

## MULTIPLE SENSE OF COMMUNITY, IDENTITY, AND WELL-BEING IN A CONTEXT OF MULTI CULTURE: A MEDIATION MODEL

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*Within Community Psychology, Sense of Community (SOC) has become a primary indicator in the study of communities. This study investigated Multiple Sense of Community (MSOC) and its relationship to identities and well-being in a multi cultural context, the Station Zone of Reggio Emilia, Italy. The principal aim of this study was to analyze SOC in a multicultural environment as a tool to assess and understand well-being and quality of life among people from different ethnic groups. Specifically, the role of MSOC as a mediator between residents' identities and well-being within a context of multi culture, was examined. A mediation model was applied. Results indicated MSOC was fundamental to the study of multicultural communities; the role of SOC mediation depended on the type of SOC considered and a mediation role of relational SOC changed among ethnic groups. Finally, different practical implications in social and community projects and interventions are discussed.*

**Keywords:** multiple sense of community, migrations, well-being, identity, mediation

### 1. Introduction

One of the key concepts of Community Psychology (Zani, 2012) is Sense of Community (SOC), however researchers continue to debate the concept in the majority of the literature to date. SOC represents the psychological experience of individuals in the community. Sarason defined SOC as “*The perception of similarity to others, an acknowledged interdependence with others, a willingness to maintain this interdependence by giving to or doing for others what one expects from them, the feeling that one is part of a larger dependable and stable structure*” (Sarason, 1974, p. 157). Sarason emphasized how SOC was fundamental in community growth and well-being and many authors have considered SOC a “*...powerful force in our culture now*”

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(McMillan & Chavis, 1986, p. 20). However, recent perspectives criticize the concept based on economic and political changes at local and global levels and the subsequent consequences on the population in social and psychological terms.

Therefore, criticisms against an idealised definition of community and sense of belonging opened up new lines of research derived from the “diversity” concept as a new central point in the promotion of social change (Trickett, 1996; Wiesenfeld, 1996). Community was not a homogeneous entity, but a complex system resulting from different factors, including new economies, international policies, high mobility levels, current migrations, lack of stability, and new technologies (Castle, 2002). How can this complexity be analyzed? Many authors have studied the multiple belongings concept (Chavis, Hogge, McMillan & Wandersman, 1986; Pretty, Andrewes & Collett, 1994), but the most notable contribution is *Multiple Sense of Community (MSOC)* proposed by Brodsky (2009). Under MSOC criteria, individuals have, live, and perceive multiple communities and consequently develop multiple senses of belonging to these multiple communities (Brodsky & Marx, 2001; Brodsky, 2009). Subsequently, questions arise based on the consequences on community life. How have changes in community influenced people? Some of the influences these changes include that individuals can choose to belong to different communities, communities emphasize diversity, and what home means to people now changes the idea of community (i.e., what it means to live together and what constitutes quality of life). Our research also examined human migration and its impact on SOC. Townley et al. (2011) reported social and cultural changes in multicultural settings, where people who migrated from different countries live together, despite belonging to different ethnic groups.

## **2. Identity, Sense of Community, and Well-Being**

Identity among migrants has been studied from a range of perspectives; for example, threats to identity following migration, maintaining ethnic identity and self-esteem, overcoming ethnocentrism, and the value of developing a within-group identity in an ethnically diverse community (Cunningham, 2005; Negy, Shreve, Jensen & Uddin, 2003; Timotijevic & Breakwell, 2000). Migrants’ identity represents a complex negotiation process related to the home country and the immigrants’ new context.

Drawing on Tajfel’s (1981) Social Identity Theory, Phinney (1991), reported in Negy et al. (2003), asserted that “*ethnic identity involves self-identification as a group member, attitudes and evaluations in relation to one’s group, attitudes about oneself as a group member, extent of ethnic knowledge and commitment, and ethnic behaviours and practices*” (p. 334). Liebkind (2006) reported that most traditional research defined ethnic identity as an individual’s sense of self in relationship to their ethnic group affiliation, conceptualizing the concept identity is “naturally” possessed. However, recent literature has characterised ethnic identity as socially constructed, the result of power relationships within social, cultural, economic, and historical contexts (Ali & Sonn, 2010; Bhatia, 2007/2008; Verkuyten, 2005). Moreover, in recent years, Toso (2008) defined ethnicity as a human group based on common morphological, cultural, and linguistic characters, where the group shared common and distinctive culture, religion, and language, among other attributes. Therefore, migrants’ ethnic identity can be described as multiple and complex processes between the home culture and the receiving context. When reaching a new country, it is vital for immigrants to maintain their cultural identity, assuming

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cultural attributes are strongly related to ethnicity. The more people who identify with their ethnic group, the more important it is to preserve their home culture (Verkuyten & Brug, 2004). Butcher (2008) indicated migrants' ties to his and her origins and identities included language, history, and symbols. However, migrants also begin to identify with the receiving country. The arrivals live under conditions that differ from their country of origin, and become exposed to an often divergent culture; experiencing traditions and daily lifestyles common to the host region, navigating the country's language, and exposure to characteristic foods and music. Consequently, both their original and new communities are involved in the development of a novel self.

The multiple identity concept, has received the most attention in the literature. Two 'identity-types' have been characterised. First, Roccas and Brewer (2002) examined *social identity complexity* to explain how people exhibit multiple or single identities depending on the degree of overlap perceived between their community memberships. Second, Ali and Sonn (2010) analysed *multi-hyphenated identities* resulting from the constant negotiation process between different identities and histories (Bhatia, 2002). Smith and Silva (2011) argued that strong ethnic identity might heighten racism and prejudice and its connection with personal health and well-being, however most studies emphasized the positive impact of multiple identities on health and well-being among migrants (Shih & Sanchez, 2009). In general, identity shows positive effects on well-being. McNamara et al. (2013) suggested identity influenced well-being directly and via the mediation of some factors (e.g., collective efficacy as a way to face problems within a disadvantaged community). When people feel divided between their home country and the receiving context, multiple identities seems to increase well-being, more than one identity (Binning et al., 2009). Moreover, research indicated identity has positive connections with sense of community. For example, Pretty et al. (2003) found an important relationship between identity and sense of place, while Mannarini et al. (2012) analyzed how identification with community affected SOC in territorial communities.

Therefore, the literature indicates a strong positive relationship between SOC, identity, and well-being, and has particularly emphasized SOC's role (Kenyon & Carter, 2010; Hombrados-Mendieta et al., 2013). Hombrados-Mendieta et al. (2013) highlighted that SOC moderates the negative effects of migration processes and is strongly associated with quality of life and well-being; migrants with high SOC levels also exhibited good quality of life levels, comparable to natives. This was also confirmed by Kenyon and Carter (2010), who analysed the relationship between SOC, ethnic identity, and psychological well-being among Native American adolescents. Results showed that adolescents with values associated with their ethnic origins exhibited increased ethnic identity and higher SOC levels. Therefore, ethnic identity appears to play an integral role in maintaining and reinforcing a sense of belonging and an emotional connectivity with the ethnic group. However, it is also important to consider how this relationship influences the larger community (i.e., the receiving community).

Consequently, current debates focus attention on SOC and question its relevance, considering the cultural and social changes of the last few decades. These changes have lead researchers to explore, for example, SOC's role in society, whether we still talk about SOC as an important indicator in Community Psychology, and if Multiple SOC represents a key concept to study cultural and social changes. Townley et al. (2011) emphasized that promoting SOC was in conflict with the current societal cultural diversity and suggested the term *community-diversity dialectic* to emphasize the need to examine SOC more thoroughly. In the present study, we emphasized the role of Multiple SOC explore migration processes and the consequences for

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migrants.

### **3. The Role of the Home and Receiving Country: Community, Belonging, and Migration**

The increasing levels of migration over the last two decades, has contributed to the cultural diversification of many societies. This has transformed the social and cultural make up of receiving communities (Harris, 2009), and has also meant that home and belonging are re-defined in relationship to the home and receiving country (Blunt & Varley, 2004). Therefore, immigrants live concurrently in different communities, where a primary community serves a notable role in maintaining contact with immigrant origins (Fisher & Sonn, 1999). Multiple spaces and community formation is also important for identity. Baldassar (1999) reported the dynamic nature of these spaces and the complex situations immigrants' experience. This highlighted that living in different cultures and social spaces results in the development of multiple identities (Ali & Sonn, 2010; Bhatia, 2002; Bhatia 2007/2008). The way in which migrants experience and perceive different communities, is largely related to their home country and receiving context; therefore these individual groups can develop different senses of belonging. In the present study, we analyzed the role of communities; how communities affected immigrants' quality of life, with an emphasis on territorial and relational communities. The Station Zone was used as the territorial community, where individuals feel a sense of belonging (territorial sense of community). Moreover, participants defined the relational community (Barbieri et al., 2014) as their home country, ethnic group, and culture, which is defined as the primary community (Fisher & Sonn, 1999). Territorial and relational SOC are interesting analytical elements to elucidate the connectivity between Multiple identities, MSOC, and well-being among immigrants. It is therefore important to consider the different roles both communities and SOC have on immigrants' quality of life.

The role of a new country, with a different culture, history, and language, represents a fundamental element of change for immigrants, not only in terms of individual identity, but also in the process of bridging the home country and the receiving context. Thus, MSOC represents a key analytic element. The specific questions informing this study are: What is MSOC's role among immigrants living under a multi cultural environment? What is the relationship between identity, MSOC, and well-being? How does this relationship influence immigrants' quality of life? The present study analyzed these relationships using a mediation model, where MSOC is a mediator between identity and well-being.

## **4. The Study**

### **4.1. Context: The Station Zone**

Italy is a country characterized by a particular recent history, compared with other European countries, with a sort of contradictory sense of unity, which seems to be more related to the local region than to a National identity. Moreover, the traditional characterization of Italians as migrants creates this particular sense of belonging far from being a national feeling: during the

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XX century Italians have relocated to foreign countries, while foreign migrations in Italy were infrequent.

In the last decades, Italy has begun to receive large numbers of migrants, and has not been prepared socially, culturally and politically for this rapid socio-cultural diversification. In the last decade migration contributed to a rapid population growth: of 61 million people living in Italy, migrants make up 8.1% in 2014. Firstly, cultural differences between Italy and the incoming communities have been underlined considering local and national Italian traditions that are perceived as in contrast with foreign cultures. Secondly, the political scenario reflects and reproduces the social and cultural situation: a) Italian policies regarding citizenship can be a significant barrier to settlement and integration, b) contradictory policies of the last decades play an important role, as on the one hand there is strict legislation about migration and, on the other hand, we can find “soft attitudes” to illegal migration creating a chaotic situation (Weil & Hansen, 1999).

Reggio Emilia (a city located in Northern Italy, Emilia Romagna Region) is one of the cities with the highest level of migration in Italy with foreigners making up 18.2% of the total population in 2013 (Municipality of Reggio Emilia, 2013). Migration has grown by 700% in the last 13 years and local policies and structures are struggling to provide many foreign migrants with welfare support (Canovi & Sigman, 2009). The largest migrant groups in the city are Albanians (12.4%), Moroccans (11.2%) and Chinese (10.1%) (Municipality of Reggio Emilia, 2013).

The Station Zone (in the Historical Centre District of Reggio Emilia) represents the focus of the research, as one of the areas with the highest number of migrants in Reggio Emilia. It is estimated that foreigners, belonging to 60 different nationalities, represent approximately 70-80% of the population, in this part of the city.

## **4.2. *Aim and Hypotheses***

### **4.2.1 *General Aim***

The main goal of the study is to analyze the role of Multiple Sense of Community among three groups of migrants living in the Station Zone.

### **4.2.2 *Hypotheses***

During the last several years, research has questioned the role of SOC and indicated the necessity to describe the complex and heterogeneous immigration processes within everyday contexts. Our study provides evidence that SOC as a concept has relevance and SOC remains important in characterizing individual and group everyday life (Townley et al., 2011). We hypothesize that MSOC (as defined by Brodsky, 2009) represents the primary analysis element and underlying MSOC, different SOC serve various roles with different effects on immigrants' quality of life. In particular, Relational SOC, associated with the home country, has a more important role than Territorial SOC, because it maintains ties with immigrants' origins, history, and culture, among other attributes (Fisher & Sonn, 1999). The maintenance of a connection to the home country is fundamental in sustaining positive individual well-being during

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immigration, while territorial SOC does not yet exhibit any relevance associated with immigration. Moreover, the study emphasizes the mediation role of MSOC in the relationship between multiple identities and well-being. The positive relationship between identity and well-being, particularly multiple identities for immigrants and the moderation role of SOC on the negative effects of immigration (Shih & Sanchez, 2009; McNamara et al., 2013) facilitates the following hypothesis: a model where MSOC is a mediator between multiple identities and well-being.

1. There is a Multiple SOC (Brotsky, 2009; Pretty et al., 1994; Wiesenfeld, 1996) among migrants living in the Station Zone.
2. There are significant differences between Territorial and Relational SOC among migrants. In particular, relational SOC is higher than territorial SOC (Fisher & Sonn, 1999; Maya-Jariego & Armitage, 2007).
3. Multiple identities positively affect well-being among migrants (Binning, Unzueta, Huo & Molina, 2009; McNamara et al., 2013; Shih & Sanchez, 2009) and multiple sense of community is a mediator of this positive relation (Hombrados-Mendieta et al., 2013). Specifically, the research suggests that multiple SOC could mediate between identities and well-being, thereby increasing well-being.
4. Among Albanians, Chinese and Moroccans there are differences in the relation between multiple identities, multiple SOC and well-being. The research hypothesizes that the relation could change depending on the belonging group.

### **4.3. Method**

#### *4.3.1 Procedure*

This research is a component of a broader study (Barbieri, 2014) that analyzed MSOC under conditions characterised by high levels of cultural diversity. A “general model” study was developed and three parallel investigations were considered to analyze MSOC in different ethnic groups residing in the Station Zone. We developed different models to elucidate the mediation model in the total sample (first model) and then, to observe ethnic differences (different models; one for each ethnic group). Quantitative data was analysed in this study. An anonymous self-administered questionnaire was developed. The questionnaire was in Italian; therefore participants could speak, read, and write using the Italian language.

#### *4.3.2 Population*

The research participants were the people living in the Station Zone. We chose people from the following three ethnic groups: Albanian, Chinese, and Moroccan. We chose Albanians and Moroccans because these groups represent the first immigrants who arrived in Italy and specifically in the current migration wave to Reggio Emilia. In addition, Albanians are currently the largest migrant group in the city (Municipality of Reggio Emilia, 2012). Chinese were chosen because Chinese migration has increased in Europe and Italy in the last decade (Cecchini, 2009).

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### 4.3.3 Sample

The method of sampling was based on a snowballing procedure (Noy, 2008). A standard format for informed consent and privacy was required; for participants under 18 years old, parents' authorization was needed. One hundred and seventy-four (N=174) questionnaires were collected, including 60 Albanians, 54 Chinese and 60 Moroccans (Table 1). 51.1% were males and 48.9% were females. 67.8% were first generation migrants, while 32.2% were second-generation migrants. Only 5.2% of migrants were born in Italy and only 6.3% of them had a dual nationality.

**Table 1. Ethnic groups in the sample**

	N	%
Albanians	60	34.5
Chinese	54	31.0
Moroccans	60	34.5
Total	174	100.0

### 4.3.4 Measures

An anonymous, self-report questionnaire was administered and the following set of measures were examined:

The *Multidimensional Sense of Community Scale for Local Communities* (Prezza et al., 2009). This 19-item scale had five response modalities, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), which measures one second-order factor (i.e., Territorial Sense of Community referred to the Station Zone).

The *Sense of Community Scale Measure* (Proesholdbell et al., 2006). This measure assessed relational SOC. Before completing this measure, participants made a choice between two community types to understand the relational community each individual most identified with since migration. Barbieri et al. (2014) reported immigrants living in the Station Zone identified community under the following two categories: "community of origins" and "ethnic associations". We included these two categories in the scale to provide continuity to the questionnaire and better understand which relational community immigrants most identified with since migration. Most participants indicated community of origin as the most important relational community, so this variable was used in our analysis. This 17-item scale included five response modalities, ranging from 1 (not at all) to 5 (very much) to measure one second-order factor.

The *Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure – Revised* (Phinney & Ong, 2007). The scale was presented twice. First to measure ethnic identity, referred to as the Country of Origin, and second to measure ethnic identity, referred to as Italian Identity. The scale uses a 5-point Likert scale (strongly disagree – strongly agree) and measures six total items. The scale's total score was analyzed.

The *Well-being Scale* (Keyes, 1998). This scale has 12 items and it uses a 6-point Likert scale

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(never – everyday). In order to test our hypothesis.

#### 4.3.5 Property of the Scales for Each Ethnic Group

In the following table the values of Cronbach's  $\alpha$  for each scale referred to the groups considered are reported.

**Table 2. Property of the Scales**

	<b>Property of Instruments: <math>\alpha</math> Cronbach</b>				
	Territorial SOC Scale	Relational SOC Scale	Well-being Scale	ID Italy Scale	ID Origins Scale
The group "Migrants"	.78	.91	.84	.85	.85
Albanians	.85	.88	.83	.87	.68
Chinese	.30	.92	.88	.79	.87
Moroccans	.79	.92	.80	.73	.87

Values of Cronbach's  $\alpha$  are high for each scale considered in the different ethnic groups. Particularly, Albanians and Moroccans have high levels in all scales, but Chinese referred a low value of  $\alpha$  for territorial Sense of Community Scale. If we consider the three migrant groups together, we can see that values of  $\alpha$  in all the scales are high (Table 2).

#### 4.3.6 Analysis and Statistics

Quantitative data have been analyzed using SPSS 21.0 for Windows. As the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, the histogram, the Q-Q Plot and the Q-Q Plot without Tendency indicated that every scale does not show a normal distribution for the migrant group (constituted by Albanians, Chinese and Moroccans) and for each single ethnic group considered, we decided to transform each scale in order to have the same type of measures.

The transformation has been developed through the formula:

$$Y = \frac{\text{Raw Score} - \text{n. items}}{\text{n. of possible answers}} * 100$$

The formula calculated a raw score through summarizing the number of items for the number of the Likert scale answers. Then, for some analysis (McNemar test), categorical variables have been created.

Results were calculated using the values of median and the McNemar test, while r Spearman no parametric correlations were used for the relation between MSOC, identity and well-being among continuous transformed variables.

#### 4.3.7 The Macro Procedure

To analyze the relation between multiple sense of community, identity and well-being we created a model of mediation (Preacher & Hayes, 2008), where MSOC is a mediator in the relation between identities (Italian and origin) and well-being. The model is a multiple mediator model and it is based on two predictors (identity of origin and Italian identity), two mediators (Territorial SOC and Relational SOC) and one criterion (Well-being).

To test the model we used Macro program for SPSS (Preacher & Hayes, 2004). Macros are additional components of SPSS that allow development of a complex model of analysis that aims to estimate indirect effects in mediation models. The macros provide unstandardized coefficients for regression as required by the mediation. Moreover, macros provide total, direct and indirect effect of the mediation model. Also, macros use a nonparametric bootstrapping procedure to calculate indirect effect of one or multiple mediators (Preacher & Hayes, 2008). In addition, macros are not based on large-sample theory, so it was possible to apply it to our small sample (Hayes & Scharkow, 2013; Preacher & Hayes, 2004; Preacher & Hayes, 2008).

The outputs of macro procedure are the following: firstly, the independent variable's direct effects on the dependent variable are reported (values of the coefficient and values of significance), moreover the related total model summary (ANOVA values F, R and R<sup>2</sup>) is reported (as the model of the direct effects of independent variables on dependent variables). Secondly, the independent variable effect on the mediator is reported (coefficient = Coeff.) and value of significance p). Thirdly, the effect of the independent variables on dependent variables through the mediator is reported (the Effects values and the Interval Confidence (CI); a significant Effect is found when confidence interval does not include zero between its values LLCI and ULCI). Fourthly, the remaining effects of independent variables on dependent variable (excluding the direct and the mediation effect) are reported (also F, R and R<sup>2</sup> values of related total effect are reported).

## 5. Results

*Hypothesis n.1: There is a Multiple Sense of Community among migrants living in the Station Zone*

First of all, we measured the median values of sense of community, identity and well-being among four groups: the Migrant Group, Albanians, Chinese and Moroccans. Table 3 shows values of relational and territorial SOC, Italian identity and identity of origin and well-being.

**Table 3. Values of Territorial SOC, Relational SOC, both Identities and Well-being**

	<i>Values of Medians</i>											
	Migrant Group			Albanians			Chinese			Moroccans		
	Med.	Min	Max	Med.	Min	Max	Med.	Min	Max	Med.	Min	Max
T SOC	50.88	12.28	84.21	50.00	12.28	78.95	49.12	33.33	64.91	55.26	15.79	84.21
R SOC	63.23	0.00	91.18	66.18	26.47	88.24	56.62	13.24	91.18	64.71	0.00	88.24
Italian Identity	62.50	8.33	100.0	66.67	8.33	100.0	39.58	20.83	87.50	70.83	12.50	100.0
Identity Origin	70.83	4.17	100.0	70.83	45.83	100.0	58.33	16.67	100.0	75.00	4.17	100.0
Well-being	58.33	15.00	96.67	60.83	23.33	96.67	50.83	18.33	86.67	63.33	15.00	93.33

*Note 1. T SOC = Territorial Sense of Community. R SOC = Relational Sense of Community*

Note 2. Values of Median, Minimum and Maximum are referred to transformed continuous variables (values from 0.00 to 100.00)

*Hypothesis n.2: There are significant differences between Territorial and Relational SOC among migrants. In particular, Relational SOC is higher than Territorial SOC*

All groups showed high levels of relational SOC and lower levels of territorial SOC. Albanians and Moroccans reported the highest levels of relational sense of community, while Chinese the lowest levels of Territorial Sense of Community. Moreover, data highlighted the presence of multiple identities. In particular, levels of identity of origin were higher than the levels of Italian identity for all the groups. Finally, migrants reported high/medium levels of well-being (Table 3).

On the other hand, the McNemar test indicated that there were significant differences between territorial and relational SOC for the migrant Group, Albanians and Moroccans ( $p \leq .01$ ), but not for Chinese, who reported low levels of both.

*Hypothesis n.3: Multiple identities positively affect well-being among migrants and Multiple sense of community is a mediator of this positive relation. Particularly, the research demonstrates that multiple SOC could mediate between Identities and well-being, specifically increasing well-being.*

### 5.1 Correlations between MSOC, Identity and Well-Being

The first step was to analyze relations among variables. We used the r Spearman non-parametric correlations between scales, as showed in Tables 4.1 and 4.2.

**Table 4.1 Correlations between Territorial SOC, Relational SOC and Well-being among different migrant groups**

	Relational SOC				Well-being			
	General M.	A	C	M	General M.	A	C	M
Territorial SOC	.52**	.52**	.26	.66**	.29**	.35**	.01	.26*
Relational SOC					.45**	.57**	.39**	.34**

\*  $p \leq 0.05$ ; \*\*  $p \leq 0.01$

Note. General M = General Model "Migrants"; A = Albanians; C = Chinese; M = Moroccans

**Table 4.2 Correlations between Territorial SOC, Relational SOC and Well-being among different migrant groups**

	Italian Identity				Identity of Origin			
	General M.	A	C	M	General M.	A	C	M
Territorial SOC	.43**	.49**	.22	.23	.29**	.26*	.23	.30*
Relational SOC	.38**	.38**	.11	.21	.59**	.55**	.74**	.38**
Well-being	.50**	.56**	.49**	.20	.32**	.42**	.42**	.06

\*  $p \leq 0.05$ ; \*\*  $p \leq 0.01$

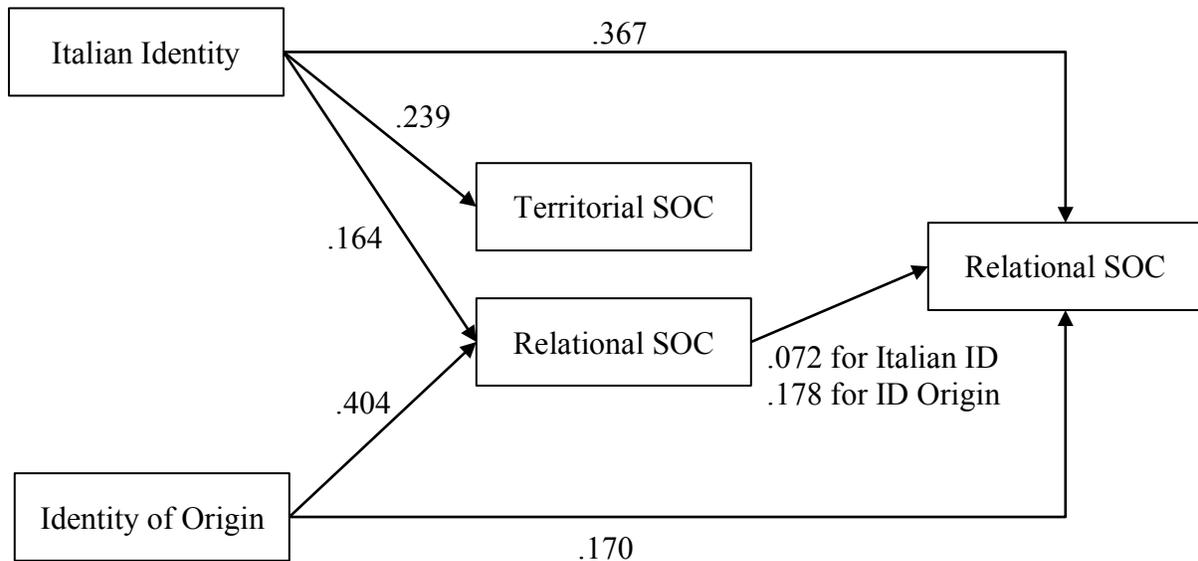
Note. General M = General Model "Migrants"; A = Albanians; C = Chinese; M = Moroccans

The results highlighted a strong correlation between territorial and relational SOC among all

the groups considered; moreover there was a strong correlation between relational SOC and well-being, while, for Chinese, there was no correlation between territorial SOC and well-being. Finally, the identity of origin showed higher correlations with territorial and relational SOC and well-being than the Italian identity.

## 5.2 The General Model of Mediation

Firstly, we calculated a general model of mediation using the Macro Procedure considering the three ethnic groups together as one macro-group (Figure 1). It was important to understand how both identities were related with multiple SOC and well-being, and the role of each SOC as mediators.



**Figure 1. General Model of Interactions between Italian Identity, Identity of Origin and Well-being with the Mediation of Territorial and Relational SOC**

Both identities had an effect on well-being (Coeff =  $.367^{**}$  for Italian identity; Coeff =  $.170^{**}$  for identity of origin) (the total effect model was significant,  $F = 42.14^{**}$ , with  $R^2 = .330$  and  $R = .575$ ).

Both identities had an effect on relational SOC (Coeff =  $.164^{**}$  for Italian identity; Coeff =  $.404^{**}$  for identity of origin); this means that the more migrants identify themselves with Italians, the higher the level of relational SOC, and the more they identify themselves with members of their original country, the higher the level of relational SOC. Instead, only Italian identity had an effect on territorial SOC (Coeff =  $.239^{**}$  for Italian Identity; Coeff =  $.063$  for Identity of Origin). Considering the mediation role of multiple SOC, territorial SOC was not a mediator in the relation between both identities and well-being (for Italian identity: Effect =  $-.018$ , CI:  $-.070 - .029$ ; for identity of origin: Effect =  $-.005$ , CI:  $-.030 - .006$ ). On the other hand, relational SOC was a mediator in the relation between both identities and well-being (for Italian

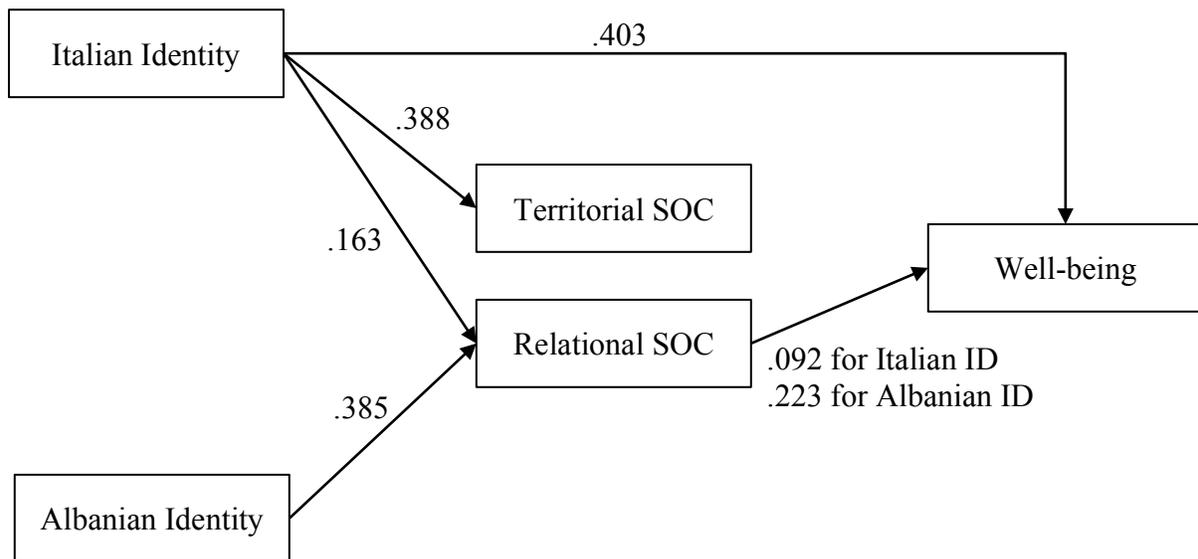
identity: Effect = .072; CI: .027 – .130; for identity of origin: Effect = .178; CI: .102 – .278). This mediation was a partial mediation because both identities had already an effect on well-being, so the effect of identities on well-being can be explained by their direct effects and the mediation of relational SOC.

Another important result was the remaining effect of identities on well-being when considering the mediation effect of relational SOC. In particular, Italian identity had an effect on well-being, which was not explained by its direct effect and the mediation effect of SOC; the effect can possibly be explained by other factors that influence this relation (Coeff = .313\*\*), while the effect of identity of origin was explained only by the direct effect and from the mediation of relational SOC (Coeff = -.03) (the total effect model was significant,  $F = 29.42^{**}$ , with  $R = .641$  and  $R^2 = .410$ ) (Figure 1).

*Hypothesis n.4: Among Albanians, Chinese and Moroccans there are differences in the relation between Multiple Identities, Multiple Sense of Community and Well-being. The research hypothesizes that the relation could change depending on the belonging group.*

### 5.3 Albanian, Moroccan and Chinese Models

In a second step, Albanians, Chinese and Moroccans models have been calculated separately using Macro Procedures to observe the characteristics of each ethnic group and to observe the hypothetical differences between them. Figure 2 shows the model for the Albanian group (only significant values are reported).



**Figure 2. Model of Interactions between Italian Identity, Identity of Origin and Well-being with the Mediation of Territorial and Relational SOC. Albanians**

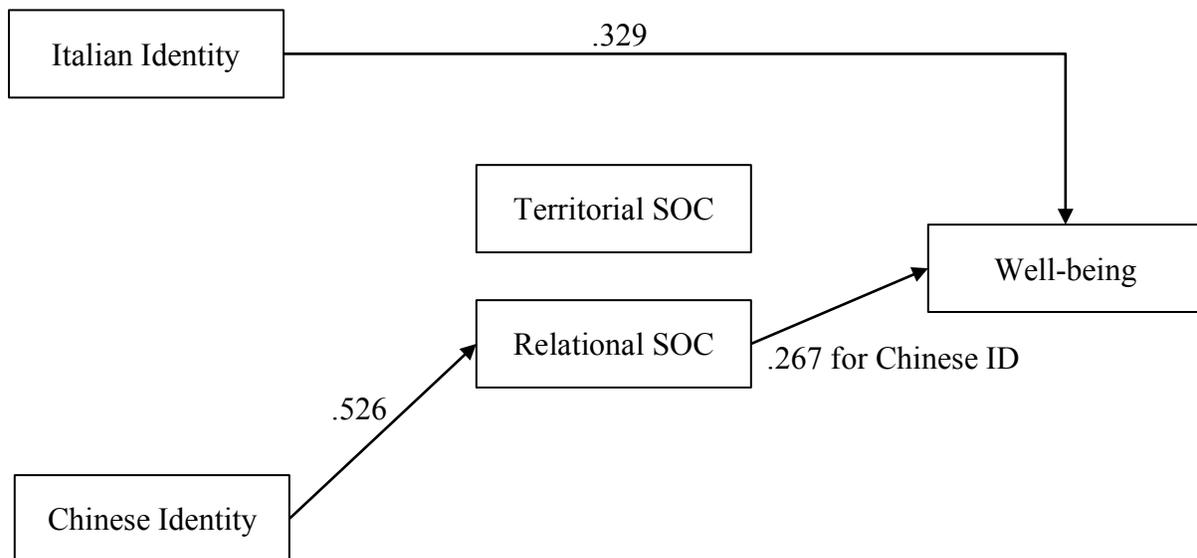
Data indicates that only Italian identity had an effect on well-being (Coeff = .403\*\*), while

Albanian identity did not (Coeff = .185). Thus, the more Albanians identified themselves as Italians, the higher the levels of well-being, while their identity as Albanians had no effects on well-being (the total model effect is significant,  $F = 16.37^{**}$ , with  $R = .604$  and  $R^2 = .365$ ).

Moreover, Italian identity had an effect on both territorial (Coeff = .388\*\*) and relational SOC (Coeff = .163\*); this means that the more Albanians identified themselves with Italians, the more they felt a strong sense of belonging to the Station Zone and, at the same time, a stronger sense of belonging to their relational community. On the other hand, Albanian identity has an effect on relational SOC (Coeff = .385\*\*), but not on territorial SOC coefficient (Coeff = .033). So the more Albanians felt a strong identity related to their origins, the more they felt they belong to their relational community, while this is not true for the sense of belonging to the Station Zone.

Considering the mediation effect of multiple SOC, territorial SOC was not a mediator between identities and well-being (Italian identity, Effect = -.063, CI: -.208 – .093; Albanian identity, Effect = -.005, CI: -.116 – .060). Instead, relational SOC was a mediator of this relation (Italian identity, Effect = .092, CI: .001 – .220; Albanian identity, Effect = .223, CI: .058 – .495). Another important result was the remaining effect of identities on well-being considering the mediation effect of relational SOC. Specifically, Italian identity had an effect on well-being, which is not explained by its direct effect and the mediation SOC, but by other factors that influence this relation (Coeff = .375\*\*). The Albanian identity's effect was explained only by the mediation of relational SOC (Coeff = -.032) (the total effect model was significant,  $F = 12.88^{**}$ , with  $R = .695$  and  $R^2 = .484$ ).

Figure 3 shows the model for the Chinese group (only significant values are reported).



**Figure 3. Model of Interactions between Italian Identity, Identity of Origin and Well-being with the Mediation of Territorial and Relational SOC. Chinese**

Data indicated that Italian identity had a direct effect on well-being (Coeff = .329\*) as does Chinese identity (Coeff = .251\*); thus, the more Chinese migrants identified themselves with

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Italians, the higher their level of well-being. At the same time, the more they identified themselves with Chinese people, the higher their well-being (the total effect model was significant  $F = 10.96^{**}$  with  $R = .548$  and  $R^2 = .301$ ).

Data also showed that neither identity had a significant effect on territorial SOC (Coeff = .103 for Italian identity; Coeff = .043 for Chinese Identity), while Chinese identity had a significant effect on relational SOC (Coeff = .526\*\*) (Italian Identity: Coeff = -.125). Thus, results could indicate that only Chinese identity has an influence on relational SOC (particularly the Chinese community): the more they identify themselves with Chinese people, the more they have a strong sense of belonging to their community.

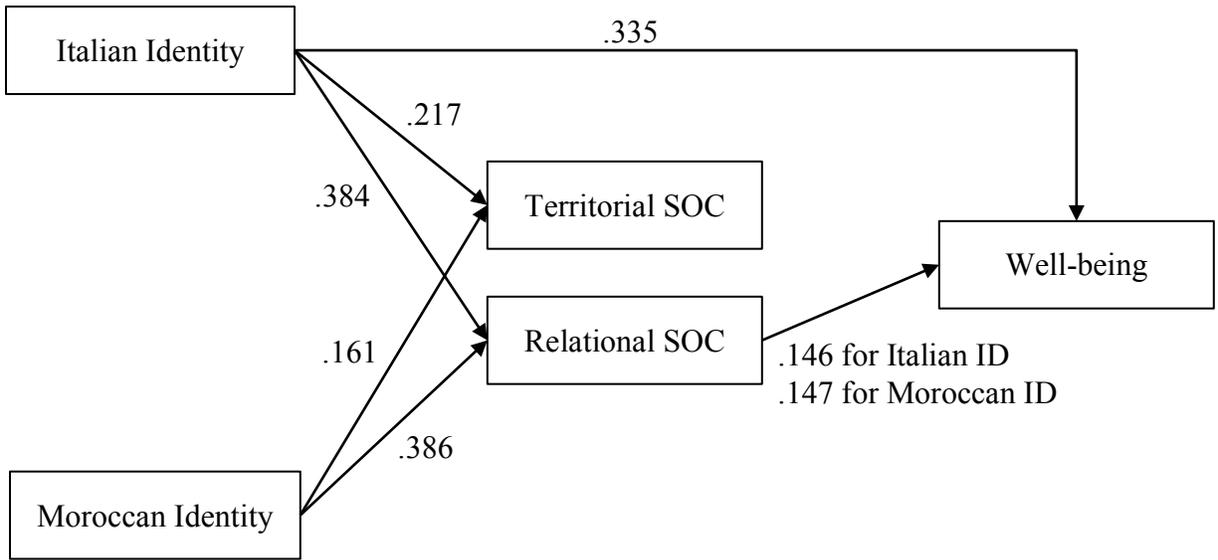
Considering the mediation effect of multiple SOC in the relation between identities and well-being, results demonstrated that territorial SOC was not a mediator of this relation for both identities (Italian identity, Effect = -.086, CI: -.373 – .013; Chinese identity, Effect = -.036, CI: -.147 – .014), while relational SOC was a mediator of the relation between Chinese identity and well-being (Effect = .267, CI: .115 – .490). Chinese migrants who identified themselves with Chinese people reported a stronger sense of belonging to their relational community, and this implies also higher levels of well-being. But this was a partial mediation, because there was the direct effect of Chinese identity on well-being, thus the mediation of relation SOC explained only a part of this effect. On the other hand, relational SOC was not a mediator of the relation between Italian identity and well-being (Effect = -.064, CI: -.175 – .020).

Another important result is the remaining effect of identities on well-being when considering the mediation effect of relational SOC. In particular, Italian identity had an effect on well-being, which was not explained by its direct effect and the mediation of SOC. Italian identity can possibly be explained by other factors that influence this relation (Coeff = .478\*\*), while the Chinese identity's effect was explained only by the direct effect and from the mediation of relational SOC (Coeff = .019) (the total effect model is significant  $F = 9.868^{**}$ , with  $R = .668$  and  $R^2 = .446$ ).

Finally, Figure 4 shows the model for the Moroccan group (only significant values are reported). Data indicate that Italian identity had an effect on well-being (Coeff = .335\*\*), while Moroccan identity did not (Coeff = .123) (the total effects model was significant,  $F = 6.63^{**}$  with  $R = .435$  and  $R^2 = .189$ ).

Moreover, both Italian and Moroccan identity had an effect on both territorial and relational SOC. Specifically, the more Moroccans identify themselves with Italians, the more they had high level of territorial SOC (Coeff = .217\*) and relational SOC coefficient (Coeff = .384\*\*). On the other hand, the more they identified themselves with Moroccans, the more they felt they belong to the Station Zone (Coeff = .161\*) and the more they felt they belong to the Moroccan community (Coeff = .386\*\*).

Only relational SOC was a mediator between identities and well-being (Moroccan identity: Effect = .147, CI: .014 – .340; Italian identity: Effect = .146, CI: .012 – .371), while territorial SOC did not (Italian identity, Effect = .024, CI: -.043 – .143; Moroccan identity, Effect = .018, CI: -.031 – .113). This means that Moroccans identifying themselves with Italians develop a higher sense of belonging to their relational community and the higher levels of well-being. At the same time their identity as Moroccans also develops a sense of belonging to their Moroccan community and this has positive outcome on their well-being.



**Figure 4. Model of Interactions between Italian Identity, Identity of Origin and Well-being with the Mediation of Territorial and Relational SOC. Moroccans**

Lastly, it seems that the direct effect of Italian identity on well-being and the mediation of Relational SOC were the only effect of identities on well-being (Italian Identity: Coeff = .165; Moroccan Identity: Coeff = -.041) (the total model effects was significant ( $F = 5.70^{**}$  with  $R = .541$  and  $R^2 = .293$ ) (Figure 4).

## 6. Discussion

Results indicated that immigrants developed multiple identities and Multiple Sense of Community during the immigration process. Indeed, immigrants maintained a strong alliance with their origins, and the conceptualisation of a new Italian identity was also detected. Moreover, immigrants indicated a strong sense of belonging to their community of origin (relational SOC), but concurrently these individuals developed a specific SOC in the receiving context (i.e., the Station Zone).

Binning et al. (2009) showed multiple identities had positive effects on well-being therefore detection of multiple identities for migrants in a new country or region and transference of the culture from the country of origin appeared fundamental to well-being. The role of MSOC in this relationship was interesting, particularly relational SOC. The sense of belonging to the relational community mediates the relationship between identity and well-being, with different roles depending on identity (Italian or Origin). Alternatively, territorial SOC exhibited no mediation effects on this relationship. Consequently, these results showed the importance of MSOC analysis due to the varied roles of SOC on well-being, particularly under social contexts characterised by cultural diversity.

More specifically, results confirmed hypothesis 1, as results showed a MSOC (Brody, 2009) among participants; Albanians, Chinese, and Moroccans reported territorial and relational

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SOC, where territorial SOC was referred to as a sense of belonging to the Station Zone (the receiving country) and relational SOC was primarily referred to as the community of origin (the home culture). However, the definition of relational community appeared to be implicitly explained between the culture from the country of origin and a semi-relational community connected by the receiving context and the home country.

Results supported hypothesis 2, as relational SOC exhibited higher values than territorial SOC. Multiple SOC analysis showed how participants perceived each community. Immigrants had low SOC levels relative to the Station Zone, which might indicate a type of protective factor (Brodsky, 2009) against cultural diversity in the community. Alternatively, data confirmed the ties and role of the country of origin. The fact that all ethnic groups provided the same responses indicated SOC was similar among different cultures/ethnic groups (i.e., immigrants' SOC did not differ following establishment within a community and was independent of ethnic group/culture).

Identities, particularly multiple identities exhibited a positive effect on immigrants' well-being. In addition, MSOC was a partial mediator of this relationship (i.e., between immigrants' identities and well-being). Consistent with former research, this study examined the role of SOC and identity and the interactions with identity and well-being (Hombros-Mendieta et al., 2013; Kenyon & Carter, 2010; Mannarini et al., 2012; McNamara et al., 2013; Pretty et al., 2012). However, new elements emerged from our study. Firstly, interconnections of each variable showed a more complex and complete portrayal of SOC; in fact, results revealed simultaneous multiple identities, MSOC and well-being. Second, a general model of interactions differentiated a "migrant" group, with the absence of ethnic differences. Later, a specific analysis of each migrant group was performed to better understand the role of culture and migration processes, which was compared to the general model. Results indicated identity and SOC were fundamental for participants' well-being. Identity influences well-being directly or through mediation of SOC, but deconstructing each dimension indicated a more complex model of interactions. It is important to emphasize that strong positive ethnic identities have a positive effect on well-being (Binning, Unzueta, Huo & Molina, 2009; Shih & Sanchez, 2009). Therefore, as the literature has suggested, multiple identity increases well-being as migrants identify with cultures from their country of origin and receiving community and find both cultures protective factors. The role of both cultures was important for immigrants' quality of life. The role of cultural origins on immigrants' well-being has been well established, however the role of culture embedded in the host country emerged from our study.

Hayes and Scharkow (2013) assessed the contribution of mediation to MSOC and our results revealed important findings. First, SOC served as a partial mediator between Multiple Identities and well-being, as Identities also have a direct effect on well-being. Second, the function of mediation depends on the specific community; in particular, the sense of belonging to the receiving context, the Station Zone, had no effects as a mediator, while the home country was a strong mediator, which increased participant well-being. We found it interesting that Relational SOC mediated the relationships between Italian identity and well-being and identity of origin and well-being. These results indicated the community of origin exhibited an important positive effect on well-being, but its function in mediation had different meanings.

Hypothesis 4 supported a mediation model with ethnic differences among Albanians, Moroccans, and Chinese. Results indicated differences among the three groups evaluated in the study, however only relational SOC exhibited a mediation role, confirming the importance of the home country in migrants' well-being. However, for Albanians and Moroccans, relational SOC

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mediated Italian and identity of origin, while for Chinese Relational SOC only mediated Chinese identity as country of origin. Yet, the receiving context showed no connection among Chinese migrants. In summary, the role of relational SOC differed between Albanians and Moroccans compared with Chinese. In the first two groups, the sense of belonging to the country of origin was a complete mediator between identity of origin and well-being (emphasizing its central role for well-being), while the Chinese relational SOC was a partial mediator (as seen in the general model).

Based on these results, the function of SOC opened new analytical perspectives. First, results confirmed the application of SOC to well-being, consistent with former research and supported by our hypotheses. Second, MSOC revealed that different SOC exhibited different roles on well-being. Territorial SOC showed the absence of effects on well-being (refuting our hypotheses) among the three ethnic groups examined, while relational SOC was fundamental to well-being, consistent with the literature (Brotsky, 2009; Fisher & Sonn, 1999; Sonn, 2002). This result might be integral to address social interventions in the Station Zone, that is to ascertain how and where relational SOC can be the focus. Relational SOC can also represent point of departure for future research in the role of territorial SOC.

Based on our results to date, we reached an important juncture regarding the future of the participants' well-being and a subsequent question. Do we develop social interventions specific to the Station Zone if the territorial SOC exhibited no obvious effects on participants' well-being? Our study emphasized the role of the community/country of origin (rather than the receiving community) and relational SOC as a possible reference point for future interventions. In fact, an integral new research factor is the role of relational SOC. A sense of belonging to the community/country of origin and maintaining its culture was a mediator between multiple identities and well-being. This relationship means multiple identities and well-being assumed different roles as it was linked with the complex structure of migrants' identities. Also, cultural and social differences were important. For Albanians and Moroccans, relational SOC exhibited not only an important role for well-being, via reinforcement of ties with the migrants' origins (as literature suggested), but relational SOC was also fundamental as it represented a bridge between the home culture and the receiving context. This result suggested relational SOC served to maintain ties with Albanian and Moroccan origins, but concurrently included immigrants of different ethnicities in the receiving context based on the role of relational SOC in bridging the country of origin and the receiving community. Consequently, important interventions can be addressed regarding social inclusion and quality of life. The focus should be on aspects of relational SOC (as associations, informal groups), which represents a bridge between both cultures (home and receiving culture), while interventions at the local community level, as a physical space must be re-evaluated. However, results indicated relational SOC does not serve the same role for Chinese, with only a mediation effect for Chinese identity. Thus, if Relational SOC for Albanians and Moroccans showed a fundamental function to maintain a relationship with their origins and create a connection with the receiving context, for Chinese it represented potential social exclusion, as it improved well-being in relationship to their ethnic community, but without a bridge to the receiving community.

The objective of interventions should be to promote and improve a sense of belonging to these relational communities as a connection between the country of origin and the receiving country (as mentioned above). Furthermore, membership in the receiving community (territorial SOC) exhibited no mediation effects on well-being, therefore future interventions must consider the absence of territorial SOC when developing projects to improve social inclusion and social

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cohesion in the territory. Results indicated relational SOC should have more emphasis than territorial SOC in future analyses. Different multiple SOC roles among ethnic groups indicated the need for different actions. Finally, we observed how the SOC concept continued to be an important analytical element in community psychology.

From a methodological point of view, the primary weakness in this study was likely derived from the restricted sample groups living under the same general conditions. Indeed, the literature emphasized our prevailing case-study design limited the possibility of generalization, and more importantly, it was challenging to test whether participant responses were contextually determined. The scales constituting the questionnaire revealed a limitation in the use of the relational SOC scale, that is, the Italian questionnaire lacked proper validation among our specific target population.

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