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Heloisa Carlos Reis

**Tecendo Redes de Resiliência: Dinâmicas Econômicas, Migração e Bem-Estar no
Empreendedorismo de Mulheres Brasileiras no Reino Unido**

**Weaving Resilience Networks: Economic Dynamics, Migration, and Well-Being among
Brazilian Women Entrepreneurs in the United Kingdom**

Uberlândia

2026

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Weaving Resilience Networks: Economic Dynamics, Migration, and Well-Being among Brazilian Women Entrepreneurs in the United Kingdom

Dissertação apresentada ao Programa de Pós-Graduação em Psicologia, do Instituto de Psicologia da Universidade Federal de Uberlândia, como requisito para a obtenção do título de Mestre em Psicologia.

Área de concentração: Psicologia

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Orientadora: Profa. Dra. Heila Magali da Silva Veiga

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Banca Examinadora

Uberlândia, 26 de agosto de 2026

Profa. Dra. Heila Magali Silva Veiga (Membro Interno)
Universidade Federal de Uberlândia – Uberlândia, MG

Profa. Dra. Clarissa do Nascimento Tabosa (Membro Externo)
Comenius University Bratislava – Bratislava, SK

Profa. Dra. Raíssa Bárbara Nunes Moraes Andrade (Membro Externo)
Universidade Federal de Lavras – Lavras, MG

**Uberlândia
2026**

as mulheres ficaram tanto tempo sem espaço
que quando uma de nós enfim
conquista uma vaga no palco
ficamos com medo de que outra mulher
possa roubar nosso lugar
mas as coisas não funcionam assim
olha os homens que estão no palco e se
fortalecem
e se multiplicam cada vez mais
com mais mulheres no palco
sobra espaço para todas lá no alto

- juntas somos mais fortes

Rupi Kaur

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Resumo

Este estudo investigou como trajetórias migratórias e condições do mercado de trabalho moldam a entrada de mulheres brasileiras no empreendedorismo no Reino Unido e como a reconstrução da identidade profissional, a resiliência e o bem-estar psicossocial são vivenciados ao longo dessas trajetórias. Adotou-se um delineamento qualitativo, exploratório e descritivo, orientado por uma perspectiva interseccional. A pesquisa contou com a participação 13 brasileiras residentes no Reino Unido e envolvidas em negócios próprios ou trabalho autônomo. Foram realizadas entrevistas semiestruturadas remotas, analisadas por meio de análise temático categorial. O corpus das falas das participantes apontou oito categorias temáticas, sendo elas: barreiras estruturais e adaptação; motivação e oportunidade de negócio; gestão empresarial e conduta profissional; aprendizagem empreendedora e planejamento financeiro; reconhecimento desigual; impacto psicológico e bem-estar psicossocial; relações comunitárias e apoio; e enfrentamento, limites e redefinição do sucesso. Os resultados mostram que a mobilidade geográfica não possibilitou continuidade profissional. O domínio do idioma, o reconhecimento de qualificações, a experiência local, as responsabilidades de cuidado e o acesso a redes alteraram o valor e a viabilidade de aplicação dos recursos profissionais adquiridos anteriormente. Sob a perspectiva interseccional, evidenciou-se como as articulações entre gênero, raça, classe, nacionalidade e arranjos familiares condicionam assimetricamente as barreiras vivenciadas, o acesso a capitais e as estratégias de inserção no mercado. O empreendedorismo emergiu da combinação entre restrições, necessidade financeira, busca por autonomia, experiências anteriores e identificação de demandas de mercado, superando a divisão rígida entre necessidade e oportunidade. A atividade empresarial favoreceu a autonomia, o reconhecimento e a reconstrução identitária, mas também produziu insegurança, sobrecarga e solidão. Conclui-se que a resiliência tem papel fundamental no processo de reconstrução da identidade profissional em outro país e deve ser compreendida como um processo dinâmico e relacional de mobilização de recursos, e não como uma característica individual atestada unicamente pela sobrevivência do negócio.

Palavras-chave: Migração; Empreendedorismo feminino; Identidade profissional; Resiliência; Bem-estar psicossocial.

Abstract

This study investigated how migratory trajectories and labour market conditions shape Brazilian women's entry into entrepreneurship in the United Kingdom, and how professional identity reconstruction, resilience, and psychosocial well-being are experienced along these trajectories. A qualitative, exploratory, and descriptive design was adopted, guided by an intersectional perspective. The research involved 13 Brazilian women residing in the United Kingdom and engaged in their own businesses or self-employment. Remote semi-structured interviews were conducted and examined through categorical thematic analysis. The corpus of participants' accounts yielded eight thematic categories: structural barriers and adaptation; motivation and business opportunity; business management and professional conduct; entrepreneurial learning and financial planning; unequal recognition; psychological impact and psychosocial well-being; community relations and support; and coping, boundaries, and the redefinition of success. The findings show that geographical mobility did not enable professional continuity. Language proficiency, the recognition of qualifications, local experience, caregiving responsibilities, and access to networks altered the value and the feasibility of applying previously acquired professional resources. From an intersectional perspective, the study revealed how the articulations between gender, race, class, nationality, and family arrangements asymmetrically condition the barriers experienced, access to capital, and labor market entry strategy. Entrepreneurship emerged from a combination of constraints, financial necessity, the pursuit of autonomy, prior experience, and the identification of market demands, thereby transcending the rigid divide between necessity and opportunity. Business activity fostered autonomy, recognition, and identity reconstruction, but it also produced insecurity, overload, and loneliness. It is concluded that resilience plays a fundamental role in the process of reconstructing professional identity in another country and should be understood as a dynamic, relational process of resource mobilization, rather than as an individual trait evidenced solely by business survival.

Keywords: Migration; Female entrepreneurship; Professional identity; Resilience; Psychosocial well-being.

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1. Introduction

Brazilian emigration has intensified in recent decades, forming significant diasporic communities abroad. The United Kingdom occupies the fourth position among these destinations, hosting one of the largest Brazilian populations in Europe (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Brazil, 2025). The Brazilian presence in the UK has become particularly concentrated in London, which has historically constituted an important destination for the community (McIlwaine & Bunge, 2016). This choice of location is further supported by London's emergence as a strategic hub for bilateral convergence, where Brazilian brands and entrepreneurial initiatives increasingly leverage the British market as a platform for international expansion and visibility (Patriota, 2025). This context makes the UK particularly relevant for examining the labor-market experiences of Brazilian migrants, including their pathways into entrepreneurship and the role played by migrant social networks in processes of settlement and economic integration (Castles, de Haas and Miller, 2020).

Within this broader migrant population, Brazilian women constitute a particularly relevant group for examining the relationship between migration and professional trajectories. Research with Brazilian women living in London portrays a relatively young and highly educated population whose migration trajectories involved educational and employment aspirations, family circumstances, and the search for new cultural experiences (Evans & McIlwaine, 2018). These findings indicate that Brazilian women's migration to the United Kingdom cannot be understood exclusively as a response to economic necessity, but as a heterogeneous process involving multiple aspirations and circumstances.

High levels of education, however, do not necessarily guarantee continuity of professional status after migration. Brazilian women in London have reported occupational downgrading and employment in sectors below their previous qualifications, while English-language limitations and the recognition of credentials can constrain access to commensurate

work (Evans & McIlwaine, 2018). Evidence drawn from research with 2,188 Brazilians in the United Kingdom in 2020 similarly portrays a relatively young and well-educated population while showing that limited English proficiency can restrict access to the kinds of work migrants previously performed in Brazil (McIlwaine & Evans, 2023). More broadly, research on migrant women shows that qualifications and professional experience are interpreted through destination-country institutions and labor markets rather than transferred automatically across borders (Elo et al., 2025; Esteban & González-Fuente, 2014; Remennick, 2013).

Classical migration theories, particularly the push-pull framework associated with Ravenstein (1885) and Lee (1966), provide an initial explanation of migration through the interaction between conditions in countries of origin and destination and the obstacles involved in mobility. However, these approaches have been criticised for their tendency to reduce migration to relatively linear economic calculations and for insufficiently accounting for migrants' heterogeneous experiences and agency (Bakewell, 2010; de Haas, 2021; Massey et al., 1993).

More recent approaches, such as de Haas's (2021) aspirations-capabilities framework, understand migration as the outcome of the interaction between individuals' aspirations to migrate and their capabilities to realize these aspirations within specific structural conditions. This perspective is particularly relevant to the present study because it allows migration trajectories to be understood through the relationship between agency and structural constraints rather than through economic determinants alone. From this perspective, the migration trajectories of Brazilian women in the UK can be understood as processes shaped by both perceived opportunities and structural constraints. Economic conditions, professional aspirations, family circumstances, migrant networks, and labour-market conditions may interact before and after migration, shaping not only mobility itself but also subsequent strategies of professional and economic integration.

Importantly, the capacity to migrate does not necessarily imply an equivalent capacity to reproduce one's previous professional trajectory after migration. Language proficiency, recognition of professional qualifications, immigration status, access to information, and the organization of the receiving labour market may reshape the range of professional opportunities available after arrival. Migration may therefore involve not only geographical mobility, but also occupational transitions and the renegotiation of professional expectations and identities.

Within this context, entrepreneurship may emerge as one pathway through which migrant women respond to labor-market constraints while pursuing economic autonomy and professional opportunities. Entrepreneurial entry is often classified as opportunity - or necessity-driven, but these motivations can overlap and change as a venture develops (Coffman et al., 2025; Williams & Williams, 2014). For migrant women, the distinction is therefore used as an initial descriptive device rather than a fixed explanation of the entrepreneurial trajectory.

Recent research suggests that the opportunity–necessity distinction is insufficient to explain entrepreneurial trajectories because constraint and aspiration may coexist and change as a venture develops (Aman et al., 2024; Coffman et al., 2025; Khademi et al., 2024). For migrant women, entrepreneurship may respond to restricted employment alternatives while also involving autonomy, prior professional knowledge, family and care arrangements, or perceived market possibilities (García & Villares-Varela, 2023; Villares-Varela & Low, 2026).

This study therefore adopts intersectionality as its primary analytical lens. Rather than treating gender, race and color, class, nationality, and migration status as independent sources of disadvantage, an intersectional perspective examines how social positions acquire meaning through their interaction within specific institutional, historical, and labor-market contexts (Cho et al., 2013; Crenshaw, 1991; Viveros Vigoya, 2016). This situated approach is particularly relevant because neither “Brazilian” nor “Latin American” constitutes a homogeneous social or racial position. Class background, region of origin, race and color,

language, legal status, perceived integration, and relationships with migrant communities can differentiate Brazilian migration experiences without operating uniformly across individuals (Azeredo, 2024; Robins, 2019).

Gender also intersects with professional trajectories through the organization of paid work, family life, and care responsibilities. Research with Latin American migrant women entrepreneurs in the United Kingdom and Ireland shows that business ownership can be organized around childcare and family needs while also supporting financial independence, professional repositioning, and a stronger sense of authority (García & Villares-Varela, 2023). Entrepreneurship is therefore a gendered and relational experience rather than a purely economic activity, and professional identities may be reconstructed in relation to family positions, social expectations, and the institutional environment encountered after migration.

Migrant trajectories are also embedded in social and community networks. Such networks can circulate information, reduce costs and risks, facilitate access to clients and opportunities, and mobilize resources that may otherwise be difficult to obtain (Massey et al., 1993). In migrant entrepreneurship, community and migrant organizations can provide linguistic assistance, specialized information, legal guidance, psychological support, and spaces of belonging (Turcatti, 2021). However, the overall value of these relationships depends on how networks develop across origin-country, co-ethnic, and local business contexts: while social ties can offer customers, mentoring, legitimacy, and essential support, narrowly bounded or insular ties may also restrict access to broader markets and resources (Jones et al., 2012; Lassalle et al., 2020; Maharjan et al., 2024; Malheiros & Padilla, 2018; Vershinina & Rodgers, 2019).

Finally, this research treats subjectivity as central to entrepreneurial experience. Professional identity reconstruction, resilience, and psychosocial well-being are approached as interconnected but analytically distinct dimensions. Professional identity concerns how

occupational continuity, competence, and recognition are renegotiated after migration (Fernando & Patriotta, 2020; Remennick, 2013). Resilience is conceptualized as a dynamic process of mobilizing resources in relation to adversity rather than as a fixed trait or an inference from business survival (Bernard & Barbosa, 2016; Hartmann et al., 2022). Psychosocial well-being concerns emotional functioning, meaning, self-worth, belonging, and the perceived capacity to manage occupational and migratory demands; entrepreneurship may support these dimensions while also introducing uncertainty, extensive workloads, loneliness, and financial pressure (Abonil et al., 2024; Eriksen et al., 2026).

By integrating migration theory, entrepreneurship studies, and an intersectional lens, this research offers a comprehensive account of how Brazilian women construct entrepreneurial trajectories while navigating the interplay between structural inequality, professional identity reconstruction, resilience, and psychosocial well-being.

1.1 Contribution and Justification of the Study

The relevance of this study lies in examining entrepreneurship not as an isolated economic decision, but as part of the broader professional trajectories of Brazilian immigrant women in the United Kingdom. Migration may reshape access to employment, the value attributed to previous qualifications and professional experience, and women's possibilities for maintaining or reconstructing their careers. In this context, entrepreneurship may emerge through the interaction between labor market constraints, economic necessity, aspirations for autonomy, opportunity recognition, and the mobilization of previous knowledge and social resources.

Existing research has provided important insights into migrant women's entrepreneurship, including structural barriers, entrepreneurial motivations, access to resources, gendered inequalities, and the role of migrant networks (Elo et al., 2025; García & Villares-Varela, 2023; Lassalle et al., 2020; Villares-Varela & Low, 2026). Studies concerning Brazilians in the United Kingdom have also documented heterogeneous experiences of labor-

market incorporation, occupational mobility, linguistic barriers, racialisation, and access to community resources (Veiga et al 2026; Azeredo, 2024; Evans & McIlwaine, 2018; Kubal et al., 2011; Robins, 2019). However, these dimensions are frequently examined separately, leaving room for a more integrated understanding of how migration trajectories, entry into entrepreneurship, professional identity reconstruction, resilience, and psychosocial well-being interact throughout women's entrepreneurial experiences.

The present study addresses this gap through an intersectional perspective, examining how gender, race, class, nationality, and migration status interact with structural and labor-market conditions to produce differentiated entrepreneurial experiences. Rather than assuming a homogeneous experience among Brazilian immigrant women, this approach considers how constraints, opportunities, and available resources may vary according to women's social positions. The study further contributes to understanding necessity and opportunity as potentially overlapping and dynamic entrepreneurial motivations and resilience as a context-dependent process shaped by personal, relational, and structural resources.

Finally, the findings may provide practical insights for organizations and professionals supporting migrant women, particularly in relation to professional integration, entrepreneurship, social networks, and psychosocial well-being. By giving visibility to the barriers and resources involved in Brazilian immigrant women's entrepreneurial trajectories, the study contributes to SDG 5 (Gender Equality), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities).

1.2 Research Problem

How do migration trajectories and labor market conditions shape Brazilian women's entry into entrepreneurship in the United Kingdom, and how are professional identity reconstruction, resilience, and psychosocial well-being experienced throughout their entrepreneurial trajectories?

1.3 Research Objectives

General Objective

The general objective of this study is to investigate how migration trajectories and labour-market conditions shape Brazilian women's entry into entrepreneurship in the United Kingdom, examining their experiences of professional identity reconstruction, resilience, and psychosocial well-being throughout their entrepreneurial trajectories.

Specific Objectives

- a) Examine how pre- and post-migration trajectories and labor market experiences shape women's motivations and pathways into entrepreneurship.
- b) Analyze how gender, race, class, nationality, and migration status intersect with structural and labor market conditions to shape barriers, opportunities, and resources throughout women's entrepreneurial trajectories.
- c) Understand how migration and entrepreneurship relate to occupational transitions, professional adaptation, and processes of professional identity reconstruction.
- d) Explore how women experience and mobilize resilience, social support, and other adaptive resources, and how these processes relate to psychosocial well-being throughout their entrepreneurial trajectories.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1 Migration Dynamics and Structural Constraints in the Host Country

Early migration theories sought to identify regularities in population movement and the conditions associated with migration. Ravenstein's (1885) nineteenth-century laws constituted an important starting point for this endeavor. Lee (1966) subsequently conceptualized migration through four broad elements: factors associated with the place of origin, factors associated with the destination, intervening obstacles and personal factors. Importantly, Lee recognised that the same conditions could be evaluated differently by different individuals and

that migration was selective rather than a uniform response to external circumstances. Nevertheless, the origin-destination framework became closely associated with push-pull explanations in which adverse conditions encourage departure while more favorable conditions attract migrants to another location (Ravenstein, 1885; Lee, 1966).

Although this approach provided an accessible vocabulary for identifying relevant migration conditions, it is insufficient as a comprehensive explanation of migration trajectories. Massey et al. (1993) demonstrate that migration theories address different analytical levels and different phases of the migration process. Neoclassical approaches focus primarily on individual responses to wage and employment differentials, whereas household, structural and network perspectives examine risk management, labor demand, social relations and the continuation of migration flows. Consequently, no single theory adequately explains both the initiation and persistence of migration. Bakewell (2010) similarly argues that migration theory has frequently oscillated between accounts that privilege structural forces and those that emphasise individual choice, without adequately explaining their interaction. Migration should therefore be understood neither as an automatic response to economic differentials nor as an unrestricted individual decision, but as action undertaken within social and institutional conditions (Bakewell, 2010; Massey et al., 1993).

Carling's (2002) aspiration-ability model addresses part of this limitation by separating the desire to migrate from the ability to realize that desire. This distinction produces three possible positions: migration, voluntary non-migration and involuntary immobility. People may prefer to remain where they are, may aspire to migrate but lack the means to do so, or may possess both the aspiration and the ability required to move. Migration ability is shaped through migrants' encounters with what Carling calls the "immigration interface", including policy barriers, financial requirements and other constraints that individuals are differently equipped to overcome. Carling and Schewel (2018) subsequently refine this distinction by emphasizing

that the resources required depend on the migration route being pursued and that migration may involve provisional, stepwise or changing trajectories rather than a single, linear movement. Analyzing aspiration and ability separately therefore clarifies why similar structural circumstances do not generate identical migration outcomes (Carling, 2002; Carling & Schewel, 2018).

Building on this distinction, de Haas (2021) conceptualizes migration as a function of aspirations and capabilities within perceived geographical opportunity structures. Aspirations concern preferences regarding moving or staying and are influenced by how individuals perceive opportunities for achieving valued life goals in different places. Capabilities refer to the substantive freedom to convert these aspirations into action, which may depend on financial resources, knowledge, social connections, documentation and physical capacity. The absence of formal restrictions is therefore insufficient when people lack the resources required to exercise mobility. Conversely, remaining in the country of origin may represent either an active preference or constrained immobility. This formulation connects agency to structure without treating them as opposites: structural conditions shape the alternatives people can perceive and access, while migrants interpret and respond to those conditions through their own projects and resources (Bakewell, 2010; Carling & Schewel, 2018; de Haas, 2021).

The heterogeneity of Brazilian migration to the United Kingdom illustrates the importance of this distinction. Studies of Brazilians in the United Kingdom identify combinations of economic, educational, cultural, relational and professional motivations rather than a single dominant explanation for migration (Evans & McIlwaine, 2018; Kubal et al., 2011; Robins, 2019). Robins (2019) shows that motivations for migration, settlement and return are related to social class and to the different meanings migrants attach to economic, cultural, informational and social resources. Evans and McIlwaine's (2018) research with Brazilian women in London similarly identify multiple and intersecting reasons for migration,

including education, employment, cultural experience and accompanying a partner. Azeredo (2024) further cautions against treating the Brazilian diaspora as a homogeneous community, demonstrating that class, regional background, legal status, racialized positioning and different degrees of connection with Brazilian culture may shape experiences after migration. These findings reinforce the need to approach Brazilian women as actors with differentiated aspirations, resources and trajectories.

The aspirations-capabilities framework explains whether and how migration becomes possible, but it does not by itself explain migrants' subsequent occupational trajectories. The capability to cross an international border should be analytically distinguished from the ability to reproduce a previous professional position in the destination country. Erel (2010) criticizes the assumption that migrants transport cultural capital as a fixed collection of qualifications and competencies that can simply be transferred between countries. Instead, the value of qualifications, experience and professional knowledge is negotiated and transformed within destination-country institutions, labor markets and social networks. Kofman (2000) also demonstrates that skilled female migrants have frequently remained invisible in migration research because definitions of skilled migration have centered on male-dominated occupational sectors and individualized models of career mobility. Professional integration after migration must therefore be analyzed as a distinct process shaped by how skills are recognized, valued and mobilized in the destination context (Erel, 2010; Kofman, 2000).

Evidence from the United Kingdom demonstrates that migrants' occupational outcomes are heterogeneous. Fernández-Reino (2019) reports substantial differences in employment, occupational position, earnings and overqualification across migrant groups. Migrants with foreign qualifications are more likely than UK-born workers to be employed below their educational level, although the prevalence of overqualification varies considerably according to origin and other characteristics. The report identifies possible mechanisms including limited

UK-specific skills, employers' mistrust of foreign qualifications and limited knowledge of recruitment practices, rather than attributing occupational mismatch to education alone (Fernández-Reino, 2019). Vargas-Silva (2014) likewise shows that highly skilled migrant groups do not experience the UK labor market uniformly and that their employment outcomes may respond differently to wider economic conditions. These variations caution against presenting downward mobility as the universal outcome of migration.

Research focused on migrant women provides further evidence of differentiated post-migration trajectories. Esteban and González-Fuente's (2014) study of skilled Spanish women in the United Kingdom identifies heterogeneous entry conditions, including cases of vulnerability and occupational mismatch. Among Brazilian women in London, Evans and McIlwaine (2018) found employment across a broad occupational range, from elementary and service work to managerial and professional positions. Their findings therefore show the coexistence of professional continuity, occupational change and possible downward mobility within the same migrant population. This heterogeneity is important because aggregate references to "migrant women" can conceal differences in education, migration route, family circumstances, legal position and access to destination-country resources (Evans & McIlwaine, 2018; Esteban & González-Fuente, 2014; Kofman, 2000).

The wider literature identifies several mechanisms through which occupational mobility may be affected after migration. The formal recognition of a qualification does not necessarily ensure access to a corresponding occupation, since employers and professional institutions may also evaluate language proficiency, locally recognised experience, networks and embodied forms of cultural capital (Erel, 2010). Elo et al. (2025) use the concept of brain waste to describe the partial or complete underutilization of migrants documented and practical talents. They argue that this process extends beyond diploma recognition and may involve accreditation systems, employer practices, language requirements, limited access to

professional networks and gendered family responsibilities. Migrant women may respond through reskilling, upskilling, occupational change or self-employment, but these responses do not necessarily eliminate deskilling or restore their previous professional position (Elo et al., 2025). Post-migration professional mobility thus reflects an interaction between institutional conditions and migrants' attempts to mobilize and reconstruct their resources.

Social networks form another connection between migration trajectory and post-migration opportunities. Massey et al. (1993) defines migrant networks as interpersonal ties connecting migrants, former migrants and non-migrants through relationships such as kinship, friendship and shared origin. These relationships can reduce the costs and perceived risks of migration by providing information, accommodation, practical assistance and access to employment. As networks expand, they may also contribute to the continuation of migration flows beyond the conditions that originally initiated them. In the Brazilian case, Kubal et al. (2011) document the role of community organizations and informal spaces in circulating information and aiding newcomers. Networks may therefore shape both the capability to migrate and access resources during initial settlement (Kubal et al., 2011; Massey et al., 1993).

Networks, however, should not be treated as uniformly supportive. Azeredo (2024) shows that Brazilian migrant communities contain internal distinctions and hierarchies associated with class, region, legal status and different relationships with Brazilian identity. Consequently, access to community resources may be uneven, and co-national ties may reproduce tensions or boundaries rather than automatically generating solidarity. In the entrepreneurial context, Lassalle et al. (2020) conceptualize network embeddedness as a dynamic process involving origin-country networks, migrant networks and host-country indigenous networks. Although these networks can provide knowledge, contacts and other resources, excessive dependence on a restricted co-ethnic network may constrain market access and business development. Migrants may therefore move towards, away from, or reconnect

with different networks as their professional and entrepreneurial needs change (Azeredo, 2024; Lassalle et al., 2020).

Migration aspirations, capabilities, labor-market institutions, professional recognition and social networks establish the context in which entrepreneurship may emerge as one possible post-migration professional pathway. Entrepreneurship should not be understood as an automatic consequence of migration, discrimination or occupational downgrading. Elo et al. (2025) show that self-employment may represent one response to restricted professional opportunities, but it may also fail to make full use of migrants' prior skills. Lassalle et al. (2020), in turn, demonstrates that entrepreneurial opportunities are constructed through migrants' evolving mobilization of knowledge, relationships and available resources. Entrepreneurship is therefore situated within migration trajectories and destination-country conditions, while remaining a contingent and heterogeneous professional choice. The specific processes through which migrant women enter entrepreneurship and develop their ventures are examined in the following section.

2.2 Intersectionality as Analytical Lens

Intersectionality emerged as a response to the limitations of single-axis accounts of inequality. Crenshaw (1991) demonstrated that frameworks addressing race and gender as separate domains could not adequately represent experiences produced through their simultaneous operation. Her distinction between structural, political, and representational intersectionality locates power across material and institutional conditions, political agendas, and cultural representations. This formulation moves beyond the idea that social disadvantage can be understood by adding discrete identity categories together. Instead, it directs attention to how relations of power are mutually constituted and how their articulation produces social positions and experiences that cannot be reduced to any single dimension (Crenshaw, 1991).

Intersectionality has subsequently developed as an analytical orientation rather than a unified theory or standardized methodology. Cho et al. (2013) conceptualize it as an open field of inquiry concerned with the contextual dynamics of race, gender, class, sexuality, nationality, and other relations of power. Its analytical value lies not in determining an exhaustive set of categories but in examining how particular categories become salient within specific social and institutional contexts. These categories are neither fixed individual attributes nor independent variables with stable effects; they are internally heterogeneous and acquire significance through their relationships with one another. Intersectionality therefore connects individual experience with broader institutional arrangements while preserving the empirical question of which relations matter, how they interact, and what forms of constraint, privilege, or recognition they produce (Cho et al., 2013).

Viveros Vigoya (2016) extends this argument through a situated account of intersectionality that foregrounds contributions from Black and Latin American feminist traditions, including Brazilian feminist thought. Her analysis challenges genealogies that locate the development of intersectional thinking exclusively within North American academia and emphasises that critiques of the universal category of “woman” have emerged across different historical and geopolitical contexts. From this perspective, gender, race, and class are not universally equivalent structures with predetermined consequences; their meanings depend on the historical configurations in which they are produced and experienced. Viveros Vigoya (2016) consequently warns against reducing intersectionality to a depoliticized listing of categories detached from concrete relations of power. Her approach also demonstrates that intersectionality is not synonymous with multiple marginalization. It encompasses both disadvantage and privilege, recognizing that positions associated with whiteness or class advantage are also relationally produced, even when they are not experienced as discrimination.

Applied to Brazilian migration, a situated intersectional perspective shifts the analysis from broad national or regional labels to the historically specific relations through which social positions are differentiated. Azeredo (2024) identifies differentiating factors within the Brazilian diaspora that may be carried from Brazil, such as class background, region of origin, race, and colour, or become more visible after migration, including legal status, language and accent, perceived integration, and relationships with Brazilian migrant communities. These distinctions may shape belonging, access to resources, and intra-community hierarchies without operating uniformly across destinations or individuals. Among Brazilians in London, class position and migration motivations similarly contribute to different relationships with migration, settlement, and the destination society (Robins, 2019). In the case of migrant women, professional trajectories may also be shaped by the interaction of institutional conditions, gendered expectations, family responsibilities, and the recognition and mobilization of skills (Elo et al., 2025).

In this study, intersectionality provides the theoretical basis for conceptualizing entrepreneurship as a socially situated professional pathway rather than as an exclusively individual choice or a uniform response to migration. Brazilian women's entrepreneurial trajectories are understood as emerging within configurations involving migration and labor-market conditions, gendered family responsibilities, class and racial positionings, language, legal status, social networks, and access to institutional and professional resources. The framework does not predetermine which of these dimensions will be most significant or assume that each necessarily produces disadvantage. Instead, it allows experiences of constraint, privilege, opportunity, and agency to be examined relationally and contextually. This positioning supports an analysis of variation in women's entry into entrepreneurship and provides a conceptual bridge to the subsequent examination of professional identity

reconstruction, resilience, and psychosocial well-being (Cho et al., 2013; Viveros Vigoya, 2016).

2.3 Migrant Women's Entrepreneurship: Beyond the Opportunity–Necessity Dichotomy

Within the post-migration context outlined above, entrepreneurship constitutes one possible professional pathway through which migrants may respond to, reinterpret, or move beyond the opportunities available to them in the destination country. Entrepreneurial motivations have frequently been organized through the distinction between opportunity and necessity entrepreneurship. Opportunity entrepreneurship generally refers to business creation motivated by the perceived possibility of exploiting a viable idea, whereas necessity entrepreneurship describes entry into self-employment when satisfactory employment alternatives are absent or severely limited. Although this distinction offers a convenient descriptive framework, it risks treating entrepreneurial motivations as mutually exclusive, fixing the meaning of the venture at the moment of entry and implicitly positioning opportunity entrepreneurship as more desirable than entrepreneurship originating under constraint (Coffman et al., 2025; Williams & Williams, 2014). These assumptions are particularly problematic in migration contexts, where restricted access to appropriate employment may coexist with prior entrepreneurial experience, professional aspirations, family considerations and the recognition of market possibilities.

Empirical evidence indicates that entrepreneurial motivations are often multiple and temporally fluid. In their study of entrepreneurs and potential entrepreneurs in an economically disadvantaged English neighborhood, Williams and Williams (2014) found that participants frequently combined necessity- and opportunity-related motives and that the relative importance of those motives could change during the development of the venture. Some businesses initially emerged from unemployment or dissatisfaction with available work but subsequently became oriented towards autonomy, income growth or the exploitation of

identified demand. The authors consequently argue that the original condition of entry should not be treated as a permanent attribute or sufficient explanation of the entrepreneurial trajectory. Coffman et al. (2025) similarly conceptualize entrepreneurship as a process through which changing needs and circumstances may enable movement from highly constrained forms of venturing towards more voluntary and aspirational forms. Longitudinal evidence from the United States further indicates that venture survival is not necessarily determined by whether the business was initially classified as opportunity- or necessity-driven, while institutional conditions continue to influence its viability (Lopez et al., 2026). Entrepreneurial motivation is therefore more appropriately understood as an evolving configuration of constraints, aspirations and perceived possibilities than as a stable binary classification.

For migrants, these configurations are embedded in the labor market, institutional environment and opportunity structure of the destination country. Research on new migrant enterprises in the United Kingdom demonstrates the importance of mixed embeddedness, according to which entrepreneurial agency operates through the interaction between migrants' resources and networks and the wider economic, regulatory and market conditions in which their businesses are established (Jones et al., 2012). In the study conducted by Jones et al. (2012), some migrants unable to access mainstream employment on acceptable terms used self-employment as a survival strategy, while limited resources and competitive market conditions contributed to the concentration of businesses in low-value sectors. This pattern should not be generalized to all migrant entrepreneurs, but it demonstrates why entrepreneurship cannot be explained exclusively through individual motivation or cultural predisposition. Business creation may involve initiative and strategic action while remaining conditioned by access to finance, recognized qualifications, business knowledge, legal rights, market demand and the types of opportunities available in sectors (Jones et al., 2012; Lassalle et al., 2020).

Opportunities themselves should not be treated as external objects that migrants either discover or fail to recognize. Drawing on interviews with Polish migrant entrepreneurs in Glasgow, Lassalle et al. (2020) show that opportunities can be created iteratively as migrants mobilize available knowledge and resources through changing relationships with origin-country networks, migrant networks in the destination country and local business networks. These forms of embeddedness may provide information, customers, mentoring, legitimacy and access to resources, but their value depends on their development over time and on the entrepreneur's capacity to connect with networks beyond the immediate migrant community. Reliance on narrowly bounded networks may support business entry while simultaneously restricting access to wider markets and resources (Jones et al., 2012; Lassalle et al., 2020). Where entrepreneurial activity also mobilizes knowledge, relationships or markets across countries, a behavioural focus on cross-border opportunity creation can avoid assuming that migrant entrepreneurs are defined solely by ethnicity or nationality (Emontspool & Servais, 2017). Migrant identity and transnational connections may therefore become entrepreneurial resources in some trajectories, but they do not constitute automatic advantages or determine the nature of the venture.

The experiences of migrant women add gendered and familial dimensions to this relationship between agency and structural conditions. Research on highly skilled female migrants shows that institutional barriers, limited recognition of qualifications, language proficiency, discriminatory practices and sociocultural expectations can prevent professional knowledge from being fully used in the destination country, producing different forms of deskilling or brain waste (Elo et al., 2025). Self-employment may offer a means of using previous expertise, achieving greater autonomy or accommodating family responsibilities, but it does not necessarily eliminate professional underemployment or guarantee financial security. Research with migrant women entrepreneurs in Britain similarly presents business ownership

as a site of class and status renegotiation rather than merely an economic survival strategy (Villares-Varela & Low, 2026). Their case studies show that entrepreneurship may help women respond to occupational downgrading, rebuild professional recognition and develop social networks even when the financial returns remain modest. Narratives of independence, hard work and contribution are also interpreted within a wider institutional context in which self-reliance may operate as a marker of migrant deservingness. Entrepreneurship is therefore potentially enabling but remains ambivalent: it may create professional and social value while reproducing financial insecurity, extensive workloads and unequal responsibility for care (Elo et al., 2025; Villares-Varela & Low, 2026).

This gendered ambivalence is especially visible in research with Latin American migrant women entrepreneurs. García and Villares-Varela's (2023) biographical study of women living in the United Kingdom and Ireland, including Brazilian participants, demonstrates that motherhood can influence both the decision to start a business and the form the venture subsequently takes. The authors use the concept of *marianismo* to examine cultural expectations associating "good" motherhood with dedication, care and self-sacrifice. Their findings indicate that women may simultaneously reproduce and contest these expectations: businesses may be organized around childcare and family needs while also enabling financial independence, personal pride and greater authority within the household. However, cultural meanings alone do not explain entrepreneurial entry. The availability of family support, the cost and accessibility of childcare, marital status and the distribution of parental responsibilities also shape whether business ownership is experienced as a preferred option, a constrained response or a combination of both (García & Villares-Varela, 2023). *Marianismo* should therefore not be treated as an inherent or uniform characteristic of Latin American women. Its analytical value lies in showing how cultural expectations are renegotiated through migration and interact with family arrangements and institutional contexts.

This literature supports an understanding of migrant women's entrepreneurship as a situated, relational and temporally evolving process. Entry into entrepreneurship cannot be reduced either to the exploitation of an independently existing opportunity or to an involuntary reaction to labor-market exclusion. It may instead emerge through the interaction of migration trajectories, occupational conditions, family and care arrangements, available resources, social networks, professional aspirations and changing capabilities for action. Moreover, the initial motivation for creating a business does not determine its subsequent meaning: ventures may acquire financial, professional, relational and personal significance as they develop (Coffman et al., 2025; García & Villares-Varela, 2023; Villares-Varela & Low, 2026).

Although recent research has begun to include Brazilian and other South American women within broader samples, evidence focused specifically on Brazilian women entrepreneurs in the United Kingdom remains limited and predominantly case based. The present study consequently approaches opportunity and necessity as potentially overlapping dimensions of entrepreneurial trajectories rather than predetermined categories, while the implications of entrepreneurship for professional identity, resilience and psychosocial well-being are developed in the following section.

2.4 Professional Identity Reconstruction, Resilience, and Psychosocial Well-Being

Professional identity constitutes an important source of continuity across migration, but this continuity is not secured by the possession of qualifications or previous professional experience alone. Migrants' ability to reproduce their former occupational position depends on how their knowledge and credentials are interpreted within new linguistic, institutional and labour-market environments. Remennick (2013) demonstrates that occupational continuity reflects a complex interaction between the cultural and linguistic dependence of particular professions, credential-recognition arrangements, local labour demand, access to professional networks and migrants' individual resources. Professional identity is therefore not transferred

intact from one national context to another. It is renegotiated through encounters with institutions, employers and occupational norms that may validate, discount or redirect previously established professional trajectories (Fernando & Patriotta, 2020; Remennick, 2013).

The identity implications of this process are particularly visible when migration is followed by occupational downgrading. In their study of 38 highly skilled Sri Lankan accountants working in the United Kingdom, Fernando and Patriotta (2020) show that employment below participants' previous qualifications and experience challenged their sense of professional worth and generated a need to make sense of their changed occupational status. Participants constructed three different narratives - disregard, opportunity and fit - through which they interpreted downgrading as organizational devaluation, an opportunity for future development or a position compatible with other aspects of their lives. These interpretations were shaped by interactions within organizations and by the emotions associated with feeling valued, disregarded or supported. Similar occupational changes can therefore acquire different meanings, indicating that professional identity reconstruction involves the production of new accounts of competence, value and future possibility rather than simply the recovery of a pre-migration identity (Fernando & Patriotta, 2020).

Identity reconstruction is not, however, exclusively a discursive or psychological process. Netto et al.'s (2020) research with migrants employed in low-paid work in England and Scotland conceptualizes progression-oriented identity work as the actions through which individuals seek to develop English-language proficiency, acquire recognized skills and establish a reputation for competence and diligence. The effectiveness of these efforts depended on access to time, financial resources, training, managerial support and assistance with family responsibilities. Constraints and enablement within workplaces and households could accumulate or change over time, producing different possibilities for occupational

progression. Although Netto et al. (2020) examine employees rather than entrepreneurs, their analysis demonstrates that identity work is materially and institutionally situated. Migrants' attempts to reconstruct a valued professional position cannot be separated from the resources and recognition available within their social and organizational environments.

Entrepreneurship creates an additional context in which professional, migrant, gendered and family identities may be negotiated. García and Villares-Varela's (2023) biographical study of Latin American migrant women entrepreneurs in the United Kingdom and Ireland, including a Brazilian participant, shows that entrepreneurial identity develops alongside rather than independently from motherhood and migration. Participants negotiated expectations associated with being both a "good mother" and a "good businesswoman", sometimes organising their businesses around care responsibilities while simultaneously developing financial independence, personal pride and a stronger sense of authority. These processes were shaped not only by cultural meanings of motherhood but also by marital status, family networks, childcare arrangements and the institutional context of settlement. Entrepreneurship may therefore provide a space for professional repositioning and identity reconstruction, but it does not necessarily restore a former professional identity or eliminate gendered responsibilities. Entrepreneurial identity instead emerges relationally through the negotiation of previous expertise, migration experiences, family positions and new forms of economic activity (García & Villares-Varela, 2023).

Resilience must be conceptually distinguished from identity reconstruction and from the mere continuation of a business. Entrepreneurship research has conceptualized resilience as a relatively stable trait, a malleable capacity, a process, and, in some cases, an outcome (Ciaramella et al., 2021; Hartmann et al., 2022). Psychological accounts also describe resilience as adaptation in the face of adversity, trauma, or significant stress rather than simply the absence of distress (Florio, 2015; Fletcher & Sarkar, 2013). To avoid conflating these positions,

the present study adopts a processual understanding: resilience is approached as an evolving process through which entrepreneurs mobilize and reconfigure personal, relational, professional, and material resources while attempting to maintain or restore valued forms of functioning (Ahmed et al., 2022; Hartmann et al., 2022). It is not presumed to be an inherent characteristic of entrepreneurs or inferred solely from business survival. Its analysis requires attention to nature and duration of adversity, the resources available, the adaptations undertaken, and their consequences over time.

For migrants, resilience is also shaped by relational, community, and institutional conditions. Migrants' adaptation may depend on social cohesion and access to supportive relationships, not only on individual coping resources (Babatunde-Sowole et al., 2020). In entrepreneurial settings, social, cultural, and economic capital may help women respond to adversity, while the availability and value of these resources remain conditioned by gender, class, racialized positioning, and migration status (Aman et al., 2024; Khademi et al., 2024; Malheiros & Padilla, 2018; Vershinina & Rodgers, 2019). Planning for adversity and access to community competence, information, shared beliefs, and social capital may contribute to business and community responses to disruption (Campagnolo et al., 2022; Olcese et al., 2023). This contextual understanding does not romanticise either resilience or community support; it directs attention to the resources that are accessible, the constraints under which they are mobilized, and the costs of adaptation.

Professional identity and resilience are connected to psychosocial well-being, although the three constructs should not be treated as interchangeable. Psychosocial well-being is understood here as a relational and subjective experience involving emotional functioning, meaning, self-worth, social connection, belonging and the perceived capacity to manage occupational and migratory demands. In a qualitative study of eight highly educated migrants experiencing delayed workforce entry in Norway, Eriksen et al. (2026) found that professional

work was associated with self-esteem, purpose, social contribution and belonging. Prolonged credential-recognition processes and exclusion from professionally relevant employment were described in relation to uncertainty, stagnation, social isolation and weakened professional identity. Although the study does not examine entrepreneurs or Brazilian migrants, it demonstrates how access to meaningful professional participation may function as a psychosocial resource and how professional identity disruption may have consequences extending beyond employment and income.

Evidence from entrepreneurship research similarly indicates that well-being may coexist with substantial occupational and financial demands. Abonil et al. (2024) qualitative study of 12 expatriate entrepreneurs in the United Arab Emirates found that entrepreneurship could provide meaning, passion, personal growth and a sense of control over one's professional life. At the same time, participants described financial precarity, long working hours, uncertainty and entrepreneurial loneliness, particularly during the COVID-19 crisis. Resilience and supportive relationships emerged as central themes in their narratives: personal and professional networks provided emotional support, reinforced confidence and helped participants respond to uncertainty. The study illustrates that relationships may operate simultaneously as business resources and psychosocial resources. However, its expatriate population, mixed-gender sample and crisis-specific context differ from those examined in the present study. Its findings therefore support an understanding of the mechanisms connecting relationships, resilience and well-being, rather than being treated as representative of all migrant entrepreneurs.

Therefore, this literature positions professional identity reconstruction, resilience and psychosocial well-being as related but analytically distinct dimensions of migrant women's entrepreneurial trajectories. Professional identity reconstruction concerns how occupational value, continuity and recognition are renegotiated after migration; resilience concerns the

evolving mobilization of resources in relation to adversity; and psychosocial well-being concerns the subjective and relational quality of functioning throughout this process. Entrepreneurship may become a context in which these dimensions interact, but their direction cannot be determined theoretically in advance. Business ownership may support autonomy, meaning, recognition and a renewed professional position while also introducing uncertainty, extensive workloads and social or financial pressures. Existing evidence remains geographically dispersed and rarely focuses specifically on migrant women. The present study therefore examines how these processes are experienced by Brazilian women entrepreneurs in the United Kingdom without assuming that entrepreneurship necessarily produces successful identity recovery, demonstrates resilience or improves psychosocial well-being.

3. Methodological Approach

3.1 Research Design

This study adopts a qualitative, exploratory, and descriptive design, considered essential for capturing the subjectivity and meaning participants attribute to their own trajectories, privileging in-depth understanding of context over statistical generalization. Intersectionality was used as an analytical lens rather than as a fixed list of variables. The analysis considered how gender, race and color, class, nationality, migration position, language, family responsibilities, and access to resources became relevant within specific labor market, institutional, household, and relational contexts, situating these trajectories within the broader historical and cultural context of the United Kingdom (Almeida et al., 2021; Villares-Varela & Essers, 2021; Ferreira et al., 2023; Machado et al., 2023).

The qualitative design is appropriate because the study seeks to understand how participants interpret changes in professional identity, emotional experiences, and coping across migration and entrepreneurship rather than estimate the prevalence of these experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2023).

Sample adequacy was evaluated in relation to the richness, depth, and relevance of the interview material to the research aims rather than through statistical representativeness. Thirteen participants were recruited within the timeframe of the master's research. This sample is not presented as representative of Brazilian women entrepreneurs in the United Kingdom; its adequacy rests on the diversity and analytical detail of the accounts generated, a limitation considered when interpreting the findings (Marshall et al., 2013; Vasileiou et al., 2018).

3.2 Researcher Positionality

The researcher is a white Brazilian woman with a high level of formal education and personal experience of international migration. This background provided familiarity with some practical and emotional aspects of migration, including language adjustment, distance from family, and professional reorientation. It may also support rapport and shared vocabulary during the interviews. Consistent with intersectional approaches to researcher positioning, this location was treated as relevant to the production and interpretation of knowledge rather than as a neutral background characteristic (Boveda & Annamma, 2023; Moralli, 2024).

At the same time, this position involved important differences from the participants. The researcher did not share the racialized experiences described by women of color and approached these accounts as an outsider to that dimension of the analysis. Her engagement with entrepreneurship was primarily academic rather than based on running a business. Positionality was treated as part of the production of knowledge, not as a claim of complete insider understanding or neutrality.

3.3 Participants and Sample Adequacy

The study included 13 adult Brazilian migrant women living in the United Kingdom who operated an income-generating activity through their own business or self-employment after migration.

Participants were between 33 and 50 years old and had lived in the United Kingdom for periods ranging from three months to 15 years. Their educational and professional backgrounds included, law, business, education, hairdressing, and **teaching**. The study records identified ten participants as white and three as women of color. To reduce the risk of deductive identification, these characteristics are presented only in aggregate.

Table 1

Aggregate characteristics of participants

Characteristic	Aggregate sample profile
Participants	13 Brazilian migrant women involved in business ownership or self-employment in the United Kingdom
Age	33-50 years
Length of residence	3 months-15 years
Race/colour composition	10 white women and 3 women of colour

The sample was relatively privileged in educational and professional terms. Many participants had higher education, extensive work experience, previous entrepreneurial knowledge, English-language education, partner income, savings, or access to training and professional support. These resources differentiated the sample from migrant women with insecure legal positions, low literacy, limited financial support, or restricted access to digital and community resources. Relative privilege was therefore incorporated into the interpretation rather than treated as evidence that structural barriers were absent.

Sample adequacy was assessed through the richness, diversity, and relevance of the material to the research aims. The study does not claim statistical representativeness or complete thematic saturation. Thirteen interviews provided sufficient detail for comparison across trajectories and for the development of the eight thematic categories, while the boundaries of this corpus are recognized in the limitations (Marshall et al., 2013; Vasileiou et al., 2018).

3.4 Data Collection and Ethical Procedures

Data were produced through in-depth semi-structured interviews conducted remotely through Microsoft Teams or Google Meet. The interviews were held in Portuguese, lasted approximately 60 minutes, and were recorded with participants' consent. Participants were recruited through combined convenience and snowball sampling (Albuquerque, 2009; Vinuto, 2014). Initial participants were reached through the researcher's existing contacts among Brazilian migrant networks and were then invited to recommend other women who met the study criteria. Eligible participants had to be Brazilian women living in the United Kingdom who owned a business or self-employment at the time of data collection. No minimum period of residence or business activity was required. Women who did not meet these criteria, withdrew their consent, or did not complete the interview were excluded from the study.

The interview guide followed a funnel structure. It began with broad questions about life history, migration, previous work, and the development of the business. It then moved to labor market barriers, professional identity, business management, gender and family responsibilities, experiences of unequal recognition, social networks, emotional impacts, coping, and well-being. Participants could develop issues they considered relevant and could decline to answer sensitive questions. The complete interview guide can be found in Appendix I. The interviews were transcribed, and the Portuguese-language transcripts remained the primary analytical material. Quotations selected for the dissertation were translated into English after the analysis.

This study is part of the research project entitled “*Gender, Migration, and Work: Identifying Barriers and Coping Strategies in Transnational Female Microentrepreneurship in Brazil*,” which received ethical approval from the Research Ethics Committee of the Federal University of Lavras, under protocol CAAE 98564026.0.0000.5148 (Appendix II). Participant names do not appear in the analytical chapters. The final reporting uses the identifiers P1-P13

and avoids linking the identifiers to detailed demographic profiles or business information that could enable re-identification.

3.5 Data Analysis

Following Bardin's (2011) three-stage framework for content analysis, the data were analyzed through an iterative process informed by principles of qualitative content analysis proposed by Schreier (2012). The first stage, pre-analysis, involved organizing the corpus, repeatedly reading the interview transcripts, and familiarizing the researcher with the data. During the second stage, exploration of the material, open coding was conducted to identify meaningful units of analysis and recurring patterns across the interviews. The coding unit was a coherent passage of one or more sentences expressing an experience, action, evaluation, or meaning relevant to the research problem and objectives. The unit of context was the participant's complete answer and, when needed, the interview as a whole. A passage could receive more than one provisional code when it addressed intersecting dimensions.

Consistent with Schreier's (2012) emphasis on the systematic development and refinement of category systems, the initial descriptive codes were reviewed, compared, and grouped throughout the analysis. Coding was primarily inductive at the initial labeling stage, while the research objectives and the concepts of intersectionality, professional identity, resilience, and psychosocial well-being served as sensitizing lenses during comparison and interpretation. Each interview was first analyzed as a case to preserve context. Provisional codes were then compared across cases, refined, merged, and organized into eight final analytical categories. These eight categories are the final framework used to organize and report the analysis, rather than a list of every provisional label generated during close reading. In Bardin's final stage, treatment of results, inference, and interpretation, the categories were examined in relation to the research questions and literature. Their boundaries were checked by returning to the transcripts, including passages that complicated the dominant pattern.

Intersectionality was operationalized through within-case and cross-case comparison. The researcher examined how particular combinations of gender, race and color, class resources, nationality, language, migration position, and family organization became consequential in specific accounts. It also examined how privilege, care arrangements, financial support, English proficiency, and access to networks shaped exposure to barriers and the resources available in response.

Professional identity reconstruction and resilience were similarly treated as interpretive processes across several categories. Professional identity was traced through occupational downgrading, reuse of previous knowledge, learning, business ownership, professional boundaries, and recognition from clients. Resilience was not coded as a personality trait or inferred from business survival. It was interpreted through the ways participants mobilised and reconfigured personal, relational, professional, and material resources in response to adversity, together with the emotional costs and consequences of those adaptations.

Google Pinpoint was used to organize the interview corpus and to search and retrieve passages from the transcripts. Generative artificial-intelligence tools, including Claude and ChatGPT, were used as ancillary resources for linguistic refinement, structural organization, table formatting, translation support, and a secondary search for potentially overlooked excerpts. They were not treated as independent coders, a separate source of evidence, or a form of methodological triangulation. All coding decisions, code definitions, case comparisons, and interpretations were undertaken by the researcher. Suggestions produced through digital tools were accepted only after verification of the original transcript and the developing analytical framework. Finally, the researcher and her academic supervisor jointly reviewed and validated the results from both analytical stages to ensure thematic consistency, analytical depth, and interpretive accuracy.

3.6 Analytical Framework

Following the coding process, a final coding framework was developed to organize and define the analytical categories used in the content analysis. The framework comprises eight final categories derived from the review, comparison, refinement, and merging of provisional descriptive codes. In this dissertation, coding refers to the procedure of identifying and labeling relevant meanings in the transcripts, whereas analytical categories refer to the broader groupings used to present and interpret the findings. Table 2 defines the eight categories, and Table 3 provides illustrative quotations from the interview transcripts.

Table 2. Analytical categories and operational definitions

No.	Analytical Category	Operational Definition
1	Structural Barriers and Adaptation in the Host Country	Use for the practical and legal obstacles immigrant women face when settling in the UK: the English language, the bureaucratic recognition of foreign diplomas, the need to restart in a lower-status job, and the wider process of arriving and adjusting as a family in a new country.
2	Motivation and business opportunity	Use for the moment the participant explains why she started her own business (financial need, the search for independence) and how she noticed a specific market opportunity, including cases where her immigrant identity itself became part of the business idea or brand.
3	Business management and professional conduct	Use for day-to-day practical challenges of running the business (marketing, legislation, logistics, currency exchange, scaling up), and for comments about keeping high professional standards and setting firm limits with demanding clients.
4	Entrepreneurial skills and financial planning	Use when the participant lists skills she sees as essential for business success (financial, emotional, networking skills) or talks specifically about planning ahead for risk and building financial reserves.
5	Gender, Race, Nationality, and Unequal Recognition	Use when the participant describes prejudice, stereotyping, or being undervalued because she is a woman, a Brazilian immigrant, or, in some cases, a Black woman. This category covers several forms of this discrimination together: prejudice based on nationality, racism combined with gender, professional stereotyping or being made to feel invisible, and the extra pressure of combining motherhood or marriage with running a business.
6	Psychological Impact and Psychosocial Well-Being	Use for reports of psychological distress linked to being far from family or to the pressure of running a business, together with reflections on resilience, on overcoming a personal hardship (such as abuse or divorce), and on the importance of women's independence as part of that same emotional journey.
7	Community relationships and support	Use for accounts of relationships within the Brazilian immigrant community and wider networks - both positive, such as emotional or business support

No.	Analytical Category	Operational Definition
		networks, and negative, such as competition, gossip, or lack of solidarity among Brazilians.
8	Coping, Boundaries, and Redefined Success	Use for practical strategies the participant uses to balance the business with personal life and motherhood (delegating tasks, setting fixed hours, keeping rest days)

Note. see Table 4 for participants sample quotes for each category.

The operational definitions in Table 2 guided the consistent application of the final categories across the corpus. Category boundaries were evaluated through recurrence, relevance to the research problem, variation between cases, and explanatory value. A category did not need to appear in every interview to be retained, and less common or contrasting accounts were considered when they clarified the conditions under which a pattern did or did not occur. Table 3 complements the definitions with illustrative quotations.

Table 3. Illustrative Quotations by Analytical Category

No.	Analytical Category	Sample Quote
1	Structural Barriers and Adaptation in the Host Country	“At the time, I believed I would quickly be able to work in my field, but I faced many difficulties related to professional validation.” (P12) “One of the greatest difficulties is bureaucracy. When you open a company in another country, you need to learn completely different rules. I also face challenges related to the supply of specific products. Many items used for Afro hair need to be imported.” (P10)
2	Motivation and business opportunity	“In the beginning it was financial need. My salary as a babysitter helped, but it was not enough (...) But I discovered that I loved being an entrepreneur.” (P9)
3	Business management and professional conduct	“The main difficulty is keeping up with constant changes in legislation. Another challenge is teaching clients about their finances.” (P12) “One of my requirements that I put in my Facebook advert is that, just as I respect the person’s limit, especially Brazilians should respect the price, and that I work with excellence, deliver quality and am punctual.” (P3)
4	Entrepreneurial skills and financial planning	“I see many very talented women who struggle because they do not know the financial side of the business.” (P12) “We often focus only on technical skills and forget that emotional management is equally important. I also consider it essential to develop communication and networking skills.” (P7)
5	Gender, Race, Nationality, and Unequal Recognition	“I was often the only woman in certain business meetings (...) my opinions were questioned more often than those of male colleagues.” (P12)
6	Psychological Impact and Psychosocial Well-Being	“Immigration made me more resilient. It also taught me how to live with uncertainty. At the same time, there were important losses related to family life.” (P12) “I think ‘I am not managing to help myself’. I became very distressed, I cried a lot. Then I went to ask for psychological help, to help me and to talk, to have someone to talk to.” (P5)

No.	Analytical Category	Sample Quote
7	Community relationships and support	“I have the group Mulheres do Brasil [Women of Brazil] (...) I felt an incredible welcome from these wonderful people.” (P11) “There is a lot of disorganisation, there is a lot of competition. And this competition generates a lot of friction and confusion among the women, and it is horrible.” (P3)
8	Coping, Boundaries, and Redefined Success	“I have a young child, and I try to plan my schedule around his needs (...) I learned that taking care of myself is also part of my business’s success.” (P9) “I organise my schedule well in advance. I try to reserve time for rest, leisure and family life. Today I understand that productivity does not mean working without stopping. The better I am emotionally, the better I can serve my clients.” (P7)

Note. Quotations are illustrative, not exhaustive. They were translated from the original Portuguese interviews with the support of an AI-based translation tool and manually reviewed by the researcher against the transcripts to preserve meaning and register. Because translation may shift affective and idiomatic nuance, this issue is acknowledged as a study limitation.

The interview guide directly invited discussion of several domains, and the interviews varied in depth; participant counts would therefore indicate coverage in this corpus, not analytical importance. The analysis gives priority to the meaning, context, variation, and explanatory contribution of each category.

4. Results and discussion

The analysis produced eight interconnected categories that explain how migration, labor market conditions, and entrepreneurship became part of the same professional trajectory. The categories are presented in a sequence to make the findings easier to follow but this sequence does not represent fixed stages. In the interviews, these processes often occurred at the same time and changed as the women's personal, family, and business circumstances changed.

Two concepts central to the research question, professional identity reconstruction and resilience, are analyzed across categories rather than presented as separate sections. Professional identity becomes visible through occupational downgrading, the motivation to regain autonomy, professional conduct, learning, recognition, and psychosocial well-being. Resilience is examined through coping, planning, support, boundaries, and the resources mobilized in response to adversity. Treating both concepts as cross-cutting processes makes it possible to show how they developed throughout the women's entrepreneurial trajectories.

The findings answer the research question by showing that entry into entrepreneurship was shaped by the gap between the participants' previous professional resources and the conditions under which these resources could be used in the United Kingdom. Foreign qualifications, English proficiency, local experience, care responsibilities, legal and bureaucratic requirements, and access to networks affected the occupational alternatives available to each woman. Entrepreneurship therefore emerged neither as a fully free choice nor as a simple reaction to exclusion. It was a situated pathway through which the women tried to

produce income, regain autonomy, use previous knowledge, respond to market needs, and rebuild a valued professional position.

Many participants had higher education, long professional experience, previous entrepreneurial knowledge, or access to resources such as a partner's income, prior international travel, English courses, professional training, and psychological support. Ten participants were identified as white and three as women of color. These characteristics placed much of the group in a relatively privileged position when compared with migrant women who have fewer educational, financial, legal, or relational resources. However, this relative privilege did not guarantee professional continuity after migration. Instead, the data show that resources acquired in Brazil were valued differently in the United Kingdom and that privilege and disadvantage could coexist. This point is important for avoiding two opposite conclusions: that all migrant women are equally marginalized, or that highly educated women are protected from occupational loss, gendered pressures, and emotional distress.

4.1 Structural Barriers and Adaptation in the Host Country

The first category shows that international mobility and professional mobility were separate processes. The participants had been able to move to the United Kingdom, but this did not mean that they could immediately reproduce their previous occupational positions. Several women arrived with degrees, established careers, or businesses in Brazil. After migration, however, their qualifications had to be translated, validated, supplemented with local certifications, or demonstrated again through British experience. English proficiency also affected more than daily communication: it influenced whether professional knowledge could be expressed and recognized.

P1 described this gap through the shame she initially felt after moving from administrative employment in Brazil to cleaning work in the United Kingdom. Her account also shows that occupational downgrading was not interpreted in only one way. The work was

first experienced as a loss of status, but later became a source of income and an opening for business development:

At first, I was ashamed to tell people in Brazil that I was working in cleaning because I felt that I had moved many steps backwards in my professional trajectory. But reality taught me something else. I realized that the work was dignified, that it allowed me to pay my bills, and, above all, that there was an opportunity to grow. (P1)

This change in meaning is consistent with Fernando and Patriotta's (2020) argument that occupational downgrading affects professional identity but can be interpreted through different narratives. P1 gradually gave new meaning to cleaning work by moving from an employee position to control over her own clients and, later, a team. Her trajectory therefore involved both occupational loss and the construction of a new source of professional value.

For participants in regulated or specialized fields, the transfer of professional capital was limited by formal and informal rules. P5, for example, had extensive experience and had previously managed a business, but she was required to complete new certifications before practicing in the United Kingdom. She stated that she had to "start from zero" once again and that the process involved several bureaucratic stages, financial costs, and training that did not add substantially to knowledge she already possessed. P2 similarly found that validation of her legal education did not give her the same professional status she had held in Brazil. She could work only in a supervised role while accumulating the local experience required for further qualifications.

These accounts reflect Erel's (2010) argument that cultural and professional capital is not transported unchanged across borders. Its value is negotiated within the institutions, occupational rules, and social relations of the destination country. They also illustrate the broader process described by Elo et al. (2025): highly educated migrant women may possess substantial knowledge while being unable to use it fully because of accreditation, language, local-experience requirements, or family responsibilities. The data therefore support a

distinction between the capability to migrate and the capability to continue a career after migration (de Haas, 2021).

Language was central to this process because it shaped both access to work and the social recognition of competence. P2 explained that difficulty speaking could be interpreted as lack of knowledge:

When you cannot express yourself properly, people think that you do not know. In the beginning, this was frustrating. I would say, "Wait, I will write it for you," because I knew what I wanted to explain. Over time, people understood my accent, but language was the main barrier for me. (P2)

P3 also arrived with very limited English. Unlike P2, she entered an occupation that did not require formal validation, but language still affected her independence and access to clients. She responded by studying every day, listening to podcasts while working, using language applications, and asking clients to speak English with her. Her account shows identity work in practice: learning the language was not only adaptation to daily life but also a strategy for reducing dependence on intermediaries and building a direct client base. This supports Netto et al.'s (2020) view that professional identity reconstruction involves concrete actions, such as language learning and skill development, whose effectiveness depends on available time, information, and support.

The interviews also contained an important contrasting case. P4 did not experience English as a major barrier because she had learned it before migration. Her family had a stable financial position in Brazil, prior international travel, a migration route linked to her partner's skilled employment, and support from his employer. She explained:

I already spoke English, so the language barrier was not a major issue. Maybe there was a little difficulty in the first months, but I adjusted quickly. My main focus was supporting my family through the transition, understanding how the schools worked, and navigating systems that were different from Brazil. I took on the role of a stay-at-home mother. (P4)

P4's experience demonstrates why structural conditions should not be assumed to affect all migrants equally. English proficiency, financial stability, prior mobility, and institutional support reduced several barriers. Yet her post-migration trajectory remained gendered: while

her partner continued in paid employment, she assumed primary responsibility for family settlement and care within an arrangement that reproduced conventional gender roles, delaying her return to professional work until after the pandemic. This reflects Collins's (2000) understanding of motherhood as dialectical: it may constitute a meaningful site of self-definition while simultaneously reproducing gendered constraints. In de Haas's (2021) terms, P4 possessed substantial migration capabilities, but their translation into professional opportunities was temporarily restricted by the gendered distribution of family responsibilities.

4.2 Motivation and Business Opportunity

The second category concerns the point at which occupational restrictions, financial needs, previous skills, and perceived demand were converted into a business idea. The accounts did not support a clear division between necessity and opportunity entrepreneurship. For many participants, both elements were present from the beginning or changed in importance as the business developed.

Table 4 provides a participant-by-participant overview of the main motivations described in the interviews. The entries summarize the dominant emphasis in each account for comparative purposes; they are not mutually exclusive classifications, because necessity, opportunity, autonomy, identity, family circumstances, and market demand frequently overlapped.

Table 4*Motivations for entrepreneurship*

Participant	Main entrepreneurial motivation	Illustrative interview excerpt
P1	Seeking autonomy, better financial recognition, and opportunities for other immigrant women.	"My main motivation was autonomy. I realised I was working really hard for other people and only getting a small part of what clients were paying. I also saw that a lot of companies did not really value their employees. I wanted to build something different."
P2	Pursuing freedom and financial independence after experiencing domestic and financial abuse.	"Since I did not have money to hire a lawyer, and I was already a lawyer back in Brazil, I started handling my own case. I got my own divorce, applied for child support, and even claimed government benefits. I learned by dealing with my own situation. That was when the opportunity came up to work as a legal consultant for Brazilians."
P3	Seeking autonomy and recognition for high-quality work after dissatisfaction with routes managed by others.	"I kept thinking, 'I want something better. I need something better in my life, and I am going after it.' [...] That was when I started moving away from other people's cleaning routes and improving my own work, making it high-quality, because that really matters."
P4	Returning to the labor market and recovering her professional identity after the family's initial adaptation period and the pandemic.	"After the pandemic, I started reflecting a lot on my life. Back in Brazil, I had a career; I am qualified. But here, I was not working or earning my own money. I thought, 'I should try something.' [...] After the pandemic settled, I began maturing the idea of returning to work and starting my own business."
P5	Seeking professional and financial freedom while overcoming fear of starting a business.	"Honestly, it is so much better to have your own business. I am free; I do what I want now. [...] I started a business in Brazil, failed, then went to another country, and now I am in London. I have been an entrepreneur for over 18 years."
P6	Regaining financial independence and recovering her professional identity after migration.	"My main motivation was getting my financial and professional independence back. When you migrate, you often lose important parts of who you are. I stopped being the manager leading teams and became just 'the wife who followed her husband.'"
P7	Building on a previous entrepreneurial orientation and responding to immigrant women's need for specialized health and self-esteem support.	"I have always had an entrepreneurial mindset. Even back in Brazil, I already had some private clients. Moving abroad just sped things up. I realised that many immigrant women were struggling with self-esteem, anxiety, and adapting to a new country."
P8	Regaining professional autonomy and identity while addressing a gap in bureaucratic support for Brazilians.	"My biggest motivation was getting my professional autonomy back. During my first few years here, I felt like I had lost an important part of who I was. [...] Starting my business happened much more because I saw a need than because I had a well-structured business plan."

Participant	Main entrepreneurial motivation	Illustrative interview excerpt
P9	Initially supplementing family income out of financial necessity and later discovering a passion for entrepreneurship.	"At first, it was all about needing extra income. [...] Baking started almost as a side income, but then I realised I absolutely loved running my own business. I loved creating new products, talking to customers, and being part of special moments in people's lives."
P10	Recovering her professional identity and passion while responding to the lack of specialized services for Afro and curly hair.	"My biggest motivation was my professional identity. I felt like I was surviving, not really living. I have always loved what I do. [...] A lot of Black women kept saying they could not find professionals who really knew how to work with their hair."
P11	Rebuilding her career after losing her job during the pandemic and responding to an unexpected business opportunity.	"Then, luckily, a friend who was renovating her home asked me to do the project. That was when I thought, 'Well, I guess I have a company now.' I realized I needed to learn how to be a business owner, because I already knew how to work in my profession."
P12	Recognizing a market opportunity among Brazilian small businesses facing UK tax and financial-management difficulties.	"I realized that many Brazilian small businesses had trouble understanding the UK's tax and financial rules. They knew their products or services really well, but they did not know much about financial management. I saw an opportunity there."
P13	Turning barriers to the traditional UK labour market into a low-cost digital business opportunity.	"My main motivation was turning a problem into an opportunity. Once I realized I would face barriers entering the traditional labor market, I started looking for other options. Digital entrepreneurship felt like the natural choice because it did not require much money to get started."

Entrepreneurship was commonly connected to financial independence, professional identity reconstruction, dissatisfaction with available work, previous entrepreneurial experience, or the recognition of unmet needs. The excerpts also demonstrate why motivation should be treated as dynamic: the initial reason for starting an activity did not necessarily determine the meaning that the business later acquired.

P9's trajectory illustrates this movement clearly. She began selling Brazilian food while working in a lower-paid occupation, initially to supplement family income. The activity later became meaningful beyond its financial function:

In the beginning, it was financial need. My salary helped, but it was not enough for us to reach our goals. The business began almost as extra income. Then I discovered that I loved being an entrepreneur. I liked creating products, talking to customers, and being part of important moments in people's lives. (P9)

This account supports Fairlie and Fossen's (2020) and Williams and Williams's (2014) criticism of treating opportunity and necessity as self-evident, fixed categories. Financial constraint explained the initial action, but it did not define the later meaning of the business. As the venture grew, P9 developed enjoyment, professional commitment, and a stronger entrepreneurial identity. This temporal movement is also consistent with Coffman et al. (2025), who argue that entrepreneurs may move from constrained forms of business creation towards more desired futures.

For other participants, the main motivation was to regain professional and financial autonomy after migration. P6 had held a management position in Brazil but initially migrated because of her partner's work. She described the effect of this transition on her identity:

When you migrate, you often lose important references from your identity. I stopped being the professional who coordinated teams and became only "the wife who followed her husband." This affected me deeply. The main motivation for starting the business was to recover my financial and professional independence. (P6)

The phrase "only the wife" reveals the two dimensions of gender inequality identified by Fraser (2007): P6 experienced both a material loss of financial autonomy and a symbolic loss of professional recognition. Entrepreneurship enabled her to recover income and professional identity, but this should not be interpreted as a complete resolution of the gendered family arrangement that produced the disruption. As Ahl and Marlow (2021) caution, entrepreneurship may individualize structurally gendered problems by placing responsibility on women to reconstruct their own autonomy. In P6's case, business creation was therefore both an exercise of agency and a response to economic dependency and status subordination. This finding parallels García and Villares-Varela's (2023) analysis of migrant women's entrepreneurship as a space where professional, maternal, and family identities are negotiated together.

P8 similarly linked entrepreneurship to the recovery of a valued professional self. After experiencing limits on the use of her qualification, she recognized that other Brazilians needed help with the same bureaucratic processes she had learned to navigate:

During my first years here, I felt that I had lost an important part of who I was. In Brazil, I was recognized through my profession. Here, I reached a point where I introduced myself only as a mother or an immigrant. When I began helping other Brazilians, I realized that I was using my previous skills again: listening, analyzing documents, solving problems, and mediating conflicts. (P8)

In this case, migration experience became both a source of difficulty and a form of knowledge that could be converted into a service. P8 did not simply discover a pre-existing opportunity. The opportunity was created through the combination of previous expertise, personal experience with migration, further study, and repeated requests for assistance. This process reflects Lassalle et al.'s (2020) argument that migrant entrepreneurial opportunities are developed through the changing use of knowledge and relationships rather than merely found in the market.

Other participants also identified unmet needs within Brazilian or wider migrant communities. These included culturally familiar products, support for small businesses, specialized services for Black and immigrant women, and communication services for entrepreneurs unfamiliar with the British market. Migrant identity consequently operated in two ways. It could limit recognition in mainstream employment, but it could also support trust, cultural understanding, and access to a specific client group. However, the data do not suggest that ethnic or migrant markets were automatically advantageous. Several women later faced difficulties in expanding beyond Brazilian clients, and dependence on a restricted community could limit growth.

Prior entrepreneurial experience also differentiated the pathways into business. P5 had been self-employed for many years and had already established businesses in more than one country. For her, the United Kingdom represented another process of rebuilding rather than a first entrepreneurial attempt. P7 had also provided services independently in Brazil and

described migration as an acceleration of an existing entrepreneurial orientation. In contrast, P11 entered business unexpectedly after employment opportunities contracted during the pandemic. These differences confirm that entrepreneurship should not be treated as a uniform migrant response. The same destination-country conditions interacted with different biographies, resources, and aspirations.

Overall, the second category answers the first specific objective by showing that entrepreneurial motivations were mixed and dynamic. Financial need, labor market barriers, autonomy, identity recovery, family needs, prior entrepreneurial experience, and opportunity recognition were combined in different ways. Entrepreneurship took shape when the women could connect these motives to usable knowledge, clients, networks, or low-cost forms of entry.

4.3 Business Management and Professional Conduct

Starting a business did not remove the constraints experienced after migration. It brought new demands related to legislation, taxes, marketing, logistics, suppliers, clients, employees, and access to markets. The participants had to combine knowledge acquired in Brazil with the practical requirements of running a business in the United Kingdom. Professional identity reconstruction therefore continued after the business was created. It involved not only recovering autonomy, but also learning how to manage risks, make decisions, and be recognized as a business owner.

These demands changed as the businesses developed. P1 began by providing cleaning services alone but later built a company with eight employees. As the business grew, her main challenge shifted from performing the service to coordinating people and managing the responsibilities of an employer:

Managing people is one of the greatest difficulties. When you work alone, you depend only on yourself. When you have a team, you have to deal with different histories, needs, and expectations. There are also issues related to documentation, insurance, taxes, and regulations. Another problem is that many clients cancel services at the last minute, and this directly affects income. London is also a very large city, so travelling between different areas takes a lot of time. (P1)

Growth gave P1 greater control over her work, but it also increased her responsibilities. Her income became dependent on employees, client cancellations, travel time, and compliance with local rules. This supports the mixed-embeddedness perspective discussed by Jones et al. (2012). The development of a business depends on the entrepreneur's actions, but also on labour arrangements, regulations, market practices, and the characteristics of the local environment. P1's previous administrative experience helped her, but it did not fully prepare her for managing a company in a different country.

P10 faced another set of management difficulties. Her specialized knowledge of Afro and curly hair allowed her to respond to a demand that was not being met by many local professionals. However, providing this service also required imported products, knowledge of British regulations, and the ability to manage a multicultural team:

One of the greatest difficulties is bureaucracy. When you open a company in another country, you need to learn completely different rules. I also face challenges related to the supply of specific products, because many items used for Afro hair need to be imported. Another difficulty is managing a multicultural team. Each person has a different way of working, different expectations, and different cultural references. (P10)

Her experience shows that technical knowledge alone was not enough to sustain the business. The same specialisation that created a market opportunity also made the company dependent on imported products and specific supply networks. Managing employees from different cultural backgrounds added another layer of responsibility. As Erel (2010) argues, migrants do not simply transfer their professional knowledge unchanged from one country to another. The value and use of this knowledge are shaped by local institutions, markets, and social relationships. P10 had to adapt her previous expertise while learning about regulations, suppliers, and team management in the British context.

P8's business required a different form of adaptation. Her previous legal knowledge and her own migration experience helped her provide support to Brazilian clients. Shared language and experience helped her build trust within this community. At the same time, the concentration of her client base among Brazilians made it more difficult to reach other markets.

She also needed to follow frequent changes in migration policy and manage different expectations about how services should be provided:

The main difficulty continues to be building credibility outside the Brazilian community. Among Brazilians, there is an immediate identification because we share similar experiences. To reach other groups, I need to prove my competence constantly. Another difficulty is following frequent changes in migration policies. British people value formal processes, planning, and predictability, while Brazilians often seek help in emergency situations. I need to move between these two ways of working. When you work alone, there is no financial, legal, or marketing department. You take on all these roles at the same time. (P8)

P8's account shows the double role of migrant networks. The Brazilian community supported the beginning of the business by providing clients, trust, and knowledge of common problems. However, these connections did not automatically provide access to a wider market. Lassalle et al. (2020) make a similar point: migrant networks can support business creation, but growth may depend on establishing connections beyond the immediate migrant community. In P8's case, it is more accurate to say that her client base remained concentrated among Brazilians, rather than that all her professional relationships were limited to this group.

Her work also involved cultural mediation. She needed to work with the formality and predictability expected in the British context while responding to Brazilian clients who often contacted her during urgent situations. Professional conduct therefore included more than technical knowledge. It required communication, cultural understanding, emotional control, and the ability to define how and when the service would be provided.

For P13, the main difficulties came from the speed and instability of digital work. Working online allowed her to serve clients in the United Kingdom, Brazil, Portugal, and Ireland. However, it also made her business dependent on platforms that changed constantly and on clients who expected quick results:

The greatest difficulty is keeping up with the speed of technological change. The platforms change constantly, and what works today may not work a few months from now. There is also strong pressure for results. Many clients expect rapid growth and do not always understand that marketing requires time and strategy. (P13)

Online work expanded P13's market, but wider access did not remove uncertainty. She had to update her knowledge continuously and explain to clients why marketing results could not be immediate or guaranteed. Her account also shows that transnational business activity is not necessarily an advantage in itself. As Emontspool and Servais (2017) argue, cross-border entrepreneurship needs to be understood through the practices, relationships, and resources that make it possible. In P13's case, access to clients in several countries was accompanied by technological dependence, constant learning, and pressure to demonstrate results.

Client relationships were also important in more traditional service businesses. P3 developed independence by working directly with clients, defining what was included in the price, and refusing requests that went beyond the agreed service. In one interaction, she responded to a client who treated her as if she were an employee:

I understand that you have a boss. I do not have a boss; you hired my company. I am here to deliver the work, and then you can evaluate it. (P3)

This response protected the agreed price and the limits of the service. It also showed how P3 wanted to be recognized professionally. By saying "you hired my company," she rejected the position of a subordinate worker and presented herself as responsible for a business, even though she worked alone. Quality, punctuality, direct communication, and control over the service became practical ways of building professional legitimacy.

P3's experience is related to Fernando and Patriotta's (2020) discussion of professional identity reconstruction. After occupational change, migrants need to develop new understandings of their competence, value, and professional position. It also reflects Netto et al.'s (2020) argument that identity work involves practical actions. Professional recognition is not built only through personal confidence. It also develops through learning, reputation, communication, and everyday interactions with clients and institutions.

Business ownership gave the women more authority over some aspects of their work, but it did not create complete independence. Their decisions continued to be shaped by

regulations, clients, employees, suppliers, technologies, and market access. Professional identity was reconstructed through this everyday work of adapting previous knowledge, learning new responsibilities, and negotiating how others recognised their competence. Entrepreneurship therefore represented a situated form of professional repositioning rather than freedom from the constraints connected to migration.

4.4 Entrepreneurial Skills and Financial Planning

The fourth category distinguishes prior professional competence from the learning and resources required to develop a business. Participants had to acquire knowledge related to finance, risk planning, training, networking, confidence, and strategic decision-making while continuing to provide their services.

P11 expressed this distinction in a concise way after an unexpected project became the beginning of her company: "[...] That was when I realized that I needed to learn how to be a business owner, because I already knew how to do my profession" (P11). Her technical expertise was substantial, but she described marketing, sales, financial forecasting, and tax planning as areas in which she was still learning. A later tax payment that she had not anticipated became a serious financial setback. Her experience shows that prior professional competence is a resource, but it is not equivalent to entrepreneurial competence.

This distinction appeared across different sectors. P12 stressed the need to follow frequent changes in legislation and to educate clients before financial problems became severe. She also described planning as the main principle in her trajectory:

I try to anticipate risks, build financial reserves, and develop different sources of income. I see many very talented women who face difficulties because they do not understand the financial side of the business. It is not enough to be good at the service; confidence and strategic vision are also necessary. (P12)

For P4, the main management challenge did not occur at the beginning. Her business grew organically through personal contacts, and her current difficulty was moving from individual clients to the corporate market. This required learning new bureaucratic

requirements, strengthening her professional presentation, completing courses, and using networks beyond the Brazilian community. The contrast between P4 and P11 suggests that business demands change over time: early survival, professionalization, and scaling require different resources. The emphasis on planning, confidence, calculated risk, and achievement also reflects entrepreneurial behavior research discussed by Rauch (2014) and Steenkamp et al. (2024), although the interviews show that these individual capacities depended on access to time, training, finance, and support.

These findings extend the discussion of professional identity beyond recovery of a pre-migration career. Some women returned to activities related to previous qualifications, while others constructed professional value in new sectors. In both cases, identity was rebuilt through practical learning and recognition from clients, not only through personal confidence. This supports Remennick's (2013) argument that professional identity depends on how knowledge and competence are recognized within the new environment. It also supports Netto et al. (2020), because progression required material resources: time to study, money for courses and certifications, access to advisers, family support, and the possibility of absorbing financial mistakes.

The category also reveals a class dimension. Participants who could invest in training, use savings, rely temporarily on a partner's income, or access professional networks had more room to learn and adjust. Those with immediate income needs had to develop business skills while continuing intensive paid work. Entrepreneurial agency was present in both situations, but the cost and risk of skill building were not equally distributed. This is consistent with the mixed-embeddedness perspective: business development depends on individual action within wider institutional, market, and network conditions (Jones et al., 2012; Lassalle et al., 2020).

4.5 Gender, Race, Nationality, and Unequal Recognition

The fifth code discusses gender, race, nationality, language, and class shaped professional recognition. The findings do not suggest that all participants experienced the same forms of discrimination. Some reported direct discriminatory treatment, others described subtler forms of professional invisibility, and some did not identify discrimination in their own trajectories. A situated intersectional analysis preserves this heterogeneity while showing how different social positions became consequential under particular conditions (Cho et al., 2013; Viveros Vigoya, 2016).

P10's account provides the clearest evidence of direct discrimination at the intersection of race, gender, and migrant status. As a Black business owner in a specialized service sector, she described situations in which external partners attributed greater technical authority to the men accompanying her:

I noticed this mainly because I am a Black woman and an immigrant. In some situations, I had to prove my competence more times than other people. There were suppliers who directed technical questions to men who were with me, even though I was the owner of the business. (P10)

P10's account documents direct racialized and gendered discrimination. Despite holding both formal ownership and the relevant technical expertise, her authority was disregarded and reassigned to the men present. This can be understood as a form of epistemic injustice: identity-based prejudice produced a credibility deficit that prevented her from being immediately recognized as the legitimate holder of technical knowledge (Fricker, 2007). It also reflects what Essed (1991) conceptualizes as gendered racism embedded in everyday practices. The routine character of these interactions does not make them less discriminatory; instead, it demonstrates how racialized and gendered hierarchies of authority can be reproduced without explicit statements of prejudice.

Intersectional invisibility further helps explain this denial of authority. Purdie-Vaughns and Eibach (2008) argue that Black women may be overlooked because they do not correspond

to dominant prototypes shaped by both androcentrism and whiteness. consequently,preneurial context, Jackson and Sanyal (2019) similarly found that Black women business owners do not fit the conventional image of the entrepreneur, which remains implicitly White and male, and consequently face recurring doubts regarding their competence and professionalism. P10's repeated need to prove herself illustrates this unequal burden of credibility: her ownership was formally established, but her recognition as an owner and technical authority remained conditional.

P12 also described unequal recognition in male-dominated business settings: "I was often the only woman in certain meetings. At times, I noticed that my opinions were questioned more often than those of male colleagues" (P12). P13 used the expression "professional invisibility" to describe how migrant women may arrive with education and experience but still need to demonstrate their value again. In these cases, entrepreneurship created greater control over work, but it did not remove gendered expectations about competence.

Gender inequality also appeared within family organizations. Several participants described responsibility for childcare, the home, and the family's emotional adaptation while developing a business. P4's trajectory showed that this work could postpone professional return even in a financially secure household. P9 and P10 described the pressure of being a business owner, mother, and partner at the same time. P6 reported feeling that she had to choose between being a "good mother" and a "good businesswoman." These accounts are consistent with García and Villares-Varela (2023), who show that migrant women may use business ownership to gain autonomy while continuing to organize work around care.

However, direct discrimination was not universal. P4 explicitly stated that being an immigrant woman had helped her connect with her mainly female migrant clients and that she had not experienced a disadvantage in her own work:

The fact that I am an immigrant woman has even helped me because my clients are also immigrant women. They identify with me, and I understand what it means to be an immigrant woman here. I have heard other women describe barriers, but in my own work I have not seen being a woman as a problem. (P4)

P3 similarly said that she felt well received by British clients and did not report racial discrimination from them, although she described hostility and exploitation in some relationships with Brazilian intermediaries. These divergent accounts are analytically important. They show that nationality and gender do not carry fixed consequences across all sectors, client groups, migration routes, or racial positions. For P4, shared migrant and gender experience became a source of identification and market legitimacy. For P10, the intersection of being Black, female, and foreign affected recognition in technical interactions. Intersectionality therefore explains variation rather than requiring a uniform narrative of disadvantage.

Relative privilege helps explain part of this variation. Higher education, whiteness for most of the sample, a skilled partner's income, more secure migration positions for some participants, prior English proficiency, and access to training or networks could reduce exposure to some constraints. These resources also helped participants respond when barriers occurred. At the same time, they did not cancel the effects of care responsibilities, foreign credential systems, accent, racialization, or gendered professional expectations. Following Viveros Vigoya (2016), privilege and disadvantage should be analyzed relationally: a woman may be advantaged by class or education and disadvantaged in a particular professional encounter through gender, race, or migrant status.

The sample composition also limits the reach of the findings. Because the participants generally had substantial educational or professional resources, the study may not capture the experiences of women with insecure migration status, low literacy, no financial support, or limited access to digital and community resources. The narratives of resilience and business

creation must therefore be interpreted within these conditions rather than presented as evidence that individual determination is sufficient to overcome structural inequality.

4.6 Psychological Impact and Psychosocial Well-Being

The sixth category shows that migration and entrepreneurship was associated with both psychosocial gains and emotional costs. Participants described loneliness, homesickness, anxiety, financial uncertainty, excessive responsibility, fear of failure, family separation, and, in some cases, depression or previous abuse. At the same time, business ownership could provide autonomy, meaning, confidence, and renewed professional recognition. These experiences often coexisted within the same narrative.

P11 gave the most direct account of depression. Her business faced financial pressure while she also experienced changes in her physical health and carried substantial concern for her partner and children. She explained:

I was still functional, but I did not believe in myself. I thought I was worthless and that everyone thought the same. I lost hope. That was when I understood that I was experiencing depression. I sought medical help, and therapy has also been important for me. (P11)

This account shows why business continuation cannot be treated as proof of well-being or resilience. P11 continued working and caring for her family while experiencing significant distress. Her functioning concealed part of the emotional cost. The finding supports Hartmann et al.'s (2022) warning that resilience should not be inferred only from an observable outcome such as persistence or business survival.

P5 also challenged the idea that a generally calm or capable person is protected from distress. During the pandemic and a previous migration stage, isolation and separation from family exceeded her usual coping resources:

I became very distressed and cried a lot. I reached a point where I thought, "I do not think I am managing to help myself." Then I sought psychological support so that I could receive help and have someone to talk to. (P5)

P8 described a similar combination of losses and pressures. She discussed missing family events, the emotional effect of winter, the loneliness of making every business decision

alone, and anxiety caused by unstable monthly income. P12 also summarized the ambivalence of migration when she said that it made her more resilient and taught her to live with uncertainty but also caused painful losses in family life.

These narratives are consistent with Abonil et al. (2024), who found that entrepreneurship can offer meaning and control while also producing financial insecurity, long hours, uncertainty, and loneliness. In the present study, these pressures were intensified by migration because family support was distant, occupational identities had been disrupted, and participants had to navigate unfamiliar systems. This pattern also reflects research on individual entrepreneurial resilience and the often-silent mental-health challenges experienced by immigrant entrepreneurs (Fisher et al., 2016; Muchineripi & Nguza-Mduba, 2025). The findings further connect with Eriksen et al. (2026): access to meaningful professional activity affected more than income, because it was linked to self-esteem, purpose, belonging, and perceived social contribution.

P2's account demonstrates the need for caution when interpreting resilience. After domestic and financial abuse, separation, housing instability, and professional dependency, she described rebuilding as a matter of survival:

I think my mental health was cared for by necessity. Either I took care of myself, valued myself, and got up, because there was no one to lift me from the bed. I suffered. (P2)

It would be reductive to describe it only as a successful story of strength. The need to act without adequate support was itself part of adversity. A processual understanding of resilience is more appropriate: P2 mobilized legal knowledge, public information, friendships, paid work, and later a new relationship to rebuild functioning over time. In this sense, resilience was not a fixed personal trait; it developed through actions and resources in response to changing conditions (Bernard & Barbosa, 2016; Hartmann et al., 2022).

Through the interviews, professional identity reconstruction and well-being were closely connected but not identical. Regaining income, using previous knowledge, or being

recognized by clients could increase confidence and meaning. P10 described the opening of her own workspace as proof that she had rebuilt her professional life. P1 attached strong emotional value to milestones that represented independence. P6 described the business as a recovery of autonomy. Nevertheless, professional recovery did not automatically reduce anxiety or create balance. Growth could increase workloads, financial responsibility, and fear of disappointing clients.

The results therefore support an ambivalent interpretation of entrepreneurship. It operated as a psychosocial resource when it restored agency, professional value, social contact, and purpose. It also operated as a source of demand through insecurity, overwork, isolation, and responsibility. Resilience was visible in the ways participants adapted, sought help, learned, and continued to pursue valued goals, but it sometimes involved high emotional costs. This distinction prevents the romanticization of migrant women's suffering and keeps attention on the social and material resources that made adaptation possible.

4.7 Community Relationships and Support

Community and professional relationships were, at once, a business resource and psychosocial one. They helped participants to find clients, obtain referrals, understand local practices, access advice, develop friendships, and cope with loneliness. However, for some participants they also produced conflict.

P11 described having friends from different periods of her migration and joining a Brazilian women's group that provided "an incredible welcome." She valued the group not only for business contacts but also for practical information and emerging friendships. P8 likewise developed a network that included Brazilian, British, and other migrant women, allowing her to obtain both technical advice and emotional support: "I developed a very strong support network. I have Brazilian entrepreneur friends, English friends, and women other nationalities. This exchange is extremely valuable."

The composition of P8's network is analytically relevant because it extended beyond the co-national circle. Lassalle et al. (2020) identify as decisive for business development. Participants whose client base remained concentrated to the Brazilian community described difficulties reaching customers outside it, a pattern already visible in 4.2, where several women found it hard to move beyond Brazilian customers.

P13 connected these relationships more directly to the emotional and practical demands of entrepreneurship:

Immigration brought growth, but also emotional strain. There is a loneliness that few people understand. [...] Entrepreneurship can also be very lonely. Most decisions depend only on you. That is why I began investing more in therapy and networking groups. [...] Talking to other women entrepreneurs helps a great deal. Often, someone has faced a similar challenge and can share her experience. Opportunities usually arise through people. (P13)

These accounts show why business and emotional support were difficult to separate. Conversations that reduced isolation could also provide information, advice, and reassurance when participants faced unfamiliar business problems. Relationships therefore supported well-being not only through companionship, but also by making uncertainty easier to manage (Abonil et al., 2024; Robertson & Grant, 2016).

The same networks also generated friction. P3 was direct about it:

There is a lot of disorganization, there is a lot of competition. And this competition generates a lot of friction and confusion among the women, and it is horrible. (P3).

P5 expressed both sides of this experience:

The women's group helped me a great deal. I met more women and saw that some wanted to help one another. But not every woman is the same. Some will want to help you, and some may try to take advantage of you. (P5)

The same relational space offered welcome and rivalry, information and gossip, referral and exploitation, and participants had to judge which was which without much to go on. These findings support Azeredo's (2024) argument that Brazilian migrant communities are internally differentiated by class, region, legal status, and relationship to Brazilian identity, and should not be treated as a single body producing uniform solidarity. They also qualify a common assumption in the migrant entrepreneurship literature: co-ethnic ties are frequently described

as an asset, but for these participants their value depended on which part of the community was involved, on what terms, and at what stage of the business.

Community networks were therefore neither entirely supportive nor entirely harmful. Their value changed according to their composition, the quality of the relationships, the participants' stage of business development, and the resources available to them. For some women, these networks created belonging and opened professional opportunities. For others, they required caution, selectivity, and the gradual construction of more independent relationships with clients.

4.8 Coping, Boundaries, and Redefined Success

The eighth category brings together the personal and practical responses participants used to manage emotional and business demands. Coping included therapy, exercise, spirituality, learning, planning, family support, delegation, limits on working hours, and changes in the meaning of success.

Professional psychological support was mentioned by several participants. P5, P7, P8, P9, P10, P11, and P13 described therapy as part of coping or recovery. Exercise, meditation, yoga, walking, religion, and time outdoors were also used to regulate stress. These practices were usually combined rather than treated as single solutions. They also reflected unequal access: therapy, courses, leisure, and protected time were easier to use when participants had financial resources, flexible work, childcare, or partner support.

Work-life boundaries became more important after periods of overwork. P9 stopped accepting every order, reserved at least one evening each week without work, and organised her schedule around a young child. P3 planned her week so that the weekend could include rest, church, or social events:

I plan. I work from Monday to Friday. On Saturday, I try to stay at home and rest, or I go to an event with the women. On Sunday, we stay at home or go to church. Because I work for myself, I have more control over my time and I feel that I have more quality of life. (P3)

P3's account shows autonomy, but other narratives demonstrate that flexibility could also create permanent availability. P13 initially answered messages during the night and worked on weekends because digital work made it difficult to separate home and business. P11 disliked working at home because domestic and family demands fragmented her attention. P8 similarly had to create formal service hours after a period in which clients contacted her at any time. Entrepreneurship therefore did not automatically produce work-life balance; flexibility became beneficial only when women could establish and defend boundaries.

Motherhood was central to these negotiations. Participants reorganized schedules around children, delegated business tasks, shared care where possible, and accepted that priorities changed over time. This finding is consistent with García and Villares-Varela (2023): business ownership can make paid work more compatible with care, but it can also preserve women's responsibility for coordinating both domains. The presence of a supportive partner, older or more independent children, shared custody, or sufficient income to reduce work shaped how much flexibility could be achieved.

Several participants also redefined success after experiencing exhaustion or instability. P12 moved from placing work above everything to valuing travel, cultural activities, and a slower routine. P13 stated:

Migration taught me that success cannot be measured only through financial results. For me, success is being able to build a life with purpose, autonomy, and quality of life. I had to establish working hours, take breaks, protect my weekends, and value time with my family. (P13)

This redefinition is an important psychosocial outcome. It shows that adaptation did not mean only increasing endurance or business growth. In some trajectories, resilience involved reducing work, asking for help, refusing clients, or changing expectations. P11 described resilience as a balance between resistance and flexibility, while also recognising that too much flexibility could make a person "break." Her definition captures the broader finding of this

code: coping required persistence, but also boundaries, support, and the protection of valued areas of life.

4.9 Integrative Discussion of the Findings

Taken together, the findings show that migration, entrepreneurship, professional identity, resilience, and psychosocial well-being formed interconnected dimensions of the participants' trajectories. Migration reorganized their professional paths because the ability to migrate did not necessarily imply the ability to continue a previous career. As proposed by de Haas (2021), aspirations were conditioned by the capabilities available in specific social and institutional contexts. Although the participants arrived with qualifications, experience, and professional knowledge, the use of these resources depended on English proficiency, credential recognition, local experience, family responsibilities, and access to networks. This supports Erel's (2010) argument that professional capital is not transferred unchanged between countries and reflects the processes of deskilling and brain waste discussed by Elo et al. (2025).

Intersectionality explains why these conditions did not affect all participants in the same way. Following Crenshaw (1991), Cho et al. (2013), and Viveros Vigoya (2016), gender, race and colour, class, nationality, language, and family arrangements operated relationally rather than as isolated categories. The predominantly White and highly educated profile of the sample represented relative privilege but did not prevent occupational downgrading, care pressures, unequal recognition, or emotional distress. At the same time, racialized participants described additional difficulties in having their competence and authority recognized. Migrant identity was also ambivalent: it could restrict professional recognition while, in other situations, creating identification with clients and access to particular markets.

The findings also challenge the rigid distinction between necessity and opportunity entrepreneurship. Consistent with Williams and Williams (2014) and Coffman et al. (2025), financial need, restricted employment alternatives, the search for autonomy, previous

experience, family circumstances, and market demand frequently appeared together and changed in importance over time. Entrepreneurship was therefore neither a completely free choice nor an automatic reaction to exclusion. From the mixed-embeddedness perspective (Jones et al., 2012; Lassalle et al., 2020), it emerged through the interaction between individual agency, available resources, institutional conditions, market opportunities, and social networks. These networks provided clients, information, and emotional support, but could also generate conflict, exploitation, or dependence on restricted markets.

Professional identity reconstruction occurred within these same conditions. In line with Fernando and Patriotta (2020), occupational changes required the participants to reinterpret their competence, value, and future possibilities. However, identity reconstruction was not only psychological. As suggested by Netto et al. (2020), it involved practical actions such as learning English, obtaining certifications, developing business skills, setting boundaries, and building a professional reputation. Some women recovered elements of their previous careers, while others constructed professional value in new areas. Professional identity was therefore not simply restored but continuously renegotiated through previous knowledge, migration experiences, entrepreneurial practices, and recognition from clients and networks.

The results also support a processual understanding of resilience. Following Hartmann et al. (2022), resilience could not be inferred solely from business survival. It appeared through the changing mobilization of personal, relational, professional, and material resources, including seeking support, attending therapy, using institutional information, establishing limits, or reducing work. Professional identity, resilience, and psychosocial well-being were related but not equivalent. Entrepreneurship could provide autonomy, meaning, confidence, and recognition while also producing unstable income, loneliness, overload, and psychological distress. Consequently, maintaining a business did not necessarily indicate that a participant was emotionally well.

Overall, migration redefined the conditions under which professional continuity was possible, while entrepreneurship emerged as a situated pathway shaped by restrictions, opportunities, biographies, aspirations, and resources. Professional identity and resilience were continuous, relational, and materially conditioned processes. Recognition, support, and access to resources influenced not only business continuity but also the participants' possibilities for choice and well-being. More than celebrating their capacity to endure adversity, the findings point to the need for contexts in which migrant women can construct their trajectories with support, recognition, and genuine possibilities of choice.

5. Final Considerations

This study examined how migration trajectories and labor market conditions influenced Brazilian women's entry into entrepreneurship in the United Kingdom. It also considered how they experienced professional identity reconstruction, resilience, and psychosocial well-being during their entrepreneurial trajectories.

The participants did not start again from nothing after migration. They arrived with degrees, work experience, professional knowledge, and, in some cases, previous experience in business. What changed was how these resources were recognised and whether they could be used in the British labour market. English proficiency, credential recognition, local experience, care responsibilities, and legal requirements affected the professional options available to them. Previous business experience, savings, partner income, and wider networks gave some women more time and security to develop a business.

The distinction between necessity and opportunity was often unclear. Financial need and difficulty accessing suitable employment led some participants towards entrepreneurship. Others identified a demand related to their profession or to problems they had experienced as migrants. In several cases, both conditions were present. A business could begin as a way to earn an income and later become connected to autonomy, professional recognition, or a sense

of purpose. The meaning of entrepreneurship also changed as the business developed and new responsibilities appeared.

Professional identity reconstruction did not always involve returning to the same occupation. Some participants continued working in their previous fields, while others used their knowledge in a different type of business. They learned about finance, marketing, legislation, and client management. Setting limits and presenting themselves as business owners were also part of this process. Professional identity depended on personal confidence, but recognition from clients and access to resources were equally relevant.

These differences cannot be explained by personal effort alone. Gender, race and colour, class, language, family responsibilities, and migration conditions affected the women in different ways. The mostly White and highly educated profile of the sample indicates a relatively privileged position compared with many other migrant women. Education and professional experience created useful resources, but they did not prevent occupational downgrading, care pressures, discrimination, or emotional distress. Being an immigrant woman sometimes helped participants build trust with their clients. In other situations, participants had to prove their competence repeatedly.

Business ownership was often meaningful, but it could also be exhausting. Participants associated entrepreneurship with income, autonomy, confidence, and professional recovery. They also described loneliness, unstable income, long working hours, and difficulty separating work from family life. The continuation of a business cannot be understood as evidence that a woman was emotionally well.

Resilience appeared in the ways participants responded to these experiences. Continuing to work was one response, but asking for help, attending therapy, refusing unfair demands, and reducing work were also important. Resilience changed during their trajectories and depended partly on the support and resources available. Understanding it as an individual

quality would place too much responsibility on the women and give less attention to the conditions in which they were trying to rebuild their lives.

The study separates the ability to migrate from the ability to continue a professional career after migration. Entrepreneurship was one response to the distance between these two possibilities. It allowed many participants to rebuild a professional position, although this process involved financial, social, and emotional costs.

The limitations of the study include the small sample size, comprising 13 Brazilian women entrepreneurs in the United Kingdom. This sample allowed a detailed analysis of their experiences, but the results cannot be generalized to all Brazilian migrant women or other migrant groups. Sample adequacy was assessed through the relevance and depth of the interviews, which also involved researcher judgement (Vasileiou et al., 2018).

Most participants were White and highly educated. Many had university degrees, professional experience, or previous business knowledge. This placed the sample in a relatively privileged position and may have influenced the types of businesses and migration experiences represented. Women with lower education, limited English, fewer financial resources, or more precarious labor and migration conditions received less attention in this study.

Black and other racialized women formed a smaller part of the sample. Their interviews included experiences of racial discrimination and unequal professional recognition, but they are not sufficient to represent the wider experiences of racialized Brazilian women in the United Kingdom. Further studies should include more women from different racial, educational, and economic backgrounds.

Convenience and snowball sampling may have favored participants who were already connected to community or professional networks. Women experiencing greater isolation or working in more precarious conditions may have been less likely to participate. This limitation is especially relevant to the results concerning community support and access to networks. The

interviews recorded the participants' experiences at one point in time. They cannot show how identity, resilience, or well-being changed across different stages of migration and business development. Longitudinal research could provide a clearer understanding of these changes.

Although this study did not evaluate support programmes or public policies, the participants' accounts point to issues that may be relevant to organizations working with migrant women. Several barriers appeared before the creation of a business, including difficulties with English, credential recognition, local experience, and unfamiliar professional rules. These results may help organizations understand that entrepreneurship is not always a fully planned choice. Clearer information about qualifications and the British labour market could give migrant women more options for continuing their professional careers.

The interviews also identified difficulties that appeared after business entry. Participants discussed taxation, financial planning, marketing, legislation, and the challenge of reaching new clients. These experiences may inform the content of entrepreneurship programmes, although the type of support would need to consider the sector and stage of each business. The accounts also advise caution when using community networks as a form of support. Brazilian networks provided clients, information, and friendship, but some participants also reported competition and exploitation. Wider professional connections may be useful in some cases, without treating Brazilian networks as a problem.

Psychosocial well-being is another relevant area. Participants described loneliness, overwork, financial uncertainty, and difficulty separating work from family life. They also mentioned therapy, family, community relationships, and clearer work boundaries as resources they used themselves. The study does not establish which services would be effective, but it indicates that business continuation should not be interpreted as evidence of well-being. Professionals working with migrant entrepreneurs could consider emotional demands alongside financial and business issues. Any use of these results should also recognize

differences in race and color, language, family responsibilities, and access to resources, since the participants did not experience migration or entrepreneurship under the same conditions.

Ultimately, for me, this dissertation is not an endpoint, but the beginning of a longer academic journey. Listening to these women changed the way I understand entrepreneurship and became a formative experience in my own trajectory. Their stories taught and inspired me, showing that building a business in another country can hold loss and possibility at the same time: the pain of leaving parts of one's life behind, the effort of beginning again, and the hope of creating a life with greater autonomy and meaning. This experience confirmed that continuing to study migration and the many ways it shapes people's lives is the path I want to pursue in my academic career. Future research can broaden this discussion by following immigrant women's trajectories over time and including women from more diverse racial, educational, and socioeconomic backgrounds. I hope that the reflections developed here encourage other researchers to listen closely to immigrant women and produce knowledge that supports more equitable conditions for their professional lives. More than celebrating resilience, this means working toward a future in which these women can build their paths with support, recognition, and genuine possibilities of choice.

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Appendix I

Semi-Structured Interview Guide

1. Could you tell me a little about your life and work trajectory since arriving in the United Kingdom and how these experiences influenced your decision to become an entrepreneur?
2. What motivated you to start your own business in the context of migration? How did the idea for your current business emerge?
3. What are the main difficulties you face in the day-to-day management of your business, particularly in relation to your status as an immigrant?
4. Do you perceive any specific challenges associated with being an immigrant woman? At what points in managing your business do these challenges become most evident?
5. How do you feel that entrepreneurship and living in another country have affected you emotionally? Could you describe how you have taken care of your mental health in this context?
6. How do you usually cope with adversities arising in your business and with obstacles related to your migration experience?
7. In your opinion, what qualities or skills does an immigrant woman need to possess or develop to become a successful entrepreneur?
8. How do you balance managing your business with your personal life, including family responsibilities and the process of adapting to a new country?

Appendix II - Proof of Submission of the Research Project to the CEP/UFLA

UNIVERSIDADE FEDERAL DE
LAVRAS



PARECER CONSUBSTANCIADO DO CEP

DADOS DO PROJETO DE PESQUISA

Título da Pesquisa: Gênero, Migração e Trabalho: Identificando Barreiras e Estratégias de Enfrentamento no Microempreendedorismo Feminino Transnacional no Brasil

Pesquisador: RAISSA BARBARA NUNES MORAES ANDRADE

Área Temática:

Versão: 1

CAAE: 98564026.0.0000.5148

Instituição Proponente: Universidade Federal de Lavras

Patrocinador Principal: Financiamento Próprio

DADOS DO PARECER

Número do Parecer: 8.539.810

Apresentação do Projeto:

Este projeto investiga o empreendedorismo de mulheres imigrantes no Brasil com foco integrado em saúde mental, bem-estar e capacitação

financeira. Parte-se de uma perspectiva interseccional para compreender como gênero, raça/etnia, classe e status migratório estruturam barreiras de

acesso a trabalho, crédito e políticas de apoio. Adota-se um desenho multimétodo em duas etapas: (1) fase qualitativa exploratória com revisão

bibliográfica, pesquisa documental e entrevistas semiestruturadas com mulheres imigrantes empreendedoras (n=20); (2) fase quantitativa (n=150)

para estimar prevalências de barreiras e estratégias de enfrentamento e mensurar indicadores de saúde mental, bem-estar e

competências/autoeficácia financeira e empreendedora. Assim, a amostra total do estudo será de 170 participantes. A amostragem qualitativa será

intencional, com possibilidade de utilização da técnica bola de neve para acessar perfis de difícil alcance: a análise seguirá a técnica de análise de

conteúdo temático. No quantitativo, serão realizadas análises descritivas, fatoriais exploratórias/confirmatórias conforme aplicável, testes para

medidas repetidas (t pareado/ANOVA) e correlações. A triangulação entre fontes e

Endereço: Campus Universitario Cx Postal 3037 - Campus Universitario - Caixa Postal 3037, Avenida
Bairro PRP/COEP **CEP:** 37.200-900
UF: MG **Município:** LAVRAS
Telefone: (35) 3829-5182 **E-:** coep.prp@ufia.br