ROMANIAN MIGRANT ENTREPRENEURSHIP–

A VEHICLE OF ACCULTURATION IN LONDON

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Praise the bridge that carried you over!

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Author's declaration

"I declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, this dissertation is the result of my work and has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Westminster or any other institution."

Iuliana Maria Chitac

Signature

Abstract

Diversity is increasingly an essential part of many global societies like Britain and entrepreneurship, and, more specifically, migrant entrepreneurship is increasingly portrayed as a driver for economic growth and integration. In this context, understanding the social impact of migrant entrepreneurship within the context is overdue, exposing the unfit current integrative policies and underutilised migrant entrepreneurship talent.

This interdisciplinary study employs a qualitative, interpretative phenomenological approach to explore how 49 London-based Romanian migrant entrepreneurs experience acculturation through entrepreneurship based on semi-structured interviews and Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis. This doctoral thesis investigates two perspectives of acculturation: the cognitive perspective of acculturation to understand how intersectional identities impact upon these migrant entrepreneurs' experiences of acculturation and the behavioural perspective of acculturation by pursuing the understanding of how these migrant entrepreneurs' entrepreneurial strategies influence their experiences of acculturation. This study expands beyond the traditional economic view of migrant entrepreneurship through these fresh cognitive and behavioural lines of inquiry to explore the contextual, interdisciplinary link between acculturation, migrant entrepreneurship, and intersectionality to contribute to interdisciplinary literature, practice, education, and policies.

First, it provides a fresh, interdisciplinary and contextualised perspective of acculturation through entrepreneurship by building an interactive, conceptual framework that demonstrates the importance and the link between interdisciplinary concepts, such as intersectional identities (i.e. sociology) entrepreneurship strategies (i.e. migrant entrepreneurship) in understanding acculturation (i.e. psychology). Second, it contributes to intersectional literature by exposing a fresh perspective of these participants' cognitive journeys of acculturation at the junction of the super-diverse socio-economic and cultural forces pro-entrepreneurial host context and their sensemaking of who they are and who they want to become. These heterogeneous journeys of becoming are portrayed as dynamic processes of

adjusting, justifying, defending, and celebrating their intersectional identities of country-of-origin, gender and entrepreneurship. Third, this study contributes to the migrant entrepreneurship research, exposing complex, heterogeneous behavioural journeys of acculturation, as some share their experiences of assimilation, whilst others talked about their social segregation or social inclusion. Their experiences conveyed a novel *migrant entrepreneurship acculturative multiplier effect,* which strengthened the social role and image of migrant entrepreneurship as a vehicle of acculturation. Fourth, this thesis contributes to methodology by creating an effective and efficient e-sampling technique via Facebook, a typology of non-verbal communication to support the IPA analysis and an ethical barter protocol to support the recruitment of hard-to-reach participants.

Table of Contents

ROMANIAN MIGRANT ENTREPRENEURSHIP– A VEHICLE OF ACCULTURATION IN LONDON....1

Acknowledgement....2

Author's declaration....4

Abstract....5

List of Tables & Diagrams....12

List of Appendices....13

Table of Acronyms....14

Publications and Conference Proceedings....15

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION....16

1.1. Introduction....17

1.2. Research theoretical background and context....17

1.3.This study's rationale and contributions to knowledge....19

1.3.1. How do intersectional identities impact upon London-based Romanian migrant entrepreneurs' experiences of acculturation? (RQ1)....20

1.3.2. How do entrepreneurship strategies impact upon London-based Romanian migrant entrepreneurs' experiences of acculturation? (RQ2)....25

1.4.This study's areas of originality....26

1.5. The overview of this study....27

1.6. Research quality....29

1.7. Researcher's positionality....31

1.8. The interdisciplinary locality of this study and its key concepts....32

1.9. Structure of the thesis....35

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW....37

2.1. Introduction....38

2.2. Acculturation: the "what" of acculturation....38

2.2.1. Contextualising acculturation....39

2.2.2. Berry's acculturation framework....42

2.3. Intersectionality and intersectional identities: the "who" of acculturation....48

2.3.1. Intersectionality as a theory....48

2.3.2. Contextualising intersectionality....51

2.3.3. Intersectional identities....53

2.3.4. Concluding remarks on intersectional identities....65

2.4. Migrant entrepreneurial strategies: the "how" of acculturation....67

2.4.1. Mainstream entrepreneurship and assimilation....70

2.4.2. Middleman entrepreneurship and social integration....72

2.4.3. Enclave entrepreneurship and social separation....73

2.5. Conclusion....75

CHAPTER THREE: 77
CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK 77
AND THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS 77
3.1. Introduction 78
3.2. Conceptual model of this IPA study 78
3.3. Context and contextualised research 80
3.3.1. Acculturation 82
3.3.2. Intersectional identities 83
3.3.3. Entrepreneurial strategies 85
3.4. The theories underpinning: the "why "of acculturation 86
3.4.1. Social Identity Theory 87
3.4.2. Optimal Distinctiveness Theory 88
3.4.3. Bourdieu's Capital Theory 89
3.4.4. Social Learning Theory and Self-Efficacy 90
3.5. Conclusion 91
CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH DESIGN 92
4.1. Introduction 93
4.2. Research Methodology 93
4.2.1. Research aim and questions 93
4.2.2. Research paradigm: interpretative phenomenology 95
4.2.3. Qualitative research methodology 97
4.2.4. Interpretative Phenomenology Analysis (IPA): rationale and critiques 99
4.2.5. Alternative research approaches to IPA 102
4.3. Summary of this study's research methodology 103
4.4. Research Methods 103
4.4.1. Research participants 104
4.4.2. Data collection 121
4.4.3. Data analysis: Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) 128
4.5. Summary of this study's research method 133
4.6. Research quality 134
4.7. Ethical considerations 136
4.7.1. Informed consent 137
4.7.2. Privacy, confidentiality and anonymity 137
4.7.3. Potential distress 138
4.7.4. Data protection and management 139
4.8. Reflectivity 140
4.8.1. Reflective research practice 140
4.8.2. Researcher's positionality 141

4.9. Conclusion 143
CHAPTER FIVE: A COGNITIVE PERSPECTIVE OF ACCULTURATION 145
5.1. Introduction 146
5.2. Cognitive acculturation through the lens of intersectionality 146
5.2.1. Intersectional identities: sense-making and lived experiences 147
5.2.2. Being Romanian in London: liability of foreignness or competitive advantage 148
5.2.3. Being an entrepreneur in London: personal empowerment or higher social status 153
5.2.4. Perception of being a woman or man as a social vulnerability 163
5.2.5. Intersectional identities as journeys of (be)longing 166
5.3. The cognitive perspective of acculturation: how do intersectional identities impact upon London-based Romanian migrant entrepreneurs' experiences of acculturation? (RQ1) 170
5.4. Discussion and concluding remarks 174
CHAPTER SIX: A BEHAVIOURAL PERSPECTIVE OF ACCULTURATION 179
6.1. Introduction 180
6.2. Behavioural acculturation through the lens of entrepreneurship strategies 181
6.2.1. Mainstream entrepreneurship: a journey of assimilation 181
6.2.2. Middleman entrepreneurship: a journey of social inclusion 188
6.2.3. Enclave entrepreneurship: a journey of social segregation 193
6.2.4. Migrant entrepreneurship: an acculturative journey of socio-cultural learning 197
6.2.5. Migrant entrepreneurship: a vehicle of acculturation in the UK 203
6.3. The behavioural perspective of acculturation: how do the entrepreneurship strategies impact upon London-based Romanian migrant entrepreneurs' experiences of acculturation? (RQ2) 208
6.4. Discussion and concluding remarks 211
CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND REFLECTIONS 216
7.1. Introduction 217
7.2. Extended conceptual framework: a summary of the research findings 217
7.2.1. The cognitive perspective of acculturation: how do intersectional identities impact upon London-based Romanian migrant entrepreneurs' experiences of acculturation? (RQ1) 221
7.2.2. The behavioural perspective of acculturation: how do the entrepreneurship strategies impact upon London-based Romanian migrant entrepreneurs' experiences of acculturation? (RQ2) 224
7.3. This study's areas of originality 225
7.4. Contribution to the knowledge 227
7.4.1. Theoretical contribution 227
7.4.2. Empirical contribution 230
7.4.3. Methodological contribution 233
7.4.4. Policy contribution 234
7.5. Implications for practice and education 237

7.6. Research limitations 243
7.7. Future research suggestions 244
7.8. Shaping and sharing: this study's impact 246
7.9. Quality and trustworthiness 247
7.9. Reflections 251
7.9.1. Becoming a researcher 251
7.9.2. Becoming as a person 255
7.10. Conclusion 256
References 258
Appendices 324

List of Tables & Diagrams

Table 1. Overview of this study's research design

Table 2. The definitions of this study's key concepts

Table 3. Acculturation strategies

Table 4. Acculturation and entrepreneurial strategies

Table 5. Research participants' demographic and business profiles

Table 6. Typology of non-verbal communication used in this study

Table 7. Summary of the study's quality criteria

Table 8. London-based Romanian migrant entrepreneurs' acculturation and their entrepreneurship strategies

Table 9. This study's contribution to knowledge

Table 10. This study's quality criteria and reinforcing strategies

Diagram 1: This IPA study's conceptual model

Diagram 2. The IPA data analysis steps

Diagram 3. The Extended Conceptual Framework

List of Appendices

Appendix 1. The interdisciplinary scientific locality of this study

Appendix 2. The profile of migrant e-entrepreneurs in the UK

Appendix 3. Migration Observatory research media publications

Appendix 4. Top 20 nouns used by the British press publications in association with Romanian immigrants

Appendix 5. London-based Romanian migrant entrepreneurs' education

Appendix 6. The time-based perspective of this study's barter exchange

Appendix 7. Research participant demographic profile

Appendix 8. Research participant business profile

Appendix 9. London-based Romanian migrant entrepreneurs' businesses (micro, small and medium-sized businesses)

Appendix 10. Interview guide

Appendix 11. The iterative process of the translation

Appendix 12. The process of emergent thematic codes

Appendix 13. A typology for nonverbal language

Appendix 14. Research participant informed consent

Appendix 15. Research participant information sheet

Appendix 16. Sample of thematic codes

Appendix 17. London-based Romanian migrant entrepreneurs' entrepreneurship strategies

Table of Acronyms

Acronyms	Explanation
IPA	Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis
EU	European Union
CER	Centre for Entrepreneurs Report
ONS	Office of National Statistics
UK	United Kingdom
CoO	Country-of-origin
SIT	Social Identity Theory
APPG	All-Party Parliamentary Group
OD	Optimal Distinctiveness Theory
GEM	Global Entrepreneur Monitor
LREs	London-based Romanian migrant entrepreneurs
Fes	London-based Romanian female migrant entrepreneurs
MEs	London-based Romanian male migrant entrepreneurs

Publications and Conference Proceedings

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction

This chapter introduces this study's aim and provides a theoretical, empirical and contextual background for exploring the cognitive and behavioural perspectives of acculturation. The interdisciplinary scientific locality of this thesis is established linking acculturation, intersectional identities, and migrant entrepreneurship to underpin this study's rationale and contributions to knowledge. The chapter continues with an overview of the research design and quality, followed by a reflective assessment of the researcher's positionality as a cultural and linguistic insider and concludes with the layout of the chapters.

1.2. Research theoretical background and context

Globalisation is far from being just the mere movement of people across geographical borders to pursue better lives and careers. Additionally, it is increasingly becoming a driver of socio-cultural diversity in many advanced societies, like Britain, thus exposing unfit, universalist policies, which fail to value and support the heterogeneity of this super-diversity (Vertovec, 2020), which contributes significantly to the socio-cultural fibre of the setting (Malerba and Ferreira, 2020; Vertovec, 2019). Motivated by host pro-entrepreneurial institutional support (GEM, 2019) and by the opportunity of overcoming deskilling and social stigma (Bosma et al. 2017; Evansluong, Ramirez-Pasillas and Nguyen Bergstrom, 2019; Datta and Gailey, 2012; Munkejord, 2017), migrants are increasingly contributing to the host countries through entrepreneurship (Dheer, 2018; Kushnirovich 2015).

The universalist approach found in conviction-based integrative policies is also perpetuated in migrant entrepreneurship studies (Andreouli and Harwarth, 2019). This approach and the focus on the economics of migrant entrepreneurship undermine the social value and impact of many communities of migrant entrepreneurs in the UK, including Romanians. Whilst they are members of the second-largest community of EU migrants in the UK (ONS, 2019), they are yet to

capture researchers and policy makers' agenda outside of the cluster of Eastern Europeans (Vershinina and Rodgers, 2019), except for a handful of studies, which focus on Romanians more broadly (Andreouli and Harwarth, 2019; Moroşanu and Fox, 2013; Moroşanu, Szilassy and Fox, 2015; Pantiru and Barley, 2014), rather than London-based Romanian migrant entrepreneurs, who are the focus of this doctoral thesis.

Migrants are at the heart of the public and political debate of super-diverse societies worldwide and entrepreneurship. By extension, migrant entrepreneurship, being regarded as a driver of economic recovery and growth, is well established (Vertovec, 2020; World Migration Report, 2020). Within this context, it is disappointing that migrant entrepreneurship's social impact remains largely overlooked (Zahra and Write, 2016; Evansluong, Ramirez-Pasillas and Nguyen Bergstrom, 2019).

Acculturation and, ultimately, migrants and migrant entrepreneurs' social inclusion in the host country is necessary and important because, in the context of the increasing social diversity, this means overcoming social inequalities between migrants and natives and the rising anti-immigrant rhetoric (Moroşanu, 2018). Acculturation creates the sense of *becoming and belonging* in the host country (Botterill and Hancock, 2018; Malerba and Ferreira, 2020), which leaves migrants and migrant entrepreneurs feeling empowered to learn, participate in and contribute to the host society (Evansluong, Ramirez-Pasillas and Nguyen Bergstrom, 2019).

This study addresses the gap, and the universalist approach perpetuated by policy-makers and scholars alike, that portrays migrant entrepreneurship as a source of purely economic value (Kushnirovich 2015) when true to its diversity membership, the contribution and the impact of migrant entrepreneurship reaches beyond economics to influence the social fibre of the host country (Evansluong, Ramirez-Pasillas and Nguyen Bergstrom, 2019). Against this landscape, the significance of context in achieving an in-depth understanding of migrant entrepreneurs' experiences of acculturation through entrepreneurship becomes pivotal (Baker and Welter, 2020; Welter et al., 2019; Welter, 2020). For this study, it is acknowledged

that these participants' acculturation, migrant entrepreneurship strategies, and intersectional identities are not happening in a vacuum, but rather, they are influenced by British society's socio-cultural and economic dimensions.

1.3.This study's rationale and contributions to knowledge

Framed by the theoretical framework and the context detailed above, acculturation, migrant entrepreneurship, and intersectionality come together to expose a fresh, interdisciplinary perspective. This approach supports this study's overall aim to understand ***how London-based Romanian migrant entrepreneurs experience acculturation through entrepreneurship.*** This study is focused on the community of London-based Romanian immigrant entrepreneurs, who, together with their co-nationals, are acknowledged as disruptive contributors to Britain's super-diversity (Morosanu, 2018; Andreouli and Harwarth, 2019), despite scarce and fragmented evidence in this sense (Vershinina and Rodgers, 2019).

Thanks to its interdisciplinarity, this work's contribution to knowledge varies, informing current debates around migrant entrepreneurship, intersectionality and bringing to the fore fresh acculturation perspectives.

First, acculturation is explored through an interdisciplinary lens as a socio-cultural learning process that enables migrant entrepreneurs to become instead of being.

Many studies have explored acculturation either from a universalist (Berry, 2011) or mixed embeddedness perspective (Barberis and Solano, 2018; Jones et al., 2014; Kloosterman, 2010) criticized for being too static (Lasalle et al., 2020), whereas for this research, interdisciplinarity is utilised. Accordingly, an interactive conceptual framework is created, demonstrating how key role concepts, such as intersectional identities and entrepreneurship strategies, explain how acculturation is experienced. This interdisciplinarity supports the exploration of these fresh, cognitive and

behavioural perspectives of acculturation.

Drawing upon Berry's model (1997, 2003, 2005), acculturation is understood as the process through which migrant entrepreneurs' intersectional identities and their entrepreneurship strategies can be adjusted through different degrees of social interaction, as venues of social learning (Bandura, 1971). In addition, acculturation allows migrants to engage with their heritage and/or the host country (Berry et al., 2011). Accordingly, acculturation is dynamic, manifesting itself as social integration or inclusion (i.e. migrants are interacting with both home and host country cultures), social separation or segregation (i.e. migrants focus on maintaining their heritage culture whilst avoiding social interactions with the broader host society), assimilation (i.e. migrants prioritise the host country's culture over their own) or marginalisation (i.e. migrants are excluded from home and host cultures) (Berry, 1997; 2003; 2005).

Thanks to its interdisciplinary approach, this doctoral thesis expands the understanding of acculturation beyond the disciplinary boundaries of psychology. Furthermore, this approach enables fresh and relevant perspectives to investigate the under-researched links between migrant entrepreneurship, acculturation (Evansluong, Ramirez-Pasillas and Nguyen Bergstrom, 2019) and intersectionality (Lassalle and Shaw, 2021). This study's contribution to the interdisciplinary literature is demonstrated in the following sections, where the two main research questions are introduced.

1.3.1. How do intersectional identities impact upon London-based Romanian migrant entrepreneurs' experiences of acculturation? (RQ1)

This study's interdisciplinarity is demonstrated through its *cognitive perspective of acculturation.* This fresh perspective becomes the focus of this first research question.

This study's intersectional perspective enables fresh insights into how migrant entrepreneurs overcome host socio-cultural challenges and opportunities and how they ultimately experience acculturation in super-diverse societies like London (Vertovec, 2007; 2019; 2020). Despite gaining momentum in migrant entrepreneurship studies (Lassalle and Shaw, 2021; Martinez Dy, Marlow and Martin, 2017; Yamamura and Lassalle, 2019), and its increasing relevance in understanding how different and multiple identities, including country-of-origin, entrepreneurship and gender identities, amongst others, are experienced, justified, negotiated and prioritised by migrant entrepreneurs in the host-context (Dheer, 2018), intersectionality holds untapped potential (Lassalle and Shaw, 2021; Yamamura and Lassalle, 2019).

This study explores intersectionality's untapped potential by recognising "the simultaneity of the different social categories to which individuals belong, and that inform their identities, but also the ways structures (contexts) are and (how) people experience them" (Carrim and Nkomo, 2016:262). It is also acknowledged that in the context of migration and migrant entrepreneurship, more specifically, the intersection of multiple identities and contexts create specific challenges and opportunities, which influence migrant entrepreneurs' agency and behaviours (Martinez Dy, 2020; Martinez Dy, Marlow and Martin, 2017; Ozasir Kacar and Essers, 2019). These barriers and opportunities impact upon their participation in the host society, their entrepreneurship strategies (Dheer, 2018; Dheer and Lenartowicz, 2018) and ultimately, their acculturation (Evansluong, Ramirez-Pasillas and Nguyen Bergstrom, 2019).

Most studies portray migrant entrepreneurship as a community-homogeneous economic activity, giving little consideration to intra-community differences. A handful of scholars have suggested that researching sub-cultural differences helps understand migrants' belonging to the host country and their entrepreneurship journeys (Dheer, 2018; Virgili, 2020). It is increasingly unsettling and problematic to see how these migrants' identities are often categorised "to fit the political needs of simple categorisations" and satisfy the public and political rhetoric (Manea, 2016).

This short-sighted view of migrants' identities in super-diverse societies has allowed for their needs to be addressed metaphysically instead of being treated as "acceptable other" human beings (Monforte, Bassel and Khan, 2019). To address the first research question requires exploring the intra-community differences associated with being London-based Romanian migrant entrepreneurs of both genders through an intersectional lens. This approach intertwines migrant entrepreneurs' identities with their acculturation, thus enabling the understanding of how these identities are negotiated, justified, prioritised, and experienced against the host society's expectations (Manea, 2016). Consequently, this study takes a stance against policy-makers and scholars who have simplified and promoted a paradoxical image of homogeneous diversity concerning acculturation by "explicitly or implicitly recognising people primarily as members of groups" (Novotny, 2015:15; Vertovec, 2020). Specifically, for this doctoral thesis, the cognitive acculturation perspective is explored by investigating how intersectional identities of country-of-origin, entrepreneurship and gender impact London-based migrant entrepreneurs' experiences.

Given the increasing British political and mediatised anti-immigrant rhetoric (Morosanu, 2018), the relevance of migrant entrepreneurs' country-of-origin identity has become salient to understanding their acculturation. This socio-cultural identity increases the "unacceptable otherness" of these communities, emphasising cherry-picked characteristics that contradict the host social normativity and expectations (Manea, 2016; Virgili, 2020). This image of discontent between host and country-of-origin socio-cultural identities results in disengagement with the host society (Dickey, Drinkwater and Shubin, 2018), which could significantly negatively impact upon the acculturation of migrants more broadly.

Despite representing the largest community of EU-migrants in the UK (ONS, 2019), this anti-immigrant rhetoric motivated this community to become hard-to-reach even for co-national researchers like myself. Similar to the handful of scholars who researched this community of immigrants (Andreouli and Harwarth, 2019; Moroşanu and Fox, 2013; Moroşanu, Szilassy and Fox, 2015; Pantiru and Barley, 2014), my

positionality as a cultural and linguistic insider proved to be critical in establishing the boding trust with the 49 research participants. As detailed in the Research Design Chapter, according to their accounts, my insider positionality eased them into a personal recall and openness to share their experiences of acculturation in London, particularly since the shared linguistic proximity enabled them to express themselves in their own, heartfelt, native language (Oxley et al., 2017; Suwankhong and Liamputtong, 2015).

Given the importance of country-of-origin identity in understanding acculturation in the context of migration, the following sub-question is formulated:

How does country-of-origin identity impact upon London-based Romanian migrant entrepreneurs' experiences of acculturation? (RQ1a)

The social identity of "being an entrepreneur" is considered another salient intersectional identity, being portrayed as the result of "interactions amongst an individual, the enterprise and society" (Orser, Elliott and Leck, 2011:564). Migrant entrepreneurship studies often portray this identity as the identity through which migrant entrepreneurs could achieve the desired optimal distinctiveness (OD) in the host country (Hamid, O'Kane and Everett, 2019; Brewer, 1991; 2003). For this study, entrepreneurship identity as a dynamic, acculturative manifestation of "becoming" rather than just "being" is explored (Gioia and Patvardhan, 2012; Leitch and Harrison, 2016). This perspective allows the focal migrant entrepreneurs to manifest their authentic selves by blending conformance and distinctiveness characteristics, translating into different degrees of acculturative belonging in the UK (Abd Hamid, O'Kane and Everett, 2019).

Within the current empirical and theoretical framework, entrepreneurial identity is essential for understanding migrant entrepreneurship, and, through this, the cognitive acculturation of this community of migrant entrepreneurs can be uncovered.

How does entrepreneurial identity impact upon London-based Romanian migrant

entrepreneurs' experiences of acculturation? (RQ1b)

Lastly, the intersectional lens includes gender identity, which is crucial for understanding acculturation and migrant entrepreneurship (Jones et al., 2019; Pantiru and Barley, 2014; Vershinina and Rogers, 2019). Gender identity is understood as "something you do, not something you are" (Phillips and Knowles, 2012:419), influencing how individuals interact, behave and acculturate within a context (Zampetakis et al., 2016). This study advances the gendered perspective in migrant entrepreneurship and acculturation by challenging the dominant, static view of this identity. The perspective of gender being a pre-established social order is replaced by a renewed focus on exploring its "untapped entrepreneurial and leadership potential" (Kamberidou, 2020:3) on their own right and not by catching up to the "ideal male entrepreneur." (Kelley et al., 2015; Villares and Essers, 2019).

Like the other two intersectional identities, gender takes on contextual meanings, from being regarded as a source of empowerment (Villares-Varella, 2018) or discrimination (Sloan et al., 2018). As gender fuels social and work divisions (Bonizzoni, 2018), it influences how these migrant entrepreneurs engage in entrepreneurship and how they ultimately acculturate in the host country (Arrighetti, Bolzani and Lasagni, 2018; Dheer, 2018). This inquiry line involves exploring how *gender impact upon London-based Romanian migrant entrepreneurs' experiences of acculturation? (RQ1c)*

Against this theoretical and hegemonic host context, for this study, it was decided that an exploration of the intersectional identities of country-of-origin, gender, and entrepreneurship would answer the first research question effectively. That is, it would uncover with clarity how these migrant entrepreneurs' intersectional identities impact upon their journeys of cognitive acculturation.

1.3.2. How do entrepreneurship strategies impact upon London-based Romanian migrant entrepreneurs' experiences of acculturation? (RQ2)

Migrant entrepreneurship is primarily portrayed as a source of income and economic wealth (Chang, Wong and Myeongcheol, 2014; Kushnirovich, 2015). However, this study argues that migrant entrepreneurship is a dynamic, everyday social phenomenon (Barberis and Solano, 2018; Evansluong, Ramirez-Pasillas and Nguyen Bergstrom, 2019). This perspective extends beyond the traditional migrant entrepreneurship economics "to embrace (…) a concern for the 'other', to challenge the unspoken and often unrecognised 'taken-for-granted aspects of what entrepreneurship is and what it might be" (Gartner, 2013: 3). Investigating this largely underexplored social everydayness lens embedded in migrant entrepreneurship (Barberis and Solano, 2018; Evansluong, Ramirez-Pasillas and Nguyen Bergstrom, 2019; Dheer, 2018; Zahra and Wright, 2016), this study delivers a fresh, behavioural perspective of acculturation.

To understand how this sample of migrant entrepreneurs experience acculturation, this study shifts away from marketing strategies of breaking in and out as previously documented (Ram and Jones, 1998; Lassalle and Scott, 2017; Evansluong, Ramirez-Pasillas and Nguyen Bergstrom, 2019) to focus on their entrepreneurship strategies. These entrepreneurship strategies, from enclave (Portes, 1991) (i.e. migrant entrepreneurs serve their heritage community exclusively) through to middleman (Bonacich,1973) (i.e. migrant entrepreneur becomes the facilitator between different ethnic and immigrant communities and the host society) and mainstream (Evansluong, Ramirez-Pasillas and Nguyen Bergstrom, 2019) (i.e. migrant entrepreneurs serve the broader host society exclusively, with no interest in preserving their heritage) are explored. This allows for uncovering the acculturative potential for these migrant entrepreneurs to achieve social inclusion in London.

This study's contribution to knowledge extends beyond theoretical and empirical streams to address the unfit universalism and homogeneous inclusivity that currently defines the conviction-based (dis)integrative policies and entrepreneurship

schemes (Vertovec, 2020). A stance is taken to establish the significance of evidence-based policies, which value diversity in its heterogeneity and reinforce the need to unlock the full social and entrepreneurial potential of every community of migrant entrepreneurs, including that of London-based Romanian migrant entrepreneurs.

Chapter Seven discusses this study's various contributions to interdisciplinarity, methodology, policies, and practice in comprehensive detail. This study's areas of originality are briefly presented in the following section.

1.4. This study's areas of originality

This study's original contributions are grounded in its interdisciplinarity and contextualised view of acculturation and its methodological advances.

(1) For this interdisciplinary study, psychology (Berry, 1997, 2003, 2005), entrepreneurship (Bonacich, 1973; Evansluong, Ramirez-Pasillas, and Nguyen Bergstrom, 2019; Portes, 1981), and sociology (Crenshaw, 1991, 2019) are brought together to address an acknowledged gap in the social dimension of entrepreneurship (Mago, 2020).

(2) The deployment of *e-sampling via Facebook*, the *typology of non-verbal communication and the ethical barter protocol* constitutes methodological originality. The e-sampling via Facebook is an efficient technique for this study. It shows social media's potential for extending cross-cultural research and widening the social media-driven research canon, particularly when sampling in hard-to-reach communities (Ling et al., 2018; Waling et al., 2020; Waring et al., 2018). This contribution materialised in a fully peer-reviewed paper presented at the BAM (British Academy of Management) Conference of 2019 (Chitac and Knowles, 2019).

(3) This study also contributes to the methodological literature on *non-verbal communication, which supports "embodied" IPA analysis ((*Bispo and Gherardi,

2019). *According to Denham* and Onwuegbuzie's (2013) meta-analysis, embodied interpretative research is absent in 73.8% of the IPA studies published in The Qualitative Report covering 1990 to June 2012, despite non-verbal communication accounting for 65-93% of our communication (Birdwhistell, 1970, cited in Bonaccio et al., 2016; Eaves and Leathers, 2018). This gap is addressed by creating a practical analysis tool and a protocol that supports the analysis of the non-verbal communication captured during data collection. This contribution was captured in a fully peer-reviewed paper presented at the BAM Conference of 2020, which was awarded the Best Full Paper in the Methodology Track (Chitac, Knowles and Dhaliwal**,** 2020).

(3) *The ethical bartering recruitment protocol* designed to support the interviewees' post-interview request to exchange their participation in the study for the researcher's professional business expertise. This recruitment research practice materialised in a full research paper, currently under review for the upcoming BAM Conference 2021. The ethical bartering recruitment protocol was developed to overcome this research practice's lack of ethical guidance. Illustrative examples of these tools' methodological relevance are provided in the Research Design Chapter and the conference papers included in Appendices A, B, and C of this thesis.

1.5. The overview of this study

In line with the aim, an interpretative phenomenology involving both qualitative and inductive approaches is utilised. Drawing upon intersectional identities and migrant entrepreneurship strategies, this study's IPA approach is essential for gaining a deep understanding of how London-based Romanian migrant entrepreneurs experience acculturation through entrepreneurship. By committing to undertake this IPA study, the researcher guides "the reader reflectively to that region of lived experience where the phenomenon dwells in the recognisable form" (Van Manen, 2014: 390), rather than to a factual conclusion (Smythe, 2011).

Due to the challenges experienced when recruiting amongst this hard-to-reach

community of migrant entrepreneurs, the research process proved to be iterative, dynamic and full of opportunities for knowledge creation in the methodological field. These methods included a combination of traditional sampling techniques, such as snowballing, chain-referral, derived rapport and time-space with social media, e-snowball sampling techniques via Facebook, being pursued to increase access and hence, the research sample. Semi-structured interviews were employed to collect data regarding the lived experiences of acculturation from 49 London-based Romanian migrant entrepreneurs (18 females and 31 males).

Drawing upon Smith, Flower and Larkin's (2009) IPA data analysis guidelines, the recorded interview data, together with the researcher's field notes, which captured participants' non-verbal communication, became the main sources of primary data subsequently subjected to thematic analysis. Committed "to the examination of how people make sense of their major life experiences" (Smith, Flowers, and Larkin, 2009:1-4), by preserving the authenticity of their lived experiences of acculturation, the researcher engaged reflectively in descriptive and interpretative phenomenological data analysis. Analysing non-verbal communication and the co-existing verbal communication proved to be a challenge. Nevertheless, it was an excellent opportunity to contribute to the methodological literature. A summary of the research design is provided in the table below.

Table 1. Overview of the research design

Research design		
Methodology	Research paradigms	Interpretative phenomenology
	Research approach	Qualitative - Interpretative Phenomenological analysis
	Research strategy	Inductive reasoning
Methods	Data collection	Semi-structured interviews & reflective fieldnotes
	Sampling techniques	Snowballing, chain-referral, derived rapport, time-space, e-sampling techniques
	Sample	49 London-based Romanian migrant entrepreneurs (18 females & 31 males)
	Data analysis	Thematic analysis

1.6. Research quality

As argued in Chapter Four, IPA is increasingly gaining the deserved recognition of being "rigorous and (able) to produce a plethora of rich data" (Callary, Rathwell, and Young, 2015:73), with concepts such as validity and trustworthiness being increasingly used to assess its quality (Golafshani, 2003). Most scholars agree that a doctoral thesis must be cohesive and coherent and that the responsibility of the

PhD candidate is to ensure a rigorous and robust research design that can deliver to deliver impactful new knowledge. Accordingly, by providing these practices, the researcher could achieve doctorates (Trafford and Leshem, 2009), which may seem harder to accomplish in qualitative studies than quantitative ones due to the lack of validity tests (Hedges, 2010). Qualitative research is far from being just a "collection of anecdotes" (Williams and Morrow, 2009:576) or just exploratory (Neergaard, 2014). It is well-positioned to contribute significantly to understanding complex phenomena, like acculturation and entrepreneurship, thereby allowing for fresh, evidence-based perspectives to be investigated. This approach requires scholars to switch from using quantitative criteria to assess the robustness of qualitative research. Instead, criteria that allow the phenomena to be understood as the participants' experienced them and shared them are required (Van Burg et al., 2020).

Aiming to ensure high-quality research practice and validity for this IPA study, the researcher followed Smith (2011) and Yardley's (2000, 2008) criteria to achieve credibility, sensitivity to the context, commitment to rigour, transparency. Amongst the strategies used to ensure the quality and the trustworthiness of this study are: direct involvement throughout the research process, triangulation of data sources, diligent and reflective research practice and reporting; understanding of the relevant interdisciplinary literature and the socioeconomic and super-diverse context; an iterative and ethical approach to research practice; and welcoming reviews from the supervisory team, conference reviewers and the broader academic community.

1.7. Researcher's positionality

The researcher's positionality "reflects the position that the researcher has chosen to adopt within a given research study" (Savin-Baden and Major, 2013:71). It influences the context and the whole research process, starting with the research aim, all the way to reporting the findings (Grix, 2019; Holmes, 2020; Marsh et al., 2018). This research journey is one of the multiple and diverse identities, each with its opportunities and limitations. As argued in great detail in Chapter Four (subsection 4.6.2), in the context of this study, the researcher acknowledges and takes on the responsibility of managing multiple positionalities, including being a researcher, an interviewer, a translator and a cultural insider to the researched community of London-based Romanian migrant entrepreneurs.

This study would not have been possible without engaging with an ongoing reflective approach to consider the researcher's potential impact on the investigation (Cohen et al., 2011). Reflection informs positionality (Holmes, 2020). It motivates the researcher to engage in bracketing, suspending his/her views and assumptions to prioritise research integrity (May and Perry, 2017), thus allowing for participants' views to be heard and the authenticity of their experiences to shine through (Alase, 2017; Burke, 2014; Holmes, 2020; Noon, 2018).

In the field, the researcher's primary focus was to ensure research integrity, by enabling these migrant entrepreneurs to share their authentic experiences of acculturation. This objective was achieved through different strategies, including: analysing data using interview transcripts, drawing up reflective field notes, and feedback from the supervisory team, participants and conference reviewers (as a researcher); allowing the interviewees to express themselves freely with limited interview guidance and interventions (as an interviewer); translating back and forth and whenever possible asking for participants' collaboration and confirmation of what was understood and interpreted (as a translator); and empowering them to share and entrust their experiences in their native language, thereby allowing for rich and more insightful experiences to be shared (as a cultural insider) (Oxley et

al., 2017; Suwankhong and Liamputtong, 2015). Managing these multiple identities requires continuous self-assessment and understanding of who you are as a person and who you are required to be as a researcher. Through a constant process of self-reflection and reflectivity, the researcher ensures the delivery of high quality and trustworthy study.

1.8. The interdisciplinary locality of this study and its key concepts

This IPA study is interdisciplinary, exploring the link between three key concepts: acculturation, intersectional identities, and migrant entrepreneurship. Psychology, sociology and migrant entrepreneurship are brought together to uncover how London-based Romanian migrant entrepreneurs experience acculturation through their entrepreneurship (Appendix 1). As concepts cross disciplinary boundaries, they are bound to expand their meanings and take on new ones. The lack of consensus on which definition best describes these meanings is widespread and long-standing (PytlikZillig and Kimbrough, 2015). Hence, to strengthen this study's quality, the meanings of these key research concepts are clarified (PytlikZillig and Kimbrough, 2015). The definitions of the key concepts embedded in this interdisciplinary study are captured in the table below and further detailed in the Literature Review in Chapter Two.

Table 2. The definitions of the key concepts

Key concepts	Definitions
Acculturation	The process through which migrant entrepreneurs' intersectional identities and their entrepreneurship strategies are adjusted through different degrees of social interaction, as venues of social learning (Bandura, 1971), with opportunities to experience and engage with their heritage and/or the host country (Berry et al., 2011). It refers to social integration or inclusion, separation or segregation, assimilation, and marginalisation.
Social Integration	This pertains to the acculturation process, where immigrants interact with both home and host country cultures (Berry, 1997, 2003, 2005).
Assimilation	Refers to the acculturation strategy where immigrants prioritise the host country's culture over their own (Berry, 2003, 2005; Lu, Samaratunge and Hartel, 2012).
Social Separation	When engaging in this, immigrants focus on maintaining their heritage culture whilst avoiding social interactions with the broader host society (Berry, 1997, 2003, 2005).
Intersectional Identities	Intersectionality theory recognises the simultaneity of different social categories, such as country-of-

	origin, gender, and entrepreneurial identities, to which these London-based migrant entrepreneurs "belong and that inform their identities, but also the ways structures (contexts) are and (how) people experience them" (Carrim and Nkomo, 2016:262).
London-based Romanian immigrant entrepreneur	This study's sample includes London-based entrepreneurs of both genders of Romanian nationality. At their interview, they are Romanian-born and first-generation immigrants residing in the UK. They are the owners of an active and legally registered business in the UK, regardless of its size. In keeping with migrant entrepreneurship literature, migrant and immigrant are used interchangeably in this study.
Mainstream Entrepreneurship	This refers to the breaking out strategy through which the migrant entrepreneurs expand their business into the mainstream or otherwise start a mainstream one from the beginning (Allen and Busse, 2016; Arrighetti, Bolzani and Lasagni, 2014).
Enclave Entrepreneurship	According to the Ethnic Enclave Theory, an enclave entrepreneurship strategy refers to "immigrant groups which concentrate in a distinct spatial location and organise a variety of enterprises surviving within their ethnic market" (Portes, 1981: 290).
Middleman Entrepreneurship	According to the middleman theory or mainstream-enclave entrepreneurship, migrant entrepreneurship facilitates socio-cultural and

	entrepreneurial interactions between different ethnic and immigrant communities and the mainstream society (Blalock, 1967; Bonacich, 1973).

1.9. Structure of the thesis

This thesis consists of seven chapters that guide the reader through the IPA study. It begins with the study's rationale and its potential contribution to knowledge by addressing interdisciplinary knowledge gaps. The following chapters closely address this by setting out its methodology and methods, which is followed by the presentation of the research findings seeking to address the two research questions. Lastly, the conclusion chapter reports on this study's originality and contribution to knowledge.

Chapter One lays the foundation of this study. It presents an overview of this work along with its underpinng rationale and contributions to knowledge.

Chapter Two presents a critical review of the interdisciplinary literature, which is organised into three main sections. Each of these sections demonstrates the value of the three interdisciplinary concepts: acculturation (i.e. psychology), intersectional identities (i.e. sociology), and migrant entrepreneurship (i.e. entrepreneurship), that underpin this research endeavour.

Chapter Three presents the interactive, interdisciplinary conceptual model created and deployed, linking acculturation, intersectional identities, and entrepreneurship strategies. It integrates the cognitive and behavioural perspectives of acculturation for interrogating the two research questions.

Chapter Four describes the research design. It justifies this design as being suitable for delivering this study's aim, thereby addressing the two research questions. This chapter describes and explains the qualitative interpretative phenomenological methodology and the research methods utilised, including the sampling techniques, data collection, and analysis tools employed to achieve the stated aim and tackle the research questions.

Chapter Five presents and discusses the research findings, which address the first research question, revealing the cognitive perspective of acculturation.

Chapter Six presents and discusses the research findings, which address the second research question, revealing the behavioural perspective of acculturation.

Chapter Seven concludes this doctoral study. It provides the areas of originality, contribution to knowledge, limitations, and proposals for future research directions. It ends on a reflective, personal note, revealing the personal and professional ups and downs of this research journey.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

This Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) study is set out, through a review of the interdisciplinary literature, to explain the key concepts (i.e., psychology-based acculturation, sociology-based intersectional identities, and migrant entrepreneurship-based entrepreneurship strategies) that underpin this research endeavour.

Specifically, Berry's acculturation framework (1997, 2003, 2005) is applied, in addition to the contextualised and intersectional approach, to provide a deeper understanding of the situated and authentic meaning of individual experiences of acculturation. Scholars have acknowledged that acculturation, migrant entrepreneurship and intersectionality are contextual, being influenced and, in turn, influencing the context in which they happen (Baker and Welter, 2020; Lassalle and Shaw, 2021; Welter, 2020). Alongside all these key debates, direct references to the extant studies on Romanian migrants and migrant entrepreneurs are made, which allows for relevant research gaps to be identified.

This literature review is structured into three main sections. They discuss the concepts of acculturation, intersectional identities, and migrant entrepreneurship and how they intersect to create an interdisciplinary study.

2.2. Acculturation: the "what" of acculturation

This section provides a brief overview of the UK's history of migration and how its approach to social integration aligns with the new generation of intra-EU migrants are provided. This contextualised approach to understanding acculturation draws on valuable socio-cultural and political considerations pertaining to the context where "circular" immigrants' identities and strategies impact their acculturation (Engbersen and Snel, 2013; King et al., 2017) in "super-diverse" London (Pardo, 2018). This study focuses on intersectional identities and entrepreneurship strategies in seeking

to understand acculturation through behavioural and cognitive perspectives. These are the interdisciplinary pillars used to explain how the research participants experience acculturation. This discussion's theoretical approach includes a theoretical perspective, evaluating different acculturation models, with a particular focus on Berry's model (1997, 2003, 2005).

2.2.1. Contextualising acculturation

Robert Winder's (2004) thought-provoking picture of migration to and from the UK creates the scenario of it being an "epic story", which seems to preserve its mundane nature and it shapes lives and societies across centuries.

"Imagine for a moment that we could watch, from some all-seeing camera high in space, the long history of the British Isles unfolding before our eyes… the most striking sight would be the astounding traffic into and out of our ports. Thousands of ships and planes, millions of people, year after year, century after century…We would not see that some of the arrivals never leave, or that some of the departures never return…" (Winder, 2004:1).

This image offers insight into the UK's rich migration history, spreading over centuries. On the one hand, it is the story of predictable post-colonialism, shaped by a process of formal selection of ethnic minorities and carefully orchestrated, stable migration (Dawson, 2007). Post colonialist migration was primarily driven and controlled by labour demands, going back centuries, including Eastern–European Jewish immigrants invited to build Britain's financial infrastructure (18th-20th Century), followed by Chinese immigrants through the treaties of Narking (1842) and Nanking (1860), who established ethnic enclaves, known as China Towns, in big cities like London (i.e. Limehouse Chinatown) (Seed, 2006). The UK's controlled and economically driven approach to immigration (Geddes, 2003) continued post-WWII (Jones and Ram, 2007) when immigrants were formally invited to support

economic development (Jones, Mascarenhas – Keyes and Ram, 2012).

On the other hand, it is also the story of “unprecedented super-diversity” (Vertovec, 2007), defined as the new age of circular or liquid migration (Bauman, 2005), as the latest intra-EU free movement, which included migrants from Central and Eastern Europe (Fox and Mogilnicka, 2017). This intra-EU migration wave is viewed as “the biggest demographic change” on the continent since WWII (Favell, 2008:701), where these migrants have become transitional commuters between East and West (Engbersen and Snel, 2013).

It is important to understand how this “liquid migration” manifests, prioritising flexibility and nomadism over the stability and permanence of the previous generation of migrants (Constant, 2020; Engbersen and Snel, 2013). This new migration pattern impacts how these migrants negotiate their identities and their acculturation or integration in the host country (Arrighetti, Bolzani, and Lasagni, 2017; Dheer, 2018). It also offers contextualised insights into how these migrants’ “contribution” to British “super-diversity” has divided public opinion into anti-immigration, anti-immigrant (Taylor, 2014) and “diversity dividend” views (Syrett and Sepulveda, 2011; Nathan and Lee, 2013), thus leading to the costs and benefits associated with the “overstay” of these immigrants being disputed. This seems to erode their acknowledged economic contribution as participants to the broader society, alongside other generations of migrants (Meissner and Vertovec, 2015).

Even though the approach to migration changed from controlled to free movement, similar to many European countries, Britain’s policies broadly held their “ad hoc, reactive and control-oriented” immigration focus (Penninx, 2005:138) instead of focusing on the integration of immigrants (Rutter, 2013). Additionally, the populist discourse accompanying Romanians recognition as EU citizens has had significant political and labour market implications. Consequently, their access to the British labour market was restricted, except for entrepreneurs, for seven years, between January 2007 and January 2014 (European Comission, 2016).

The absence of clear UK integration policies (APPG Report, 2017) suggests that the maintenance of post- colonialism practices has remained broadly unchallenged and

that the persistence of homogeneous and universal policies, such as the Equality Strategy and the Social Mobility Strategy, ignores the essence of the "super-diversity", which defines today's British society (Vertovec, 2020). Hence, there is a need to address this "current integration policy (which) is fragmented, ad-hoc, and lacking in coordination" (All- Party Parliamentary Group on Social Integration, 2017: 8).

This super-diverse new generation of immigrants has transformed British society and, in particular, in the context of this study, the City of London, into a multicultural society (Pardo, 2018), wherein the capital over 37% of residents are ethnically diverse (ONS, 2019). It is in this multicultural society with "circular" migration that acculturation needs to be understood, for these new globalised societies encourage the overlapping of a myriad of affiliations (Benhabib, 2004), which impact the identities and acculturation of all social participants (Arrighetti, Bolzani and Lasagni, 2017; Berry et al., 2011). Through a chain-like effect of acculturation, immigrants and natives become, voluntarily or involuntarily, through the everyday social interactions, subject to different degrees of acculturation as they adapt to a new evolving reality (Berry, 2005; Brown and Zagefka, 2011).

The City of London context is relevant for this study because of its richness in coexisting contradictions fuelled by its super-diversity (Platt and Nandi, 2018; Vertovec, 2020). As an important contributor to this super-diversity (Vertovec, 2007; 2019), Romanian migrant entrepreneurs have established themselves as the youngest community of migrant entrepreneurs (CER, 2015, Appendix 2) and an important part of the migrant community, which constitutes the second-largest community of EU migrants in the UK, after the Poles (ONS, 2019). Whilst the migration patterns and demographics have changed with the expansion of the intra-EU free movement; the pro- entrepreneurial British context continues to influence an upward trend of migrant entrepreneurs. This recurring feature links the established generation of migrant entrepreneurs from Asia and Hong Kong with the recent waves of Poles, Somalis (Edwards et al., 2016), and Romanians.

Within this multicultural context, disadvantages and social mobilities co-exist (Zuccotti and Platt, 2017; Zwysen and Longhi, 2018), where minorities, Chinese and Indians, for example, still experience occupational segregation (Mok and Platt, 2018). Additionally, the British and more specifically London labour market pulls in migrants whilst also reinforcing its strong position on temporarily restricting access to their labour market (Guma and Dafydd, 2019; Scott, 2017).

Whilst these co-existing contradictions increasingly define today's reality in many global societies, including London, new generations of migrants continue to contribute to the complexity of these socio-economic and institutional contexts, finding authentic ways to experience acculturation (Platt and Nandi, 2018; Vertovec, 2020). The location of the UK's largest community of Romanian migrant entrepreneurs can be located in London. It is one of the compelling justifications for this context as the most compelling one for studying their acculturation. Moreover, it is in the context of London's multiculturalism that migration and acculturation go hand in hand (Dey et al., 2019), forming the site for understanding how social practices and identities are formed (Arrighetti, Bolzani and Lasagni, 2017). This next section is designed to clarify what acculturation means from the perspective of Berry's model (1997, 2003, 2005), which is one of the key interdisciplinary concepts of this study.

2.2.2. Berry's acculturation framework

"...how can peoples of different cultural backgrounds encounter each other, seek avenues of mutual understanding, negotiate and compromise on their initial positions, and achieve some degree of harmonious engagement?" (Berry, 2005:698).

Coined by Powell (1880), the term “acculturation” evolved into a cross-disciplinary concept, taking on different meanings. In migration discourse (Castles et al., 2001), it is often used interchangeably with a plethora of other concepts, including social integration, social inclusion, settlement, citizenship (Ager and Strang, 2004) and embeddedness (Klostermann and Rath, 2018; Ryan and Mulholland, 2015). This lack of a “single, generally accepted definition, theory or model of immigrant integration” (Castles et al., 2001: 12) increases the confusion around its true meaning, whilst also opening great research opportunities to explore it variously, from more novel perspectives, such as intersectional identities and entrepreneurship, which could help create and communicate a new reality.

Additionally, the cross-disciplinary use of the concept has expanded its meaning. It has supported the development of multiple frameworks by scholars, including interactionist (Waldinger, Aldrich and Ward, 1990) and mixed embeddedness ones (Kloosterman and Rath, 2018). Both these frameworks have been used in researching migrants’ journeys of acculturation, proving popular amongst migrant entrepreneurship scholars (Barberis and Solano, 2018; Lassalle et al., 2020; Kloosterman, 2010; Ram, Jones and Villares-Varela, 2017).

However, both models' comparative assessment creates tension between theory and practice (Jones, Ram and Villares-Varela, 2017) by over-relying on human capital to explain this phenomenon's dynamics. Furthermore, these models have often been criticised as doing nothing more than illustrating the status quo, thus providing no opportunity for upward social mobility or manifestation of different degrees of social inclusiveness (Jenkins, 2013). This view of broad embeddedness is limiting by being too abstract for this interpretative phenomenological study, which aims to capture change manifested as different degrees of acculturation, which could and are achieved through different entrepreneurial strategies enacted by migrant entrepreneurs (Brzozowski and Pedziwiatr, 2015).

Over the last decade, another acculturation model has been designed, using Berry’s model of acculturation (1997, 2003, 2005) as the starting point. The Relative

Acculturation Extended Model (RAEM) focuses on differentiating between two diachronous views of acculturation, such as ideal and real experiences. It creates a detailed operational view across eight domains of acculturation preferences, attitudes, and behaviours (i.e. work, family relationships, religious beliefs and customs), including migrants and host communities (Navas et al., 2010; Velandia-Coustol, Navas-Luque and Rojas-Tejada, 2018). However, this model was designed especially for quantitative research to suit the Spanish context and better suited for an inter-group comparative study between immigrants and host communities (Klakla and Szydłowska, 2017; Velandia-Coustol, Navas-Luque and Rojas-Tejada, 2018), a focus that would expand beyond the aim of this current study which prioritises depth of the experiences of acculturation instead of the detailed compartmentalisation of these experiences proposed by RAEM.

By contrast, besides being the most cited acculturation model between 1990 and 2020 in interdisciplinary studies linking ethnic-national identity to acculturation (Shuangyun and Hongxia, 2020), the main strength of Berry's model (Berry, 1997, 2003, 2005), upon which this study is built, is incorporating the dynamic nature of culture and immigrant agency. As such, acculturation is portrayed as the process through which migrant entrepreneurs' intersectional identities and strategies are adjusted through different degrees of social interaction, as venues of social learning (Bandura, 1971), and opportunities to experience and engage with their heritage and/or the host country (Berry et al., 2011). However, the contextual dynamics embedded in Berry's model (1997, 2003, 2005) would not suffice if the immigrant has not been capable of exercising his/her agency by enabling the context to change because acculturation is a "...dual [bidirectional] process of cultural and psychological change resulting from contact between two or more cultural [sic] groups and their members. At the group level, it involves changes in social structures and institutions and cultural practices. At the individual level, it involves changes in a person's behavioural repertoire" (Berry, 2005:698).

Overall, according to this acculturation framework, migrants participate voluntarily or not in the process of social and cultural learning through everyday interaction with

other members of the host society. During these social interactions, all involved negotiate their ethnic-national identity and their belonging/participation in the larger society. Through the different degrees of social interaction with the mainstream culture, they are likely to engage in one of four acculturation strategies: integration, assimilation, separation, or marginalisation (Berry, 1997, 2003, 2005).

Table 3. Acculturation strategies

		Host country cultural contact	
		YES	**NO**
Home country culture maintenance	**YES**	Integration	Separation
	NO	Assimilation	Marginalization

Integration: The migrants engage in both host and home country cultures.
Assimilation: The migrants focus on the host country's cultural contact.
Segregation: The migrants maintain their home country culture.
Marginalisation: The migrants distance themselves from both cultures.

Source: Berry's acculturation model (1997, 2003, 2005)

The integration strategy refers to the acculturation process, whereby immigrants interact with both home and host country cultures (Berry 2003, 2005; Berry et al., 2011). Empirical evidence suggests that, in multicultural contexts like London, social integration manifests itself as biculturalism or a "cultural pendulum" (Dey et al., 2017). This promotes the image of a bicultural immigrant, who is comfortable participating in both ethnic and mainstream contexts, clearly understanding the implications of participating in both, regarding their advantages, disadvantages, and responsibilities (Basilio et al., 2014). Whilst most of the literature presents integration as the preferred strategy, deemed to be positive and beneficial to all (Esses et al., 2014), I argue that this view ignores "progresses, relapses, and turns... [that] make

it (this acculturative outcome) practically impossible to predict and control" (Chirkov, 2009:94). Furthermore, recent evidence reinforces another contradiction, whereby the immigrant has co-existing experiences of feeling socially integrated and discriminated against in the host society (Jugert et al., 2020).

Broadly presented as preserving national identity, *assimilation* refers to the acculturation strategy, whereby immigrants prioritise the host country culture over their own (Berry, 2003, 2005; Lu, Samaratunge and Hartel, 2012). With the rise in immigrants' free movement from developing countries into Western countries like the UK, assimilation is promoted as an acculturation equivalence, justified by the need to entertain a superior socio-cultural landscape (Mulinari and Neergaard, 2009; Paraschivescu, 2016). However, this argument is unjust and unrealistic as it ignores the existence of super-diversity, thereby legitimising discriminatory practices based on immigrants' culturally driven competencies (Anthias, 2013b; Anthias, 2016), and thus, denying their agency in shaping these social outcomes (Cederberg and Villares-Varela, 2019).

Empirical evidence suggests that the public portrait of a community of immigrants not only shapes their identity in the host country, for it also increases the likeliness of their acculturation to start, either from a position of marginalisation or voluntary or involuntary segregation (Anthias, Morokvasic-Müller and Kontos, 2013). By enacting a *separation or social segregation strategy*, immigrants focus on maintaining their heritage culture whilst avoiding social interactions with the broader host society (Berry 2003, 2005). In Europe, empirical evidence suggests that the "devalued" immigrants (Kunst and Sam, 2014), such as Muslims (Fleischmann and Phalet, 2018) and highly educated Eastern Europeans in Germany (Steinmann, 2019), experience social segregation, which manifests itself through high levels of discrimination (de Vroome, Martinovic and Verkuyten, 2014; Verkuyten, 2016). To manage the risk of discrimination, it is well documented that migrant communities exhibit either hyper-identification, by segregating themselves within their community (Minton, Kahle and Kim, 2015), or reactive identity (Schwartz et al., 2010), by accentuating their distinctiveness from their community; focusing on being

assimilated within the host society (Dey et al., 2017).

The fourth acculturation strategy proposed by Berry's framework (1997, 2003, 2005) is *marginalisation*, which manifests itself through immigrants' avoidance of social interaction either with their community or host culture (Berry, 2005). Materialising as total cultural disengagement, empirical evidence has shown that marginalisation has a pivotal gender dimension (Anthias, 2016; Lassalle and Shaw, 2021), particularly in the informal European labour markets (Neergaard, 2009).

Despite its strengths over other acculturation models considered, Berry's model is not without criticism (Sapountzis, 2013). Its main critiques pertain to its failure to capture how host community members influence immigrants' acculturation strategies through their discourse and rely on the limiting cognitivist assumption. Acculturation remains to some degree universalist, with experiences being categorised across the four quadrants (Chirkov, 2009). To overcome these limitations, a thorough analysis of the socio-cultural landscape is used to contextualise the current study, with participants' entrepreneurial practices being explored as vehicles of change.

To contribute to the acculturation literature, by emphasising its dynamic nature, in this thesis, it is argued that acculturation is a contextual process of becoming, a meaning-making process through which immigrants are doing and undoing their identities in the host context (Anthias, 2016; Dheer 2018). Hence, acculturation is investigated from two perspectives: as a dialogue between social representation and intersectional identities and as a learning process through entrepreneurship-driven social interactions. These approaches mark the acknowledged need to "shift from a focus on developmental end-states (like "integration" and "competence") towards a more process-oriented notion of acculturation that can account for situated, negotiated, and often contested developmental trajectories" (Herman, 2001:272). Following the approach of previous scholars (Ward, 2013), acculturation is operationalised and understood as *feelings of belonging* in relation to a community, as experiences of "becoming" rather than just "being" (Gioia and Patvardhan, 2012; Leitch and Harrison, 2016) and togetherness (Berry and Hou, 2017; Villotti,

Stinglhamber and Desmette, 2019), which are used interchangeably (Karim and Tak Hue, 2020).

Inherent to the idea that in super-diverse contexts like London, immigrants could achieve social integration by preserving their national identity whilst also learning and assuming elements from host culture identity, in this context, acculturation becomes the process of managing multiple identities (Berry and Hou, 2017). Underpinning this cognitive perspective of acculturation, Berry's model plays a "pioneering and foundational role in people's understanding and research of cross-cultural psychology" with intersectional identities, including gender and acculturation, at the heart of the immigrant's journey (Shuangyun and Hongxia, 2020:17).

2.3. Intersectionality and intersectional identities: the "who" of acculturation

This section discusses the cognitive perspective of acculturation by focusing on how intersectional identities are shaped in the context of migration. This discussion starts with a critical argument for embedding intersectionality as a theory within this study, followed by detailed discussions regarding the three intersectional identities of country-of-origin, entrepreneurial, and gender, which are framed by Social Identity Theory (Tajfel and Turner, 1979). This section concludes with a contextualised overview of how Romanian migrant identity is portrayed by the British media.

2.3.1. Intersectionality as a theory

The term intersectionality was coined by Kimberle Crenshaw (1989, 1991), a socio-legal theorist, as a means to capture the dual oppression experienced by African-American women due to their race and gender. Since then, the intersectionality approach has been used to support migration (Burkner, 2012), organisational (Martinez Dy, Marlow and Martin, 2017), social psychology (Warner, 2008), and sociological studies (Choo and Ferree, 2010). Its cross-disciplinary spread created

opportunities for new empirical evidence, although it significantly delayed the likelihood of having a “one definition fits all” perspective shared across multiple disciplinary fields (Anthias, 2013a; Lassalle and Shaw, 2021; Martinez Dy, Marlow and Martin, 2017). However, this cross-disciplinary use supported the evolution of its meaning from a purely negative and oppressive one, associated almost exclusively with women, into a buzzword (Davis, 2008) and ultimately into a more inclusive connotation, whereby intersectionality supports the understanding of gendered identities (Crenshaw, 2019; Lassalle and Shaw, 2021). Its cross-disciplinary importance led scholars to pay increased attention to various forms of discrimination rooted in intersectional identities (Matambanadzo, Valdes and Vélez-Martinez, 2016), reminding all of us of the “inexhaustibility of the struggle for social justice” (Harris and Leonardo, 2018).

Furthermore, its multidisciplinary use is reflected in the development of multiple approaches, including being used as a framework (Syed, 2010), as a research paradigm (Dahmon, 2011), as a theoretical and methodological framing (Anthias, 2013b; Lassalle and Shaw, 2021), and as a theory (Carrim and Nkomo, 2016).

In the context of this study, intersectionality is used as a theory because it “recognizes the simultaneity of the different social categories to which individuals belong and that inform their identities, but also the ways structures (contexts) are and (how) people experience them” (Carrim and Nkomo, 2016:262). This approach supports the understanding of the multiplicative rather than the additive effect that different but intersecting social positions have on the acculturative behaviour of the migrants and migrant entrepreneurs in this case (Murzacheva, Sahasranamam and Levie, 2019). Intersectionality means identifying and situating individuals' multiple selves and social identities and the interaction between these, portrayed as contextual privileges and disadvantages that shape their experiences and reality (Lassalle and Shaw, 2021; Smith et al., 2019). Similarly to migrant entrepreneurship scholars (Lasalle and Shaw, 2021; Villares-Varella and Essers, 2019), intersectionality is operationalized as cognitive and behavioural experiences of belonging that inform and are informed by these migrant entrepreneurs’ identities of

country-of-origin, entrepreneurial and gender identities, which ultimately impact their acculturation experiences in London.

By contrast, when used as a research framework, intersectionality emphasises the significance of multiple identities, whilst omitting the possibility of inequalities (Syed, 2010; Werbner, 2013). When argued as a research paradigm, intersectionality supports the understanding of historical and socially constructed realities (Hancock, 2016), expanding beyond marginalised identities (Cheng, 2015; Pio and Essers, 2014) to understand interlinked, oppressive, and privileged identities (Marfelt, 2016). In contrast, when used as a theoretical and methodological framework, its focus shifts from reality to explaining how linking theory to practice and how social identities can simultaneously have individual and dialogical meanings (Anthias, 2013a; Lassalle and Shaw, 2021).

Another debated topic on intersectionality concerns the "right" number of identities to be researched in any given study. Opinions seem to remain divided on this issue. Some argue for one identity or social category (Hancock, 2007), others for three (Anthias, 2013b), whilst others call for prioritisation of the relevancy of social categories on a one-to-one basis, rather than advocating a particular number (Tatli and Ozbilgin, 2012). Following Tatli and Ozbilgin's (2012) approach, the researcher chose the most common "big three" social identities as this proved to be the most relevant for the interviewees (Barrett and Vershinina, 2017; Dhamoon, 2011). In identifying the relevant intersectional social categories, this approach enabled the identification of an inclusive theoretical framework for this study in a manner previously reported by other scholars (Mooney, 2016).

Three intersectional identities (i.e. country-of-origin, entrepreneur, and gender) are discussed in the following section, drawing on the Social Identity Theory (SIT) (Tajfel and Turner, 1979). Consistent with the perspective of intersectionality as a theory, this theory presents identity as a "bridge between the self and society" (Burford, 2012).

2.3.2. Contextualising intersectionality

Following Yuval-Davis' (2015) "situated intersectionality" to understanding identities, this section presents Romanian migrants' identities as they were portrayed in British media and public opinion between 2007 and 2014, the time leading up to and following the lifting of labour market controls imposed on these migrants by the UK. This effectively sets the scene for a better understanding of these migrants' experiences of discrimination and privilege. As aforementioned, at the time of this study, Romanians had established themselves as the second largest EU migrants (ONS, 2019) and the youngest community of migrant entrepreneurs in the UK (CER, 2015).

Between 2007 and 2014, British tabloid media (Appendix 3 & 4) was flooded with "cultural racism" (Fox, Moroşanu and Szilassy, 2012:680), denying these migrants an EU shared identity by emphasising their cultural and national otherness, using an expansive inventory of negative and "anti-immigrant" words (Fox, Morosanu and Szilassy, 2012:687), such as "dangerous criminals (…) and social parasites preying on their well-meaning hosts" (Light and Young, 2009: 289, 292). The online BBC Magazine (2013) and a survey in the Observer (Mann, 2016, March 20) reported how stereotypes built around the country's corruption, orphans, communism, and poorly developed economy fuelled Romanians' bad public image in the UK and across Europe.

This populist public discourse not only created "moral panics" (Pijpers, 2006) and "national pleas" to limit their access (Krings, 2009) to avoid a "race to the bottom" (Amin, 2013), for it also created "social downgrading", with an undeniable long-term negative impact (Trevena, 2013). This over-exaggeration of the impact that free movement of Romanians could have had on developed countries like the UK (Light and Young, 2009; Fox, Moroşanu and Szilassy, 2012; Lulle, Muresanu and King, 2017) secured a pathologised image of these immigrants in the public domain (Fangen, Johansson and Hammaren, 2012) and encouraged discrimination (Lulle, Dvorakova and Szkudlarek, 2019; Moroşanu, 2018; Moroşanu and Fox, 2013;

Rzepnikowska, 2019).

Whilst this populist discourse is considered by some to be nothing more than a spillover from the previous “unprecedented and largely unanticipated” EU-8 migration wave (Light and Young, 2009:285), this is far from creating just a reproduced, frozen identity for Romanian immigrants in the UK, as it has been argued (Fox, Moroşanu and Szilassy, 2012). Their identity was altered under the siege of xenophobic political and public discourse, which emphasised their otherness and non-belonging, being increasingly portrayed as “an alien form of life [...] included, yet distrusted, welcomed, yet under threat of expulsion” (Arcarazo and Martire, 2014:1). Consequently, the acculturation of immigrants seemed to be reduced to a question of social “deservingness”, perpetuating the social normality of the image of immigrants as “others” (Monforte, Bassel and Khan, 2019). This reductionist perspective is increasingly criticised for its risk of perpetuating an oppressive hierarchy of cultures, which ranks immigrants according to cultural stereotypes (Nicholls, Maussen and Caldas de Mesquita, 2016).

Contradicting this view of “othering” Romanians, built upon assumptions of inferior human and social capital compared to the British (Panibratov, 2015), the majority of Romanian migrant entrepreneurs interviewed for this study were highly educated either in an EU country or in the UK, with most of them “topping-up” their education in the UK (Appendix 5). This seems to contradict the stereotypes promoted by the British media and most of the literature, which presents Eastern European migrants largely as uneducated and pushed to the margins of entrepreneurship (Shubin and Dickey, 2013).

Broadly, this is the context in which Romanian migrants start their journey as entrepreneurs and experience acculturation in the UK. However, it is essential to understand that this context is far from being static, as for such immigrants’ agency is a co-enabler of how their social identities and practices are shaped, transformed, negotiated, and manifested. At the intersection of social powers, manifested as privileges and discrimination emerging during social interaction between natives and immigrants, a contextualised understanding of acculturation emerges (Fathi, 2017;

Schachner, van de Vijver and Noack, 2017).

2.3.3. Intersectional identities

"Increasingly, we emerge as the possessors of many voices. Each self contains a multiplicity of others, singing different melodies, different verses, and with different rhythms. Nor do these many voices necessarily harmonize. At times they join together, at times they fail to listen one to another, and at times they create a jarring discord" (Gergen, 1992:83).

Gergen's (1992) acknowledgement of multiple, intersectional voices echoes Crenshaw's (1989, 1991) intersectionality, which evolved from a methodological and theoretical framework (Anthias, 2013b; Syed, 2010) of feminist politics, emphasizing the dual oppression experienced by African-American women due to their race and gender (Crenshaw, 1991) into a theory recognises the simultaneous existence of multiple identities and their influence on behaviours (Carrim and Nkomo, 2016).

Keeping in line with this study's intersectional lens and Tajfel and Turner's Identity Theory (1979), identity refers to the meaning of self and socially constructed positionalities that individuals negotiate, develop and manifest at the intersection of their agency and the context (Staunæs, 2003). Thus, it is the answer to the question "Who am I?" (Stryker, 1987; Stryker and Burke, 2000) and the meaning the 49 individuals give to being Romanian migrant entrepreneurs of both genders in London as part of their acculturative journeys.

Identity is central to the process of acculturation, supporting the understanding of how immigrants adjust voluntarily and involuntarily to their initial set of values, behaviours, intergroup relations, decision-making, and practices to enable participation in the host society (Berry and Hou, 2017; Tao, Essers and Pijpers, 2020). This view reinforces the cognitive perspective of acculturation, which focuses on how social identity is transformed or shaped (Tajfel and Turner, 1979) as a means to address immigrants' adjustment for sameness or otherness in the host society

(Berry and Hou, 2017).

Despite the link between acculturation and migrants' identification with home and host countries being established by scholars (Dheer, 2018; Sam and Berry 2010), the research on cognitive acculturation in the context of migrant entrepreneurship remains fragmented, made up of patches of empirical evidence that convey the paradoxical idea of homogeneous diversity across communities of immigrants (Dheer, 2018; Dheer and Lenartowicz, 2018). Few scholarly voices reinforce the importance of exploring the relationship between identity and acculturation as an essential socio-cultural antecedent for migrant entrepreneurship strategies (Dheer, 2018).

This study addresses this need for interdisciplinary knowledge by exploring the link being multiple, intersectional identities and acculturation.

According to previous empirical evidence, at the heart of intersectionality is gender as an overarching social identity, which influences acculturation (Berlepsch, Rodríguez-Pose and Lee, 2018) and entrepreneurship (Ozasir Kacar and Essers, 2019; Yousafzai, Fayolle and Saeed, 2019). Therefore, gender becomes the way of performing entrepreneurship (Phillips and Knowles, 2012) and the way of living (Gungor and Bornstein, 2013), reinforcing its contextualized meanings of discrimination and privileges (Fathi, 2017). This identity feeds into McCall's (2005) perspective of intra-categorical analysis, which enhances the relevance of the gender-driven stance to understand the researched phenomenon better. Consequently, to gain a deeper understanding of how immigrants experience acculturation, this study involves exploring how social identities of nationality, gender, and entrepreneurship intersect to enable the authentic voice of each of these migrant entrepreneurs (Lassalle and Shaw, 2021), encouraging intra-group heterogeneity of these distinctive experiences to shine through (Juan, Syed, and Azmitia, 2016).

2.3.3.1. Country-of-origin identity: being Romanian in the UK

From an acculturative perspective, understanding country-of-origin identity starts by answering the question of "who am I?" and "where do I belong?" (Umana-Taylor et al. 2014), in an inherently contextualised manner, embedding equally meanings of belonging and distinctiveness in the host society (Abd Hamid, O'Kane and Everett, 2019). Addressing this intersectional facet of migrant's social identity and the social connotations associated with this membership in today's UK context of migration, the question is posed as to whether "Made in Romania" is a social blessing or curse for London based Romanian migrant entrepreneurs?

Starting as a marketing concept, "country-of-origin" or CoO (Abraham and Patro, 2014) soon became synonymous with the quality of the product or the service offered. Hence, once imported across disciplinary fields, its connotation came to define social labels transferred to people communicating stereotypes of quality and opportunities for different social association or dissociation for the social participants involved (Zolfagharian, Saldivar and Sun, 2014). However, its cross-disciplinary interchangeable use created a rather problematic confusion between ethnic, national, and country-of-origin identities (Eriksen, 2002), their separation being broadly judged through their historical lens, whereby countries of origin are seen as a sum of different ethnicities forming coalitions within the constantly changing national borders. Whilst associating a person with their country-of-origin and with a particular ethnicity are two different things since there is the likelihood that multiple ethnic communities co-exist within the same national borders (Adams and van de Vijver, 2017), in the context of this study, CoO, national and ethnic identities are used interchangeably to describe Romanian-born individuals, as a means to ease the understanding of the link between acculturation and identity, as established by the literature, which uses ethnic identity over national and CoO identities.

Berry's acculturation model links minority and majority national identities, which become the foundation of acculturative strategies and outcomes (Jugert et al., 2020). Therefore, following this framework, the journey of acculturation implies that immigrants have the opportunity to blend elements of the home and host country

identifies to develop a sense of belonging to the host society (Fleischmann and Verkuyten, 2016; Fleischmann, Leszczensky and Pink, 2019). Furthermore, the concept of CoO/national identity is one of the intersectional identities, which has been increasingly capturing the interest of scholars researching migrant entrepreneurship (Dickey, Drinkwater and Shubin, 2018) and acculturation (Hou, Schellenberg and Berry, 2018). Empirical evidence presents Eastern European immigrants' CoO identity either as a liability to exhibit foreignness (Gurau, Dana and Light, 2020) on the grounds of inferior human and social capital that is very likely out of synch with the demands of a developed labour market, such as the UK, (Panibratov, 2015) or due to competitive advantage (Gurau, Dana and Light, 2020; Zhou, 2013).

The literature on acculturation generally associates CoO identity with disconnect, whereby preserving strong national identity results in socio-economic discrimination, driving the immigrants into segregation and disengagement with the host society (Dickey, Drinkwater and Shubin, 2018), or towards assimilation, which further reinforces a devaluation of diversity (Badea et al., 2015). Assessing the impact of migrants' national identity in the context of recent EU migration, a comprehensive survey across 28 EU member states revealed that 37% of these migrants experienced identity-related discrimination (O'Flaherty, 2017).

However, this definitive and static view denies the possibility for social integration, the existence of multicultural societies, and the migrant's agency to influence change by adjusting his/her identities and behaviours to new contextual realities, which is not the limited exchange of cultures, but rather, their co-existence. In the context of multicultural societies like London, a positive image of migrants' strong engagement with their national identity associated with labour market integration emerges (Bisin et al., 2011), which could open up future opportunities for acculturation into the mainstream (Dickey, Drinkwater and Shubin, 2018).

The extent to which migrants' country-of-origin identity buffers or exacerbates discrimination for intra-EU migrants has scarcely been documented, perpetuating the illusion that the shared EU identity, formally shared by the citizens of its member

states, is an acceptable explanation, refuting the need for descriptive acculturation or social integration in a space to which we all should belong (Moffitt, Juang and Syed, 2020). But this integration of Europeans in Europe through a shared, regulated identity seems to contradict the post-colonialism form of integration, which looms over migration research (Anthias, 2013a) and reinforces a static “us” and “them” constructed through symbolic powers (Lewicki, 2017).

The ongoing publicised stigma against Romanian migrants and the associated socio-economic long-term impact on their identity and, thus, acculturation cannot be ignored or underplayed. Their identity as European insiders and, yet, outsiders to Western Europe resembles that of the Polish community in the UK (Andreouli and Howarth, 2019).

Social integration is often presented within migration studies as the desired acculturation strategy (Erdal and Oeppen, 2013). Of this new generation of circular migrants, Polish migrants have become the most researched (Vershinina et al., 2019). By contrast, Romanian immigrants, despite being the second-largest community of intra-EU migrants in the UK, after the Poles (ONS, 2019), have rarely captured the attention of scholarly discussions, with a few noticeable exceptions (Andreouli and Harwarth, 2019; Moroşanu and Fox, 2013; Moroşanu, Szilassy and Fox, 2015; Pantiru and Barley, 2014).

Following Social Identity Theory (SIT), given the threat migrants’ CoO identity could pose to the overall social identity, individuals hold the decision of accepting and thus, becoming segregated or distancing themselves from it (Tajfel and Turner, 1979) and thus pursuing assimilation (Berry et al., 2011). Evidence suggests that immigrants react to these due to CoO stereotypes by reactively adjusting their social interactions with these communities. This theory portrays social identity as the result of an individual’s multiple affiliations. Thus, migrants’ identities often undergo an intersectional tension due to the acculturative adjustment that their identities are likely to go through in the host-context (Verkuyten, 2016).

With this intersectional complexity in mind, it can be concluded that what

differentiates the CoO identity from other social identities extends the visible genealogical dimension to include feelings of belonging or undesired otherness (Verkuyten, 2016). This negative connotation is reinforced through social interactions, heightening the visibility of these migrants' CoO identity in the host country (Verkuyten, 2016). However, CoO identity is one piece of the intersectional puzzle of migrants' social identity. Thus, its meaning is intertwined with the meanings embedded in other social identities, such as entrepreneurial and gender identities, which are relevant to this study.

2.3.3.2. Entrepreneurial identity: being an immigrant entrepreneur in London

To understand what it means to be an immigrant entrepreneur in London, the literature on immigrant entrepreneurship proposes two primary debates: firstly, the appropriateness of ethnic versus immigrant entrepreneurship and secondly, who qualifies as an entrepreneur (Dabić et al., 2020).

The literature on immigrant entrepreneurship reveals that ethnic, immigrant entrepreneurship and migrant are used interchangeably (Sinkovics and Reuber, 2021). However, this approach is rather problematic since the population of ethnic entrepreneurs might include immigrants but also native-born individuals. Moreover, due to previous research focus on cultural, ethnic characteristics of entrepreneurs without a clear definition of the overused concept, many authors adopted a simplified way of researching the immigrant population by focusing on their ethnic attributes and the exploitation of ethnic resources (Zhou, 2013), limiting the considerations given to their country of origin (Barret and Vershinina, 2017; Sinkovics and Reuber, 2021).

In line with previous studies (Evansluong, Ramirez-Pasillas and Nguyen Bergstrom, 2019; Lassalle and Shaw, 2021), this study differentiates between ethnic and immigrant entrepreneurs by considering country-of-origin as the interface of their nationality. Hence, the terms "migrant" and "immigrant" describes the first

generation of foreign-born (Romanian-born) individuals residing in the UK, as host country (Chababi, Chreim and Spence, 2017), where they are the owners of a legally registered business or enterprise, regardless of its size (Brzozowski, Cucculelli and Surdej, 2017; Sinkovics and Reuber, 2021).

“Being an entrepreneur” is a social identity “created through interactions amongst an individual, the enterprise and society” (Orser, Elliott and Leck, 2011:564). However, the “ideal” entrepreneurial identity persists around masculinity (Ahl and Marlow, 2012) and the Western male (Essers and Benschop, 2007), who thrives in a high-risk environment, where his need for achievement can be satisfied (Chasserio, Pailot and Poroli, 2014; McClelland, 1961). Hence, in the context of migrant entrepreneurship, gender, and ethnic-national identities reinforce distinctiveness and “otherness” proliferated outside this normative framework, impacting the legitimacy of this social identity and its associated practices and outcomes (Orser, Elliott and Leck., 2011).

Entertaining the idea of optimal distinctiveness (OD) as a means for migrants to establish a legitimised identity or to overcome stigmatised stereotypes in the host country, empirical evidence suggests that entrepreneurial identity is often used as a vehicle to balance belongingness and distinctiveness (Hamid, O’Kane and Everett, 2019; Brewer, 1991; 2003). This view reinforces the ontological, phenomenological position of this study, which sets up to explore identity as a dynamic, acculturative expression of “becoming” rather than just “being” (Gioia and Patvardhan, 2012; Leitch and Harrison, 2016). This perspective allows the identity to *become* instead of *being*, turning the attention towards the acculturation strategy of social inclusion, whereby home and host socio-cultural elements are equally embedded in migrants’ lives. Thus, their entrepreneurial identity seems to blend conformance and distinctiveness, as captured by the OD Theory (Abd Hamid, O’Kane and Everett, 2019).

However, understanding what it means to be a migrant entrepreneur expands beyond the semantic definition to a contextualised view, which frames the

associated values, norms, behaviours, and strategies (Jones et al., 2019). Sharing this perspective of contextualised identity, Barrett and Vershinina (2017:440) state that “entrepreneurs (…) actively construct their identity through what is and is not available to them (i.e. capitals) and what is and is not possible or can be done in the context in which it operates (i.e. habitus)”. Therefore, understanding entrepreneurial identity means understanding its sociological meaning and the institutional context in which it takes place (Newbery et al., 2018).

From a sociological perspective, entrepreneurial identity refers to how entrepreneurs experience this positionality, specifically what meaning they give to it and how they enact it through practices and strategies that differentiate them from other professionals (Omorede, Thorgren and Wincent, 2015). In this sense, empirical studies suggest that, in the context of migrant entrepreneurship, the entrepreneurial identity could be a vehicle for pursuing independence from the immigrant enclave (“breaking out” of the ethnic-national enclave) (Lasalle and Scott, 2018) or the expression of “optimal distinctiveness” (Abd Hamid, O’Kane and Everett, 2019) and empowerment that could disrupt the status quo of the existing social order (Villares-Varela and Essers, 2019), by enabling upward social mobility (Villares-Varela, 2018). Hence, to understand entrepreneurial identity better, the focus should shift from the geographical context towards the perspective of “doing context” (Baker and Welter, 2020), where the entrepreneurial agency of these migrant entrepreneurs becomes an enabler of specific social interactions, influencing through their knowledge, their positionality as community role models, collective action and thus, the host community (Baker and Welter, 2020).

Empowerment is about the process and the agency through which transformative change occurs (Al-Dajani and Marlow, 2013), thereby encouraging personal and professional development (Sardenberg, 2016). This is increasingly the case for women migrant entrepreneurs who become role models within their community, whose positionality as entrepreneurs in the host country becomes synonymous with higher social status and recognition (Al-Dajani and Marlow, 2013; Baker and Welter, 2020).

There is mounting evidence that entrepreneurial identity informs context-bound social and economic empowerment driven by the entrepreneurial agency (Gupta, Pingali and Pinstrup-Andersen, 2017). Despite the concept of empowerment suffering from the lack of a clear analytical structure (Cornwall and Edwards, 2014), the consensus is that empowerment is a process of agency and not just an objective, whereby migrant women and men engage as agents of change in a bottom-up social mobility journey (Cornwall and Edwards, 2014). This empowerment encourages processual change, shaping the migrant entrepreneurs' drive to take ownership of their decisions and actions (Al-Dajani and Marlow, 2013) and thus, be an active player in her/his process of acculturation through social learning (Daugherty, 2012).

History has proven that entrepreneurship-driven social mobility existed starting with Industrial Revolution entrepreneurs, who were considered the entrepreneurial middle class, labelled "petite bourgeoisie" (Bledstein and Johnson, 2001), hierarchically positioned between "haute bourgeoisie" and the working class (Marx and Engels, 1937). Moreover, nowadays, with globalisation encouraging the decentralisation of social mobility beyond national borders and the redefinition of social class to promote social inclusiveness in increasingly diverse societies (Maclean, Harvey and Kling, 2017), entrepreneurship is increasingly becoming a social class in its own right. However, the equivalency between entrepreneurship identity and the middle class is yet to be established (Ruef and Reinecke, 2011).

2.3.3.3. Gender identity: being a woman or a man migrant entrepreneur in the UK

From an institutional perspective, understanding what it means to "be an entrepreneur" requires understanding the contextual and historical meaning attributed by the community of interest to this identity (Stead, 2017). Further exploration of the institutional perspective, which gives contextual meaning to the entrepreneurial identity, reveals how gender becomes a critical facet of the intersectional identity construct, defining how women in the mainstream and migrant entrepreneurship fit in (Ozasir Kacar and Essers, 2019; Yousafzai et al., 2015;

Yousafzai, Fayolle and Saeed, 2019). To understand the doings and redoings of women's migrant entrepreneurial identity requires more focus on the relationship between entrepreneurial identity as a process of becoming within the set context (Lewis, 2013). The relevance of gender identity is further discussed to explore the gendered way of doing entrepreneurship and, thus, of experiencing acculturation.

As women make up over 50% of Europe's migrants (World Bank, 2019), gender is increasingly gaining attention in migration and acculturation, being recognised as "something you do, not something you are" (Phillips and Knowles, 2012:419). As an essential part of an individual's social identity, which drives social interactions, behaviours, and outcomes, gender identity remains anchored in contextual social structures (Zampetakis et al., 2016). A growing body of sociological and entrepreneurship studies have started to acknowledge the existence of a gendered way to entrepreneurship, and acculturation, revealing gendered socio-economic trajectories amongst women and men (Berlepsch, Rodríguez-Pose and Lee, 2018; Lassale and Shaw, 2021).

Through the lens of intersectionality, this study promotes gender identity as one of the key intersectional identities to support the understanding of migrant entrepreneurship and acculturation. Following in the footsteps of other scholars' perspectives in acknowledging that acculturation and migrant entrepreneurship are gendered phenomena (Jones et al., 2019; Pantiru and Barley, 2014; Vershinina and Rogers, 2019), the perpetuated faulty image of migrant entrepreneurship as being homogeneous and male-dominated (Berlepsch, Rodríguez-Pose and Lee, 2018) is challenged in this study. The discussion on gender identity draws upon the extant sociological and migrant entrepreneurship literature critically to assess the relevant debates around gender identity, acculturation, and migrant entrepreneurship.

Within the migration literature, empirical evidence suggests that women migrants are more likely to be affected by interpersonal adversity, whilst men are more likely to be affected by labour market discrimination (Farmer and McGuffin, 2003; Pantiru and Barley, 2014). These gendered differences of experiencing new life as migrants ultimately have resulted in women migrants seeming to be more likely to experience

social inclusion than men due to their intercultural interactions, aspirations for personal achievement, and flexible gender role attitude (Gungor and Bornstein, 2013). This gender role flexibility becomes increasingly visible and exercised by women migrants who have migrated from a society with a strongly patriarchal culture into one where social equality is prioritised (Donato et al., 2006), which could also be the case for the research participants included in this study. In accord with this assumption, findings were reported by Pantiru and Barley (2014) about the acculturation of Romanians in the UK in their first year as full EU citizens in the UK (European Commission, 2017). Additionally, it has been acknowledged in the discourse around migration that the host country's message towards migrants is moderated by gender. Women migrants tend to be less visible in public or political discourse (Eberl et al., 2018; Poppe and Verkuyten, 2012).

Gender is one of the intersectional identities explored as part of the cognitive perspective of acculturation, and thus, its role is very important in understanding how this researched community experiences acculturation. Therefore, its interpretation in isolation would be misgiven because it ignores identities that constitute a critical part of the study's inclusion criteria; it contradicts the importance of the intersectionality theory assumed for this study. An assessment of gender identity in migrant entrepreneurship literature reveals that, despite being an acknowledged distinctive intersectional identity, which reflects the way of doing business, gender remains dominated mainly by the male perspective in entrepreneurship (Ahl and Marlow, 2012), as is also the case in acculturation (Haider, 2020; Pantiru and Barley, 2014). Hence, the gender-biased perspective on entrepreneurship and migrant entrepreneurship (Vershinina and Rogers, 2019) is greatly influenced by the gendered social roles, which shape expectations, social interactions (Akinola, Martin and Phillips, 2018) as well as entrepreneurial behaviours and strategies (Chasserio, Pailot and Poroli, 2014). However, this static, pre-established social order seems wrong to justify the image of women as being less entrepreneurial than their men counterparts (Kelley et al., 2015; Minniti and Naude, 2010), lacking confidence and without self-efficacy (Bandura, 1971; Jennings and Brush, 2013), even though increasing statistical evidence points to

their having “the largest untapped entrepreneurial and leadership potential in Europe” (Kamberidou, 2020:3).

As a counterargument to that of women entrepreneurs’ lacking self-efficacy, recent studies have established that education and self-efficacy (Pfeifer, Sarlija and Zekic Susac, 2016) go hand in hand and thus, those who have the knowledge and “believe in their skills (entrepreneurial self-efficacy) are more likely to be both interested in and to succeed in becoming entrepreneurs” (Estrin Mickiewicz et al., 2011: 8). As previous empirical evidence suggests, the intersectional theory is a valuable tool in exploring negative stereotypes and discrimination associated with gender and nationality (Rosenthal, 2016), which drives social stratification and inequalities. In Western countries, gender and nationality-driven discrimination is persisting, which has been found to be the case for migrant women from Thailand in the Netherlands (Manassen and Verkuyten, 2018), Latinos in New York (Deaux and Greenwood, 2013), and Russians in the UK (Vershinina and Rogers, 2019). These findings corroborate the notion of double-disadvantage, which characterises individuals' lives from these two identity-driven disadvantaged positions (Settles and Buchanan, 2014).

With its increased relevance in research, gender proves significant in understanding migrant intersectional identities. Specifically, it emphasises social and labour market divisions (Bonizzoni, 2018), thereby reinforcing the notion of the existence of gendered entrepreneurial strategies (Arrighetti, Bolzani and Lasagni, 2017) and the existence of an informal hierarchy of cultures (Villotti, Stinglhamber and Desmette, 2019). Gender identity is an overarching identity with a contextualised meaning, experienced either as a source of inequality or empowerment (Sloan et al., 2018). Reinforcing the importance of gender in the hierarchy of social identities, Villares-Varella, (2018) presents how Latin American migrant women entrepreneurs feel empowered by entrepreneurship, despite this identity contradicting their traditional social roles.

With social identities being unmade and remade in the context of migration, this study contributes to migrant entrepreneurship and acculturation literature by

investigating how intersectional identities are shaped and how they shape women and men London based Romanian migrant entrepreneurs' strategies and, consequently, their experiences of acculturation (Arrighetti, Bolzani and Lasagni, 2018). This is captured by posing the following research question:

RQ 1: How do intersectional identities impact upon London-based Romanian migrant entrepreneurs' experiences of acculturation?

This research question focuses on the cognitive perspective of the phenomenon of acculturation, thereby calling for exploration regarding how intersecting identities, including gender, country-of-origin, and entrepreneurial, impact upon the researched community's experiences of acculturation in London. To simplify the intersectionality lens, this research question is supplemented with sub-questions addressing each of these intersectional identities.

RQ1a: How does country-of-origin identity impact upon London-based Romanian migrant entrepreneurs' experiences of acculturation?

RQ1b: How does entrepreneurial identity impact upon London-based Romanian migrant entrepreneurs' experiences of acculturation?

RQ1c: How does gender impact upon London-based Romanian migrant entrepreneurs' experiences of acculturation?

2.3.4. Concluding remarks on intersectional identities

The review of the literature on intersectional identities of country-of-origin, entrepreneurial, and gender has revealed that these identities are essential in understanding acculturation and migrant entrepreneurship because they support the exploration of contextual insights into what migrant entrepreneurs are and how they participate in the host country (Arrighetti, Bolzani and Lasagni, 2017; Lasalle and Scott, 2018; Wieland et al., 2019). The significance of intersectionality in this study is motivated by its acknowledged ability to encourage a deeper probing of lived

experiences by considering how intertwined different social identities influence behaviour and social outcomes in context. Therefore, by promoting social identities as dynamic, constantly undergoing undoing and redoing through the social interactions between the entrepreneur, society, and the institutional environment, these migrant entrepreneurs' perceptions and actions are also transformed (Lassalle and Shaw, 2021; Sieger et al., 2016). Consequently, migrant entrepreneurs' transformative journey of their identities becomes an important part of their acculturative journey in the host society (Jurgen, Silke and Soren, 2017).

At the heart of the literature on intersectional identities is the hierarchical social order, which reinforces different degrees of contextual legitimacy and self-efficacy associated with these identities (Stead, 2017). Specifically, empirical evidence suggests that migrants who find themselves stigmatised and stereotyped on the grounds of their ethnic-national identity, might prioritise, for example, their entrepreneurial identity, as a means to belong in the host country (Dey et al., 2017). To satisfy personal and cross-cultural social expectations, migrants negotiate a complex web of intersectional identities. Amongst these identities, gender identity is experienced as another glass ceiling, especially by women migrant entrepreneurs, who are expected to fulfil their traditional social roles as mothers, wives, and "even silent contributors" to the family business (Dhaliwal, 1998) before that of entrepreneurs in their own right (Vershinina and Rogers, 2019). Hence, they remain squeezed between masculine labour market ideals and underpaid, deskilling jobs (Graeber, 2018; Munkejord, 2017; Verkuyten, 2016) when seeking to verify their legitimacy in the face of multiple disadvantages (Nestorowicz, 2012).

By recognising that men and women not only acculturate differently (Archuleta, 2015) but also do business differently (Vershinina and Rogers, 2019; Zampetakis et al., 2020), this study responds to the calls for a gendered view of entrepreneurship and acculturation (Jones et al., 2019; Pantiru and Barley, 2014; Vershinina and Rogers, 2019) by exploring how London-based Romanian migrant entrepreneurs of both genders experience acculturation.

Using the behavioural perspective to understanding acculturation, the following

section discusses the debates around the migrant entrepreneurs' strategies, including middleman, mainstream, and enclave, which showcase how migrant entrepreneurship and acculturation intersect.

2.4. Migrant entrepreneurial strategies: the "how" of acculturation

The behavioural perspective promotes acculturation as a social and cultural learning phenomenon (Bandura, 1971), which takes place during social interactions between migrants and the broader host society. At the heart of these social interactions is the exchange of cultural values and behaviours (Vertovec, 2009; 2020), which increases awareness of the social order and shapes the social expectations of those involved (Vershinina and Rogers, 2019). This perspective is critical in understanding engagement between immigrants and the host society and, more specifically, the impact these social interactions have on migrants' participation in the host society (Berry et al., 2011).

However, this standpoint promotes a shift from the over-explored economic view of entrepreneurship, and by extension, migrant entrepreneurship as a gender-blind source of income and economic empowerment (Chang, Wong and Myeongcheol, 2014; Kushnirovich, 2015), towards entrepreneurship as a gendered, social phenomenon (Barberis and Solano, 2018; Evansluong, Ramirez-Pasillas and Nguyen Bergstrom, 2019; Mago, 2020; Zahra and Wright, 2016).) and a vehicle of acculturation in the host society, "intrinsically intertwined with the very fabric of contemporary society" (De Clercq and Voronov, 2009: 395). This image resonates with Gartner's (2013: 3) call for "a willingness to step outside of the entrepreneurship field itself to embrace a variety of ideas, (…) a concern for the 'other', to challenge the unspoken and often unrecognized "taken-for-granted aspects of what entrepreneurship is and what it might be".

Contributing to this growing stream of interdisciplinary research, which brings together sociology and migrant entrepreneurship, this study explores a fresh perspective of how

acculturation is experienced by exploring the contextualised entrepreneurial strategies and their impact on acculturation (Evansluong, Ramirez-Pasillas and Nguyen Bergstrom, 2019; Kushnirovich, 2015; Zahra, Wright and Abdelgawad, 2014). Supporting this inquiry, Berry's acculturation model (1997, 2003, 2005) enables the opportunity for migrant entrepreneurs to enable and thus experience different degrees of acculturation through the practice of different entrepreneurial strategies. These strategies include mainstream or breaking-out entrepreneurship, mainstream-enclave entrepreneurship or enclave entrepreneurship or breaking-in entrepreneurship (Berry, 2005; Evansluong, Ramirez-Pasillas and Nguyen Bergstrom, 2019). The table below captures how acculturation through entrepreneurship is explored within this study.

Table 4. Acculturation and entrepreneurial strategies

		Host country cultural contact	
		YES	**NO**
Home country culture maintenance	**YES**	Integration/Mainstream-enclave Entrepreneurship	Separation/Enclave entrepreneurship
	NO	Assimilation/ Mainstream entrepreneurship	Marginalisation

Integration: The migrants engage in both, host and home country cultures.
Assimilation: The migrants focus on the host country's cultural contact.
Segregation: The migrants maintain their home country culture.
Marginalisation: The migrants distance themselves from both cultures.

Source: Based on Berry's acculturation model (1997, 2003, 2005) and entrepreneurship strategies of enclave (Portes, 1981), the middleman (Bonacich, 1973) and mainstream (Evansluong, Ramirez-Pasillas and Nguyen *Bergstrom, 2019)*

According to the table above, these migrant entrepreneurs, who engage in mainstream entrepreneurship by serving and interacting with the broader society, either exclusively or by bridging between the immigrant enclave and the

mainstream, are more likely to enact and experience social integration or assimilation. Whilst those who engage in ethnic enclave focused entrepreneurship seem to limit their social interactions with the broader society in favour of maintaining their culture and thus, they are more likely to experience separation or segregation in their acculturation journey (Berry, 2005; 2011).

Similarly, recent studies of migrant entrepreneurship have interchangeably used entrepreneurship and breaking strategies to explain acculturation (Evansluong, Ramirez-Pasillas and Nguyen Bergstrom, 2019; Griffin-EL and Olabisi, 2018). The literature suggests that the breaking-in strategy refers to migrant entrepreneurs engaging in enclave entrepreneurship, which, according to Berry's model, is conducive to the separation strategy of acculturation (Lasalle and Scott 2017). Additionally, by practising a breaking-out strategy, the migrant entrepreneur distances her/himself from the enclave, either by becoming a broker between the enclave and the mainstream or by engaging exclusively with the mainstream (Evansluong, Ramirez- Pasillas and Nguyen Bergstrom, 2019; Lasalle and Scott, 2017).

It is clear that by serving their communities or the mainstream, migrant entrepreneurs engage in social interactions, which enables their acculturation (Berry, 2011). These social interactions, embedded in entrepreneurship and influenced by their intersectional identities, shape their entrepreneurial strategies towards achieving different degrees of acculturation in the host country (Arrighetti, Bolzani and Lasagni, 2014). Hence, these entrepreneurship-driven social interactions encourage voluntary or involuntary socio-cultural learning. Consequently, they expose the migrant entrepreneurs to the opportunity to build social trust and togetherness, thereby enhancing their acculturation outcomes and participation in the host society, with a deeper understanding of their position within its diversity (Berry and Hou, 2017).

Consequently, by acknowledging its contextual and social nature (Zahra and Wright, 2016), migrant entrepreneurship opens up the opportunity for it to be explored as a vehicle of acculturation and social integration for migrant entrepreneurs (Arrighetti,

Bolzani and Lasagni, 2014; Barberis and Solano, 2018; Evansluong, Ramirez-Pasillas and Bergstrom, 2019). Supporting this behavioural perspective of understanding acculturation, the following section discusses "how" migrant entrepreneurship strategies, including enclave, middleman, and mainstream, accord with Berry's acculturation strategies.

2.4.1. Mainstream entrepreneurship and assimilation

Mainstream entrepreneurship strategy refers to the breaking out strategy through which the migrant entrepreneurs expand their business into the mainstream or otherwise start a mainstream one from the beginning (Allen and Busse, 2016; Arrighetti, Bolzani and Lasagni, 2014). This means that the migrant engages more with the broader society, rather than maintaining his/her own home culture, which translates into him/her experiencing assimilation as a strategy of acculturation (Berry, 2005, Hou and Berry, 2017).

The literature on migrant entrepreneurship associates mainstream entrepreneurship strategies with greater financial returns (Block, Fisch and van Praag, 2016) as well as high levels of host human and social capital, enabled by its frequent social interactions between migrant entrepreneurs and the host society (Berry, Hu and Schellenberg, 2016). Through these economic and social entrepreneurial manifestations, migrant entrepreneurs experience social and cultural learning opportunities and "un-othering" (Essers and Tedmanson, 2014). This perspective of mainstream migrant entrepreneurship being an enabler of social and cultural learning and thus acculturation resonates with previous empirical evidence about Turkish entrepreneurs in the Netherlands (Essers and Tedmanson, 2014) and Cameroonian, Lebanese, Mexican and Assyrian entrepreneurs in Sweden (Evansluong, Ramirez-Pasillas and Nguyen Bergstrom, 2019).

However, whilst this entrepreneurial strategy of engaging with the mainstream creates the opportunity for social and economic growth, it does so at the cost of limiting the preservation of the migrant entrepreneur's own culture, whereby it

encourages unidirectional acculturation or assimilation, rather than social integration (Berry, Hu and Schellenberg, 2016). Through mainstream entrepreneurship, the migrant entrepreneurs break out of their enclave into the broader society, which values their services or products (Arrighetti, Bolzani and Lasagni, 2014) and understands and relates to their cultural behaviours (Allen and Busse, 2016). This strategy reinforces that migrant entrepreneurial identity gains mainstream legitimacy, aligning with the host country's social expectations (Lassalle and Scott, 2018).

It is important to understand these strategies are as dynamic as migrants' intersectional identities and that the context greatly impacts on the social outcomes of acculturation. In a multicultural society such as London (Pardo, 2018), practices of inclusiveness and an emphasis on togetherness (Villotti, Stinglhamber and Desmette, 2019) should be part of the majority's daily life. Consequently, it comes as no surprise that multiculturalism is portrayed as the cultural context that offers the greatest prospects of acculturation and social integration (Nguyen and Benet-Martines, 2013), which seems to be particularly beneficial when trying to overcome country-of-origin-driven discrimination. This is because multicultural communities blend, thus rendering many of these otherwise visible differences less prominent (Villotti, Stinglhamber and Desmette, 2019).

Against this landscape of empirical evidence, it can be argued that assimilation in a multicultural society like London could easily translate into biculturalism (Nguyen and Benet-Martinez, 2013). This acculturation strategy resembles Berry's social integration strategy (Berry, 2005). This biculturalism dilutes the hierarchy of cultures and the need for conformity to the host community's values (Villotti, Stinglhamber and Desmette, 2019). Clearly, these entrepreneurial strategies are seen as transforming social interactions, encouraging human and social capital development as key entrepreneurial opportunity enablers (Bolívar-Cruz, Batista-Canino and Hormiga, 2014). They are means to overcome discrimination and otherness (Wang and Warn, 2018) and, thus, vehicles for acculturation and even social integration for migrant entrepreneurs (Evansluong, Ramirez-Pasillas and Nguyen Bergstrom,

2019).

In light of the debates discussed in the section dedicated to migrant entrepreneurial strategies and acknowledging the need for a social perspective on migrant entrepreneurship, the exploration of this interdisciplinary, behavioural perspective of acculturation is guided by the following research question:

RQ 2: How do London-based Romanian migrant entrepreneurs' entrepreneurial strategies impact upon their experiences of acculturation?

2.4.2. Middleman entrepreneurship and social integration

Berry's acculturation model (1997, 2003, 2005) suggests that social integration is more likely to be experienced when migrants engage equally in preserving their home culture and learning that of the host country (Berry, 2005). Some scholars view this cultural balancing act as biculturalism, whereby the migrant is equally comfortable participating in both ethnic and mainstream contexts, clearly understanding the implications of participating in both in terms of their advantages, disadvantages, and responsibilities (Basilio et al., 2014).

However, there are cases where multicultural hybridism, which is very likely to be experienced in a multicultural metropolis like London (Pardo, 2018), is understood as social integration. By adopting this entrepreneurship strategy, the migrant entrepreneur might recruit employees from immigrant enclaves or other resources, which he/she includes in mainstream projects (Arrighetti, Bolzani and Lasagni, 2014). In this context, the migrant entrepreneur interacts with diverse cultural communities that make up the social fibre, thereby increasing cultural awareness and intelligence and maintaining their own culture.

Accordingly, this form of social inclusion refers to migrant entrepreneurship literature as middleman theory or mainstream-enclave entrepreneurship, which portrays the immigrant entrepreneur as the facilitator or broker between different ethnic and

immigrant communities and the mainstream (Bonacich, 1973). By fulfilling this mediating role, the migrant entrepreneur becomes the economic exploiter of resources (Williams and Krasniqi, 2018) and the contributor or agent of change to both contexts (Cederberg, 2017).

2.4.3. Enclave entrepreneurship and social separation

The ethnic enclave theory refers to “immigrant groups which concentrate in a distinct spatial location and organise a variety of enterprises surviving within their ethnic market” (Portes, 1981: 290). The migrant enterprise anchored in the ethnic or migrant enclave serves the needs of that community, greatly relying on its resources (Shubin and Dickey, 2013).

The literature on migrant entrepreneurship suggests that many migrants, particularly women, start their entrepreneurial journey in their community for a myriad of reasons; some positive, others less favourable, including: as a source of empowerment as community role models (Khan and Khan, 2016); as a means to manage risks associated with limited entrepreneurial, human or social capital (Brzozowski and Pedziwiatr, 2015); and as a means to overcome discrimination (Datta and Gailey, 2012), de-skilling (Munkejord, 2017) or to fulfil their need for achievement (McClelland, 1961; Williams and Youssef, 2014). Hence, the migrant entrepreneur, segregated within the confines of his/her ethnic enclave, benefits from socio-economic opportunities inside the enclave and the social capital built on its members' trust and sameness (Xie and Gough, 2011). However, whilst, at a glance, the migrant community’s social support ensures the short-term survival of migrant enterprise (Gomez et al., 2015) and even competitive advantage (Gurau, Dana and Light, 2020; Zhou, 2013), it also limits its long-term development (Trevizo and Lopez, 2016) and it caps its financial returns (Arrighetti, Bolzani and Lasagni, 2014; Brzozowski, 2017).

Touching on the gender perspective, empirical evidence suggests that women

entrepreneurs are more likely to invest in their businesses' relational aspects rather than the monetary ones that men focus on (Adkins et al., 2013). In this light, by prioritising relationships through their entrepreneurial practices, women entrepreneurs are also seen as more likely to achieve recognition within their ethnic enclave. Thus, they are more greatly expected to pursue ethnic enclave entrepreneurship. Hence, they might experience this form of entrepreneurship as double empowerment: being recognised as role models within their ethnic community (Vecci and Zelinsky, 2019) and overcoming inequality of dominance against a patriarchal cultural system that shaped their entrepreneurial cultural ceiling (Vossenberg, 2013).

The debate surrounding enclave entrepreneurship has become increasingly focused on the importance of how limiting is for the growth potential of the migrant enterprises due to limited access to information and business opportunities, which could jeopardise the future of migrant enterprises (Bouk, Vedder, and Poel, 2013). However, a less common counterargument is the fact that this limitation can be overridden by the size as well as by the quality of the enclave in terms of human and social capital, which might create more significant growth opportunities for the migrant enterprise than a multicultural society could (Klaesson, Ozge, and Dieter, 2019). I see this argument as very relevant, given the context of this study, whereby Romanian migrants are the second-largest community of EU migrants in the UK (ONS, 2019) and, therefore, a valuable source of breaking-in entrepreneurship (Griffin-EL and Olabisi, 2018).

However, evidence suggests that it is beneficial not only for the survival, but also, for the growth of the migrant enterprise to expand beyond the ethnic enclave into mainstream society (Jennings et al., 2013; Sorensen and Sharkey, 2014), from both economic and social perspectives. Nevertheless, to exercise the opportunity to expand into the mainstream requires particular cultural and social capital, which are seen as entrepreneurship and acculturation key determinants (Gomez et al., 2015). From an acculturation perspective, the enclave entrepreneurship strategy is associated with social separation or a breaking-in strategy. The migrant

entrepreneurs preserve their country-of-origin identity by limiting their social interaction with other communities or the mainstream. This entrepreneurship strategy limits migrant entrepreneurs' exposure to social participants outside the consignment of their enclave, limiting their opportunity for social and cultural learning and opportunity for social integration in the host country (Evansluong, Ramirez-Pasillas and Nguyen Bergstrom, 2019).

2.5. Conclusion

The interdisciplinary debates presented in this chapter of the literature review showcase how acculturation (i.e. psychology), intersectional identities (i.e. sociology), and migrant entrepreneurship (i.e. migrant entrepreneurship) come together to support the understanding of how London based Romanian migrant entrepreneurs experience acculturation through entrepreneurship, as captured in the conceptual model presented. This review of the interdisciplinary literature advances the importance of researching acculturation from different perspectives in a contextualised and gendered manner as a means to understanding today's globalisation and diverse societies. This approach could offer valuable insights into migrants' acculturative challenges and opportunities, shifting the universalist policies towards more disaggregated local and national policies that could address social inequalities more effectively (Vervotec, 2020).

Researching the acculturation of the London Romanian migrant entrepreneurs in the UK is important for the following reasons. Despite them being members of the second-largest community of EU migrants in the UK (ONS, 2019), their "contribution" to British super-diversity (Vertovec, 2007; 2019) remains embroiled in the "anti-immigrant" public debate (Fox, Morosanu and Szilassy, 2012), thus leading to social inequalities through underutilised talent, potentially limiting their contribution to the host society. As this community remains largely under-researched and their stereotypes have gone unchallenged by researchers (Vershinina and Rogers, 2019), their voices remain silenced and, thus, subject to misjudgement in British society.

As the youngest community of migrant entrepreneurs in the UK (CER, 2015), understanding their entrepreneurial journey creates the opportunity to formulate more inclusive and effective policies, not only to ensure the survival of these migrant enterprises but also, to enhance their growth potential, along with supporting newcomers and women in pursuing entrepreneurship. Gaining insights into this new generation of circular migrants (Engbersen and Snel, 2013) is beneficial for this community as much as it is for the broader British society, as a means to address and prevent acknowledged socio-economic discriminations and inequalities (Griffin-EL and Olabisi, 2018), through a better understanding of its super-diversity (Pardo, 2018).

CHAPTER THREE:
CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

3.1. Introduction

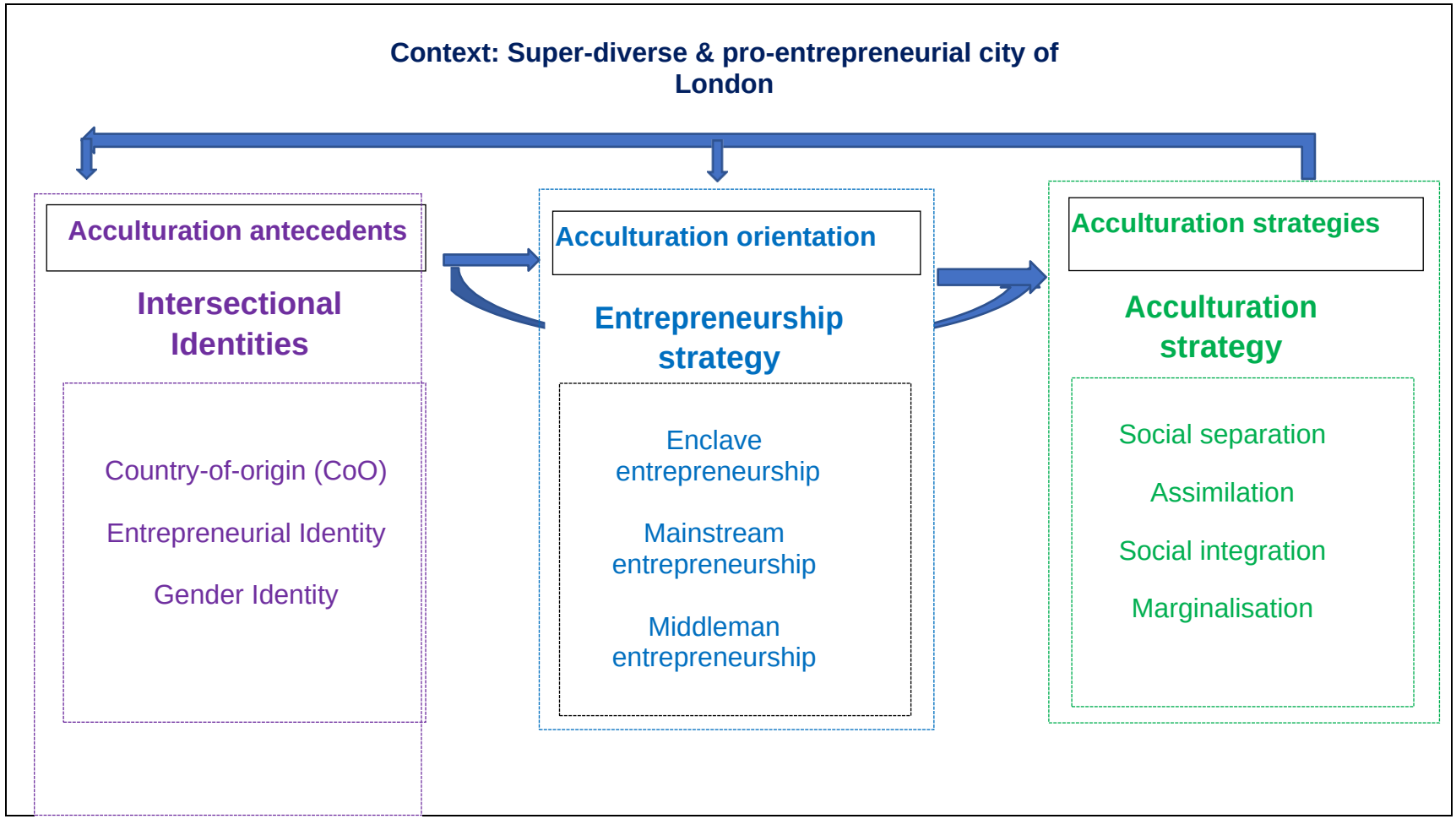
Drawing on the interdisciplinary literature and the empirical evidence detailed above, this study's IPA inquiry is captured in its dynamic and interdisciplinary conceptual model. The last section presents the interdisciplinary theories which ground the understanding of the "why" embedded in acculturation.

This study's conceptual model illustrated acculturation's cognitive and behavioural perspectives, embedded in the research aim and the two research questions.

3.2. Conceptual model of this IPA study

The following conceptual model was designed based on the interdisciplinary literature review detailed in the previous chapter. It integrates the cognitive and behavioural perspectives of acculturation. Specifically, it seeks to understand the contextualised impact of intersectional identities of country-of-origin, entrepreneurship, and gender identities (acculturation antecedents) and entrepreneurship strategies (acculturation orientation) on acculturation strategies. This conceptual framework creates a structured, interdisciplinary view to the study's aim, that of capturing how London-based Romanian migrant entrepreneurs experience acculturation through entrepreneurship, from the cognitive and behavioural perspectives, which are captured by the two research questions (Kappa, 2019; Schachner, van de Vijver and Noack, 2017).

Diagram 1. This IPA study's conceptual model



This study aims to gain insights into London-based Romanian migrant entrepreneurs' experiences of acculturation, by focusing on how their intersectional identities of country-of-origin, entrepreneurship, and gender, together with their entrepreneurial strategies, impact their journey of acculturation. This study's conceptual framework's interactive nature is represented by dashed lines, which indicate a dynamic and interdisciplinary interaction between the acculturation antecedents (i.e. sociology-based intersectional identities), entrepreneurship strategies (i.e. migrant entrepreneurship-based strategies), and acculturation strategies (i.e. psychology-based acculturation strategies). The model is built on the assumption that there is a dynamic interaction of shaping and being shaped between the context, intersectional identities, and entrepreneurial strategies, resulting in different acculturation strategies being pursued by the community of interest.

The following section will detail the main concepts of intersectional identity, migrant entrepreneurship, and acculturation, which anchor the conceptual model for this study.

3.3. Context and contextualised research

London is a compelling context to study the acculturation of the Romanian migrant entrepreneurs for diverse reasons, including being home to the largest community of Romanian entrepreneurs in the UK (CER, 2015); for its relevance as a trendsetter of globalisation as a super-diverse multicultural society (Pardo, 2018, Vertovec, 2020); for its pro-entrepreneurial institutional system (GEM, 2019); and for its co-existing social contradictions, which allow for varied challenges and privileges specific to migration, from discrimination to social mobility to be experienced (Zuccotti and Platt, 2017; Zwysen and Longhi, 2018). Furthermore, researching in this context allows for the understanding of migrants' intersectional identities in a socio-cultural frame (Yuval-Davis, 2015) where experiences of sameness or distinctiveness are equally possible (Abd Hamid, O'Kane and Everett, 2019). Context impacts upon migrant entrepreneurial strategies and behaviours (Baker and Welter, 2020; Zahra, Wright and Abdelgawad, 2014). According to the Global

Entrepreneurship Monitoring Report (2019), with regards to Britain's pro-entrepreneurial context, the country scores well in the world in six entrepreneurial pillars, such as physical infrastructure, cultural and social norms, entrepreneurial finance, internal market burdens, commercial and professional infrastructure, and government policies concerning taxes and bureaucracy. These pro-entrepreneurial pillars seem to be essential drivers for migrant entrepreneurs who engage in entrepreneurship at a higher rate (10.2%) than British (8.5%). Against this landscape, equally from entrepreneurship and acculturation perspectives, context acts as a buffer or enabler of specific and different degrees of acculturation (Schachner, van de Vijver and Noack, 2017). It influences migrant entrepreneurs to engage in different entrepreneurship strategies (Dheer, 2018). Straightening this perspective, according to Audretsch, Belitski and Desai (2019) and Chowdhury, Audretsch and Belitski, (2019), there is a strong correlation between entrepreneurship and the economic and institutional environment and that this support becomes an essential driver for migrants to break in entrepreneurship (Nontenja and Kollamparambil 2018). Specifically, causes and effects are greatly diverse across national and institutional landscapes (Seaman, Bent and Unis, 2016), creating the opportunity for undisputable heterogeneity of entrepreneurship experiences and behaviours (Welter et al., 2017; Vertovec, 2020).

Marrying concepts from psychology, sociology and migrant entrepreneurship, this study contributes to the interdisciplinary stream of literature, and it responds to the call for contextualised approach needed to understand entrepreneurship (Martínez-Sanchis et al., 2021) and in particularly complex phenomena such as acculturation and migrant entrepreneurship (Jones et al., 2019; Villares-Varela and Essers, 2019; Welter, 2020).

3.3.1. Acculturation

This study draws on Berry's (1997, 2003, 2005) acculturation model, which presents it as the process through which migrants can experience the different acculturation outcomes of integration, assimilation, separation, and marginalisation by engaging in various degrees of maintaining their heritage culture and of participating in the host society. Social integration refers to the acculturation strategy where the migrant is equally engaged with the home and host country cultures. Assimilation is the acculturation strategy through which migrants immerse themselves in the host country culture; distancing themselves from their ethnic-national culture. Social separation occurs when migrants chose to interact with their community, preserving their ethnic-national distinctiveness through very limited contact with the mainstream (Berry, 2005). Through social interactions with different ethnic communities and the mainstream, these individuals engage purposefully or not in social and cultural learning (Bandura, 1971), and thus, they open up to opportunities for acculturation (Berry et al., 2011).

This model emphasises that acculturation is a process of becoming, of transformative engagement with host and home cultures, whereby the migrant has the agency to influence the outcome of his/her acculturation, by enacting different acculturation strategies. For example, immigrants could act upon the opportunity to move from feeling segregated to feeling integrated into the host society, through the practice of mainstream entrepreneurship, accompanied by redoing of their intersectional identities, which could ultimately influence their degree of acculturation (Arrighetti, Bolzani, and Lasagni, 2017). Through the cognitive and behavioural perspectives of acculturation, this study explores how these migrant entrepreneurs' intersectional identities and entrepreneurial strategies impact how they experience acculturation in London.

3.3.2. Intersectional identities

The cognitive perspective of acculturation focuses on how social identities are undone and redone (Tajfel and Turner, 1979), as a means for migrants to overcome otherness and to achieve belongingness in the host society (Berry and Hou, 2017). These intersectional identities are constantly negotiated, hierarchically prioritised as enablers to fit into the host contextual social order and as a means to achieve optimal distinctiveness (Brewer, 1991; 2003; Abd Hamid, O'Kane and Everrett, 2019). The degree to which they achieve either of the two greatly impacts upon their behaviours (Carrim and Nkomo, 2016).

Hence, to understand acculturation as a lived experience, it is important to ascertain what these intersectional identities mean for these migrant entrepreneurs regarding acculturative belonging and distinctiveness as part of their acculturative becoming in the host society. Specifically, it allows for uncovering how these migrant entrepreneurs adjust their identities, purposely or not, reactively or not, and consequently their behaviours, social interactions and strategies (Berry and Hou, 2017; Tao, Essers and Pijpers, 2020).

Gender identity is the overarching identity that overlaps with the entrepreneurial and migrants' national identity. This identity is relevant in understanding acculturation (Berlepsch, Rodríguez-Pose and Lee, 2018) and entrepreneurial strategies (Vershinina ad Rogers, 2019) because gender is the way an individual does things, rather than what they are (Phillips and Knowles, 2012). In migrant entrepreneurship, gender identity, specifically being a woman, is a source of discrimination and otherness (Lassalle and Shaw, 2021; Villares-Varela and Essers, 2019), in dissonance with the male-centred entrepreneurial identity and her traditional social roles. Hence, it is important to contribute to this stream of literature by promoting gender as an identity that matters, because it is by amplifying this gendered view of

these migrant entrepreneurs' experiences of acculturation that a complex web of intertwined heterogeneous realities can be revealed (Ahl and Marlow, 2012; Marlow and Swail, 2014). Through this process of gendered contextualisation, women's entrepreneurship, and by extension, women's migrant entrepreneurship research, practice, and policy can receive their due attention (Lassalle and Shaw, 2021).

Entrepreneurial identity is "created through interactions amongst an individual, the enterprise and society" (Orser, Elliott and Leck, 2011:565), and thus, it impacts upon entrepreneurs' behaviours, strategies, experiences, and social interactions (Chasserio, Pailot and Poroli, 2014). Deeply rooted in the socio-economic context in which it is performed, scholars have found this social identity to be an avenue for migrants to break out of their enclave (Lasalle and Scott, 2018) and the expression of empowerment and positive, desired distinctiveness (Abd Hamid, O'Kane and Everett, 2019), and an enabler of upward social mobility (Villares-Varela, 2018).

Country-of-origin identity refers to the Romanian national identity of this community of interest. It is often associated with a liability of foreignness (Irastorza and Pena-Legazcue, 2014), inferior human and social capital, which is out of synch with the demands of a developed labour market, such as that of the UK (Panibratov, 2015). Clearly, intersectionality allows for a better understanding of how immigrants' identities are constructed and experienced, by focusing on "when and how identities are used" rather than using them as demographic facts or abstract social categories (Taksa, Powell and Jayasinghe, 2015). This transformative view enables these multiple identities to become one with immigrants' journey of acculturation (Barrett and Vershinina, 2017).

3.3.3. Entrepreneurial strategies

Most of the literature and previous empirical evidence link migrant entrepreneurship to economic integration in the host country (Kushnirovich, 2015). Furthermore, Eastern European migrant entrepreneurship struggles to escape the simplified, geographical categorisation and thus to expose its socio-economic potential and value to the host society from the assigned position of fake entrepreneurship (Thornquist, 2013), overshadowed by precarity and economic survival (Shubin and Dickey, 2013; Gurau, Dana and Light, 2020). Particular research streams have emerged for exploring migrant entrepreneurship's economic impact, from job creation to innovation and value creation in host societies (John, 2019), except for a few scholars promoting its social dimension (Arrighetti et al., 2017; Dheer, 2018; Evansluong et al., 2019; Mago, 2020; Zahra and Wright, 2016).

This study's focus expands beyond the economic, traditional view of migrant entrepreneurship by proposing a conceptual model which focuses on a fresh, behavioural perspective of acculturation (Berry, 1997, 2003, 2005) by exploring migrant entrepreneurship as a socially embedded process (Evansluong, Ramirez-Pasillas and Nguyen Bergstrom, 2019; Zahra and Wright, 2016), which enables social change through entrepreneurship-driven social interactions, presented as entrepreneurial strategies. These entrepreneurial strategies enable these migrant entrepreneurs to experience different degrees of acculturation (Barberis and Solano, 2018). Hence, migrant entrepreneurship has the potential to become a vehicle not only for economic integration but also, as a facilitator of social interactions between migrant entrepreneurs and mainstream society (Allen and Buse, 2016; Evansluong, Ramirez-Pasillas and Nguyen Bergstrom, 2019).

Against this landscape, migrant entrepreneurs who engage in mainstream entrepreneurship by serving and interacting with the broader society, either

exclusively or by bridging between the immigrant enclave and the mainstream, are more likely to enact and experience social integration or assimilation, whilst those who engage in ethnic enclave focused entrepreneurship seem to limit their social interactions with broader society in favour of maintaining their culture and thus, are more likely to experience separation or segregation in their acculturation journey (Berry, 2005, 2011). These entrepreneurial strategies are seen as transforming social interactions, encouraging human and social capital development as key entrepreneurial opportunity enablers (Bolívar-Cruz, Batista-Canino and Hormiga, 2014) and as means to overcoming discrimination and otherness (Manea, 2016; Virgili, 2020), thereby achieving social integration (Evansluong, Ramirez-Pasillas and Nguyen Bergstrom, 2019; Grzymala-Kazlowska and Phillimore, 2017). By shifting the focus from the economic meaning towards the social nature of migrant entrepreneurship, this study contributes to the growing stream of interdisciplinary research, by exploring acculturation through migrant entrepreneurship (Evansluong, Ramirez-Pasillas and Nguyen Bergstrom, 2019). Its interdisciplinarity resides at the contextualised intersection of psychology (i.e., acculturation), sociology (i.e., intersectional identities) and migrant entrepreneurship (i.e., entrepreneurship strategies) that underpin this research endeavour.

3.4. The theories underpinning: the “why “of acculturation

This interdisciplinary study draws upon psychology (acculturation), sociology psychology (intersectional identity), and entrepreneurship (migrant entrepreneurship) to fulfil its aim of providing an in-depth understanding of how London-based Romanian migrant entrepreneurs experience acculturation through entrepreneurship, is reliant upon interdisciplinary theories to answer the “why” questions. Accordingly, Social Identity Theory (Tajfel and Turner, 1979); Optimal

Distinctiveness Theory (Brewer, 1991; 2003); Need for Achievement Theory (McClelland, 1961), Bourdieu's Capital Theory (1977, 1990), together with the Social Learning Theory and self-efficacy (Bandura, 1971) are drawn upon to address such why questions, which are posed in the context of migrant entrepreneurs' journey of acculturation in the host country.

3.4.1. Social Identity Theory

Within the unique frame of the Social Identity Theory (Tajfel and Turner, 1979), identity takes on a "dual character", by bridging between psychological identity encompassing the "sense of self" (Knights and Willmott, 1989), of "who one is"(Ashforth and Mael, 1989), and sociological identity as "the collection of group memberships that define an individual" (Hogg and Terry, 2000), to be understood as "thoughts, feelings, and behaviours of individuals in groups" (Smith, Mackie and Claypool, 2014). Fundamentally, this theory argues that individuals associate themselves with specific social groups, with the expectation of enhancing their social identity, recognition, and support (Moghaddam, 2008); to feel empowered (Al-Dajani and Marlow, 2013); as a means to overcome discrimination (Datta and Gailey, 2012) and de-skilling (Munkejord, 2017); and to increase the opportunities for upward social mobility (Dannecker and Cakir, 2016).

In association with this theory, Branscombe, Schmitt and Harve's (1999, cited in Ramos et al., 2012) model of identity-rejection advances the idea that group-based social stigma and discrimination motivate the minority members to seek social recognition and positive self-esteem within their national enclave.

Despite this causal relationship between perceived discrimination and heritage community identification being under-supported by empirical evidence (Ramos et al., 2012), the likelihood of reversed causality, whereby enclaved minority members

feel increasingly discriminated, remains a valid opportunity for inquiry (Verkuyten, 2016).

Acknowledging that contradictory nature of previous research findings, Branscombe, Schmitt and Harve's (1999, cited in Ramos et al., 2012) identity-rejection model remains an important mechanism together with the Optimal Distinctiveness Theory (Brewer, 1991; 2003), which mediate the understanding of how intersectional identities are understood and experienced by migrant entrepreneurs in the host society.

3.4.2. Optimal Distinctiveness Theory

Optimal Distinctiveness Theory (Brewer, 1991; 2003) entertains the individual's desire to balance contextual belongingness and uniqueness. It aligns with this study's ontological position, whereby intersectional identities are considered dynamic (Leitch and Harrison, 2016), always becoming and harmonising the social self and the social context (Gioia and Patvardhan, 2012). The literature on migrant entrepreneurship is rich in examples of migrant entrepreneurs adjusting their identities or creating new ones alongside their associated behaviours, as a means to fit in, whilst also standing out and being recognised as entrepreneurs in the host society (Marlow and McAdam, 2015; Zhao et al., 2017). For women migrant entrepreneurs, the legitimacy granted by achieving "optimal distinctiveness" means balancing their traditional roles and meeting the expectations of the male entrepreneurial image (Chasserio, Pailot and Poroli, 2014). Consequently, many communities of women migrant entrepreneurs, such as Polish ones in the UK (Barrett and Vershinina, 2017), are likely to emphasise their home country identity and sameness to access cheaper resources, which also defines their distinctiveness compared to the mainstream (Abd Hamid, O'Kane and Everett, 2019).

3.4.3. Bourdieu's Capital Theory

Bourdieu's Capital Theory (1977, 1990) refers to how individuals are deploying and converting their economic (economic resources), cultural (education and skills), and social capital (social connections between similar to diverse social networks). Specifically, the conversion of these forms of capital, from cultural or social capital into economic capital (Bourdieu, 1990) advances the idea of a relationship approach regarding how individuals as agents accumulate, adjust and deploy them (Figueira, Caselli and Theodorakopoulos, 2015). As such, at the heart of his Capital Theory, Bourdieu's individuals are "socially constituted as active and acting in the field under consideration by the fact that they possess the necessary properties to be effective, to produce effects" (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:107). Therefore, considering social capital as an individual's power over as opposed to a power to which enables different socio-cultural and economic benefits and advancement through identities that accrue social recognition or legitimacy (Claridge, 2020; Rudick et al., 2019). These forms of capital are central to migrant entrepreneurship (Cederberg and Villares-Varela, 2018), acting as enablers of the future generation of migrant entrepreneurs through "knowledge spillover and role modelling" (Linder, Lechner and Pelzel, 2019:4). Central to Berry's acculturation model (1997, 2003, 2005) is the degree to which migrants accumulate host country cultural capital and converse of their home cultural capital to enable their acculturative belonging. Furthermore, Brieger and Gielnik (2020:5) report that social networks provide the infrastructure for the migrant enterprises, "helping potential immigrant entrepreneurs to recognize and exploit opportunities".

Intersectionality allows for understanding that, whilst some identities embed social oppression and encourage discrimination in host countries, others address some of

these power relation asymmetries by creating an experience of optimal distinctiveness (Abd Hamid, O'Kane and Everett, 2019), thus making this journey of acculturation worthwhile for immigrants (Berry and Hou, 2017). Bringing together intersectional identities and migrant entrepreneurship, the Theory of Need for Achievement (McClleland, 1961) refers to an individual's perseverance in specific activities in his/her pursuit of significant achievement. The literature suggests that the need for achievement significantly impacts entrepreneurship behaviour and strategies (Kumara, 2012), motivating the entrepreneurs to expand their business and social networks as means to explore opportunities for personal and professional growth (Sabiu et al., 2018).

3.4.4. Social Learning Theory and Self-Efficacy

Anchored in social psychology, self-efficacy is an essential part of the Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1971, 1977, 1982) and entrepreneurship. It pertains to the individual's belief in his/her entrepreneurial abilities and skills, thus envisioning entrepreneurial identity as suitable and credible within a given context (Wennberg, Pathak and Autio, 2013). The perspective of entrepreneurship as a socially interactive and dynamic phenomenon (Barberis and Solano, 2018; Evansluong, Ramirez-Pasillas and Nguyen Bergstrom, 2019) supports the understanding of entrepreneurial self-efficacy as being shaped by social role expectations (Qin and Estrin, 2015), by entrepreneurial role models (Wyrwich, Stuetzer and Sternberg, 2016), thus being a driver of entrepreneurs' behaviours and strategies (Hoang and Yi, 2015). Evidence suggests that low self-efficacy is more common amongst women migrant entrepreneurs pursuing entrepreneurship from a disadvantaged position (Azmat, 2013), from countries with limited entrepreneurship traditions, where the "ideal" entrepreneurial identity persists around masculinity (Ahl and Marlow, 2012; Villares-Varela and Essers, 2019).

Derived from the interdisciplinary literature detailed in this chapter, this study aims to explore how acculturation is experienced through migrant entrepreneurship, using the cognitive and behavioural perspectives.

3.5. Conclusion

Through its interdisciplinary nature, this study holds the opportunity to contribute to the growing stream of interdisciplinary research, by exploring the contextualised insights into the lived experiences acculturation, as cognitive and behavioural manifestations, filtered through the social lens of migrant entrepreneurship. Through this complex web of interlinked and interdisciplinary concepts and fresh perspectives, this study's research findings could support effective policies for heterogeneous communities of migrant entrepreneurs, like that of Romanian migrant entrepreneurs in London.

The second part of this doctoral thesis explains and justifies the methodology, and the research methods used to support this IPA study.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH DESIGN

4.1. Introduction

This chapter explains the research methodology and methods used to achieve the stated research aim and answer the research questions.

It starts with a brief restatement of the research aims and questions, followed by a discussion on the study's interpretative phenomenological paradigms, to understand how reality is created, explored, and understood in the context of this thesis. This discussion continues with an assessment of the qualitative approach adopted. The following section focuses on the research methods, describing the fieldwork design, including sampling techniques and data collection tools, followed by a detailed Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) presentation. It continues with a critical evaluation of the role of reflection and the researcher's positionality within this study, followed by a description of ethical research practice implemented. A summary of the research design elements used in this study concludes this chapter.

4.2. Research Methodology

Central to research design discussions lies the scholarly interest in clarifying the "distinction between research methodology and method" (Van Manen, 1990:27). The methodology refers to "the rationale and the philosophical assumptions", whilst research methods pertain to the tools supporting the research processes (McGregor and Murnane, 2010:2).

4.2.1. Research aim and questions

The research aim and questions clarify the starting point, the direction of this study, and its contribution to knowledge (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019). Whilst they

are presented in greater detail in the Literature Review Chapter, they are briefly restated at the beginning of this chapter as they embed the world view and direction of this IPA inquiry, which is central to the discussion on the research design.

This study aims to deepen our understanding of how London-based Romanian migrant entrepreneurs experience acculturation through entrepreneurship.

This inquiry into how these migrant entrepreneurs experience acculturation is supported by two research questions embedding the phenomenon's behavioural and cognitive perspectives, exploring the link between intersectional identities, entrepreneurship practices, and acculturation (Arrighetti, Bolzani and Lasagni, 2017; Brown and Zagefka, 2011).

The two main research questions addressed are as follows.

RQ 1: How do intersectional identities impact upon London-based Romanian migrant entrepreneurs' experiences of acculturation?

This research question embeds the cognitive perspective of the phenomenon of acculturation, by exploring how different intersecting identities, including gender, country-of-origin, and entrepreneurial impact on the researched community's experiences of acculturation in London. To simplify the intersectionality lens, this research question is supplemented with sub-questions addressing each of these intersectional identities.

RQ1a: How does country-of-origin identity impact upon London-based Romanian migrant entrepreneurs' experiences of acculturation?

RQ1b: How does entrepreneurial identity impact upon London-based Romanian migrant entrepreneurs' experiences of acculturation?

RQ1c: How does gender impact upon London-based Romanian migrant entrepreneurs' experiences of acculturation?

RQ2: How do London-based Romanian migrant entrepreneurs' entrepreneurial strategies impact upon their experiences of acculturation?

4.2.2. Research paradigm: interpretative phenomenology

A paradigm is a philosophy that shapes the researcher's interpretation of the knowledge created in terms of the interaction between perception and truth (Grant and Giddings, 2002). As Grant and Giddings (2002: 11) emphasised, its purpose is "to focus our attention in certain ways", intentionally shaping the research process.

At the foundation of methodological choices is that of the paradigm under which the research is carried out. Firstly, because the research paradigm plays a key role in the overall study's research strategy and methods, greatly influencing all stages of the research process, from setting the research aims to knowledge dissemination. Secondly, it allows the researcher to identify the most suitable methodology for the study. Finally, the research paradigm can help the researcher to pursue more creative research methods (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019), such as e-sampling via Facebook or analysis of non-verbal communication.

As a matrix of philosophical perceptions, research paradigms are defined as ontological and epistemological philosophies. Ontology refers to the "study of being" of the individual as part of reality (Crotty, 1998: 10) and the basis for "developing of epistemology" (Grant and Giddings, 2002: 12). Seeking to explore "being and becoming" an individual's personal view of the reality and how he/she experiences it (Willig, 2013), phenomenology is considered to be the most appropriate

ontological stance for this study, because it recognises and connects an individual's multiple realities (Alase, 2017; Van Manen, 2014). This stance supports the understanding of individuals' lived experiences as a process of becoming, where they are equally creators and participants.

The decision to adopt phenomenological philosophy has resulted from critically assessing the suitability of other ontological philosophical underpinnings, including critical realism, realism, constructivism, and phenomenology, in supporting this study's aim. Compared to phenomenology, critical realism, realism, and constructivism paradigms were deemed less suitable for this study, for different reasons. Critical realism, because it promotes entrepreneurship as a market process, with realised or unrealised opportunities for profit (Ramoglou and Tsang, 2016), contradicts the view adopted for this study, whereby entrepreneurship is understood as a dynamic social process (Zahra and Wright, 2016). Realism, because it presents reality as a fact, portraying individuals as consumers rather than creators of their realities, failing to capture the essence of this study: the lived experiences of individuals (Bryman, 2016; Willig, 2013). Lastly, whilst there is a clear overlap between constructivism and phenomenology, both viewing the reality as a construct of multiple lived experiences and consciousness (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019), this researcher acknowledges scholars advocating phenomenology owing to its ability to explore deeper meaning (Alase, 2017; Cope, 2005). This is considered as being particularly appropriate when researching women migrant entrepreneurs (Lassalle and Shaw, 2021), who are part of this study's focus.

Additionally, the interpretive epistemological stance prioritises "understanding the social world that people have constructed and which they reproduce through their continuing activities" (Blaikie, 2010:124) as a journey of "becoming", which takes on different meanings (Alase, 2017). It is against this landscape that I started to understand how Crotty's (1989) tree could grow from being a positivist, abstract

label, into becoming the product of individuals' consciousness, interactive associations, and meanings. This interpretative phenomenological lens "remind(s) ourselves that it is human beings who have constructed it as a tree, given it the name, and attributed to it the associations we make with trees" (Crotty, 1989:43). Ultimately, this is the tree that I, as a researcher, sought to explore through this study. To incorporate this interpretative phenomenological philosophy into a coherent research design, inductive reasoning is considered better suited than the "hypothetico-deductive" form, which focuses on testing existing theory (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019). In the context of this study, inductive reasoning allows for the interpretation of participants' experiences of acculturation, some similar to other communities of immigrants entrepreneurs and some more novel (Bryman, 2016).

Having discussed the interpretative phenomenological philosophy anchoring this study along with presenting the research aim and questions, the following section justifies the suitability of qualitative methodology for this investigation.

4.2.3. Qualitative research methodology

The study of migrant entrepreneurship has attracted quantitative and qualitative approaches (Dabića et al., 2020). Quantitative approaches have been used to explore enterprise performance (Hopp and Martin, 2017), sources of capital (Zhang et al., 2016) and family resources in migrant entrepreneurship (Dana et al., 2019), whilst qualitative approaches have supported explorative inquiries into social capital and identity (Dana et al., 2019; Fernando and Patriotta, 2020), cognition, personality and strategies (Dheer and Lenartowicz, 2020; Vandor, 2020). Some studies have used interviews (Arrighetti, Bolzani and Lasagni, 2017), whilst others narrative analysis (Barrett and Vershinina, 2017), comparative case studies (Solano et al., 2020), and grounded theory (de Vries, Hamilton and Voges, 2015).

In theory, the research philosophies discussed in the previous section of this chapter do not impose any of the two methodological approaches. However, the aim of this study, that of deepening our understanding of how acculturation is experienced through entrepreneurship, is a great driver for qualitative inquiry, because it focuses on "capturing the actual meanings and interpretations that actors subjectively ascribe to phenomena (of acculturation) to describe and explain their behaviour by investigating how they experience, sustain, articulate and share with others these socially constituted everyday realities" (Johnson et al., 2006:132; Patton and Haynes, 2014). Furthermore, the intersectional lens assumed for this study (see Chapter Two) also reinforces the suitability of the qualitative approach, as it allows for intersectional identities to be naturally explored (Lassalle and Shaw, 2021). Additionally, the present study indirectly responds to the calls for more qualitative research in acculturation and entrepreneurship, which has been encouraged by many scholars (Higgins, McGowan and Trehan, 2013; Najda-Janovzka and Buzoianu, 2017).

Qualitative research is suited for illuminating the authenticity of the participants' acculturative journeys. It can also show how other scholars have already proven how entrepreneurs and migrant entrepreneurs engage differently in entrepreneurship (Grimes, 2018; Kirtley and O'Mahony, 2020) and how they establish and negotiate their identities to adapt or break out (Van Burg et al., 2020). Thanks to its embedded ability to explore these unique and dynamic insights, qualitative research demonstrates its suitability and importance in this study.

The quantitative methodology was dismissed because its association with exploratory or theory-testing research broadly focuses on estimating the relationship between different variables that objectively exist and shape a factual reality (Davidsson, 2016). Consequently, this view of reality free of subjective interpretations is inconsistent with this study's research aim and questions.

Given the argued benefits of using a qualitative research approach in the context of this study, the discussion on methodology continues with a critical evaluation of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) as the most suitable qualitative research approach. This discussion includes the rationale of IPA, its critiques, and the alternative approaches considered.

4.2.4. Interpretative Phenomenology Analysis (IPA): rationale and critiques

"IPA is a qualitative research approach [methodology] committed to the examination of how people make sense of their major life experiences (…) and (it) shares the views that human beings are sense-making creatures, and therefore the accounts which participants provide will reflect their attempts to make sense of their experience" (Smith, Flowers, and Larkin, 2009:1-4). Hence, its suitability for this study is reinforced given it supports exploration and understanding of the complex and emotionally charged social phenomenon (Smith and Osborn, 2015); acculturation in this case.

Historically anchored in Edmund Husserl's works (1859–1938) and further developed as the "phenomenological movement" by Alfred Schutz (1899–1959), Martin Heidegger (1889–1976), Maurice M. Ponty (1908–1961), and Jean-Paul Sartre (1905–1980), IPA aims to enable the subjective experiences and the phenomenon under research to be known on its own (epoche) and for its underlying meanings or reason to be described and interpreted (Pivcevic, 1970, cited in Cope, 2005). Driven by the commitment of understanding and amplifying interviewees' lived experiences as a layered contextual reality (Alase, 2017; Noon, 2018), IPA's fundamental principles, including phenomenology, hermeneutics, and ideography, would appear to support this "explicit commitment to person-in-environment, and not

just phenomenon-as-experienced" (Quest, 2014:43).

In practice, Husserl's reduction method is used to suspend through reflectivity any assumptions, bracketing off any socio-cultural and historical contextual meaning. The practice of reflective attentiveness (Van Manen, 2014) enables the descriptive and authentic view of participants' acculturation experiences as they were communicated during interviews to shine through (Giorgi and Giorgi, 2003).

Secondly, to overcome the limitations associated with employing only descriptive analysis emerging from the exclusive use of Husserl's 'reduction' to the abstract, Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty's hermeneutic phenomenological approach marks the next level of analysis, which was focused on bringing to light a heterogeneous view of the reality voiced by the interviewees (Larkin and Thompson, 2012). Consequently, by engaging in this hermeneutic circle, going back and forth between "the part and the whole" (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009:28), how the words were communicated and interpreted in the context of the sentence was uncovered as well as how each of these sentences shapes its paragraph. It was through this iterative process that I could capture participants' coherence and sensitivities, which further supported "justifiable claims about a text that goes beyond that text but always emanates from the text itself" (Medina, 2012:43).

Lastly, the IPA's idiographic principle helped identify divergent and convergent cross-case patterns (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). This approach enabled "deeper understandings and insights into complex (...) phenomena as they occurred within particular contexts" (Piantanida and Garman, 1999: 132). Owing to its embedded inductive reasoning, it also enabled the transferability of the findings to other contexts (inferential generalisation) (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003) and different knowledge streams within the literature (theoretical generalisation) (Smith, Flowers, and Larkin, 2009), both being valuable sources of knowledge creation in this study.

By undertaking an IPA methodology, the following philosophical assumptions were made: “understanding is deeply informed by one’s experience” (Smythe, 2011:36) and the way of understanding and communicating this is contextual (Smythe, 2011). This requires one to “re-connect with what it means to be human, and discover afresh what is already known, but perhaps forgotten, hidden, and put aside (…) Yes, a phenomenon has been articulated, but always it comes back to people, people like you and me” (Smythe, 2011:51).

Despite IPA being one of the most well-known and commonly used qualitative methodologies in psychology, the discipline where acculturation, one of this study’s main concepts, resides, there is a need to assess not only its suitability for this study, but also, to consider its limitations (Willig, 2013). IPA practice of relying heavily on language, not only as a means of communication, but also, as the main source for data collection (i.e. interview recordings, fieldnotes) and interpretation (i.e. experiences) (Willig, 2013) is seen as a limitation. To overcome this limitation and increase research quality, the interpretation of co-occurring non-verbal communication is used to achieve a deeper understanding of the interviewees’ shared experiences (Gherardi, 2018). This approach, alongside following an IPA tradition of focusing on a small number of participants, also helped overcome a heavily descriptive IPA analysis practice. This approach allowed for comparisons of themes, relationships and thematic patterns across different individual accounts to be identified and analysed.

4.2.5. Alternative research approaches to IPA

The decision of choosing the IPA methodology as the most suitable for this study was the result of a comparative analysis amongst other qualitative methodologies, including grounded theory, critical narrative analysis, and thematic analysis, each offering different angles as to what data could unveil through analysis (Smith, Flower and Larkin, 2009). Firstly, grounded theory (Glaser and Straus,1967) was considered unsuitable for this study, because it focuses on theorising a particular phenomenon, instead of focusing on an individual's lived experiences, which the IPA methodology aims to explore (Smith, Flower and Larkin, 2009).

Secondly, *critical narrative analysis (CNA*), although sharing hermeneutic, ideographic, and inductive perspectives with IPA (Langdridge, 2007), focuses on snapshot events, instead of an individual's experience as a journey, as a strategy. Thirdly, the assessment of *narrative analysis* raised the concern that its focus on "reporting on the life of a single individual" using only verbal communication would take away from the authenticity of the feelings (Murray, 2015), which help shape "the meaning for several individuals' lived experiences of a concept or the phenomenon" through which the dynamic reality of becoming is recognised (Creswell, 2013:76).

Finally, thematic analysis (TA), whilst being praised for its flexibility in identifying, analysing, and reporting thematic patterns within experiential and critical research, is descriptive rather than interpretative (Braun and Clarke, 2013). Hence, it limits the greatest IPA strength, that of being interpretative, which is key for this study seeking to explore a deeper understanding of participants' lived experiences and their underlying meanings.

In sum, IPA was considered to be the most suitable research methodology for this study, because it aligns with its aim and research questions and its underlying

philosophies. Its principles allowed the researcher to explore individuals' lived and contextualised experiences of acculturation in-depth, experiences that embed meaning beyond the descriptive nature of language.

4.3. Summary of this study's research methodology

This section has explained the researcher's decisions when adopting the IPA methodology for this study, whilst also considering the alignment between the interpretative phenomenological philosophy and inductive reasoning. These methodological underpinnings were key in the pursuit of capturing rich data and gaining a deep understanding of how Romanian entrepreneurs of both genders experience acculturation through entrepreneurship in London. By committing to undertake this IPA study, the researcher guides "the reader reflectively to that region of lived experience where the phenomenon dwells in the recognizable form" (Van Manen, 2014: 390), rather than to a factual conclusion (Smythe, 2011).

The next section of the chapter discusses the research methods in terms of explaining and justifying how this IPA study was conducted. It starts by detailing the process of participants' access and selection, followed by a critical overview of how the data was collected and analysed. The section concludes by describing how the ethics were implemented in practice; how reflectivity shaped this research journey; and what critical steps were undertaken to ensure the research quality.

4.4. Research Methods

From a phenomenological perspective, the research method is the "path toward understanding that is as sensitive to its phenomenon as to its own orderly and self-correcting aspects" (Pollio, Henley and Thompson, 1997: 28). Thus, it includes the inventory of the research tools that make the research process operational, including

sampling techniques, data collection procedures, and data analysis strategies (Alase, 2017).

4.4.1. Research participants

This subsection focuses on the process of sampling the research participants. It details reflectively the access challenges experienced and the strategies used to overcome these. It clarifies how the research participants were selected through traditional and novel sampling techniques. Finally, a succinct description of the research participants' demographics wraps up this discussion.

The process of identifying and sampling "the right" research participants are influenced by the study's IPA approach, focusing on purposely selecting those who have experience of the phenomenon under study (Alase, 2017; Peat, Rodriguez and Smith, 2019). Hence, aligned with the aim of this IPA study that of deepening understanding of how London-based Romanian migrant entrepreneurs experience acculturation through entrepreneurship, the following participants' inclusion criteria were formulated: London-based entrepreneurs of both genders, of Romanian nationality, with an active business, with or without other employees, besides themselves at the time of their interview.

These participants' inclusion criteria anchor the two-stage selection process, which includes gaining and maintaining access to the researched community, followed by sampling the participants using different sampling techniques. Fieldwork experiences regarding this two-stage selection process are discussed in the following two sections.

4.4.1.1. Gaining access: challenges and strategies

As PhD researchers, we rely greatly on research methods books to guide us through our research, without realising that this journey is loaded with contextual experiences, which need to be addressed on-the-go (Kristensen and Ravn, 2015). Similar to most novice researchers, I entered the sampling stage with the feeling that "there is a world of people out there waiting to be interviewed and that my job as researcher was to make sure I selected the most suitable of these" (Butera, 2006: 1263). But soon enough, the truth sank in, and I realised that recruiting research participants required more than methodological knowledge. It required emotional resilience, creativity, innovation, strategizing, flexibility, and time, lots of time (Kristensen and Ravn, 2015).

Despite being the second-largest EU-immigrant community in the UK (ONS, 2019), the highly stigmatised and mediatised image of these immigrants has motivated them to seek low visibility in the host society (Fox, Morosanu and Szilassy, 2012), which has also gained them the label of being a "hard-to-reach" community (Ellard-Gray et al., 2015). Furthermore, the limited number of scholars reporting these research challenges (Thummapol et al., 2019) and the existence of just a handful of qualitative studies focused on Romanian immigrants in the UK, all of which seem to have required an insider researcher (Fox, Morosanu and Szilassy, 2012; Moroşanu, Szilassy and Fox, 2015; Pantiru and Barley, 2014), prove the need for an iterative and reflective approach to researching as a means to overcome these challenges. To address the acknowledged methodological gap in reporting such best research practices (Ellard-Gray et al., 2015), together with my supervisory team, I wrote a conference paper reflecting upon the participant recruitment process.

In practice, accessing and sampling London-based Romanian immigrant entrepreneurs became a long-term, dynamic process spread out over nine months

(June 2018 - January 2019). Initially, I engaged in exploratory access, observing rather than interacting with the community members (June 2018). The trust-building access (July 2018 – January 2019) stage was marked by interaction with community members during community meetings and events. During this time, different research contacts, specifically with gatekeepers, and community membership materialised. During the final stage, known as the breakthrough access (September 2018 - January 2019), I was recognised as a valued and trusted community member (Blix and Wettergren, 2015; Rantatalo et al., 2018).

Despite my positionality as a cultural insider, as a researcher, I experienced access barriers, which made this study very time-consuming, pushing the limits of what was achievable within the allocated timeframe. Amongst the most challenging access barriers experienced were: the researcher's partial outsider positionality, the gatekeeper-researcher-participant power relation; the researched community's lack of trust in research and research participants' social and professional risks (Bonevski et al., 2014).

The researcher's partial outsider positionality: as she self-identifies as a Romanian immigrant, but not as an entrepreneur in London and having no initial contact with the researched community. This positionality as an outsider influenced the community's initial lack of openness and provoked some suspicion regarding this study's legitimacy (Zickar and Carter, 2010). Participation in the community's public events helped overcome this barrier and build the necessary trust to motivate potential research participants to participate in this study (Cunliffe and Eriksen, 2011). These events were opportunities to inform this study's research community (Marshall and Rossman, 2016; Thummapol et al., 2019).

The gatekeeper-researcher-participant power relation: manifested as expressions of the social and professional status, shaped by the socio-cultural

context (Riese, 2018) and social interactions (Foucault, 1982), grounded in my positionality as researcher-research leader, which was perceived as being superior to the research participants and gatekeepers. To address this unwelcomed power asymmetry, the interviewing was approached as a friendly conversation, where interviewees and their stories took the central stage (Cheek, 2011). Additionally, participants' choice regarding location, schedule, and interview language preferences was also prioritised (Wendler et al., 2006, cited in Riese, 2018).

Researched community's lack of trust in research: this was due to participants' lack of an established research culture in their home country, where research might lack transparency, fail to deliver impactful outcomes (Jacklin and Kinoshameg, 2008) or where ethics might be loosely applied (Bonevski et al., 2014). To overcome this and thus build the necessary trust, the participants were approached with transparency, by answering all their questions and by providing them with a collection of formal documents approved by the University Ethics Committee, including the participants' information sheet and consent form.

Research participants' social and professional risks refer to potential loss of professional reputation or social status by revealing sensitive business practices, such as the company's competitive advantage and future business assignments (Bonevski et al., 2014). To manage these risks, the research topic was prioritised, and an interview guide was provided as a means to prevent any potential distress or exposure to professional vulnerabilities.

Research participant-researcher barter for qualitative data refers to the common but increasingly invisible and underreported, but ethical and efficient research practice, whereby consistent with the principle of equitable fairness, the researcher voluntarily exchanges expertise for interviewees consented participation in research.

Despite its omnipresence in our everyday lives, as we trade professional favours and knowledge or as we share" likes" on social media (Hsu et al., 2017), this exchange is far from being free or ethically questionable. However, due to the lack of proper ethical guidance (Gunia and Lewicki, 2020) and the overreliance on participants' altruistic interest to contribute to the greater good (Resnik, 2019), this research practice continues to be regarded as ethically suspect and "morally impermissible" (Deane et al., 2019:29). This view of barter as a default consent-undermining practice, raising ethical issues of coercion and undue influence, is misrepresentative of the fieldwork reality, where the collaboration between researchers and researchers should rely on a win-win approach (Largent and Fernandez Lynch, 2017). This approach increases the chances for knowledge co-creation and impactful research, which is encouraged (Kapasi and Rosli, 2020).

Being introduced to barter during her fieldwork, by 16 of the interviewees who initiated these exchanges post-interview, the researcher took the opportunity to expand this methodological knowledge to overcome the acknowledged lack of ethical guidance and fragmented and scarce reporting on this research practice (Ram, 1997; Resnik, 2019).

To ensure an ethical barter, respecting and reinforcing GDPR rules regarding the management of the risk of coercion or undue influence (GDPR, 2018) the researcher focused on ensuring that participants have the required information (i.e. participants' information) to voluntarily and formally consent to participate (i.e. written consent) and that they were aware of their right to withdraw from this study at any time and with no explanation. In this sense, given that they initiated the barter after their interview demonstrated that the barter played a secondary role in their decision to participate in this study. Additionally, they did not exercise any pressures, allowing the researcher to pursue ethical assessment from the supervisory team and the institutional code of ethics. They reinforce this trade as an opportunity for expert

advice, which the researcher could leverage thanks to her eight years of management and professional financial experience.

"I know that you have a good understanding of business management, and I could use some professional advice if you could give me some advice on some of the issues I currently experience with my business." (Male Entrepreneur 1)

In practice, this barter resulted in an exchange of an average of 60 minutes of participants' interviewing time with an average of 2.25 hrs (145 minutes) of business counselling and translation services delivered by the researcher (see Appendix 6).

A detailed account of the barter research practice used during experienced during the research recruitment stage is presented and discussed in the full paper, with the title of "*You scratch my back and I scratch yours: Bartering for qualitative data*", which has been accepted for the upcoming British Academy of Management Conference.

Despite the challenges faced in accessing this community of interest, it is essential to remember that, the iterative and reflective approach to research allowed me, as a researcher, to overcome them and thus, to build value-adding research collaborations, which made this study a great learning experience.

The following section discusses the different sampling techniques used to sample 49 London-based Romanian migrant entrepreneurs (18 Female Entrepreneurs and 31 Male Entrepreneurs) into this study.

4.4.1.2. Sampling research participants

Sampling refers to the process of selecting, randomly or purposively, research participants from the community of interest (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019). This discussion is underpinned by concerns regarding the sample size and data

saturation, which takes us back to reflecting on the IPA research traditions. These are reinforced by renowned scholars, who agree that in IPA studies, “there is no right answer to the question of... sample size” (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009:56). Even though this perspective theoretically challenges the generalisation powers of an IPA study (Bryman, 2016), it focuses on the particularities of the researched phenomenon across the sample and increases the findings' transferability to similar contexts communities (Rajasinghe, 2019).

In the context of this study, achieving empirical saturation was prioritised over the numerical sample size, and I used these pieces of evidence as a control point.

The empirical saturation is the moot point in data collection, whereby the benefit of data collected with any additional interview could translate into “diminishing returns” (Bryman, 2016; Saunders et al., 2018). In research practice, it is experienced as a sense of completeness, where, for the researcher, the participants’ captured narratives offer no new perspectives on the matters of interest (Nelson, 2016). In the current study, this materialised in “additional data not lead(ing) to any new emergent themes” relating to the topic studied (Given, 2016:135). This process was far from being straightforward, for it requires, as is often implied by the IPA research tradition (Alase, 2017), a diligent focus on ensuring that rich data of participants’ experiences are captured through probing questions (Hennink et al., 2017; Given, 2016) and that a progressive log of the emergent themes is kept throughout the data collection stage.

In the context of this study, data saturation was reached with the interview data collected from a sample of 49 interviewees (three being excluded due to not meeting the inclusion criteria (Male Entrepreneurs 2 and 33 and Female Entrepreneur 9), which generated rich, quality data for meaningfully addressing the research questions (Cunliffe and Alcadipani, 2016).

These research participants were selected using an iterative selection process with multiple purposive sampling techniques, including snowball sampling, chain referral, time-event, and e-sampling via Facebook. These sampling strategies are discussed in the following two sections of this chapter.

Traditional sampling

The IPA underpinning this study influenced the choice of the purposive sampling techniques over random ones because they are efficient in "select(ing) respondents that were most likely to yield appropriate and useful information" (Kelly, 2010: 317; (Campbell et al., 2020; Robinson, 2014) on acculturation through entrepreneurship, which is central to this study (Palinkas et al., 2015; Robinson, 2014). Additionally, considering the challenges experienced in accessing this hard-to-reach community, the reflective and iterative approach to sampling (Bonevski et al., 2014; Ling et al., 2018; Waling et al., 2020; Waring et al., 2018) increased the opportunity for sampling by accessing different networks. Moreover, it helped manage the selection bias risk associated with purposive sampling and increased the opportunity for rich data collection (Bryman, 2016).

Consequently, in practice, multiple purposive sampling techniques, including derived rapport, time-space, snowball sampling, and e-sampling via Facebook, were used to sample 49 London-based Romanian immigrant entrepreneurs.

By using ***the derived rapport sampling technique,*** the community leader/gatekeeper mediated the collaboration between myself as researcher and 12 potential research participants (Ellard-Gray et al., 2015), who in return, requested fewer clarifications and were proved to be more trusting compared to those sampled using traditional snowballing, for example.

The ***time-space sampling technique*** was efficient in targeting three elite members of the Romanian business community in participating in advertised public and community events. There was a clear opportunity to invite them to join this study (Semaan, 2010). Together with their positionality as community role models, their participation increased the community trustworthiness of this research project.

The snowball sampling *technique* was used for its convenient nature and for its praised efficiencies in selecting hard-to-reach populations (Cohen and Arieli, 2011; Tracy, 2013). This sampling technique proved efficient and productive yielding 30 research participants.

However, due to the time and resource constraints that a PhD study has and the fact that using traditional sampling techniques came to a halt for almost two weeks, as there was no evidence suggesting that there was enough data collected to support in-depth IPA, I decided to assess Facebook as a potential sampling alternative to overcome the bottlenecks experienced using those techniques detailed above.

E-sampling via Facebook

The initial interest in Facebook as a potentially great source for the "right" research participants was influenced by most interviewees, who befriended me post-interview on this social media platform. The interviewees' approach motivated me to assess the importance that Facebook, alongside other social media platforms, plays in migrants' everyday lives (Dekker and Engbersen, 2014; Oiarzabal, 2012) as a means to communicate with their home country (Dekker and Engbersen, 2014) and with their co-nationals in the host country (Oiarzabal, 2012).

Its 2.6 billion worldwide monthly users, each of whom spends daily, on average, 25 minutes (Facebook, Inc. Report, 2020), creating and sharing varied forms of

information (Mintel, 2013), was concrete evidence of its research potential for research in general. This new e-society shaped and shared by over 30% of the world population, each of them having, on average, a network of 338 e-friends (McClain, 2017) and which during this pandemic crisis, increased the use of Facebook Messenger by more than 50%, globally (Facebook, Inc. Report, 2020), is clear evidence that social media is deeply embedded in our everyday lives, impacting on the way we socialise, work, and live. Its global reach and real-time interactions reinforce its untapped research potential. Social media-driven research remains scarce, mainly being used in medical (Head et al., 2016) and social studies (Kosinski et al., 2015). Specifically, a handful of studies probed Facebook's research potential for surveys (Baltar and Brunet, 2012; Valdez, 2014) and advertisement driven studies (Carter-Harris et al., 2016; Potzchke and Braun, 2017), rather than as a recruitment platform for qualitative interviewing (Chitac and Knowles, 2019).

Against this landscape depicting an acknowledged research gap, a novel sampling technique labelled e-snowball via Facebook was created to address some of the gatekeeper challenges experienced during the fieldwork, by transferring some of that power back and by enabling sampling (Ellard-Gray et al., 2015) when traditional sampling through physical contact was found to be limited. This materialised into a conference paper presented at the British Academy of Management 2019 Conference, in which this e-sampling technique was explained step-by-step.

This virtual sampling technique developed shares commonalities with the traditional snowball sampling, including similar concerns around the selection bias, because it encourages sampling of a segment of the population present online and those who are more involved in the community and not the whole target population (Ruths and Jurgen, 2014). However, I argue that the risk of selection bias could be reduced when sampling on Facebook, compared to the traditional sampling techniques, for, owing to its large number of users, social media increases the opportunity for a

larger and more heterogeneous sample.

Equally important is the fact that Facebook allowed access to diverse and multiple networks of participants and limited gatekeepers' influence of sampling based on personal preferences or their understanding of "being fit" for a particular study or not (Cohen and Arieli, 2011). These strategies ensured proper management of the selection bias risk (Singh and Wassenaar, 2016).

Clearly, in this study, as often happens in qualitative studies more broadly, gatekeepers played a significant role, having a great influence on who got selected, particularly during the traditional sampling stages. They were the ones who controlled the access to this researched community as they were people with influential power, often regarded as role models (Clark, 2011). Moreover, gaining and maintaining access to this community meant approaching multiple clusters that were driven by strongly gendered enacted power relations, under the potential suspicion of "being played" and "being watched". This social behaviour is common amongst people who experienced living under authoritarian regimes (Bekmurzaev, Lottholz and Meyer, 2018) as Romanians did for over 40 years. However, my positionality as a cultural insider meant I was cognisant that these social behaviours were deeply rooted in participants' patriarchal and autocratic upbringing (Janenova, 2019). Hence, I was aware during the early stages that overcoming these access barriers required a diligent one-to-one approach, where each of the research participants became the central focus.

The creation of the virtual e-sampling technique via Facebook yielded 13 interviewees over three weeks and proved to be a great learning curve for a novice researcher like myself. This experience confirmed for me social media's untapped potential of accessing and sampling hard-to-access populations (Dekker and Engbersen, 2014; Kayrouz et al., 2016; Oiarzabal, 2012), as well as being seen to

provide embedded time and cost efficiencies (Rife et al., 2016).

The following subsection presents the demographic and business profiles of the 49 research participants, who comprise this study's voices.

4.4.1.3. Participants' demographic and business profile

The researcher relied on participants' self-reported demographic and business profiles for this descriptive analysis (Appendix 7 & 8). These self-reported profiles were completed during the interview stage, as a means to increase the transparency and validity of this study. Overall, the demographic and business profiles of London-based Romanian migrant entrepreneurs (LREs) interviewed for this study is one of highly educated, first-time migrant entrepreneurs, with an average age of 34 years, who were mainly hiring immigrants and primarily serving the British market. Their age average is corroborated by one of the very few documents capturing statistics on Romanian entrepreneurs in the UK, namely the Centre of Entrepreneurs Report (2015), which also presents this community as the youngest community of migrant entrepreneurs in the UK. In fact, it was found that they engage in entrepreneurship almost ten years earlier than any other community of immigrants and nearly 20 years earlier than British nationals (CER, 2015).

By looking at this sample through a gendered lens, it is clear that this perspective reveals important intra-group differences. By analysing this sample, it was observed that the London-based Romanian female migrant entrepreneurs (FEs) interviewed were highly educated in the EU universities and pursued some form of education in the UK. The majority ran micro-businesses in the "Consumer Goods & Services Sector", averaging four employees, whilst also serving the ethnic and British markets.

By contrast, just over half of the London-based Romanian men migrant entrepreneurs (MEs) interviewed had a small or medium business in the “Construction & Real Estate” industry, which is in line with the latest National Statistics (ONS, 2019). They also declared hiring an average of 47 employees, primarily immigrants and serving the British market (Appendix 9).

A summary of the research participants’ demographic and business profiles is provided in the table below.

Table 5. Research participants' demographic and business profiles

Participants code	Age	Highest level of education	Education level completed in the UK	SIC Industries	No. of employees	Market served
Male Entrepreneur 1	37	Bachelor Degree	None	Consumer goods & services	3	British Market
Male Entrepreneur 3	47	High School	NVQ	Construction & Real Estate	20	British Market
Male Entrepreneur 4	26	Bachelor Degree	None	Consumer goods & services	20	British Market
Male Entrepreneur 5	24	Bachelor Degree	Bachelor Degree	Management consultancy	1	British Market
Male Entrepreneur 6	23	Bachelor Degree	Bachelor Degree	Management consultancy	5	British Market
Male Entrepreneur 7	33	High School	None	Construction & Real Estate	56	British Market
Male Entrepreneur 8	36	Bachelor Degree	Certification	Construction & Real Estate	60	British Market
Male Entrepreneur 9	71	High School	Certification	Consumer goods & services	20	British Market
Male Entrepreneur 10	34	Bachelor Degree	None	Consumer goods & services	1	British Market
Male Entrepreneur 11	43	Master Degree	None	Consumer goods & services	2	British Market
Male Entrepreneur 12	43	Bachelor Degree	None	Information Technology	1	British Market
Male Entrepreneur 13	42	Bachelor Degree	Certification	Consumer goods & services	1	British Market
Male Entrepreneur 14	43	High School	None	Consumer goods & services	6	British Market
Male Entrepreneur 15	41	High School	Certification	Construction & Real Estate	15	British Market
Male Entrepreneur 16	36	Bachelor Degree	Master Degree	Construction & Real estate	25	British Market
Male Entrepreneur 17	38	Bachelor Degree	HND	Consumer goods & services	10	British Market
Male Entrepreneur 18	59	High School	Certification	Construction & Real Estate	600	British Market
Male Entrepreneur 19	31	Bachelor Degree	Certification	Consumer goods & services	60	British Market
Male Entrepreneur 20	37	High School	Certification	Construction & Real Estate	14	British Market
Male Entrepreneur 21	41	High School	None	Construction & Real Estate	60	British Market

Male Entrepreneur 22	36	High School	Certification	Construction & Real Estate	20	British Market
Male Entrepreneur 23	31	High School	NVQ	Consumer goods & services	5	British Market
Male Entrepreneur 24	31	High School	NVQ	Consumer goods & services	5	British Market
Male Entrepreneur 25	50	High School	NVQ	Consumer goods & services	12	British Market
Male Entrepreneur 26	54	Master Degree	Master Degree	Construction & Real estate	6	British Market
Male Entrepreneur 27	32	High School	None	Consumer goods & services	5	British Market
Male Entrepreneur 28	32	Bachelor Degree	None	Construction & Real estate	15	British Market
Male Entrepreneur 29	45	Bachelor Degree	Master Degree	Construction & Real estate	100	British Market
Male Entrepreneur 30	38	Master Degree	None	Construction & Real estate	4	British Market
Male Entrepreneur 31	39	High School	Certification	Construction & Real estate	258	British Market
Male Entrepreneur 32	72	Bachelor Degree	None	Construction & Real estate	4500	British Market
Female Entrepreneur 1	23	Master Degree	Master Degree	Consumer goods & services	5	British Market
Female Entrepreneur 2	40	High School	None	Consumer goods & services	15	Ethnic Market
Female Entrepreneur 3	36	High School	HND	Consumer goods & services	6	Ethnic Market
Female Entrepreneur 4	45	Master Degree	Certification	Consumer goods & services	4	Ethnic Market
Female Entrepreneur 5	45	Bachelor Degree	None	Management consultancy	1	Ethnic Market
Female Entrepreneur 6	38	Bachelor Degree	Bachelor Degree	Consumer goods & services	4	British Market
Female Entrepreneur 7	40	Bachelor Degree	Certification	Consumer goods & services	1	Ethnic Market

Female Entrepreneur 8	32	Bachelor Degree	Certification	Consumer goods & services	3	Ethnic Market
Female Entrepreneur 10	34	Master Degree	None	Management consultancy	1	British Market
Female Entrepreneur 11	41	Bachelor degree	Certification	Consumer goods & services	1	British Market
Female Entrepreneur 12	47	Master Degree	Master Degree	Healthcare	1	British Market
Female Entrepreneur 13	51	High School	Certification	Consumer goods & services	5	Ethnic Market
Female Entrepreneur 14	34	Master Degree	Bachelor Degree	Manufacturing & Heavy industry	5	British Market
Female Entrepreneur 15	41	Master Degree	None	Consumer goods & services	3	Ethnic Market
Female Entrepreneur 16	37	High School	Certification	Manufacturing & Heavy industry	3	British Market
Female Entrepreneur 17	37	Master Degree	None	Consumer goods & services	4	British Market
Female Entrepreneur 18	36	High School	Certification	Construction & Real estate	10	Ethnic Market
Female Entrepreneur 19	27	Master Degree	Master Degree	Consumer goods & services	3	Ethnic Market

Source: Researcher's fieldwork (2018-2019)

The sampling of research participants was followed by data collection. During this stage, the researcher formulated, piloted, and finalised the interview guide to support the semi-structured, face-to-face interviews with the research participants. This next section discusses the interview guide, the interviewing process, and the additional data collection tools used in this study.

4.4.2. Data collection

Data collection involved collecting in-depth information from 49 London-based Romanian migrant entrepreneurs, who consented to share their experiences of acculturation by participating in face-to-face interviews (Creswell, 2013). This was a critical stage in the research process, where, through reflectivity and bracketing, I "committed to a degree of open-mindedness (…) suspend(ing) (or bracketing off) (her) preconceptions when it comes to designing and conducting interviews" to "enable participants to express their concerns and make their claims on their terms" (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009:42). Following in the footsteps of previous qualitative scholars, I relied on a within-method strategy rather than a mixed-methods one, which combines qualitative and quantitative methods (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019). This involved triangulating three data collection tools, including recorded face-to-face interviews, field notes, and participants' demographic and business profiles.

The remainder of this section discusses the three data collection tools used in this study. Specifically, it details how the interview guide was created and refined and how semi-structured interviews were chosen as the most suitable data collection form for this IPA study. It also encompasses the researcher's field notes and participants' self-reported demographic and business profiles.

4.4.2.1. Piloting the interview guide

The interview guide was designed to collect open-ended, non-directive questions, aligned with the research aim and questions (Appendix 10). Its purpose was to guide

the interviewee and researcher, intending to explore three main identities (Noon, 2018). Once the first draft of the interview guide was completed, it was tested twice to ensure its effectiveness as a data collecting tool (Ismail, Kinchin and Edwards, 2018; Majid et al., 2017), that participants would have a good understanding of the study's concepts (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016) and that any procedural and topic ambiguities could be clarified beforehand (Marshall and Rossman, 2016). The piloting of the interview guide was conducted following Van Teijlingen et al.'s (2001) model, which is focused on validating the following steps:

- Easing the interviewees into the research conversation using the funnelling technique, which assists them in gradually recalling and sharing their experiences, from simple to complex.

- Encouraging the participants to reflect upon their experiences at a deeper level, beyond the factual reality, by using prompt questions, such as "How did you feel? How did this impact on you? Why do you think you felt that way? Why do you think it happened that way?" (Noon, 2018).

- Assessing the time necessary for conducting face-to-face interviews to manage participants' expectations and create a feasible interview schedule and research plan.

- Adjusting the interview questions by replacing specialised terminology with everyday language to guide the interviewees better to understand some fuzzy concepts, such as acculturation.

Piloting the interview guide was a great opportunity to manage and improve different aspects of the interviewing process, including testing the feasibility of the proposed study; pre-testing the semi-structured interview guide as an efficient data collection tool (Ismail, Kinchin and Edwards, 2018); and increasing my awareness as a researcher of the interviewing skills required. This step also played an important role in acknowledging and managing potential ethical risks commonly associated with researching with human beings.

This was a steep learning curve, which tested my key interviewing skills, such as showing patience and empathy, approaching the interviewee as an expert of his/her

experience, maintaining focus, managing expectations and communicating efficiently, in a friendly, yet professional way. In addition, this approach encouraged the "participants to offer a rich, detailed, first-person account of their experiences." (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009:56). Ultimately, all these measures contributed to producing richer narratives of lived experiences to be shared by the research participants, to the point that some of these individuals were profoundly touched by the personal relevance that this interview topic had for themselves:

> *"In this society, I am always alert. So, if you were British, I would have approached this interview differently. The fact that you are Romanian makes me feel relaxed." (Male Entrepreneurs 29).*

Once the interview guide was piloted and refined and the research participants were sampled, the next stage in the research process was to invite them for a face-to-face interview.

4.4.2.2. Semi-structured interview

Qualitative interviews are considered the most effective method of "gather(ing) descriptions of the life-world of the interview with respect to interpretation of the meaning of the described phenomenon" (Kvale, 1983:174). Specifically, semi-structured interviews were considered because compared to structured ones, they grant the flexibility to capture nuanced, authentic stories (Noon, 2018), which enables the identification of relevant theoretical and empirical links (Bryman, 2016). Following the common practice in intersectional studies (Lassalle and Shaw, 2021; Villares-Varela and Essers, 2019), "semi-structured, conversational style interviews appeared to be the best method to understand how each of the participants gave meaning to their work experiences" and the identities associated with them (Mooney and Ryan, 2009:5).

The decision for the most suitable data collection tool took into account the suitability of focus groups. However, their use was considered unsuitable for this study, due to their proclivity for groupthink and the interviewees' potential risk of exposing personal and business vulnerabilities. These potential risks could have impacted participants' willingness to share their experiences in-depth and thus thwarted the achievement of the research's stated aims (Alase, 2017).

Clearly, the semi-structured interviews supported the researcher's aim of capturing, understanding, and interpreting London-based Romanian migrant entrepreneurs' experiences of acculturation through entrepreneurship, by "facilitate(ing) an interaction which permits participants to tell their own stories, in their own words" (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009:57).

Overall, between September 2018 and January 2019, 49 semi-structured interviews were conducted. Regarding the communication venue used, 45 interviews were face-to-face (30 with men), and four were Skype interviews (1 with a man).

Face-to-face semi-structured interviews

Interviews are portrayed in the literature as a conversational data collection tool. Precisely, in the context of this study, the IPA driven interview was planned to encourage a researcher-researched relationship (Alase, 2017) as a means "to facilitate that interaction which permits participants to tell their own stories, in their own words" (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009:57), to fulfil its purpose of exploring participants' lived experiences in depth.

Similar to experiences shared by other scholars, the experience of face-to-face interviews was a positive one (Curtis and Curtis, 2011) because it encouraged verbal and paralinguistic exchange and it enabled trust through direct social interaction, which further allowed for researcher-researched cultural and migrant commonalities to be shared (Irvine, Drew and Sainsbury, 2012). Manifested as "natural talking", these interviews became fruitful venues for socialising (Longhurst, 2016) and effective vehicles for unveiling insights rarely explored. As the interviews progressed, I noticed how the interviewees grew motivated to share their experiences in a more detailed manner, verbally and non-verbally, when compared to the pre-interview interactions, which were more formal and factual. This

comfortable setting for interviewing ultimately increased the richness of data (Vladlena and Stephanie, 2013), encouraging these participants to share detailed and personalised experiences of their acculturation in London.

However, it cannot be denied that these advantages were at times countered by some disadvantages, widely acknowledged by the research community. Amongst these, the most relevant are time and resources inefficiencies as well as some participants' avoidance in sharing in-depth entrepreneurship information as a means to managing the risk of exposing personal and professional vulnerabilities (Vogl, 2013).

Skype semi-structured interviews

As often happens for many professionals, from academics to entrepreneurs, time is increasingly becoming a sought-after currency that influences greatly the way we interact. Hence, it is no surprise that Skype, with over 300 million users worldwide (Anonymous, 2015), has become one of the most popular Voice-over-Internet-Protocol (VoIP) technologies and an enabler of synchronous video-communication (Seitz, 2015, 2016) for qualitative interviewing (Moylan, Derr and Lindhorst., 2015; Quartiroli, 2017).

In the context of this study, three interviewees preferred Skype interviews, citing time constraints as the primary motivator. Apart from being time and resources efficient means to expand research, these Skype interviews encouraged openness in formulating in-depth answers. The participant felt relaxed, self-reflective, and in control (Deakin and Wakefield, 2014; Seitz, 2016). This also allowed for interviewee-interviewer interactive engagement, where both verbal and nonverbal communications were easy to observe (Oates, 2015; Seitz, 2016). Overall, these Skype interviews were a positive experience, although there were some shortfalls to overcome, including interrupted calls and pauses as well as poorly audible segments (Seitz, 2016). The risk of these shortfalls was managed by using some of the following strategies: scheduling a pre-testing session before the interview to ensure that both connections are correctly set up (Seitz, 2016); choosing a quiet interview setting (Oates, 2015); and encouraging the participants to talk clearly and to repeat themselves whenever needed or simply echoing what they have just said

to get their confirmation of the accuracy of what has been heard (Seitz, 2016). Clearly, this study, alongside others, proved that Skype interviews are effective for increasing research participation and overcoming time and resource constraints. The one caveat is that they require previous training, but they can be tailored to increase body language visibility and thus, to increase the opportunity for rich data collection (Mirick and Wladkowski, 2019).

In this study, communication skills and cultural awareness were considered critical in establishing the necessary trust, which further motivated honest and in-depth reflective participation. Like many other research elements, interviewing required an iterative approach. Different techniques were used, including laddering down, echoing, and summarising what had been said as a means to verify the understanding of the meanings conveyed. Besides, probes were deemed necessary to sharpen the interviewees' focus and collaborate during the interviews. These strategies played a significant role in enhancing the quality and the richness of data collected and, thus, the robustness of the research findings (Mirick and Wladkowski, 2019; Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019).

Regardless of the channel of communication used, the 49 semi-structured interviews provided a friendly conversational platform for capturing participants' experiences and presenting them as "knowledgeable agents who are socially constructing their realities, thus can explain their thoughts, intentions, and actions" (Gioia et al., 2013: 17).

As part of the within-method approach, other data collection tools were used alongside these recorded semi-structured interviews, including self-reported demographic and business profiles as well as field notes.

4.4.2.3. Self-reported demographic and business profiles

The self-reported demographics and business profiles were completed during the interview stage by participants. Specifically, the demographic profiles included references to education, age, years of residence in the UK, work experience, and gender (Appendix 7), whilst the business profiles included business specifics, such

as business legal form, industry sector, number and nationality of employees and market served (Appendix 8). This data was used in the descriptive analysis of the research sample as well as being a triangulated source for the interpretative analysis.

4.4.2.4. Researcher's fieldnotes

A fieldnotes diary is a widely used method for collecting primary data in qualitative research (Vassilopoulou, 2011). In the context of this study, they fulfilled MEMO activities, referring to Mapping research activities; Extracting meaning from the data; Maintaining momentum; and Opening communication (Birks, Chapman and Francis, 2008). In practice, these activities fulfilled two main functions: as reflective filters, capturing details of the research process, including time efficiencies, fieldwork experiences, reflective thoughts on personal bias and assumptions and as data collection tool, capturing nonverbal communication language co-occurring during the face-to-face interviews and emergent themes (Nadin and Cassell, 2006).

The nonverbal language captured supported a deeper, interpretative engagement with the interview data and the creation of a typology of the nonverbal language, which has been presented in a conference paper. This research paper addresses an acknowledged methodological gap in that the majority of qualitative research relies on interpreting only 7% of what is captured through verbal language, whilst 93% of the nonverbal communication remains greatly ignored in interpretative studies (Mehrabian, 1981, cited in Onwuegbuzie and Byers, 2014).

This within-method approach to data collection contributes to ensuring a high-quality research practice, whilst also supporting the descriptive and interpretative analysis of this study (Nadin and Cassell, 2006), which are the focus of the discussions in the next section.

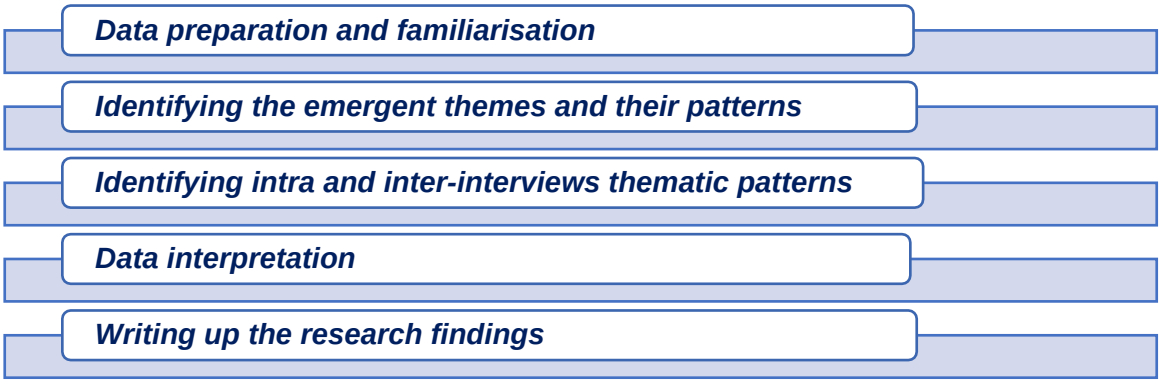
4.4.3. Data analysis: Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA)

For this study, a deeper understanding of participants' experiences of acculturation through entrepreneurship was pursued through the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) of verbal and nonverbal communication (Gherardi and Perrotta, 2014; Onwuegbuzie and Byers, 2014). This section explains how the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis of verbal and non-verbal data from the 49 recorded interviews was conducted.

4.4.3.1. IPA verbal data analysis

Aiming to ensure the study's aim and high-quality research practice, I applied the IPA principles, as advocated by well-known IPA researchers (Smith and Osborn, 2008; Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009), to analyse research data. These principles are delineated in the diagram below.

Diagram 2. The IPA data analysis steps



Source: Smith and Osborn (2008), and Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009)

During the ***data preparation and familiarisation,*** I transcribed and translated the recorded interviews, followed by reading and re-reading this data with and without the associated fieldnotes, which captured co-occurring non-verbal communication (Miles, Huberman and Saldana, 2014; Smith, Flower and Larkin, 2009). These co-occurring non-verbal cues increase the data richness, providing deep insights into participants' emotions (Silverman, 2017). Additionally, I identified relevant text

units from each interview that I used an illustrative direct quotation to support my IPA analysis.

Since most interviews were conducted in Romanian and the analysis was in English, I also translated from Romanian into English the recorded interviews' verbatim transcripts by following an iterative translation process (Appendix 11). Specifically, to preserve the equivalence of meanings between the recorded interviews and their translated transcripts (Regmi, Naidoo and Pilkington, 2010; Zhu, Duncan, and Tucker, 2019), those interview episodes considered for further analysis or used as direct quotations were translated backwards and forwards (Regmi, Naidoo and Pilkington, 2010). Ultimately, this approach helped preserve the authenticity and the uniqueness of participants' experiences as they were initially shared (Alase, 2017).

By taking on the role of translator, whilst also being a cultural and linguistic insider to the researched community, I was privileged to gain great insight into participants' lived experiences of acculturation. That is, I had a good understanding of their metaphoric language (e.g., *"some of them wear white gloves when approaching you"* (Female Entrepreneurs 18) and its impact on the meaning embedded in their experiences. Despite not being a certified translator, I have a good command of English, thanks to my extensive professional experience in sales management and investment banking of over 11 years in an English-speaking country and a master's degree from the University of Glasgow. My extensive background in using English reinforced my English linguistic competence in translating these interviews accurately. Furthermore, to ensure that the equivalence between my interpretation and their intended meaning attributed to their experiences was accurately captured, I also used feedback from participants on the translation and the interpretation of their interviews (Zhu, Duncan, and Tucker, 2019).

Identifying the emergent themes and their patterns involved categorising through coding the emergent themes using NVivo12 software, which is commonly used when analysing qualitative data (Welsh, 2002; Miles, Huberman and Saldana, 2014). Moreover, it requires little time and professional guidance to master the software (Bezeley, 2007). Through open coding, I "broke down the data" and focused on identifying concepts that were later linked to the theoretical framework (Birks, Chapman and Francis, 2008), specifically, acculturation, intersectional

identities, and entrepreneurial strategies. Further, through axial or theoretical coding, the emergent patterns of thematic convergence or divergence across different interviews were coded (Saldana, 2013; (Appendix 12). All the relevant themes had been categorised and formatted in a codebook for future reference. While using this software in data analysis increases the conceptual connections between multiple interviews, thus greatly reducing the risk of human error, I took an active role in managing the risk of automatic coding concerning synonymous themes by applying manual coding (Wakkee, Englis and During, 2007). For the fieldnotes portraying interviewees' co-occurring non-verbal communication, a similar process of coding was followed.

Identifying intra- and inter-interview thematic patterns refers to the data analysis stage when the previously coded themes are linked across the different interviews. This "iterative and inductive cycle" (Smith, Flower and Larkin, 2009:79) helped me identify gendered patterns of experiences of acculturation. Since these "themes are usually expressed as phrases which speak to the psychological essence of the piece and contain enough particularities grounded and enough abstraction to be conceptual" (Smith, Flower and Larkin, 2009:92), I connected them using different strategies, including polarisation (considering differences rather than similarities), contextualisation (clustering of common cross-interviews experiences), numeration (the frequency of their occurrence) and abstraction (pattern identification and sub-ordinate themes) (Smith, Flower and Larkin, 2009).

During the ***data interpretation*** stage, my focus was on "trying to make sense of the participants trying to make sense of what (is) was happening to them" (Smith, Flower, and Larkin, 2009:3) whilst remaining faithful to their voices (Noon, 2018). Specifically, I used the hermeneutic circle method to interpret the interviewees' contextual experience in the light of its parts, by going back and forth between words and whole sentences; between particular extracts and the whole interviews (Smith, Flower, and Larkin, 2009).

Writing up the research findings was the last step in the data analysis process, which was focused on reporting the main interdisciplinary emergent themes, such as intersectional identities, acculturation, and entrepreneurial strategies, to address

the two research questions and thus, fulfil my commitment as a PhD researcher of contributing to knowledge.

The data analysis has been presented broadly as a gradual, step-by-step process. The steps tend to overlap significantly in practice, as one has to multitask between data analysis and data collection (Miles, Huberman and Saldana, 2014). This strategy assisted me in keeping track of the emergent themes and identify patterns of convergence or divergence early on in the research (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009) and facilitate an efficient assessment of data saturation (Saunders et al., 2018). The following section details the analysis of the non-verbal communication captured during interviews, together with the associated challenges and strategies formulated to deal with them.

4.4.3.2. IPA nonverbal data analysis

Committed to delivering on the aim of pursuing a deeper understanding of participants' experiences and my analytical research approach led to my elicitation that across 22 years of qualitative research (1990-2012), only 17% of phenomenological studies included any discussion of non-verbal communication (Denham and Onwuegbuzie, 2013). The result of my diligent inquiry into understanding why scholars are shying away from interpreting the nonverbal communication that makes up 93% of communication (Greckhamer and Cilesiz, 2014; Mehrabian, 1981, cited in Onwuegbuzie and Byers, 2014), materialised in addressing this methodological gap (Thanem and Knights, 2019) by creating a context-bound typology of non-verbal communication, which is illustrated below and has been detailed in a BAM conference full research paper.

Table 6. Typology of non-verbal communication used in this study

Paralinguistics		Kinetics	
CAPS	Louder tone	ŁŁ	Crossed legs (reserved)
!	Animated tone, with/without exclamation	O	Eye contact to engage
?	Looking for confirmation (high pitch)	Ø	Looking away/gazing away
Aha	Confirmation or self-affirmation	©	Eyes wide open (surprised)
Mm	Hesitation	X	Crossed arms (Sensitive subject/reserved)
::	Vowel elongation	I ¡	Open arms (Feeling safe/empowered)
Hm	Continuers	§	Holding his head (Struggle/emotional event)
Word	Prominence associated to pitch accent	Ñ	Nodding the head (disbelief)
±	Change in tone (louder to normal and back)	Ā	Nodding the head (agreement)
> <	Speeded-up talk	÷	Smile
< >	Slowed-down talk	◯	Staring
=	Turn-taking	ll	Facing the other person
{}	Spelling to emphasize		
Chronemics		**Proxemics**	
(.)	Micropause	\	Pulling back
(….)	Long pause	/	Leaning forward
@	Laughter	∫	Small social space (withing 30 cm)
¥	Surprised	≡	Big social space (over 30 cm)
V	Holding breath	∏	Obstructed social space (across table)
Λ	Breath down	○	Open social space (no obstacles)
¢	Silence	¶	Sideway orientation

Source: Researcher's own based on fieldwork and De Finna (2007), Edwards (1997, cited in Sperti, 2019), and Onwuegbuzie (2016)

This typology on non-verbal communication includes kinetics (subject's body postures), proxemics (use of social space), chronemics (speech markers for silence, gaps, and hesitation), paralinguistics (variation of voice volume and tone), and oculesics (subject's engagement in eye contact and gazing) (Moore, Hickson and Stacks, 2014; Onwuegbuzie, 2016). These were captured during the face-to-face interviews and coded using symbols, which are explained in detail. Following the rationale of dedicated scholars to this topic and qualitative research tradition, these non-verbal cues were used in triangulation with the co-occurring verbal accounts; as a "proofreading tool" for verbal accounts; as a means of capturing underlying messages to create a layered understanding of meaning and scope for new insights (Onwuegbuzie and Byers, 2014) (Appendix 13).

Being mindful that interpreting non-verbal communication in the context of limited or a lack of culturally-bound topologies and guidelines would be challenging and

challenged, I welcomed participants' co-creative collaboration (Mero-Jaffe, 2011) by asking for their feedback on the interpretative analysis. This approach ensured research quality and trustworthiness (Czarniawska, 2016). Following Smith, Flowers and Larkin's (2009) data analysis process, as detailed in the previous section, I used illustrative examples of co-occurring kinetics, proxemics, paralinguistics, chronemics. I corroborated verbal communication to reach a deep understanding of interviewees' experiences.

Clearly, the data analysis process proved equally enriching and challenging. Enriching, as these new insights created the context of reflective and bracketing research practice and offering a source for rich data, which transformed this interpretative analysis from a 2D (words and their meanings) into a 3D form (words-nonwords-meanings). This was challenging due to the complexity of this multilayer approach and the lack of prescribed guidelines for interpreting culturally bounded non-verbal language.

4.5. Summary of this study's research method

In this section, the research method suitable for this IPA study to deepen understanding of how London-based Romanian immigrant entrepreneurs experience acculturation through entrepreneurship has been discussed. This has included the specifics of the iterative process of accessing and combining traditional and novel purposive sampling techniques, including derived rapport, time-space, snowball, and e-sampling via Facebook, to sample 49 London-based Romanian migrant entrepreneurs (18 female and 31 male). Additionally, data collection challenges and strategies have been presented, including how the pilot study refined the interview guide and how semi-structured interviews, field notes, and how demographic and business profiles were used to capture rich data. Moreover, Smith, Flower and Larkin's (2009) IPA data analysis was used as guidelines to interpret verbal and nonverbal communication.

Clearly, choosing the most suitable research design is a complex reflective process of becoming an experienced, knowledgeable, and skilful researcher. Reflectivity was experienced as a "journey of learning and unlearning" (Palaganas et al., 2017:436) that transformed many unknowns into knowns, and it increases the

validity and the trustworthiness of the research practice (Jootun, McGhee and Marland, 2009). The following and last section of this chapter discusses how reflectivity shaped this research inquiry and my ethical engagement throughout the research process as a means to ensure validity and high-quality research practice.

4.6. Research quality

Research quality refers to how well the study fulfils its stated aim and addresses its research questions (Yin, 2015). However, the quality of qualitative research continues to be questioned against unsuited quantitative measurements of replicability and objectivity, which go against its “soul search”- driven nature (Finlay, 2012). Given IPA has started gaining the deserved recognition of being “rigorous and (able) to produce a plethora of rich data” (Callary, Rathwell, and Young, 2015:73), concepts such as validity, quality, and trustworthiness have been increasingly used to assess its quality in qualitative research (Golafshani, 2003). Despite the operationalisation of these concepts not being straightforward (Roulston, 2010), they become the foundation of frameworks meant to guide the qualitative researcher in achieving high-quality research practice (Smith, 2011; Yardly, 2000, 2008).

Therefore, aiming to ensure high-quality research practice and validity for this IPA study, I followed Smith's (2011) and Yardley’s (2000, 2008) criteria to guide me in achieving credibility, sensitivity to the context, commitment to rigour, transparency, and impact of this study’s findings.

The table below details the quality criteria and the strategies used to reinforce them.

Table 7. Summary of the study's quality criteria

Credibility	• Direct involvement throughout the research process • Triangulation of data sources • Diligent and reflective research practice and reporting
Sensitivity to context	• Understanding of the relevant interdisciplinary literature • Acknowledging the socio-economic and superdiverse context
Commitment to rigour	• Within-method triangulation • Reviews from the supervisory and conference reviewers • Reflective research practice
Transparence & coherence	• Diligent reporting • Iterative approach • Reviews from the supervisory and conference reviewers
Impact & importance	• Assessment of the literature, empirical evidence and policy gaps • Reviews from the supervisory and conference reviewers

Source: Smith (2011) and Yardley's (2000, 2008) criteria for validity in qualitative research

Credibility is a measure of research validity, referring to the degree to which research findings address the study's focus and preserve the authenticity of participants' experiences (O' Dwyer and Bernauer, 2014). This study's credibility was achieved through my direct involvement in all stages of the research process; through triangulation of multiple sources of data (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019); through diligent and reflective research practice and reporting (Yardley, 2008; Yin, 2015); and through an active and consistent collaboration with the supervisory team, conference reviewers and the participants (Czarniawska, 2016; Tuffour, 2017).

Sensitivity to context pertains to critically assessing the socio-economic environment, understanding the main literature debates that discuss the key concepts, and engaging the research audience in interpreting the collected data. This includes the analysis of participants' direct quotations (Smith, 2011; Yardly, 2000). Additionally, the reflective field notes enabled the acknowledgement and the separation of my feelings as well as personal assumptions from interviewees' stories. Throughout the face-to-face interviews, I adopted an empathetic and

participant-centred approach, which facilitated the capture of interviewees' nonverbal cues, thereby providing further valuable insights into their experiences' underlying meaning (Berger, 2013; Majid et al., 2017; Merriam and Tisdell, 2016).

Commitment to rigour was reinforced through detailed reporting of all stages of the research process and by engaging reflectively in data collection during the face-to-face interviews and when interpretatively analysing the data (Yardley, 2008; Van Burg et al., 2020).

Transparency and coherence were achieved through explicit disclosure of research participant selection, data collection techniques, and analysis to the supervisory team, internal examiners, and conference reviewers (Smith, 2011; Berends and Deken, 2019; Van Burg et al., 2020).

Impact and importance refer to knowledge creation and contributions (Yardley, 2008). This study's findings address gaps in literature and policy, which could improve and support the entrepreneurial conduct and performance of Romanian migrant entrepreneurs and other similar communities of migrant entrepreneurs in the super diverse and multicultural city of London, where diversity represents 37% of the overall population (ONS, 2019).

As a researcher, I hope that my efforts to communicate diligently all aspects of the research process, my insider/outsider positionality, the challenges faced, and the complexity of analysing the participants' nuanced experiences in this study constitute a coherent and trustworthy research practice.

4.7. Ethical considerations

The positionality of a qualitative researcher is impacted upon by participants' identities and their trust in the research collaboration. At the heart of this collaboration is the debate of what constitutes an ethical research practice, which raises questions of regulations reinforcing ethics and matters around the risks of objectification of participants due to the researcher-researched power asymmetries (O'Connell Davidson, 2008). Accordingly, from the regulated perspective,

throughout this research journey, I preserved my commitment “that participation in [any] this IPA study will be strictly voluntarily based and […] and that these participants […] should be better off knowing they were able to tell the stories of their “lived experiences”; not worse off from it” (Alase, 2017:92).

The practice of ethical research started with the ethics application approved by the University of Westminster Ethics Committee in June 2018, thus ensuring that this research aligns with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR, 2018) regarding informed consent, confidentiality, and data privacy for all the research participants. Following the traditional research practice of ensuring ethical research practice, I invited the potential research participants to read, ask for clarifications and sign off a set of formal documents, including the consent form (Appendix 15), participant information sheet (Appendix 15), demographic and business profiles (Appendix 7 & 8) before the interview. The practical implication of these documents and how they were operationalised in this study are further discussed.

4.7.1. Informed consent

One of the key formal documents was the consent form, which aligns with the essential GDPR defining attributes, such as “any freely given, specific, informed and unambiguous indication of the data subject's wishes by which he or she, by a statement or by clear affirmative action signifies agreement to the processing of personal data relating to him or her” (GDPR, 2018). It played a critical part in the University Ethics Committee's approval in June 2018 and building a trusting relationship with the research participants and the legitimacy of this study in the research community.

4.7.2. Privacy, confidentiality and anonymity

Confidentiality is another key currency of ethical research practice. In this study, it was operationalised following GDPR rules (GDPR, 2018), which includes pseudonymisation of all the participants by coding their names (e.g., from John C to ME1 or Male Entrepreneur 1) and proper data management through passwording

and secured storage.

Additionally, to manage the risk of re-identification, as reported by other scholars when using Facebook or other social platforms (Jones et al., 2012; Zimmer, 2010), I limited Facebook interactions with the recruited e-friends to private messages via Messenger. I directed research-based conversations via e-mail as much as possible, and I applied a bespoke privacy filter to increase the privacy of befriended research participants (Marsh and Bishop, 2014).

Despite the concepts of confidentiality and anonymity being related, they differ as the former refers to ensuring that participants' personal information are protected. The latter refers to collecting data and the extent to which this data can be traced back to specific participants (Bos, 2020). Ensuring the anonymity of research participants whilst protecting research integrity and quality is a challenge many researchers face, particularly when they use direct quotations from their interviews. In this sense, I followed standard best research practices, such as coding participants names and avoiding the use of full interview accounts (Slavnic, 2013; Surmiak, 2018). in this study and other papers based on these data. There is a long-standing debate surrounding the impact of confidentiality on the reliability of the study and that of anonymity on self-self-reporting, without any conclusive, supporting evidence (Bos, 2020).

This diligent, ethical practice when using social media-driven research materialised in a full conference paper, as a means to address an acknowledged methodological gap and to inform the best practice regarding how to engage with social media-driven research ethically.

4.7.3. Potential distress

Whilst the topic of this IPA study is not particularly emotional, as researcher and interviewer, I was aware that whilst sharing their lived experiences, some of these participants could experience personal vulnerabilities, which could necessitate a cautionary approach. To manage this risk, I followed Seidman's (2013:99) advice of maintaining a "delicate balance between respecting what the participant was saying and taking advantage of opportunities to ask (more) difficult questions".

Accordingly, I adopted an Aristotelian approach to ethical research, by making on-the-spot "ethics of virtue" decisions (Brinkmann and Kvale, 2015). In practice, I drew on my cultural insider positionality to ensure that the interview was as positive an experience as possible, paying attention to empowering the participants as the primary decision-makers regarding the interview location, interview schedule, and what they were ready to share. This played an important role in motivating the participants to participate in this study and disclose their experiences (Alase, 2017).

Throughout the interviewing stage, I kept an open, flexible, and friendly attitude, by "allowing (…) the participant to engage in a dialogue whereby initial questions are modified in the light of participants' responses" to prevent tension points from escalating (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009:57). I understood from early on in the research that, for this study to succeed, it was essential to allow for cultural commonalities to be shared at the beginning of all interviews, as means "to establish rapport and to obtain good data from participants" (Smith, Flowers, and Larkin, 2009: 64).

4.7.4. Data protection and management

Following the University of Westminster data protection and management protocols, which align with reported ethical research practices, all the audio, and the transcription files have been individually passworded and saved on an external drive and the university's computer drive (Alase, 2017).

All the research documentation provided in physical forms, such as the consent forms or fieldnotes, were securely stored at my home. Additionally, following the widespread research tradition, once this study is completed, all these recordings, together with all the consent forms, field notes, and self-reports, will be destroyed to ensure that no third party will ever gain access to this data (Rubin and Rubin, 2012).

Although following GDPR and institutional ethical rules and continuously engaging in reflective research practice, it is hard to argue for absolute protection of all these ethics, because as Rhoens (2019) was saying that "in the age of big data", total

control is a challenge at best not only for researchers like myself but for global legal entities (Bos, 2020).

4.8. Reflectivity

Reflectivity is the key methodological element, referring to my ability as a researcher "to stand outside the research process and critically reflect on that process" (O'Leary, 2004:11), as a means to manage personal bias, which could impact my fieldwork interactions and outcomes (Temple and Moran, 2011). This is particularly important when researching intersectional identities (Kamenou, 2007), one of the foci of this study.

4.8.1. Reflective research practice

Throughout my research practice, I openly declared and managed intersectional identities, by keeping fieldnotes of interview dynamics, personal assumptions, and details of the research process. I engaged with other researchers, the supervisory team, and conference audiences, all of which provided valuable opportunities to reflect on knowledge co-creation within this study (Berger, 2013). Additionally, evidence of reflective engagement includes piloting and adjusting the initial interview grid to improve understanding of topic meanings and to ensure rigorous study practice (Majid et al., 2017; Merriam and Tisdell, 2016), whilst effectively collaborating with participants can ensure the accuracy of interpreting the meaning they shared in their interviews.

These approaches helped me build research not simply "about" participants but "with" and "for" them, such that their voices and their stories remained central to the study (Sprague, 2016; Vershinina et al., 2019). Engaging reflectively in research means also acknowledging and reporting the impact that my intersectional identities, as a researcher, interviewer, translator, and my insider-outsider positionality (Creswell, 2013), could have on the data collection and research findings (Temple and Moran, 2011).

4.8.2. Researcher's positionality

Researcher's positionality within the study defines his/her world view and how one understands, interacts ad thus positions himself/herself in the context and throughout the whole research process, from the stated aim to the interpretation of the research findings (Grix, 2019; Holmes, 2020; Marsh et al. 2018).

Reflectivity and self-reflection inform positionality (Holmes, 2020). Throughout this research journey, the researcher acknowledges and understands that, although it is essential to be present, she also has the responsibility to suspend her assumptions and views and allow participants' voices to be heard. The IPA researcher's responsibility is to enable the authenticity and heterogeneity of interviewees' experiences to shine through (Bourke, 2014; Holmes, 2020).

Like other professionals, researchers have to manage multiple social identities, including researcher, interviewer, and translator. For me, as a researcher, reflectivity became a key skill in this journey (Temple and Moran, 2011), actioned as a filter to distinguish between personal assumptions and participants' lived experiences, thus keeping the authenticity and the uniqueness initially communicated by them (Alase, 2017).

Firstly, as a researcher, I focused on ethical and "contextual analysis by exploring the deeply-rooted meanings of the (acculturation) phenomenon and highlighting the explanations of what happened" (Wu and Wu, 2011:1305), by relying on interview transcripts, reflective, observational field notes as well as feedback from the supervisory team, participants and conference reviewers.

Secondly, as a cultural insider, I share Merriam et al.'s belief that the "notion of positionality rests on the assumption that culture is more than a monolithic entity to which one belongs or not" (2001:411). Hence, I set my positionality as a cultural insider who was a valuable trust enabler, providing access to the researched community (Suwankhong and Liamputtong, 2015), which was of great benefit when interpreting the meaning of verbal and nonverbal accounts (Ganga and Scott, 2006). However, this positionality also embedded gender and occupational-driven power relations asymmetries, deeply rooted in the patriarchal upbringing of the members

of the researched community. I found my experience as a cultural insider to resonate with Morosanu's (2015) reflection on her fieldwork.

The experienced dynamics of my positionality put me in the position of being an "outsider" to this community of entrepreneurs, which helped me preserve the authenticity of their voices (Ergun and Erdemir, 2010). However, this "otherness", promoted in literature as "diversity in proximity" (Ganga and Scott, 2006), also had the disadvantage of being challenging and time-consuming this was because the participants' requirements for common idiosyncratic cultural references and relatable social status had to be addressed during the pre-interview phase. This translated into a process of interviewing the interviewer, as a means to building trustworthiness of attention, which though not radically new in qualitative research with migrant elites (Suwankhong, Liamputtong and Rumbold, 2011) remains, as yet, an uncommon practice.

There is clear evidence of the significance given of the researcher's cultural insider positionality within this study. However, my insider-outsider positionality was neither assured nor stable (Ergun and Erdemir, 2010), being constantly negotiated and reconstructed between belonging and not-belonging (Weiner-Levy and Queder, 2012). Consequently, being granted access by the community members and participants' openness to share and entrust their stories were never taken for granted (Suwankhong and Liamputtong, 2015). Other implications of this insider-outsider positionality, which became more influential during the interviewing and sampling stages of the research process, have been detailed in this chapter's specific sections.

Thirdly, as a translator, I translated 49 interview transcripts from Romanian into English. The decision to interview in Romanian was taken on a case-by-case basis to encourage richer narrative accounts during interviews. The choice of switching from English, which was interviewees' business or technical language, to their native language, allowed for deep emotional engagement in the interaction (Oxley et al., 2017). By assuming the positionality of a translator, I also took on the responsibility to ensure that the translation was technically correct whilst also capturing the emotional state communicated by participants, which was the main benefit of holding these interviews in the participants' native language. One of the challenges

experienced was finding the semantic equivalence of colloquial expressions (e.g. “a hand washes the other one” = you scratch my back, and I scratch yours). In this case, my role as a translator incorporated cultural and linguistic aspects (Temple and Young, 2004). My experience as a translator resonates with the experience of other scholars, who reported that “the solutions to many of the translator’s dilemmas are not to be found in dictionaries, but rather in an understanding of the way language is tied to local realities, to literary forms and to changing identities.” (Simon, 1996:137, cited in Temple and Young, 2004:165; Bashiruddin, 2013).

In the context of this study, the process of translation was an exercise in balancing language, culture, and reflectivity (Callary, Rathwell and Young, 2015). The process of translation is discussed in detail in the section dedicated to “IPA verbal data analysis” and Appendix 11.

Clearly, this has been a journey of reflectivity, where the researcher found herself “stand(ing) outside the research process and critically reflect on that process” many times, to give the deserved recognition of all these intersectional identities and to let the associated experiences shine through (O’Leary, 2004:11). This was a journey where the researcher remained committed until the end to give her interviewees a voice that made sense in their way and that built insightful meaning (Noon, 2018).

Reflective engagement is critical at all stages of the research process and an intrinsic part of the ethical research practice, which involves finding the best strategies to ensure participants’ informed consent, privacy, confidentiality, avoidance of potential distress, and data protection.

4.9. Conclusion

Committed “to the examination of how people make sense of their major life experiences (i.e. acculturation) and (by sharing) the views that human beings are sense-making creatures, and therefore the accounts which participants provide will reflect their attempts to make sense of their experience” (Smith, Flowers, and Larkin, 2009:1-4), in the context of this study, I argued for a qualitative, IPA methodology, which aligns with its interpretative phenomenological paradigms. Its underpinning

IPA method included semi-structured interviews, triangulation of interview data, field notes, and participants' self-reported demographic and business profiles as tools to collect data. The research participants were sampled using a combination of non-probability traditional and via Facebook sampling techniques. Additionally, IPA analysis included analysing non-verbal communication together with co-existing verbal communication.

To ensure high-quality research practice and validity, I used within-method data triangulation, and I welcomed conference and supervisory team reviews as part of the ongoing personal reflective approach to the research. I consistently kept reflective field notes as part of my commitment to learning and as a means to manage the risk of personal bias, to preserve participants' authentic experiences, and to ensure coherent, detailed, and transparent research practice (Smith, 2011; Yardley, 2008). As an early career researcher, "it was in the struggle between different approaches that (she) I learned, and from the diversity and ambiguity of meaning; not through the recitation of a presumed uniformity, consensus, and unity, given in a way that requires unquestioning acceptance" (Clegg and Hardy, 1996:8).

The following part of the thesis presents the research findings and addresses the two main research questions. Specifically, it is structured into two chapters following the two perspectives of acculturation under investigation. The first chapter presents and discusses the research findings that support the understanding of the cognitive perspective of acculturation, by exploring how intersectional identities impact upon London-based migrant entrepreneurs' experiences of acculturation. The second chapter presents and discusses the research findings that support the understanding of the behavioural perspective of acculturation, by exploring how London-based Romanian migrant entrepreneurs' entrepreneurial strategies impact on their experiences of acculturation.

CHAPTER FIVE: A COGNITIVE PERSPECTIVE OF ACCULTURATION

5.1. Introduction

This chapter begins the presentation and discussion of this study's research findings, intending to advance the empirical understanding of how intersectional identities of country-of-origin, entrepreneurship, and gender impact upon London-based Romanian migrant entrepreneurs' experiences of acculturation. Specifically, this IPA includes interpretation of verbal and nonverbal communication of the meanings and experiences shared by 49 London-based Romanian migrant entrepreneurs [LREs]: 18 female entrepreneurs (FEs) and 31 male entrepreneurs (MEs), of being Romanians, entrepreneurs, and women or men in the UK. These emerging research findings aim to address the first research question on how intersectional identities impact upon London-based migrant entrepreneurs' experiences of acculturation.

Next, the discussion of the research findings frames and positions them in the interdisciplinary literature to reinforce this study's contribution to knowledge and policy. This cognitive perspective of acculturation is framed by the theories of Intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989, 1991, 2019), Social Identity (Tajfel and Turner, 1979), and Optimal Distinctiveness (Brewer, 1991, 2003), discussed in the Literature Review chapter of this thesis.

5.2. Cognitive acculturation through the lens of intersectionality

This section analyses how these Romanian migrant entrepreneurs experience their intersectional identities of country-of-origin, entrepreneurship, and gender identities in London as part of their acculturation journey in the UK. Specifically, this cognitive perspective of acculturation focuses on how these intersectional identities are undone and redone as part of their broader social identity (Tajfel and Turner, 1979). Whilst most researchers on migrant belonging in Europe and North America support the existence of a link between acculturation and migrants' country-of-origin worthiness (Desille, 2020), intersectionality theory overcomes the limitation of this unidirectional lens. It, thus, enables an understanding of how multiple identities

come together synergistically to influence social change and agency (Carbado, Crenshaw and Mays, 2013).

5.2.1. Intersectional identities: sense-making and lived experiences

> *"I am proud to be a Romanian businesswoman in London, however challenging and beneficial this is for me. Thanks to having a strong personal identity, I feel now equal to the British entrepreneurs. However, my national identity is secondary to who I am. This helps me feel integrated." (Female Entrepreneur 10)*

This experience of interlinked, hierarchical, and transformative identities is shared by most of these London-based Romanian migrant entrepreneurs (LREs) (see Appendix 16). The intersectional perspective presented in the Literature Review chapter comes alive through their shared experiences. They portray their country-of-origin, entrepreneurial, and gender identities as an act of contextualised personal agency. Through this situated, voluntary or involuntary hierarchy of identities, they pursue legitimacy and inclusion in British society. It is primarily thanks to their entrepreneurial identity, regarded as a manifestation of their agency, that they feel empowered to address their stigma and social misfit as Romanians and thus, meet the social expectations of "acceptable otherness" and even social inclusion in the host country. It is through the entrepreneurship identity that they feel empowered to fight back against the reductionist image of "deservingness", which entertains the image of immigrants as "others" in the host society, as discussed in the Literature Review chapter (Monforte, Bassel and Khan, 2019).

5.2.2. Being Romanian in London: liability of foreignness or competitive advantage

This subsection explores what meanings are embedded in being Romanian in London for these migrant entrepreneurs. The responses communicate gendered-nuanced experiences of what being Romanian means in British society. Regarding which, the Romanian migrant women entrepreneurs emphasise this social identity as a liability of foreignness:

> *[…] the fact that I am a Romanian designer caught many off-guard and left them lost for words. Everybody knows that there is a widespread preconception about Eastern Europeans, and particularly Romanians, that we are somehow less capable and that we could only be employees and not entrepreneurs." (Female Entrepreneur 16)*

It is this idea of *longing to belong*, as a means to overcome "othering" rooted in highly mediatised negative social stereotypes, that the majority of these women migrant entrepreneurs share:

> *"He was saying things, that mass media spreads, without giving it a second thought […]. He associated us with gypsies […]. But I am one of the top students and amongst the first entrepreneurs in my class! How is this so easily ignored?" (Female Entrepreneur 1)*

Like these illustrative examples, most of the focal women migrant entrepreneurs shared detailed and situated personal examples of identity-driven experiences, when they felt superficially misjudged on the grounds of being identified and identifying themselves as Romanians. Their feelings of rejection resonate with Branscombe, Schmitt, and Harve's (1999) rejection-identification perspective (cited in Ramos et al., 2012), whereby these migrant women entrepreneurs, being confronted with a socially manifested rejection due to their national identity, reinforce their belonging to their cultural community of heritage. However, finding shelter within their enclave from mainstream social discrimination is experienced by many as an anchor-identity from which they can build their new, entrepreneurial identity, as a meritocratic one.

> *"Being from Romania is a disadvantage. For many, this is an unpleasant surprise. This news changes the social interaction completely. It hits you like a thunderclap, mainly because we are seen as less educated than others. It's not hard to figure out when someone is looking down on you (…). I try to detach myself from these prejudices and be proud of myself and my achievements." (Female Entrepreneur 14)*

Many experience their Romanian identity as a social disadvantage and a hurtful, devaluing social experience, not only in encounters with the British, but also, when interacting with other immigrants, which takes them by surprise: "it hits you like a thunderclap". However, they refuse to become victims of these unfair stereotypes and fight back through concrete personal and professional achievements:

> *"We are all aware of the hurtful labels given to Romanians. But I struggled for a long time to escape this social stigma: Romanians did that! Romanians are gypsies! Only Romanians! (…) All these years, I learned that this society reminds you that being Romanian is regarded as a social disability. Sitting around and complaining does not help. Change starts with you and from within yourself." (Female Entrepreneur 13)*

By taking a stance against this social stigma, they see themselves responsible and empowered to change this through their socio-economic performance as well as through their pro-active participation in this society. These beliefs of being the owners of their destiny are supported by examples of their entrepreneurial achievements, which are portrayed as ethnically neutral. Thus, they are considered the right approach to creating the desired identity in a meritocratic society like Britain.

For many, their liability of foreignness has been justified as a matter of lack of adequate human capital, such as speaking accented English (*Female Entrepreneur* 11):

> "*The only benefit associated with me being Romanian here was the fact that it motivated me to succeed (…). I was always made aware that I am at a disadvantage for not being born and raised here, in the UK (…) and that my English lacks the right, British accent, which is expected." (Female Entrepreneur 11)*

All these devaluing references inform these women of their liability of foreignness, perpetuating media stereotypes of inferior human and social capital compared to the native population, which reinforces their "otherness".

Despite their experiences of "unacceptable otherness", which materialise in the experiences of social and personal discriminatory challenges, it is notable that these women migrant entrepreneurs do not remain passive to these social rejections, nor do they assume an ad hoc reactive identity to prevent these negative social interactions, as Latinos in the USA (Gutierrez, 2013) and the Turkish immigrants in Germany (Celik, 2015) are likely to do. They resentfully emphasise their worthiness through detailed and contrasting examples, or they sarcastically excuse their social "offenders" for their ignorance and lack of diversity knowledge.

These accounts are not just situated rhetorical examples, for they provide a detailed image of these women's identities, which contrasts with the stereotype they

emphasise as being associated with. Through this approach of reconstructing the Romanian identity, they try to prevent a stereotyping hazard (Fang et al., 2013), with lasting social implications for their legitimacy (Suddaby, Bitektine and Haack, 2017).

Whilst these Romanian female migrant entrepreneurs (FEs) experience their CoO identity as a "liability of foreignness", the majority of London-based Romanian male migrant entrepreneurs (MEs) interviewed shared positive experiences of being Romanians in London. Specifically, these positive experiences are associated with being and having access to a pool of hardworking, loyal workers, based on which they build their competitive advantage in the British market. As one explained it:

> *"I believe that, for me, being a Romanian businessman in the UK has its advantages […]. For me, sharing a cultural background with these workers is a great competitive advantage, because I understand and know how to motivate them." (Male Entrepreneur 16)*

These MEs reinforce with pride their Romanian identity. However, the line between their country-of-origin and entrepreneurial identities becomes increasingly blurred, making it hard to differentiate whether their pride is embedded in being entrepreneurs or Romanians. This is consistent with the intersectionality theory adopted for this work, discussed in detail in Chapter Two.

Similar to their women counterparts, they use detailed personal examples to emphasise their worthiness through competitive human and social capital, which they bring to the host society, firstly as Romanians and then as entrepreneurs:

> *"First of all, I always say it proudly that I am Romanian (…). While on contract with the British Ministry of Defence, my team of Romanians has been asked to take over from the English and Brazilian electricians (…). Romanians are appreciated to be among the best workers here." (Male Entrepreneur 15)*

To reinforce this positive connotation of being Romanian, they also exploit the "good migrant worker" rhetoric, which increasingly surfaces in research focused on different communities of Eastern European migrants (Baxter-Reid, 2016), as a means to address their widely publicised stigmatised image (Andreouli and Hawarth, 2019).

However, despite their positive discourse and their pride in being Romanian in London, these interviewees revealed underlying feelings of frustration of being misjudged and negatively stereotyped, which forced these women and men equally to adopt a defensive position, to prove themselves as deserving of equality alongside the British. To redo and negotiate a more positive social image of what it means to be Romanian, they end up inadvertently reinforcing the informal hierarchy of cultures (Villotti, Stinglhamber and Desmette, 2019) discussed in the Literature Review chapter, which they overtly despise. They pursue optimal distinctiveness by negotiating new meanings and more inclusive social boundaries as Romanians:

> *"Being Romanian (…) The advantages of being Romanian are linked to the perception that Romanians are associated with cheap labour (…) But I have always proved that we are neither that cheap nor as poorly trained and unskilled as this society portrays us to be." (Male Entrepreneur 28)*

This approach helps them achieve legitimacy and belonging in the host society. It allows them the opportunity to experience being Romanian as an asset, a competitive advantage, rather than as a liability of foreignness.

From these shared experiences, a deeper understanding is gained of how country-of-origin identity translates equally into economic and social costs and opportunities for these migrant entrepreneurs. Whilst the female entrepreneurs interviewed share experiences of liability of foreignness as Romanians in London, emphasising feeling unjustly misjudged and stereotyped, at the opposite pole, their male counterparts engage more actively in the remaking of what it means to be Romanian in London. It is through their agency and contextualised strategic behaviours, these migrant entrepreneurs not only overcome their liability of foreignness for they transform it

into a competitive advantage.

By turning their liability of being Romanians in London into a competitive advantage, these migrant entrepreneurs' experiences shift from being to becoming. This remaking of what it means to be Romanian embeds social and economic benefits, which contradicts the widespread image of migrant entrepreneurs' liability of foreignness. Hence, these migrant entrepreneurs turned their liability of foreignness, which previous empirical evidence has associated with migrants' threefold loss of competitiveness derived from market costs, challenges, and gaps (Guercini et al., 2017), into a competitive advantage (Zhou, 2013; Gurau, Dana and Light, 2020).

5.2.3. Being an entrepreneur in London: personal empowerment or higher social status

In contrast to their gendered polarised discourse created around their identity as Romanians in London, these migrant entrepreneurs talk about their entrepreneurial identity as a source of personal, social empowerment and upward social mobility. Their feelings of empowerment as entrepreneurs are described using a plethora of personal emotional terms, from "fulfilment", "satisfaction", "achievement", "pride", "professional independence" to more pragmatic business-mindset feelings of "being role models" and "higher social class".

Specifically, the claims of pride and fulfilment made by Female Entrepreneur 4 are common across these interviews, often portrayed as solutions to their need for achievement:

> *"I am proud to be a strong Romanian businesswoman in a country so well developed, where I could take on so many business opportunities." (Female Entrepreneur 4)*

However, according to some accounts, the impact of entrepreneurial identity changes from being a personal matter into a social one, which embeds meanings of legitimacy, seen as a solution to overcome otherness "in a country so well

developed". These dyadic feelings of struggle and achievement mark the transition between their Romanian identity, which for many remains a source of debated and debatable inferior capital, and their entrepreneurial identity, which is seen as an opportunity to exercise their agency and empowerment:

> *"My experience as a businesswoman in the UK provides endless possibilities to be perfected, a true learning opportunity for which I am so grateful. What seemed only a dream last year and for the last 20 years, is now a reality (…) I am finally in control of my future." (Female Entrepreneur 11)*

She emphasises her entrepreneurial identity as a journey of becoming with new forms of capital being accumulated and deployed, reminiscent of Bourdieu's Capital Theory (1977, 1990), presented in the Literature Review chapter.

The reality of micro-entrepreneurship would appear to contradict what it means to be an entrepreneur in Romania, which can explain their disbelief regarding "a dream (which is) now a reality". Instead, this career path manifests itself as a celebration of their agency and a fulfilment of their need for achievement; gaining an identity that brings feelings of control and personal freedom:

> *"Being a Romanian businessman in the UK means more freedom to implement my ideas and thus, to achieve what I want. It means enjoying the achievements of my decisions and being the master of my destiny." (Male Entrepreneur 20)*

Whilst most interviewees share a personal feeling of empowerment as entrepreneurs, they also made contradictory claims or played down the label of an entrepreneur, to the point of rejection:

"I do not consider myself (…) a true businesswoman. Not yet... It is something I chose to do out of a passion for education (…). It is a lifestyle that I find hard to give up. I meet new people almost every day, I learn something new every day, and although the label of businesswomen seems an exaggeration, I am often praised for my services." (Female Entrepreneur 5)

These migrant entrepreneurs share experiences of conflicted identities. Despite acknowledging their entrepreneurial behaviours, they deny their entrepreneurial identity, which creates internalised tensions of bicultural identity, which are signs of ongoing acculturation.

The Female Entrepreneur 5, like many of these women entrepreneurs, portrays herself as entrepreneurial, but not as an entrepreneur, as she finds it contradictory to be recognised as a businesswoman due to her micro-enterprise and the limited profits it generates. Such women's experiences as entrepreneurs are portrayed as manifestations of the entrepreneurial cultural ceiling:

"I do not see myself as an entrepreneur, because my business is limited to my shop. Technically, I know that I am, but I don't see myself as such. Because it seems to me that my business is too small for me to be considered a true entrepreneur." (Female Entrepreneur 17)

This blurriness of what it means to be entrepreneurs results from a dual system of cultural values, Romanian and British, that they try to reconcile. Their claim of the imperative need to establish a relationship of causality between being a *true entrepreneur* and *their business size* also shows their lack of entrepreneurial experience and the scarcity of role models, as references. As first-time entrepreneurs, they reveal bicultural contradictions of what it means to be in that role and the significance of context in shaping this positionality. In Romania, the image of the entrepreneur is associated with the middle class, financial wealth, and

middle to macro size businesses (Voda and Florea, 2019). In contrast, the pro-entrepreneurial British system supports a diverse spectrum of businesses to be opened by wanna-be-entrepreneurs with different levels of finances.

Therefore, their need for achievement, although underway, is yet to be fully reached since they feel they have a long way to go to meet the expectations of the ideal entrepreneur and widespread hegemonic masculinity:

> *"I don't see myself as an entrepreneur. This is because my business is small and because this label of entrepreneur or businesswoman doesn't necessarily help me. I think this label is associated with a certain turnover (aha) (.) Probably more men than women achieve that. Sadly! (…) Or are we just made to believe that?" (Female Entrepreneur 18)*

Their cultural, entrepreneurial ceiling is nurtured by the image of "the typical Romanian entrepreneur as a male between 25 and 44 years old" (European Commission Report, 2016:20), together with the widespread masculine image of the ideal and legitimised entrepreneur, which is perpetuated in the literature (Ahl and Marlow, 2012; Villares-Varela and Essers, 2019). This deepens their profound lack of confidence and low self-efficacy. However, these women's statements are reflective, showing a diligent assessment and understanding of who they are as entrepreneurs and who they want to become, thus experiencing their entrepreneurship identity as a *journey of becoming* "true entrepreneurs", rather than just *being.* It is hard to ignore the fact that, despite being highly educated, these women entrepreneurs' low self-efficacy seems to contradict studies that have found a positive association between education, entrepreneurial perceptions, and self-efficacy (Pfeifer, Sarlija and Zekic Susac, 2016). This is consistent with the intersectionality theory previously discussed, whereby their feelings of unfair social stigmatisation as Romanian's overspill, thus eroding their enthusiasm for being entrepreneurs, as discussed earlier in this thesis. Furthermore, their feelings of low self-efficacy reinforce the notion of these women entrepreneurs feeling "othered" and pursuing entrepreneurship from a disadvantaged position:

"But I should point out one thing: I do not see myself as a businesswoman just because I have just this shop. Technically I am, I have a registered business, but I don't see myself like one. Because it seems to me that my business is too small to be considered a businesswoman (…). Shop Timeout ranked my business as the best bakery in West London. Yes, of course, I do not know if it is my identity as a businesswoman, that motivates me now or the recognition I gain for the products I offer my community." (Female Entrepreneur 17)

Overall, for these Romanian women migrant entrepreneurs, their entrepreneurial identity means personal empowerment, "a lifestyle," and an exercise of their agency, rather than economic empowerment, as a wealth generator. Whilst their claims reveal conflictual identities, this shows their ongoing, dynamic journey as first-time entrepreneurs and many of them as migrants. Consequently, they are more comfortable identifying themselves as entrepreneurial rather than as entrepreneurs. It is precisely this dual limited experience as migrants and as entrepreneurs that explains their low self-efficacy and their contradictory identity claims.

By contrast, for the majority of Romanian men migrant entrepreneurs interviewed, being entrepreneurs in the UK conveyed a positive, socially empowering identity and a higher social status:

"For me, being an entrepreneur means that I am now part of a different social class (…)." (Male Entrepreneur 1)

For others being an entrepreneur means economic empowerment:

"I earn enough money to have a good lifestyle here (…). I now live in an exclusive British neighbourhood, in a house worth over a million pounds and run a business with a revenue of over £3 million." (Male Entrepreneur 16)

"Being a Romanian businessman in the UK was very difficult at times, but also very satisfying with every building from this great financial district that was rented." (Male Entrepreneur 32)

Despite many of these entrepreneurs reporting feeling economically empowered as entrepreneurs, their experiences also reveal social values and the role that they play outside the traditional economic repertoire, which is central to the migrant entrepreneurship literature (Evansluong, Ramirez-Pasillas and Nguyen Bergstrom, 2019):

"As an entrepreneur, I try to improve the lives of others, expecting nothing in return. This is what being an entrepreneur means to me. "(Male Entrepreneur 16)

Therefore, their experiences as migrant entrepreneurs are communicated as meso (i.e. firm) and macro (i.e. community) experiences, rather than personal (micro), as was also the case for their women counterparts:

"I am now aware that being an entrepreneur comes with a lot of responsibilities, towards myself and others." (Male Entrepreneur 5)

This macro perspective of being entrepreneurs shows that their impact and interest transgress the financial bottom line of running a business and securing profit in the broader social environment.

Notably, contrary to their women counterparts, these male entrepreneurs' experiences as entrepreneurs do not reveal conflicted identities but rather precise contrasting cultural and contextualised meanings of their entrepreneurial identity. Their accounts suggest their entrepreneurial identity is equally acknowledged by the Romanian migrant community and British society:

"I consider that being a businessman in British society not radically different from other professions (…) My business revenue last year was just over £3 million. But as a member of the Romanian community here, it is (…) a higher social status (…). I get the red-carpet treatment." (Male Entrepreneur 29)

Male Entrepreneur 29 shared feeling socially empowered by virtue of his cultural background, whereby being an entrepreneur makes you a community role model and automatically a success story. This is truly a manifestation of his desire for legitimacy and positive distinctiveness, which was discussed in Chapter Two of this thesis (Abd Hamid, O'Kane and Everett, 2019; Brewer, 1991; 2003) and which is shared by many others of these male entrepreneurs:

"Back home (in Romania), I am seen as a role model who managed to build a business and managed to gather around him quality people, people who contribute to the development of a successful business here, in London." (Male Entrepreneur 20)

This image of national heroes as entrepreneurs in London has a "demonstration effect", which accompanies their hope that, as entrepreneurs, they could bring positive change in both countries. Their contribution to the inventory of national role models is significant for the future of entrepreneurship in their home country, where it is still in its infancy. This might also influence the image of Romanian migrants and migrant entrepreneurs in the UK.

Overall, these migrant entrepreneurs experience being entrepreneurs as a dynamic personal and social empowerment journey through cultural and entrepreneurship learning. They associate their identity as entrepreneurs with feelings of pride and gratitude for this opportunity, which allows them to take control of who they want to be. This is harder to achieve given their stigmatised identity as Romanians in the

UK, which is particularly problematic for these female migrant entrepreneurs. Male entrepreneur 20's experience summarises beautifully the essence of what is the meaning of being entrepreneurs for these London-based migrant entrepreneurs: "a journey, with ups and downs, to achieve my goals."

Being an entrepreneur in London: nonverbal high social status

These migrant entrepreneurs revealed how their intersectional identities are the result of contextualised social interactions. From their verbal accounts, it becomes clear that for most of the men, their entrepreneurial identity becomes their vehicle for upward social mobility in the host country. Aiming for a deeper understanding of these participants' lived experiences, which resonates with this study approach, this analysis goes beyond the spoken accounts to understand these participants' nonverbal communication, which scholars consider to represent 65-93% of what is communicated (Birdwhistell, 1970, cited in Bonaccio et al., 2016; Eaves and Leathers, 2018).

Building up a powerful image of the successful entrepreneur in London, Male Entrepreneur 32 shares a particularly rich verbal and non-verbal experience of what it means for him to be an entrepreneur in the UK:

Q: What does it mean for you to be an entrepreneur in the UK?	*Transcription and description*
***A: "ŁŁ, X, ¶, mm**, ǁ, @, ÷ **(.)** As a Romanian **ENTREPRENEUR**, **O, II, " I::** cannot say that I was treated in any different way, and I think I was fortunate to be in charge of a company that everyone needed here**!** in the sense that we had the money and the knowledge to deliver where many British companies failed before. (...) as a Romanian **ENTREPRENEUR**, I did not have to ask for any favour. I was not the one who needed them, but they needed **US**. And from this point of view, I had no problems [...].*	***A: "ŁŁ, X, ¶, mm**, ǁ, @, ÷ (With his legs and arms crossed and his body turned sideways, he hesitated, then he opened his arms and turned around to face the researcher. He breathe deeply and laugh briefly) **(.)** (micropause) As a Romanian **ENTREPRENEUR**, **O, II,** ǁ **(**louder tone**,** eye contact, open arms**) I::** (vowel elongation) cannot say that I was treated in any different way, and I think I was fortunate to be in charge of a company that everyone needed here**!** (animated tone), in the sense that we had the money and the knowledge to deliver where many British companies failed before. (...) as a Romanian **ENTREPRENEUR** (louder tone), I did not have to ask for any favour. I was not the one who needed them, but they needed **US** (louder tone). And from this point of view, I had no problems [...].*
***O, ÷ MY** title **(...)** (long pause) awarded to me by the Queen, **FOR ME (...),** personally, is a well-deserved recognition. I received the title for the services I brought to this financial district (.) which houses the largest financial institutions in London [.].This is the main reason why I was given the title [ ]. (Male Entrepreneur 32)*	***O, ÷** MY title **(..)** (louder pitch followed by a long pause) awarded to me by the Queen, **FOR ME (...)** (louder tone, followed by a long pause)**,** personally, is a well-deserved recognition. I received the title for the services I brought to this financial district [ ] which houses the largest financial institutions in London [.].This is the main reason why I was given the title [ ]. (Male Entrepreneur 32)*

The transition from crossed arms and sideways orientation (ŁŁ, X, ¶) to an open posture with the arms open and facing the interviewer (V, ‖), accompanied by a smile and brief laughter (@, ÷), marked the turning point in the interview, as the end to a PR moment and the beginning of the research interview.

He made claims of high social status associated with pride and social power as an entrepreneur. Furthermore, his emphasis on his importance to the city of London never faltered during the interview. He strategically used pauses, accompanied by raising his voice, thus leading to some sort of suspense to emphasise his achievements and his legitimacy as an entrepreneur (i.e. I, ENTREPRENEUR, US, FOR ME).

The shift from his authoritative tone to the moment of (@ ÷) laughter and smile marked the turning point in this interview. While scholars consider laughter and smiles to be universal nonverbal forms of communication, with a broad inventory of meanings from humour to well-being and social affiliation, they are still often misunderstood (Curran et al., 2018). In the context of this interview, Male Entrepreneur 32 used laughter as a regulator to signal a change in attitude, which heralded a more relaxed, personal and focused approach.

Male Entrepreneur 32 emphasised verbally and nonverbally a high social status as an entrepreneur. He reinforced this through the interview setting (i.e. company headquarters at the heart of London's financial district): by regularly gazing at the panoramic view of the district he has helped to build, which felt like an invitation to take a tour of his architectural achievements. He did this by emphasising keywords, using contrasting tonalities and pauses, which suspended any other lines of thought.

His claims convey strongly the power and control, which are not surprising given the undeniable achievements for the broader British society, as the architect and builder behind Canary Wharf. In his claims, he *others* himself as he is *othering* his British counterparts. This creates a contradiction between his identity as an entrepreneur and his entrepreneurial behaviour. As an entrepreneur, he feels motivated to demonstrate his higher social status, by emphasising his distinctiveness. Moreover, his entrepreneurial behaviour reveals how his entrepreneurship strategy enables belonging to the host society, by serving the British market and by hiring only 15

Romanians out of 1,500 permanent diverse workers, most of whom are British, according to him.

Overall, these findings reinforce that the meanings and the characteristics used to define these migrant entrepreneurs' entrepreneurial identity play a significant role in informing contextualised, personal, and social change.

5.2.4. Perception of being a woman or man as a social vulnerability

It is evident across these accounts that hegemonic masculinity is equally relevant and impactful for some of these women migrant entrepreneurs as it is for some of their male counterparts, who share experiencing gender as a devalued identity against the normative hegemonic masculinity they experience in the UK:

> *"As soon as you're compared with the "British white male", it becomes ten times harder, because you're being asked to compete at an extremely high level. From what I've seen, I had to compete against 46-year-old white males, with many more years of experience under their belt (…). Frankly speaking, I love it! Unfortunately, being just any male, in this context, does not help. Being an entrepreneur, however, helps you in getting your opinion across, because, at my level, I constantly receive media attention, as I am regarded as the benchmark for this industry." (Male Entrepreneur 6)*

Many of the participants associate their gender identity with feelings of vulnerability. They try to overcome this by prioritising their entrepreneurial identity, which they associate with feelings of empowerment, as detailed in this chapter's previous section. The levels of detail used in describing the hegemonic masculinity they need to conform to, yet be distinctive from, to enhance market competitiveness reveal diligence in managing their multiple identities and deeper frustrations of experiencing these inequalities.

Notably, their claims reveal gender as the way they do things, rather than what they are:

> *"Being a woman (…), I think that, after all, the strategies, the steps I take are more representative of who I am than the gender I belong to." (Female Entrepreneur 10)*

For some of the female migrant entrepreneurs interviewed, being one is not limited to how the business is run, for it is also about taking a stance in overcoming the traditional social order that acts as a social barrier, thus creating inner and social tension and contradiction between the meanings of being a woman and an entrepreneur at the same time:

> *"I have the advantage of having a male co-founder (…). Let's say, whenever we meet a potential business partner, we would work out who's more suited to represent our business. I happened to be directly made aware that a woman, or myself, in this case, was less suitable, less welcomed than a man to participate in some business meetings." (Female Entrepreneur 1)*

Their feelings reveal the socio-cultural burden of the pre-established social roles that scholars argue to be one of the reasons why some women migrant entrepreneurs are portrayed and portray themselves as less entrepreneurial (Kelley et al., 2015) and having low or even completely lacking entrepreneurial self-efficacy, in contrast to their men counterparts (Bandura, 1971, 1977; Jennings and Brush, 2013; Newman et al., 2019):

> *"Where, God, have I landed?! Being a businesswoman is just a label, although some might think I also became a millionaire overnight. But what I am proud*

of is that in this society, my achievements are recognised and that people are less likely to say that I have managed to open my business, because I am someone's wife or because I am someone's mistress, like in Romania (…) There, the value of a businesswoman is not recognised outside of her association with a man." (Female Entrepreneur 11)

Their Romanian and entrepreneurial identities are clashing. According to their national culture, their entrepreneurial identity lacks legitimacy without a masculine association, or without wealthy profits. Therefore, they find it hard to reconcile the two identities in their bicultural state of mind. The burdens of their inherited traditional social roles are portrayed as devaluing. The opportunity to challenge this double standard experienced by these women migrant entrepreneurs in a meritocratic society, like the UK, leaves them full of hope.

Others communicate being confused about which one of their intersectional identities is more socially appropriate and which defines best who they are: that of being a woman or an entrepreneur:

"There have been times when my clients have been empathetic towards me, but I do not know if it was because I am a woman […] or because they appreciate the product that I offer them as an entrepreneur (…)." (Female Entrepreneur 17)

This example shows that these two identities are still negotiated as part of the greater and more holistic social "super-identity". This overlapping of multiple identities resonates with the concept of intersectionality as a theory that has been discussed in the Literature Review chapter.

Overall, these interviews inform that hegemonic masculinity is an important, contextualised matter, which influences how these migrant entrepreneurs experience their gender identity. Its manifestation resonates powerfully with Jewkes

and Morrell's (2012) perspective of being perceived and enacted as *"a set of values established by men in power that functions to include and exclude, and to organize society in gender unequal ways. It combines several features: a hierarchy of masculinities, differential access to power among men (over women and other men), and the interplay between men's identity, men's ideals, interactions, power, and patriarchy"* (Jewkes and Morrell, 2012: 40).

When exploring the meanings of what it means to be Romanian migrant entrepreneurs in London for these participants, a pattern of gendered and intra-categorical nuanced experiences started to take shape during these interviews. Many of the female entrepreneurs interviewed associate being Romanian in London with feelings of liability of foreignness and discriminating against otherness, whilst others portray it as a competitive advantage. Contrasting these dyadic patterns of emotions, their entrepreneurial identity is celebrated through feelings of personal and social empowerment across the board. By contrast, their gender identity speaks to social vulnerabilities. However, consistent with the Social Identity (Tajfel and Turner, 1979) and Optimal Distinctiveness theories (Brewer, 1991, 2003) presented earlier in this study, the migrant entrepreneurs' identities are equally a process of sensemaking of who these migrant entrepreneurs are, as about their belonging in the British society.

5.2.5. Intersectional identities as journeys of (be)*longing*

Insights into what it means to belong and how these migrant entrepreneurs experience this journey are uncovered by relying on the same intersectionality theory that supported the understanding of the meanings underlying these participants' identities of country-of-origin, entrepreneurship, and gender presented in the previous section. These migrant entrepreneurs report their experiences of belonging as a dynamic process; as a journey towards social inclusion in the host country, through which they align their identity, knowledge, and behaviours with the host community:

> *"Since I opened my business, I feel* more *integrated compared to when I was a corporate employee, because now I feel closer to my clients, I share many stories with them, and I inevitably become part of their life too […]. Socially, yes, I do I feel much more integrated now than before." (Female Entrepreneur 17)*

Like most of the migrant entrepreneurs interviewed, Female Entrepreneur 17 experienced fulfilling moments of belonging to the community that she serves as an entrepreneur. However, her claims of cognitive acculturation are selectively focused on her entrepreneurial identity. She completely overlooks the role played by her Romanian and gender identities in this process of acculturative belonging.

She presents her experience of acculturation as an ongoing journey of becoming socially integrated, not yet fully achieved, manifested as a progression between "before and now" alongside a transformative, hierarchical ladder, where she seizes the opportunity to "trade" her identity as an employee with that of an entrepreneur. Her claims of belonging to her community reveal a journey of assimilation as *she shares many stories with them and becomes part of their life*. These contradictory feelings and unidirectional behaviours reinforce her longing to belong and her ongoing journey of acculturation, which is reported by other interviewees:

> *"All I want is to be seen as equal, not inferior in any way because I am an immigrant (…). We all contribute to what London is, after all." (Male Entrepreneur 21)*

In many of these interviews, impressive episodes of these migrant entrepreneurs' agency shine through from under the pile of social vulnerabilities they share. But for many, these vulnerabilities seem to override their agency, leaving them feeling at the bottom of the informal hierarchy of cultures.

Contrasting Female Entrepreneur 17's experience of acculturative assimilation, the idea of "finding your place" within the host social hierarchy emerges across multiple interviews, as, for example:

> "*[…] inclusion is a matter of finding your place in this vast diversity." (Male Entrepreneur 13)*

This presents a contradictory image of social inclusion lived as a separation, which creates the premises for future experiences of hybrid multiculturalism due to the increased multiculturalism awareness shared.

These dyadic episodes of mixed emotions and understanding of place in British society become the building block of these migrant entrepreneurs', contextualised ("in this vast diversity"), yet subjective, journeys of belonging. It is along these journeys that they report experiencing different degrees of acculturation shaped through the adjustment of their national and gender identities and the creation of their entrepreneurial identity as a means to fit in, by fulfilling the host normative expectations.

Conveying mixed feelings of pride and stigma as Romanians, many of these migrant entrepreneurs restrain themselves from succumbing to a simplistic essentialist view. They choose to use their heritage and their Romanian identity as a survival kit, flexible and sensitive to the context, ready to support their understanding of the reality presented and their social engagement.

> *"Being Romanian helped overcome all kinds of challenges, and it helped gain good business visibility and opportunities. There is no such thing as bad publicity! Is it?! As a Romanian entrepreneur, I was invited, for example, two or three times to the BBC to represent our "British" community of entrepreneurs. This helped show who we really are as Romanians." (Male Entrepreneur 18)*

Through this constructivist view, insight is gained into how their Romanian and entrepreneurial identity evolves and adjusts, enabling them to become “acceptable others” in a context where their Eastern European cultural differences are broadly stigmatised, which resonates with previous studies (Anthias, 2013a).

Acculturative belonging is presented as a solution to overcome social inequalities driven by his “liability of foreignness” (immigrant), recalled as “inferiority”, he seems to find it achievable through the recognition of his contribution to the host society. His belongingness is experienced as a contextual (London) and hierarchy-making process, which he perceives as an opportunity for exercising his agency to change his status quo and thus, overcome feeling “inferior other” by becoming “acceptable other” (i.e. contributor) (Anthias, 2016).

Overall, these migrant entrepreneurs reveal the importance of their belonging in the UK. They become actively engaged to address their “otherness” through constant social actions of “sharing” (Female Entrepreneur 17), of “contributing” (Male Entrepreneur 21), and as “a way of living” (Female Entrepreneur 2). They are conscious of their journey, and they are active participants in the transformation that they seek. Mediated by their practices of sharing stories (Female Entrepreneur 17) along with other socio-economic and cultural contributions, an intentional and emotional bridge towards belonging that connects the individual self “I” with the broader society presented as “they” start to emerge within it. This cognitive perspective of acculturation makes their feelings and practices of “belonging” relevant, advancing the discussion of how these migrant entrepreneurs’ intersectional identities impact upon their experiences of acculturation.

5.3. The cognitive perspective of acculturation: how do intersectional identities impact upon London-based Romanian migrant entrepreneurs' experiences of acculturation? (RQ1)

In this chapter, the cognitive perspective of acculturation as a means to understand how intersectional identities of country-of-origin, entrepreneurship, and gender impact upon London-based migrant entrepreneurs' acculturation experiences have been explored. The experiences of the 49 London-based Romanian migrant entrepreneurs interviewed have revealed a complex interplay of identities, lived as patterns of synergetic or competing emotions, adjusted and negotiated to suit situated social interactions, as a means to overcome otherness and thus, belong in the host country:

> *"I think that, when you have a successful business here, as I do now, the whole world sees and treats you differently. I am not just a Romanian anymore! And, this helps me feel included." (Male Entrepreneur 21)*

These words capture the essence of how these Romanian migrant entrepreneurs experience their intersectional identities, as a complex manifestation of belonging in British society. Their claims take us on a journey of cognitive acculturation enabled and manifested through the adjustment, justification, defence, and celebration of who they are and who they continue to become.

A gender-driven kaleidoscope of feelings and meanings shape the picture of fluid, contradictory, and sometimes conflicted identities. From claims of liability of foreignness to competitive advantage as Romanians, from feelings of personal empowerment to high social status as entrepreneurs and experiences of gender-driven social vulnerabilities, these intersectional identities create situated and complex social experiences. It is through this intersectional lens, as an enabler of exploring co-existing identities (Crenshaw, 1991, 2019), that these identities form,

become and overlap, creating tensions, confusions, contradictions, and harmonies that are experienced and shared by these participants.

The changes experienced by these migrant entrepreneurs' identities resonate with Social Identity (Tajfel and Turner, 1979) and Optimal Distinctiveness theories (Brewer, 1991, 2003), as presented in the Literature Review chapter. These identities play a significant role in these individuals' overall social identity in the host country. They are negotiated and adjusted to meet the social expectations for what is believed to be "acceptable otherness" or optimal distinctiveness. This demonstrates the social nature of these intersectional identities, which are prioritised selectively to suit situated interactions and specific social scenarios. This is particularly important in the context of migration, where identity adjustments are part of everyday life and practices (Evansluong, Ramirez-Pasillas and Nguyen Bergstrom, 2019; Robertson and Grant, 2016). It is important to acknowledge that for these migrant entrepreneurs, this identity adjustment is experienced as a challenge and an opportunity to overcome their liability of foreignness and otherness and integrate into the new society and learn by doing how to best run their businesses.

These findings, although not profoundly novel in the migrant entrepreneurship literature, reveal fresh, situated perspectives of what it means to be Romanian migrant entrepreneurs in London. These fresh perspectives expand interdisciplinary and intersectional knowledge. Specifically, despite the liability of foreignness being an acknowledged country-of-origin identity challenge for different communities of migrant entrepreneurs (Gurau, Dana and Light, 2020), in the context of this study, being Romanian is experienced particularly by men as a competitive advantage. This finding is surprising and novel, except for one recent study identified (Gurau, Dana and Light, 2020). These findings contradict not only the anti-immigrant public discourse detailed in Chapter Two, but also, the handful of studies focused on Eastern Europeans and particularly on Romanians, which portray them as broadly unskilled (Morosanu, 2018) and struggling at the margins of entrepreneurship (Shubin and Dickey, 2013).

From their entrepreneurial identity perspective, the research findings reveal a gender pattern of meanings, as the focal women migrant entrepreneurs share

feeling personally empowered, but having a hard time identifying themselves as "true" entrepreneurs, whilst their men counterparts make claims of higher social class as entrepreneurs in London. These findings inform the debates concerning the "ideal" male entrepreneur (Ahl and Marlow, 2012; Berlepsch, Rodríguez-Pose and Lee, 2018) and explain why these men experience entrepreneurship as upward social mobility (Baker and Welter, 2020; Valdez, 2011, 2016), whilst the women emphasise their low-self efficacy (Bandura, 1971, 1977; Newman et al., 2019).

Contrary to their Romanian identity, which is broadly experienced as a given heritage survival kit, the entrepreneurial identity is experienced as an exercise of contextualised, agentic social interaction (Anthias, 2016; Martinez Dy, 2020). They use the creation of their entrepreneurial identity as an opportunity to renegotiate a positive, optimally distinctive social identity in British society, which they cannot do as Romanians. However, in their pursuit for entrepreneurial legitimacy in London, this "identity does not always live up to its promise" (Ybema et al., 2009, cited in Symon and Pritchard 2015:244), causing contradictory feelings and meanings owing to the cultural misalignment between the home and host country values.

From the perspective of their gender identity, these research findings suggest that these migrant entrepreneurs experience being women or men as social vulnerability. For the women, this social vulnerability informs the debate around gendered entrepreneurship, which singles out women entrepreneurs' challenges against the ideal male entrepreneur (Ahl and Marlow, 2012; Villares-Varela and Essers, 2019). But when it comes to men, their experiences of feeling socially vulnerable in the host country shape a novel debate in the migrant entrepreneurship literature. Their experiences of social vulnerability against the host country's normative hegemonic masculinity have been rarely documented, except for a handful of migration studies (Huizinga and van Hoven, 2020; Jewkes et al., 2015; Urdea, 2020).

Overall, these migrant entrepreneurs live their intersectional identities as a kaleidoscope of emotional experiences, as they pursue their belonging in the UK. These intersectional identities are manifested as acceptable social representations for situated social interactions, as a means to belong in British society. Hence, their intersectional identities shape these migrant entrepreneurs' journeys of belonging through learning, transforming them from passive migrants into active custodians of

bicultural values and meanings, and drivers of personal and social change (Welter, 2020). These implications confirm that these identities are not static, but dynamic acculturative journeys that they undertake, justify, and defend through everyday representations, behaviours, and practices (Abd Hamid, O'Kane and Everett, 2019; Omorede, Thorgren and Wincent, 2015).

Their journey of acculturation as a means to belong in London's super-diverse society sheds light on the cognitive perspective of acculturation, which, as discussed in Chapter Two, sees these intersectional identities as enablers or barriers to cultural learning and participation (Berry and Hou, 2017). Accordingly, through this perspective, these transformative and transformed intersectional identities impact upon these migrant entrepreneurs' acculturation in the UK.

Many felt socially integrated thanks to their entrepreneurial identity, whilst others feel assimilated or socially segregated due to their Romanian identity. However, across all these interviewees, understanding the importance of the entrepreneurial identity has been gained. The feelings of social and economic empowerment that they experience through their entrepreneurial identity make their social integration pursuit worthwhile. Therefore, this identity greatly deserves its top ranking in the informal hierarchy of these migrant entrepreneurs' intersectional identities.

Evidence suggests that those who feel socially and economically empowered by their entrepreneurial identity are likely to pursue mainstream entrepreneurship (Anderson and Warren, 2011). Fundamentally, as is also emphasised by Social Identity Theory formulated by Tajfel and Turner (1979), by prioritising their entrepreneurial identity as their primary social identity, these migrant entrepreneurs present themselves as recognised members of the broader community of entrepreneurs, which enhances their legitimacy in the host country (Suddaby, Bitektine and Haack, 2017).

By contrast, motivated by their feelings of stigma as Romanians, many of those interviewed, and female migrant entrepreneurs, in particular, have chosen to prioritise their entrepreneurial identity over that of their nationality so as to shelter themselves from this negative image. Hence, they become more likely to pursue assimilation, hoping that over time their liability of foreignness will become less

visible as Romanian, as they learn and assume host country values and behaviours. Alternatively, driven by the same desire to overcome what they perceive to be social injustices and misrepresentation, others seek positive distinctiveness within their national enclave. This protective identity strategy, which informs the debate around women migrant entrepreneurs, as detailed in Chapter Two of this thesis, manifests itself as social separation or segregation (Byron and van de Vijver, 2017).

This cognitive perspective of acculturation builds a complex and paradoxical journey of acculturation in which these migrant entrepreneurs take on an active role, in negotiating, justifying, defending, and prioritising their intersectional identities to suit situated scenarios. Their mixed feelings of discrimination and social integration show the tension between their identities, defining an ongoing and dynamic journey of acculturative belonging in London. Their cognitive integration reveals an assimilationist path towards "acceptable otherness" or a segregationist journey as a means to shelter themselves from the social stigma of being Romanians. Regardless of where they find themselves in their acculturative journey in the UK, they share their commitment to pursuing social integration as a means to overcome otherness. This enables them to achieve legitimacy and belonging and thus, the opportunity to enjoy full socio-economic benefits as Romanians migrant entrepreneurs in London.

5.4. Discussion and concluding remarks

Responding to the call for fresh perspectives on acculturation and entrepreneurship (Adams and van de Vijver, 2017; Arrighetti, Bolzani and Lasagni, 2017; Evansluong, Ramirez-Pasillas and Nguyen Bergstrom, 2019; Virgili, 2020), for this study, intersectionality theory (Crenshaw, 1989, 1991, 2019) has been used to explore the cognitive perspective of acculturation. This approach informs the discussion about the significant role played by intersectional identities in shaping the acculturation of London-based Romanian migrant entrepreneurs (LREs).

Through the cognitive perspective of acculturation, this research challenges the simplified universalism perpetuated by scholars and policymakers. These research findings emphasise this disengagement and misalignment between the everyday reality of these migrant entrepreneurs, who, like many other migrant communities,

are part of an institutionalised diversity, which assigned them to cultural boxes and policies of integration and migrant entrepreneurship (Malik, 2012; Vertovec, 2020; Virgili, 2020). This negligent universalism created social tensions and influenced the rise in xenophobic nationalism across the European Union and the UK (Burrella and Schweyher, 2019). By failing to recognise and address the distinctive needs, identity and socio-economic contribution of the overall London super-diversity, these aggregated policies continue to fail to support the acculturative belonging pursued by these migrant entrepreneurs, alongside other communities of migrant entrepreneurs in the UK (Botterill and Hanckock, 2019; Guma and Dafydd Jones, 2019; Lulle et al., 2019).

Specifically, the 49 London-based migrant entrepreneurs in this study's sample have reported experiencing these intersectional identities as hierarchical, transformative, and acculturative. These intersectional identities' hierarchical nature is increasingly visible in how these migrant entrepreneurs prioritise their entrepreneurial identity. This is praised by some as personal empowerment (*"I am proud to be a strong Romanian businesswoman" Female Entrepreneur 4*), by others as an enabler of higher social status ("*I am now part of a different social class" Male Entrepreneur 1*) or social and economic empowerment ("*I received the title (Sir) for the services I brought to this financial district"* Male Entrepreneur 32).

These findings are consistent with Mugge and van der Haar's (2016)' study, which presents these identities as hierarchies of social powers, with consequences expanding beyond the everyday entrepreneurial practices, to impact on migrants' journey of acculturation. As entrepreneurs, more than as Romanians, they find themselves better positioned socially to address not only the social and structural disadvantages they experience as Romanians (Martinez Dy, 2020) and as women and men (Ahl and Marlow, 2012: Huizinga and van Hoven, 2020; Jewkes et al., 2015; Urdea, 2020), but also, to pursue opportunities of belonging and acculturation in the UK (Anthias, 2016).

Many of these women's lack of confidence and low entrepreneurial self-efficacy (Koellinger, Minniti and Schade, 2013; Newman et al., 2019) trigger a personal rejection of their entrepreneurial identity. Their shared feelings of low self-efficacy seem to reinforce the image of women migrants pursuing entrepreneurship from a

disadvantaged position (Azmat, 2013), being less likely to rely on multiple and mixed social networks (Koellinger, Minniti and Schade, 2013). This informs the debate around women entrepreneurs and, by extension, women migrant entrepreneurs, who feel their identity being challenged by the image of hegemonic masculinity of entrepreneurship (Dannecker and Cakir, 2016) as well as by the lack of role models and mentorship (Newman et al., 2019). For first-time entrepreneurs and migrants, these missteps in meeting the expectations for the entrepreneurship identity in the host country could result in social segregation, according to Berry's acculturation model (1997, 2003, 2005).

Similar to South Asian women migrant entrepreneurs in the UK, the fluid identities of these women migrant entrepreneurs allow them to establish their entrepreneurial identity through professional achievements, almost as a reactive identity through which they get to exercise their agency and thus, to challenge what they perceive to be unfit traditional gender roles (Mavrommatis, 2015). Contrasting with their entrepreneurship identities, their Romanian and gender identities are experienced as "liability of foreignness" (*"being Romanian is a disadvantage"* Female Entrepreneur 11) and social vulnerabilities against the acknowledged hegemonic masculinity ("*you're compared with the "British white male"* Male Entrepreneur *6*). Hence, there is no surprise that the social visibility of these identities is strategically reduced. These intersectional identities are transformative and transformable for the social self and others in the host society, smoothing the tensions between who they are and what they want to belong to (Mavrommatis, 2015), which informs their journey of acculturation.

Their Romanian identity reveals contradictory feelings of social stigma and discrimination ("*being from a developing country, like Romania, you are, by birth, inferior to people from other European cultures* "Female Entrepreneur 16), or in contrast, a competitive advantage ("*being a Romanian businessman in the UK is a competitive advantage compared to other companies"* Male Entrepreneur 16).

Whilst these feelings of stigma are justified by the increasing anti-immigrant discourse on the rise across Europe and the UK (Morosanu, 2018), transforming it into a competitive advantage is contradictory to the main body of migrant entrepreneurship literature (Gurau, Dana and Light, 2020). Thus, this is a novel

finding concerning the Romanian entrepreneurs or, more broadly, Eastern European entrepreneurs in the UK, who maintain a default image of precarity (Vershinina and Rogers, 2019).

Accordingly, “identity” expands beyond the reflective self to convey a valuable member to the community of interest that of the entrepreneur whilst also differentiating them from their community of co-nationals or their hegemonic ideal (Jewkes et al., 2015). This renders these identities fluid and flexible, equally transformable and transformative (Boland, 2020; Lahdesmaki et al., 2016). They allow us to explore who these migrant entrepreneurs are and how they relate to the society in which they live (Ward, 2013).

Despite these research findings reinforcing some manifestations of identity found across different communities of migrant entrepreneurs, these migrant entrepreneurs bring also fresh perspectives regarding cognitive acculturation. Adding to the fact that this is the only study focused on Romanian migrant entrepreneurs in the UK, to date, which contributes to the literature on migrant entrepreneurship more broadly, these findings portraying intersectional identities as transformative identities adds a fresh intersectional perspective to the growing body of migrant entrepreneurship literature and Eastern European migrant entrepreneurship. Specifically, their claims of transforming their liability of foreignness into competitive advantage were unexpected, given increasingly anti-immigrant public opinion (Burrella and Schweyher, 2019; Morosanu, 2018).

For the first time, these research findings reveal the personal, social, and economic costs and benefits associated with being Romanian migrant entrepreneurs in London. From their experiences, their entrepreneurial identity emerges as the identity holding the most potential for their present or future social inclusion that they pursue for myriad personal, social, and economic reasons. This enriches the debate on inequality, otherness (Gurau, Dana and Light, 2020; Sloan et al., 2018; Wang and Warn, 2018), optimal distinctiveness (Abd Hamid, O’Kane and Everrett, 2019), and stigma looming over migrant entrepreneurship and Eastern European migrant entrepreneurship, in particular (Vershinina and Rogers, 2019). These findings shift the mainstream understanding of Eastern European migrant entrepreneurship from being about economic survival, a form of fake entrepreneurship (Thornquist, 2013),

towards becoming a vehicle for acculturation (Evansluong, Ramirez-Pasillas, and Nguyen Bergstrom, 2019).

CHAPTER SIX: A BEHAVIOURAL PERSPECTIVE OF ACCULTURATION

6.1. Introduction

The previous chapter's research findings have revealed the cognitive acculturation for the focal migrant entrepreneurs as a complex journey of competing for dynamic, emotional, and celebrated experiences of intersectional identities. From episodes of despised stigma and identity rejection to moments of celebration of self-achievement and social empowerment, these participants shared their experiences of belonging to the broader host society, which, for many, were manifestations of overcoming “otherness”.

These research findings reinforce the importance of understanding the cognitive perspective of acculturation. These participants have emphasised that their identities as Romanians, entrepreneurs, women and men are valuable social representations that influence their acculturative belonging. While this perspective reveals valuable and novel insights, to fully address this study's aim requires exploring the behavioural perspective of acculturation. This perspective would complete this IPA investigation by exploring how these migrant entrepreneurs’ entrepreneurship strategies impact upon their acculturation in London.

Accordingly, this second chapter of analysis presents and discusses this study’s research findings, intending to advance empirical understanding of how London-based Romanian migrant entrepreneurs’ entrepreneurial strategies impact upon their experiences of acculturation. Specifically, this IPA includes an interpretative investigation of verbal and nonverbal communication of the entrepreneurial strategies reported by 49 London-based Romanian migrant entrepreneurs ([LREs]: 18 female entrepreneurs [FE] and 31 male entrepreneurs [ME]), captured during their interviews. These emerging research findings are aimed at addressing the second research question of this study.

Next, the discussion of the research findings positions them in interdisciplinary literature, thereby reinforcing this study’s contribution to knowledge and policy. This behavioural perspective is supported by Berry’s (1997, 2003, 2005) model of acculturation and entrepreneurship strategies.

6.2. Behavioural acculturation through the lens of entrepreneurship strategies

This section explores, through the lens of migrant entrepreneurship, how London-based Romanian migrant entrepreneurs' entrepreneurial strategies impact upon their experiences of acculturation. Specifically, this behavioural perspective of acculturation focuses on how enclave (Wilson and Portes, 1980), the middleman (Bonacich, 1973), and mainstream (Evansluong, Ramirez-Pasillas, and Nguyen Bergstrom, 2019) entrepreneurship strategies have influenced these migrant entrepreneurs' journeys of acculturation in the UK.

By adopting a social perspective on migrant entrepreneurship, this study shifts away from the over-explored economic perspective of entrepreneurship, and by extension, migrant entrepreneurship as a gender-blind source of income and economic empowerment (Chang, Wong and Myeongcheol, 2014; Kushnirovich, 2015), towards entrepreneurship as a gendered, social phenomenon (Barberis and Solano, 2018; Evansluong, Ramirez-Pasillas and Nguyen Bergstrom, 2019). This social perspective enables the exploration of migrant entrepreneurship's everyday practices that are "intrinsically intertwined with the very fabric of contemporary society" (De Clercq and Voronov, 2009: 395). Consequently, this study responds to the call to "step(ing) outside of the entrepreneurship field itself to embrace (…) a concern for the 'other', to challenge (…) the often unrecognized 'taken-for-granted aspects of what entrepreneurship is and what it might be" (Gartner, 2013:3), by pursuing to explore the social perspective of a new generation of migrant entrepreneurs, that of the first generation of Romanian migrant entrepreneurs in the UK (Evansluong, Ramirez-Pasillas and Nguyen Bergstrom, 2019; Zahra and Wright, 2016).

6.2.1. Mainstream entrepreneurship: a journey of assimilation

Some of the London-based Romanian migrant entrepreneurs (LREs) interviewed reported engaging in mainstream entrepreneurship through routine interaction with wider British society, from customers to employees and suppliers:

"We started by addressing the needs of our student colleagues, who live on a budget, whilst also responding to the needs of privately owned restaurants that we helped to address their food waste problem. Our business is built for strategic business reasons and not for a specific ethnic community." (Female Entrepreneur 1)

Whilst some of these migrant entrepreneurs present their mainstream entrepreneurship as a proactive response to business opportunity, others use this strategy reactively to overcome their Romanian otherness and to increase their entrepreneurial legitimacy. Male Entrepreneur 1's claims reveal how the link between his intersectional identities and entrepreneurial strategies started to take shape:

"*I offer non-ethnic specific, good quality products for everybody to enjoy (…) and I usually hire English-speaking, competent people to cover customer service. This is my home, alongside these people of different nationalities that you see as my business neighbours. This is what Britain and being British means for me (…). I take pride in running a successful business outside the safety net of the Romanian community." (Male Entrepreneur 1)*

Additionally, he portrays his separation from the Romanian community as a means to belong and to gain legitimacy as a migrant entrepreneur "lost" in the middle of a diverse community of "British" entrepreneurs. This is an entrepreneurship strategy that ensures his business's economic survival in the diverse community he serves and enhances his feelings of belonging and legitimacy through positive distinctiveness (Abd Hamid, O'Kane and Everett, 2019), as discussed in detail in the previous chapter. His legitimacy as an entrepreneur is reinforced by his dissociation from his Romanian community and identity, through which he feels becoming the acceptable other within the community of diverse entrepreneurs. He portrays himself as fulfilling the social expectations of acculturation in London's multiculturalist

society.

> "*I was lucky that my first experience as an entrepreneur was in the British business environment. This whole system is done in such a way as to help those who have initiative, with no real entrepreneurial experience, like myself. See all these businesses? You get my point?!" (Male Entrepreneur 25)*

For many of these migrant entrepreneurs, London's multiculturalism and pro-entrepreneurial society have been vital to becoming entrepreneurs by pursuing mainstream entrepreneurship, despite being first-time in the role and thus, having limited entrepreneurial skills. Rightfully so, according to the last Global Entrepreneurship Monitor Report (2018, 2019), the "UK is Europe's leading entrepreneurial economy and exhibits a strong all-around entrepreneurial profile" (GEM, 2018:8), which reinforces the claim made by Female Entrepreneur 1:

> *"[..] if you like to live in Europe, the UK probably is the best country to live in from an entrepreneurship perspective […]. What can I say, here I found many opportunities as an entrepreneur?" (Female Entrepreneur 1)*

These contextualised accounts reveal their trust in the British system, emphasised through the "assurance that here everything is possible". The host pro-entrepreneurial system and the institutional support fuel their enthusiasm and their feelings of achievement as they become entrepreneurs.

> *"As a Romanian businesswoman in the UK, I can assure you that here everything is possible. Here, in England, it seems to me that those who fail are those who do not want to do anything and the lazy ones." (Female Entrepreneur 6)*

Most of these migrant entrepreneurs who described mainstream entrepreneurship strategies align with the perspective of high levels of host human and social capital, driven by and driving frequent social interactions between migrant entrepreneurs and the host society (Berry, Hu and Schellenberg, 2016). Their acculturative feelings of belonging and their search for "un-othering" are common in migrant entrepreneurship (Essers and Tedmanson, 2014).

What is remarkable, is that the mainstream strategy materialises into an exposure of these migrant entrepreneurs to a form of multicultural hybridism, as both the following accounts reveal. Regarding which, Male Entrepreneur 1 focuses on reiterating detailed similarities between himself and the community to which he feels being part of: *"alongside these people of different nationalities that you see as my business neighbours. This is what Britain and being British means for me.".* Similarly, Female Entrepreneur 1 presents herself as part of a diverse body of students that she serves through her business: *"we serve the needs of our student colleagues and business owners, "* telling of acculturation in the broader British society.

For these migrant entrepreneurs, their engagement in mainstream entrepreneurship in multicultural London is manifested as everyday entrepreneurial interactions with mixed social networks. Consequently, their interactions with these diverse networks that are custodians of valuable host socio-cultural capital (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992) help these first-time entrepreneurs learn how to run their enterprises and how to become active social participants in the host country. It is through these socially enabling entrepreneurship strategies that they increase their cultural, social, and entrepreneurial capital, thereby enriching their experiences of acculturation in the UK:

"My business is built on bespoke relationships with each of my patients. As a Doctor of Chinese medicine, the primary market I serve is that of women of a certain age and education, rather than one of ethnic identity. At least, this is my business message. I have a pro bono centre and an exclusive clinic on Bradley Street. The successful running of these two different clinics requires great social and multicultural skills as well as professional skills, of course! It requires educating your clients on your services and understanding their personal needs and cultural beliefs towards Chinese medicine." (Female Entrepreneur 14)

Mainstream entrepreneurship is as much about cultural awareness as it is about entrepreneurial skills. Understanding and applying host country cultural and business values is regarded as the basics for entrepreneurship survival and sustainability. For these migrant entrepreneurs, their priority is to overcome otherness and build entrepreneurship legitimacy, by meeting the normative entrepreneurial expectations through socio-cultural learning.

Whilst these mainstream strategies are often praised as sources for business growth and economic power, their social impact cannot be overlooked, as is the case for Male Entrepreneur 32:

"As I said, my company is made up of Canadians, Americans, English, and Romanians. I have around 20 Romanians working for my company (…) alongside other 1,500 permanent employees from different cultural backgrounds." (Male Entrepreneur 32)

For Female Entrepreneur 16, mainstream entrepreneurship is as much an economically sensible entrepreneurship strategy as it is regarded as a means to overcome potentially being pushed into enclave entrepreneurship, which she perceives as limiting and limited from a personal and professional perspective:

"I usually work with many local designers. For the Chelsea project, I collaborated with several British(ly) diverse designers (…). My clients are mostly American, British, and other Europeans. To be honest, I don't want to limit my clients by designing only for Romanians or one ethnicity, because (…) I want to enjoy all the possibilities of today." (Female Entrepreneur 16)

Her fears of potentially ending up serving only the Romanian community and thus, being forced into enclave entrepreneurship are found to be common across different communities, where women migrant entrepreneurs who, very much like WE 16, due to limited entrepreneurial capital and resources, ensured business survival within their cultural enclaves (Arrighetti, Bolzani and Lasagni, 2014; Delfín Gonzalez and Campbell, 2018).

What is unexpected is the fact that mainstream entrepreneurship is their first port of entry into entrepreneurship. This a strategic, agentic choice of trying to keep out of their co-national enclave and not a strategy of breaking out of the enclave, which empirical evidence suggests as being more broadly the norm for migrant entrepreneurs. This was found to be the case for other Eastern European migrant entrepreneurs, such as the Polish entrepreneurs in Scotland, (Lasalle and Scott, 2018). As they engage strategically with the broader society, they also acquire suitable forms of capital to support their mainstream journey. Furthermore, these social interactions enable them to increase their cultural awareness, which materialises in competitive services and products (Arrighetti, Bolzani and Lasagni, 2014), whilst also improving their entrepreneurship legitimacy in the host country (Abd Hamid, O'Kane and Everrett, 2019):

"One of the basic requirements for any employee here is to know English very well, because most of my clients are English and because these customers are well-educated and posh and so, they appreciate that we speak English in this shop. So, now, I have hired a Frenchman for the front of the house and a

German woman, who is very ambitious and hardworking, which is great for me and the business! (…) I initiated a few partnerships with other businesses from my community. For example, we created a new chocolate ice cream product with the ice cream shop and organised Christmas events. In this posh area, few Romanians are living and looking for a job. My business is built on the profile of the community I serve." (Female Entrepreneur 17)

These feelings of hoping to achieve legitimacy and belonging are consistent with the identity findings detailed in the previous chapter of the analysis. By prioritising their knowledge of the community, they serve as entrepreneurs that develop cultural awareness, which motivates them to align their entrepreneurship strategies to the informal social requirements of their community of customers and neighbours. These strategies impact not only their way of doing business, but also, their acculturation, in terms of socio-cultural learning and participation in the host community.

According to Berry's (1997, 2003, 2005) acculturation model, these London-based Romanian migrant entrepreneurs, women and men alike, by performing mainstream entrepreneurship, also engage in a pattern of assimilation, whereby they interact more with the broader society, with no vested interest in preserving their heritage:

"We're servicing the British market. We create business strategies for multicultural businesses. We`re not targeting a particular group of companies, we`re targeting the British market, not based on nationality, but their business potential and opportunity. (…) I would say I was born in Romania, but I was made in Britain! Coming from a country like Romania, knowing what challenges are, what disappointments are, knowing how is to have nothing, made it easier for me to compete here and learn how to become better than many, because many British don`t know what nothing is. I am focusing on becoming a successful entrepreneur here, instead of being Romanian." (Male Entrepreneur 6)

Hence, they pursue assimilation as a strategy for personal and entrepreneurial growth. Along this acculturation journey, assimilation allows for a focused and sped-up accumulation by deploying diverse forms of suitable and expected forms of capital, which would clash with their heritage values. Their Romanian identity is regarded as the basis for their drive to become better, to which they give passive social significance, limited to situated, suitable social interactions, where the visibility of their Romanian identity adds value, rather than eroding that leveraged by their entrepreneurial identity. It is not that they refute their origins, but they do assertively focus on developing their entrepreneurial potential.

6.2.2. Middleman entrepreneurship: a journey of social inclusion

Across many of these interviews, a clear pattern of middleman entrepreneurship starts to emerge, as these migrant entrepreneurs become brokers of different forms of capital between immigrant communities and the broader British society:

> *"My business partners are primarily the Ministry of Defence, 90% London counsels, and 10% private jobs. (…) The vast majority of my workers are Romanians." (Male Entrepreneur 15)*

Similarly, Male Entrepreneur 22 explains his hiring as well as mixed business and social network strategies, which reinforce his role as facilitator between the ethnic or immigrant enclaves and the mainstream. Like matchmakers, they exploit immigrant enclaves as a valuable source of knowledge and labour force mobilisation, which they try to match with the mainstream business contracts and contacts:

"This company relies on contracts only with the British local authorities. I currently have 15 to 16 permanent employees and about 50 to 60 temporary workers for each project. The accountant is from Ukraine, now the chief of staff is Indian, the CFO is from Ghana, the general manager is Romanian. When it comes to temporary employees, although they are all mixed from an ethnic point of view, 85% of the employees are still Romanians." (Male Entrepreneur 22)

Notably, many of these middleman entrepreneurs rely on contracts with public authorities, from local councils to the Ministry of Defence, which reinforces their legitimacy and their competitiveness in the British Market. These findings prove once more that their claims of experiencing being Romanian as a competitive advantage are well-founded and justified by concrete entrepreneurial behaviours.

Contrary to other Eastern European migrant entrepreneurs in the UK, such as the Poles, these interviewees engage in middleman entrepreneurship strategies to achieve industry benchmarking, rather than entrepreneurial diversification, as a means to break out of their enclave (Lassalle and Scott, 2018):

"We are in the top 10 construction companies in London. I think the value we bring to the British society is quite high." (Male Entrepreneur 30)

This suggests substantial business awareness and knowledge of the labour market at the macro level. It also reveals the impact of some of these enterprises on the British construction sector that build their competitive advantage by using the second-largest community of EU immigrants in the UK as their hiring pool, which fosters business growth opportunities. Additionally, these interviewees portray their entrepreneurial strategies as sources of personal and professional achievement. Their claims resonate with McClelland's Theory of Need for Achievement (1961), manifested as high self-efficacy, which impacts upon their entrepreneurial behaviours in terms of reporting how their company ranks within the industry. Their

acknowledged competitive advantage and the industry's understanding would appear to have motivated these migrant entrepreneurs to expand their businesses and social networks to explore opportunities for personal and professional growth.

Furthermore, contrasting with the image of struggling Eastern European migrants at the margins of entrepreneurship (Shubin and Dickey, 2013), these migrant entrepreneurs reveal leading disruptive migrant entrepreneurship strategies, despite being first-time entrepreneurs:

> *"I have a large electrical company serving English, Russian, Greek, and high-end French customers. I am dealing with bespoke, exclusive high-tech projects. Also, being an accredited company, we deliver projects for other smaller companies, which do not have the accreditation for electrical work." (Male Entrepreneur 21)*

Hence, they challenge their mediatised stigma and their default image of enclave entrepreneurs, not only by transforming their foreignness into a competitive advantage, but also, by actively pursuing and learning how to approach the mainstream effectively as a valuable source for business opportunities through direct market competition with the native population:

> *"Now I deliver a building project for a Singaporean company, but I often have contracts with Afghani, Indian and Chinese companies here in London. In principle, our partners are large companies, either through direct or indirect contracts (…). The iconic semicircle buildings in central London are our signature." (Male Entrepreneur 31)*

These accounts offer valuable insights of trust and business predictability, which justify their entrepreneurial exploitation of diverse immigrant enclaves. This also

demonstrates their proactive interest in maintaining it as their competitive advantage in Britain:

> *"I employ people of all nations, from Bulgarians, Poles, Moldavians, Romanians and Indians. I do not limit myself to Romanians only. In general, I employ immigrants, who represent 80% of those working for my company. They are more hard-working, serious, and on time than the rest." (Male Entrepreneur 23)*

Whilst these migrant entrepreneurs' strategies resonate with Bonacich's Middleman Theory (1973), whereby they become brokers between different ethnic and immigrant communities and the broader British market, their impact seems to expand beyond their economic value, into influencing everyday social interactions:

> *"For my business' sake, I encourage my employees to adapt to this society, to learn the language (…), I encourage them to be positive, learn new things, open their own business. If they grow, my company grows!" (Male Entrepreneur 27)*

> *"And this adjustment does not mean giving up who we are, but rather improving ourselves (...). I think of it as a process of adjusting your knowledge and interpretations to this reality, society. It is about understanding the society I live in." (Male Entrepreneur 29*)

Whilst the entrepreneurial pragmatism and motivation are visible, they understand that their business survival depends on the degree of their acculturation and that of their employees. Through their social interactions, they also become custodians of multicultural, host country socio-cultural and entrepreneurial values, standards, and behaviours. As immigrant role models and employers, they influence the future

generation of Romanian migrant entrepreneurs, support other stakeholders' acculturation, and bring about positive social change.

Overall, these research findings inform the debate on migrant entrepreneurship equally as an economic and social phenomenon, performed through interactive and mixed social networks, which is "help(ing) potential immigrant entrepreneurs to recognize and exploit opportunities" (Brieger and Gielnik, 2020:5). It is through their entrepreneurial engagement in these diverse social networks that these migrant entrepreneurs fulfil an economic and social role in British society. Given their role as facilitators between immigrant enclaves, which is their pool of talent and resources, and the broader British society, which is the source of business opportunities and partnerships, these migrant entrepreneurs constantly engage with the host and home countries.

Consistent with Berry's acculturation model (1997, 2003, 2005) discussed in the Literature Review chapter, these migrant entrepreneurs' middleman entrepreneurship strategy enables their social inclusion in British society:

> *"For me as a Romanian businessman in the UK, social inclusion is important, because it means to have a global, not an ethnic view of the society in which you live. If you are not integrated into British society, you will never be able to do business for a longer period. I support my employees to speak English and learn British culture, so they can interact with our British customers, who can return the effort by learning about us." (Male Entrepreneur 20)*

It is through this dynamic process that they also become enablers of different degrees of acculturation for all stakeholders involved in these socio-economic exchanges, including their employees, their customers, and their business partners.

It is somewhat surprising to see that these middleman entrepreneurship strategies are shared only by the men entrepreneurs and not by the women. It is reasonable to posit that the micro-size of women's enterprises and their low entrepreneurial self-

efficacy, as discussed in the previous chapter, explain why they opt to pursue enclave entrepreneurship, as detailed in the next section of this analysis.

6.2.3. Enclave entrepreneurship: a journey of social segregation

Contrasting with the middleman entrepreneurship and their social inclusion experienced by many of the men entrepreneurs interviewed, most of their female counterparts' accounts indicated their performing enclave entrepreneurship. These gendered nuanced findings reinforce the relevance of gender as a way of doing business (Phillips and Knowles, 2012):

> *"Because I run a Romanian school, we employ Romanians, because it feeds into the school's scope (…). You see, to teach the Romanian language to Romanian kids, it is obvious that the educators and teachers must be Romanian." (Female Entrepreneur 5)*

Like most of these female migrant entrepreneurs, through her enclave entrepreneurship strategies, Female Entrepreneur 5 has been building her business model to address the needs of her Romanian community, which requires, according to her, hiring Romanians. Whilst, in this case, she justifies her enclave strategies as best suited for her business model, other female migrant entrepreneurs interviewed do so as a means to manage the entrepreneurial risk as first-time entrepreneurs, preferring to learn entrepreneurship at a financial price they can afford:

> *"At the moment, my business serves the Romanian community […] That does not mean that I am not open to collaborating with other nationalities. But (…) to hire other nationalities besides Romanians, I would have to use recruitment agencies, which means additional costs that I cannot cover at the moment." (Female Entrepreneur 13)*

However, enclave entrepreneurship is not limited to hiring Romanians or serving the Romanian community. It also entails growing as first-time entrepreneurs, one step at a time, firstly, by overcoming their traditional cultural roles of becoming enclave role models as women entrepreneurs:

> *"I became a role model for young people as well as for women who understood me and my Romanian restaurant business (…). Being a businesswoman, especially a Romanian one in the UK, is a great thing, because you escape being marginalised and being stereotyped many times sometimes, unfairly. What everybody needs to learn is that we are a nation of men and powerful women, women capable of raising their children and bringing value to this society through our enterprises." (Female Entrepreneur 13)*

This positionality as community role models is not always straightforward for these women entrepreneurs. However, the link between their low-risk propensity and their feelings of low self-efficacy is consistent with previous study findings (Brieger and Gielnik, 2020; Newman et al., 2019), primarily owing to the lack of entrepreneurial experience, as first-time entrepreneurs, and having micro-sized businesses (Appendix 9), which many see as inconsistent with what entrepreneurship means according to their Romanian heritage. Consequently, feeling "othered" and discriminated against due to assumptions of inferior human and social capital compared to the British, they "re-skill" by topping up their education in the UK (Appendix 5), whilst using their credentials and serving the Romanian enclave, where they are best suited and welcomed:

> *"I have a masters degree in accountancy, and I've been a professional accountant for over 20 years in Romania. The British authorities have recognised all my accounting credentials. I opened my accountancy business, because there is a large Romanian community in the UK, and thus, my accounting services are needed (…) I want to expand my business to include*

other communities of immigrants, such as the Spanish and Portuguese, and maybe even British, if possible, when my English is up to standard." (Female Entrepreneur 15)

It is a common entrepreneurial strategy amongst many communities of migrant entrepreneurs, to take advantage of their co-ethnic social and human capital by leveraging the "network that includes markets, resources, and information shared by the group, based on the country of origin, average skill level, group language proficiency, social network, geographical concentration, shared beliefs and other resources" (Maani, and Rogers, 2015: 5). Whilst their enclave entrepreneurship seems to expose their vulnerabilities of feeling discriminated against, it also offers them the cultural framework to feel empowered by the opportunity of break away from their patriarchal upbringing on their own, thanks to their new positionality as entrepreneurs and the personal independence it embeds (Gill and Ganesh (2007), cited in Alkhaled and Berglund, 2018). Consistent with previous studies presented in the Literature Review chapter of this thesis (Arrighetti, Bolzani and Lasagni, 2014; Klaesson and Oner, 2020), the enclave enterprise is experienced equally as a protective shield from the mainstream competition, allowing these first-time entrepreneurs to enjoy entrepreneurial efficiencies and short-term business survival, but potentially a limitation in the long term, as some of these women hold:

"I know it is important to break out of the Romanian enclave and thus, to open up to better understanding this society I live in, and I can see myself doing it by taking on an active role. But I think I am not there yet." (Female Entrepreneur 18)

Many of them experience these limitations as social and acculturative, restricting their opportunities to learn and thus, participating in British society:

"99% of my clients are Romanian, but I also have some Bulgarian and Turkish clients who are married to Romanians. But I understand that I would benefit from interacting with other cultures (…), as it would allow me to become more proficient in English and to gain more professional and cultural knowledge." (Female Entrepreneur 4)

Whilst many of their claims are pragmatic, revealing their unpreparedness to serve the mainstream market owing to their lack of human (English skills) and economic capital (not enough funds), they also embed hope and agency to break out of the enclave through business growth:

"As for clients, we never wanted to serve only the Romanian community or to address an ethnic niche. (…) but we were forced to change our business model for an international restaurant into a Romanian one to respond to the clientele that our restaurant attracted. We are trying to open another restaurant, this time an Italian one. We are looking at different locations which would help us achieve this." (Female Entrepreneur 3)

Overall, for most of these women entrepreneurs, their enclave enterprises are acknowledged sources of business survival and efficiencies. They are also points of entry into entrepreneurship and opportunities for business growth and acculturation through socio-cultural learning in the near future.

These findings contradict previous studies in that these women migrant entrepreneurs, despite being highly educated, perform enclave entrepreneurship, which is commonly linked to low education (Delfín Gonzalez and Campbell, 2018; Kushnirovich, Heilbrunn and Davidovich, 2017). Their lack of entrepreneurial experience, as first-time entrepreneurs, their low entrepreneurial self-efficacy rooted in their cultural, entrepreneurial ceiling (Voda and Florea, 2019), and the clashes between being a woman and the ideal male entrepreneur (Ahl and Marlow, 2012;

Villares-Varela and Essers, 2019) are some of the reasons why these women migrant entrepreneurs, despite being highly educated, engage in enclave entrepreneurship. Their enclave entrepreneurship becomes a disruptive strategy of "breaking free and breaking up" the traditional social order (Rindova, Barry, and Ketchen, 2009:9, cited in Villares-Varela and Essers, 2019).

Their claims also reveal a social perspective of enclave entrepreneurship, which the literature portrays as being conducive to social segregation (Lassalle and Scott, 2018). However, they show their entrepreneurship as a dynamic economic and social becoming journey rather than as an outcome. Hence, although their enclave entrepreneurship is a limitation, for the time being, it is far from being experienced as a "social stranglehold" (Borjas, 2000) because they believe that serving the second largest community of immigrants in the UK represents a great entrepreneurial opportunity, from which they could grow (Klaesson and Oner, 2020).

6.2.4. Migrant entrepreneurship: an acculturative journey of socio-cultural learning

The exploration of the cognitive perspective of acculturation presented in the previous chapter of this analysis revealed that these 49 London-based migrant entrepreneurs experience their intersectional identities as a journey of belonging in the UK. The exploration of their behavioural perspective of acculturation reveals how these migrant entrepreneurs experience their entrepreneurship as a journey of acculturative socio-cultural learning. This shifts the understanding of migrant entrepreneurship from being an enabler of economic survival to becoming an important vehicle for their acculturation.

Invoking the connection between people and contexts (Cuervo and Wyn, 2014; 2017), the meanings of belonging, becoming, and learning shared by these participants are part of a broader interdisciplinary repertoire of acculturation and migrant entrepreneurship studies (Hou, Schellenberg and Berry, 2018; Munkejord, 2017), thus reinforcing the dynamic and contextual nature of these journeys:

"As an entrepreneur, the fact that I interact with people of so many other nationalities widens my knowledge horizon and my opportunities to learn from these social interactions (…)." (Female Entrepreneur 14)

"I think of my social inclusion as a process of adjusting my knowledge to the new reality." (Male Entrepreneur 29)

From these statements emerges the idea that these journeys of self and social adjustment are welcomed and pursued with the expectation of a better life overall, driven by a better understanding and participation in the host society, as migrant entrepreneurs.

These journeys of learning, enabled and performed by having an overtly declared social purpose of acculturation and social inclusion in the British society, being portrayed as the manifestation of a normal lifestyle, show these participants' long-term social commitment to British society:

"I participate in all community festivals, from Jamaican to Polish, to British and Romanian […]. I get involved in organising some of them as well. The pumpkins I grow usually go to a school for children with special needs here. I donate many vegetables to a hospital here that offers a warm meal every evening to homeless people. So, as you can see, this is what being socially integrated means to me too; a natural way of living my life. And this is how I choose to integrate." (Female Entrepreneur 2)

Like Female Entrepreneur 2, many interviewees explained their acculturation and their feelings of social inclusion as manifestations of proactive community participation in local organisations and festivals, and further into the broader society, supporting social initiatives organised by hospitals and schools. Her story conveys meanings of "solidarity and togetherness" and "a sense of belongingness to all cultures", which aligns with the expectations of today's super diverse Britain (Demireva, 2019), where "the diversity of people's different backgrounds and

circumstances is appreciated and positively valued" (Cantle, 2005: 14).

These respondents' views reinforce their enterprises as being enablers of these social and business learning opportunities:

> *"Having my business here in the UK helps me become socially included. It pushes me to learn new things much faster, particularly because this society is full of small business owners like myself, from whom you can learn many things and even how to be a businesswoman here." (Female Entrepreneur 16)*

Not only does their entrepreneurship enable them to become active socio-economic participants, for their acculturation journey is acknowledged by many as a matter of business survival. Moreover, this acculturative learning is key in understanding their customers, how to properly run their business as well as how to communicate with their customers and business partners:

> *"Entrepreneurship has certainly contributed to my social inclusion here. Because of my business, I had to expand my focus beyond just doing a task well. I had to learn different things about management, accounting, taxes, law, networking, marketing. All these taught me a lot about this environment and my clients (…) Integration is very important for me, and the long-term survival of my business is important." (Male Entrepreneur 25)*

One of the interviewees shared an emotionally intense image of his acculturative learning experience. Through his verbal and non-verbal communication (see Appendix 13 for the typology of nonverbal communication used), he expressed feelings of deep emotional struggle and devaluing social vulnerabilities, which defined his journey of acculturation in the UK:

Q: What does social inclusion mean for you as a Romanian migrant entrepreneur in the UK?

A: “**mmm, (…), Ø,** I think everyone tries their be**::**st to FEEL integrated into any society they live in. **O** Ye**::**s, **>** you automatically try to integrate as soon as possible and as well as you can and, to do that **(…), mmm, Ø,** although you feel vulnerable **Ø O**, just like a new**(.)** born baby. Like a baby trying to imitate his parents, I, **Ā (…)** myself try to imitate what others around me do, how they talk, how they behave, the slang they use **O** (…) (Male Entrepreneur 17)

Transcription of nonverbal communication

A: “**mmm, (…), Ø, (***hesitation, pause, and then gazing away to confirm understanding of the topic)* I think everyone tries their be**::**st (*elongated vowel to emphasise)* to FEEL (l*ouder tone to emphasise intensity and significance*) integrated into any society they live in. **O** Ye**::**s, **> (***eye contact, followed by word emphasis through vowel elongation and slower tone to allow time to reflect)* you automatically try to integrate as soon as possible and as well as you can and, to do that **(…), mmm, Ø, (***pause, hesitation, and gazing away*) although you feel vulnerable **Ø O**, (*gazing away and eye contact)* just like a new**(.) (***small pause)* born baby. Like a baby trying to imitate his parents, I, **Ā (…) (***louder tone, nodding in agreement and long pause to emphasise and juxtaposed feelings of vulnerability with control)* **myself** try to imitate what others around me do, how they talk, how they behave, the slang they use **O** (…) *(eye contact and long pause to regulate social interaction by encouraging turn-taking)* (Male Entrepreneur 17)

In this case, the frequent gazing away, flagged the interviewee's avoidance of exposing personal vulnerabilities. It signalled hesitation to answer because the question was too complex or too personal (Ho, Foulsham and Kingstone, 2015). There were also instances when the interviewee looked away to mark turn-taking, as a form of regulating the social interaction during the interview, which aligns with the meaning attributed by previous studies (Cummins, 2012; Sandgren et al., 2012). Additionally, the interview location, a conference room with a big window overlooking the London city centre, allowed his gazing behaviour to become natural, creating the perfect emotional detachment scenario. In this environment, gazing became a context-bound kinetics fact (Mcdonald and Tatler, 2013). However, in this case, gazing towards and away fulfilled not only naturally occurring monitoring and regulating functions of the social interaction that flag mutual understanding (Ho, Foulsham and Kingstone, 2015), but many times these were gestures meant to distract from confronting his vulnerabilities in an open forum.

Male Entrepreneur 17 shared through verbal and nonverbal language his social inclusion experience as one of starting from nothing, something that he wanted to avoid because it meant losing his *"home middle-class status*". He emphasised the difficulty of understanding all the implications of this cultural learning process, but he saw himself overcoming them, feeling very much like a baby taking his first steps. He felt that this process of becoming made him "vulnerable", as if he had lost his entrepreneurial agency and "*high social status"* that he was so proud of when talking about his entrepreneurial identity.

His acculturation journey through cultural learning seems basic, yet very dramatic, because, as a graduate in Romanian law, his de-skilling (Munkejord, 2017) in the UK was inevitable in that this knowledge became obsolete and untransferable outside Romanian borders. His experience of "de-skilling", which was accompanied by "downward social mobility", although common amongst immigrants from developing countries emigrating to developed countries (Munkejord, 2017; Nowicka, 2012), was an intensely emotional and life-changing event for him.

His feelings of vulnerability might have also been triggered by the clash between his new positionality as an immigrant, which made him feel like a socio-cultural apprentice and his Romanian patriarchal upbringing. This feeling of being forced to start his life over *"like a baby trying to imitate his parents"* and thus, to some extent, of being "othered", seemed to be unpreventable. However, it laid down the foundation for this journey of becoming, as noted by him: *"a successful businessman (…), worthy of the red-carpet treatment".*

These experiences resonate with Berry's (2006) view that acculturation happens through socio-cultural learning. These migrant entrepreneurs portrayed entrepreneurship as an enabler and opportunity for socio-cultural learning and thus, acculturation in London.

6.2.5. Migrant entrepreneurship: a vehicle of acculturation in the UK

Overall, the exploration of the cognitive and behavioural perspectives of acculturation revealed that, for these migrant entrepreneurs, entrepreneurship is equally an enabler of economic empowerment, socio-cultural learning, and acculturation in the UK:

> *"I like to think that through my business, I have helped British people understand a lot more about the Romanian culture, which I consider to be very important, considering that the Romanian community in the UK is one of the largest. We all need to learn about each other if we want to live in harmony in this diverse society. It is in everybody's best interest to try to understand their society, beyond the stereotypes and superficial categorisation." (Female Entrepreneur 14)*

This is one of the few accounts in which a direct answer to the question "why does acculturation matter?" is directly provided, without invoking one-sided socio-cultural vulnerabilities.

Her voice seems to echo the London Mayor's social integration for 2020, which states:

> *"At its core, social integration means shaping a city in which people have more opportunities to connect with each other positively and meaningfully." (Mayor of London 2020:4)*

Overall, these London-based Romanian migrant entrepreneurs portrayed entrepreneurship as a vehicle of social inclusion for their employees:

> *"Integration is very important for me as a migrant entrepreneur and my employees. It ensures our wellbeing in Britain and business survival and growth. I think that I play a big role in my employees' integration into this society. I ask them to learn and speak English, I train them how to address our clients, I offer counselling in how to file their taxes, I help them find a stable home, apply for NINO and open a bank account." (Male Entrepreneur 25)*

Hence, these migrant entrepreneurs have become custodians of bicultural values, standards and practices, playing a key role not only in their acculturation and that of their employees, but also, the acculturation of other stakeholders with whom they interact:

"One of my roles as a businessman here is to mediate between the British society I serve and the Romanians I hire. I help them with everything (…), starting with their problems (…), helping them understand how best to behave in this society, by sharing my experience. I even provided them with a consultancy office, where they are advised, free of charge, regarding many aspects of their legal life here, including taxes (…). I have people who trust me and rely on my opinion to take life decisions, who have worked for me for over ten years." (Male Entrepreneur 31)

From these interviews emerges the idea that all participants in entrepreneurship undertake, voluntarily or not, their acculturative journey of becoming "intrinsically intertwined with the very fabric of (the host) society" (De Clercq and Voronov, 2009: 395). Their claims resonate with Gartner's (2013:3) call for "a willingness to step outside of the entrepreneurship field itself to embrace a variety of ideas, (…) a concern for the 'other', to challenge the unspoken and often unrecognized 'taken-for-granted aspects of what entrepreneurship is and what it might be".

This is a great insight into the impact that London-based Romanian migrant entrepreneurs have not only on their acculturation, but also, the acculturation of their workforce, in this case, other co-nationals:

"We also collaborate with those who recruit for universities, to cover a requirement that has arisen from women or wives who follow their spouses to the UK. This was an essential step for their integration into British society, and an opportunity to teach them English, which is essential if you want to live in British society.

We have also created a newsletter and a Facebook group to which Romanians can subscribe to access information that encourages their social inclusion, either by informing them about the English courses, legal, tax, job counselling

(...), or the changes that occur in British society. This is how we try to inform Romanians living here of the opportunities or alternatives they have for a better life here. We help them become familiar with the requirements of this society, so they can start behaving accordingly and thus, to enjoy living here more." (Female Entrepreneur 18)

These migrant enterprises become voluntary socio-cultural educational hubs for their immigrant workforce as well as for the other stakeholders, supporting them in their journey of socio-cultural learning, so that they can understand the society they live in better:

"Being a Romanian entrepreneur in the UK means learning how to run a business and encouraging other people to get to know us better, because they would see we bring value to this society, if they would only have the patience to get to know us." (Female Entrepreneur 14)

The above reveals their belief that their enterprises' sustainability depends not only on their entrepreneurial skills and knowledge but also on their socio-cultural capital. Hence, entrepreneurship becomes an opportunity to achieve personal and professional growth, thereby representing a vehicle for social change, an idea supported by a handful of scholars who prioritise the social perspective of entrepreneurship (Barberis and Solano, 2018; Evansluong, Ramirez-Pasillas and Nguyen Bergstrom, 2019; Mago, 2020).

From these participants' experiences emerges a novel finding in the migrant entrepreneurship literature, that of the migrant entrepreneurship multiplier effect:

"I know that Romanian entrepreneurs encourage their employees to take this journey, by supporting them through practical tips and role modelling. Perhaps the role of Romanian entrepreneurs in the UK is much greater than many have imagined, expanding beyond their everyday economic activities, due to their multiplier effect, home and here." (Female Entrepreneur 18)

This multiplier effect of entrepreneurship means that its impact triggers "a sequence of positive events that set in motion a chain of constructive situations leading to a better outcome" (Lepeley, 2020: 14).

As such, Romanian migrant entrepreneurship becomes an enabler of acculturation for multiple and diverse stakeholders, by creating jobs, business partnerships and as a mediator of everyday social interactions. Moreover, it is an enabler of socio-cultural learning and exchange, increasing socio-cultural awareness, challenging social stigma and stereotypes and encouraging a can-do attitude amongst the next generation of Romanian migrant entrepreneurs. Furthermore, as custodians and enablers of socio-cultural learning through their entrepreneurship strategies and social interactions, they influence the socio-cultural knowledge shared by all participants and ultimately their acculturation in today's super-diverse London society:

"Being a Romanian entrepreneur in the UK is a process of learning for me and a process of encouraging other communities from here to get to know us better." (Female Entrepreneur 14)

Overall, Romanian migrant entrepreneurship emerges as a dynamic process that enables socio-economic and cultural change and exchange for these migrant entrepreneurs and their workforce, business networks, and other stakeholders. In

sum, their entrepreneurship becomes an opportunity, an enabler, and an important vehicle of acculturation.

6.3. The behavioural perspective of acculturation: how do the entrepreneurship strategies impact upon London-based Romanian migrant entrepreneurs' experiences of acculturation? (RQ2)

This chapter of analysis has explored the behavioural perspective of acculturation as a means to understand how entrepreneurship strategies impact upon London-based Romanian migrant entrepreneurs' experiences of acculturation. Specifically, the experiences shared by the 49 London-based Romanian migrant entrepreneurs interviewed revealed entrepreneurship as a dynamic, gendered, and contextualised process of acculturative socio-cultural and entrepreneurship learning:

> *"Many of us, Romanians, became entrepreneurs overnight, with no prior experience or knowledge of what entrepreneurship means. Now, I discover it as a process of personal development, as I learn how to run my business and what it means to live and have a business in Britain, all at once." (Male Entrepreneur 24)*

Consistent with what previous scholars have found, specifically, that entrepreneurship and acculturation are contextualised and gendered phenomena (Berlepsch, Rodríguez-Pose, and Lee, 2018; Haider, 2020; Villares-Varela and Essers, 2019), the research findings have revealed that most of these women and men migrant entrepreneurs share divergent, gendered ways of doing business (Phillips and Knowles, 2012) and acculturation.

Inspired by previously documented interdisciplinary research practice (Dheer, 2018; Kushnirovich, 2015), by integrating into Berry's (1997, 2003, 2005) model of acculturation these migrant entrepreneurs' business strategies, a clear pattern of interdisciplinary association has emerged, which supports these research findings:

Table 8. London-based Romanian migrant entrepreneurs' acculturation and their entrepreneurship strategies

		Host country cultural contact	
		YES	**NO**
Home country culture maintenance	**YES**	Integration/Middleman entrepreneurship (22 Male Entrepreneurs)	Separation/Enclave entrepreneurship (10 Female Entrepreneurs)
	NO	Assimilation/ Mainstream entrepreneurship (8 Female Entrepreneurs & 9 Male Entrepreneurs)	Marginalisation

Integration: The migrants engage in both, host and home country cultures. *Assimilation:* The migrants focus on the host country's cultural contact. *Segregation*: The migrants maintain their home country culture.
Marginalisation: The migrants distance themselves from both cultures.

Source: Based on Berry's acculturation model (1997, 2003, 2005) and entrepreneurship strategies of enclave (Portes, 1981), the middleman (Bonacich, 1973) and mainstream (Evansluong, Ramirez-Pasillas and Bergstrom, 2019) and this study's research findings

Some of these London-based Romanian migrant entrepreneurs have shared mainstream entrepreneurship experiences, reminding us of Berry's assimilation strategy. These migrant entrepreneurs prioritise their participation into the broader host society over preserving their heritage. Their assimilation has emerged as a voluntary act of personal and entrepreneurial agency. Their justification for pursuing assimilation in British society is anchored in their need for achievement and overcoming the social stigma associated with being Romanians. They felt these could be achieved by learning and understanding London's super-diversity through direct social interactions mediated by their mainstream entrepreneurship strategies.

A cross-analysis of these interviews revealed a divergent gender-driven pattern of acculturation strategies, where the majority of the women (10 out of 18) shared experiences of enclave entrepreneurship and, thus, social segregation, whilst the majority of their male counterparts (22 out of 31) shared engaging in middleman entrepreneurship and thus, experiencing social integration (Appendix 17). Whilst the idea of achieving social inclusion through migrant entrepreneurship remains highly debated by scholars (Mago, 2020), for the majority of these male entrepreneurs, who shared engaging in middleman entrepreneurship, such inclusion meant socio-cultural learning through everyday social interactions with the diverse enclave and mainstream social networks (Chimucheka, Chinyamurindi, and Dodd, 2019). Their role as facilitators between these mixed social networks was motivated by their views and experiences that being Romanian is a competitive advantage for them as entrepreneurs in the UK, for varied reasons previously discussed.

By contrast, the women migrant entrepreneurs interviewed reported engaging in enclave entrepreneurship strategies (Wilson and Portes, 1980), focusing on serving the Romanian migrant community in London. Motivated by their need for achievement (McClelland, 1961; Williams and Youssef, 2014) in circumstances of limited entrepreneurial capital, resources, entrepreneurial experience, and a solution to the social stigma experienced as Romanians also become socially segregated. However, their social segregation journey is far from marking a static social outcome, as they often contemplate the importance of achieving social inclusion,

which they long for, revealed by their plans of breaking out of their enclave into the mainstream. Overall, these research findings inform entrepreneurship as a complex economic and social, acculturative phenomenon that enables and motivates migrant entrepreneurs, their employees, and other stakeholders to pursue and achieve different degrees of acculturation in the UK social segregation to assimilation and ultimately social inclusion.

The findings also reinforce that for these migrant entrepreneurs, entrepreneurship, thus, their acculturation, is a dynamic process of *becoming* through socio-cultural learning, rather than just *being* (Brzozowski and Pedziwiatr, 2015; Mago, 2020). Hence, their acculturation becomes a profoundly emotional "ongoing project entailing a sense of hope for the future", as Ghassan Hage (1997:103, cited in Cuervo and Wyn, 2017) points out. In sum, these migrant entrepreneurs' acculturation remains the product of their entrepreneurial agency, their social interactions with different communities of interest, and the super-diverse and pro-entrepreneurial host context.

It is through the behavioural perspective of acculturation explored by this study, that a more profound understanding has been gained of the significant role and novel multiplier effect that these migrant entrepreneurs' strategies have in the acculturation of all the stakeholders involved. Across all these journeys, migrant entrepreneurship emerges as a socio-cultural acculturation vehicle for their employees, customers, and business partners. This acculturation process and, ultimately, social inclusion increases in significance for them as residents and as migrant entrepreneurs, because it ensures social belonging, business survival and future growth.

6.4. Discussion and concluding remarks

The research findings have revealed that the focal London-based Romanian migrant entrepreneurs' experiences of acculturation are as complex as the meanings and the motivations that drive them to pursue different entrepreneurship strategies.

Significantly, it has emerged that their acculturation is contextual, gendered, and non-linear.

Some of these research findings reinforce those of previous studies. They contribute to the contextualised social and gendered perspective of migrant entrepreneurship (Evansluong, Ramirez-Pasillas and Nguyen Bergstrom, 2019; Kushnirovich, 2015; Villares-Varella and Essers, 2019), which allows for the interdisciplinary investigation of acculturation (Dheer, 2018; Mago, 2020). As such, this study contributes to the interdisciplinary literature which links intersectional identities (sociology), migrant entrepreneurship (entrepreneurship), and acculturation (psychology) to reveal a fresh perspective of migrant entrepreneurship, which extends beyond its overexploited economic impact and brings new perspectives to understanding migrant entrepreneurship as a vehicle of acculturation.

The findings revealed *a paradox of acculturation,* whereby some of these highly educated Romanian female migrant entrepreneurs, who shared experiences of discrimination as Romanians, pursuing assimilation through mainstream strategies. Previous empirical evidence touching upon the *paradox of social inclusion*, in particular, suggests either that higher education is associated with less discrimination (Flores, 2015) or that higher educated migrants, despite feeling discriminated against, are more likely to experience social inclusion, if their country-of-origin identity is less visible in the host country (Steinmann, 2019).

These research findings stand out because almost half of these women, who are highly educated and felt discriminated against as Romanians, also pursued assimilation in British society. Through mainstream entrepreneurship, they have chosen to distance themselves from this social stigma by speeding up their process of socio-cultural learning, through which they hope to achieve belonging and later on social inclusion in the host society.

Additionally, these research findings contradict those in the only known published study to investigate the acculturation of Romanian migrants in the UK (Pantiru and Barley, 2014). Specifically, Pantiru and Barley's (2014) study held that Romanian

women are more likely to be socially integrated than their men counterparts, who are more likely to experience social segregation. Contradicting Pantiru and Barley's (2014) findings, this study reveals that the female migrant entrepreneurs interviewed experience social segregation, whilst their men counterparts make social inclusion claims. Significant methodological differences between the two studies can explain these contrasting differences, starting with the sample populations: migrant entrepreneurs vs migrants in general. Moreover, as opposed to the previous study's quantitative methodology, this study's qualitative IPA approach has allowed for a deeper understanding and explanation of the complex phenomenon of acculturation, which can hardly be explained through the standardised survey answers Pantiru and Barley (2014) themselves acknowledged.

Additionally, these two studies differ in the historical times they cover. Specifically, Pantiru and Barley (2014) focused on the period before Romanians' full access to the UK labour markets, starting in January 2014, whilst this investigation took place between 2017-2021, when they had the opportunity to exercise their full EU citizenship rights in the UK. The lack of corroborating research findings between these two studies is justified by their focus on two different historical times, samples with different socio-economic profiles, and the use of different research methods.

Because the Romanian community is the second-largest EU migrant community in the UK (ONS, 2019), the social segregation experienced and enabled through enclave entrepreneurship strategies by these women entrepreneurs is not inherently wrong. This strategy offers them a great opportunity to become entrepreneurs in their own right and with minimum risk by employing enclave resources and serving their co- nationals. (Wu, Schimmele, and Hou, 2012). However, this acculturation outcome is considered a milestone in these female migrant entrepreneurs' journeys of becoming socially included and not an end in itself (Gioia and Patvardhan, 2012; Leitch and Harrison, 2016). Their claims reveal their hopes, their *longing to belong*, relying on entrepreneurial plans to break out of their enclave, by expanding their enterprises into the multicultural mainstream.

A novel research finding and one of this study's key contributions is the perspective

of the *migrant entrepreneurship acculturative multiplier effect*. Through their different entrepreneurship strategies, these migrant entrepreneurs become economic contributors, job creators, community role models, custodians of bi-cultural values, promoters of entrepreneurship standards and practices, as well as agents of change, thereby enabling and influencing the acculturation of multiple stakeholders, besides their own. By representing and having access to the second-largest community of EU migrants in the UK (ONS, 2019) and through everyday entrepreneurship social interactions, their impact extends beyond the immediate and personal economics of their enterprises. Through daily social interactions mediated by different entrepreneurship strategies, they engage themselves, their employees, their customers, and business partners in a valuable socio-cultural and entrepreneurial learning journey, which influences their socio-cultural knowledge and awareness, from which wider society can benefit in the longer term.

Paraphrasing the Keynesian economic multiplier effect (Keynes, 1936), from which the idea of a multiplier effect originated, this acculturative multiplier effect implies that entrepreneurship-driven social interactions between diverse enterprise stakeholders increased their acculturation opportunities more than the individual social interactions outside the enterprise have the potential to do. Resonating with Glaeser et al.'s viewpoint (2003), these aggregated social interactions enabled by migrant entrepreneurship overstate individual elasticities.

Given this novel perspective of the migrant entrepreneurship multiplier effect, this study challenges the overall Western universalism and top-down view of integration, thus responding to the recent call for a disaggregated research agenda and policies (Vertovec, 2020). It promotes the need for a shift from an inclusive approach to a more heterogeneous one to acculturation and migrant entrepreneurship. This disaggregated approach to acculturation and migrant entrepreneurship policies is important because it supports the fulfilment of the social and entrepreneurial potential embedded within super-diverse Britain. These policies could prove critical during these historical times when the underutilised socio-economic wealth potential fostered by the diverse communities of migrants and migrant entrepreneurs could

become an important driver for Britain’s socio-economic recovery.

CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND REFLECTIONS

7.1. Introduction

This last chapter's focus is to conclude this study, detailing its areas of originality, its contribution to knowledge, limitations, and future research directions.

It starts with addressing the aim and the research questions in a summary of the findings, which have been integrated into this study's extended conceptual framework. In light of this overview of the London-based Romanian migrant entrepreneurs' (LREs) cognitive and behavioural experiences of acculturation through entrepreneurship, the discussion highlights the areas of originality and its theoretical, empirical, methodological, policy, and practical contributions. Further, the research limitations are acknowledged, and opportunities for future research are identified. This section is followed by a critical assessment of the venues of knowledge dissemination approached to increase this study's impact. Finally, this chapter also includes a critical assessment of the trustworthiness of the research process and personal reflections of this doctoral journey. For this reason, unlike the rest of the chapters, I write the reflective sections of this chapter in the first person.

7.2. Extended conceptual framework: a summary of the research findings

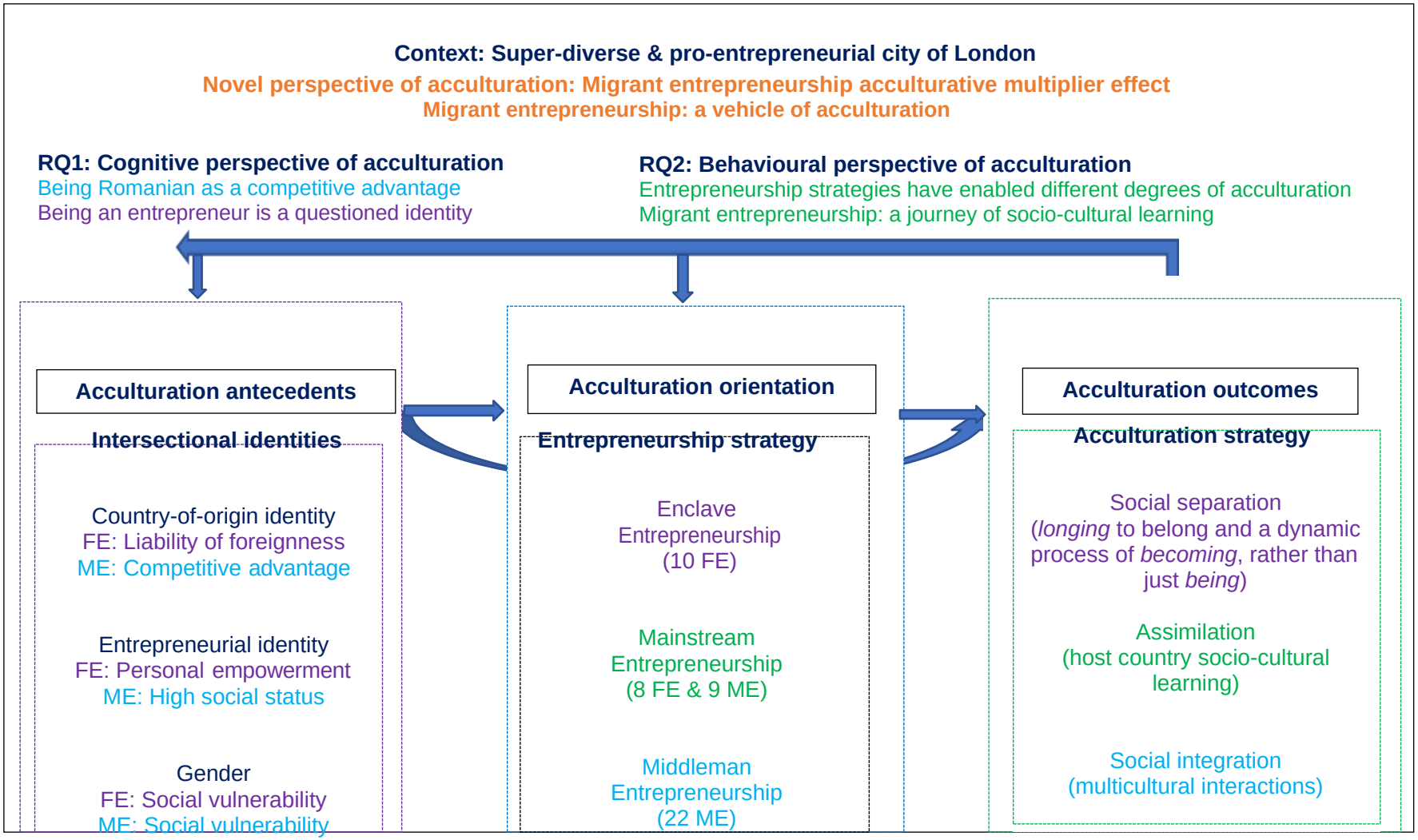
> *"I know Romanian entrepreneurs encourage their employees to take this journey (of acculturation) by supporting them through practical tips and role modelling. Perhaps the role of Romanian entrepreneurs in the UK is much greater than many have imagined, expanding beyond their everyday economic activities because of their multiplier effect, home and here." (Female Entrepreneur 18)*

This extract from the data embeds the essence of how these migrant entrepreneurs

experience acculturation through entrepreneurship, which fulfils this IPA interdisciplinary study's aim. Overall, these migrant entrepreneurs have portrayed acculturation as a dynamic, complex, and heterogeneous journey, sharing an interest in their becoming and belonging as well as a concern for others. This social dimension of their entrepreneurship has exposed its role as a vehicle of acculturation for themselves and for other stakeholders. The magnitude of entrepreneurship's social impact has revealed a fresh, unexpected, acculturative multiplier effect, which challenges the default image of precarity dominating the literature on Eastern European migrant entrepreneurs (Vershinina and Rogers, 2019).

An overview of this study's research findings is captured in the diagram below. This comprehensive conceptual framework provides a visual representation of this work's interdisciplinary concepts and the research findings associated with each of the two research questions. These findings are succinctly summarised below, having been interpreted and discussed in great detail in Chapters Four and Five of the analysis included in this doctoral study.

Diagram 3. The Extended Conceptual Framework



As set out in Chapter One, this study investigated how London-based Romanian migrant entrepreneurs (LREs) experience acculturation through entrepreneurship. To achieve this aim, the above conceptual, interactive, and interdisciplinary framework was designed to support the contextualised IPA inquiry into the cognitive and behavioural perspectives of acculturation of the 49 interviewed LREs.

Their responses revealed acculturation as a contextualised, dynamic and heterogeneous process of *becoming and belonging* through social-cultural learning. Many acculturation journeys were exposed as experiences of social inclusion, whilst others described feeling socially segregated or assimilated. Their intersectional experiences as London-based Romanian migrant entrepreneurs and their entrepreneurship strategies influenced their participation in the host society and their cultural maintenance, thereby shaping their acculturation. Their authentic and insightful accounts of experiences are presented below by revisiting each research question, which guided this IPA study's inquiry.

7.2.1. The cognitive perspective of acculturation: how do intersectional identities impact upon London-based Romanian migrant entrepreneurs' experiences of acculturation? (RQ1)

To address this question, understanding how participants' country-of-origin, entrepreneurship, and gender identities impact upon their acculturation in London was pursued. To delayer the intersectionality lens, this research question was supplemented with three sub-questions addressing each of these intersectional identities:

RQ1a: How does country-of-origin identity impact upon London-based Romanian migrant entrepreneurs' experiences of acculturation?

RQ1b: How does entrepreneurial identity impact upon London-based Romanian migrant entrepreneurs' experiences of acculturation?

RQ1c: How does gender impact upon London-based Romanian migrant entrepreneurs' experiences of acculturation?

These migrant entrepreneurs revealed rich, contextualised, and transformative experiences of acculturation. As uncovered by addressing this first research question, their cognitive perspective of acculturation drew on Crenshaw's intersectionality lens (1991, 2019) to explore the layered view of these *complex journeys of longing for belonging* and *becoming, rather than just being*. It is through this lens that gendered nuances of mixed and contradictory meanings of what it means to be *Romanian migrant entrepreneurs in London* have been uncovered by the interviewees.

Firstly, being Romanian in the UK revealed gender-driven contradictory meanings. On the one hand, these women entrepreneurs experienced it as a liability of foreignness; an emotional reminder of the overall negative image of Romanian migrants in the UK. On the other hand, for their male counterparts, this identity was experienced as a competitive advantage.

Secondly, they associated their entrepreneurship identity with deep feelings of personal and social empowerment and even upward social mobility. However, whilst MEs ascribe to this identity high social status and social empowerment, which they align with the competitive advantage associated with being Romanians, women entrepreneurs shared contradictory feelings of personal empowerment and low self-efficacy. They shared a personal and bi-cultural struggle to identify themselves with "true" entrepreneurs. Their entrepreneurship identity exposed conflicting feelings of being "technically entrepreneurs" by the British expectations but failing to meet Romanian expectations of being "true" entrepreneurs. This dualism of bi-cultural meanings left them feeling confused by the different bi-cultural meanings of this "masculine" identity.

Their gender identity revealed experiences of social vulnerabilities for both women and men. This finding was not surprising, given the social stigma and low entrepreneurial self-efficacy these female entrepreneurs previously shared and which conveyed nascent cognitive acculturation, whereby these women still *long to belong*. By contrast, the male entrepreneurs' feelings of social vulnerability against the host hegemonic masculinity were unexpected. These findings contradict the empowerment experienced as Romanian entrepreneurs.

These diverse claims revealed that these migrant entrepreneurs' intersectional identities were products of the context and their agency, each prioritised based on its suitability to meet situated social expectations of the host society. While continuously adjusting and prioritising their intersectional identities, they described how they learned and incorporated new cultural meanings to overcome their liability of foreignness and, thus, to belong in the host context. This dynamic "becoming" reinforced the transformative nature of their identities, as enablers or barriers to these migrant entrepreneurs' cultural learning and participation in the host society.

Despite the importance of all three identities in shaping these migrant entrepreneurs' journeys of acculturation, they prioritised and celebrated their entrepreneurship identity as the acculturative jigsaw piece with the most agency and potential to achieve social inclusion in the host country. Thanks to its potential for upward social class mobility and social inclusion and thanks to enabling the entrepreneurs' agency, most of the participants portrayed the entrepreneurship identity as worthy of its top position in the informal hierarchy of identities. Their entrepreneurship identity became the pillar of their cognitive acculturation, empowering them and allowing them the recognition and the freedom to shape who they want to be.

Overall, these acculturation journeys expose these identities as transformative and transformable, ever-changing at the junction of socio-economic and cultural forces of the super-diverse and pro-entrepreneurial host context. They define these entrepreneurs' sense-making of who they are and who they want to become, constantly engaged in a dynamic process of adjusting, justifying, defending, and celebrating their intersectional identities. The identities' various contextualised meanings justify these migrant entrepreneurs' decision to prioritise them according to their suitability in situated circumstances.

Many of these migrant entrepreneurs described feeling socially integrated thanks to their entrepreneurial identity, whilst others felt either assimilated or socially segregated owing to their Romanian one. This repertoire of emotional experiences exposed their cognitive perspectives of acculturation through the intersectionality lens as complex, dynamic, and along heterogeneous paths. These migrant entrepreneurs actively negotiate, justify, defend, and prioritise their intersectional identities, exposing assimilationist paths towards "acceptable otherness" or

segregationist journeys to shelter themselves from the social stigma of being Romanians or on journeys of social inclusion grounded in celebrating their diversity. Regardless of where they found themselves in their acculturative journey in the UK at the time of their interview, they shared their commitment to pursuing social integration, portrayed as the opportunity to enjoy full socio-economic benefits as Romanian migrant entrepreneurs in London.

This study's extended conceptual framework presented above also emphasises the relevance of the behavioural perspective of acculturation for these migrant entrepreneurs. This interdisciplinary link between migrant entrepreneurship and socio-psychological aspects of acculturation has been formalised and pursued when addressing the second research question.

7.2.2. The behavioural perspective of acculturation: how do the entrepreneurship strategies impact upon London-based Romanian migrant entrepreneurs' experiences of acculturation? (RQ2)

Overall, the responses pertaining to this research question revealed that behavioural acculturation was not a straightforward journey, but rather, a contextualised and dynamic one. Members of the sample group portrayed it as an empowering, yet challenging journey, at the junction of entrepreneurship strategies and the super-diverse and pro-entrepreneurial British context.

This perspective of acculturation revealed the heterogeneity of these experiences and entrepreneurship strategies. From mainstream entrepreneurship and experiences of acculturative assimilation (8 female entrepreneurs and 9 male entrepreneurs) to enclave entrepreneurship and social segregation (10 female entrepreneurs) or finally, to middleman entrepreneurship and social inclusion (22 female entrepreneurs), these accounts of acculturation were remarkably diverse, complex, and authentic. These research findings resonate with the gendered kaleidoscope of feelings communicated by these migrant entrepreneurs when sharing their experiences of cognitive acculturation.

No matter what stage in their acculturation process, these migrant entrepreneurs are in, their claims revealed that acculturation and social inclusion matter for them. Despite that, some shared experiencing segregation or assimilation, whilst others talked about feeling socially included in super-diverse British society. However, they all remained hopeful in having the opportunity of becoming full socio-economic participants in the host society. Their hope for social inclusion revealed that their role as Romanian migrant entrepreneurs extended beyond entrepreneurship economics into the social realm.

Their behavioural perspective of acculturation revealed a rather unexpected, fresh perspective of migrant entrepreneurship and particularly Eastern European migrant entrepreneurship in the UK. It showed the novel *migrant entrepreneurship multiplier effect,* which challenges the Eastern European migrant entrepreneurship's widespread image of precarity, articulating a fresh perspective of migrant entrepreneurship. This migrant entrepreneurship multiplier effect showed the magnitude of the social role and image of migrant entrepreneurship as a vehicle of acculturation. These research findings inform entrepreneurship as a complex, acculturative phenomenon, which has enabled and motivated these migrant entrepreneurs, their employees, and other stakeholders to pursue and achieve different degrees of acculturation in the UK, from social segregation to assimilation and ultimately social inclusion. The following section outlines this study's areas of originality.

7.3. This study's areas of originality

This study's contribution to knowledge ranges from theoretical and empirical contributions to the interdisciplinary literature, migrant entrepreneurship, psychology scholarship, methodological research and practice, and more ambitious contributions to the development of diversity-supporting policies.

The discussion of this study's research findings, which was the focus of Chapters Four and Five of this doctoral thesis, revealed its originality and its contribution to diverse streams of literature, practice, and policy (Catling and Butt, 2016). Following Phillips and Pugh's (2010) criteria, this study's originality is demonstrated through a

critical and reflective analysis of its fresh empirical and theoretical findings and the novelty of its methodological tools that contribute to the interdisciplinary and methodological bodies of literature.

(1) For this interdisciplinary study, the disciplines of psychology (Berry, 1997, 2003, 2005), entrepreneurship (Bonacich, 1973; Evansluong, Ramirez-Pasillas, and Nguyen Bergstrom, 2019; Portes, 1981), and sociology (Crenshaw, 1991, 2019) were brought together to address an acknowledged gap in the social dimension of entrepreneurship (Mago, 2020) and to explore this fresh, interdisciplinary understanding of acculturation through entrepreneurship.

(2) This study's methods of *e-sampling via Facebook*, the *typology of non-verbal communication* and barter protocol are examples of methodological originality. The e-sampling via Facebook has proved to be an efficient e-sampling technique for this study. It has shown social media's potential for expanding cross-cultural research and widening the research canon.

(3) The *typology of non-verbal communication* supports the IPA analysis of this study. This approach advances the research analysis agenda by creating a practical analysis tool and a protocol for probing non-verbal language. Illustrative examples of these tools' methodological relevance have been discussed in the Research Design Chapter of this thesis.

(4) *The ethical bartering recruitment protocol* designed to support the interviewees' post-interview request to fairly trade their participation in the study for researchers' business expertise. This recruitment research practice materialised in a full research paper, accepted for the upcoming British Academy of Management Conference 2021. It designed an ethical bartering recruitment protocol as a means to overcome the lack of ethical guidance on this research practice.

Illustrative examples of these tools' methodological relevance have been discussed in the Research Design Chapter.

These originality areas further support this study's contribution to knowledge, as discussed in the next section of this chapter, by revisiting the extended conceptual model.

7.4. Contribution to the knowledge

This study's contribution to knowledge draws its areas of originality discussed above and its interpretative phenomenological and contextualised intersectional approach. Specifically, it relates to its fresh, interdisciplinary perspective of acculturation through entrepreneurship and its e-sampling, non-verbal analysis methodological tools and the ethical bartering recruitment protocol, which are detailed below:

(1) The cognitive perspective of acculturation, which shows the interplay between intersectional identities of country-of-origin, entrepreneurship, and gender identities, and their significant impact and dynamic role in these migrant entrepreneurs' experiences of acculturation.

(2) The behavioural perspective of acculturation, which demonstrates the complexity of these contextualised and complex journeys of acculturation, where migrant entrepreneurship has become through its strategies an important vehicle of different degrees of acculturation in the host country.

(3) The methodological gaps regarding sampling using social media platforms, specifically e-sampling via Facebook, the practice of embodied analysis, which focuses on the analysis of non-verbal alongside verbal communication and the ethical bartering recruitment protocol.

7.4.1. Theoretical contribution

This study's interdisciplinary focus drew attention to the importance of acculturation, particularly in today's increasing globalisation and mass migration, by investigating how migrant entrepreneurs' intersectional identities and their entrepreneurship strategies impact upon their experiences of acculturation in super-diverse and pro-entrepreneurial London society. By marrying concepts from the disciplinary fields of

sociology, psychology, and entrepreneurship, this research has contributed to the contextualised discourse in migrant entrepreneurship and acculturation literature in several ways:

(1) It provides an in-depth, fresh, and contextualised perspective of acculturation through entrepreneurship;

(2) It advances understanding of how intersectional identities impact on the acculturation of migrant entrepreneurs, given the plethora of heterogeneous meanings and emotions revealed.

(3) It advances understanding of how entrepreneurship strategies impact on the acculturation of migrant entrepreneurs.

Many studies have explored acculturation either from a universalist (Berry, 2011) or mixed embeddedness perspective (Barberis and Solano, 2018; Jones et al., 2014; Kloosterman, 2010). This doctoral study contributes to the interdisciplinary literature by building an interactive conceptual framework that demonstrates the importance of other concepts, such as intersectional identities and entrepreneurship strategies, in understanding acculturation. This interactive and interdisciplinary conceptual framework has exposed fresh and dynamic perspectives of acculturation, demonstrating that these journeys are heterogeneous rather than universalist (Vertovec, 2020), contextual rather than abstract (Welter et al., 2020), and transformative rather than static (Berry et al., 2011).

Testimony to its interdisciplinary contribution, this study has revealed the significant, transformative impact that the intersectional identities of country-of-origin, entrepreneurship, and gender has had upon the acculturation of these migrant entrepreneurs. This fresh cognitive perspective of acculturation demonstrates this study's contribution to interdisciplinarity regarding migrant entrepreneurship and the increasing body of intersectional research (Crenshaw, 1991; 2019; Villares-Varela and Essers, 2019).

This approach demonstrates that, within the unique frame of the Social Identity (Tajfel and Turner, 1979) and Optimal Distinctiveness Theories (Brewer, 1991), these intersectional identities took on a "dual character", bridging the personal

"sense of self" (Knights and Willmott, 1989) and social identity (Hogg and Terry, 2000). The reconciliation of country-of-origin, entrepreneurship, and gender identities has created bi-cultural tension between meanings and expectations, specifically for the female entrepreneurs interviewed, motivating these participants to prioritise and increase their visibility and legitimacy as empowered and agentic entrepreneurs (Al-Dajani and Marlow, 2013), whilst playing down the social stigma, vulnerabilities and de-skilling (Datta and Gailey, 2012; Munkejord, 2017) felt by some as Romanians. Intersectionality has enabled the exploration of this repertoire of synchronous emotions and experiences, revealing that gender is a way of performing entrepreneurship (Phillips and Knowles, 2012; Yousafzai, Fayolle and Saeed, 2019) and a way to acculturate (Berlepsch, Rodríguez-Pose and Lee, 2018). This perspective reinforces gender's contextualised meanings of discrimination and privileges (Fathi, 2017). The manifestation of these meanings became the basis for gendered-nuanced acculturation patterns shared by these women (i.e. social segregation and assimilation) and men migrant entrepreneurs (i.e. social inclusion). This informs the debate on gender as a way of doing business instead of being (Phillips and Knowles, 2012), which is prevalent in the entrepreneurship and migrant entrepreneurship literature (Vershinina and Rogers, 2019).

This study's behavioural perspective of acculturation has advanced the knowledge on migrant entrepreneurship as a social phenomenon (Dheer, 2018; Evansluong, Ramirez-Pasillas and Nguyen Bergstrom, 2019; Mago, 2020) instead of its traditional image as a purely economic phenomenon (Chang, Wong and Myeongcheol, 2014; Kushnirovich, 2015). It has revealed migrant entrepreneurship as a vehicle of acculturation, playing a significant role in these migrant entrepreneurs' journeys of achieving different degrees of acculturation in the UK. Their enclave (Portes, 1991), middleman (Bonacich,1973), or mainstream entrepreneurship strategies (Evansluong, Ramirez-Pasillas and Nguyen Bergstrom, 2019) enabled different degrees of acculturative social interactions, which exposed a broad spectrum of experiences, from social inclusion to assimilation and social segregation.

Overall, these findings contribute to the interdisciplinary literature, by revealing the link between acculturation, intersectionality, and migrant entrepreneurship. They

demonstrated the importance of the emergent interconnectivity between the three intersectional identities (i.e. country-of-origin, gender and entrepreneurial identities) and the social-cultural and entrepreneurial context in understanding the acculturation through entrepreneurship. Hence, acculturation becomes a journey of how these migrant entrepreneurs experience who they are and become and how their entrepreneurial behaviours contribute to their acculturative belonging in the host society.

7.4.2. Empirical contribution

This IPA study has also made empirical contributions that enrich Eastern European migrant entrepreneurs' knowledge in the UK, specifically, acculturation experiences through entrepreneurship. The analysis of their entrepreneurship strategies, intersectional identities, and their impact upon their acculturation in the UK has shown an important link between acculturation and migrant entrepreneurship.

Firstly, the work contributes to acculturation by revealing a fresh, complex, and interdisciplinary view of these participants' lived experiences. As shown in Chapter Four, these migrant entrepreneurs' acculturation was deeply anchored in their meanings and manifestations of their intersectional identities of country-of-origin, entrepreneurship, and gender identities.

Despite being representative of this new "circular" intra-Eu migration wave (Engbersen and Snel, 2013; King et al., 2017), these migrant entrepreneurs did not fit the bill of the "commuter migrant" (Engbersen and Snel, 2013; Morosanu, 2018). They shared pursuing acculturation with a mindset for settling long-term in the UK, rather than living "in-between" home and host countries, as found with other circular migrants (Constant, 2020; Vershinina and Rodgers, 2019). Their acculturation also differs from previous post-colonial migration waves since most of these migrant entrepreneurs shared experiencing social inclusion instead of the expected assimilation (Paraschivescu, 2016; Vertovec, 2020). Rather than drawing upon the dominant indigenous culture, which publicised their unacceptable diversity and social stigma (Burrella and Schweyher, 2019; Morosanu, 2018), they relied on the pro-entrepreneurial and super-diverse characteristics of British society (GEM, 2020;

Pardo, 2018; Vertovec, 2020), prioritising their intersectional identities to meet host social expectations. This contextual, cognitive approach of grounding their journeys in the context and prioritising their intersectional identities based on their social suitability and expectations enabled many of them to transform the liability of foreignness into a competitive advantage (Gurau, Dana and Light, 2020).

Chapter Five discussed how these migrant entrepreneurs' entrepreneurship strategies impacted upon their acculturation. This line of inquiry advanced a novel perspective of migrant entrepreneurship as a vehicle of acculturation not only for these migrant entrepreneurs but for other stakeholders. This finding contradicts the default image of precarity that Eastern European migrant entrepreneurship has been associated with (Vershinina and Rogers, 2019), thus challenging its unidimensional representation as a vehicle of economic survival, estranged at the margins of entrepreneurship (Shubin and Dickey, 2013). This study has shown the importance of migrant entrepreneurship in understanding super-diversity, which reinforces the salience of recognising and "fully embrace(ing) (its) heterogeneity and differences" (Welter et al., 2017:7) in research, practice, and policies.

By revealing the migrant entrepreneurship acculturation multiplier effect, these findings have demonstrated not only migrant entrepreneurship's key role in the process of acculturation of these migrant entrepreneurs, as an important vehicle of acculturation, but perhaps more importantly, its acculturation multiplier effect and, thus, its key role in the acculturation of multiple stakeholders. This novel finding of a migrant entrepreneurship acculturation multiplier effect differs from the traditional Keynesian perspective of the multiplier effect, which focuses on spill-over investments addressing market disequilibrium (Galambos and Amatori, 2016) or the multiplier effect supporting the understanding of women entrepreneurs' well-being (Lepeley, 2020). By contrast, these migrant entrepreneurs experience this acculturative multiplier effect as an enabler of positive role models and upward social mobility, socio-economic and cultural value-adding exchanges, and social interactions, all of which ultimately affect the acculturation of multiple and diverse enterprise stakeholders.

This finding feeds into Vertovec's (2020) recent call for more disaggregated integration policies and for Kapasi and Rosli's call (2020) to research

entrepreneurship and, by extension, migrant entrepreneurship in a more impactful manner. It revealed how these migrants' entrepreneurship strategies embedded an important acculturative role and potential which has been hidden under their traditional economic dimension (Evansluong, Ramirez-Pasillas, and Nguyen Bergstrom, 2019; Mago, 2020).

Lastly, the experiences of acculturation through entrepreneurship shared by the 49 London-based Romanian migrant entrepreneurs interviewed for this study are a small but important part of the second-largest community of EU migrants in the UK (ONS, 2019). Despite the authenticity of their accounts of experiences comprising a kaleidoscope of personal intersectional emotions and entrepreneurial practices, they are not entirely unique. Whilst this would appear to be the first study on London- based Romanian migrant entrepreneurs, some of these remarkable experiences might share some similarities with other communities of migrant entrepreneurs across the globe (Gurau, Dana and Light, 2020; King and Lulle, 2016; Lassalle et al., 2020; Lassalle and Scott, 2018).

However, what is notable and exciting with these migrant entrepreneurs is that whilst they are representatives of the new generation of circular migrants, commuting between home and host countries (Engbersen and Snel, 2013; King et al., 2017), their lives have remained grounded in the UK context, pro-actively pursuing belonging and becoming as a part of their entrepreneurship and ultimately, their acculturation journey in the UK. Their lived experiences of acculturation through entrepreneurship contribute to the diversity of migrant entrepreneurship and the mosaic of acculturation, expanding the understanding of social diversity in its becoming and belonging journey.

This study has shown the important role of acculturation, and social inclusion as globalisation increasingly becomes the norm. It highlights the complexity of these heterogeneous journeys and the overdue need to address the lack of policies that value and support super-diverse societies, like Britain (Vertovec, 2020).

Overall, these findings reinforced this study's empirical contribution by revealing that acculturation is a dynamic and contextualised social learning process and participation. They also demonstrate that migrant entrepreneurship is a vehicle of

acculturation, and thus, it is far from being an abstract, monocultural, and mono-disciplinary experience.

7.4.3. Methodological contribution

This study's methodological contribution is threefold. Firstly, during this study's sampling stage, a new e-sampling technique via Facebook was designed to gain access to this hard-to-reach community of migrant entrepreneurs when sampling using other traditional sampling techniques, such as derived rapport snowballing, chain reference, and event, proved ineffective.

This study's new e-sampling technique via Facebook designed to sample participants for face-to-face interviews materialised in a fully peer-reviewed paper at the BAM Conference of 2019 (Chitac and Knowles, 2019). Hence, this study has contributed to advancing the social-media-driven research agenda, which holds tremendous yet the underutilised potential for researchers, thanks to its time, resource, and reach efficiencies regarding sampling hard-to-reach communities (Ling et al., 2018; Waling et al., 2020; Waring et al., 2018).

Secondly, this study has advanced the methodological repertoire of interpretative analysis by creating a typology of non-verbal language and a suitable analysis protocol to support the inclusion of non-verbal communication. This embodied approach to the data (Bispo and Gherardi, 2019), which researchers have largely ignored because of a lack of clear guidance (Bispo and Gherardi, 2019; Clarke, Cornelissen, and Healey, 2019; Hitchcock and Onwuegbuzie, 2020), helped in exploring the participants' lived experiences beyond the spoken words, revealing rich and insightful emotions hidden in plain sight in their non-verbal communication (Chitac, Knowles and Dhaliwal, 2020).

This typology of non-verbal language addressed the widespread omission of engaging with 65-93% of what is communicated non-verbally by relying only on the participants' verbal utterances (Birdwhistell, 1970, cited in Bonaccio et al., 2016; Eaves and Leathers, 2018) and in informing an in-depth interpretative analysis of the participants' experiences (Bispo and Gherardi, 2019; Eaves and Leathers,

2018). This methodological contribution materialised in a full peer-reviewed research paper presented at the British Academy of Management Conference in 2020, which received the “Best full paper award” in the Methodology Track at that Conference. Detailed accounts of these methodological contributions in the Research Design Chapter of this doctoral study and the full conference papers are included in Appendices A and C.

Thirdly, this doctoral thesis contributes to methodological literature by advancing barter knowledge as an ethical recruitment research practice. Despite being an everyday exchange and a common research practice (Resnik, 2019), researchers are largely underreporting it due to its lack of clear ethical guidance, which renders ethically suspect of undue influence and coercion (Whittle et al., 2014).

This study addresses this gap by creating an ethical, analytical barter protocol, used to respond to the post-interview requests from 16 research participants to exchange an average of 60 minutes of their time for participating in a qualitative interview with an average of 2.25 hrs (145 minutes) of business counselling and translation services delivered by the researcher. This protocol ensures an ethical practice of barter. Furthermore, it increases the awareness that researchers should not beg for their data and *fairly* collect their data through a win-win collaborative relationship with the research participants (Largent and Fernandez Lynch, 2017). A detailed account of the barter protocol created and used in this study is captured in the Full Conference Paper submitted for the upcoming British Academy of Management Conference 2021.

7.4.4. Policy contribution

In addition to theoretical, empirical, and methodological contributions detailed in the previous sections, this study’s research findings have revealed evidence-based insights with relevant implications for developing disaggregated migrant entrepreneurship and social integration policies. Both perspectives of acculturation explored by this study have exposed these migrant entrepreneurs’ challenges and opportunities; how they made sense of who they were and who they needed to become to be recognised as London-based Romanian migrant entrepreneurs in the

UK. Their heterogeneous journeys shed light on the importance of developing disaggregated policies in addressing the gender gap and the heterogeneity of the diversity in acculturation and migrant entrepreneurship (Kamberidou, 2020; Vertovec, 2020; Villares-Varela and Essers, 2019).

These first-hand experiences of migrant entrepreneurship and acculturation strategies offer valuable insights that expand the understanding of British society's socio-cultural heterogeneity. Firstly, thanks to its intersectionality lens, which included gender alongside the other two identities, this study has revealed that migrant entrepreneurship and acculturation as gendered ways of doing business and acculturating. Whilst some of these findings reinforce previous empirical evidence (Phillips and Knowles, 2012; Vershinina and Rodgers, 2019; Villares-Varela and Essers, 2019), they also offer valuable insights from a community of migrant entrepreneurs that has yet to catch the attention of the research community, despite being members of the second-largest one of EU migrants in the UK (ONS, 2019), thus representing significant social participants and contributors to London's super-diverse society (Prado, 2018; Vertovec, 2019). Their experiences have shown that the universalist approach to diversity, which persists across multiple fields, from policy to research, practice, and education, is unfit and misrepresentative of today's socio-cultural and entrepreneurial reality (Vertovec, 2020; Zahra and Wright, 2016).

These migrant experiences of acculturation through entrepreneurship reinforced the socio-cultural and economic importance of understanding and supporting Britain's diversity as a valuable and valued heterogeneous social fibre. This fresh perspective would be beneficial for migrants, migrant entrepreneurs, and the broader host community. The provision of adequate entrepreneurial and acculturation policies that include this new generation of migrants and migrant entrepreneurs (Hogberg et al., 2016) becomes increasingly relevant in managing super-diversity and promoting social equality and inclusion in the context of increasing migration (Evansluong, Ramirez-Pasillas, and Nguyen Bergstrom, 2019; Pantiru and Barley, 2014), not only in the UK, but also, across the whole of Europe (Vervotec, 2020).

Since most current policies reflect policy-makers convictions, rather than being based on the relevant empirical evidence, the entrepreneurial talent and acculturation of the diverse communities of migrants remain unsupported and

delayed, covered by one-size-fits-all universalist policies, as *aggregated units of diversity* (Vertovec, 2020; Wiklund, Wright and Zahra, 2019). By addressing this social paradox of aggregated diversity, these policies would benefit from these research findings, which, alongside other studies on migrant entrepreneurs and acculturation (Dheer, 2018; Evansluong, Ramirez-Pasillas and Nguyen Bergstrom, 2019), promote "the shift from thinking in *homogeneous* units to thinking in terms of *heterogeneous* units", to encourage "a general openness to cultural diversity" and "a shift from a *holistic* approach… to a *disaggregated* approach that discards the notion of assimilation as a single process, considers multiple reference populations and envisions distinct processes occurring in different domains" (Brubaker 2001: 543-543, cited in Vervotec, 2020). These research findings have brought forward the complexity of authentic experiences, the intersectional dynamics of the identities, and the entrepreneurship strategies that became direct manifestations of acculturation in the super-diverse and pro-entrepreneurial British context.

These fresh perspectives of cognitive and behavioural acculturation challenge the current universalist policy façade. They reinforce the need for a gender perspective in these policies, which would acknowledge, value, and support the women migrant entrepreneurs by offering a legal, representative platform to become and grow as entrepreneurs and thus, prevent future underutilisation of talent and socio-economic contribution to society (Brieger and Gielnik, 2020). Despite their low self-efficacy and visibility in comparison to the ideal male entrepreneur (Ahl and Marlow, 2012; Villares-Varela and Essers, 2019), continuously challenging social norms as others before and alongside them, these first-time women entrepreneurs demonstrated a positive impact on the host society, by creating jobs, contributing to their communities as enablers and promoters of socio-economic and cultural exchanges (Brieger and Gielnik, 2020). Local entrepreneurship and cultural mentorship schemes to regional and national policies could support their entrepreneurship, growth, and acculturation.

Such programmes and policies could positively impact upon and address some of the most complex challenges that these migrant entrepreneurs shared experiencing and which, despite their authenticity, are echoing the challenges experienced by diverse communities of migrant entrepreneurs across the globe (Evansluong,

Ramirez-Pasillas and Nguyen Bergstrom, 2019; Vershinina and Rodgers, 2019; Villares-Varela and Essers, 2019). This is the context and the diversity that policymakers should prioritise, by creating a socio-economic and cultural framework that supports the acculturation and development of social wealth for the whole of British society.

Future policies must be planned based on empirical evidence, such that they could better represent and support super-diverse British society (Wiklund, Wright and Zahra, 2019). This disaggregated and evidence-based focus is increasingly important, particularly during these challenging times with the impact of Brexit and the Covid-19 pandemic still in the balance. Given the economic downturn, the underutilised and untapped potential of migrant entrepreneurship should be enabled to play its acknowledged role as a driver for economic development and social change (Barberis and Solano, 2018; Brieger and Gielnik, 2020; Evansluong, Ramirez-Pasillas and Nguyen Bergstrom, 2019) through policies that value the diversity of all communities of migrants, which make up 37% of the British social fibre (ONS, 2019).

Despite these research findings being context-bound, the two phenomena of acculturation and migrant entrepreneurship are global. Thus, this acknowledged need for alignment between policies and empirical evidence persists as a socio-economic issue across borders (Wiklund, Wright and Zahra, 2019). It would benefit broader society to develop evidence-based policies representing the heterogeneous diversity that defines many global societies, like Britain (Pardo, 2018). This approach is critical in promoting and enabling equitable, full socio-economic participation for all society members (Berry and Ward, 2016; Vervotec, 2020; Ward et al., 2018).

7.5. Implications for practice and education

This study's contextualised, interdisciplinary findings have several implications for practice and education. Firstly, by sharing their behavioural perspective of acculturation, these migrant entrepreneurs exposed the culturally unfit universalist entrepreneurial programmes, which drove most of them to become entrepreneurs by doing; learning entrepreneurship on the go. Migrant entrepreneurs like Male

Entrepreneur 4, Male Entrepreneur 5 and Male Entrepreneur 15 talked about longing to become more socially included and to expand their business into the mainstream but emphasised not having the required entrepreneurial knowledge to do so. Whilst all seemed to agree that entrepreneurship is an empowering achievement, it cannot be ignored that for these first-generation migrant entrepreneurs with limited entrepreneurial knowledge and few role models, having access to a culturally sensitive platform to share best practices and becoming part of an entrepreneurial network is key to surviving and growing. Such platforms and networks would enable them, particularly the segregated enclave entrepreneurs, to grow their enterprises outside the enclave whilst also motivating other migrants to engage in entrepreneurship.

Secondly, most of the women entrepreneurs interviewed have undertaken education in the UK in addition to their undergraduate studies completed in a European University outside the UK (Appendix 5). They also emphasised the significant role of entrepreneurship education in the British educational system, as shared by the Female Entrepreneur 1, Male Entrepreneurs 6 and 17 on their journeys to becoming entrepreneurs. Since they valued education, and they exhibited a keen interest in seeking entrepreneurial programmes to better themselves. This reinforces the importance of including such entrepreneurship- practice-oriented insights when designing entrepreneurial programmes that support the underutilised talent of Britain's diversity. This approach is critical, particularly for first-time migrant entrepreneurs whose entrepreneurial journeys are experienced as complex webs of socio-economic challenges and opportunities.

Culturally sensitive entrepreneurial workshops organised by educational, institutional, and associated organisations are some venues accessed by some of these migrant entrepreneurs, which could be effective ways of sharing practical entrepreneurial information. Taking advantage of such opportunities would help narrow the gap between theory and practice and facilitate impactful research that could benefit multiple stakeholders (Dimov et al., 2020; Kapasi and Rosli, 2020; Tourish, 2019), starting with the current and future entrepreneurs themselves.

Thirdly, despite many of these migrant entrepreneurs relying on their community of co-nationals whose needs some of them served or whose resources many of them

explored, by revealing migrant entrepreneurship as a vehicle of acculturation for them and other enterprise stakeholders, they also showed the importance of a diverse enterprise. Whilst for many, their heritage community remains a significant source of competitive advantage, this was strengthened with a blend of other diversity and British natives. This approach allowed these entrepreneurs and their stakeholders to speed up their acculturation process by learning through these ad-hoc, intra-enterprise social interactions. Such culturally sensitive and diversely blended programmes and educational venues would support migrant entrepreneurs in extending their socio-cultural and entrepreneurial knowledge and networks in the host country (Evansluong, Ramirez-Pasillas and Nguyen Bergstrom, 2019).

These venues would help migrant entrepreneurs design and test successful entrepreneurial ideas thanks to their understanding and interaction outside their enclave. They would be beneficial in facilitating their acculturation, while providing them with the entrepreneurship support required to succeed and grow, from which the broader society could benefit in the long term. When migrant entrepreneurs become active and recognised members of the local community and wider society, they also increase their socio-cultural and entrepreneurial learning opportunities and, thus, their opportunities for acculturation and social inclusion in the host country. Therefore, such venues are important for achieving social inclusion and in successfully developing their enterprises.

This study's contribution to knowledge is various. In the previous sections, it has been demonstrated how its research findings contributed theoretically and empirically to the interdisciplinary literature and migrant entrepreneurship debates on gender contextualised research and its social impact. Their evidence-based characteristics informed on the heterogeneity of these acculturation experiences, exposing the need for disaggregated integrative and migrant entrepreneurship policies to which they can contribute. Its iterative approach to research practice materialised in three methodological contributions, an e-sampling technique via Facebook, a non-verbal topology of communication and an ethical barter recruitment protocol.

Last but not least, this study has contributed to education and practice by exposing migrant entrepreneurship as a vehicle of acculturation and reinforcing the need for culturally sensitive and diverse networks that would support their socio-cultural and

entrepreneurial learning, which all social participants will benefit long term. The table below presents a summary of this study's contributions to knowledge, outlining their relevance for research, practice, and policy.

Table 9. This study's contribution to knowledge

Areas of contribution to knowledge	Research findings
Theoretical contribution	***(1)*** Provided in-depth ***interdisciplinary and contextualised perspectives of acculturation.*** (2) Advanced the understanding of how ***intersectional identities impact upon the acculturation*** of migrant entrepreneurs, given the plethora of heterogeneous meanings and emotions they revealed. These cognitive insights informed the debate on intersectionality, demonstrating that these participants' three identities were transformative and in a dynamic process of becoming. (3) Advanced the understanding of how ***entrepreneurship strategies impact upon the acculturation*** of migrant entrepreneurs, revealing complex, dynamic and heterogeneous journeys of acculturation. These behavioural insights inform the debates on gender in migrant entrepreneurship (Vershinina and Rodgers, 2019) and on the underexplored and underutilised social potential of migrant entrepreneurship (Brieger and Gielnik, 2020; Evansluong, Ramirez-Pasillas and Nguyen Bergstrom, 2019).

2. Empirical contribution	(1) ***Being Romanian in the UK*** was experienced as a "***competitive advantage*"** rather than a "liability of foreignness". (2) ***Migrant entrepreneurship acculturation multiplier effect,*** *as* a vehicle of acculturation for multiple stakeholders. This study went beyond the traditional economic image of migrant entrepreneurship (Chang, Wong and Myeongcheol, 2014; Kushnirovich, 2015), to explore, as have a handful of scholars, its social dimension (Arrighetti, Bolzani and Lasagni, 2014; Barberis and Solano, 2018; Evansluong, Ramirez-Pasillas and Nguyen Bergstrom, 2019) and perhaps more importantly, its acculturative impact.
3. Methodological contribution	(1) The design of a new ***e-sampling technique via Facebook*** as a source for recruiting research participants for qualitative interviews (Chitac and Knowles, 2019). (2) Creating a ***typology of non-verbal communication*** and a suitable analysis protocol to support the embodied analysis of the interview data (Chitac, Knowles and Dhaliwal, 2020) (3) Creating an ***ethical barter protocol*** as an ethical recruitment research practice (Chitac, Knowles and Dhaliwal, 2021). Despite being an everyday exchange and a common research practice (Resnik, 2019), researchers are primarily underreported due to its lack of clear ethical guidance, which renders ethically suspect of undue influence and coercion (Whittle et al., 2014).
5. Policy contribution	(1) Since these research findings report lived experiences of acculturation and migrant entrepreneurship strategies, they offer valuable

	insights for influencing a shift from the holistic view embedded in current policies, which reflect policy-makers convictions instead of the empirical evidence (Vertovec, 2020; Wiklund, Wright and Zahra, 2019), towards promoting "a *disaggregated* approach that discards the notion of assimilation as a single process, considers multiple reference populations and envisions distinct processes occurring in different domains" (Brubaker 2001: 543-543, cited in Vervotec, 2020).
4. Implications for practice & education	(1) The majority of these first-time migrant entrepreneurs learned entrepreneurship by doing, with many proactively seeking educational or practice-based programmes to further their entrepreneurial careers. These experiences inform of the importance of creating ***culturally sensitive entrepreneurship programmes*** to support the development and growth of these migrant enterprises. (2) Given that many of these migrant entrepreneurs have undertaken some form of education and their undergraduate degrees completed in EU universities, these research findings inform on the importance of designing entrepreneurial educational programmes that disseminate knowledge in a culturally sensitive manner and celebrate diversity and increase cultural awareness. (3) Since it has been demonstrated that migrant entrepreneurship is a vehicle of acculturation, enabling socio-cultural learning and participation, their participation in ***diverse networks*** would increase their opportunities to acculturate and

	expand their migrant enterprises (Evansluong, Ramirez-Pasillas and Nguyen Bergstrom, 2019).

7.6. Research limitations

This qualitative study has fulfilled its aim of deepening our understanding of how London-based Romanian migrant entrepreneurs experience acculturation through entrepreneurship, by prioritising and amplifying participants' authentic voices, following the IPA research tradition (Alase, 2017; Noon, 2018; Smith, 2011; 2019; Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). Despite the value of these research findings of turning these participants' "lived experience into a textual representation of its essence" (Van Manen, 2001:36) being fulfilled, they remain context-and time-bound, with no intent to test any hypothesis, which would contradict the interpretative phenomenological approach.

This doctoral thesis has been focused on the members of the second-largest community of EU immigrants in the UK (ONS, 2019), namely London-based Romanian migrant entrepreneurs. Despite offering authentic lived experiences of acculturation, this focus solely on these migrant entrepreneurs could be further expanded to explore other enterprise stakeholders' experiences, such as the employees, business partners, customers, and local entities. Their importance has been highlighted despite their passive presence in this study. This approach to understanding acculturation would further strengthen the heterogeneity and disaggregated case for programmes and policies promoted by this study.

This study's findings have revealed valuable, but time-bound experiences, which had taken place during times of great historical significance for the EU and the UK (2018-2020), when Romania became a full EU member, and Brexit, which marked the UK's separation from the EU. A longitudinal, post-Brexit comparative perspective

would help understand how the migrant entrepreneurs' experiences of acculturation change during important historical times and across different communities of migrant entrepreneurs in the UK. This would build on how different political changes impact social and economic wealth for societies. In addition, this longitudinal approach would increase the opportunity to track acculturative experiences as they happen instead of relying on participants' recollection of such experiences.

This thesis has shown that London's super-diverse and pro-entrepreneurial context significantly impacted how these participants experienced acculturation. While London was considered the most appropriate context for this study, due to hosting the biggest concentration of Romanian migrant entrepreneurs and the metrolopis that the largest community of Romanian migrants in the UK call home ( ) it will be beneficial to expand this inquiry into less diverse contexts outside London. This future research direction might include a more demographically and business diverse sample, which would be representative not only for London society, but also, of the broader British society. Such an inquiry into the wider British diversity would strengthen the socio-cultural and economic impact of such an inquiry not only at the community level, but also, at the national one.

These limitations are also opportunities for future cross-cultural, interdisciplinary research, strengthening the evidence-based knowledge needed for practice and policy development to support and value diverse societies like Britain and other global ones.

7.7. Future research suggestions

This thesis has shown that interdisciplinary research has provided the opportunity for fresh and insightful perspectives regarding the investigated phenomenon. More interdisciplinary studies and interactive conceptual frameworks are needed to understand how acculturation is experienced in today's super-diverse societies, like Britain (Vertovec, 2020). This approach of stepping outside the traditional and mono-disciplinary boundaries has enabled new and meaningfully disruptive new knowledge to emerge.

Migrant entrepreneurs interviewed portrayed acculturation as an agentic expression of their potential and an empowering opportunity for socio-cultural and entrepreneurial learning. These findings demonstrate the need to rethink acculturation in a contextualised and dynamic manner, which celebrates diversity and heterogeneity, rather than simply tolerating it.

Future studies should take the opportunity to expand this IPA investigation to include different communities of migrants in similar or different super-diverse contexts. Such empirical findings are essential for the development of effective programmes and policies from which migrants and local alike would benefit long term (Vertovec, 2020; Zentai, 2020)

This study went beyond the economic, traditional image of migrant entrepreneurship to expose the unexpected migrant entrepreneurship acculturative multiplier effect. Future inquiries would benefit from exploring this fresh and novel perspective in cross-cultural contexts, using a comparative approach between migrant entrepreneurs and local entrepreneurs. This approach could reveal the influence that the current universalist programmes and policies have on these two communities of entrepreneurs.

This study's research findings should be considered in the context of these limitations and these opportunities for future research. Nonetheless, these findings provide fresh, valuable insights into the complex, dynamic, and heterogeneous acculturation experiences of 49 LREs, contributing to the existent stream of literature on acculturation, migrant entrepreneurship, and intersectionality, whilst also informing on fresh, contextualised, and interdisciplinary perspectives of acculturation.

The following sections take on a reflective approach to assess the impact and the quality of the research process, followed by personal reflections of this doctoral journey. For this reason, and unlike the rest of the chapters, I write the reflective sections in the first person.

7.8. Shaping and sharing: this study's impact

This chapter's main body has addressed this study's contribution to knowledge, emphasising its varied theoretical, empirical, methodological, and practical implications to more ambitious ones, such as its contribution to disaggregated policy development. Reflecting upon my commitment as an IPA researcher to amplifying the voices of these migrant entrepreneurs, I have come to realise that, as researchers, we have the responsibility to strengthen our contribution to knowledge by disseminating it (Catlin et Butt, 2016; Kapasi and Rosli, 2020). For me, this meant carefully planning to turn around my PhD's "shelf-bending" destiny common to most PhD studies (Dunleavy, 2003:237) by sharing with the broader academic community some of this study's contributions, as detailed above.

This study's methodological contributions have been disseminated as thoroughly reviewed British Academy of Management Conference papers throughout this research journey. Full details of these conference papers can be found in the Research Design Chapter and Appendices A, B, C and D. Additionally, all the research outputs associated with this doctoral study have been uploaded to research dedicated platforms, such as the university's portal to ResearchGate and Google Scholar. This exposure has increased the visibility of this study's contribution to knowledge, by encouraging scholars from the global community to engage, assess and make valuable recommendations. According to Kapasi and Rosli's (2020) suggestions, such proactive engagement with the worldwide research community is a great venue to disseminate knowledge and increase research quality. This direct exposure and open dialogue foster all these aspects.

I prepared an article on the analysis of nonverbal communication, awarded the Best Full Paper in Methodology Track, British Academy of Management (BAM) Conference of 2020, for publishing in the BAM journal in collaboration with my PhD supervisory team. However, I am fully aware of the lengthy publishing process and the potential challenges of being accepted.

Upon successfully completing my PhD, this study's research findings will be disseminated through different social media platforms to the community of migrant entrepreneurs who were the focus of this study and to other communities of

entrepreneurs. Additionally, because this is the first known study to focus on Romanian migrant entrepreneurs in the UK, some representatives of this community of entrepreneurs and the Romanian Embassy in London manifested their interest in organising post-research events to support disseminating this knowledge. These invitations will be sent out after the completion of this research journey. These are some of the great opportunities for disseminating the findings impactful research, but also an opportunity to give back to the community whose members entrusted their experiences and believed in this study.

Cumulatively, all these strategies of disseminating these research findings have the potential to promote and increase the visibility of this study's contribution to knowledge, which has been detailed in the previous sections of this chapter. I agree with Sharma and Bansal (2020) that encouraging this research practice of "we", manifested as conferences, research websites, future journal outputs, and social media platforms, provides great opportunities for disseminating knowledge and strengthening the impact of this study.

In the next section of this chapter, I share my reflective journey to complete this doctoral thesis.

7.9. Quality and trustworthiness

Throughout this study, I reflectively guided my research passion and built up my research skills to bring valuable and impactful knowledge to the broader research community, committed to ethical, trustworthy, and transparent research practice. With every step I took towards fulfilling the aim of this study, I understood that without a "we" research practice (Kapasi and Rosli, 2020) and co-knowledge creation approach (Berger, 2013), I would not have been able to amplify the voices and the stories entrusted to me by those 49 London-based Romanian migrant entrepreneurs, who consented to take part in this study.

This study's quality and trustworthiness have been strengthened following Smith's (2011) and Yardley's (2000, 2008) principles, which focus on achieving credibility, remaining sensitive to the context, being committed to transparency, and assessing

the impact of the research findings. The table below presents a summary of the principles applied to ensure this study's quality and trustworthiness.

Table 10. This study's quality criteria and reinforcing strategies

Credibility	• Direct involvement throughout the research process • Triangulation of data sources • Diligent and reflective research practice and reporting
Sensitivity to context	• Understanding of the relevant interdisciplinary literature • Acknowledging the socio-economic and multicultural context
Commitment to rigour	• Within-method triangulation • Reviews from the supervisory and conference reviewers • Reflective research practice
Transparence & coherence	• Diligent reporting • Iterative approach • Reviews from the supervisory and conference reviewers
Impact & importance	• Assessment of the literature, empirical evidence and policy gaps • Reviews from the supervisory and conference reviewers

Source: Smith (2011) and Yardley's (2000, 2008) criteria for validity in qualitative research

This study's *credibility* was reinforced through my direct involvement at all stages and by reporting with diligence the research process (Yardley, 2008; Yin, 2015); by critically and reflectively assessing the suitability of the research methods used or by creating new ones, better suited to address the aim of this study (i.e. topology of non-verbal communication); by preserving the authenticity of participants' experiences of acculturation (O' Dwyer and Bernauer, 2014; Smith, 2011) by amplifying their voices, enabled by the process of knowledge co-creation and reflection (King and Learmonth, 2015; Kulik, 2020); and through an active and consistent collaboration with the supervisory team, conference reviewers and participants (Czarniawska, 2016; Tuffour, 2017). *The sensitivity to context* and the

importance of this study have been ensured by a critical and rich overview of the relevant literature and a contextualised approach.

Following these principles of quality, I have shown the relevance and rationale of the research topic, addressing the knowledge gaps identified across the three different literature streams brought together by this study. Additionally, during the piloting stage of the research process and also throughout the interviewing stage, participants were encouraged through the semi-structured interviews to share authentic experiences and what was truly relevant for them from an acculturation perspective.

The critical overview of the interdisciplinary knowledge of acculturation through migrant entrepreneurship, although limited and fragmented, shaped the relevant theoretical framework used as the foundation for this study's conceptual model. The overview of the interdisciplinary literature is rich and comprehensive through the diversity of the sources represented, from peer-reviewed journals, official statistics, and reports, which predicated my understanding of the interdisciplinary concepts of acculturation, migrant entrepreneurship, and intersectionality. I have reported with transparency how the rationale and the research questions of this interdisciplinary study were formulated against the surveyed literature and previous empirical evidence. I critically and reflectively assessed how this study relates to the established body of knowledge and how its research findings would fulfil originality requirements and contribution to knowledge expected from a doctoral thesis.

Throughout the face-to-face interviews, I adopted an empathetic and participant-centred approach. This allowed for the gap between the initial research intent and participants' interests to converge, materialising in a semi-structured interview guide, which allowed the interviewees to control their story's narrative, which best communicated and preserved the authenticity of their experiences concerning the broader research topic. This principle has been fundamental in fulfilling this IPA study's requirements, that of amplifying the participants' voices, whilst preserving their experiences' authenticity and uniqueness (Alase, 2017; Smith, 2011).

I have reinforced my commitment to rigour through reflective practices of within-method triangulation. Using within-method triangulation, which combined interview,

verbal and non-verbal data, field notes, and participants' business and demographic profiles, I pursued a deeper understanding of participants' acculturation experiences. This research practice also allowed for proper management of my bias, as these data sources acted as constant reminders of my interviewees' voices.

I constantly reflected on my research practice, by critically assessing my decision-making process, my positionality as a partial insider to the researched community, and its impact on the overall research practice and findings. I found this form of reflection to be valuable in fulfilling my overall commitment to high research quality, because it shaped a more impactful research practice of "we" (Kapasi and Rosli, 2020). This practice was reinforced by disseminating this study's knowledge as it evolved, using different platforms, from the university website to conferences, to online communities of researchers, such as ResearchGate and google scholar.

Similar to Shepherd's scholarly advice (2015), this constant and multivocal dialogue with diverse stakeholders, including the migrant entrepreneurs interviewed, narrowed the divergence and the divide between researcher and participants (Carton and Ungureanu, 2017; Ram et al., 2013; Shepherd and Gruber, 2020). This also enabled a trust-based collaboration, which motivated these participants to share detailed and personal perspectives of acculturation and migrant entrepreneurship, from which they, other communities of entrepreneurs, policymakers, and broader society could benefit (Dimov, Schaefer, and Pistrui, 2020).

The constant engagement with my supervisors, internal examiner, BAM conference reviewers, and the ResearchGate audience, was a significant driver of my development as a PhD researcher and delivered valuable sources of new research perspectives. Some of these collaborations became genuine opportunities "to unlock(ing) learning [… and] beyond the project (team) level to other levels of experience–individual, organisation, and society" (Raelin, 2001:11–12), which strengthened this study's quality (Kapasi and Rosli, 2020; Tikkamaki et al., 2016).

This study remains central to my journey of becoming a researcher and a constant reminder that research is an iterative, dynamic process of constant adjustment to ever-evolving research practices, to which we are all invited to leave our incremental

research print. This journey as a PhD researcher was as much about my skills and my resilience to see this work through as it was about the participants' generous entrusting of their experiences. It also involved the broader research community, who, together with my supervisors' and examiners' support, have recognised and encouraged early career researchers like myself.

7.9. Reflections

In this journey of becoming a researcher, I felt like "an author who writes from the midst of life experience where meanings resonate and reverberate with reflective being. "(Van Manen, 2014:390).

Van Manen's (2014) reflection resonates profoundly with my experiences as an early career researcher spread over four years of resilient hard work, which increased my research know-how and reinforced my professional and personal foundation. These changes have been as significant as this study's research findings. What started as an academic inquiry, a collection of ambitious words chosen to draft a research proposal to fulfil a knowledge gap and settle a personal curiosity trolling the Globe, trying to make sense of her status as an immigrant, increasingly became a personal and professional journey of becoming.

7.9.1. Becoming a researcher

My journey of becoming a researcher has been both humbling and exhilarating, unfolding like a puzzle of anxiety and triumphant wins. It was a journey of self and professional discovery growing from a student into a researcher, a journey lived as the process of "dynamism and flux" (Brown, 2010:173), which defined "what it means to be and identify (one)myself as, a researcher" (Su, Nixon and Adamson, 2010:88).

I stepped into the research arena with the passion and the curiosity to understand how immigrants like myself belong and become, taking on an ever-changing journey to find their place, their home, their identity in this world. I wanted to emerge myself

in the reality of being here and there, always alert and seemingly settled in a perpetual move that many migrants share across the world. I wanted to bring value to the researched community, and the broader research community, by revealing fresh perspectives of how the realities of acculturation and migrant entrepreneurship are lived. I started off convinced that there is a foolproof recipe for such inquiries and that this would be an exercise of "rigour and seriousness" (Trafford and Leshem, 2009:305), which I was familiar with as an investment banking professional.

However, I became the builder and the architect of this puzzle, facing a myriad of philosophical and methodological choices and gaps, which I had to address. Luckily, my passion for knowledge grew to be my best research ally, transforming knowledge gaps into research opportunities and valuable contributions to knowledge. Among these are creating a typology of non-verbal language, an e-sampling technique via Facebook, and the barter protocol. These have been some of this journey's highlights, giving the research community practical research tools.

During my doctoral journey, I learned that research is not simply an exercise of ticking some boxes, which takes you progressively along the best research practice path. It was about doing the right thing, iteratively adapting and developing the research repertoire of methods and methodologies to suit my research. It was about being present in my research, questioning, welcoming questions with an open mind, and understanding that this journey was one of becoming better and improving. This journey was carved by the resilience and kind support from dedicated professionals, from supervisors to examiners, peer-reviewers, and PhD colleagues who cheered me across the finish line.

My initial struggle of reflective detachment from what appeared to be a methodological safety net, helped me understand better my role and responsibility as a researcher in delivering ethical and trustworthy qualitative research. Resonating with Berry and Clair's (2011) research practice, in my journey of becoming as a person and researcher, I learned through the lens of reflectivity many facets to the world I was exploring, which transformed my struggles into a deeper understanding of who I was and who my participants were in our contexts.

I found myself questioning and critiquing myself, back and forth, between “reflexivity as recognition of self; reflexivity as recognition of the other; reflexivity as truth; reflexivity as transcendence” (Pillow, 2003: 181, cited in Pillow, 2015), until I understood and learned how to articulate and separate my worldview from my contribution to my research community.

This reflective approach has been critical to this doctoral journey. It helped me reserve not only my sanity during pandemic times, for it also helped me ensure a trustworthy study, by blending “thick and fine liminal lines of doing and questioning whether even to do and how to do research” (Pillow, 2015: 428), which empowered the research participants to share their experiences in the way they lived them. Reading through my field notes, conference papers, and interview data, I noticed how throughout this journey of becoming a researcher, with every interview and every experience I collected from each of the 49 interviews, I let go of my thoughts and ideas and learned to prioritise my participants’ experiences. This approach increased my awareness and understanding of what it means to be in the field, instead of looking from the outside in.

My research design choices have been justifiable and fit for purpose, some informing the call for a social media-driven research agenda (Kamp et al., 2019), others to promote an “embodied” analysis (Bispo and Gherardi, 2019), and others to inform the debates around intersectional and contextualised research approaches (Crenshaw, 2019; Jones et al., 2019; Rice, Harrison, and Friedman, 2019; Villares-Varela and Essers, 2019; Welter, 2020). All of these created opportunities for fresh research perspectives and findings.

It is through this diligent reflection and reflective approach (Kapasi and Rosli, 2020; Pillow, 2015) that I understood the research practice as an opportunity and a great responsibility. This influenced my critical thinking, thesis structure, decisional process, and confidence to take sensitive, yet valid research decisions. It defined my journey from being a student with an ambitious research proposal to becoming a confident, scholar-steward (Thompson and Walker, 2010), speaking with greater authority about my field, thus overcoming the apologetic and fragmented attitude (Littleton, 2017), with which I began my doctoral journey. Writing this thesis has been a liberating step of this journey, sprinkled with a kaleidoscope of emotional ups and

downs, which shaped my self-credibility and the credibility of my study, tested by conference audiences and experienced, dedicated supervisors.

Along this journey, I can see my progress, from adapting interview strategies and data analysis guides to creating a new non-verbal typology and e-sampling technique. This dynamic and iterative research journey helped me realise the great responsibility each qualitative researcher takes in representing the uniqueness and the authenticity of the participants, guiding the reader through a story that brings a fresh and valuable perspective of lived experiences of acculturation.

All in all, this jigsaw puzzle tells the story of how London-based Romanian migrant entrepreneurs experience acculturation in the UK, a story that enriches the research community and takes the reader on a journey that otherwise would have remained buried under a pile of stereotypes and social biases. This has been a story that preserves their authenticity and amplifies their voices, providing a slice from the narrative of Britain's super-diversity.

In particular, I accord with Heidegger (2011), his being-in-the-world analysis, to develop an engaged interpretation of entering the field. I experienced my fieldwork as being thrown into a world where I struggled at the beginning to make sense of me and my participants' positions across space and time amidst already existing structures, things, and practices (Van Manen, 2014).

Contradicting Mullins and Kiley's (2002) view, all these challenges and opportunities, which shaped this study and my journey, both personal and professional, made me feel that this PhD was my Nobel Prize. Throughout this 4-year journey, I have become empowered to see myself successfully fulfilling it, which started as a career ambition and it deepened into a passion for researching and creating, which has never left me.

7.9.2. Becoming as a person

"I see now that the path I choose through the maze makes me what I am. I am not only a thing, but also a way of being — one of many ways — and knowing the paths I have followed and the ones left to take will help me understand what I am becoming." (Keyes, Flowers for Algernon, 1966:141).

These words sum up the essence of my journey of becoming the person I am today. This study has been the biggest research commitment I have undertaken and one of the most challenging, yet proudest achievements. Becoming the person I am today felt like a track where joys and fears sometimes defined through fulfilling expectations and unexpected wins, whilst at other times they nurtured uncertainty and challenges; redefining who I am.

Throughout this journey, conventional ceilings that I was unaware of, carried around in my cultural luggage, were uplifted and thinned out, thus allowing the opportunities that lay ahead to be revealed, teasing my curiosity and passion for exploring in more depth the experiences shared; the realities presented. I grew increasingly aware of my biases and learned how to bracket them, allowing my participants' experiences to be amplified and preserving their authenticity. I reached the understanding, preached by other scholars, that becoming a researcher means knowing yourself (Pillow, 2003, 2015).

This doctoral study has been as much a professional journey as it was a personal one of finding myself, of growing and removing some cultural ceilings, which I had carried around for so long and which, like many of my interviews, I had to challenge head-on. During my fieldwork and throughout my PhD journey, I felt vulnerable and powerful, I fell many times, and I rose again, but I built the resilience, which took me to the end of this journey. I come to question my sanity, confused and contradicted about how best to prioritise my role as a researcher, as a mum, as a wife, as a daughter, as a mentor, and as a lecturer. I struggled, fell, and then rose again, full of hope that I have what it takes to complete this journey. In the darkest moments, questioning what was more important in my life, to finish this journey that I was so passionate about, to protect my son's sanity and mine during harsh Covid times, or to find a job that properly supports my family. I was lucky to find hope in the support

and kindness of my supervisors, Director of Studies, and dedicated academics from the British Academy of Management, who reassured me of the value that I bring to the broader research community. Their kindness and professional commitment lit up my journey, guiding me towards the finish line.

Whilst this has been my PhD journey, it has also been an important life one, isolated from the curious eyes during the prolonged pandemic lockdown, but rich in tears and fears and joys in the middle of my family, staring at my son, sometimes hopeful, sometimes lost, giving up at times, bouncing back other times, but always hopeful that one day I will be one of the lucky ones to complete my PhD. My son is waiting for that day as much as I am; he is hopeful, as much as I am! This research journey has been as much a journey of creating knowledge as it was one of self-discovery.

7.10. Conclusion

Like many generations of PhD researchers, I, too, am fulfilled to have completed this jigsaw puzzle, which “can only fully be appreciated when all the components are present and fitted together” (Trafford and Leshem, 2009:308). This doctoral thesis fulfilled its aim by providing fresh, valuable insights into the complex, dynamic, and heterogeneous acculturation experiences of 49 London-based Romanian migrant entrepreneurs. These insights contribute to the extant stream of literature on acculturation, migrant entrepreneurship, and intersectionality, whilst also informing on fresh, contextualised, and interdisciplinary perspectives of cognitive and behavioural acculturation.

The research findings have shown that acculturation is a complex, contextualised, and dynamic process, shaped by intersectional identities and entrepreneurship practices. These experiences' heterogeneity has exposed current migrant entrepreneurship programmes, integration policies, and research practice as unfit to represent and support super-diverse and pro-entrepreneurial societies like Britain because of their universalist discourse and their conviction-based foundation (Vertovec, 2020).

This study's research findings shed light on how intersectional identities and entrepreneurship strategies impact the acculturation experiences of 49 London-based Romanian migrant entrepreneurs. Motivated by a multicultural and pro-entrepreneurial context, these migrant entrepreneurs' experiences have revealed the novel perspective of a *migrant entrepreneurship acculturative multiplier effect*. This has reinforced the significance of migrant entrepreneurship's social, acculturative value, surprisingly not only for the migrant entrepreneurs interviewed but also for diverse and multiple stakeholders, including their employees, business partners, local authorities, customers, and broader British society.

As a PhD researcher, I hope that this fresh perspective of migrant entrepreneurship's acculturative multiplier effect will motivate future researchers to further explore this phenomenon's cross-cultural and longitudinal perspectives. This will allow for the formulation of disaggregated integration policies (Vertovec, 2020) and migrant entrepreneurship policies that value its socio-economic significance and impact (Evansluong, Ramirez-Pasillas and Nguyen Bergstrom, 2019; Mago, 2020). Through these first-hand experiences shared by members of different communities of migrant entrepreneurs, a solid foundation for future sustainable policies serving the London super-diverse and pro-entrepreneurial social fibre can be formed. Considering the increasing globalisation and, thus, mass migration, the need better to understand how these migrants and the locals engage in these socio- cultural exchanges, making sense of their super-diverse societies, how they take part and contribute to them, and how they ultimately become, thereby achieving acculturative belonging and social inclusion, is more pressing than ever.

The responses to these questions have far-reaching implications for the research community, community and governmental agencies, professional entrepreneurship organisations, policymakers, and migrants and nations' overall welfare.

In conclusion, I hope this study will further dialogues and fruitful debates about acculturation and migrant entrepreneurship, serving as a stimulating point for exploring diversity in a disaggregated, gendered, contextualised, and interdisciplinary manner that celebrates and values these differences.

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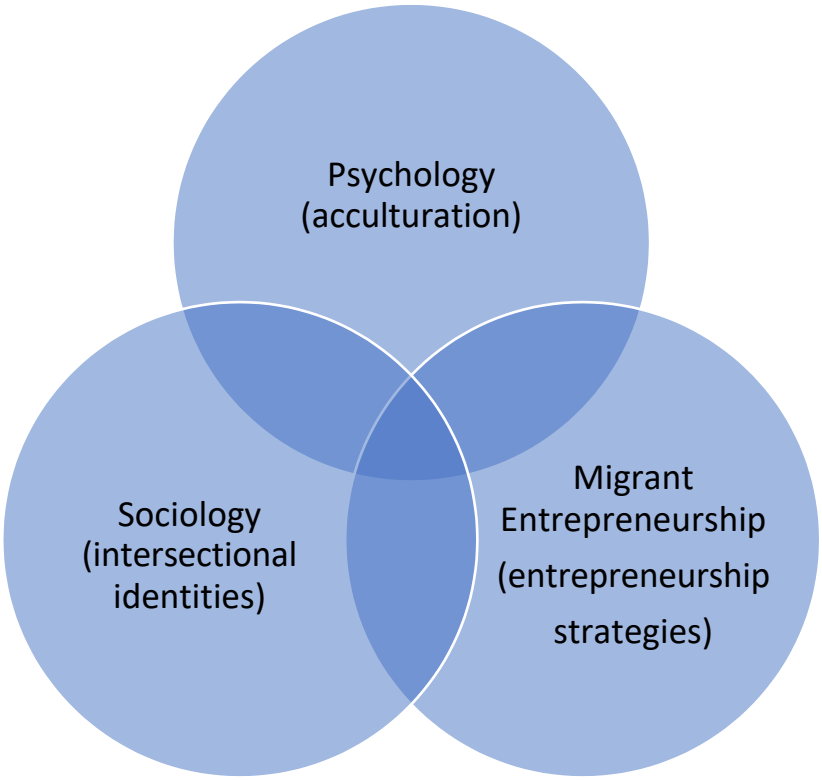
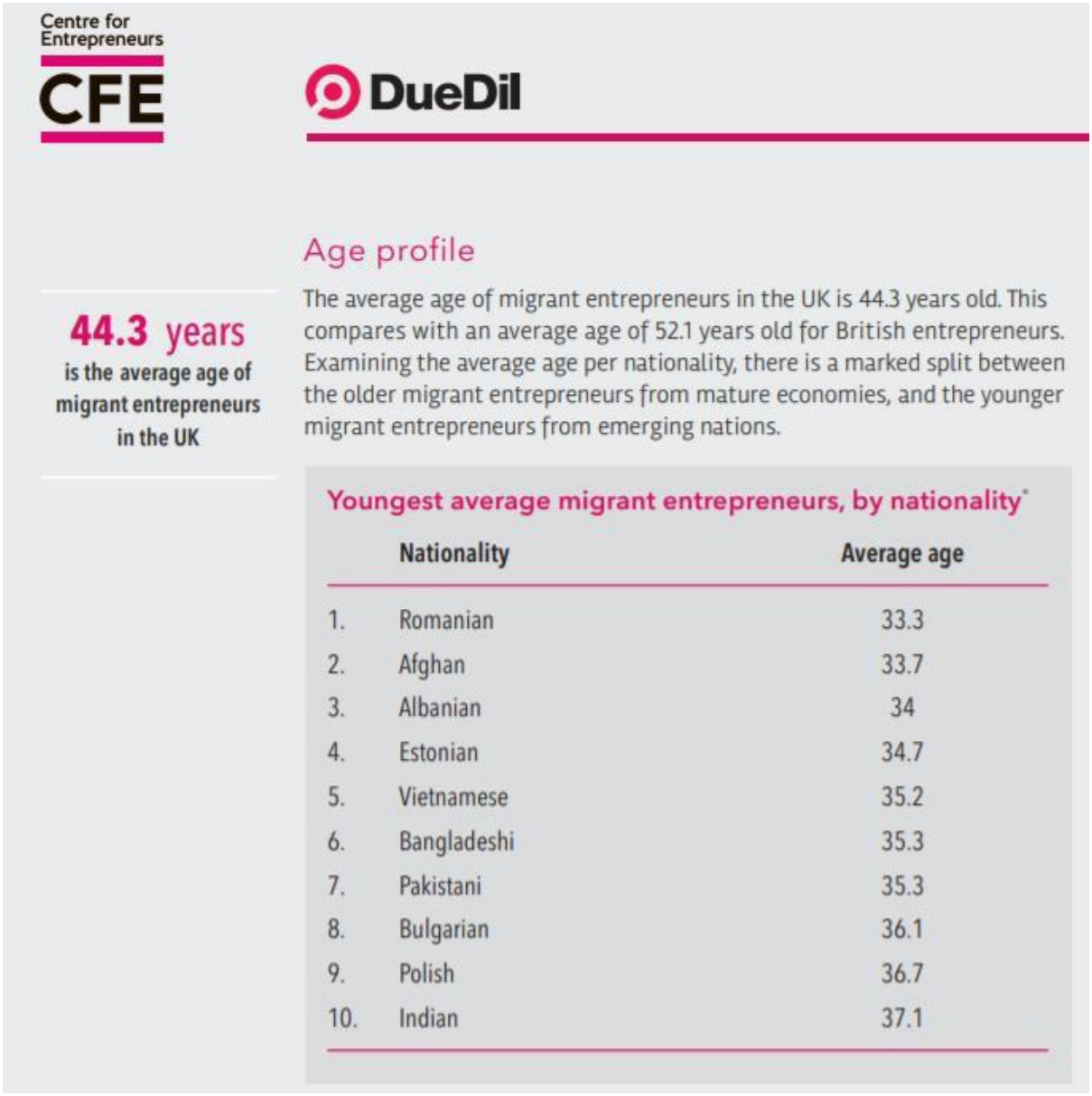
Appendices

Appendix 1. The interdisciplinary scientific locality of this study



Appendix 2. The profile of migrant e-entrepreneurs in the UK



Centre for Entrepreneurs
CFE

DueDil

Age profile

44.3 years
is the average age of migrant entrepreneurs in the UK

The average age of migrant entrepreneurs in the UK is 44.3 years old. This compares with an average age of 52.1 years old for British entrepreneurs. Examining the average age per nationality, there is a marked split between the older migrant entrepreneurs from mature economies, and the younger migrant entrepreneurs from emerging nations.

Youngest average migrant entrepreneurs, by nationality*

	Nationality	Average age
1.	Romanian	33.3
2.	Afghan	33.7
3.	Albanian	34
4.	Estonian	34.7
5.	Vietnamese	35.2
6.	Bangladeshi	35.3
7.	Pakistani	35.3
8.	Bulgarian	36.1
9.	Polish	36.7
10.	Indian	37.1

Source: Centre for Entrepreneurs Report, 2015

Appendix 3. Migration Observatory research media publications

Tabloids & Midmarkets	Broadsheets
The Daily Mail The Mail on Sunday	The Times The Sunday Times
The Sun The Sun on Sunday	The Daily Telegraph The Sunday Telegraph
The Express The Sunday Express	The Guardian The Observer
Daily Mirror Sunday Mirror	The Independent Independent on Sunday
Daily Star Daily Star Sunday	The Financial Times

Source*: Oxford Migration Observatory Report (2014). Bulgarians & Romanians in the British National Press: 1 December 2012 – 1 December 2013.*

Appendix 4. Top 20 nouns used by the British press publications in association with Romanian immigrants

Tabloids			Broadsheets		
Noun	Raw frequency	Normalised	Noun	Raw frequency	Normalised
side	21	9.03	abattoir	26	12.29
gang	19	8.17	migrant	16	7.57
abattoir	17	7.31	ambassador	13	6.15
criminal	13	5.59	gang	13	6.15
woman	13	5.59	immigrant	13	6.15
immigrant	13	5.59	authority	12	5.67
passport	11	4.73	woman	11	5.20
gypsy	11	4.73	beggar	9	4.26
beggar	10	4.30	horse	9	4.26
defender	10	4.30	orphanage	8	3.78
national	10	4.30	capital	8	3.78
slaughterhouse	8	3.44	supplier	7	3.31
ambassador	8	3.44	horsemeat	7	3.31
thief	8	3.44	citizen	7	3.31
authority	8	3.44	leu	6	2.84
minnow	7	3.01	girl	6	2.84
squatter	7	3.01	dictator	5	2.36
capital	7	3.01	parliament	5	2.36
keeper	7	3.01	soprano	4	1.89
stopper	5	2.15	slaughterhouse	4	1.89

Source: Oxford Migration Observatory Report (2014:12). Bulgarians & Romanians in the British National Press: 1 December 2012 – 1 December 2013.

Appendix 5. London-based Romanian migrant entrepreneurs' education

	F		F Total	M		M Total	Grand Total
	<36 years old	36 years & older		<36 years old	36 years & older		
	5	13	18	9	22	31	49
Of which, higher education completed	100%	54%	67%	67%	50%	55%	59%
Of which, educated in the UK	80%	77%	78%	44%	68%	61%	67%

Source: Researcher's fieldwork (2018-2019)

Appendix 6. The time-based perspective of this study's barter exchange

Participants' code	Highest level of education	SIC Industries	Bartering service	Bartering time in minutes
Male entrepreneur 1	Bachelor Degree	Consumer goods & services	Business analysis	75
Male entrepreneur 3	High School	Construction & Real Estate	Brainstorming business diversification	40
Male entrepreneur 4	Bachelor Degree	Consumer goods & services	Educational counselling	85
Male entrepreneur 5	Bachelor Degree	Management consultancy	Assessing the business website	50
Male entrepreneur 11	Master Degree	Consumer goods & services	Formulating a hiring ad	35
Male entrepreneur 14	High School	Consumer goods & services	Assisting with recruitment (designing interview questions)	45
Male entrepreneur 16	Bachelor Degree	Construction & Real estate	Assisting with recruitment (reviewing job applications)	45
Male entrepreneur 18	High School	Construction & Real Estate	Reviewing some presentations	270
Male entrepreneur 22	High School	Construction & Real Estate	Translate a contract	150
Male entrepreneur 29	Bachelor Degree	Construction & Real estate	Business brainstorming for a growth opportunity	150
Female entrepreneur 1	Master Degree	Consumer goods & services	Reviewing a business plan	130
Female entrepreneur 2	High School	Consumer goods & services	Business analysis for expansion	170
Female entrepreneur 3	High School	Consumer goods & services	Assessing venues for advertising	100
Female entrepreneur 4	Master Degree	Consumer goods & services	Document translation & recruiting & educational mentorship	430

Female entrepreneur 5	Bachelor Degree	Management consultancy	Assessment of a research proposal	160
Female entrepreneur 13	High School	Consumer goods & services	Assisting with recruitment (Interview questions, advert, and interviewing)	230
Total minutes				**2165**
Total hours				**36.0833333**

Source: Researcher's fieldwork (2018-2019)

Appendix 7. Research participant demographic profile

UNIVERSITY OF WESTMINSTER

Research Participant's Demographic Profile

First Name/Alias			
Country of origin			
Gender	M	F	
Age			
Highest level of education			
Education/training completed in the UK			
Preferred language for the interview	English	Other:	
Years of work experience	In the UK:	Other EU countries:	Home Country
Previous work experience	Field:	Position:	Duration:
Number of years of permanent UK residency	Up to 5	Between 6 to 10	Over 10 years
UK citizenship	Yes	No	Years:
First generation of immigrants in the UK	Yes	No	
Relevant, additional observations:			
Please make sure to include any demographic elements that you consider relevant.			

Note: please make sure that no more than one answer is chosen and, if there is an alternative answer, please include it in the "Relevant, additional observations" section.

Appendix 8. Research participant business profile

UNIVERSITY OF WESTMINSTER

Research Participant's Business Profile

Business legal form		
Business industry		
Business main services/products		
Operating years in the UK		
Number of owners		
Number of employees		
Nationality of the employees		
Entrepreneur	1st time	Multiple times
1st Generation entrepreneur in the family	Yes	No
Business owned in the UK	One	Multiple
Business owned in other EU countries	None	One/multiple
Primary market served	Ethnic market	British market
Business accounts over the past year	Active	Dormant
Relevant, additional observations:		
Please make sure to include any demographic elements that you consider relevant.		
IMPORTANT NOTE:		
I am committed to ensuring that this data will remain confidential and the anonymity of your identity and that of your business will be concealed.		
Thank you for your participation in this research.		
Iuliana Chitac, BA, MSc, Ph.D. student		
University of Westminster, London, UK		
w1654057@westminster.ac.uk /juliana.kitzak@gmail.com		

Note: please make sure that no more than one answer is chosen and that if there is an alternative answer, please include it in the “Relevant, additional observations” section.

Appendix 9. London-based Romanian migrant entrepreneurs' businesses (micro, small and medium-sized businesses)

	F		**F Total**	M		**M Total**	Grand Total
	<36 years old	36 years & older		<36 years old	36 years & older		
	5	13	**18**	9	22	**31**	49
Of which, running a Micro Business	100%	85%	89%	56%	38%	43%	59%
No. of employees	3.40	4.46	4.17	18.67	58.95	46.87	30.85

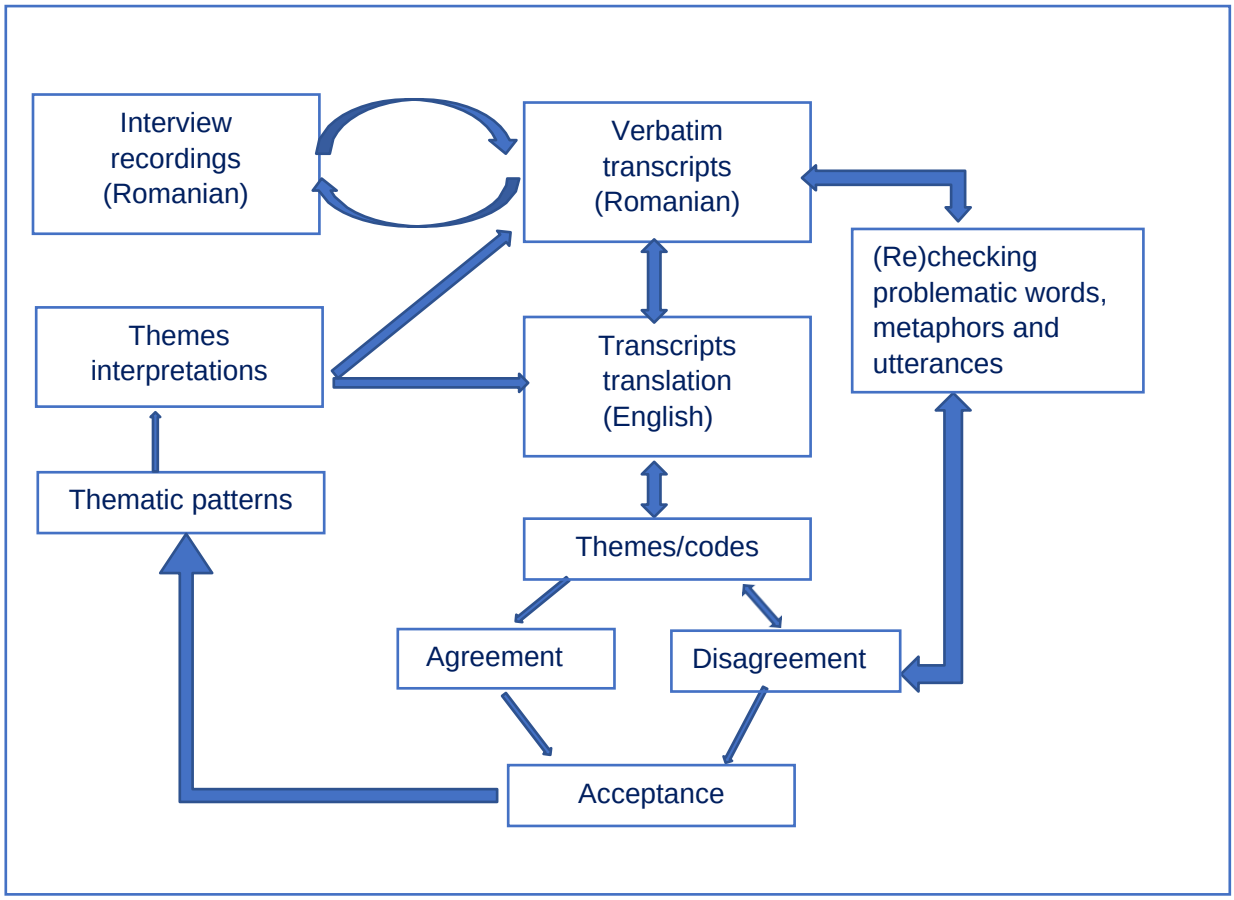
Source: Researcher's fieldwork (2018-2019)

Appendix 10. Interview guide

Interview Guide	
Research project title: Romanian immigrant entrepreneurship - a vehicle of acculturation in London, UK	
Interview topics	***General semi-structured questions***
Motivators f or migrating in London, UK	Tell me about your decision to emigrate to London UK
Personal background	Tell me about your background and your life before becoming an entrepreneur in London, UK
Motivators to become an entrepreneur	Tell me what motivated you to open your business in London, UK
Entrepreneurship strategies	Describe your business from an employer, product/service, and business network perspectives. Describe what role entrepreneurship/ entrepreneurial practices played in your acculturation/SI in the UK society?
Entrepreneurial identity	What does it mean to be an entrepreneur in the UK for you? Describe if and what positionality/social identity you perceive/think that entrepreneurship gives you in London?
Gender	Describe if and what challenges and benefits you experienced as a Romanian woman or man entrepreneur in London?
Country of origin	Describe if and how the fact that you are a Romanian entrepreneur shaped your entrepreneurship experience in London.
Social inclusion/acculturation	Describe what social inclusion means for you as a Romanian immigrant entrepreneur and your business in London, UK.
Lessons	Describe what have you learned from your journey as a Romanian

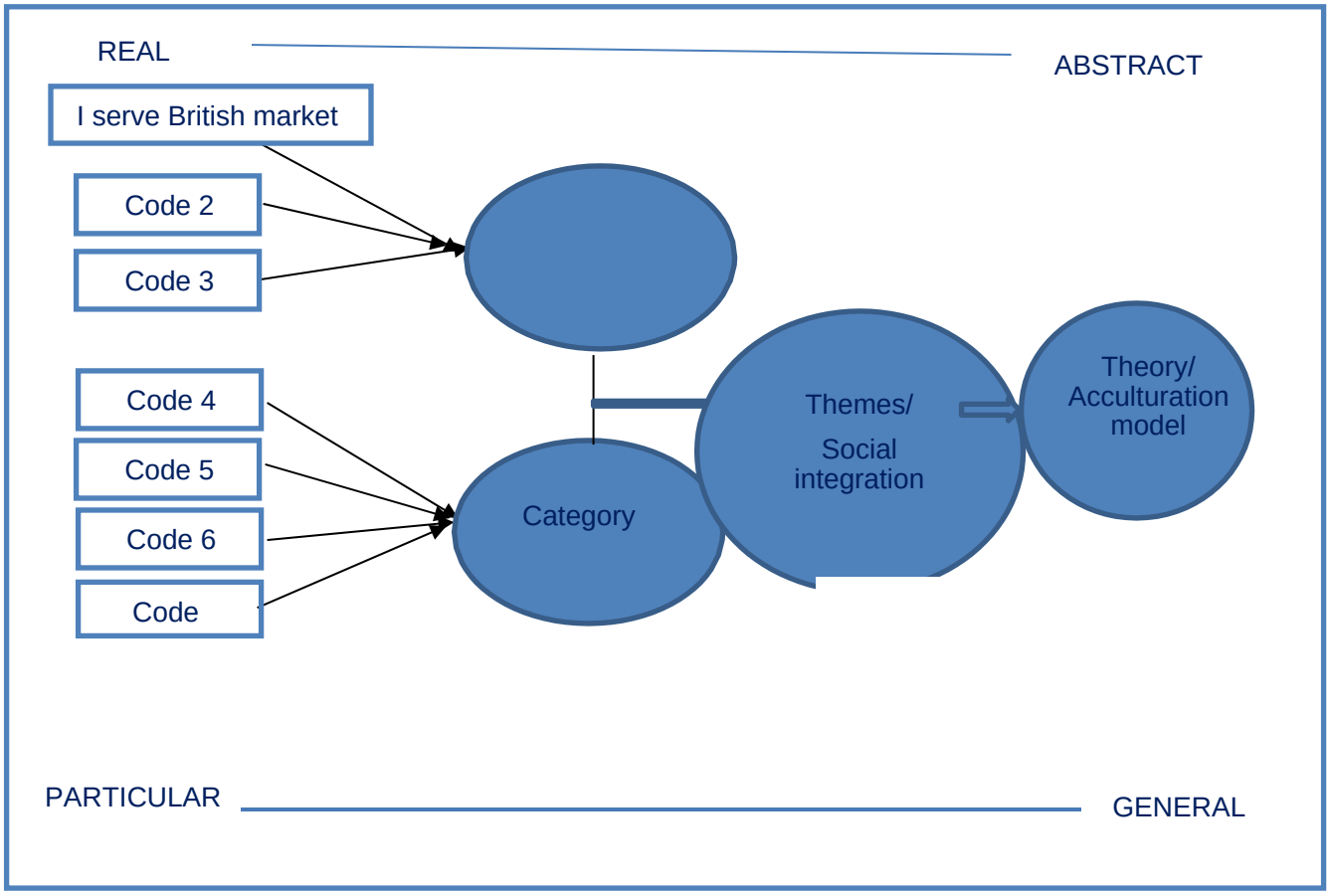
of *Entrepreneurship*	immigrant entrepreneur in London.

Appendix 11. The iterative process of the translation



Source: Based on Regmi, Naidoo and Pilkington (2010)

Appendix 12. The process of emergent thematic codes



Source: Saldana, (2013)

Appendix 13. Typology of non-verbal communication used in this study

Paralinguistics		Kinetics	
CAPS	Louder tone	ŁŁ	Crossed legs (reserved)
!	Animated tone, with/without exclamation	O	Eye contact to engage
?	Looking for confirmation (high pitch)	Ø	Looking away/gazing away
Aha	Confirmation or self-affirmation	©	Eyes wide open (surprised)
Mm	Hesitation	X	Crossed arms (Sensitive subject/reserved)
::	Vowel elongation	I ¡	Open arms (Feeling safe/empowered)
Hm	Continuers	§	Holding his head (Struggle/emotional event)
Word	Prominence associated to pitch accent	Ñ	Nodding the head (disbelief)
±	Change in tone (louder to normal and back)	Ā	Nodding the head (agreement)
> <	Speeded-up talk	÷	Smile
< >	Slowed-down talk	◯	Staring
=	Turn-taking	II	Facing the other person
{}	Spelling to emphasize		
Chronemics		**Proxemics**	
(.)	Micropause	\	Pulling back
(....)	Long pause	/	Leaning forward
@	Laughter	∫	Small social space (withing 30 cm)
¥	Surprised	≡	Big social space (over 30 cm)
V	Holding breath	∏	Obstructed social space (across table)
Λ	Breath down	○	Open social space (no obstacles)
¢	Silence	¶	Sideway orientation

Source: Researcher's own based on fieldwork and De Finna (2007), Edwards (1997, cited in Sperti, 2019), and Onwuegbuzie (2016)

Appendix 14. Research participant informed consent

UNIVERSITY OF WESTMINSTER	**Interview Consent Form**
Research project title: Romanian immigrant entrepreneurship - a vehicle of social inclusion in London, UK	
Ph.D. student: Iuliana Chitac (University of Westminster, UK): w1654057@westminster.ac.uk	
https://www.westminster.ac.uk/research/graduate-school/current- students/doctoral-researchers/chitac-iuliana	
The interview will take approximately 60 minutes.	
No risks associated with your participation in this research are anticipated. However, you have the right to withdraw from participating in this research at any time. In addition, any personal interview data will be removed if that is practicable, as anonymized data that has been collated may not be possible to be removed at an advanced level stage in the research).	
The researcher will ensure your anonymity and data confidentiality in agreement with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) to which the University of Westminster aligns.	
Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed as part of the above research project.	
According to the ethical procedures for academic research undertaken on behalf of UK institutions, by signing this consent form, you agree that you understand the purpose of this research and your participation and that you agree to the conditions of your participation.	
Research Participation & Quotation Agreement	
I understand that my words may be directly quoted under the agreement of anonymity. Please carefully read and sign any of the following statements you agree with:	
	I am voluntarily taking part in this research project
	This interview will be recorded and transcribed
	The interview content may be used for academic purposes, publications, and academic events
	I agree to be contacted to review my interview transcripts
	I understand that I can exercise the right to withdraw from this research

	at any time
	I have been allowed to ask any questions before and after the interview

Appendix 15. Research participant information sheet

Participant's information form

Study Title: EU2 immigrant entrepreneurship-a driver of social inclusion or social segregation in London, UK
Researcher: Iuliana Chitac
Supervisors: Dr. Deborah Knowles & Dr. Ainurul Rosli

Invitation

I would like to invite you to take part in this research study. This study is undertaken as part of the researcher's PhD study at the University of Westminster.
Please take time to read the following information carefully. You are welcome to ask for further clarifications wherever needed.

Purpose of this study

This research aims to deepen our understanding of what drives Romanian and Bulgarian (EU2) entrepreneurs to develop a business in London, what challenges they have found adapting to the British commercial environment, and how their gender, country of origin and social class have helped, or hindered, their standing with the local community more broadly. Ultimately, it examines whether entrepreneurship helps these entrepreneurs become more integrated in the wider mix of British society or whether the preservation of "Romanian-ness" or "Bulgarian – ness" can itself be a platform for advancement.

Participant's invitation to take part in this study

This study aims to interview over 30 EU2 immigrant entrepreneurs with an established business in London, UK.
You have been invited to take part in this study because you are a EU2 immigrant entrepreneur with an established business in London, UK and thus you are part of the target population for this study.
Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You are free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason

Interview process

Participation venue: Tape-recorded, face-to-face open-ended questions interview
Participant's direct involvement: 60 minutes

Key research topics for the semi-structured interviews:

1. Motivators to open the business in London, UK
2. Social class of entrepreneurship
3. Experiences as women or men entrepreneur
4. Challenges and opportunities experienced due to country of origin (Romania or Bulgaria)
5. Social inclusion/social segregation

Potential benefits:

Your contribution to this study has the following potential benefits:

- ✓ *At a personal level*, this study aims to deepen your understanding of the role that you, as an entrepreneur, play in the broader community.
  Additionally, given the semi-structure nature of these interviews, there will be no direct pressure for you to answer any questions that you may find sensitive. You have control over what you want to share and if you want to participate to the full extent of the interview as there will be no consequences of you withdrawing from this study.
- ✓ *At community level*, this could be an opportunity to identify best practices of entrepreneurship from which you and your business could benefit.
- ✓ *For the academic community*, this study has the potential to deepen our understanding of what drives Romanian and Bulgarian (EU2) entrepreneurs to develop a business in London, what challenges they have found adapting to the British commercial environment, and how their gender, country of origin and social class have helped, or hindered, their standing with the local community more broadly. Ultimately, it examines whether entrepreneurship helps these individuals become more integrated in the wider mix of British society or whether the preservation of "Romanian-ness" or "Bulgarian – ness" can itself be a platform for advancement.

Participant's confidentiality:

The researcher follows the University of Westminster principles to manage the processing of personal information in compliance with the key GDPR principles and its relevant Articles and Recitals, as set out in the full Regulation, and with any relevant supporting guidance issued by the UK Information Commissioner.

The six key principles, in Article 5 of the GDPR, can be briefly summarised as:

Personal data shall be:

- ➢ Processed lawfully, fairly and in a transparent manner in relation to the data subject ('lawfulness, fairness and transparency');
- ➢ Collected for specified, explicit and legitimate purposes and not further processed in a manner that is incompatible with those purposes; further processing, where allowed for archiving purposes in the public interest, scientific or historical research purposes or statistical purposes personal information will be collected for clear and specific purposes, shall not be considered incompatible with the initial purposes ('purpose limitation');
- ➢ Adequate, relevant and limited to what is necessary in relation to the purposes for which they are processed ('data minimisation');

- Accurate and, where necessary, kept up to date; every reasonable step must be taken to ensure that personal data that are inaccurate, having regard to the purposes for which they are processed, are erased or rectified without delay ('accuracy');
- Kept in a form which permits identification of data subjects for no longer than is necessary for the purposes for which the personal data are processed ('storage limitation');
- Processed in a manner that ensures appropriate security of the personal data, including protection against unauthorised or unlawful processing and against accidental loss, destruction or damage, using appropriate technical or organisational measures ('integrity and confidentiality').

Reporting of the research findings:

The research results might be published or used in academic events. Your identity will be kept anonymous and your information confidential in accordance with the instructions you have signed off in the consent form supplied.

Key contacts for this study:

This study is organised by the University of Westminster and funded through Anthony Quinn Foundation scholarship.

Researcher:

Iuliana Chitac: w1654057@westminster.ac.uk or juliana.kitzak@gmail.com

Research Supervisors:

Dr. Deborah Knowles: d.s.knowles@westminster.ac.uk
Dr. Ainurul Rosli: a.rosli@westminster.ac.uk

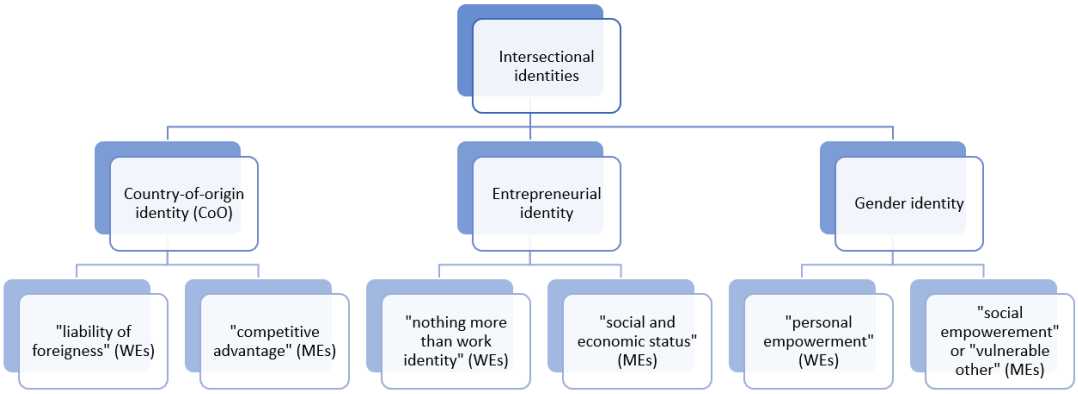
This research has been scrutinised by the University of Westminster Ethics Committee, to protect your interests and to ensure that the required research standards are met.

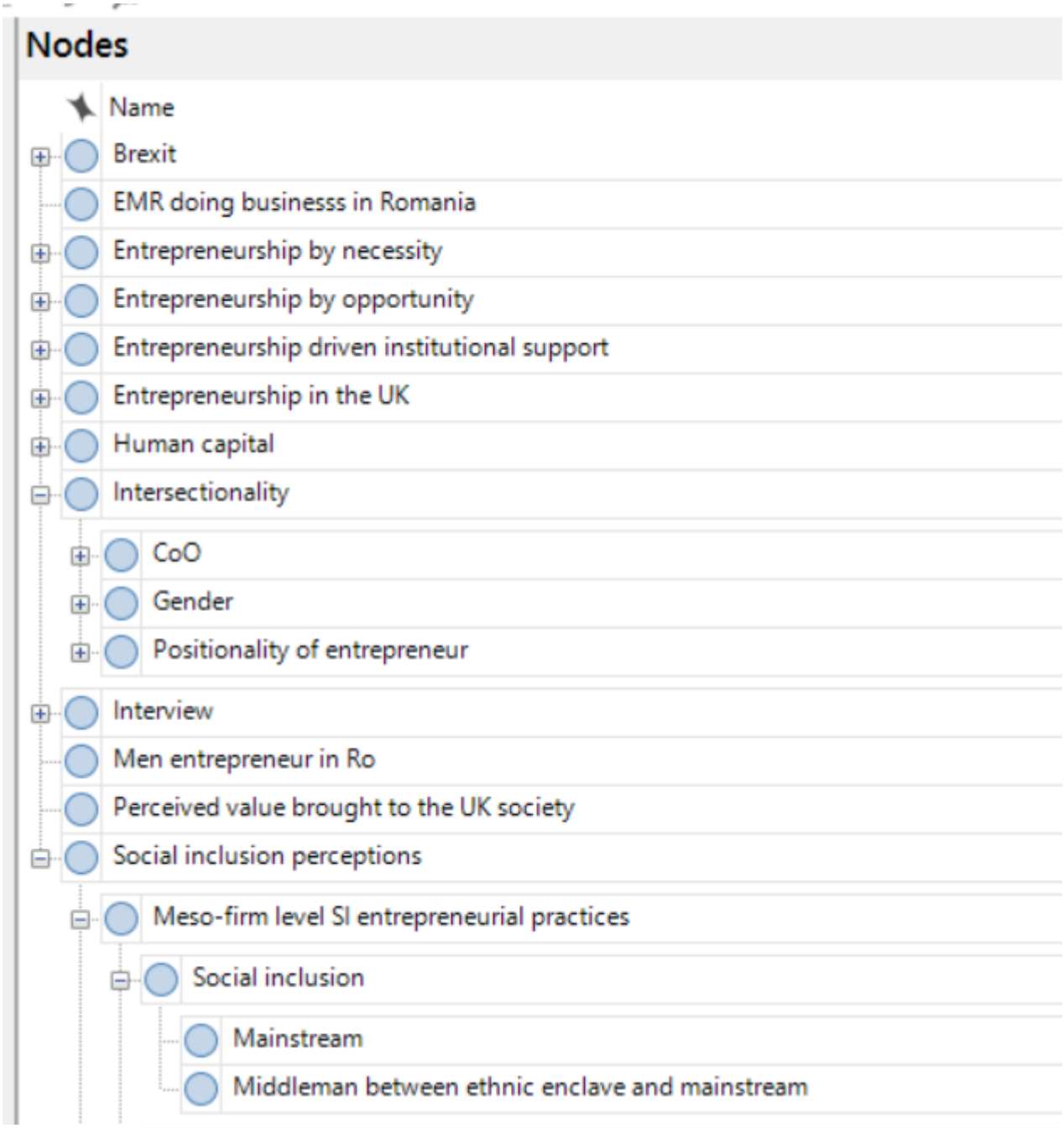
Please sign to confirm that you have read and understood the implications of your participation in this study.

Date ***Participant's signature***

Thank you for taking the time to read this Information Sheet.

Appendix 16. Sample of thematic codes




Nodes
Name
Brexit
EMR doing businesss in Romania
Entrepreneurship by necessity
Entrepreneurship by opportunity
Entrepreneurship driven institutional support
Entrepreneurship in the UK
Human capital
Intersectionality
CoO
Gender
Positionality of entrepreneur
Interview
Men entrepreneur in Ro
Perceived value brought to the UK society
Social inclusion perceptions
Meso-firm level SI entrepreneurial practices
Social inclusion
Mainstream
Middleman between ethnic enclave and mainstream

Appendix 17. London-based Romanian migrant entrepreneurs' entrepreneurship strategies

Entrepreneurship strategies	FE	ME	% FE	% ME
Mainstream entrepreneurship	8	9	44%	29%
Middleman entrepreneurship	0	22	0%	71%
Enclave entrepreneurship	10	0	56%	0%

Source: Researcher's fieldwork (2018-2019)