

From Integration to Institutional Contribution:

Migrant Women, Professional Legibility, and National Interest in the United States

An Interdisciplinary Research-Based Study

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Peer Review

This article underwent **editorial academic peer review** in accordance with the standards of the *International Journal of Interdisciplinary Research*.

The manuscript was evaluated by independent reviewers for **conceptual originality, analytical rigor, ethical considerations**, and its relevance to **interdisciplinary research in migration studies, journalism, labor integration, and public interest analysis**.

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Abstract

As migrant women in the United States move beyond initial stages of economic integration, the central challenge increasingly shifts from employment access to **institutional legibility and public-value recognition**. This article examines how migrant women's professional activities evolve from adaptive self-employment into forms of contribution aligned with national interest domains, including community services, media, education, and care-related industries. Drawing on interdisciplinary analysis that integrates migration studies, labor sociology, and research-based journalism, the study argues that **institutional recognition rather than skill availability constitutes the primary bottleneck to effective integration**. By conceptualizing professional legibility as a measurable pathway toward public value creation, the article reframes migrant

women's work as a structural asset for host societies rather than a marginal or transitional phenomenon.

Keywords: national interest, professional legibility, migrant women, institutional integration, public value, United States

Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1. From Economic Participation to Institutional Contribution

In U.S. migration discourse, integration is frequently measured through employment indicators such as labor-force participation, income generation, and legal work authorization. While these indicators are essential, they offer an incomplete account of how migrants—particularly women—become **recognizable contributors within institutional, civic, and professional systems**.

For migrant women who enter the United States through humanitarian, displacement, or mixed-status pathways, integration increasingly depends not on the possession of skills or motivation, but on the **translation of professional capacity into forms that are legible to U.S. institutions**. This includes engagement with regulatory frameworks, alignment with public-interest sectors, and participation in knowledge, service, and care economies that generate collective benefit.

This article shifts the analytical focus from employment as an outcome to **institutional contribution as a process**.

1.2. Professional Legibility as a Missing Analytical Concept

Despite extensive scholarship on migrant labor integration, limited attention has been paid to **professional legibility**—the condition under which individual professional activity becomes intelligible, classifiable, and valuable within institutional systems.

Professional legibility encompasses:

- compliance with regulatory and ethical standards;
- recognizability of skills and expertise;
- alignment with public or community-oriented objectives;
- visibility within media, civic, or professional ecosystems.

Migrant women frequently generate public value through their work long before such activity becomes institutionally legible. This temporal gap creates systemic under-recognition and delays effective integration.

1.3. Research Questions

This study addresses four core questions:

1. How do migrant women in the United States transition from economic integration to institutional contribution?
2. What mechanisms enable professional legibility within U.S. institutional frameworks?
3. Which forms of migrant women's professional activity most directly align with national interest considerations?
4. Why do media and policy frameworks lag behind empirical contribution?

1.4. Contribution and Significance

This article contributes to interdisciplinary research by:

- introducing **professional legibility** as an analytical bridge between integration and national interest;
- linking migrant women's labor to U.S. public-value domains;
- demonstrating the role of research-based journalism in documenting institutional contribution;
- offering a framework applicable to policy, media, and integration analysis.

1.5. Structure of the Article

The article proceeds as follows:

- **Chapter 2:** Literature Review & Conceptual Framework (national interest, public value, institutional legibility);
- **Chapter 3:** Methodology;
- **Chapter 4:** Empirical Analysis (U.S.-based pathways of contribution);
- **Chapter 5:** Discussion & Policy Implications;
- **Chapter 6:** Conclusion.

Chapter 2. Literature Review & Conceptual Framework

2.1. National Interest as an Analytical Category

In public policy research, “national interest” is often used rhetorically, but in analytical terms it can be operationalized as a set of outcomes that improve a host society’s **security, economic resilience, public welfare, and institutional effectiveness**. In migration contexts, the national interest is not limited to border enforcement; it also includes **integration capacity**—the ability of institutions and communities to convert human potential into stable participation and public value.

This article treats national interest as a multi-dimensional construct with four measurable dimensions:

1. **Economic resilience:** labor participation, entrepreneurship, local service capacity, tax base expansion over time.
2. **Public welfare efficiency:** reduced dependency on emergency assistance, improved access to services (especially in underserved communities).
3. **Social cohesion and civic stability:** reduced marginalization, stronger community trust, lower social conflict.
4. **Information integrity and public communication:** access to reliable information ecosystems, especially for linguistically diverse communities.

Example (composite):

A migrant woman provides bilingual community reporting and practical guidance on local services. The immediate value is informational (people understand how to access healthcare, legal aid, schooling). The systemic value is civic: reduced misinformation, fewer administrative burdens, and increased institutional trust. This is a contribution aligned with national interest under the “information integrity” dimension.

Analytical implication: national interest can be approached as an evidence-based matrix rather than a political claim.

2.2. Public Value Theory: How Individual Work Becomes Collective Benefit

Public value theory emphasizes that social benefit emerges when institutions and communities translate activities into outcomes that improve collective welfare. In the context of migrant work, this translation occurs when migrant-led services fill structural gaps in local systems.

Migrant women’s professional activities often generate public value through:

- service provision in resource-poor neighborhoods;
- culturally competent care and communication;

- informal mediation between institutions and communities;
- micro-enterprise creation that stabilizes households and local markets.

Example:

A migrant woman runs a small service micro-enterprise that employs two other migrants part-time. Even if the business is initially small, it can reduce financial precarity for multiple households and expand service availability in a local area. Over time, such activity may contribute to tax revenue and reduce reliance on social assistance.

Analytical implication: the scale of public value is not only in business size, but in **system effects** (stability, reduced precarity, community access).

2.3. Institutional Legibility: Why Competence Is Not Enough

A recurring finding across integration scholarship is that migrants may possess strong human capital yet remain underutilized due to institutional barriers. This article conceptualizes this phenomenon as **institutional legibility failure**: the inability of institutions to “read” and validate skills, credentials, and professional identity in a way that enables recognized participation.

Institutional legibility depends on:

- recognizable credentials and licensing pathways;
- documented work history and references;
- language and communication fit;
- conformity with sectoral standards and compliance systems.

For migrant women, legibility barriers may be amplified because their work is often located in sectors that are:

- feminized and culturally undervalued,
- informal or semi-formal,
- home-based or micro-enterprise oriented,
- constrained by care responsibilities.

Example:

A woman with years of experience as a journalist or editor may be institutionally illegible in the U.S. media ecosystem without local references, a U.S.-style portfolio, and a record of publication in recognized outlets. She may still produce high-quality reporting, but the system lacks a straightforward “credential translation” mechanism.

Analytical implication: legibility is a structural property of systems, not an individual deficit.

2.4. Credentialing, Licensing, and the Gendered “Recognition Tax”

Credential recognition research shows that migrants frequently experience a “recognition tax”—additional burdens of proof, re-certification, and adaptation that effectively function as hidden costs of entry into professional life.

For women, this tax is often gendered because:

- care responsibilities restrict time for retraining;
- women are more likely to enter sectors with fragmented credentialing systems (services, care, micro-enterprises);
- social narratives more readily classify women’s skills as “informal” or “domestic.”

Example:

A migrant woman with professional skills in care, education, or service work may need multiple licenses, background checks, and training modules to become fully formal. During this period she may continue operating in semi-formal conditions to meet economic needs. The longer the recognition process, the higher the risk of deskilling and marginalization.

Analytical implication: recognition regimes can unintentionally produce inequality by requiring time and resources migrants may not have.

2.5. Micro-Professionalization and the “Bridge Zone” Between Informal and Formal

Earlier articles in this series established that migrant women often build **micro-professionalization**: systematic practices that make work more legible even before full formalization. In U.S. contexts, this bridge zone is particularly important because many sectors allow incremental compliance and professionalization even when full licensing is delayed.

Micro-professionalization includes:

- standardized service protocols and ethical guidelines;
- documented portfolios (before/after photos, client education materials);
- transparent pricing and scheduling systems;
- training certificates and continuing education;
- community reputation and referrals documented through testimonials.

Example:

A service provider develops written hygiene protocols, obtains training certificates, maintains

client consent forms, and builds a digital portfolio. Even if formal licensing is incomplete, her work becomes legible as professional rather than “casual informal labor.”

Analytical implication: micro-professionalization functions as a practical bridge that reduces risk and increases recognition potential.

2.6. Migrant Women and Community Information Ecosystems: A Hidden National-Interest Domain

One of the least recognized domains of migrant contribution is **community-level information infrastructure**. In multilingual communities, migrants—especially women with communication skills—often act as:

- translators of institutional information;
- informal educators and navigators;
- community correspondents documenting local issues;
- mediators correcting misinformation.

This domain becomes nationally relevant in contexts where misinformation undermines public health, civic participation, or social stability.

Example:

During crises (public health, disasters, legal changes), linguistically isolated communities depend on trusted messengers. A migrant woman producing clear explanatory content about local rules, healthcare access, or rights can reduce confusion, increase compliance, and lower institutional burden.

Analytical implication: information integrity and civic navigation are public goods—and thus national-interest relevant.

2.7. Conceptual Framework: The Institutional Legibility Pathway (ILP)

Based on the literature, this article proposes an **Institutional Legibility Pathway (ILP)** model describing how migrant women’s professional capacity transitions into recognized contribution in the U.S.

Stage 1: Capacity (Skill and Human Capital)

- transferable skills, education, prior experience.

Stage 2: Adaptation (Context Fit)

- U.S.-style documentation, language adjustment, market understanding.

Stage 3: Micro-Professionalization (Legibility Building)

- portfolios, protocols, certificates, structured services.

Stage 4: Recognition (Institutional and Public Validation)

- references, partnerships, media visibility, formal compliance.

Stage 5: Contribution (Public Value and National Interest Outcomes)

- service provision, entrepreneurship, civic information, community resilience.

Propositions guiding the empirical analysis:

- **P1:** Legibility-building (Stage 3) is the primary bottleneck in the U.S. context.
- **P2:** Women's care responsibilities shape the pace and form of legibility-building.
- **P3:** Public value emerges before full institutional recognition, creating a temporal gap.
- **P4:** Media representation influences the speed of recognition by shaping social legitimacy.

2.8. Chapter Summary

This chapter established a research-grounded foundation for analyzing migrant women's institutional contribution in the U.S. It reframed national interest as an operational category, introduced institutional legibility as a structural mechanism, and proposed the ILP model to guide empirical analysis.

The next chapter (Methodology) will operationalize these concepts into measurable analytical categories and define how the study examines U.S.-based pathways of legibility and contribution.

Chapter 3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design and Analytical Logic

This study adopts a **qualitative, interdisciplinary, process-oriented research design** grounded in research-based journalism. The methodological objective is not to measure employment outcomes per se, but to **trace pathways through which migrant women's professional capacity becomes institutionally legible and publicly valuable in the United States.**

The analysis follows the **Institutional Legibility Pathway (ILP)** model introduced in Chapter 2 and focuses on identifying:

- transitional mechanisms between stages of legibility,
- bottlenecks that delay recognition,
- conditions under which individual practice converts into public value.

The research logic is **explanatory and interpretive**, emphasizing causal mechanisms and institutional interactions rather than numerical prevalence.

3.2. Units of Analysis

The primary unit of analysis is the **professional pathway**, defined as a sequence of practices and interactions through which an individual's work moves from capacity to contribution.

Each pathway is analyzed across five ILP stages:

1. **Capacity** — skills, education, experience brought into the U.S. context.
2. **Adaptation** — translation of skills into U.S.-compatible formats.
3. **Micro-Professionalization** — documentation, standardization, and ethical structuring of work.
4. **Recognition** — validation by institutions, peers, media, or formal systems.
5. **Contribution** — demonstrable public value aligned with national interest domains.

This structure allows systematic comparison across heterogeneous professional fields.

3.3. Case Selection Criteria

Cases were selected using purposive criteria designed to capture **institutional contribution rather than mere economic activity**:

- migrant women residing in the United States;
- engagement in sustained professional or semi-professional activity;
- evidence of micro-professionalization (documentation, protocols, portfolios);
- interaction with U.S. institutional or community frameworks;
- observable public value beyond private income generation.

Cases span multiple domains, including:

- community journalism and information services,
- education and mentoring,
- care and service micro-enterprises,
- creative and communication-based professions.

All cases are anonymized and presented as **analytical composites**, ensuring ethical compliance and focus on structural mechanisms.

3.4. Data Sources

The study draws on four categories of data:

3.4.1. Journalistic Field Material

- long-form reporting,
- observational notes,
- documented professional practices.

This material captures lived integration processes often absent from administrative datasets.

3.4.2. Documentary Evidence

- training certificates,
- portfolios and work samples,
- public-facing materials (websites, social media, informational content),
- participation in community initiatives.

These artifacts function as **legibility signals** within institutional systems.

3.4.3. Media Content

- coverage referencing migrant women's professional activity;
- framing analysis (survival vs contribution);
- visibility trajectories over time.

3.4.4. Secondary Research

- migration and labor integration literature;
- public policy reports;

- institutional guidelines relevant to professional recognition.

3.5. Analytical Framework and Coding Scheme

Empirical material was coded using a multi-layered framework aligned with ILP stages.

3.5.1. Capacity Indicators

- prior professional experience;
- transferable skills;
- education and training background.

3.5.2. Adaptation Indicators

- U.S.-style documentation;
- language and communication adjustment;
- sectoral market fit.

Example: transformation of prior journalistic experience into community reporting formats.

3.5.3. Micro-Professionalization Indicators

- written protocols and standards;
- ethical guidelines and consent practices;
- continuing education and certificates;
- structured pricing and service delivery.

Example: standardized client intake and safety protocols in service-based work.

3.5.4. Recognition Indicators

- institutional acknowledgment (partnerships, referrals);
- peer validation;
- media visibility;
- partial or full regulatory compliance.

Example: collaboration with local organizations or citation by community media.

3.5.5. Contribution Indicators (National Interest Alignment)

- service provision to underserved populations;
- reduction of informational or service gaps;
- community trust-building;
- economic spillover effects (employment, training others).

Example: community journalism reducing misinformation and improving civic navigation.

3.6. Ethical Protocol

Given the vulnerability of migrant populations, the study follows strict ethical principles:

- anonymization and abstraction of individual identities;
- avoidance of regulatory exposure;
- emphasis on agency and professionalism;
- non-sensationalist representation.

The study aligns with ethical standards of both academic research and responsible journalism.

3.7. Methodological Limitations

The study acknowledges limitations inherent to qualitative, process-oriented research:

- absence of large-scale quantitative measures;
- reliance on interpretive analysis;
- potential selection bias toward visible cases.

However, these limitations reflect the **institutional invisibility problem** central to the research question and reinforce the necessity of this methodological approach.

3.8. Chapter Summary

This chapter established a rigorous methodological foundation for analyzing migrant women's institutional contribution in the U.S. By operationalizing professional legibility and national interest alignment through the ILP model, the study creates a clear analytical pathway from individual practice to public value.

The next chapter presents **empirical analysis**, illustrating how these mechanisms operate in practice across U.S.-based professional domains.

Chapter 4. Empirical Analysis: U.S.-Based Pathways of Institutional Contribution

4.1. Stage I — Capacity: Human Capital Without Immediate Legibility

Empirical evidence indicates that migrant women often arrive in the United States with substantial **human capital**—education, professional experience, and transferable skills—yet remain institutionally opaque. Capacity exists, but institutions lack standardized mechanisms to “read” it.

Observed patterns:

- professional histories documented in non-U.S. formats;
- skills embedded in experience rather than credentials;
- fragmented evidence of competence across languages and platforms.

Example (composite):

A woman with years of journalistic experience arrives with published work in foreign outlets. While her skills in investigation, interviewing, and analysis are intact, U.S. institutions require portfolios aligned with domestic standards, references from recognized outlets, and familiarity with local ethics codes. Capacity is present; legibility is not.

Interim conclusion: Capacity alone does not activate integration. Without translation, it remains dormant within institutional systems.

4.2. Stage II — Adaptation: Translating Skills Into U.S.-Compatible Forms

Adaptation represents the first active effort to convert capacity into legibility. Women engage in **skill translation** rather than retraining, reframing existing competencies in formats recognizable within U.S. professional ecosystems.

Key adaptive strategies include:

- reformatting CVs and portfolios to U.S. conventions;
- adopting U.S.-specific professional terminology;
- aligning services with local regulatory expectations;
- producing English-language documentation and outputs.

Example:

A migrant woman adapts her prior reporting experience into community-oriented explanatory journalism—short guides, local reporting, informational content—thereby aligning her skills with immediate U.S. community needs.

Interim conclusion: Adaptation is not identity loss; it is contextual repositioning that preserves professional coherence.

4.3. Stage III — Micro-Professionalization: Building Legibility Before Formal Recognition

Micro-professionalization emerges as the **central empirical mechanism** through which migrant women overcome legibility barriers. This stage is characterized by deliberate structuring of work to signal professionalism and compliance—even in the absence of full licensing.

Empirical markers of micro-professionalization:

- written protocols (ethics, safety, hygiene, consent);
- documented workflows and standards;
- structured pricing and scheduling;
- continuous training and certificate accumulation;
- digital portfolios and public-facing materials.

Example:

A service provider develops documented hygiene protocols, client consent procedures, and educational materials explaining service standards. These documents function as substitutes for delayed formal licensing, making professionalism visible to clients and partners.

Interim conclusion: Micro-professionalization compresses the recognition gap by producing artifacts institutions can interpret.

4.4. Stage IV — Recognition: Partial Validation and Its Bottlenecks

Recognition is rarely binary. Empirical cases show **partial recognition** emerging before full institutional validation. This includes:

- referrals from local organizations;
- informal partnerships;
- media mentions or citations;
- inclusion in community initiatives.

However, recognition often stalls due to:

- rigid licensing regimes;
- lack of transitional recognition categories;
- media narratives emphasizing vulnerability rather than contribution.

Example:

A migrant woman collaborates with a local nonprofit to provide community information services. While her work is relied upon, she is described publicly as a “helper” rather than a professional contributor, limiting broader recognition.

Interim conclusion: Recognition bottlenecks arise from classification systems, not performance deficits.

4.5. Stage V — Contribution: Converting Professional Practice Into Public Value

When recognition reaches a threshold, migrant women’s work produces **observable public value** aligned with national interest dimensions identified earlier.

Domains of contribution observed:

- **Economic resilience:** micro-enterprises stabilizing households and creating secondary employment;
- **Public welfare:** culturally competent services reducing access gaps;
- **Social cohesion:** trust-building within marginalized communities;
- **Information integrity:** accurate, accessible communication reducing misinformation.

Example:

Community journalism initiatives led by migrant women provide multilingual reporting on local services, public health guidance, and civic processes. These efforts reduce confusion, increase compliance, and lower institutional load.

Interim conclusion: Contribution often precedes formal recognition, creating a temporal mismatch between value creation and validation.

4.6. Comparative Case Synthesis Across Domains

Comparative analysis across professional domains reveals consistent ILP dynamics:

ILP Stage	Core Mechanism	Primary Barrier
Capacity	Presence of transferable skills, education, and professional experience	Lack of institutional recognition of prior qualifications
Adaptation	Translation of skills into U.S.-compatible formats and practices	Documentation and format mismatch
Micro-Professionalization	Development of standards, protocols, portfolios, and ethical guidelines	Limited resources and delayed formal pathways
Recognition	Partial validation through community partnerships and media visibility	Rigid institutional classification systems
Contribution	Creation of public value aligned with national interest domains	Temporal lag between value creation and formal validation

This pattern holds across journalism, education, care, and service micro-enterprises.

4.7. Media Framing and Its Impact on ILP Progression

Media narratives exert a measurable influence on ILP progression. Cases receiving **contribution-oriented coverage** progress faster toward recognition, while those framed as survival stories remain stalled.

Observed effects:

- contribution framing attracts institutional partners;
- survival framing limits professional legitimacy;
- absence of coverage delays recognition altogether.

Example:

Two similar micro-enterprises receive different outcomes based on coverage: one framed as “community initiative” secures partnerships; the other framed as “coping strategy” remains informal.

Interim conclusion: Media visibility functions as an accelerator or brake within the ILP.

4.8. Chapter Synthesis

This empirical analysis demonstrates that migrant women’s institutional contribution in the United States follows a structured, multi-stage pathway rather than an ad hoc trajectory. The **Institutional Legibility Pathway** explains why contribution is frequently under-recognized despite tangible public value.

Key findings:

- micro-professionalization is the pivotal stage for legibility;
- recognition systems lag behind actual contribution;
- care-compatible design enables sustainability;
- media framing materially affects integration speed.

These findings prepare the ground for the final discussion on policy implications and national interest alignment.

Chapter 5. Discussion and Policy Implications

5.1. Interpreting Institutional Legibility as a Systemic Constraint

The empirical analysis confirms that the primary constraint faced by migrant women in the United States is not a deficit of skills, motivation, or economic initiative, but a **systemic failure of institutional legibility**. Women progress through the ILP stages at different speeds, yet repeatedly encounter recognition bottlenecks that are external to their professional performance.

This finding reframes integration debates in two important ways. First, it shifts responsibility from individual adaptation to **institutional design**. Second, it clarifies why conventional integration metrics—employment status, income level, or licensing completion—often underestimate actual contribution. When institutions lack transitional categories to acknowledge micro-professionalized work, value creation remains invisible in official accounts.

Implication: Integration outcomes cannot be accurately assessed without measuring legibility-building processes.

5.2. Micro-Professionalization as a Policy-Relevant Bridge

Across cases, micro-professionalization emerges as the most reliable bridge between adaptation and recognition. While often dismissed as informal or provisional, these practices constitute **proto-institutional compliance**: they replicate the logic of professional standards in advance of formal validation.

From a policy perspective, micro-professionalization provides a concrete intervention point. Rather than forcing immediate full compliance—which can interrupt income stability and discourage participation—institutions can support **graduated recognition** models that validate documented standards, protocols, and portfolios.

Illustrative policy pathway:

Recognition of documented safety protocols and portfolios could allow provisional operation, supervised partnerships, or access to training subsidies—accelerating formalization without economic disruption.

Implication: Supporting micro-professionalization reduces integration delays and preserves human capital.

5.3. Gendered Care Constraints and Integration Design

The analysis demonstrates that care responsibilities are not incidental variables but **structural determinants** of viable integration pathways. Women engineer professional practices around care schedules, spatial constraints, and emotional labor—often producing stable, care-compatible models that remain institutionally undervalued.

Policies premised on full-time availability, uninterrupted training schedules, or centralized service provision disproportionately disadvantage women. By contrast, integration frameworks that accommodate modular participation and decentralized practice align more closely with observed realities.

Implication: Gender-responsive integration requires redesigning pathways—not merely adding support services.

5.4. Media Framing as an Integration Accelerator or Brake

Media representation plays a decisive role in shaping institutional responses. Contribution-oriented framing—highlighting standards, continuity, and public value—correlates with faster recognition and partnership opportunities. Survival-oriented framing, while empathetic, tends to freeze professional identities at the adaptation stage.

This suggests that media institutions function as **secondary recognition systems**, influencing how other institutions perceive legitimacy. Research-based journalism that documents process and standards can thus act as an **integration accelerator**.

Implication: Media is not peripheral to integration; it is a co-producing institution of recognition.

5.5. National Interest Alignment: From Individual Practice to System Outcomes

When assessed through the ILP lens, migrant women's professional activities align with national interest across multiple domains:

- **Economic resilience:** stabilization of households, micro-enterprise formation, secondary employment.
- **Public welfare efficiency:** culturally competent services reducing access gaps and institutional load.
- **Social cohesion:** trust-building within marginalized communities.
- **Information integrity:** accurate, localized communication mitigating misinformation risks.

Crucially, these outcomes materialize **before** full formal recognition. The temporal gap between contribution and validation represents a lost opportunity for policy optimization.

Implication: National interest is best served by accelerating recognition, not delaying it.

5.6. Toward an Institutional Legibility Policy Framework

Based on the findings, this study proposes key elements of an **Institutional Legibility Policy Framework**:

1. **Transitional Recognition Categories**
Acknowledge micro-professionalized work as a legitimate integration phase.
2. **Evidence-Based Legibility Signals**
Accept portfolios, protocols, and documented standards as interim proof of competence.
3. **Modular Credentialing and Licensing**
Enable staged compliance aligned with real integration trajectories.
4. **Media–Policy Coordination**
Encourage reporting practices that document contribution and standards.

Together, these measures can reduce integration friction while enhancing public value.

5.7. Synthesis

Chapter 5 demonstrates that institutional legibility is the missing link between migrant women's professional practice and recognized contribution in the United States. By reframing integration

as a process rather than an outcome, and by treating micro-professionalization as policy-relevant evidence, institutions can better align integration mechanisms with national interest objectives.

The next chapter concludes the article by summarizing contributions, limitations, and directions for future research.

Chapter 6. Conclusion

6.1. Summary of Findings

This article examined how migrant women in the United States transition from economic integration to **institutional contribution**, focusing on the mechanisms that render professional activity legible and publicly valuable. Building on the Institutional Legibility Pathway (ILP), the study demonstrated that:

- migrant women often generate **measurable public value** prior to full institutional recognition;
- the primary integration bottleneck lies in **legibility systems**, not in human capital deficits;
- **micro-professionalization** functions as the pivotal bridge between adaptation and recognition;
- care-compatible professional design enables sustainability without diminishing contribution;
- media framing materially influences the speed and scope of recognition.

Together, these findings reposition migrant women's professional activity as a **structural asset** rather than a transitional anomaly.

6.2. Theoretical Contributions

The article advances interdisciplinary scholarship in three key ways:

- 1. Conceptualization of Professional Legibility**
It introduces legibility as a systemic property that mediates between capacity and contribution, complementing existing integration and labor theories.
- 2. Extension of Survival and Integration Research**
By tracing trajectories beyond initial adaptation, the study connects survival economies to longer-term institutional participation.
- 3. Operationalization of National Interest**
The analysis translates national interest into observable domains—economic resilience,

public welfare efficiency, social cohesion, and information integrity—grounding the concept empirically.

6.3. Implications for Policy and Institutional Design

The findings suggest that U.S. integration frameworks can be strengthened by:

- adopting **transitional recognition mechanisms** that validate micro-professionalized work;
- expanding acceptable evidence of competence to include portfolios, protocols, and documented standards;
- implementing **modular credentialing** aligned with care-compatible trajectories;
- recognizing media and community institutions as partners in integration.

Such measures can accelerate recognition without compromising regulatory integrity, aligning integration outcomes with national interest objectives.

6.4. Implications for Journalism and Public Discourse

The study underscores journalism's role as a **recognition intermediary**. Research-based, process-oriented reporting can surface standards, continuity, and public value, counterbalancing narratives that confine migrant women to survival frames. By documenting institutional contribution, journalism enhances both accuracy and civic utility.

6.5. Limitations

As a qualitative, process-oriented study, this research does not aim for statistical generalization. The use of composite cases and interpretive analysis may limit specificity, though it strengthens ethical compliance and structural insight. Future work can complement these findings with quantitative indicators of legibility and contribution.

6.6. Directions for Future Research

Future studies may:

- test the ILP across different regulatory regimes and sectors;
- quantify the temporal gap between contribution and recognition;

- assess the impact of media framing on institutional decision-making;
- examine digital platforms as accelerators of professional legibility.

6.7. Final Remarks

Migrant women’s professional activities in the United States frequently meet the criteria of public value and national interest well before they achieve full institutional recognition. By identifying **institutional legibility** as the missing link, this study offers a practical and analytical framework for aligning integration mechanisms with real-world contribution. Recognizing and supporting this alignment is essential for inclusive growth, institutional efficiency, and social cohesion.

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