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Career (re)construction of Haitian migrants: challenges and opportunities in Nova Mutum-MT

(Re)construção de carreira de migrantes haitianos: desafios e oportunidades em Nova Mutum-MT

Fernanda Cavalheiro Ruffino Rauber[1i], Orcid: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2340-1048; **Andressa Santana Brito Conceição**[2ii], Orcid: https://orcid.org/0009-0000-3229-9607; **Eloisa Helena de Souza Cabral**[3 iii], Orcid: http://orcid.org/0000-0002-3923-4280; **José Roberto Pereira**[4 iv], Orcid: https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1570-2016; **Agilson Poquiviqui**[5 v], Orcid: https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2983-3316

1. Universidade Federal de Lavras (UFLA) Lavras/MG, Brasil. E-mail: fcr.adm@gmail.com
2. Universidade do Estado de Mato Grosso (UNEMAT) - Campus de Nova Mutum - Nova Mutum – MT - Brasil. E-mail: andressa.santana@unemat.br
3. Universidade Federal de Lavras (UFLA) Lavras-MG, Universidade dos Vales do Jequitinhonha e Mucuri (UFLAJM). E-mail: elocabra07@gmail.com
4. Universidade Federal de Lavras (UFLA), Lavras-MG, Brasil. E-mail: jrobertopereira2013@gmail.com
5. Universidade do Estado de Mato Grosso (UNEMAT) – Campus Nova Mutum, Nova Mutum – MT - Brasil. E-mail: a.poquiviqui@unemat.br

Abstract
This paper analyzes the career (re)construction of Haitian migrants in Nova Mutum, Mato Grosso, emphasizing implications for management, public policy, and contemporary migratory dynamics. Based on a qualitative design (exploratory focus group and individual interviews), a thematic analysis was conducted by triangulating narratives, documents, and the local context. The findings indicate: (i) occupational trajectories situated in markets characterized by strong on-the-job learning; (ii) barriers to the recognition of qualifications and institutional routines that affect mobility; and (iii) the role of support networks and local arrangements in integration and retention. Theoretical contributions: career is articulated as a contextual phenomenon specific to Haitian migration in Brazil. Methodological contributions: this article provides a replicable triangulation protocol. Practical contributions: it is proposed management and policy recommendations for competence recognition, mediation with employers, and the design of public services. The results advance the debate by specifying how context, networks, and rules operate in career (re)construction within recent migratory flows.
Keywords: career; haitian migration; professional integration; public policies; local labor markets.

Resumo
Este artigo analisa a (re)construção de carreira de migrantes haitianos em Nova Mutum-MT, destacando implicações para a gestão, para as políticas públicas e para as dinâmicas migratórias contemporâneas. Com base em delineamento qualitativo (grupo focal exploratório e entrevistas individuais), realizamos análise temática triangulando relatos, documentos e contexto local. Os achados indicam: (i) trajetórias ocupacionais situadas em mercados com forte aprendizagem no trabalho; (ii) barreiras de reconhecimento de qualificações e rotinas institucionais que afetam mobilidade; e (iii) o papel de redes de apoio e de arranjos locais na inserção e permanência. Contribuições teóricas: articulamos carreira como fenômeno contextual às especificidades da migração haitiana no Brasil. Contribuições metodológicas: explicitamos um protocolo de triangulação replicável. Contribuições práticas: propomos recomendações de gestão e política para reconhecimento de competências, mediação com empregadores e desenho de serviços públicos. Os resultados avançam o debate ao precisar como contexto, redes e regras operam na (re)construção de carreira em fluxos migratórios recentes.
Palavras-chave: carreira; migração haitiana; inserção profissional; políticas públicas; mercados de trabalho locais.

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1. Introduction

Career construction is, above all, a narrative that accounts for identity formation over time (Inkson, 2007), highlighting the dynamic relationship between individuals and institutions and revealing the evolution of these relationships (Arthur et al., 1989). Mayrhofer, Meyer, and Steyrer (2007, p. 215) assert that "careers are always careers in contexts," and Lawrence (Lawrence, 2011) emphasizes that all careers are embedded within a social context. Thus, understanding career development requires considering the social context and how individuals perceive these changes.

In the Brazilian context, the municipality of Nova Mutum-MT, located in the northern region of the state of Mato Grosso, has distinguished itself by its capacity to attract private investments and by the growing demand for labor, driven by its local strategic planning (GCOM, 2022). This economic dynamism positions the city as a significant hub for the reception of contemporary migratory flows. The integration of these individuals into the labor market and local society enables the continuation or (re)construction of their professional trajectories (Closs & Oliveira, 2015).

In the case of Haitians, migration is primarily driven by economic factors. In Brazil, they face the challenging responsibility of securing their own livelihood and sending remittances to their families in Haiti (Barbosa, 2015). Consequently, they seek employment opportunities and an improved quality of life but are not exempt from the exploitation of their labor, especially when in irregular status, often being utilized "as cheap labor and, not infrequently, with limited labor rights (Moraes et al., 2013)." Since 2010, the Ministry of Labor and Employment (MTE), and according to DataMigra (MJSP, 2024), has granted 777 humanitarian reception visas to Haitians, aiming to combat crimes that violate human rights, such as labor analogous to slavery and prostitution (Moraes et al., 2013). Specifically, up to June 2024, 4,119 humanitarian visas have been issued.

The migration of Haitians to Brazil intensified following the earthquake on January 12, 2010, which struck southwestern Haiti with a magnitude of 7.3 on the Richter scale. Until then, Brazil was not one of the primary migration destinations for Haitians. The disaster prompted the Brazilian government to offer support to the Haitian people. In 2011, the Brazilian economy was considered positive, ranked eighth in economic development by the World Bank; additionally, the popularity of football among Haitians were factors that favored the governmental decision (F. V. dos Santos, 2016).

On December 27, 2024, the federal government issued Interministerial Ordinance MJSP/MRE No. 51, which regulates the granting of temporary visas and residence permits for Haitians, conditioning the issuance of the visa on the capacity of civil society institutions to provide humanitarian reception. This measure, previously applied to Afghans, represents an unprecedented legal provision in Brazil and has been a source of criticism from civil society organizations, particularly regarding the requirement for Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) to demonstrate that they will promote the economic and social inclusion of migrants.

Recent normative changes, specifically Interministerial Ordinance MJSP/MRE No. 51 of 2024, have been the subject of technical debate. As noted by Paulo Illes, former Director of Migration Policy at the Department of Migrations (DEMIG) of the Ministry of Justice (cited in Delfim, 2025), this regulation establishes conditions that can be interpreted as a transfer of the state's responsibility for humanitarian reception to civil society institutions. According to the author, this new institutional arrangement highlights challenges in the regulation and implementation capacity of migration public policies, by delegating to NGOs the verification

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of feasibility for the economic inclusion of migrants.

This study adopts a situated career perspective: trajectories and mobility emerge from the interaction between individual attributes, networks, and local institutional arrangements. This framework guides the analysis by prioritizing mechanisms such as skills recognition, workplace learning, and local regulations. The distinctive contribution of this research lies in investigating career (re)construction outside major metropolitan areas, explaining how entry points and institutional mediations in a medium-sized municipality influence the validation of knowledge and labor market retention.

In light of this context, the study sought to answer the following question: how do sociocultural and economic factors influence the professional trajectories of Haitian migrants in Nova Mutum-MT? The overall objective is to investigate how the career (re)construction of these migrants occurs in the aforementioned locality. Grounded in Savickas's Career Construction Theory (2002), the research analyzes the career adaptability and narratives of the subjects in the face of cultural and institutional challenges, offering theoretical contributions regarding careers in migration contexts and practical insights for the management of public and organizational inclusion policies.

2. Careers and the migratory context

Gaps persist regarding how Haitian migrants (re)construct careers in intermediate inland cities, where labor markets, policies, and networks operate differently from capitals and metropolises. This study addresses this gap by explaining mechanisms of insertion, mobility, and skills recognition in Nova Mutum-MT.

This section presents the theoretical framework underpinning the analysis: (i) concepts of career and their contextual inscription; (ii) specificities of Haitian migration in Brazil. The objective is to provide analytical categories to, in section 3, ground the methodological procedures and, in section 4, interpret the results in light of these concepts.

2.1 Understanding the concept of careers and the migration movement

The contemporary understanding of career transcends the traditional view of linear progression within a single organization. As Mayrhofer, Meyer, and Steyrer (2007, p. 215) emphasize, "careers are always careers in contexts," which implies that an individual's professional trajectory is inseparable from the norms, values, and opportunity structures of the environment in which they are embedded. From this perspective, career ceases to be merely a personal itinerary and becomes a situated phenomenon, shaped by the interaction between the individual and institutions (Arthur et al., 1989).

Career construction is an active and continuous process in which individuals shape their careers based on past experiences, present circumstances, and future-oriented perspectives (Savickas, 2023. This process is influenced by both internal and external factors, such as personality, values, skills, employment opportunities, and culture. Savickas (2023) emphasizes the importance of self-awareness and reflection, as well as flexibility and adaptability to changes in the work environment. In this regard, career (re)construction occurs when individuals face changes in their professional lives, such as migration, job change, dismissal, or acquisition of the company by another organization.

In these cases, individuals are compelled to reassess their professional objectives and goals, seeking to acquire new skills and competencies to respond to emerging growth

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opportunities. Career (re)construction is a challenging process but also an opportunity for personal and professional development, facilitating adaptation to a new workplace, city, or country (Duarte & Silva, 2013). This concept entails making adjustments that enhance professional performance and enrich personal life, demonstrating openness to new experiences that challenge and expand knowledge, personal experiences, and cultural certainties. Therefore, mobility transcends the geographical phenomenon, representing a complex set of dispositions and competencies that enable the individual to engage with difference and experience otherness in both professional and personal spheres (Freitas, 2009).

In the context of transnational migration, career (re)construction requires what Savickas (2002, 2023) calls **Career Adaptability**. This is a psychosocial construct that reflects an individual's resources to manage vocational development tasks, occupational transitions, and personal traumas. For the migrant, this adaptability is challenged by the need to renegotiate their professional identity within a foreign labor market, where their prior competencies are not always recognized.

In this process, the regional context of the host municipality plays a decisive role. The study published by Raiher (2023) reinforces that industrial agglomerations and the local economic dynamics are fundamental determinants for municipal growth and, consequently, for the vitality of the labor market. In medium-sized cities with strategic planning and investment attraction, such as Nova Mutum-MT, the availability of job opportunities can act as a facilitator of labor market integration, although it does not guarantee the maintenance of the migrant's original professional status.

However, the literature indicates that career transitions in migratory contexts are frequently characterized by **downward professional mobility**. As noted by Bemak and Chung (2018) and Closs and Oliveira (2015), language barriers, systemic prejudices, and the difficulty of credential recognition compel many migrants to accept occupations below their qualifications. Thus, career (re)construction on Brazilian soil is not a uniform movement but a process of tension between the individual's agency (their resilience and career adaptability) and the institutional barriers of the new social context.

On one hand, the attitudes of the local population play a central role, ranging from the acceptance of diversity as an enriching value to resistance, often influenced by prejudices or economic fears. On the other hand, migrants, by leaving behind what is familiar, commit themselves to understanding the norms, values, and functioning of the new society. This adaptation encompasses economic, social, and cultural aspects and is driven by inclusive public policies that promote access to essential services such as healthcare, education, and professional training (Segal, 2024).

Unemployment and underemployment are particularly challenging for male migrants who come from cultures where they are traditionally the primary breadwinners. The reality of unemployment in a foreign country can lead to shifts in family roles, compelling wives to enter the workforce to support the family, which generates cultural conflicts between the country of origin and the host country. Conversely, these women face the challenge of initiating a professional career in a foreign country (Bemak & Chung, 2018).

In summary, migration, as a global phenomenon, involves complex challenges that directly affect individuals' capacity to (re)construct careers in new contexts. Despite these difficulties, migrants' resilience emerges as an adaptive force, enabling them to overcome adversities and contribute to local economies. However, these benefits can only be maximized in environments that promote inclusion and equal opportunities, which remains a challenge in many locations (Jarvis & Kirmayer, 2023).

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2.2 The context of Haitian migration: causes and challenges

According to UNHCR, the United Nations Refugee Agency, 44,860 Haitians had entered the formal labor market by June 2024, with the vast majority being adults aged 30 to 39 years (43.4% of the total) and men (67.8% of the total). Regarding educational profile, 51.2% had completed secondary education, of whom 1.9% held a university degree. The average salary of Haitians employed in June 2024 was R$ 1,844.7, a value 13% lower than the average salary of Brazilians hired during the same period. The main economic activities in the formal labor market are: (i) slaughtering of swine, poultry, and other small animals, (ii) restaurants and other food and beverage service establishments, and (iii) building construction (ACNUR, 2024a).

Migration can occur due to various factors, such as the pursuit of new professional opportunities, education, family reunification, and security (Véran et al., 2014).. With the increase in Haitian migrants, the National Immigration Council (CNIg) issued Resolution No. 1 in January 2012 to regulate the distribution of Haitians within Brazil. The resolution proposed measures for the adaptation of Haitians already residing in the country and, through the Brazilian Embassy in Port-au-Prince, granted 1,200 visas per year, limiting issuance to 100 visas per month (Moraes et al., 2013).

Despite these measures, in 2012 many Haitians faced human exploitation, including prostitution, conditions analogous to slavery, and trafficking, violating human rights. This situation was acknowledged by the Federal Prosecutor, Anselmo Henrique Cordeiro Lopes, who also highlighted the Brazilian government's insufficient knowledge regarding Haitian migration (Moraes et al., 2013). In 2013, the civil society organization Conecta Direitos Humanos identified that 800 immigrants were living in precarious conditions in Brazil, in overcrowded shelters lacking basic sanitation and adequate hygiene (Moraes et al., 2013).

According to the report by Paula Rosa for the BBC World Service, "Haiti has suffered from political instability since its independence in 1804," (Rosa, 2024) in addition to economic, social, and public security factors that have worsened in recent years. The security situation in Haiti deteriorated following the assassination of then-president Jovenel Moise in 2021. In response to this crisis, an international mission was approved during Brazil's tenure on the UN Security Council. This mission aims to assist in combating threats to peace, stability, and security in Haiti (Matoso, 2024).

The security situation in Haiti continues to deteriorate. The escalation of violence perpetrated by armed groups imposes severe restrictions on humanitarian access, resulting in a context of profound insecurity and scarcity of basic resources for the population (ACNUR, 2024b). Armed gangs currently control 80% of the capital, Port-au-Prince. These gangs have carried out coordinated attacks against authorities and state institutions, including prison break-ins and the release of thousands of detainees (Matoso 2024). United Nations data indicate that violence has internally displaced nearly 314,000 people, and in 2023, three million children—the highest number ever recorded—required humanitarian assistance in Haiti (Rosa, 2024). Nearly one in three children suffers from chronic malnutrition in the country. Haiti has one of the highest tuberculosis incidence rates in the region. Cholera caused approximately 10,000 deaths following the earthquake that devastated the country in 2010 and reemerged in some areas of Haiti in 2024. Additionally, 1.7% of the adult population is HIV-positive, according to figures from the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS). Furthermore, approximately 40% of the population is illiterate, according to World Bank data, and only half of the children attend school, according to UNICEF statistics. In 2021, natural disasters further impacted the country. A magnitude 7.3 earthquake killed around 2,000 people and destroyed

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30% of the southern peninsula. The cities of Cayes and Jérémie were the most affected, with 304 fatalities. Subsequently, Tropical Storm Grace exacerbated the already deteriorated conditions, causing flooding and landslides.

Furthermore, the country was overtaken by ultra-violent gangs that kidnapped, killed, and raped while expanding their control. In February 2021, there was an attack on the official residence, resulting in the assassination of President Jovenel Moise, who had been in power since 2017, following the departure of his predecessor, Michel Martelly. Moise faced challenges during his term, including accusations of corruption and being confronted by waves of frequently violent anti-government protests.

In March 2024, Haiti declared a state of emergency for 72 hours following attacks by armed gangs that invaded the main national prison located in Port-au-Prince, releasing approximately four thousand inmates with the intention of forcing the resignation of Prime Minister Ariel Henry. This group aimed to overthrow the government and control, on average, 80% of the country (Ahmadi, 2024). In light of the situation the country has experienced and continues to endure, Haitian migrants chose to leave the country (ACNUR, 2024b).

Such changes, combined with sociocultural barriers such as structural racism and xenophobia (Bemak & Chung, 2018; Santos & Hanashiro, 2021), create an environment of legal and social uncertainty that strains the labor market integration of these individuals.

2.3 Mobility and career (re)construction: developments

Professional mobility in migratory contexts transcends mere geographic displacement. It represents the capacity and willingness to engage with new professions, positions, and skill sets (Freitas, 2009). However, this mobility is not necessarily linear or upward; it is often constrained by the dynamics of the local labor market.

In this regard, Raiher (2023) highlights that the economic growth of Brazilian municipalities is strongly driven by industrial agglomerations. For migrants, medium-sized cities experiencing economic expansion, such as Nova Mutum-MT, offer a landscape of labor opportunities that may facilitate immediate entry into the labor market. However, initial integration predominantly occurs in foundational sectors, such as civil construction and animal protein processing (UNHCR, 2024a), which may constitute downward professional mobility.

Downward professional mobility is particularly critical for migrants who held higher status and qualifications in their country of origin (Bemak & Chung, 2018). Scalon (1999) defines mobility as movements of improvement or deterioration in professional status. When migrants face systemic barriers to licensing and credential recognition, what the literature terms underemployment or brain waste occurs, generating tensions in professional identity and changes in gender and family roles (Bemak & Chung, 2018).

Tafner et al. (2022) corroborate this perspective by highlighting that the pursuit of formal employment is hindered by prejudices and the stereotypical perception of the Haitian workforce as cheap and low-skilled labor. The precariousness of working conditions, combined with the lack of support for training and professional development, reinforces a cycle of economic and social vulnerability that directly impacts the quality of life of Haitian immigrants.

According to Santos and Hanashiro (2021), the lack of effective public policies and the absence of consistent governmental support hinder the adaptation of these immigrants, rendering them dependent on NGO initiatives for access to basic services such as Portuguese language courses and career guidance. Furthermore, Tafner et al. (2022) indicate that Haitians face stigmatization and racial prejudice, which limit their opportunities for social participation and directly impact their self-esteem and emotional well-being. The study highlights the central

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role of the family as an emotional support system and a mechanism of resistance in the face of challenges encountered in the new environment. However, even with family support, economic insecurity and the lack of local support networks are identified as barriers to the labor market integration of Haitians.

On the other hand, upward mobility and successful career (re)construction depend on career adaptability (Savickas, 2023) and the recognition, even if informal, of practical knowledge. The transition to positions with greater autonomy or immigrant entrepreneurship (such as the progression from micro-entrepreneur to microenterprise) are indicators that the social context of the medium-sized city enabled the individual to renegotiate their occupational trajectory (Lawrence, 2011). Therefore, the analysis of the migrant's career must consider whether the local environment acts as a barrier or as a catalyst for competencies.

3. Methodological procedures

Analytical implications for the data: it was observed (i) progression based on learning at work, (ii) mobility conditioned by skills validation, and (iii) effects of local policies and routines on occupational trajectories. These expectations guide the interpretation of the results and prevent extensive descriptions.

3.1 Methodological approach

A qualitative methodology was chosen, as it allows for a detailed exploration of the social, cultural, and economic contexts influencing the career (re)construction of these migrants. The qualitative approach is particularly suitable for career studies, as it enhances the potential for developing research focused on individuals' experiences and choices (Dokko et al., 2019).

The qualitative approach focuses on an in-depth understanding of the experiences of Haitian migrants in Nova Mutum - MT. Described as a research method that seeks to comprehend specific social situations, qualitative research allows for a detailed and contextualized analysis of the participants' experiences and perceptions, providing a comprehensive understanding of the studied group (Creswell, 2007).

3.2 Data collection procedures

For this article, semi-structured interviews were used as the primary data collection instrument, an approach that included questions aimed at addressing the main research question. Secondary data documentary research was also employed to complement the information gathered during the interviews (Gil, 2008).

Data collection occurred in two complementary stages, characterizing the triangulation of sources and methods (Creswell, 2007):

I. **Documentary research:** analysis of interministerial ordinances and UNHCR reports to contextualize the legal and demographic framework;
II. **Semi-structured interviews:** conducted with participants who volunteered following initial contact with the group of Haitians.

The following selection criteria were established: a) Haitians residing in the municipality for more than six months; and b) engaged in the labor market (formal or informal) at the time of data collection. The sample excluded: a) migrants with a length of residence

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shorter than the stipulated period; b) those without work experience in Brazil; and c) individuals under 18 years of age at the time of data collection. These criteria aimed to ensure that participants had experienced the career (re)construction process intended by the study.

Of the nine individuals initially contacted who met the sample selection criteria, five volunteered for the interview stage. Scheduling was conducted according to the participants' availability and convenience. The interviews were conducted in person between March 14 and May 14, 2024, and were audio-recorded with the participants' consent.

All ethical guidelines respecting the dignity and autonomy of the participants were rigorously followed. Participants were informed in advance about the research objectives and freely consented to their participation, with the right to refuse any question that made them uncomfortable. Furthermore, the possibility of withdrawal at any point during the study was assured, without any penalty or need for justification. All interviews were conducted in a safe and welcoming environment, fostering trust and openness to share stories and challenges encountered during the migration process and integration into the municipality. The feelings and limitations of the participants were respected, with interruptions made whenever necessary, allowing for resumption at more convenient times. These precautions were adopted to ensure the voluntariness, privacy, and well-being of the interviewees.

3.3 Data analysis

The data analysis was conducted using content analysis techniques, through which relevant categories related to the barriers and opportunities faced by the participants emerged. Some categories were predefined based on the proposed objectives and theoretical foundations, while others emerged during the field data collection (Souza, 2019).

The research corpus consisted of the document containing the interview transcripts, with the information organized according to its relevance to the research objectives. The analysis was conducted in three phases:

I. Pre-analysis: full transcription of the 05 interviews and floating reading.
II. Data analysis: manual coding in a spreadsheet, where excerpts from the narratives were linked to units of meaning
III. Results Analysis: Cross-referencing the narratives with the theoretical framework and the local context of Nova Mutum.

This organization allowed for the systematic structuring of the results (Bauer & Gaskell, 2015). The adopted procedure employed investigative strategies for data collection, conducted simultaneously and/or sequentially, with the objective of obtaining a more comprehensive understanding of the studied phenomenon (Creswell, 2007).

4. Presentation and discussion of the results

This section presents the results and discussions based on the triangulation of data obtained through documentary research, exploratory focus groups, and semi-structured interviews. The analysis focuses on how the economic dynamism of Nova Mutum-MT interacts with the individual trajectories of Haitian migrants. Initially, the profile of the subjects is characterized, followed by a discussion of the thematic categories in light of the theoretical framework.

4.1 Participant characterization

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Through semi-structured interviews, the life histories, challenges, and career (re)construction processes of Haitian migrants were explored. The study included the participation of five individuals, aged between 22 and 40 years, with an average length of stay in Brazil of approximately five years. Table 1 presents the detailed profile of the participants.

Table 1 – Profile of the interviewees

	IDENTIFICATION				
	E1	E2	E3	E4	E5
GENDER	Male	Female	Male	Male	Male
AGE	22	40	30	22	30
MARITAL STATUS	Single	Married	Married	Single	Married
CHILDREN OR DEPENDENTS	No	Yes	Yes	No	No
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT	Secondary Education	Secondary Education	Secondary Education	Pursuing Higher Education	Secondary Education
CITY OF ORIGIN	Port-au-Prince	Port-au-Prince	Saint-Marc	Port-au-Prince	Gonaives
YEAR OF ARRIVAL IN BRAZIL	2022	2015	2014	2022	2019
TYPE OF VISA*	Humanitarian	Permanent	Naturalized	Humanitarian	Permanent

* Type of visa reported by the interviewee*

Source: prepared by the authors (2024)

All participants reported having left their family or part of it in their country of origin, indicating that migration involved separation from loved ones. Furthermore, they stated that they came to Brazil after an acquaintance from their home country had already migrated there. Nova Mutum-MT was the first city in which they resided, due to prior personal connections awaiting them.

4.2 Categories of analysis

The data analysis revealed three main categories reflecting the migration and adaptation experiences of Haitians in the Brazilian context: (i) motivational factors for migration, (ii) challenges in professional adaptation, and (iii) professional mobility in the local labor market. Each of these categories is subdivided into specific themes, presented in Table 2.

Table 2 – Research framework categories

MAIN CATEGORY	SUBCATEGORY	DESCRIPTION
Migration Factors	The Haitian Crisis and Its Consequences	Political, economic, and social context that propelled migration.
	The local labor market	Initial perceptions of migrants regarding professional opportunities.

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Professional Adaptation	Challenges Faced by Haitians in the Municipality Following Migration	Adaptations, challenges, and the influence of the local social and economic context on career (re)construction.
	Language barriers	Communication difficulties and their impact on employability.
Professional Mobility	Labor Insertion Sectors and Career Progression	Developments in the professional mobility of Haitians in the municipality.

Source: prepared by the authors (2025)

The challenges faced by Haitian migrants in Nova Mutum are multifaceted, encompassing structural factors as well as individual adaptation issues. The following section details the results obtained, exploring each category specifically, with an emphasis on participants' perceptions and analysis in light of the existing literature.

Based on the research framework, the data were processed seeking convergences and contradictions between the accounts and the literature, as summarized in Table 3.

Table 3 – Research framework categories

Axis of analysis	Evidence in the testimonies (Convergences)	Dialogue with the literature
Motivation	Physical insecurity and institutional collapse in Haiti	Situated Career: The origin context compels the interruption of the trajectory (Mayrhofer, Meyer, and Steyrer, 2007)
Adaptation	Migration through networks of acquaintances in Nova Mutum	Social Capital: Informal networks substitute for public policies (Tafner et al., 2022).
Mobility	Employment in slaughterhouses and construction; technical advancement	Adaptability: The capacity to reconfigure competencies in new sectors (Savickas, 2023).
Contradiction	Maintenance of previous status; downward mobility	Credentialing Barrier: Educational attainment does not guarantee status in the new country (Bemak & Chung, 2018).

Source: prepared by the authors (2025)

The synthesis presented reveals that, although individual trajectories possess particularities, such as professional continuity versus downward mobility, there is a common element: adaptability. The following analysis details how these subjects negotiate their professional identities in the face of barriers and opportunities within the context of Nova Mutum, deepening the nuances of each identified category.

4.2.1 Migration Factors: Understanding the Context

As Mayrhofer, Meyer, and Steyrer (2007) emphasize, careers are always embedded within a specific context. Lawrence (2011) reinforces this notion by asserting that all careers are situated within a social context. Therefore, to understand how individuals develop their

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careers, it is essential to analyze the issues related to the social context and the ways in which these individuals perceive such changes.

As discussed in the theoretical framework, institutional instability in Haiti functions as a push factor that disrupts established professional trajectories. For the interviewees, displacement to Brazil did not merely represent a geographical change but a sudden interruption in their life projects. The interviews confirm that insecurity and economic paralysis in the country of origin were the central triggers, as evidenced in the account of E4, who managed the family business, and E5, who worked as a teacher.

However, the motivational factor is not limited to the crisis; it is mediated by the perception of Nova Mutum as a safe environment for humanitarian reception. The "lack of opportunities" cited by the participants (E1, E4) aligns with Mayrhofer, Meyer, and Steyrer's (2007) perspective on how the local political context can hinder career development. Thus, migration emerges as an attempt to regain agency over one's own career trajectory, even if this entails a restart in entry-level sectors, a theme that will be further explored below.

In summary, the severe political, economic, social, and security crisis experienced by Haitians in their country of origin has led them to seek new opportunities in countries such as Brazil. Despite facing challenges in the host country, Haitians appear to prefer migrating to locations where they can live in a safer and more stable environment.

4.2.2 Professional Adaptation: Challenges and Opportunities

Although the municipality of Nova Mutum is driven by agribusiness, there is a shortage of qualified labor. The municipal public administration seeks to fill more than 300 job vacancies offered through the National Employment System (SINE). These efforts have been insufficient to meet the demand for qualified professionals.

The accounts of the interviewees corroborate the observations made by Kozhevnikov (2021), who draws attention to the urban context in relation to culture. The author emphasizes that cultural differences can constitute one of the challenges faced by migrants seeking to establish local connections that may, in some way, facilitate the development of their careers.

The interviewees present distinct professional trajectories, particularly four of the five Haitian migrants who exhibit diverse and adaptive careers in Brazil. Interviewee 1, originally a graphic designer and photographer in Haiti, worked in various sectors in Brazil, including civil construction and poultry processing plants, eventually working as a graphic designer, albeit with unsatisfactory remuneration. He also worked as a language teacher and is currently an interpreter, while gradually seeking to return to photography. His trajectory illustrates career adaptability in Nova Mutum. Although he initially experienced downward professional mobility by working in the poultry processing plant, his transition to the role of interpreter demonstrates the capacity to reconfigure prior competencies (languages) in response to local labor market demands. This movement corroborates Savickas's (2023) perspective that the individual actively engages in the reconstruction of their professional narrative amid changing contexts.

Interviewee 2 was a salesperson in a religious goods and meal container store in Haiti. In Brazil, she worked as a domestic worker, kitchen assistant, bakery employee, and in a poultry slaughterhouse. Currently, she is a homemaker, caring for her young child, but plans to return to work when the child grows older. In this case, a trajectory marked by different occupations followed by a temporary interruption due to family reasons is observed. This pattern reflects the vulnerability of women's careers in the migratory context, where individual agency is

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constrained by gender roles and domestic caregiving responsibilities (Bemak & Chung, 2018), postponing the project of professional reintegration.

In the case of interviewee 3, who was a tile setter in Haiti and owned a tile installation service company with a partner, he maintained the profession in Brazil, along with the partner, who also came to Brazil. By transferring his expertise as a tile setter and his business structure to Brazil, the individual succeeded in maintaining his occupational status. This finding diverges from the predominant trend of downward professional mobility in the forced migration literature, suggesting that technical occupations with high demand in the local construction sector can serve as a starting point, facilitating the transfer of human capital between countries.

The accounts of Interviewees 4 and 5 illustrate Career Adaptability (Savickas, 2023) at different stages. Interviewee 4, although having migrated from a managerial position (ice cream shop) to operational work as a tiler, uses this occupation as financial support for a strategic transition through legal studies. In turn, Interviewee 5 exemplifies intragenerational upward mobility in the new context: by stating that "*when I arrived here I was a laborer, today I am a bricklayer*," he demonstrates that, despite an initial loss of status (he was a teacher and tailor in Haiti), the labor market in Nova Mutum allows for technical progression based on practical on-the-job learning.

This reality corroborates the observations of Bemak and Chung (2018), who highlight that, beyond economic and social readjustment challenges, migrants frequently face difficulties in securing employment that corresponds to their qualifications and education. Often, the educational credentials obtained in the country of origin may not be fully recognized or transferable to the host country, requiring migrants to demonstrate adaptability in reconfiguring their career trajectories.

4.2.3 Professional mobility and implications

Mobility encompasses not only geographic relocation but also an individual's capacity, willingness, and desire to engage with diverse cultures, professions, organizations, positions, and bodies of knowledge. However, this mobility can be influenced by numerous factors, including educational attainment, work experience, professional networks, and even socioeconomic and demographic variables.

It is evident that mobility for the interviewees has been upward, as they have been experiencing professional growth since their arrival in the municipality. This situation is reflected in the statements of the research participants, such as Interviewee 1, who began in the construction sector as a bricklayer, worked as an English teacher, and is currently employed as an interpreter.

Other interviewees demonstrate a perception of professional growth and valorization, as identified in the testimony of interviewee 5, who states: "I was a laborer, today I am a bricklayer, and I want to become a plumber in a few days," and interviewee 4, who reports, "I was an assistant (...) today I am a tiler... Here I earn more, here people value my work as a tiler."

According to interviewee 3, Nova Mutum also contributed to the growth of his company, which operates in the civil construction sector. He mentions the legal status of his company, which expanded and ceased to be merely an individual micro-entrepreneur: "I went to the CDL (Chamber of Shopkeepers), then I registered as a micro-entrepreneur and later became an ME [microenterprise/small business], and I sought an accountant to transfer the registration from micro-entrepreneur to ME."

The social context exerts a fundamental influence on the development of individual careers, asserts Lawrence (2011). In light of the social scenario that Brazil is providing to

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migrants, they perceive migration to the country as advantageous, as stated by interviewee 2: "I think it is better here, I live better and earn more than there."

The mobility identified in the accounts of Haitian migrants in Nova Mutum-MT reveals a phenomenon of skill reconfiguration that challenges the logic of stagnation in underemployment. While the classical literature on forced migration (Bemak & Chung, 2018) emphasizes the pain of downward mobility and status loss, the data from this research indicate a capacity for both institutional and individual resilience.

The analysis of the testimonies from E3 (business consolidation) and E5 (technical progression in civil construction) suggests that the context of a medium-sized city, with dynamic productive agglomerations as discussed by Raiher (2023), functions as a catalyst for opportunities. In these environments, Career Adaptability (Savickas, 2023) manifests not only as a psychological resource of the migrant but also as a practical response to the municipality's labor shortages.

The interviewees' accounts highlight the influence of the social context on the career (re)construction of migrants. They emphasize aspects such as organization, safety, quality of health services, education, and the receptivity of the local community, which contribute to a positive perception of the environment, thereby facilitating migrants' integration. These aspects reflect the importance of considering the social context in the career adaptability and professional development of migrants, as noted by Mayrhofer, Meyer, and Steyrer (2007).

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study adopted a situated career perspective, wherein trajectories and mobility emerge from the interaction between individual attributes, networks, and local institutional arrangements. This framework guided the analysis by avoiding individual essentialisms and prioritizing mechanisms such as skills recognition, workplace learning, and local regulations. Since the objective was to investigate the career (re)construction of Haitian migrants in Nova Mutum-MT, it was found that, although each migrant possesses a distinct personal experience, the trajectories reveal common patterns of overcoming challenges and adaptation.

The results demonstrate that adaptation in Nova Mutum-MT reflects barriers already observed in the literature, such as linguistic challenges and the lack of recognition of qualifications. However, this study addresses an important gap by detailing how migration to interior cities in Brazil presents a heterogeneous pattern of labor market integration. Contrary to the literature that focuses on downward professional mobility and underemployment (Bemak & Chung, 2018), the findings in this paper reveal that the majority of respondents experienced upward professional mobility since their arrival, driven by the specific opportunities of the municipality and the local humanitarian reception.

Among the primary factors motivating Haitian migration are insecurity and political instability in Haiti, as well as the pursuit of improved living conditions. In light of the events in their country of origin, migrants arriving in Brazil find themselves vulnerable and seeking a different reality. Generally, they are adapting to a new society with cultures distinct from their own. Therefore, state intervention is essential to ensure security, health, quality of life, and peace, enabling them to live again with dignity and stability in a new country.

The need for public policies that facilitate integration is evident, such as diploma recognition programs and Portuguese language courses. At the organizational level, companies

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in Nova Mutum-MT can benefit from inclusion programs that leverage migrants' prior skills, promoting a diverse environment and fostering sustainable career (re)construction. Specific training and development programs for migrants can enhance their skills, facilitate their integration, and contribute to the construction and reconstruction of sustainable and adaptive careers. Furthermore, in practical terms, the findings indicate that local organizations need to overcome the short-term perspective that views migrants solely as low-skilled operational labor, by developing competency inventories that capitalize on their previous qualifications (such as the cases of pedagogy and design identified).

Within the scope of Public Management, the results suggest the need to streamline the formalization channels for local microenterprises and to establish linguistic mediation networks that do not overburden NGOs, thereby enabling career adaptability to translate into regional economic development.

During the course of this research, difficulties arose that directly impacted the results. One of the main factors was the migrants' reluctance to address the subject, which hindered the recruitment of a larger number of participants and limited the diversity of the experiences reported. Additionally, the language barrier also posed a challenge. Although all interviewees had an acceptable level of Portuguese, there were difficulties in interpreting certain words, which may have affected the clarity of their responses. Furthermore, initial distrust was observed among the interviewees, who demonstrated hesitation in openly sharing their experiences due to previous negative encounters or fear of exposure. As this study focuses on the subjective perceptions of five individuals, the results should not be generalized or considered explanatory standards regarding the motivation or challenges faced by other migrants. Nonetheless, by bringing to light the nuances of the migration and professional mobility experiences of Haitians, this study contributes to the field of human resource management and inclusion policies by providing insights for the development of strategies aimed at valuing diversity and the migrant workforce.

Future research could adopt ethnographic methods to mitigate some of the limitations encountered in this study. It would also be beneficial to conduct longitudinal studies to track the career development of Haitian migrants. Furthermore, it is important to expand the research to include migrants from other groups and nationalities, allowing for a broader understanding of migration dynamics and labor market integration.

In summary, this study contributes to understanding the career trajectories of Haitian migrants, emphasizing the need for public and corporate policies that promote inclusion and recognize their skills. Understanding these trajectories can guide effective strategies for integration and support, benefiting both migrants and the local community. It is underscored the necessary inclusion of migrants from other origins to achieve a more comprehensive view of migration and integration dynamics, thereby fostering a more inclusive and diverse society.

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[i] Doutora em Administração pela Universidade Federal de Lavras (UFLA) – MG - Brasil .

[ii] Bacharel em Administração pela Universidade do Estado de Mato Grosso – UNEMAT

[iii] Doutora em Ciências Sociais pela Pontifícia Universidade Católica de São Paulo – SP - Brasil.

[iv] Pós-doutorado em Ciências Sociais pelo Centro de Estudos Sociais da Universidade de Coimbra – PT. Doutor em Sociologia pela Universidade de Brasília. Mestre em Administração Rural pela ESAL – Lavras-MG.

[v] Doutor em Sociologia pela Universidade Federal de São Carlos - PPGS-UFSCar em parceria com a Universidade do Estado de Mato Grosso (UNEMAT) – DINTER – Cáceres - MT -Brasil. Mestre em Administração pela Faculdade de Estudos Administrativos/FEAD – Belo Horizonte - MG- Brasil.

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