The Meaning of Home in Male Migration: Listening to Men's Experiences

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Abstract

We assessed the sense of psychological home among adult men ($n = 17$; M age = 29.7 years old) who had experienced migration to Italy, focusing on the relationship between psychological home and the process of integration into the new country. *Psychological home* is a dynamic process in which people sense a safe and secure environment that ranges beyond the confines of a structured dwelling, a process which is reflective and which communicates one's self-identity. Participants engaged in a semistructured interview with the aim of establishing a generic concept of psychological home and identifying the issues that arise at the intersection of psychological home and migration. The results highlighted certain themes about the meaning that psychological home assumes in the lives of migrants and about the way in which the migration experience acts to support or hinder the process of building this sense of home. Of special interest is the idea that individuals might develop multiple psychological homes related to the different places and relationships that they experience. In this sense, establishment of a psychological home might be considered the ideal affective state for psychological adaptation to a new country.

Keywords Psychological home · Migration · Men's perspective · Qualitative method

Introduction

Home is an important aspect of every person's life: home provides security and protection. Moreover, a person's sense of home reflects a simple yet complex context that seems to be constitutive of human experience and represents a source of personal identity. Home might provide comfort and meet social and physiological needs

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(Moore. 2000). The transactional perspective, proposed in the field of environmental psychology, aims at understanding the dynamic relationship between the person and his life environment (Altman. 1990; Stokols, and Shumaker. 1981). This perspective contends that experiences of the places in which people live and the meanings that people develop are the product of a complex interaction among material and social aspects of the environment and individual and subjective factors (Bonnes and Sec-chiaroli. 1992). Moreover, people's relationship to their living environment plays a key role in their well-being (Gattino et al. 2013). However, psychological literature on the role that the home could play in people's lives is not extensive (Graham et al. 2015). Very few studies have examined how the house is generally experienced or understood (Zufferey et al. 2019).

The present study lies mostly within the field of psychology, in which the notion of *Psychological home* has been conceptualized as a dynamic process through which people structure and modify environments to reflect and communicate their self-identity, including elements of thinking, feeling, and doing (Sigmon et al. 2002). Psychological home reflects an individual's psychological need to identify a sense of self with a physical location (Ferrari et al. 2018). (Sigmon et al. 2002) developed a unidimensional scale that assesses the level of a psychological home expressed in an individual's environment and the benefits or liabilities derived from the relationship with a physical space. The same authors suggest that psychological home contains cognitive, affective, and behavioral components and that these elements enable a person to feel a sense of safety, protection, and well-being (Roster et al. 2016). Klis and Karsten (2009), analyzing sense of home in the context of the dual-residence situation of commuters, identified three dimensions that people consider to be important in their experience of home: a social dimension (i.e., interaction with family), a material dimension (i.e., personal objects in a home), and an activity patterns dimension (i.e., routines connected to place identity). This idea has been reinforced by a further study that underlines the fact that the meaning attributed to the house might be both enhanced and weakened by efforts to customize the place (Roster et al. 2016). Previous research has shown that a person's sense of home also includes a strong emotional component (Blunt and Dowling. 2006; Buttimer. 1980).

Studies on homeless people highlighted how housing services are appropriate for increasing and supporting people's capacities. The home is the foundation for developing a well-lived life (O' Shaughnessy et al. 2021). Home represents a significant setting for self-care and for care relationships among people living in or visiting the dwelling (Bowlby and Jupp. 2020). Psychological home is a significant predictor of life satisfaction (Crum and Ferrari. 2019a). People who have higher levels of psychological home reported higher levels of subjective well-being and sense of community and lower levels of negative affect (Cicognani. 2011; Roster et al. 2016, Migliorini et al., under review).

Psychological Home and Migration

From a psychological point of view, psychological home may assume great importance in the well-being of migrants because persons who emigrate change their place

of living radically from one country to another country, which requires them to rebuild a sense of home in a new culture, a process which might include the need to adjust to the ways in which people live in the host country. The "new home" in the country of arrival, therefore, might represent a base for migrants to begin to build a membership (Fozdar and Hartley. 2014) and a psychological home in the foreign context; in this sense, this new home could be a key outcome indicator of migrants' successful societal integration (Ager and Strang. 2008; Tasleem et al. 2020). According to theories of personal identity in the field of environmental psychology (Proshansky et al. 1983), if people lose their living space, as occurs during migration, this event might cause confusion or disorder in their identity. When home is lost, individuals might experience feelings of belonging nowhere (Wright. 2009).

The experience of home in migrants was analyzed by Boccagni (2014). He highlighted that people felt a decreased sense of belonging and security in the host country compared to that which they experienced in their country of origin. Migration highlights that home is a process and, as such, involves continual practices of home-making that must be thought and experienced (Blunt and Dowling. 2006). A migrant's home might represent a cultural context in which identity, belonging, and social connections, including transnational connections, are at stake (Liu et al. 2019). A recent study underlined the fact that migrants' desire for contact with the host culture predicted psychological home. Furthermore, the expectations of migrant and host groups concerning integration might affect the way in which psychological home is established (Migliorini et al., under review).

The development of emotional ties to the place in which people reside is a prerequisite for developing a sense of belonging (Lewicka. 2008). The development of identity among immigrants involves a negotiation of physical and psychological distance between the country of origin and the host country (Tummala-Narra. 2019). Migrants often experience a profound loss of social networks and cultural roots and feel a sense of homelessness between two worlds, which causes them to feel as if they belong to none (Falicov. 2003). These feelings of loss, deprivation, and loneliness may expose migrants to the negative consequences of acculturative stress (Chau. 1997; Garcìa et al. 2002; Ponizovsky and Ritsner. 2004). However, actual home ownership might also lead to the development of a sense of continuity and trust in a new country (Cain et al. 2015). Home is a multidimensional concept that includes both psychological and physical aspects. It is important to explore the dynamic ways in which immigrants build their sense of home during the process of integration (Liu et al. 2019).

Recently, research has noted that facilitating a good home experience for elderly migrants might encourage an increase in well-being (Wang and Zhan. 2019). Although the home is very important in the life of migrants and there has been research on the meaning of the home (Ahmed et al. 2020), there have been no studies that have investigated psychological home in migrants.

Gender Studies on the Meaning of Home

Migrant men have been largely unaddressed in the literature (Wojnicka. 2020). Only recently have the experiences of immigrant men emerged as an interesting topic in

the literature (Charsley and Wray. 2015; Wojnicka and Pustułka 2019). Studies on psychological home among natives have reported that gender is an important factor in understanding the importance of self-identity in one's home (Crum and Ferrari. 2019a). However, only a few works have examined the significance of domestic space for men (Walsh. 2011), probably because men have typically been defined by their movement away from the home rather than their inside it. Traditional studies have underlined men's ambivalent relationships with home because expending energy in home life is often perceived as deviating from the primary role of the breadwinner (Lein. 1979).

More has been written about the relationship that migrant women have with their home. Research on migrant women (Wilkins. 2017) has identified certain barriers to developing a sense of home and belonging because of migrant status. For women of color, migrants, and other marginalized groups, home may be a place of insecurity rather than a place of refuge (Manzo. 2003). Immigrant women expressed in the context of their home a conflict between their wish to maintain a sense of identity and the urgency to hide this identity to avoid discrimination (Wilkins. 2017). Other works have underlined the importance that immigrant women attribute to keeping religious and cultural artifacts in their houses, as these artifacts aid these women in recalling narratives and social stories to facilitate settlement in their homes (Tolia-Kelly. 2003).

The existing literature in the field of psychology has examined migrant men in the contexts of their working lives and career trajectories, family transformations, and social problems such as intimate partner violence or youth criminality (Wojnicka and Pustułka. 2019). Regarding psychological home, the literature has suggested that men perceive a lower sense of psychological home than do women (Cicognani. 2011; Crum and Ferrari. 2019b), which may be attributed to the unequal distribution of domestic responsibilities. This fact highlights the need to expand our understanding of the relationships between men and home. (Grove. 2018), in her review of the book "Food, masculinities, and home: interdisciplinary perspectives," underlined the fact that male foodwork has been linked with meaning at home. A chapter in the book also highlighted the fact that immigration might increase participation in home cooking with the goal of reestablishing one's identity in the host country. Therefore, our study intends to describe the experience of psychological home in migrant men to identify certain peculiarities connected to gender and migration.

The present study aims to fill the gap in the field of psychology related to the paucity of investigation on psychological home in migrants. In particular, this study represents a first exploration of the generic concept of psychological home in migrant men, which has been less represented in the literature, and identifies issues that arise at the intersection of psychological home and migration.

Method

Participants

Participants in the study were 17 migrant adult men who resided in Italy.

Although participants came from different countries, our aim was to reflect on a generic concept of psychological home among individuals who had experienced migration and on the changes in the relationship between migrants and their "homes" in the context of this experience. For this reason, we did not include refugees or displaced people in the sample because this specific condition might have peculiar characteristics regarding the reasons for migration and different types of accommodations (Kandylis. 2019).

Participants' ages ranged from 20 to 56 years, and they had lived in Italy for a mean duration of 13 years. The majority of participants had a high school or higher level of education and were employed full- or part-time. Most of the men were single and had no children. The dwelling type was an apartment for all men.

Procedure and Measures

The project was reviewed by members of the Ethical Research Committee of the Department of Education Sciences of the University of Genoa and was confirmed to conform to ethical norms. The authors developed a semistructured interview. This interview focused on the perception of psychological home in men who had experienced migration. The research included both purposive and snowball sampling. Migrant men belonging to certain local associations were invited to take part in the study, and these men in turn referred other men who wished to take part in the interview to the authors.

The migration journey was investigated to discover the reasons for migration, the initial intentions of the migrants, and the people with whom migration took place. One part of the interview was dedicated to investigating the idea of the participants' home and the relationship between that home and the experience of migration. Sociodemographic information about age, education level, employment, marital status, children, country of origin, and time lived in Italy was collected during the first part of the interview. The interview schedule included four core questions: (1) "Why did you decide to change country? (Reasons, intentions, migration itinerary…)" (2) "In your experience, in which places did you feel at home?" (Images of homes, emotions, intention to change home…) (3) "How much and what is there in your home related to your culture of origin?" (Customization, differences from home in country of origin…) (4) "Is there anything that we haven't asked that you feel may have been important in your experience of home in the new country?".

The semistructured and open-ended format allowed for a focused and in-depth conversation. Participants could express their responses with any level of detail, and the interviewer could choose to proceed to the next area of question or to delve more deeply into the current question. The interviews were conducted by trained psychology students and had an average duration of 39 min. The interviews were conducted in Italian with all participants. All participants signed an informed consent prior to the interview, which took place remotely and was recorded and transcribed verbatim to proceed with the analysis.

Data Analysis

The textual materials collected were analyzed by means of the grounded theory methodology (GTM) (Charmaz and Belgrave. 2019; Corbin and Strauss. 2008) and with the use of NVIVO11. Following GTM procedures, all concepts generated from initial open coding (developed by PC and VR independently) were identified in a smaller subset of thematic categories via axial coding (Strauss and Corbin. 1990), so core characteristics of the interview data were captured. The software was used to organize the statements into initial codes and then to create a draft thematic map. This thematic map was developed and reviewed to ensure that it was representative of the dataset. The map was adjusted, and themes were refined through an iterative process until consensus was reached concerning the final thematic map. This approach was used to sort and develop an understanding of what was happening in the social situation being studied (Charmaz. 2006).

Results

Three main themes were developed, each of which contained subthemes. The finalized thematic map is shown in Fig. 1.

The first theme focused on psychological home. Psychological home as narrated by men comprises four different subthemes: *Feelings*, *Behaviors*, *Cognitions*, and *Relations*.

The first subtheme pertained to *Feelings* and includes subcategories pertaining to the emotions that migrant men associated with the psychological home. Participants highlighted the importance of feeling at ease when they think of home: "The house is a place, first of all, in which I feel totally at ease, for example, I can do whatever I want" (Peruvian man, 21 years old). Home was also a place in which it was possible to be quiet: "Now I feel really at home, in this sense, in a place where I can still stay and quiet" (Moroccan man, 24 years old). Additionally, the place that participants
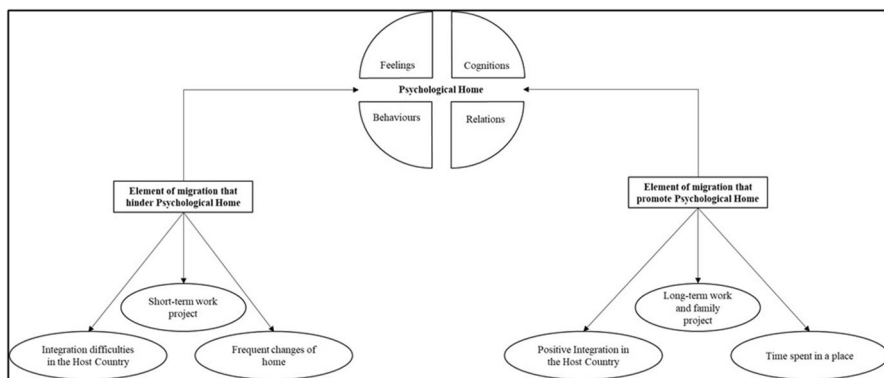

Fig. 1 Finalized thematic map

considered home was a place of safety: "It was not easy, but in the end, with all the sacrifices, we have a place to be quiet and safe" (Albanian man, 20 years old).

Furthermore, participants underlined an affective bond with the home even when they were not in the house because they had feelings of missing home: "When I'm out and…. I miss it" (Pakistan man, 29 years old); "Concerning the home (in Albania), we miss the garden, we miss the people who are there but… it's all there and we'll still have everything when we return" (Albanian man, 53 years old). Feeling as if one is the owner of space and things represents another category in men narratives: "When it is your house you can say it loudly: 'this is my house'" (Moldovan man, 43 years old); "When a house is your property, you can't think that one day someone will come and evicts you, no, because I am the owner and therefore, I am safer and even quieter. The property gives just that sense of security" (Albanian man, 20 years old).

The second subtheme, *Behaviors*, included all actions pertaining to construction, manipulation, flexibility, maintenance, and personalization that participants described in relation to the home: customization, female management of the house, presence of objects from the culture of origin, autonomy from the extended family. The possibility of customizing the space seemed important for participants: "It is full of plants here, it seems like a jungle…(laughs) but we say that we have added something of our own, mirrors, there are gnomes… now there are a bit of our accessories" (Pakistan man, 29 years old). However, most participants recognized that women have a primary role in house management: "The house was already furnished, but many things she (wife) bought with her, actually, that is the bed, some furniture or other she took, in the sense that she decided how to take them…" (Moroccan man, 24 years old); "The house is… in our tradition it is the queen (laughs) that takes care of it, the queen (laughs)… the only thing she gave me the order to do was to paint the house, to be a painter!" (Egyptian man, 56 years old).

Some respondents stated that they brought certain objects that referred to their country of origin into their house in Italy: "When you enter the house, you see the pyramids, you see the sphinx, you see our photos of memories in Sharm el-Sheik, in Cairo, in Alexandria, my hometown" (Egyptian man, 56 years old). Finally, autonomy from the extended family represented an important behavioral aspect in the development of the psychological home: "If you want to change something with the house there (in the country of origin), you must have a lot of family permissions: like if mom wants, if dad wants… instead, here, you have more autonomy in your house…" (Moldovan man, 43 years).

The third subtheme included attributions, meanings, and beliefs about home and self. The *Cognitions* subtheme contained all sentences that referred to good memories, to the idea of home as an inheritance for participants' children, and to certain ideas regarding the importance of personal space. The idea of home was related to men's memories: "In some situations I felt right at home, at home… when other people came to join us reminded me… reminded me of the old times" (Albanian man, 30 years old). Home, in men's narratives, represented an inheritance for their children: "In Italy, the house is important for me. I wish one day I can buy it, I made it for my children, a house for them" (Egyptian man, 56 years old); "My father wants

to put the house in my name, so that he can go back to Albania and leave everything here to me! He wanted to leave me the nest" (Albanian man, 20 years). In men, narratives arose concerning the importance of personal space to work and study; as one man said: "Home is a place where I can have my own studio, where I can do my research and study, and even my girlfriend can have her own place, divided from mine, where she can study and do her own thing" (Moroccan man, 24 years old).

Furthermore, migrant men spoke of their home in the context of their country of origin: "I feel at home when I go back to my hometown, there I feel safe" (Congolese man, 25 years old); in the context of the host country: "I think of Italy as home. I have many things here: friends, work; and even if part of me is Nigerian, the home is here" (Nigerian man, 21 years old); or in the context of both countries:

When I hear the word 'home', I remember my home in Albania, but I also remember my home where I am now... because the origins are those, I will never deny, and every time I go, I get so many good memories and it is a pleasant place. For me, then, the word "home" means two images: one here and one there (Albanian man, 30 years old)

Migrant men described a change in the state of mind and the sense of home as a process that could develop in multiple spaces over time:

The house is still there, but it's like, in my head, there's not the idea to go back one day. I'm aware that it was my home, but I can't feel it anymore; it belongs to a thing of the past, and instead my home is now here (Peruvian man, 21 years old).

Finally, the fourth subtheme pertained to *Relations*, which included relational experiences that were part of the psychological sense of home. In particular, participants said that for them, the family was home:

When we go to Moldova, I cannot stay long because I want to come back home, my home, because my home is in Italy with my family. Your home is your family, and the family is where your home is (Moldovan man, 43 years old).
When I think of home, I think of my family (Palestinian man, 29 years old).
I have always had the dearest people around me, and I would call this home (Albanian man, 24 years old).

Participants underlined the importance of interaction with family members in calling a place home:

I was always with my father, and he said: 'You have to be quiet, you'll see that in a week you will fall in love with this house, you'll love it too!'. Actually [...] after a while he (the father) spoke to me and I listened to him... he made me feel at home, because he told me these things and reassured me (Albanian man, 20 years old).

The second proposed model focused on elements of migration experience that hindered or promoted psychological home. We described these issues by quoting

some sentences transcribed from participants. Among the factors that hindered psychological home, men identified elements connected to frequent change of home: "I never had a constant home, I changed home 4 times, 5 times" (Ecuadorian man, 23 years old). These changes are tiring because, as one man expressed: "As soon as you settle in one place then you have to start all over again in another" (Pakistan man, 29 years old). Such changes also impact short-term work projects: "In Dubai, I didn't feel at home… I was focused on the fact that it would be over in a year. Beautiful, you work and everything… but in a year it will end!" (Syrian man, 37 years old).

Furthermore, some emotions seemed to be connected to difficulty in building a sense of home, such as feeling alone in an unknown place: "I did not want to be alone in a place that I did not know well, in a space that I did not know" (Albanian man, 20 years old). Another example included experiences of feeling like a guest: "The sense of home is also connected to the sense of being guests, of feeling like guests" (Moroccan man, 24 years old).

Finally, men described difficulties in integration in the host country that included discrimination, as one man said: "I can't stand those who say that I should not be here… I did not come here by plane to have fun, but I risked my life at sea… If you say so, I really do not accept it" (Nigerian man, 21 years old). These issues also included linguistic difficulties: "Initially, I had some difficulty, not knowing how to communicate, not knowing the language" (Albanian man, 20 years old).

Additionally, among the elements of migration that promote psychological home, men identified aspects connected to the time dimension; in particular, they said that time spent in a place allowed people to feel at home: "At first, I did not feel at home when I arrived, it took some time, now I can say that it is my home" (Peruvian man, 21 years old). This connection appears to be associated with the fact that elderly people, in men's perceptions, are more home-bound: "Like all the old people who say: 'This is my house, I'm here'" (Syrian man, 37 years old).

Furthermore, men described how long-term family projects and long-term work projects were important for feeling at home in a place: "Now that I have a job, I pay for the expenses, I don't even have to answer to any other person, and I'm comfortable with my house, with my things, that is, I'm fine" (Ecuadorian man, 25 years old); "I like having an apartment to live alone, so when I have a job I can marry a girl" (Malaysian man, 22 years old). Integration into the host country represented an important element in fostering a sense of home following the migration experience. Men spoke about being welcome in Italy as a relational resource in establishing psychological home; as one migrant stated: "I always felt at home here in Italy, even if I was not born there, but I never found social difficulties, ever. Italians have always welcomed me well; I never had negative experiences" (Ecuadorian man, 24 years old). In contrast, another young man explained the difficulty of feeling at home in the absence of this welcome: "It was difficult to feel at home in a place where I did not know the place or the people and where people did not speak to me" (Albanian man, 20 years old). These experiences underlined the fact that a positive reception from the Italian community represented a key element in the possibility of feeling at home.

Discussion and Conclusion

Important themes emerged from the interviewees and highlighted some peculiarities of the relationship that exists between psychological home and migration experience from the perspective of men. In our results, we found three themes, each with subthemes, that help to understand, on the one hand, the meaning that the psychological home assumes in the lives of migrants and, on the other hand, the way in which the migratory experience supports or hinders the process of building this sense of home.

In migrant men's definition of psychological home, three subthemes overlapped with the components introduced by (Sigmon et al. 2002); the relational component seemed to be especially salient for the migratory context. The presence in the host country of positive and reassuring relationships with family and community represented an important resource for migrant men in establishing a psychological home that could reflect and communicate their self-identity. In migratory experience, identity issues are interlaced with feelings of belonging (or not belonging) to groups, places, and cultures (Mannarini et al. 2018). Migration can impact a person's identity; migrants who are able to rework or establish aspects of the self might also attain a sense of belonging to the new place (Ward and Styles 2003). In this sense, although psychological home tends to be an individual-level factor, perception of home may be linked to interpersonal- and community-level factors. Home might represent a base from which migrants may begin to build a membership through their successful settlement. In fact, the results of the *Feelings* component suggested that individuals who feel safe and secure in their environment, for instance, may be more satisfied in their interpersonal relationships and engage more with their communities. Psychological home might represent a socioemotional space in which migrant men feel connected to others. For migrants, friendship networks promote integration into the community and affect life satisfaction (Hombrados-Mendieta et al. 2019).

When discussing the psychological sense of home in the context of gender, in the *Behaviors* component, participants pointed out that the domain of managing the house belonged primarily to the women with whom they shared these homes. Women seemed to make the ultimate decisions concerning the kinds of decoration in and arrangement of the house, while male participants played a secondary role in the decision-making process. In the words of migrant men, the ability to establish a psychological home appears to be anchored to the possibility of having long-term work and family projects, as these projects are an indispensable element in investing one's psychic and emotional resources in a place. This connection may be related to the fact that these men have already experienced a loss of sense of home and are consequently concerned with finding themselves again after experiencing the negative emotions associated with loss and separation (Garcini et al. 2019). Men express the desire to build something for their children, considering home to be a tangible sign of a legacy that is not only material but also composed of thoughts, sacrifices, and investments required to feel safe in a new country. According to Aroian (1990), migrant men appear to be future-oriented, and this orientation requires them to learn skills to master settlement tasks, including occupational and relational adjustment. Men establish a

home as a domain of autonomy and consider property as a source of stability. Our results seem to highlight the fact that a sense of psychological home is mediated by the legal relationship to the home. Men say that if you own the house, you may have a different relationship with it; if you rent it, for example, your relation to the home could be more uncertain. This result supports findings concerning the association between homeownership, social capital, and sense of security (Hu and Ye. 2020).

These observations open up interesting avenues of discussion concerning the fact that the psychological sense of home offers an opportunity to understand gender division and perhaps allows for a change in gender politics. The customization of spaces, attachments to objects, and practices are defined according to gender and related to gender roles. For Young (1997), men are involved in the construction of a house and ownership of the home, and women are recognized as the cultivators of that space through domestic practices. Gender practices around the home in migration contexts could be chosen to convey cultural meanings that go beyond the material space. Gender practices could help to revitalize those elements of home that refer to broader concepts of communities and customs that are perceived as having been lost during migration (Fathi. 2020).

Of special interest in the current work, as suggested by the results in the *Cognitions* component, is the idea that individuals might develop multiple psychological homes related to the different places and relationships that they experience. Some authors (e.g., Fozdar and Hartley. 2014) argued that the house may be considered to be more of a social concept than a territorial concept because it is more closely related to relationships and feelings than to a specific material space. In this sense, home goes beyond the chronological barriers of past, present, and future and beyond a physical place (Chen and Bao. 2020). In the establishment of psychological home, migrant men negotiate attachment and belonging to interconnected temporal, spatial, and relational processes (Ryan. 2008). However, according to Sigmon et al. 2002), the construct of a psychological home should be viewed as a "specific type" of place, a physical environment in which people invest their energy. The sense of multiple homes could be interesting for community psychology in accounting for the multiple belongings and multiple experiences of migrants. According to Wessendorf (2017), acquiring the skills to build social relations with people of different ethnic, linguistic, or religious backgrounds forms part of the process of building a home within a context of diversity, and these skills might add a sense of belonging to the neighborhood or the city in which migrants have settled. Migrants can continue to think of their country of origin as their psychological home, and this country can be a safe place that is physically absent but psychologically present in support of their well-being. Consistent with the ambiguous loss construct (Boss. 2007), participants in the study expressed uncertainty regarding where their home is. However, interviews showed that the relational component and, in particular, reassuring relationships with family members, welcome experienced in the new context and the possibility of building networks and social capital in the new community can make it possible to feel at home in the new country as well, a fact which sometimes leads people to change their psychological home from the country of origin to the country of arrival.

This research contains several limitations. The scarcity of studies concerning masculinity and psychological home could contribute little to the construction of the interview questions, which were therefore very broad. While this fact rendered the study truly exploratory, it may have omitted some important questions regarding male specificity.

A further limitation was the study's adoption of a culturalist perspective in drafting the interview schedule, such that, even if it was coherent with the goal of the work to understand how psychological home changes due to migration experience, the study was nevertheless affected by the strong limit of this orientation to reify culture as an absolute autonomous reality, independent of the action of the subjects (Berry et al. 2002). In fact, pancultural or etic dimensions may be useful for studying a phenomenon in general, while purely emic descriptions of a single culture do not allow generalizations. However, asking people to think about their culture of origin may have led them to look for a difference between the two home contexts in cultural terms. Future studies could use an emic approach (Shweder. 1991) to observe whether cultural elements still emerge from interviews with participants.

Moreover, even though men in this research were from a number of different ethnic backgrounds, this study treated them as a homogenous group. Future studies should focus on a group with a specific provenance, relating acculturative preferences to the host context. Multiple characteristics of individuals, such as age or social status, could suggest different points of view concerning the topic of psychological home and might help shape integration opportunities or challenges after migration (Grzymala-Kazlowska and Phillimore. 2018).

Building a sense of home in a foreign land is an ongoing process for migrants. Not belonging to a culture associated with a single place, migrants continually negotiate their sense of home between different places and, over time, become more familiar with the host country, which was once unknown. Establishment of a psychological home might be considered the ideal affective state for psychological adaptation to the new country.

Declarations

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