

# HOMING: THE HOME-MIGRATION NEXUS

HOME AS A WINDOW ON MIGRANT BELONGING, INTEGRATION AND CIRCULATION



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## Living with the fear of dying without seeing one's family again: Exploring the Ageing-Migration-Home Nexus

Luis Eduardo Pérez Murcia  
Post Doc Researcher  
HOMInG, University of Trento  
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# Research design

## Overarching research question:

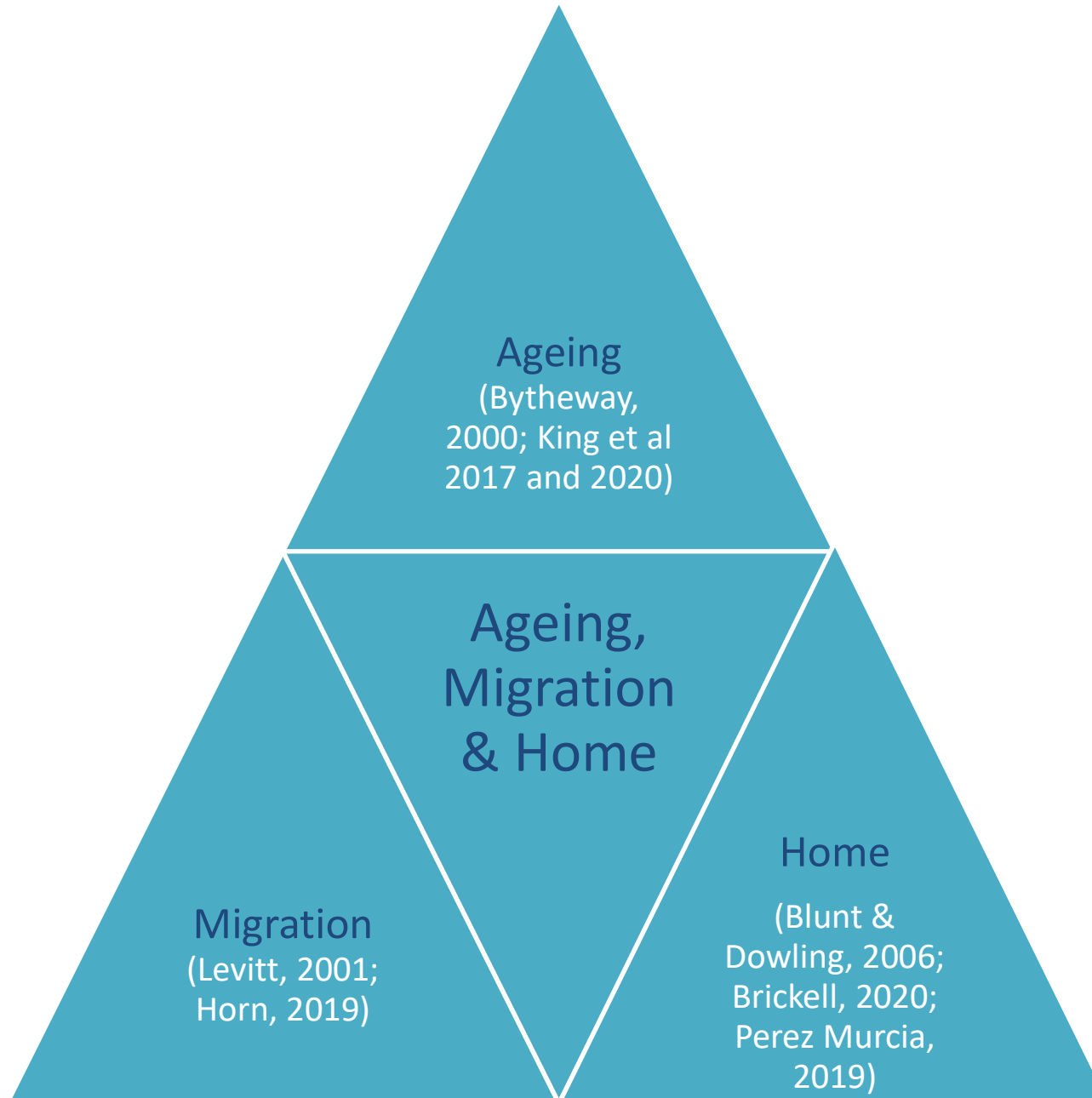
How do **death and funerals** shape experiences and attitudes towards **home** amongst **people ageing within transnational families**?

## Two interrelated questions:

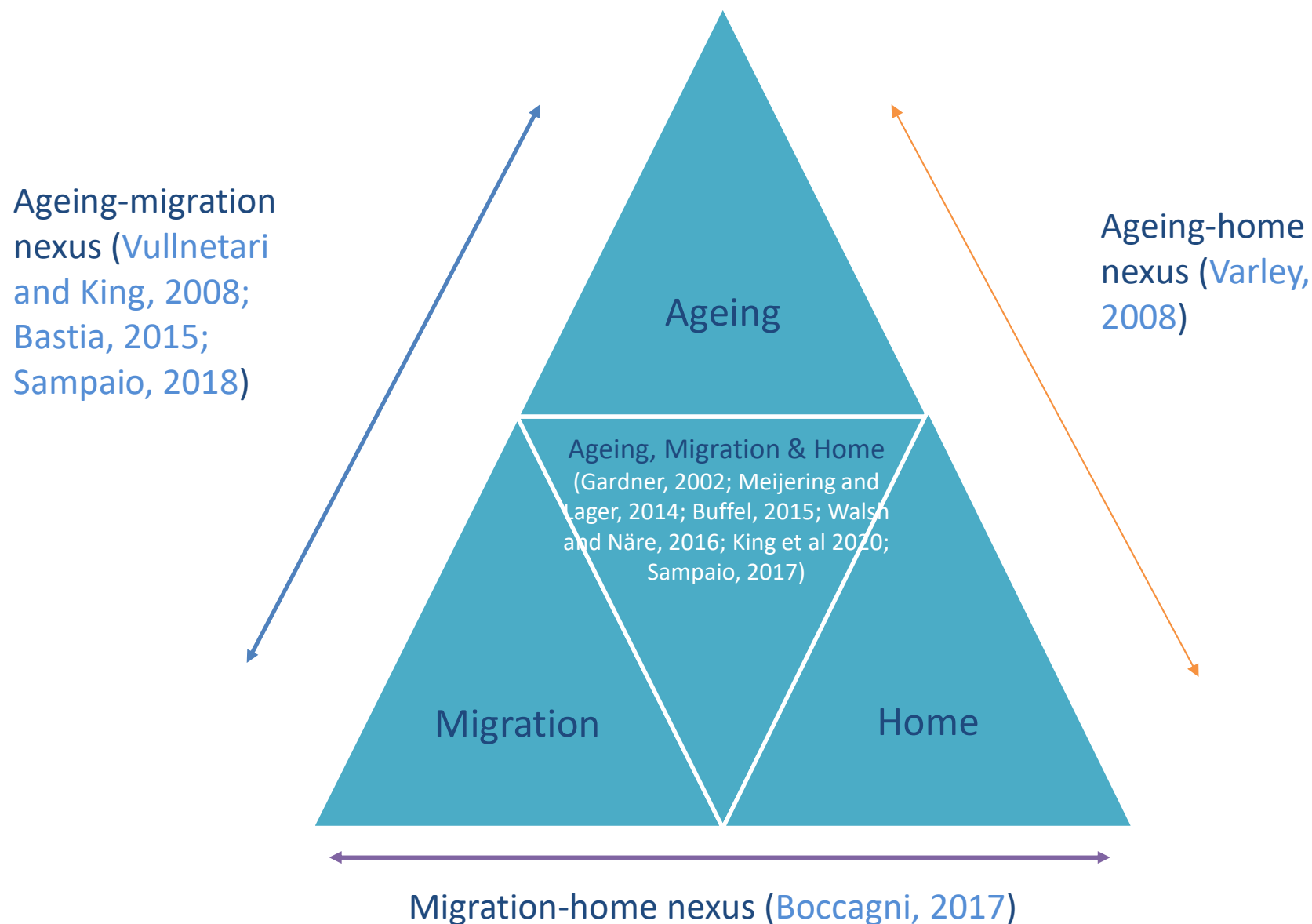
How do **people ageing in migrants' countries of origin** experience **home** when they **fear dying** without meeting their families living abroad again?

How do **migrants experience home** after leaving significant others 'behind' and when not being able to attend their funerals?

# Conceptual framework



# Where is death and funerals in the discussion about ageing, migration & home?



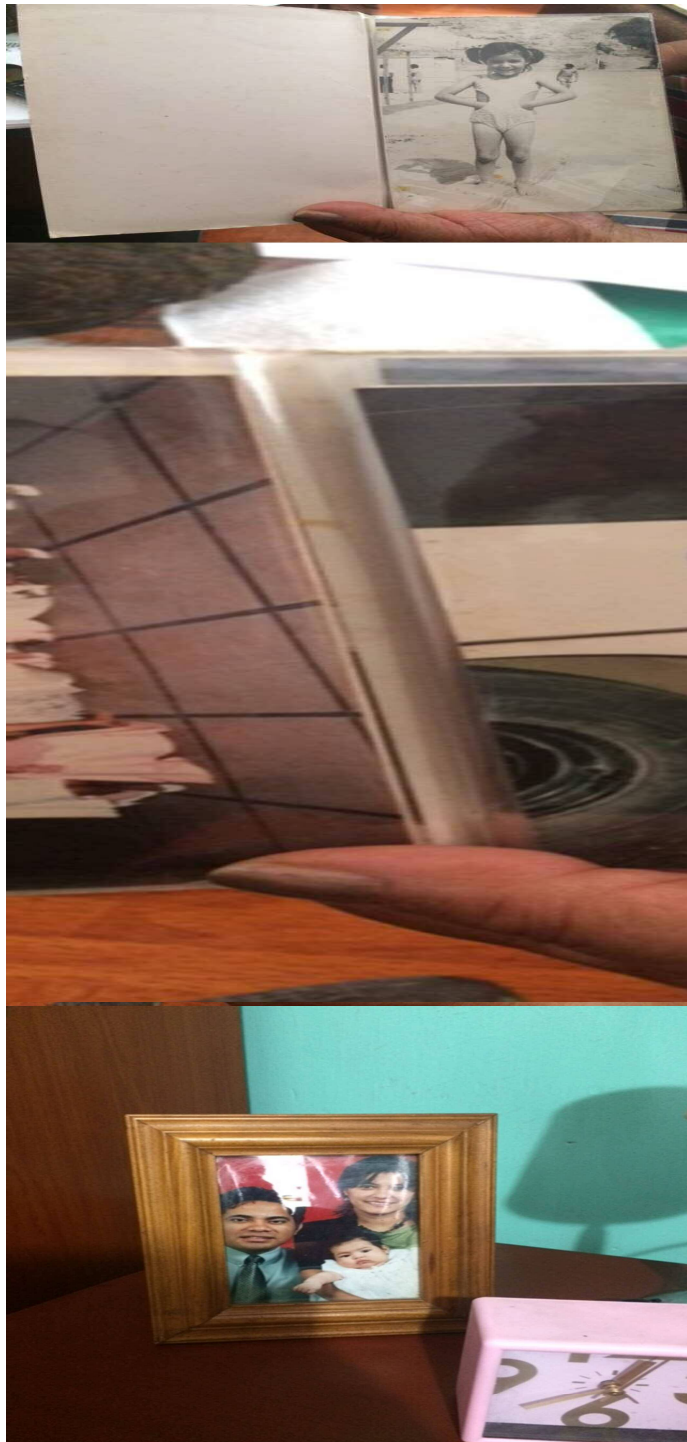


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## Yolanda (62) – Ageing in **Lima** ... afraid of dying without seeing her daughter who lives in **Manchester** again

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- Living in the same house for 62 years
- Experiences of home shaped by death of relatives and transnational migration
- ‘Wishing to become a flying grandmother’
- ‘When my visa was rejected, I became aware that there is a world between us. For many years I did not see my house as home. I did not want to go back after work and wanted to spend all my time outdoors. Nobody was waiting for me here [her house], I felt so lonely and home for me is family togetherness’.



‘Year after year I am more and more concerned about dying without seeing Lilian again. I know she loves me, and I cannot tolerate the idea of seeing my daughter rushing to find a flight ticket to Lima just to see my death body in a coffin. I do not want to cause her such pain’.



Gloria (57) ageing  
in **Madrid**...  
searching for  
home in her  
father's grave back  
in **Quito**

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- Gloria could not bring her father to Spain as planned
- Father was caring for her four children in Ecuador and he died
- Unattended funeral – undocumented migrant by the time her father died
- ‘I was phoning him as much as I could, and he asked me to promise him not to go back. I remember he said ‘stay there. There is no point in coming back. There is no future for you here. You must stay in Spain and bring your children there’. It was a tough decision, and I cannot change it now. I can only regret it’.



- ‘How can you recover from that? There is no way to overcome this sorrow. Every single day I think about my father and often imagine his life here, in this house, with us [in Spain]. I find comfort in his words and they alleviate my pain. It is still overwhelming, though’
- Gloria keeps a **spiritual connection with her father**. A visit to the cemetery when she travels back to Ecuador is an opportunity to say ‘**sorry, I could not be here [in Ecuador] with you**, but you will be always here [she touched her hearth]’.

# Conclusion and Implications

- Death and funerals complicate experiences of home in later life for those who move and those who stay put or are 'left behind'
- Homeless in one's house – the experiences of many of the elderly interviewed in Ecuador and Peru
- Struggling for home in Europe – regret and nostalgia for death relatives
- Implications for three areas of research
  - 'The left behind'
  - People ageing-in-place
  - Return migration
  - Policy implications?
  - The impossibility to say good bye