

## HOUSING, LIVING CONDITIONS, AND SETTLEMENT PATTERNS OF SELECTED COMMUNITIES OF FOREIGN ORIGIN IN NAPLES. INSIGHTS FROM A MICRO-MACRO APPROACH

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**Abstract.** We aim to update the knowledge framework on the different settlement geographies and on the housing and living conditions of selected foreign communities living in Naples, the capital of Campania region. To this aim we propose a micro-macro approach that combines micro data, coming from the SCIC (*Sistema cittadino per l'integrazione di comunità*) sample survey carried out in Naples in 2022 on adult immigrants belonging to selected communities of foreign origin according to their country of citizenship at birth (Sri Lanka, Ukraine, Pakistan and Bangladesh, Nigeria and Senegal), and macro data, coming from the permanent census of 2021. In a general framework with significant heterogeneity, results highlight that settlement patterns are generally linked to housing and living conditions with few exceptions. The Pakistanis and the Bangladeshis are more concentrated and segregated in historical centre and have worst housing and living conditions in terms of crowding and availability of accommodation, but not in terms of accommodation's irregularity. Conversely, the Ukrainians have a widespread settlement model with the highest frequency of house for rent without a regular contract, but also the lowest crowding index.

### 1. Introduction

The foreign presence over the past decades in Naples, the capital city of the Campania region with the highest percentage of foreign residents in Southern Italy, is articulated in terms of origins, demographic and social characteristics, migratory projects, employment, and living arrangement (Buonomo *et al.*, 2025; Strozza and Gabrielli, 2018). Ties within foreign communities, perhaps more than others, are those aspects that influence pathways to inclusion, use of services and opportunities in the destination context, because they are the main channel of communication and access to information. These aspects together with the opportunities provided by the destination context play an important role in determining the housing, living conditions and settlement patterns of immigrants. Campania is among the Italian regions with the highest housing hardship, with a predominance of private property, a narrow and undynamic rental market, and limited available public housing.

Naples is characterized by a high level of intra-urban heterogeneity. The presence of immigrants not only reflects this diversity but also contributes to it by introducing new cultural and social dynamics. (Mazza *et al.*, 2018; Benassi *et al.*, 2020; Benassi and De Falco, 2025). In urban contexts, the most culturally and socio-economically

vulnerable populations -such as immigrants- can fuel processes that are often linked to those of residential segregation, such as extreme poverty and social marginality according to a self-propulsive spiral defined as the vicious circle of segregation (Tammaru *et al.*, 2021). Thus, housing and settlement strategies mark a decisive moment in the process of building the migrant's social identity within the destination context. Scholars' debate concerns residential segregation and housing poverty, the possibility of satisfying basic needs through dignified housing solutions, the role of migrants in destination context and in the labour market, and the structural limits of housing at local scale. Previous analysis on housing and living conditions and settlement patterns have shown how they are the result of different household and individual characteristics, migratory strategies, and integration processes (Dadusc *et al.*, 2021).

Deepening the empirical evidence recently observed from Buonomo *et al.* (2025), we aim to update the knowledge framework on the different residential geographies and on the housing and living conditions of the main communities of foreign origin living in Naples. Two research questions move our analyses: RQ1 - *Do selected communities of foreign origin have different housing, living conditions and settlement patterns in Naples?* RQ2 - *Are there specific settlement intra urban areas associated with specific housing and living conditions?*

This contribution proposes an original micro-macro approach (using both individual and aggregate data) in studying the relationship between space and place with reference to the municipality of Naples and for selected communities of foreign origin. It combines micro data, coming from the SCIC (*Sistema cittadino per l'integrazione di comunità*) sample survey carried out in Naples in 2022 on adult immigrants belonging to selected foreign communities according to their citizenship at birth (Sri Lanka, Ukraine, Pakistan and Bangladesh, Nigeria and Senegal), and macro data, coming from the permanent census of 2021.

Based on the 2021 Census data, § 2 will provide a summary overview of the settlement patterns of selected foreign communities residing in the municipality of Naples and on their level of residential segregation. The § 3 will describe the survey data used and the multivariate analyses to define the territorial clusters of settlement of foreigners in Naples, according to certain characteristics, and to analyse the association of settlement patterns with housing and living conditions. The § 4 will provide an overview of the settlement patterns, living and housing conditions, such as home ownership title, the actual availability of housing, and the housing crowding level. In addition, the existing association of housing and living conditions with settlement patterns will be assessed, considering individual, family, and migration characteristics. Some concluding remarks will be reported in §5.

## 2. The settlement patterns of selected communities of foreign origin residing in Naples

By using census data of 2021 at sub municipality level (i.e. census tracts and districts or ‘quartieri’<sup>1</sup>), this section briefly describes the settlement patterns of the major foreign-origin communities in Naples. Here we focus on six target communities, namely: Sri Lankan, Ukrainian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Nigerian and Senegalese. In Figure 1, we report the published results of Buonomo *et al.*, (2025) concerning Dissimilarity index (D), Delta index (DEL), and Location quotient (LQ) of these communities by district of residence in Naples<sup>2</sup>.

The highest levels of Dissimilarity index (D), compared to the Italians, are those recorded by Senegalese, Pakistani and Bangladeshi (values above 0.7). Moreover, these three foreign-origin communities also record high levels of Delta index (DEL=0.79). Looking at the Location quotient (LQ) map we can see that the settlement pattern of such foreign-origin communities is polarized in the historic center (LQ >2), and there are many districts where such communities are mostly absent. The Ukrainians show the opposite with low dissimilarity (D=0.23) and low level of concentration (DEL=0.40). The widespread settlement pattern of Ukrainians is tested by the numerous districts in which there is high or low over-representation of this community (LQ). The Sri Lankans, who take intermediate values in the global indices (D and DEL), are over-represented (LQ) in a specific and spatially contiguous area that extends from the historical center to the western coastline districts. A similar settlement pattern is shown among the Nigerians who take intermediate values in the global indices (D and DEL), but with an over-representation (LQ) in nine Eastern districts, some of which are shared with the Senegalese, the other African community here observed.

In the cited publication, Buonomo *et al.* (2025) grouped the 30 Neapolitan districts into five units (or clusters), by using factor analysis and cluster analysis<sup>3</sup>. In

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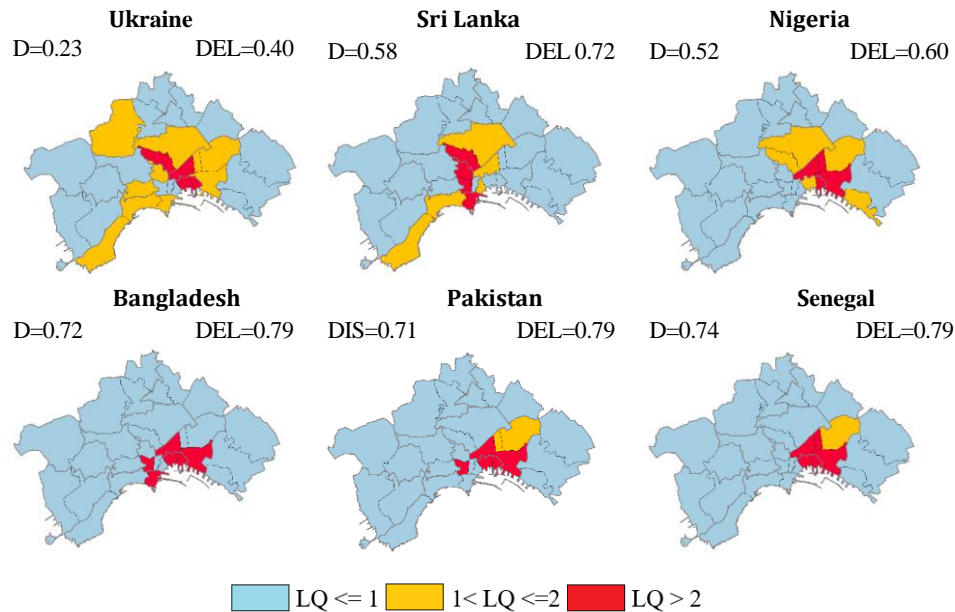
<sup>1</sup> The 30 districts (or ‘quartieri’) are not proper administrative units of the municipality of Naples, yet these sub-municipalities represent, to a certain extent, the social history of the municipality and they contribute differently to its economic and social dynamics. Moreover, they guarantee a balanced distribution in terms of resident population.

<sup>2</sup> Dissimilarity (Duncan and Duncan, 1955) and Delta (Hoover, 1941) indexes range from 0 to 1 and refer to evenness and concentration dimension of residential segregation (Massey and Denton, 1988). D is the closer to 1 the greater the dissimilarity (i.e., lack of similarity) between the spatial distribution of one group relative to the other. DEL is the closer to 1 the smaller the physical space occupied by the population in question and therefore the greater the level of areal concentration. Location quotient (LQ) range from 0 to  $\infty$  (Isard, 1960). LQ is greater than 1 the more the (minority) group in question is, in a given territorial unit, over-represented compared to the Italian residents in relation to the same share calculated for the entire context considered (in our case the entire municipality of Naples). Conversely there is under-representation in those territorial units where LQ is less than 1.

<sup>3</sup> Buonomo *et al.* (2025) considered 17 elementary indicators related to the characteristics of foreign residents for the 30 Neapolitan districts, namely: incidence of foreigners among residents, sex and age structure of

this publication, the progressive numbering of the intra urban clusters is ordered from the center towards the outskirts of the city (Figure 2).

**Figure 1** – Dissimilarity index (*D*), Delta index (*DEL*), and Location quotient (*LQ*) of selected communities of foreign origin by district of residence in Naples.

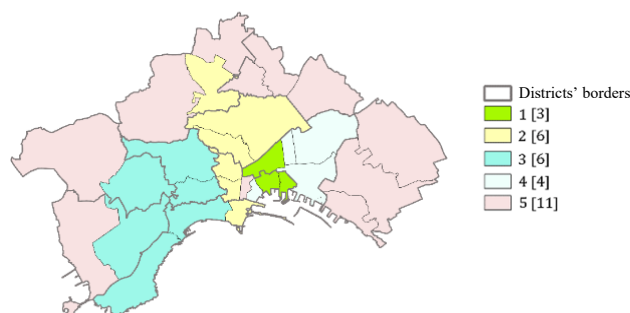


Source: Census data 2021. Buonomo et al., 2025.

The first cluster (called “historical center”) covers three districts in the historical center: San Lorenzo, Mercato, and Pendino. It is characterized by the high incidence of the foreigners with numerous Asian citizens, with a male predominance especially at ages 30-54 years and with high employment rate among men. The second cluster (called “central area”) consists of six contiguous districts from historical center almost to suburbs: San Ferdinando, Montecalvario, Avvocata, Stella, San Carlo all’ Arena, and Piscinola. It is characterized by a strong homogeneity by foreign origin with the predominance of the Sri Lankans, with a significant presence of young adults and with average rates of female employment.

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foreigners, incidence of EU foreigners on total foreign residents, incidence of the six numerically largest foreign communities on total foreign residents, employment rate by gender. By using principal component factor analysis, the authors identified four synthetic factors in linear combination of the 17 elementary indicators observed. After, hierarchical cluster analysis identified five clusters and the relative descriptions, considering the identified four factors. For further details on used methods see Buonomo et al. (2025).

**Figure 2** – Intra urban clusters of residence of foreigners.

Source: Census data 2021. Buonomo et al., 2025.

The third cluster (called “wealth area”) consists of six districts, among which two are coastal, forming a compact area immediately on the west side of the central area: Vomero, Arenella, Chiaia, Posillipo, Fuorigrotta, and Soccavo. It is characterized by a high feminization of the foreign presence and the importance of the older component. The Ukrainians numerically represent the first of foreign origin (a quarter of the area's foreign population). The fourth cluster (titled “industrial and commercial area”) consists of four districts in the east side of historical center: Vicaria, Poggioreale, Zona Industriale, and Porto. It is characterized by high female employment rate, a predominance of the Chinese, a strong family presence and a young age structure. The fifth cluster (called “suburban area”) brings together eleven districts: San Giovanni a Teduccio, Barra, Ponticelli, San Pietro a Patierno, Secondigliano, Miano, Scampia, Chiaiano, Pianura, Bagnoli and San Giuseppe. It is characterized by extreme heterogeneity in the foreign presence with low employment rates.

### 3. Sample data and micro-macro methods

The sample survey on “Settlement patterns and integration levels of immigrant citizens in the municipality of Naples” was conducted in early 2022, as part of the SCIC project, by the Dedalus Cooperative, in collaboration with the Department of Political Sciences of the University of Naples Federico II.

By using center sampling techniques (Baio et al., 2011), it involved 600 adult foreign citizens at birth (or individuals of foreign origin), regardless of their residence condition, legal status, or naturalization. 150 Sri Lankans and 150 Ukrainians interviewed represent the first and second largest foreign-origin communities in the municipality, respectively. Two adding groups were also considered: the Nigerians and the Senegalese (sub-Saharan Africa); the Pakistani and the Bangladeshi (Indian subcontinent). An additional 150 interviews were conducted for each group, equally divided between the two nationalities constituting the aggregate. This sample

aggregation strategy suffers the limitation of putting together communities who present elements of heterogeneity among themselves.

The data collected were weighted<sup>4</sup> to make the four groups of observed communities representative in the municipality, equal to 55% of the total foreigners (Buonomo *et al.*, 2025). The survey collected 72 questions, mostly closed or semi-closed, with batteries of items on a Likert scale, to update the existing knowledge on housing and living conditions, settlement strategies, levels of integration achieved, delving into specific topics such as: migration background, labor market, family characteristics, opinions and sense of belonging. The data are cross-sectional and do not allow for longitudinal or panel data analysis. Three aspects of housing and living conditions are considered in the analysis: home ownership title (property house, rented house with regular or irregular contract, living in the workplace, other types of living), actual availability of housing (total or partial), and housing crowding level. Partial availability is defined as when not all the rooms in the house are available to the interviewee and his family. The crowding index is computed as the ratio of the number of inhabitants to the number of available rooms (Avramov, 2005).

After a description of these three housing and living characteristics among the observed communities of foreign origin, two logistic regression models and one linear regression model were estimated. The dependent variables considered are negatively oriented: irregular housing (1 housing without a regular contract and 0 property or rental house with a regular contract), partial availability of housing (1 partial availability and 0 total availability), and crowding index (continuous variable).

Multivariate analysis aim, on the one hand, to observe the significant differences that exist in housing and living conditions among communities of foreign origin and, on the other hand in a completely original way, the association of these housing and living conditions to the five intra urban clusters of Neapolitan districts, described in section 2, and to social and cultural integration, net of some control variables concerning the socio-demographic, occupational, migration, and family characteristics.

Following the ISMU Foundation methods (Blangiardo and Mirabelli, 2018), integration is here considered a multidimensional process. The cultural integration index considers 10 elementary variables and covers the practices, perceptions and mutual relationships of foreigners and of the receiving society. The social integration index considers 14 elementary variables and covers lifestyles, associationism, friendships, attitudes and opinions about gender roles and children. The elementary variables were assigned normalized values in a range between -1 and 1 (where 0 expresses an average situation). The modalities of the individual variables were ordered from low levels to increasingly higher levels of integration and the

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<sup>4</sup> The weighting system used guarantees the representativeness of the interviews within the individual groups and gives value to the overall data (without distinction by group), ensuring that they correspond to the reality constituted by the four groups as a whole.

individual scores relating to the individual variables were obtained by assigning to the different modalities a score equal to the difference between the relative frequency of the previous modalities (lower level of integration) and that of the subsequent modalities (higher level of integration). The average of the scores for the set of variables relating to each dimension of integration allowed us to obtain the values of cultural and social integration respectively for each interviewee. Further computational information on integration indexes is available in Buonomo *et al.* (2025). Other control variables are included in the multivariate analysis to edge against compositional effects and concern gender (men, women), age groups (less than 35 years, 35-44 years, 45 years and more), educational level (lower secondary or less, upper secondary, tertiary), legal status (lived irregular position during the stay - yes, no), years since migration (discrete variable), household (alone, couple with/without children, not-cohabiting couple, other), and occupational status (employed with or without a regular contract, unemployed).

#### 4. Results

Looking at the distribution of each community of foreign origin by settlement clusters (Table 1) and according to Buonomo *et al.* (2025), the Sri Lankans show a high concentration in the central area (81.5%) and in the historical center (11.1%). The Ukrainians present the most widespread settlement pattern with the highest percentage in the wealth area (30.6%). The strong Asian connotation of foreign presence in the historical center sees particularly high percentages of the Pakistani and the Bangladeshi (92.7%), confirming their totally polarized settlement pattern in this cluster. The Nigerians and the Senegalese mostly settle in the historical center (91.7%), but, according to Buonomo *et al.* (2025), this is mostly do because of the Senegalese. All the observed communities of foreign origin, which do not include, for example, the Chinese, the Moroccans or the Romanians, would be located with lower percentages in the suburban area and in the industrial and commercial area.

According to home ownership title (Table 1), almost three-quarters of the considered foreigners are in property or rented house with regular contract (73.5%). In addition, 78.0 percent have total housing availability.

According to what has already been more extensively highlighted in Buonomo *et al.* (2025) and briefly here reported, there are, however, substantial differences in the four foreign-origin groups.

The 87.4 percent of the Sri Lankans live in property house (3.2%) or rented under contract (84.2%), with a rather small share of housing situations characterized by instability and irregularity.

The Ukrainians have a very heterogeneous distribution: the highest percentage of homeowners (9.4%), of those in rented house with an irregular contract (30.7%), or of

those living in the workplace (15.6%); rather small percentage, compared to the other communities, of those in rented house with regular contract (43.6%). The 86.9 percent of the Pakistani and the Bangladeshi live in rented houses, of which a significant proportion live without a regular contract (20.9%). The percentage of those living in other accommodation is significant (9.8%), while only 1.0% live in property houses, and only 2.3% live in the workplace. In addition, more than a third have partial availability of housing (36.6%). Similarly, the Nigerians and the Senegalese mostly live in rented houses (89.1%) but with the second smallest percentage, compared to the other communities, of those who do not have a regular contract (16.7%). Also significant among them is the percentage of those living in other accommodation (7.7%). The sub-Saharan community has the highest percentage of those with total availability of housing (91.3%), while Pakistanis and Bangladeshis have the highest percentage of cases where the housing they live in is only partially at their disposal.

**Table 1** – *Settlement clusters, and housing and living conditions by communities of foreign origin. Naples. Column percentages.*

Settlement clusters and housing/living conditions	Sri Lanka	Ukraine	Pakistan and Bangladesh	Nigeria and Senegal	Total
<i>Clusters of settlement</i>					
Historical center	11.1	26.8	92.7	91.7	36.3
Central area	81.5	22.8	1.7	3.9	45.4
Wealth area	2.0	30.6	0.0	0.0	9.1
Industrial/commercial area	0.0	7.6	3.1	3.9	2.9
Suburban area	5.4	12.2	2.5	0.5	6.3
<i>Home ownership title</i>					
Property house	3.2	9.4	1.0	3.2	4.4
Rented house with regular contract	84.2	43.6	66.0	72.4	69.1
Rented house with irregular contract	7.3	30.7	20.9	16.7	16.8
Living in the workplace	4.5	15.6	2.3	0.0	6.6
Other types of living	0.9	0.8	9.8	7.7	3.1
<i>Actual availability of housing</i>					
Total	83.5	72.7	63.4	91.3	78.0
Partial	16.5	27.3	36.6	8.7	22.0
<i>Total</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>

Source: SCIC data 2022. Buonomo et al., 2025.

Table 2 shows an average number of 2.3 rooms in the accommodation; it reduces to 2 rooms if only available rooms are considered. The average crowding index is 1.7 people per room. The Pakistani and the Bangladeshi have on average the lowest number of available rooms (1.6 rooms) and the highest crowding index (2.4 people per room). On the opposite, the Nigerians and the Senegalese have on average the highest number of available rooms (2.1 rooms) and the lowest crowding index (1.5 people per room).



**Table 2** – Average number of total rooms and of available rooms in the accommodation and crowding index by communities of foreign origin. Naples. Average number (standard deviation).

Communities of foreign origin	Average number of total rooms	Average number of available rooms	Crowding index
Sri Lanka	2.3 (0.9)	2.1 (0.9)	1.7 (1.0)
Ukraine	2.6 (0.8)	2.0 (0.9)	1.5 (0.8)
Pakistan and Bangladesh	2.1 (0.7)	1.6 (0.6)	2.4 (1.9)
Nigeria and Senegal	2.2 (1.0)	2.1 (0.9)	1.5 (0.8)
Total	2.3 (0.9)	2.0 (0.9)	1.7 (1.2)

Source: SCIC data 2022. Buonomo et al., 2025.

**Table 3** – Selected determinants of housing contractual irregularity, partial availability of accommodation, and crowding index of housing. Naples. Logistic and linear models. Coefficients and p-values.

Determinants	Irregular <sup>(a)</sup> (ref.: regular) -logistic-		Partial <sup>(b)</sup> (ref.: total) -logistic-		Crowding index -linear-	
	coeff	p.value	coeff	p.value	coeff	p.value
<i>Communities of foreign origin: ref. Pakistan and Bangladesh</i>						
Sri Lanka	-0.309		-0.590		-0.704	***
Ukraine	1.683	***	-1.194	**	-1.299	***
Nigeria and Senegal	-0.450		-1.929	***	-1.128	***
<i>Settlement cluster: ref. Historical center</i>						
Central area	-0.688	*	-0.187		-0.249	*
Wealth area	-0.141		0.864	*	-0.002	
Industrial/commercial area	0.787		0.960	*	0.220	
Suburban area	-2.184	***	-0.932		-0.455	**
Cultural integration (continue)	-1.192	**	-1.390	***	-0.105	
Social integration (continue)	-0.184		-1.136	**	-1.223	***
Costant	-0.371	***	-1.125	***	2.392	***
(Pseudo) R <sup>2</sup>	0.272		0.219		0.198	

Notes: (a) home ownership title is irregular in case of rented house with irregular contract, living in the workplace; (b) availability of accommodation is partial if not all the rooms in the house are available to the interviewee and his family; \*p-value<0.1, \*\* p-value<0.05, \*\*\* p-value<0.01.

Control variables: gender, age groups, educational level, legal status, years since migration, household, and occupational status.

Source: our elaboration on SCIC data 2022.

As far as the regression models, only the coefficients (and p-values) of the three target aspects are shown in Table 3 for space reasons (communities of foreign origin, settlement clusters, cultural and social integration).

The Pakistani and the Bangladeshi (the referent community) more often than the others have low housing independence and higher crowding level, the Ukrainians have

the highest coefficient concerning housing contractual irregularity (1.683), but also the lowest coefficient of crowding level (-1.299).

According to the descriptive in Table 1, the Nigerians and the Senegalese show the lowest coefficient of partial housing availability (-1.929). Interestingly, the Sri Lankans, who had shown better housing conditions in the descriptive analyses especially in comparison with the referent community (the Pakistani and the Bangladeshi), assume a statistically significant value only in the case of the crowding index (-0.704) once the control variables (among which years since migration) are considered. Moving on the macro areas of settlement, the referent category (historical center) and industrial and commercial area have the highest coefficients concerning housing contractual irregularity, while suburban areas show the opposite (-2.184).

Partial availability of accommodation is observed, probably for different reasons, mostly in industrial and commercial area (0.960) and in wealth area (0.864). While the crowding index assumes the lowest coefficients in suburban area (-0.455). Not surprisingly, increasing cultural and social integration are negatively associated with unfavorable living and housing conditions. However, this is not statistically significant for social integration in the case of contractual irregularity, and for cultural integration in the case of crowding index.

## 5. Conclusion

The analyses described housing and living conditions and settlement patterns of foreigners in the municipality of Naples to delineate areas of hardship. The main results allowed us to answer the research questions posed at the beginning of the paper and recalled below. RQ1: *Do selected communities of foreign origin have different housing and living conditions and settlement patterns in Naples?* Yes, we observed a heterogeneity among the four groups of observed communities. Cultural and social integrations positively affect housing and living conditions. The micro-macro approach, based on survey and census data, show that the Pakistani and the Bangladeshi are concentrated in historical center (San Lorenzo, Mercato and Pendino) which is densely populated, and foreigners are just under 20% of residents. Considering only three specific aspects, they assume the worst housing and living conditions as well, among the considered foreign-origin communities, mostly in terms of crowding and availability of accommodation. This is undoubtedly the most difficult situation. A similar settlement path is observed among the Nigerians and the Senegalese who mostly settled in the historical center but have good housing and living conditions in terms of crowding and availability of accommodation. Conversely, the widespread presence in Naples of the Ukrainians can be linked to employment and residential opportunities. This settlement pattern is associated on average to the largest percentage of people with property house as well as with housing contractual irregularity, testifying to how living arrangement is a process that takes place over time

through non-linear and highly articulated paths capable of significantly affecting the social vulnerability of immigrants throughout the migration project. Different is the case of the Sri Lankans, who have on average the longest history of inclusion with a rather structured presence predominantly family-based (Guadagno, 2022), with a peculiar settlement pattern located in specific districts of the center (in particular Avvocata and Stella) with good housing conditions, at least in terms of housing contractual regularity and availability. *RQ2: Are there specific settlement intra urban areas associated with specific housing and living conditions?* With few exceptions, the worst housing and living conditions are observed in historical center and industrial area, mostly in terms of crowding and housing contractual irregularity. Conversely, central and suburban areas have the best housing and living conditions. These results align with and further enrich those of previous studies on similar issues conducted in other Italian metropolitan municipalities (Benassi *et al.*, 2022; Rimoldi *et al.*, 2024). Future analysis might consider other living and housing aspects, other foreign-origin communities in the same municipality or might compare settlement patterns of the same communities in different municipalities.

### Acknowledgements

This research was co-funded by European Union - Next Generation EU - component M4C2, in the context of PRIN 2022-PNRR "Foreign population and territory: integration processes, demographic imbalances, challenges and opportunities for the social and economic sustainability of the different local contexts (For.Pop.Ter.)" [P2022WNLM7] and PRIN 2022 "The Children of Immigrants Have Grown Up. The transition to adulthood for youth with a migratory background", research unit of the University of Naples Federico II [P2022PFL7ZB; CUP: E53D23010370006]

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