THEY CAME SEARCHING FOR THE AMERICAN DREAM:
A CROSS-SECTIONAL STUDY OF EDUCATION, ACCULTURATION, AND SELF-EFFICACY AMONG RECENT ALBANIAN IMMIGRANTS

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Abstract

Previous research has indicated a positive bidirectional correlation between self-efficacy and higher educational attainment. Similarly, college educated immigrants are more likely to report higher adherence to cultural norms in the host country. This cross-sectional study explored the relationship between education, self-efficacy, and acculturation for recent adult Albanian immigrants currently residing in the US. A total of 153 participants completed two surveys and one demographic questionnaire that included assessment of beliefs on their capabilities to accomplish tasks which affect daily lives, adherence to heritage values, adherence to mainstream values and their current level of education, employment, gender, marital status, individual and household incomes. Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA), Multivariate Analysis of Covariance (MANCOVA) and Pearson correlation analysis did not reject the null hypothesis. The differences in self-efficacy and acculturation between participants based on their level of education were not-statistically significant. Other factors that might have affected dependent variables such as underemployment, homeownership and gender were explored. Limitations and clinical implications of this study were discussed.

Keywords: Albanian, self-efficacy, acculturation, education, employment, homeownership.
DEDICATION

Për babanë tim, Fatos Zeko.

(For my father, Fatos Zeko)
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CHAPTER 1.
INTRODUCTION AND STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Introduction

The United States for centuries has been a destination where people from all around the world have arrived and permanently settled. Refugees, immigrants, and asylum seekers from every country in the world have arrived on American shores in search of opportunities lacking in their native land. The United States continues to be a preferred destination for immigrants (West, 2011). It is likely that through 2050 it will remain the top receiver of immigrants among developed countries (DESA, 2015).

Despite the distance, Albanian immigrants have chosen “America,” as they simply refer to it, for over 150 years, many of them arriving prior to World War II (Nagi, 1988). Current estimates put the number of Albanian immigrants and their descendants between 250,000 and 500,000 (Nedelkoska & Khaw, 2015). The first large wave of Albanian immigrants arrived at the time of the Industrial Revolution, between 1860 and 1920, in search of economic opportunities (King & Vullnetari, 2003) or to escape the political unrest (Vullnetari, 2007). Between 1945 to 1991, due to the political constraints of communist dictatorship, most Albanians who arrived in the United States were defectors who risked their lives to escape the communist regime, often leaving behind families that experienced persecution and internment as retribution for those who left. The current wave of Albanian immigrants started to arrive in the United States during the early 1990s, following the fall of the communist regime. The influx has continued uninterrupted for the last 25 years.

It is important to differentiate Albanians who emigrated from Albania, who will be the participants in this study, from those who immigrated from Kosovo or Macedonia. While they all
share a common language and many traditions, their experience under communist dictatorship is different. Communism in Albania was much more isolative. Human rights and migration were more restricted in Albania than under the Yugoslavian governing regime. Ethnic Albanians living under Marshal Tito in Yugoslavia could leave the country and had more exposure to foreign cultures. In particular, Kosovar communities in the United States have a long history of immigration and settlement, which continued almost uninterrupted even when Yugoslavia was part of the Soviet Bloc (Ramet, 1992).

While there are very few studies on recent Albanian immigrants to the US, in this last decade there has been some demographic data collected either through government institutions or researchers. Nedelkoska and Khaw (2015) found that the two main immigration methods to the United States used by Albanians are the diversity lottery and family-sponsored visas. Most Albanian immigrants, between 80 and 93% each year (USDHS, 2009, 2013, 2014), have entered the United States as immigrants, rather than as refugees, asylum seekers, or temporary highly skilled workers. Due to age requirements for obtaining immigration visas as determined by the American Immigration Center (AIC, 2016), most Albanian immigrants arrived after their 21st birthday. As of 2015, the average age of first-generation Albanian immigrants was 40 (Nedelkoska & Khaw, 2015) and most of them were married with children (Barjaba, 2004). The reasons for immigration also varied with the age at which the Albanians arrived in the United States.

Because the U.S. Census Bureau (2014) identified Albanians as White, it compared their economic and educational attainment to other Whites. Most Albanians who arrived after 1990 immigrated in pursuit of education and employment opportunities (Mane & Waldorf, 2010). Education is important for Albanians, regardless of their country of residence. Estimates suggest that almost 53% of first-generation Albanian immigrants currently in the United States hold a
college degree or higher (Nedelkoska & Khaw, 2015). This is higher than other Whites, of whom about 38% hold a college degree or higher (Bureau of Labor Statistics 2015) or the overall foreign-born population of whom about 29% hold a four-year college degree or higher (Zong & Batalova, 2016a). In particular, Albanian women have higher levels of college completion at 34.6% compared to other White women at 26.3% (Nedelkoska & Khaw, 2015) or foreign-born women of whom approximately 28% hold a baccalaureate degree or higher (Ruiz, Zong, & Batalova, 2015). According to Mane and Waldorf (2010), 35% of the Albanian immigrants who arrived in United States between 1991 and 2010 had already acquired a college degree prior to their moves. This trend extends to other foreign-born non-Hispanic Whites, who are more likely to hold baccalaureate or higher degrees than native non-Hispanic Whites (Ryan & Bauman, 2016).

Workforce participation among Albanian immigrants in the United States slightly outperforms non-Albanian Whites (Nedelkoska & Khaw, 2015). The unemployment rate of Albanians is lower than that of other non-Hispanic Whites in the United States, at 8.8%. Self-employment is higher among Albanians who do not hold a baccalaureate degree (12.2%) than Albanians who have an undergraduate degree or higher (8.1%) (Nedelkoska & Khaw, 2015). While first-generation Albanians in the United States participate more in the workforce than other Whites, there are significant differences in their income (Mane & Waldorf, 2010; Nedelkoska & Khaw, 2015). Despite their level of education, highly skilled first-generation Albanian immigrants earn wages that are $17,000 less than their White counterparts. The gap in the overall annual earnings increases to $21,000 if one adds non-wage income (Nedelkoska & Khaw, 2015). This trend extends to many other immigrant groups, due to the industries in which they work, which include food preparation and serving occupations, building and grounds cleaning and maintenance occupations or healthcare support occupations (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2018). According to
the Migration Policy Institute, as late as 2015, 35% of Albanian immigrants worked in service industries. No other European ethnic group has more than 16.6% of immigrants working in service industries (Mane & Waldorf, 2010).

In using American sociological definitions of race and ethnicity (Henslin, 2012), Albanians appear to be a homogenous group. As a collectivist society (Hofstate, 2016), Albanians tend to consider group needs more important than individual needs, but other factors such as regional culture, education, and socio-economic status (SES) impact the level of adherence to such norms (Heigl, Kinebanian, & Josephsson, 2012). For Albanians, whose formative years occurred prior to 1991, the communist regime further reinforced the practice of prioritizing group needs over individual needs (Nikolla, 2013). The regime only encouraged the pursuit of individual needs and accomplishments if it met the needs of the group and increased its prestige (Nikolla, 2013). Thus, those immigrants who left Albania as adults after the political change had to transition and adapt very quickly to the American cultural orientation and norms to find success and economic stability as immigrants.

Few studies have explored the lives of recent Albanian immigrants. Most of the studies done in the United States have focused on economic status and professional pursuits. The few studies, published mostly in Europe, either had small samples with fewer than fifteen participants, or focused on perceived self-efficacy in relation to nutrition or educational efforts. To date there is a lack of peer-reviewed publications considering the steadily growing number of Albanian immigrants in the US. In particular, the examination of their self-efficacy and the process of acculturation is likely to shed light on how they use their skills acquired either prior or post their settlement in the US to perform in the host culture. Immigration to a host country where norms, values, and beliefs differ from those of one’s country of origin demands that immigrants find novel
ways of coping with new psychological and emotional stressors. Like other immigrants arriving in a new country, Albanians have brought their beliefs, norms, and values traits they believe define the cultural identity of both the individual and the group to which the individual belongs (Syed, 2013). These markers of cultural identity include cognitive processes and behavioral choices that individuals make based on group membership and a collective cultural heritage (Syed, 2013). When Albanian immigrants encounter the American way of life, a process of change occurs affecting their perceptions of their own culture and an ongoing evaluation of the new culture began (Syed, 2013). Known as acculturation, this process represents a psychological construct that occurs when immigrants come into contact with a new culture (Birman & Simon, 2014). Not only the American culture influenced Albanian immigrants, but the latter also influenced the American culture and individuals whom they interacted with (Berry, 2003). This ongoing process continues to happen in both cultures simultaneously, albeit at various levels and depths (Berry, 2003). During this process of exchange, Albanian immigrants find themselves embracing or rejecting elements from both their own and the host culture. This makes the acculturation process a continuing progression and transformation of the beliefs, customs, and values held by the individual (Berry, 2003).

Previously internalized cultural patterns transform due to first-hand interactions with the mainstream/host culture that result in changes for both groups who come in contact (Oppedal, 2006). This process of change during interaction trigger stress, and the individual uses previously learned coping mechanisms to address it (Kosic, 2004). The psychological and physiological reactions of immigrants to the host culture and immigrants’ experience during their interactions can result in feelings of depression, anxiety, and marginalization, and psychosomatic symptomatology (Williams & Berry, 1991). Immigrants have to learn to improvise quickly, to deal
with language and cultural barriers while addressing unknown or ambiguous situations in the host country. In addition, linguistic differences, along with differing religious, economic, and social backgrounds, can exacerbate the stress resulting from immigration. As a result, immigrants face challenges to meet the new demands, even when they could perform various occupational tasks and activities with competency in their native countries (Bandura, 1997). The level of adaptation in the new country depends not only on the individual’s skills and abilities, but also on the belief that use of these skills will initiate a positive change (Berry, 2005).

Statement of the Problem

Self-efficacy has undergone extensive study (Bandura 1997; Hutchinson-Green, Follman, & Bodner, 2008; Maddux, 2009; Martin & McLellan, 2013). Since Bandura coined the term, research has expanded to include various aspects of a person’s life such as education (Kennedy, 2010; Kung, 2009; Pajares & Graham, 1999; Reid, 2013; Riconscente, 2013; Wilhite, 1990), vocational pursuits (Eden & Aviram, 1993; Robb, 2012; Yoshizaki & Hiraoka, 2015), cognitive and motivational consequences (Markus & Kitayama, 1991), and immigration and acculturation (Tatar, Ben-Uri, & Horenczyk, 2010). As the influx of immigrants to the United States continues uninterrupted (Zong & Batalova, 2016b), immigrants bring with them knowledge and abilities that can benefit American society. When self-efficacy accompanies these abilities, they play an important role in adaptation and in what Bandura (1997, p. 36) called “a generative system of human competence.” A number of other factors, such as acculturation level (Pham & Harris, 2001), time of stay in the United States (Kimbro, Lynch, & McLanahan, 2008), demographic factors like race/ethnicity, employment, gender, and level of education (Lum & Vanderaa, 2010; Zimmerman, Zimmerman, Gataullina, & Constant, 2006), and efforts to improve their education, vocational training, and health (Becker 1993), influence beliefs in one’s abilities. According to
Bandura (1997), self-efficacy is a cognitive construct that people achieve when they have confidence in their abilities to make changes, and believe that the competencies they have acquired in life allow them to exercise control over choices and outcomes.

Like self-efficacy, acculturation is a lifelong process (Berry, 1993). Psychological changes that occur during the process of acculturation vary from economic changes, such as pursuing types of employment unknown in the country of origin, to cultural and gastronomic alterations of beliefs and lexicons (Berry, 2005). Some cultural changes are visible when natives and immigrants learn each other’s languages, share each other’s food preferences, and adopt forms of dress and social interactions that are characteristic of each group. There is a wealth of literature, which focuses on the process of acculturation (Lakey, 2003). However, to date, no study has examined how the education level of Albanian immigrants and employment or underemployment influence acculturation and self-efficacy.

There has been much focus on the interaction of self-efficacy with acculturation and its impact on physical health; for example, on factors that affect the practice of healthy behaviors or dietary norms (Fukuoka, & Dawson-Rose, 2015; García-Jimenez et al. 2014; Kamitani, Mansyur, Rustveld Nash, & Jibaja-Weiss, 2016). There has been extensive investigation of the relationship between self-efficacy, acculturation, and career choices of immigrants (In, 2016; Liu, 2009; Patel, Salahuddin, & O’Brien, 2008). However, researchers need to continue increasing their understanding of how level of education interacts with acculturation for different immigrant groups. This is important because individual factors play an important role in the acculturation process (Ward, Bochner, & Furnham, 2001) with a positive correlation between higher levels of education and higher levels of acculturation (Berry, 2005).
The majority of studies on acculturation and self-efficacy have examined two of the largest racial/ethnic groups in the United States: Latinos/Latinas and Asian immigrants (Lui, 2015). There is limited research on how Albanian immigrants exercise control over their daily choices, how they motivate themselves in a new culture, and how they integrate newly acquired adaptation skills. Despite an increasing number of Albanian immigrants in the United States, little research has focused on this ethnic group. Most of these studies have focused on the cultural and economic impact Albanians have in the United States (Mane & Waldor, 2010; Nedelkoska & Khaw, 2015). To date, research investigating psychological self-efficacy and acculturation of adult Albanian immigrants in the United States is sparse (Balidemaj, 2016).

A metasearch literature review on these topics revealed very few peer reviewed publications focusing on Albanians as an ethnic group and either of the two constructs explored in this study: self-efficacy and acculturation. A number of academic databases such as Academic OneFile (Gale, Cengage) Psychology and Behavioral Sciences Collection, eBook Collection (EBSCOhost), PsycINFO, AgeLine, Health and Psychosocial Instruments, CINAHL Complete brought up only one study on Albanian immigrants in the US and their acculturation process (Balidemaj, 2016). There were, however, other studies such as the one focusing on Albanian teachers living in Kosovo and their beliefs on self-efficacy and multicultural education (Yildirim & Erdogan 2016); Albanians students living in the country of Albania and their entrepreneurial characteristics (Kume, Kume, & Shahini, 2013); or physical activity, eating habits and self-efficacy of Albanian adolescents living in Tirana, the Albanian capital city (Çitozi, Bozo, & Pano, 2013).

Due to the large number of Albanian immigrants living in abroad, mostly in Europe and North America, their acculturation process has drawn the interest of social sciences researchers.
Mannarini, Talò, Mezzi, and Procentese (2018), explored multiple senses of community and acculturation strategies among Albanian migrants in Italy; Haenni, Heinzmann, Müller, and Buholzer (2017), researched psychosocial adaptation and school success of Albanian students in Switzerland; Mantwill, and Schulz (2017), investigated the impact of acculturation on health literacy for Albanian immigrants in Switzerland; Papadopoulos, Karasavvoglou, Geranis, and Violitzi. (2015) surveyed the effect of socio-demographic variables on Acculturation of Albanian immigrants in Greece, to name some of the most recent publications.

None of the research published either in the US or Europe has looked at some important demographic differences or political regimes to which Albanians have been subject through the centuries. For example, ethnic Albanians live in several countries in Southern Europe. Their ethnic identity has been shaped by social and political influences of that country. For example, freedom of movement, ability to own private property, or living in a multi-party system created a different experience for ethnic Albanians in Greece, compared to ethnic Albanians living in ex-Yugoslavia, a forced, short-lived conglomerate of countries behind the Iron Curtain, or the life of ethnic Albanians living in the country of Albania, but under one of the most brutal communist dictatorships in history.

Prior to settling in the US, many recent Albanian immigrants experienced a restrictive upbringing under a communist dictatorship, where party members dictated many important life variables including housing, education, and employment; to smaller, but quality of life issues such as who owned a black and white TV or a small refrigerator. These immigrants witnessed Albania’s turbulent transition to the market economy (Roaf, Atoyan, Joshi, Krogulski, & IMF, 2014). Education and employment went from being a decision of government to being an individual choice (Duro, Shahu, Kambo, & Duro, 2015). Taking the initiative to sell and buy goods led to
praise, rather than punishment with jail time. While still struggling to find a way in a liberalized market, the country’s economy collapsed due to pyramid schemes and Albania was on the brink of civil war (Jarvis, 1999). Considering the limited number of studies, cultural differences, and these significant historic events, it is important to study self-efficacy and acculturation more fully through the lens of individuals with different educational backgrounds.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to explore levels of self-efficacy and acculturation among Albanian immigrants based on their level of education and current type of employment. To date only one study (Balidemaj, 2016) has observed the process of acculturation in this ethnic group in the United States. This proposed study will take a closer look at acculturation and its correlation with self-efficacy moderated by individual factors. This study will explore the relationship between self-efficacy and acculturation of Albanian immigrants, considering several demographic factors, such as level of education, country where a college degree was obtained, employment, age at migration, and gender. Specifically, this study will examine the effect of higher education on acculturation and self-efficacy.

This study will investigate:

1. the age at the time of immigration, gender and employment status and their relationship with self-efficacy and acculturation among Albanian immigrants.
2. the difference in self-efficacy between Albanian immigrants with a 4-year college-degree and Albanian immigrants who do not have a 4-year college degree.
3. the difference in acculturation between Albanian immigrants with a 4-year college-degree and Albanian immigrants who do not have a 4-year college degree.
4. the differences in self-efficacy and acculturation level among Albanian immigrants who obtained a college degree in Albania prior to immigrating to the US, compared to Albanian immigrants who obtained a college degree in the U.S. after immigrating.

5. the relationship between self-efficacy and acculturation among Albanian immigrants who have a 4 year-college degree.

Significance of the Study

This study adds to the literature on acculturation and self-efficacy in Albanians, whose life experiences have only recently come under investigation. Previous research has suggested that the differing local customs (Caplan 2007), a different language (Chapman, & Perreira, 2005), and different social norms (Balls Organista, Organista,& Kurasaki, 2003) likely increase stress and hinder the process of adaptation in the host culture. Increased acculturative stress increases the risk of psychological problems (Berry, 1997). While there are several factors that influence acculturation, similarities between the host culture and the culture of origin (Balls Organista et al. 2003), and perceptions of mental illness by immigrants (Atkinson & Gim, 1989) play a significant role. Additionally, few studies have shown how education impacts acculturation level and self-efficacy, when subjects work below their skill levels (Crouter, Davis, Updegraff, Delgado, & Fortner, 2006; Galarneau Morissette 2008; George, Thomson, Chaze, & Guruge, 2015; Takano 2006).

It will be of benefit for many practitioners, in particular, those residing in Illinois, Massachusetts, Michigan, and New York, where a large number of Albanian immigrants reside. With a better understanding of Albanians, mental health providers will gain a perspective on a different ethnic group. Increased knowledge of and appreciation for this group is likely to minimize
attribution errors (APA, 2016) and stigma, and it will contribute to more positive interpersonal interactions in a multicultural setting (APA, 2016). As this current research will expand the understanding of cultural diversity for Albanian immigrants, it will help reduce some of the cultural barriers for future researchers.

**Theoretical Framework**

Personality (as a psychological construct) is defined as a life-long process of development which affects individual thought, behavior or feeling patterns (Corr & Matthews, 2009). The norms and values of the society in which the individual lives, play a very important role in this process of personality development. Even when accounting for innate traits (Kandler et al., 2010), the environment continuously influences individual preferences, decisions, and overall how one organizes life (Ford & Arter, 2013). For example, one’s understanding of their social location in life as influenced by individual dimensions such as sex/gender or race/ethnicity, evolves over the years, as the views and perceptions of the society in which the individual resides change other the years (Arnett Jensen, 2012). Individual thoughts, behavior, and feelings transform in light of new societal currents as the individual, in search of equilibrium, attempts to give meaning to the events and circumstances (Phinney & Ong, 2007; Yip, Douglas & Sellers, 2014). Many human development theories use Eurocentric, Western perspectives as foundations. The authors of these theories drew inspiration not only from academic knowledge, but also from observing and analyzing the environmental influences around them. While there are similarities among all individuals regardless of background, race and ethnicity have significant effects on the psychological development of identity (Ballou, Matsumoto, & Wagner, 2002). When people diverge from what most consider normal development and behavior, others can perceive them as deviant (Sue, 2001). It is only in the last few decades, with the expansion of multicultural
psychology and research, that researchers have investigated how an individual interacts with his or her environment through a multicultural lens.

In their work on Feminist Ecological Theory (FET), Ballou et al. (2002) articulated that human existence is multifaceted, undergoing continuous influence from ongoing interactions of the individual with surrounding contexts. Accurate understanding of individual experiences must take into account a number of factors that affect the intersectionality of individual characteristics, such as, but not limited to, race/ethnicity, gender, level of education, or employment; with external influences from nuclear family and school district; to more global influences, such as political and economic factors. While acknowledging personality traits’ influence on the decision-making process, FET also draws attention to the environment outside of the person, which impacts and shapes personality, beliefs, and values. A schematic of FET conceptualizes the individual in the center of his or her universe surrounded by concentric circles as seen in Figure 1, in which radii rise as the connection to the individual becomes less direct. In the immediate level of development called the microsystem, FET places those entities that have direct interactions with the individual, such as spouses, children, parents, siblings, and other relatives. Immediate and extended family members not only share blood-related and legal relationships, but also directly influence personality development. They dictate primary values and beliefs, they introduce and reinforce social norms, and they acquaint the individual with cultural customs and traditions. Informal and formal institutions with which an individual enters in contact throughout life further reinforce these beliefs and values. These institutions include, but are not limited to neighborhood organizations, religious congregations and education systems.
Figure 1.1 – The Ecological Model


FET suggests that human development does not happen in a vacuum, but many forces, internal and external shape it, some of which are beyond the individual’s control. This theory provides the most appropriate basis for studying the experiences of Albanian immigrants in the US. It draws attention on the impact not only of the family, but many other dimensions that influence individual decision-making, from friends or extended family (Gyula, Takacs, Karacsonyi, & Imrek 2002; Heigl et al. 2012), to societal doctrines, such as the one-party state as part of the historical and political context in Albania (Nikolla, 2013).

Rationale for a Relationship-Based Research Design

This study uses a quantitative research design. The goal is to explore whether level of education of recent Albanian immigrants is predictive of self-efficacy and acculturation. Bandura
(1997) reported that higher educational attainment has a positive correlation with self-efficacy and increases efforts to use education to pursue better employment opportunities. In other words, individuals who believe themselves to be competent in accomplishing goals, are more likely to pursue reemployment or better job opportunities (Eden & Aviram, 1993; Vinokur, van Ryn, Gramlich, & Price, 1991). Unemployment or underemployment is a stressor that negatively affects self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997; Kennedy & Chen, 2012). However, it is uncertain how level of employment affects self-efficacy for Albanian immigrants, in particular for those immigrants who are underemployed for their level of vocational skills.

Similarly, previous research has found positive correlation between successful adaptation in a host culture and educational achievement. (AitOuarasse & van de Vijver, 2005; Jiang, Green, Henley, & Masten, 2009; Nagel 2003; Suinn, Ahuna & Khoo, 1995). Better-educated immigrants get more involved with the host culture, and are better able to integrate, due to their capability for cultural learning (Jayasuriya, Sang, & Fielding, 1992). When highly educated immigrants lose their social and economic mobility or encounter delays in the host culture, they are more likely to experience feelings of depression, anxiety, and isolation in the host culture (Ait Ouarasse & van de Vijver, 2004, 2005). These changes negatively affect their beliefs in their abilities to control life outcomes (Schreder, Smuc, Siebenhandl, & Mayr, 2013).
Definition of Terms

To ensure full understanding of constructs and background of participants used throughout this study, it is important to define a number of terms. The researcher developed all definitions not accompanied by citations.

- **Acculturation** involves changes that result from sustained contact between two distinct cultures (Redfield, Linton, & Herskovits, 1936) which may occur on both the cultural/group and psychological/individual levels (Berry, Trimble, & Olmedo, 1986). Psychological acculturation refers to changes in the behaviors, attitudes, values, and identities of individuals (Berry, 1980; Graves, 1967). A bidirectional process (Berry, 2003; Ryder, Alden & Paulhus 2000), acculturation involves learning a new language, customs, and norms, while adapting or even relinquishing some customs, norms, and values from heritage culture.

- **Albanian immigrant**, for the purpose of this study, is defined as an individual who emigrated from Albanian, as an adult between 1991 and 2010.

- **Culture** is defined as an individual and social construct with both universal and unique elements that influences behavior and/or interpretation of behaviors (Spencer-Oatey, 2012).

- **Ethnic Albanian immigrant** is an individual who belongs to the ethnic group native to Albania and a number of neighboring countries such as Kosovo, Macedonia, Greece, Serbia, and Montenegro.

- **Exosystem** is a construct conceptualizing the social, political, legal, economic, and religious institutions with which an individual is not directly interacting, but that
influence life-long development. These institutions shape the norms, values, and beliefs of a society (Ballou et al., 2002).

- **Gender** refers to the condition of being male, female, or non-gender conforming. In today’s society, gender refers to cultural aspects of being male or female. It includes roles and expectations that a given society attributes to males and females (APA, 2018).

- **International migrant** is defined as a person who has left their country of birth either permanently or temporarily, and is engaged in social and economic activities in the new country. An international migrant’s move to a new country has been voluntary and does not describe those individuals who have been forcibly removed or forced to abandon their native land (Castles, 2000).

- **Insider participant observer** is defined as a research who is also a member of the group being studied (Bonner & Tolhurst, 2002).

- **Heritage culture** encompasses values, norms, and traditions of the culture to which immigrants were exposed in their native country (Ryder et al., 2000). Albanian culture represents heritage culture in this study.

- **Higher education** is defined as having completed a baccalaureate degree or higher.

- **Low education** signifies obtaining a high school diploma or less.

- **Low (under) employment** is defined as involuntary part-time or low wage employment that is lower than the vocational skills an immigrant has. Underemployment carries lower status and lower wages (Crouter et al., 2006; Friedland & Price, 2003).
Macrosystem is a conceptual understanding of governmental, economic, and environmental forces at a national or global level. The individual does not have direct interaction with them, but their influence is experienced through policies and regulations that dictate psychological and physical development (Ballou et al., 2002).

Mainstream culture encompasses values, norms, and traditions of the culture to which immigrants were exposed in their host country (Ryder et al., 2000). American culture represents mainstream culture in this study.

Microsystem is defined as the institutions with which an individual interacts on a daily basis, such as family and fictive kin, neighborhood, places of worship, local school districts, and work (Ballou et al., 2002).

Self-efficacy is defined as individual beliefs about capabilities to accomplish tasks which affect daily lives. These beliefs influence feeling, thinking, behavior and motivation (Bandura, 1997). Higher perceived self-efficacy is positively correlated with higher education attainment and better employment opportunities (Eden & Aviram, 1993).

Sex entails the physical and biological traits that differentiate between a male and a female (APA, 2018).

Skill-based employment is defined as a job that matches educational training, income and/or prestige.
CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Chapter 2 provides a literature review on FET and an introduction to the constructs of self-efficacy and acculturation in the current literature with an analysis from a feminist ecological perspective. A theoretical overview on how employment and education influence self-efficacy and acculturation levels follows. The second part of Chapter 2 describes some of the major events that have influenced Albanian identity formation. It also includes a brief overview of historic developments in education and employment under the communist regime. This chapter falls into three parts; each contributes to the rationale of the proposed study by providing an overview of the literature on self-efficacy and acculturation and an introduction to some of the major cultural and historical events that have impacted identity formation and immigration of Albanians to the United States. The first part of this dissertation does not test any existing theories, but examines the correlation between acculturation and self-efficacy. It provides a summary of empirical research on theoretical perspectives pertaining to these two variables. This chapter presents the development of these constructs through immigration, employment, and level of education. By examining political and socio-cultural factors such as communism and collectivism, this literature review provides a social context for understanding Albanian immigrants. The second part provides (a) an overview of historic factors that influenced Albanian identity, (b) the reasons behind international territorial relocation of Albanians and their migratory patterns and settlements in the United States, (c) an examination of collectivistic patterns in the Albanian society interpreted through the FET lens, (d) the limited rights of Albanian citizens under communist dictatorship, and (e) information that future mental health providers can use to understand the Albanian
immigrant population better. Finally, this chapter summarizes the current literature review findings.

**Self-Efficacy**

Bandura (1977) conceptualized social cognitive theory as a method by which individuals learn social behavior, develop their cognitive skills beyond innate capabilities, and refine their critical thinking skills. He maintained that by observing and communicating with others, an individual determines how successful he or she will be. These beliefs then impact how a person views and enhances his or her abilities and achieves his or her presumed goals.

A core construct of social cognitive learning is self-efficacy, a term coined by Bandura (1977), who defined it as the belief people hold in themselves regarding their mastery of tasks. Working from such beliefs, individuals engage in thought processes to initiate and advance changes in their lives, motivational processes, and affective experiences. Bandura suggested that individuals with higher levels of self-efficacy set more challenging goals for themselves and are more likely to succeed in accomplishing those goals.

Bandura (1997, p. 36) defined this construct as “a generative capability in which cognitive, social, emotional and behavioral subskills must be organized and effectively orchestrated to serve innumerable purposes.” In a classic experiment, Schwartz and Gottman (1976), demonstrated that self-statements about capability can interfere with performance, even when subjects perceive themselves as able to accomplish a task presented to them. Much of it depends on internalized beliefs of efficacy (Bandura, 1997) which undergo influence from the beliefs, norms, and values of the society in which the individual resides. Failure is often a step in the process of achievement, rather than the end of an effort. Individuals who believe in their capabilities to accomplish tasks tend to bounce back from setbacks and return to focusing on how to increase their knowledge and
their abilities in order to avoid future failures. Lacking performance on a task is manageable, because individuals with high levels of self-efficacy believe they have the capabilities to exercise control over events in their lives.

Four factors influence beliefs about self-efficacy: a) mastery of experiences, b) social learning, c) verbal persuasions, and d) psychological responses (Bandura, 1997; Hutchinson-Green et al., 2008). To become proficient in an activity, an individual engages in a series of repetitive and incremental learning experiences that result in mastering an experience (Hutchinson-Green et al., 2008). The individual interprets the outcome of each experience, and it later influences future performances. Bandura (1997) suggested that if individuals engage in incrementally more challenging tasks and goals, then they are attempting systematically to master a specific behavior.

The use of self-regulatory strategies increases as a result of efficacy beliefs, which result in increased personal achievement (Kennedy, 2010; Pajares & Graham, 1999). A person is an agent of change of both self and the environment (Bandura, 2002), not just a ship without a rudder tossed around by social systems or environmental forces. Social systems dictate norms and expectations for the individual, yet at the same time said individual has an effect on social systems (Bandura, 2002). This is a reciprocal, active, and ongoing learning process which shapes an individual’s thoughts, feelings and behaviors. The quality of this process paves the way of future interactions.

Just like individual learning experiences are likely to impact one’s beliefs of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997), impeding or catalyst environmental factors also influence perception of capabilities (Bandura, 2002). Psycho-socio-cultural interactions between an individual and the environment are of particular importance as it is on a psychological level that cognitive development starts prior to factual knowledge acquisition (Vygotsky, 1986). If a child guided by more knowledgeable individuals, succeeds after many failed attempts in a given task, this child
will start to internalize beliefs that ongoing efforts can bring desired change (Vygotsky, 1978). If more knowledge others blame or do not support a child after unsuccessful efforts, it is likely this child will internalize negative beliefs about having control over the outcome a given task. Pursuit of loftier education goals is an example of an ongoing task, which successful outcome depends on the support or lack thereof, multiple facets of society. Family members, neighbors, peers, and school systems, are only some of the players positioned near a child in the zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1986). It is in this limbo of the learning process; the environment has the power and opportunity to encourage a child to attempt change. The microcosmos in which a child lives provides the scaffolding which reinforces either the notion that with effort one can change the outcome (Gredler & Shields, 2007), or that one’s life is like a ship without a rudder, left at the mercy of others. The social interaction between child and others plays a critical role in cognitive development and paves the way for the growth of higher thinking processes.

Observational learning is a second way of creating beliefs of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1994). Other people’s experiences serve as models, increasing or lowering the observer’s sense of efficacy. Observers are likely to assume they possess what is necessary to accomplish a task if they observe people similar to themselves successfully mastering an activity (Bandura 1997). The level of similarity between the model and the observer influences self-efficacy more than the task in question (Schwarzer, 1992). The ability of the model to accomplish a task is even more important when the task at hand is utterly new to the observer.

The third source of self-efficacy is social persuasion, or verbal encouragement from others that one possesses the necessary capabilities to accomplish a task successfully (Bandura, 1994). Compared to other sources of self-efficacy, this form of reinforcement is less productive, because it competes with factual data about successful outcomes of activities. An individual is more likely
to benefit from verbal persuasion at the beginning of the learning process, when the outcome of his or her efforts does not hold sufficient information about personal efficacy. When individuals presume, they lack capabilities to exercise control over the environment, social persuasion is less likely to change such perceptions. People who doubt their capabilities are less likely to engage in challenging tasks and more likely to dwell on their failures.

**Self-Efficacy and Feminist Ecological Theory**

According to FET (Ballou et al. 2002), norms and beliefs undergo direct influence not only from individual dimensions of self, but also from the social, political, and educational environment. Caregivers who encourage children’s cognitive, social, and physical capabilities, create growth opportunities, and are positively responsive to children’s task accomplishments foster a strong sense of efficacy. As the presence and the feedback of peers, neighbors, teachers, and religious leaders increases with age, so does the influence they have on the developmental process of efficacy. In particular, peer selection is purposeful and serves as a reinforcer of long-held personal beliefs. Not only do peers provide examples of competencies an individual aspires to master, but they also serve as comparative models an observer can use to judge personal accomplishments on a given task (Bandura, 1997).

The social systems that enforce these norms dictate the level of freedom and decision-making autonomy each individual has in a given society (Bandura, 1997). On the one hand, social systems and institutions reinforce the long-lasting patterns of social behavior necessary for the survival of a civilization or culture (Bandura, 1997; Turner, 1997). On the other hand, these same “interlocking double-structure(s) of persons-as-role-holders” (Harre, 1979, p. 98) produce and reinforce environmental cues that activate the use of skills and knowledge the individual possesses, with various degrees of efficiency (Langer & Park, 1990). While most people benefit from a
combination of innate and learned capabilities to exercise influence on their surroundings (Bandura, 1997), their social locations constrain their true abilities to make changes (Hensley, 2012). Race, ethnicity, gender, age, and social capital are only some of the determinants of social location (Henslin, 2012). In combination, factors in the immediate environment such as family, neighborhood, and scholastic systems, and more distant influences such as political, economic, and social systems (Ballou et al., 2002) impact “personal aspirations, outcome expectations, perceived opportunity structures and constraints, and conceptions of personal efficacy” (Bandura, 1997, p. 10).

Self-Efficacy in Individualistic and Collectivistic Societies

Markus and Kitayama (1991) drew attention to the fact that self-efficacy is a construct that applies across nations and cultures. However, Bandura’s theory does not extensively address cultural differences that play a very important role in the formation of constructs that relate directly to the observer’s model (Heine, Lehman, Markus, & Kitayama, 1999). A comprehensive picture of self-efficacy must take into account cultural dimensions, and, in the case of this dissertation, more recent findings focusing on both individualistic and collective societies.

Socio-cultural environments vary in their values, their beliefs, and the opportunities they promote for their members. The degree of interdependence between members of a society is in function of the level of individualism accepted by that society (Hofstade, 2003). Western cultures, historically strongly influenced by Christian values, promote individual advancement and “salvation” (Hughes, 1974), and society members expect and encourage the pursuit of self-interest (Triandis, 2001). People in Western cultures, which are essentially individualistic, do not look down on or sanction those who are not successful in the same way as more collectivist cultures, where such failure can lead to the individual becoming a burden on his or her family or society.
more generally (Bandura, 1997; Goiten, 1967; Triandis, 2001). Individualistic societies have created other structures to deal with individual failure. The American social system is merit-based form of governance that rewards the talent and skills of the individual who succeeds. A socially successful individual is rewarded for their merit. Access to appropriate resources are crucial in encouraging and nurturing merit. Better socio-economic situation creates better access to resources. Those in a lower socio-economical standing find themselves disadvantaged as they have less resources to develop merit. However, instead of taking responsibility of this systemic failure, the individual becomes the scapegoat of the disparity (Lambert, 2014). The tangible punishment of the individual can result in such as loss of capital and changes in social status, (Triandis, 2001).

The basis of self-efficacy for members of an individualistic culture is personal achievement and perceived independence (Markus & Kitayama, 1994). In summary, these findings suggest that educational and professional achievements not only bring prestige to individuals who achieve goals, but also, at least for members of collectivistic societies, they bring prestige to the group to which the individual belongs.

In collectivistic cultures, the needs and interests of the group come before the needs of the individual. The collective entity, whether that is the family, neighborhood, organization, or employment structure, imposes its norms and obligations on the individual (Triandis, 1995). They serve as motivators and reinforcers of personal self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997). The connectedness among group members serves as a validator of beliefs of personal efficacy. It is important to underline the fact that the construct of self-efficacy is not unique to individualistic cultures. Every human being possesses the capability we call self-efficacy, regardless of the society and culture in which he or she resides (Schooler, 1990). Self-direction and autonomy are not exclusive norms of individualistic cultures. While the well-being of the group is much more of a priority, when
members of collectivistic cultures take the initiative, other members foster this seemingly individualistic trait as long as it benefits the collective entity (Schooler, 1990).

In U.S. an individualistic culture is prevalent, with society expecting individuals to take care of themselves, there are loose familial ties (Hofstade, 2003), and fictive kin replacing consanguine relatives in their obligations (Henslin, 2012). Interacting with acquaintances is common in American society: members take the initiative, are self-reliant, and are unfazed by the idea of approaching strangers to seek information and help (Hofstade, 2016).

Group influence in an individualistic society still exists, although it does not come from blood relations. Often celebrities, athletes or so called “trendsetters”, individuals who have the financial, technological and marketing resources to dictate the rules of behavior and cultural norms, and introduce them in social media. From there, peers, acquaintances and even strangers exhort pressure toward the individual to conform (Jetten, Postmes, & Mcauliffe, 2002), purchase the latest toy, upgrade a perfectly functioning piece of electronic equipment, discard last year’s fashion in an attempt to keep with “the Joneses”. While Americans take pride in self-reliance, autonomy, and initiative, conformity with group norms on one hand and social sanctions for defectors on the other, are as present as they are in a collectivistic society (Gavac, Murrar, & Brauer, 2017).

In Albania, familial and group influence is very strong. In his review of the country’s culture, Hofstade (2016) found that Albania had one of the strongest scores indicating a collectivistic society. He suggested that Albanians create and maintain long-term commitments to their in-groups. All group members expect loyalty in return for protection and support from the groups to which they belong. While expectations of total dedication to the group have been part of Albanian culture for centuries, this demand became stronger after WWII with the establishment
of the communist government. Forced agricultural collectivization and confiscation of private property removed any opportunity for individual self-advancement (Civici, 2002). When the government abolished private ownership by law in 1976, communist propaganda disseminated the idea that even the desire for personal achievement is “imperialistic,” and all individual accomplishments “must only benefit the common good.” With such a legacy, it is not surprising that the emphasis on collectivism is stronger in Albania than in any other European country, and that it is more similar to China and other Southeast Asian countries like Vietnam and Thailand.

Level of Education, Employment, and Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy determines career choices and occupational development even in early childhood (Bandura, 1997). Children and adolescents who believe they are capable of more demanding jobs such as lawyers or doctors are also more likely to pursue tertiary education (Harvey & McMurray, 1994). Since its introduction, several studies have explored the influence of self-efficacy on academic achievement (e.g., Kennedy, 2010; Kung, 2009; Pajares & Graham, 1999; Reid, 2013; Riconscente, 2013; Wilhite, 1990). Children and adolescents explore challenging fields such as mathematics or nursing when they believe that particular careers are attainable (Riconscente, 2013; Robb, 2012). Denissen, Zarrett, and Eccles (2007) analyzed data from Childhood and Beyond longitudinal study, which for eleven years focused on development of children’s achievement and motivation. Children lived in several communities in Michigan, and came from middle- or working-class families, with a wide range of income between $10,000 to $80,000. Gender division was balanced with girls representing 51% of the sample. However, the vast majority of children identified as white. Analysis of data from approximately 1,000 children aged 6-17, found that subjects who they believed they could achieve positive results, and they pursued these subjects, which reinforced their self-efficacy.
This impact on intellectual performance indicates that students who believed they could solve problems could find solutions and develop strategies faster than students who either lacked intellectual abilities or doubted their personal efficacy (Bandura, 1997; Kung, 2009). Children who believe in themselves remain focused longer and persist until satisfied with the outcome (Bouffard-Bouchard, Parent, & Larivée, 1990; Kung, 2009). Throughout life, occupational aspirations and a degree of personal control shape the trajectories and foster the undertaking of activities that will bring an individual closer to a vocational goal, and at the same time, further reinforce his or her beliefs of efficacy (Martin & McLellan, 2013). Self-efficacy in one’s cognitive abilities does not develop in a vacuum. Accomplishments that reinforce self-motivation reinforce it (Bandura, 1997). When students successfully accomplish small, short-term, measurable tasks, they are more likely to sustain efforts until they accomplish long-term goals (Kennedy, 2010). In complex interactions, educational achievement reinforces self-efficacy, which in turn promotes higher academic pursuits (Bandura, 1997). Higher self-efficacy is a contributing factor to loftier academic success (Martin & McLellan, 2013).

Self-efficacy is a strong contributor to career development (Yoshizaki & Hiraoka, 2015). Not discounting the importance of economic factors, such as globalization, the overall job market, wage stagnation, and changes in different industries, individuals who believe they have the capability to pursue better employment will approach the whole process with more confidence (Bandura, 1997). Arnett Jensen (2012) reported that Erikson, in his theory of psychosocial development, stated that one of the major tasks of middle adulthood is a fulfilling and productive career. Expertise peaks at this stage, as does crystallized intelligence (Arnett Jensen, 2012). Many of the skills that help with career advancement, such as networking or ongoing positive connections to institutions like an alma matter, develop during early adulthood (Bandura, 1997).
However, opportunity alone is not sufficient to ensure employment. Research shows that more confident individuals develop novel ways of job search, like searching or applying for jobs that at first sight might not fit well with their previous careers (Yoshizaki & Hiraoka, 2015). They develop a sense of accomplishment and generativity and develop career expertise (Arnett Jensen, 2012). Pursuit of self-development to adapt to an ever-changing economy occurs through ongoing efforts by the individual to prepare for new vocational pursuits (Yoshizaki & Hiraoka, 2015). Higher self-efficacy helps in finding reemployment, increasing networking, and improving job-related mastery (Eden & Aviram, 1993).

As self-efficacy impacts pursuit and maintenance of satisfactory types of employment, so that the quality of experiences in the workplace impacts self-efficacy. Sanders, Damen, and Van Dam (2015) conducted a study during which at regular intervals of six months, low educated workers were trained and completed questionnaires to establish the effects of training participation and the quality of learning experience in self-efficacy. Conducting a regression analysis ($n = 359$), they found that just participating in a training did not increase the perceived self-efficacy. It was the positive learning experiences in the workplace that improved self-efficacy. Low-educated workers have had either limited or negative opportunities to reinforce beliefs in their abilities during their academic years (Illeris, 2006), which, as mentioned above, reduces self-efficacy. Sanders et al. (2015) suggested that despite lacking extensive academic experience, participation in workplace training increased self-efficacy in the workplace for low-educated employees.

**Acculturation**

Berry (2003) presented two levels that became the foundation for description and evaluation in his model of acculturation. The cultural level incorporates social, ecological, political, and institutional alterations that occur to a culture as a result of its interaction with,
acceptance of, or rejection of another autonomous culture (Sam & Berry, 2010). The ongoing debate about acculturation has focused on two main areas: dimensionality and directionality. Acculturation does not take place in a single direction (Berry, 2003). Immigrants show different degrees of preference toward their heritage and host cultures. With each placed on a bidirectional arrow, preferences for heritage and host culture form quadrants that define acculturation strategies. The choice of one of the acculturation strategies depends on some crucial elements: the first element is the immigration policies the receiving society adopts (Sam & Berry, 2010), which has a decisive impact on the process of inclusion of immigrants. The second element is the characteristics of the societies of origin and the social context of origin of immigrants. When the heritage and host culture differ extensively, immigrants will be more likely to choose separation strategies (Phalet & Schonpflug, 2001; Yagmurlu & Sanson, 2009). All these studies highlight the influence of basic factors that affect the processes of both identification and integration. Length of residence in the host country, ethnicity, timing and mode of arrival in a new country, employment, and the cultural and social capital of the family are all factors that, directly or indirectly, act on identity construction and routes of acculturation of immigrants.

Psychological level of acculturation refers to the changes that occur in the individual when interacting with the host culture (Sam & Berry, 2010). Supporters of a unidimensional model place the individual on a continuum that changes with exposure and ongoing interaction with the mainstream culture (McCrae, Yik, Trapnell, Bond, & Paulhus, 1998).

Berry’s (1993, 2004) view on acculturation presents two dimensions where the heritage and host culture impact domains like attitude, language, and cultural identity. During their process of adaptation in the new country, immigrants will experience circumstances which lead to them to questioning the value of their heritage culture. Similarly, engaging with the mainstream culture
will raise questions such as “is it of value to maintain relationships with the host society?” (Berry, 1997). To answer these questions, immigrants and host nationals need first to evaluate what Berry (1997, p. 9) calls “cultural maintenance” and an evaluative process in determining which elements of their culture to maintain. Second, both immigrants and host nationals need to evaluate their levels of interaction between groups. Immigrants who subscribe to the idea that it is beneficial to have good relationships with the host culture, while still holding onto to their heritage cultural identity, will likely engage in an integration strategy.

On the other hand, members of the host culture likely foster this process, based on their beliefs that immigrants have the right to maintain their cultural traditions, while at the same time embracing some aspects of the host culture (Bourhis, Moise, Perreault, & Senecal, 1997). Immigrants who see the host culture as more important will likely engage in what Berry (1997) called an assimilation process. Members of the host culture endorse the idea that it is better for immigrants to renounce their heritage culture and to embrace the host culture fully. When immigrants only hold on to their heritage culture, they are likely to engage in separation. Some host nationals who believe that separation between immigrant and host culture is beneficial to the host society reinforce this process (Bourhis et al., 1997). The last strategy immigrants might use during the process of acculturation is marginalization (Berry, 1997). Seldom a voluntary choice, immigrants who find themselves using this strategy in their interactions with the host culture have likely experienced rejection by host nationals, but also forced segregation in the host culture (Bourhis et al., 1997).

The second dimension evaluates the adherence to the dominant culture based on the level of participation and the type of contact that people have with the natives. Based on these
dimensions, Berry hypothesized four trajectories: integration, separation, assimilation, and marginalization (see Table 1).

**Acculturation and Self-Efficacy**

As mentioned earlier, self-efficacy refers to the perceived capabilities of an individual to deal with unforeseen challenges. While many individual and social factors influence it, acculturation correlates positively with increased perceptions of self-efficacy (Pham & Harris, 2001). Thus, increased acculturation is likely to positively influence an individual’s sense of self-efficacy (de Saissy, 2009). Immigrants report lower levels of stress during the process of acculturation when they experience a higher sense of self-efficacy (Berry, 2005; Khan & Waheed, 2006). A number of studies have found positive correlations between levels of acculturation and self-efficacy. In her study of Chinese immigrants (n = 51) in Northern Ireland, de Saissy (2009) used the Abbreviated Multidimensional Acculturation Scale and the General Self-Efficacy Scale. After de Saissy performed t tests and correlational analyses, the results showed a positive correlation between self-efficacy and acculturation for Chinese immigrants. Similarly, Nagel (2003), in her qualitative study of skilled Arab immigrants (n = 54) in Britain, found that despite the stigma and perception of “sameness” among the general public, participants who believe in their own capabilities to control outcomes in their lives, are more likely to integrate into British society and the politics of multiculturalism. The results of a study by Tatar et al. (2010) with Israeli immigrant teachers (n = 133) has provided additional data on the correlation between self-efficacy and acculturation. They collected data using three questionnaires gathering information on acculturation, self-efficacy, and demographic data. In this study, self-efficacy was assessed by measuring teachers’ beliefs in their ability to complete teaching related tasks, their relationship with school personnel, and their interactions with students of different cultural backgrounds.
Results of a MANOVA suggested that teachers who endorsed more assimilative views also reported lower levels of self-efficacy. Using Berry’s (2006) definition of assimilation, when an individual has a more positive orientation towards mainstream culture and chooses to break away from heritage culture, Tatar et al. (2010) suggested that those teachers who preferred the Israeli culture over their native Russian culture, also endorsed latent beliefs of being less capable to accomplishing their teaching tasks.

**Level of Education, Employment, and Acculturation**

There is a positive correlation between completion of college education and self-efficacy. Higher levels of acculturation have positive correlations with higher levels of education among immigrants (Nagel 2003; Suinn et al., 1995). Language proficiency facilitates the process of acculturation as it mediates culture shock, language shock, and ego-permeability (Jiang et al., 2009). Language proficiency is defined as a person’s ability to speak a second language with syntax, pronunciation, and morphology similar to that of a native speaker (Schuman, 1986). It also mediates acculturation stress and facilitates exchange of cultural knowledge (Karni, Davey, & Davey, 2013; Noels, Gordon, & Clement, 1996). Additionally, college-educated immigrants reported higher levels of acculturation. In her study on health behaviors and acculturation level, Chen (2009) found that better educated Chinese American mothers reported higher levels of acculturation and promoted healthier behaviors, such as higher levels of physical activity and better dietary choices for their children.

Similarly, on education, higher levels of acculturation had positive correlations with better employment outcomes. Assessing employment opportunities for immigrants in Denmark ($n = 1,473$), Gorinas (2013) found they positively correlated with higher levels of acculturation. While Gorinas’s study evaluated acculturation and employment for Middle Eastern and Eastern European
immigrants in Denmark, Wilson-Forsberg (2014) conducted a qualitative study to assess the correlation between employment and acculturation of Latino immigrants in Canada. Her findings further suggested that higher levels of acculturation have positive correlations with better employment opportunities, particularly for skilled immigrants ($n = 24$).

**An Introduction to Albanian Identity**

Located on the Mediterranean coastline, Albania is a small country, with an ancient history dating back to the Middle Paleolithic Era (Prendi, 1982). It has endured ongoing occupations and endless waves of conquerors carrying different flags and speaking languages very different from the Albanian language, one of the oldest in the Indo-European branch. Until the proclamation of independence in 1912, Albanians were living in a number of countries and territories, many of which the Ottoman Empire still occupied. Their unification, based on a common historic background and language, created the first formal state of Albania since a brief attempt in the 1400s (Elsie, 2010). Considering the deep divides that still afflict the Balkan region, Albanian unification proved to be an unusual union of different ethnic and religious groups. Ethnic separation of Albanians into Tosks and Ghegs began mainly as an adaptation to natural barriers in the mountainous country.

While ethnic differences were initially due to the challenges of the physical environment, religious divisions clearly relate to the redrawing of the borders and the rise and fall of European powers (Elsie, 2010). Initially pagan polytheists, many believe that St. Paul converted the Albanians to Christianity (Schnabel, 2008). The fragmentation of the Roman Empire created the first major religious division between Albanians, with southern Tosks placing themselves under the tutelage of Constantinople, while northern Ghegs maintained ties to Rome as a way to separate themselves from the Orthodox Slavic occupying forces (Leften, 2000). The Ottoman occupation
of the Balkans forced Albanians to convert to Islam as a means of survival. While Islamization was slow, at the time of the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire in 1922, almost 60% of Albanians identified as Sunni or Bektashi Shia (Nielsen, Aknönü, Alibašić, & Racić, 2013). The religious separation of Albanians never became a barrier to collaboration among groups. Religious tolerance developed as an adaptation to national expediency (Hutchinson & Smith, 2000). Through centuries of territorial occupations and assimilation attempts, Albanian national identity emerged as a unifying factor forged by a common language, shared cultural beliefs, and feelings of belonging unique to this group (Babuna, 2003). While a sense of shared national identity that overcame ethnic and religious divisions influenced Albanians through centuries, it was the communist dictatorship that played a role in the identity formation of current adult Albanian immigrants. Establishment of the communist regime after WWII, the continuous purging of democratic forces, extreme isolation from the rest of the world, and state control of industry and the banking system eventually resulted in Albania emerging in 1990 as one of the poorest countries in Europe. By that time, food rationing had become a norm even in Tirana. Medication shortages and lack of other bare necessities left the few Europeans allowed to visit the country in shock in view of widespread poverty. Years of socialist realism fundamentally altered Albanian culture and traditions, and primitive attempts at a cultural revolution, which virtually wiped out century-old traditions, fostered ignorance and set people against each other.

Albanians born after the end of WWII became the main targets of communist propaganda, which tried to fill the forcibly created vacuum of values and beliefs with the utopian concept of njeriu i ri (new man). There was an irreversible connection between this new identity and the collective identity, which the government protected and promoted (Nikolla, 2013). A lufta e klasave (war of the classes) focused on eradicating the so-called bourgeois and revisionist values,
allegedly protecting the individual from foreign influences and the enforcement of a proletariat dictatorship. According to Nikolla (2013), the war of the classes caused degradation of long-held beliefs, instilled widespread distrust between family members and government institutions, and forever altered how Albanians perceived personal and public opportunities. It fostered corruption, albeit state run, and transformed respect for authority figures into fear and mosbesim (lack of faith, or breaking the of word of honor).

**Migratory History of Albanians**

Albanians have a long history of migration. The earliest recorded mass migration occurred in the 15th century, when the newly created Albanian state fell under Ottoman rule. Almost one third of its habitants fled persecution, settling in southern Italy and northern Greece (Tirta, 1999).

The first Albanian immigrants to reach U.S. shores arrived in the middle of the 19th century. The majority were Tosks, mostly originating from East and South East Albania. They settled in Massachusetts, working in the local mills (Vullnetari, 2012). In the 1920s and 1930s, a new wave of Albanian immigrants included many political asylum seekers, who brought with them a strong sense of Albanianhood (Ragaru & Dymi, 2004) and started the organization of the U.S. diaspora (Nagi, 1988). A number of churches, newspapers, and local organizations emerged to support immigrants as well as political and social movements, with Boston serving as the major epicenter for Albanians in the United States (Ragaru & Dymi, 2004). One of the most prominent organizations at the time was the Pan-Albanian Federation of America – Vatra (Federata Pan-Shqiptare “Vatra”), whose founders Faik Konica, a Muslim, and Fan Nolian, an Albanian Orthodox Christian, led decades of efforts promoting the Albanian cause around the world (Skendi, 1967). With the beginning of WWII, travel to the United States diminished. The Albanian
authorities (2005) have estimated that the descendants of Albanians who arrived prior to WWII in the United States number around 150,000.

The communist government established after WWII closed the country’s borders. The number of defectors who reached the United States between 1944 and 1990 was in the dozens, as most of those who managed to cross the well-guarded borders chose to settle in Europe (Ragaru & Dymi, 2004). While the communist dictatorship in Albania forbade people to leave the country, discriminatory practices in Josif Tito’s Yugoslavia favored immigration of ethnic Albanians from Kosovo, Macedonia, and Montenegro (Ramet, 1992), areas populated by ethnic Albanians, but separated due to the redrawing of the borders in 1913. Limited industrial development combined with unemployment rates and harsh secret police practices starting in the 1960s pushed many ethnic Albanians, Kosovars in particular, towards European countries like Germany and Switzerland, and to North America, mostly the United States and some of the Canadian provinces. However, it is not possible to determine the exact number of immigrants to the United States, because at the time they held either Yugoslavian or Turkish passports (Nagi, 1988).

The new wave of Albanian immigrants started after the collapse of the communist regime. After a number of mass exoduses toward neighboring countries, Albanians started to make their way to the United States. Starting in 1991, data from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (2014) suggests that over 85,000 Albanian immigrants have lawfully obtained permanent residence status through the diversity program, family-sponsored preferences, and other classes of admission. This number does not include second-generation Albanian children, Albanians who arrived in the United States via other countries such as Greece or Italy, temporary workers, students, and ethnic Albanians from Kosovo, Macedonia, or Montenegro. The number of

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1 Author’s calculations based on USDHS data (2000, 2014).
Albanians and Albanian descents in the United States is currently between 250,000 and 500,000 (Nedelkoska & Khaw, 2015).

**Limited Rights of Albanians Under the Communist Regime**

The flux of Albanian immigrants abruptly stopped when the communist regime sealed the borders for almost six decades. International migration was punishable by law. The central government controlled and regulated national migration (Sjörberd, 1994). Home ownership was practically nonexistent and the government often allotted housing based on connections to the communist elite, which further restricted internal movement in the country. Marriage was the main way Albanians gained permission for movement (Sjörberd, 1994).

Employment and education were highly centralized (OSCE, 2016; Pajo 2016). While the communist regime achieved a literacy level between 96% and 98% during its 45 years of rule (RPSShME, 1990), it also controlled college admissions and employment opportunities for Albanian citizens. Starting in the early 1960s, there was a strong emphasis on Marxist-Leninist ideology which was a part of every level of education (Duro et al., 2015). The Department of Education determined subjects of study, in particular, degrees in Liberal Arts, to meet the needs of the time as the communist party determined them. There were established quotas for each major, which colleges had to fulfill at all costs. The government often set required enrollment and graduation rates for each university. Student selection for college admission was fully under government control.

More often than not, permission to enter college was the result of party adherence rather than merit. Preferred majors such as medicine or foreign languages went mostly to students with some type of connection to the communist elite (Duro et al., 2015). Less preferred majors were often the only opportunity for less politically connected high-school students to pursue college
degrees. They included subjects like agriculture, geology/mining, and construction engineering. While the communist government guaranteed employment for all graduates, only children of the elite received positions in the capital and some of the major cities. A preferred degree such as medicine was no guarantee of optimal employment. Once they graduated, students received an official notification of where the government had assigned them to work. Those unhappy with their assignments would turn to relatives and friends to try to overturn the decisions. The results often depended on who had the strongest connections to the decision-making bureaucrats. As the government preestablished job openings and expected employers to fulfill them, no position would stay vacant for long. Thus, if a student managed to change his or her job assignment, there would be another student to take his or her place.

Most graduates travelled to the country’s remote areas to work for between three and five years, contributing to the local economy. Communist politicians determined when they could return to their native cities. Unauthorized moves were punishable to various degrees. There was an overall push to place newly minted graduates in areas culturally and linguistically different than the ones from which they originated. Due to harsh weather conditions and lack of transportation, mountainous North Albania was least preferred as an employment site. An assignment to those areas was a clear signal to all that the family did not have the necessary connections to ensure a better opportunity. Even if the graduate held a preferred degree such as medicine, the prestige was not the same as if the government had assigned the student to work in a more prominent area. The government did not allow anyone it deemed an enemy of the people, which included anyone ever accused of attempting to overthrow the regime, or their children and relatives, to pursue tertiary education.
Albania Under the Lens of Feminist Ecological Theory

In Albania, a collectivistic society, the microsystem, as defined by FET, has a strong influence on behaviors and expectations of the individual (Gyula et al., 2002). Albanians learn that the honor of the family comes first. Heigl et al. (2012) found that family needs overshadow individual needs, with people adapting their personal beliefs and values to those of the circle of relatives, acquaintances, and influential figures such as elderly family members, teachers, and, in recent years, religious figures. Many see education and employment as among the many measures of individual success, which increase the perceived success of family or clan.

Because of their tumultuous past, for centuries, Albanians have relied more on the microsystem than institutions at the local or national level. Albania gained its independence only 100 years ago, and during this time, its political system changed from a democratic republic, to a monarchy, to an annexed territory under Fascist Italy, to a communist dictatorship, and to a democratic republic in transition. Thus, history has taught Albanians to be cautious of social institutions and their impermanence. FET suggests that governmental and educational institutions, at the exosystem level, play an important role in policy making, legislation, and enforcement of laws. More than once during their history, in particular over the last six centuries since Ottoman Empire annexation, and especially during the 50 years of communist dictatorship, these institutions have betrayed, starved, marginalized, and eliminated Albanians who were not part of the political elite. The distrust that citizens initially directed toward governmental institutions trickled down to healthcare systems. The poverty of an isolated country was palpable in the poor quality of overall healthcare, and in particular, in the archaic, secretive, and inhumane treatment of individuals with mental illnesses. On one hand, the volatile political system created distrust of governmental institutions. On the other hand, it fostered close ties with immediate relations, as
individuals relied on each other to meet the economic and safety needs that official institutions did not satisfy (Hannaway, 2012). Due to the instability of local institutions, Albanians interacted and traded freely with individuals from other countries prior to WWII. Geographically positioned between East and West, part of the Ottoman Empire, but culturally and linguistically drawn to European and Christian beliefs, Albanians found themselves comfortable in many cultures. When emigration became legal 25 years ago, it was not just the desire to pursue a better life that pushed millions to emigrate. For many, the added bonus was the opportunity to see and live in countries and cities around the world that until then they had only been able to read about in banned books or watch illegally on forbidden TV channels. Despite the eagerness to emigrate, many realized only after having left that values, social norms, and legal rules of many societies are very different that those transmitted by the media, and that other societies reinforce their values in different ways. Albanian immigrants had to adapt to the new societies in which they chose to live.

In summary, self-efficacy has been defined as a series of beliefs individuals have about themselves and their capability to control and change the environment around them. It is influenced by and influences personal choices and outcomes such as employment and education. For immigrants, beliefs of self-efficacy become very important as they try to rebuild life in a new country. Closely intertwined with self-efficacy, the process of acculturation relates to different levels of intergroup relations between immigrants with their heritage culture and members of a host culture. Having been born and raised under dictatorship, Albanian immigrants in the United States bring with them lived experiences that differ from mainstream American culture. To become contributing members of the American society and continue to honor long-held Albanian beliefs, they are tapping into their self-efficacy and navigating the host culture in which they reside.
Chapter 3 provides an overview of the methodology used in this study. The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between acculturation and self-efficacy for Albanian immigrants as moderated by levels of education and their current levels of employment. Other predictors included, level of employment, age at the time of arrival, and gender. This chapter presents the research questions, hypotheses, analysis methods, sampling procedures and participants. It includes a description of inclusion criteria, power analysis, research methods, the role of the researcher’s background, and human subject concerns. It presents a brief summary of validity threats. It includes a brief description of the monetary rewards provided to participants.

Participants

Inclusion Criteria. To be eligible to participate in the study, participants met the following criteria: (a) Native to Albania; (b) Ethnic identification as Albanians; (c) Immigrated to the United States between 1991 and 2010; (d) entered the US between ages 21-45; and (e) had obtained a high school diploma or higher.

Sampling Techniques

A snowball technique was used to recruit participants. A convenience method, snowball sampling is often useful with populations that are small compared to the general population ( Heckathorn, 2011 ). Using contacts within the Albanian immigrant community in Massachusetts the investigator identified two recruiters, both Albanian natives who immigrated to the US as adults. Both recruiters are involved with the Albanian communities in Massachusetts. They were provided with an overview of the study, and trained on the importance of confidentiality,
impartiality in identifying potential participants, and issues that may arise as a result of data contamination.

**Sample Size**

G*power 3.1 was used to determine the necessary sample size (Faul, Erdfelder, Buchner, & Lang, 2009). This application provides *a priori* and criterion power analysis. The sample size to conduct MANOVA, MANCOVA, and Pearson correlation analysis was determined to be between 150-175 subjects, with power ranging from 0.90 to 0.95, Type I error, \( \alpha = 0.05 \).

**Measures**

This cross-sectional study used correlational research design, during which participants were asked to complete two self-reporting measures and one socio-demographic questionnaire developed by the investigator. These measures provided information about participants’ beliefs of self-efficacy and their perceived levels of acculturation. The demographic questionnaire included information such as age, gender, level of education and whether it was completed in Albania, the US or elsewhere, current type of occupation, current income level, length of stay in the United States, immigration status, and level of English proficiency. The independent variable for this study was the level of education. Other demographic characteristics, such as employment, gender, age and time of arrival to the US., were analyzed to explore if they moderated the relationship between self-efficacy and acculturation. Dependent variables for this study were self-efficacy and acculturation. All instruments underwent two levels of editing, by the investigator and two certified Albanian/English translators. Once translated forward to Albanian by the investigator, they were translated back to English by a certified bilingual translator. A third translator addressed discrepancies between the different translated questionnaires.
Self-efficacy. Jerusalem and Schwarzer developed the General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSE) in 1979, and later revised it (Schwarzer & Jerusalem, 1995). Recommended for use with individuals age 12 and up, more than 1,000 studies worldwide have used this 10-item, self-administered measure, and researchers have translated it into 33 languages. The items are rated on a 4-point, Likert-type scale from 1 (not at all true) to 4 (exactly true), with scores ranging from 10 to 40. While there is no cut-off score, empirical distributions of Albanian immigrants into groups with college degree or higher, college degree obtained prior to or after immigration, will provide data for comparison. Items assess beliefs that facilitate goal-setting, persistence, and recovery from setbacks. Schwarzer and Jerusalem (2013) suggested that researchers can calculate a score provided the subject responds to seven or more items. The internal consistency of the GSE has been in the 0.76 to 0.90 range in several different languages. After administering the GSE to 14,634 subjects in 25 countries, Scholz, Doña, Sud, and Schwarzer (2002) further supported the idea that self-efficacy is a unidimensional construct. A unidimensional construct is measured on a linear scale, where a set of items have enough communalities that can be connected to one latent variable, but each item has also an independently correlated factor (Falissard, 1999). An instrument used to measure a unidimensional construct is likely more stable than an instrument measuring a multidimensional construct, where it is necessary to find equivalence between dimensions (Falissard, 1999). Overall, a scale that measures a unidimensional construct, such as GSE, yields clearer outcomes. Confirmatory factor analysis using LISREL supported the assumption of unidimensionality (Scholz et al., 2002). Scholz et al. corroborated previous findings, as the internal consistency for the whole sample was $\alpha = 0.86$ with a range of $\alpha = 0.75$ to 0.91.
The GSE has shown strong reliability. Grammatopoulou et al. (2014) found that the test-retest reliability for GSE was .96. Nilsson, Hagell, and Iwarsson (2015) found that test-retest reliability ranged from 0.69 to 0.80. To date, no study has used the GSE with an Albanian immigrant population. The validity and reliability of this scale was assessed during the pilot phase of the study. Internal consistency was evaluated calculating Cronbach’s alpha which were found to be between .76 and .90. Content validity was assessed by giving a panel of 20 native Albanians the General Self-Efficacy Scale (Schwarzer & Jerusalem, 1995) and the New General Self-Efficacy Scale (NGSE) (Chen, Gully, & Eden, 2001). Upon completion of both questionnaires, panel members reported on question comprehension, test fatigue and overall reaction to each questionnaire. Once content validity was established, the mean scores from the Albanian sample were compared with findings from other similar ethnic groups in search of statistically significant differences.

Acculturation. The Vancouver Index of Acculturation (VIA), a bidimensional scale was used, to measure acculturation. Ryder, Alden, and Paulhus (2000) developed this 20-item scale to differentiate between the acquisition of elements from the host/dominant culture and the maintenance of elements from the non-dominant culture (Huynh, Howell, & Benet-Martínez, 2009). In presenting this scale, Ryder et al. (2000) suggest that the intertwining of heritage and mainstream cultural identities vary, based on a person’s attitudes, beliefs, and values at a particular point in time. Demographic factors, religious affiliation, level of education or employment, among others, influence the intersection of different cultural identities. One of the few generalized measures of acculturation (Iwamasa, Regan, Subica, & Yamada, 2013), the VIA assesses three domains: values, social relationship, and adherence to traditions. This scale assesses the frequency of use of English and other languages, which allows for good orthogonal measurement of
acculturation dimensions (Kang, 2006). Participants rate each item on a 9-point Likert-type scale from 1 (strongly agree) to 9 (strongly disagree). The order of questions presented in the scale alternates between the heritage and mainstream subscale. Odd-numbered questions measure heritage orientation and even-numbered questions measure mainstream orientation. Ryder et al. (2009) suggested that researchers can determine the level of cultural maintenance or acculturation based on the scores of each subscale (Kang, 2006). The demonstrated orthogonality for the Vancouver Index of Acculturation has been established at .09, which indicates independence between the two subscales. Widely used, the VIA has proved reliable, with content reliability alphas above 0.80 (Huynh et al., 2009). While such a range of score reliability might affect validity coefficients, it meets conventional cutoffs for research in the social sciences. To date, only one study has used the VIA with Albanian immigrants (Balidemaj, 2016). Administered in English, it produced $\alpha = 0.93$. Balidemaj’s study consisted of 139 ethnic Albanian immigrants ages 19-38, 59.7% of whom were women. Subjects varied in level of education, location where they obtained the highest degree, employment status and income. Length of immigration in the United States averaged at 13.94 years. Reasons for immigrations varied from asylum seekers, to refugees, to immigration visas and family reunions.

Demographic questionnaire. This questionnaire collected information through several single- and multiple-item questions. It gathered data regarding current age and age at the time of arrival, marital status, level of education and whether it was obtained in Albania, the US, or elsewhere, occupation in Albania and in the United States, level of English proficiency, and individual and familial income.
The Role and the Background of the Researcher

I immigrated to the United States from Albania as an adult, having obtained an undergraduate degree and having achieved working fluency in English prior to my settlement. My previous knowledge and accomplishments, albeit small, strongly influenced the trajectory of my process of adaptation. Over the years, I learned to live between two cultures and two continents, being exposed to opportunities that America offers to immigrants, its social norms, hierarchies, and collective meanings. I experienced challenges in understanding American norms, values and beliefs. Simple trials like trying to understand baseball or American football, to bigger differences such as work place dynamics and expectations. During this process of adaptation, I continue to develop this Albanian-American identity. My Albanian identity influences my daily choices and decisions. It influenced selection of this topic of research. I chose to study Albanian immigrants in the US, with whom I share many similarities, such as age, gender, region of provenience from Albania, or professional accomplishments in the US. Choosing subjects from the same community to which I belong, I collected data as an insider participant observer. My social location within the Albanian immigrant community played a role in how I approached and addressed participates. My knowledge of the community allowed me to easily identify venues and times when I was more likely to recruit participants. For example, I knew that weekends would be the best days to locate Albanians as they gather in cafes or community centers. This provided stability in research data gathering, as it allowed identification of a large number of participants, making it possible to collect more diverse research data.

One of the biggest advantages of being an insider was the fact that I spoke Albanian, which facilitated interaction, particularly with participants who reported little English fluency. My request to complete the scales and questionnaire were almost never rejected. Participants showed
respect toward me and the other two recruiters, willingly choosing to disclose even sensitive information such as income. They shared thoughts and ideas about their life in the US voluntarily. For example, several older participants expressed doubts about their decision to immigrate as adults. They were not sure such a move had been beneficial to them. Yet, without fail, they all used the most common coping phrase I have heard from other older Albanian immigrants: “We did it for our children, and they are doing great.” These brief spontaneous conversations enriched further my knowledge of the Albanian immigrant community in the US. Additionally, having lived most of my life in Albania, I have an understanding of the values, norms, and beliefs of said society. I have knowledge of the formal and informal power structure. Subjectively, from my experience both in Albania and the US, I was aware of the hierarchy of identities. For example, older individuals, particularly males, are situated at the top of this hierarchy. They are to be respected and listened to. Age plays an important role in the interaction dynamic. Despite the fact that I was better educated than most male participants, in speaking to older men, I used a language of respect and reverence. For example, regardless of blood relation, I addressed some participants likely to be my parents’ age as “uncle” or “aunty” as a sign of respect, particularly those in their 60s and 70s.

Being an insider of this community helped me, because I understood the intersectionality of different identities. In doing so, I was able to maintain the natural flow of social interactions, being aware of what “works” when interacting with older Albanian immigrants as mentioned previously.

My experience as an insider did present its challenges too. During data collection and analysis, I had to be aware of my dual roles as an Albanian immigrant and as a researcher. It was important for me to take the necessary steps, not to allow my subjective experience to contaminate
the research data. First, while being polite and considerate of all participants, I clarified my role before distributing the scales and questionnaire. This allowed me to maintain professional distance between me and participants. It also safeguarded from: (a) answering personal questions beyond what was necessary to disclose in the context of research; and (b) discussing possible findings. Second, I had to rely on the dissertation committee, whose members were a “community outsiders.” Their outsider view helped me improve my research objectivity.

It was with help from committee members that I was able to overcame one of the biggest challenges for me as an insider participant observer bias and blind spots. Despite similarities or understanding of the Albanian community, I had to be mindful that my personal experience cannot predict findings, nor does it mirror the experience in the US of all other Albanian immigrants. As a junior researcher I conferred often with dissertation committee members. In improving my objective view of my research, their questions helped me look at the bigger picture, such as how data analysis and interpretation can further enrich current literature. At the same time, by conversations with committee members encouraged me to take an analytical view of the phenomena I was observing or interaction within the Albanian community. They helped me step back and reflect on behaviors, norms, and beliefs which I had taken for granted.

**Research Questions**

1. Can age at the time of immigration, gender, and employment status affect the relationship between self-efficacy and acculturation among Albanian immigrants?

   Hypothesis 1: Level of education, age at migration, gender, and employment status will moderate the relationship between self-efficacy and acculturation level.

   Multivariate Analysis of Covariance (MANCOVA) will be used to compare means between groups.
2. Is there a difference in self-efficacy between Albanian immigrants with a 4-year college-degree and Albanian immigrants who do not have a 4-year college degree?

Hypothesis 2: There will be differences in self-efficacy between Albanians with various levels of education.

Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) will be used to compare means between groups. $F$ test will be performed on the main effects.

3. Is there a difference in acculturation between Albanian immigrants with a 4-year college-degree and Albanian immigrants who do not have a 4-year college degree?

Hypothesis 3: There will be differences in acculturation between Albanians with various levels of education.

Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) will be used to compare means between groups. $F$ test will be performed on the main effects.

4. Are there differences in self-efficacy and acculturation level among Albanian immigrants who obtained a college degree in Albania prior to immigrating to the US, compared to Albanian immigrants who obtained a college degree in the U.S. after immigrating?

Hypothesis 4: There will be a statistically significant difference between Albanian immigrants who have obtained a college degree in the United States and those immigrants who obtained a college degree in Albania on their level of self-efficacy and acculturation.

Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) will be used to compare means between groups.

5. Is there a relationship between self-efficacy and acculturation among Albanian immigrants who have a 4-year college degree?

Hypothesis 5: There will be a positive correlation between self-efficacy and acculturation for Albanian immigrants who have already obtained a college degree.
A Pearson correlation analysis will be conducted to test this hypothesis.

**Validity**

It is important to consider validity threats for this study. It is important to remember that despite the selection of measures for the assessment of the dependent variable that other researchers have used with a multitude of ethnic and racial groups, the findings are somewhat unique to the Albanian community in the United States. This study gathered information for the future use for clinicians working with this ethnic group; however, it may not be possible to generalize some findings to a larger cohort of immigrants.

**Procedures**

Details of the procedures of data collections are reported in the result section. Information presented includes details on how participants were recruited, how questionnaires were distributed and administered, and how they were scored.

**Human Subjects Concerns**

To protect the rights and welfare of participants in this study, the Institutional Review Board at Northeastern University independently evaluated both the risks and benefits. The main risks were loss of anonymity for participants and possible psychological discomfort that could have arrived during the data collection phase. To ensure confidentiality all personal data was encoded and stored separately from the key to decode it. Being an advanced doctoral student pursuing a degree in Counseling Psychology, the investigator had received years of academic and professional training to identify signs of potential psychological discomfort. Additionally, participants were given contact information for this dissertation committee chair and IRB representative.
Participant Monetary Reward

Participants who completed the survey were eligible to win one of the following prizes:

$15.00 Amazon Gift Card (2 available)

$25.00 Amazon Gift Card (1 available)

$50.00 Amazon Gift Card (1 available)

$75.00 Amazon Gift Card (1 available)
CHAPTER 4.

RESULTS

Chapter 4 presents the results of the study. The final sample consisted of 153 recent Albanian immigrants, who settled in Massachusetts between 1991 and 2010. Demographic data collected includes: current age, year of arrival, sex, marital status, self-reported English proficiency, highest degree obtained, the country in which that degree was obtained, homeownership, annual individual and family income, and type of job pursued in Albania compared to the type of job pursued in the US. Analysis of results for General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSE), New General Self-Efficacy Scale (NGSE), and Vancouver Index of Acculturation (VIA) are also presented. Validity and reliability findings for GSE and NGSE are also introduced. Statistical analysis and findings of the hypotheses are described in the end of chapter.

Phase 1 – Pilot sample

The pilot phase provided important insight on the sample, time needed to complete the questionnaires, the tiredness effect and comprehension of scales’ statements or questionnaire questions. All participants for the pilot phase were recruited by the investigator. The average time participants spent completing all the questionnaires was about 10 minutes. When asked individually, participants in the pilot study denied feeling tired. There were no major issues with comprehension. Of all participants in the pilot phase, the majority (65%) identified as male, the remainder (35%) identified as female.

Demographics

Age: In the pilot stage there were 20 participants who ranged in age from 28 to 64. Their average age was 44.2 years (SD = 11.4). The average age at arrival was 28.8 (SD = 7.8) ranging from 20 to 44 years of age.
Year of arrival: The year of immigration to the United States for participants in the pilot study ranged from 1994 to 2010. Unlike the overall sample, the majority of participants arrived between 2000 and 2010 (60%), while the rest of participants (40%) immigrated between 1991-1999.

Sex and marital status: The majority of participants (65%) were men and the remainder were women (35%). No participants identified as “other.” The majority of the participants were married (90%), while the rest of the participants were widowed (5%) and single (5%). None of the participants in the pilot phase were divorced. All male respondents were married, as were the majority of women (71.4); the rest of the women in the pilot phase were either single (14.3%) or widowed (14.3%).

Education: At the time of study, 45% of the participants held a high school diploma. There were no participants who held an associate degree as their highest educational achievement. The remainder of the participants (55%) held a baccalaureate degree. None of those included in the pilot study reported holding a graduate degree. All participants completed their secondary education in Albania. The majority of participants in the pilot study (85%) earned their baccalaureate degree in Albania, the remainder completing their postsecondary education in the US (10%), or earned two four-year degrees, one in Albania and one in the US (5%).

Employment: The majority of participants in the pilot phase were employed (94.8%), while the remainder of the participants were retired (5.2%).

Data analysis.

The General Self-Efficacy (GSE) scale was used to measure the reported level of self-efficacy among participants. As this scale has not previously been used to assess self-efficacy of Albanians, its test-retest reliability was evaluated during the pilot phase of the study. Initially a
sample of 20 participants were administered both GSE and New General Self-Efficacy (NGSE) scale in addition to VIA and the demographic questionnaire. Data were entered on an Excel spreadsheet and checked twice for errors. There were no missing data for the 20 participants in the pilot phase. Each participant was assigned a case number. The final data set contained the scores for VIA, demographic characteristic and two sets of scores evaluating self-efficacy for each participant, which were generated from GSE and NGSE. These two self-efficacy scales have similarities and some differences. Both are Likert scales, both one tailed. However, GSE is on a 1 to 4 Likert scale, while NGSE is on a 1 to 5 Likert scale. GSE has ten items, while NGSE has only eight items. NGSE scores underwent a linear transformation, so they could be compared to GSE scores.

Normality distribution was assessed using Kolmogorov-Smirnov test of normality. Scores obtained from GSE were normally distributed, unlike scores obtained from NGSE. The latter scores were transformed using a based ten logarithm. The new transformed variable was now normally distributed at 95% confidence interval as indicated by a non-significant Kolmogorov-Smirnov test of normality presented in table 1.

*Table 1 - Tests of normality*

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</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGSE_normal</td>
<td>.184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GSE</td>
<td>.122</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* This is a lower bound of the true significance.

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

The internal consistency of GSE scale translated in Albanian was assessed using Cronbach’s α (DeVellis, 2003). An inspection of the data analysis for the scale’s 10 item returned α = .878. Previously reported range of alpha levels for GSE ranged from 0.76 to 0.90 in different languages.
The correlation between GSE and NGSE was calculated using a Pearson correlation. There was a relatively high positive correlation between the scores for GSE and NGSE, $r (19) = .694, p < 0.01$.

In order to estimate internal consistency of GSE translated in Albanian, a 1-tailed Pearson Correlation analysis was conducted for each of the questions. Statistically significant correlations varied from .496 ($p < 0.01$) for question 7 to .867 ($p < 0.01$) for question 8. The complete list of correlations and significance for each question in the GSE scale are presented in Table 2.

Table 2 - Correlation Analysis of Variables in the GSE Scale Pilot Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Questions</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Correlation</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I can always manage to solve difficult problems if I try hard enough</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>.644</td>
<td>.020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. If someone opposes me, I can find the means and ways to get what I want.</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>.831</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. It is easy for me to stick to my aims and accomplish my goals.</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>.689</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I am confident that I could deal efficiently with unexpected events.</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>.671</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Thanks to my resourcefulness, I know how to handle unforeseen situations.</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>.598</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I can solve most problems if I invest the necessary effort.</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>.587</td>
<td>.027</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I can remain calm when facing difficulties because I can rely on my coping abilities.</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>.496</td>
<td>.030</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. When I am confronted with a problem, I can usually find several solutions.</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>.867</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. If I am in trouble, I can usually think of a solution.</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>.718</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. I can usually handle whatever comes my way.</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>.842</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Vancouver Index of Acculturation is a 20-item questionnaire designed to assess adherence to heritage and mainstream values (Ryder, Alden, & Paulhus, 2000). Each participant was assessed on his or her adherence to both values. For the heritage subscale an example item is “I often participate in my Albanian cultural traditions.” For the mainstream subscale an example
item is “I often participate in mainstream American cultural traditions.” The heritage subscale demonstrated excellent internal consistency in the sample of Albanian immigrants with a Cronbach alpha of .91.

Table 3 - Reliability Statistics – VIA – Heritage scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cronbach's Alpha</th>
<th>Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items</th>
<th>N of Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.973</td>
<td>0.912</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The mainstream subscale demonstrated good internal consistency in the sample with a Cronbach alpha of .88.

Table 4 - Reliability Statistics – VIA – Mainstream scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cronbach's Alpha</th>
<th>Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items</th>
<th>N of Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.876</td>
<td>0.871</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Phase 2 – Complete sample

Demographics

Recruitment and missing data. The remainder of the participants were recruited by: (a) community recruiters directly n = 57 (37.3%); (b) the investigator n = 65 (42.7%); and (c) from an advertisement in the community, n = 31 (20.2%). A total of 174 questionnaires were collected by all recruiters including the investigator. During the data entry phase, 28 questionnaires had missing data on one or more dependent variables. Using listwise deletion (Roth 1994), 21 cases with > 25% of missing data were removed prior to running any statistical analysis. To maintain the highest possible number of cases and limit bias, single imputation with mean substitution (Gelman, & Hill, 2017) was used for the remaining 7 cases with ≤ 25% missing data.
Questionnaires were completed either on the weekend or in the afternoon hours when Albanian immigrants socialize with each other, particularly in local cafés as it is done traditionally in Albania. Of the 31 valid questionnaires completed by participants who responded to community advertisements, 27 were men. Most of the female participants were recruited directly by the principal investigator through community organizations.

*Age:* The average age of participants at the time of this study was 48.7 years (SD = 11.01) ranging from 26 to 69 years old as presented in table 5. The average age at the time of arrival was 31.6 (SD = 9.02) ranging from 18 to 49 years old as presented in table 5.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age on arrival</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>31.65</td>
<td>9.021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age at present</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>48.71</td>
<td>11.012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valid N (listwise)</td>
<td>153</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Year of arrival:* All participants reported immigrating to the US between 1991-2010. The majority of participants arrived between 1991 and 1999 (59.5%) while the rest of participants (40.5%) immigrated between 2000-2010.

*Sex and marital status:* The majority of participants (66%) were men and the remainder were women (34%). No participants identified their gender as “other,” although that was an option on the demographic questionnaire. The majority of the participants were married (94.8%), the rest of the participants were widowed (2.6%), single (1.3%), or divorced (1.3%). All male respondents were married as presented in table 6.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Marital status</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>male</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
EDUCATION AND SELF-EFFICACY AMONG ALBANIAN IMMIGRANTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>female</th>
<th>Married</th>
<th>44</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Widowed</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Education: At the time of study, 37.3% of the participants held a high school diploma and 9.1% held an associate degree. Almost forty-two percent (41.8%) had earned a baccalaureate as the highest degree they had obtained while the remainder of the participants (11.8%) reported to have completed graduate studies. All the participants completed their secondary education in Albania. Participants with an associate degree obtained their diploma in Albania (60%) or in the US (40%). Those participants who held a baccalaureate degree, the majority (72%) completed their studies in Albania, while 16% obtained their four-year degree in the US. There was a smaller number of participants (12%) who reported to have obtained a four-year degree in both countries. The majority of participants who hold graduate degrees (80%) completed their studies in the US, while the remainder (20%) finished their graduate degree in Albania.

Table 7 - Cross tabulation of Degree, Sex and Location of degree

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location of degree</th>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albania</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HS-AA</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BA-GR</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AA</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BA-GR</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albania &amp; USA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AA</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BA-GR</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>68</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>41</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Employment: Most of the participants (75.8%) reported currently holding a different job than the one they held in Albania. Among the remaining participants, 16.3% reported working in a similar position in the US as they did prior to immigrating from Albania, and the remainder 7.9% either had just graduated from high school or college or did odd jobs until they arrived in the US. Currently the majority of participants were employed (94.8%), while the remainder were retired (5.2%). No participant reported being unemployed. Among those currently employed, almost seventy percent (69%) held one or two jobs. Within that group, twenty-six percent were self-employed. The remainder of the participants (31%) held three or more part-time jobs. Participants varied in the number of hours worked each week. The range of hours worked varied from 20-80 per week. Of those currently employed the majority (53.8%) worked 40 hours per week as listed on table 8.

Table 8 - Hours working – descriptive

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Valid</th>
<th>Missing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>44.45</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mode</td>
<td>40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Std. Deviation</td>
<td>10.916</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range</td>
<td>60</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum</td>
<td>80</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9 - Hours working

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hours</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-35</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38-45</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>60.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46-80+</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>29.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Income: There was a wide range of individual and family income. Annual individual income varied from 2% reporting earning of less than $5,000; 10% of the participants earning an
individual income between $5,000 – $19,000; 7% of the participants earning between $20,000 –
$29,000; almost 25% of the participants earning between $30,000 - $50,000; 20.8% reporting an
individual annual income between $50,000 to $74,000; 7.8% reporting individual annual earnings
between $50,000 - $99,000; 11.8% earning more than $100,000 per year. Nearly 18% of those
surveyed declined to disclose their individual earnings.

Table 10 - Individual income

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In Thousands</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 – 19</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 – 29</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 – 49</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>24.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 – 74</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>20.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75 – 99</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100+</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>11.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undeclared</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>17.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Almost seventeen percent (16.9%) of participants reported an annual household income
of less than $50,000; 32.7% reported household earnings between $50,000 to less than $100,000;
22.9% reported earning more than $100,000; 27.5% declined to answer their annual household
income.

Table 11 - Household income

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In Thousands</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 – 19</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 – 29</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 – 49</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 – 74</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>15.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75 – 99</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100+</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>24.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undeclared</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>27.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Most of the participants of this study (78.4%) were homeowners, while 21.6% reported renting their current dwellings. The average age of homeowners at the time of this study was 49.3 years (SD = 11.2) ranging from 28 to 69 years old. The average age of renters was 45.3 (SD = 14.6) ranging from 26 to 67 years old.

_Table 12. Crosstabulation of individual income with education_

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country where degree was obtained</th>
<th>Highest degree obtained</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Median individual income</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Albania</td>
<td>HS/AA</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>$53,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>$49,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>GR</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>&gt; $100,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US</td>
<td>AA</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>$64,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>$77,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>GR</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>&gt; $100,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albania and US</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>$63,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

_Figure 4.1. Age distribution of homeowner and renter participants._
Data analysis

The following section outlines the evaluation of the above-mentioned hypotheses. The variables associated with the hypotheses were assessed as described in the previous section. Only complete questionnaires were retained. Results were analyzed using Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) and Multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA).

Assumptions. Prior to running MANOVA and MANCOVA analysis all data were evaluated to make sure it met assumptions required to produce valid results. Each assumption is discussed below.

Normality. Due to extreme skewness present, data underwent two-step inverse transformation. Once the transformation of data was complete, the assumption of normality was reviewed using Kolmogorov – Smirnov test of normality. Table 13 indicates that the normality of distribution has been met for the Self-Efficacy scale, as well as Mainstream and Heritage subscales for both subgroups, participants with less than four-year college degree, as well as participants who have obtained a baccalaureate degree or higher, at 95% confidence interval. The boxplots suggested a normal distribution shaped of residuals. Histograms also suggested normality of distribution.

Table 13 - Test of normality

Kolmogorov-Smirnova

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subscale</th>
<th>Degree</th>
<th>Statistic</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mainstream Subscale</td>
<td>HS-AA</td>
<td>0.089</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>.200*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BA-GR</td>
<td>0.074</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>.200*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heritage Subscale</td>
<td>HS-AA</td>
<td>0.133</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>.200*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BA-GR</td>
<td>0.106</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>.200*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
EDUCATION AND SELF-EFFICACY AMONG ALBANIAN IMMIGRANTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Self-Efficacy subscale</th>
<th>HS-AA</th>
<th>71</th>
<th>.200*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BA-GR</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>.200*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.2 Self-efficacy prior to data transformation

![Figure 4.2](image)

Figure 4.3 Self-Efficacy following data transformation

![Figure 4.3](image)

Figure 4.4 – Mainstream values prior to data transformation.
Figure 4.5 Mainstream values following data transformation

Figure 4.6 – Heritage values prior to data transformation
Figure 4.7 – Heritage values following data transformation

**Linearity.** The assumption of linearity was assessed by scatterplot. It suggested that there was a linear relationship between self-efficacy scores, mainstream and heritage scores based on the highest degree obtained.

**Multivariate outliers.** There were no multivariate outliers in the data as determined by Mahalanobis distance (p > .001).

**Homogeneity of variance – covariance.** There was homogeneity of variance – covariance as assessed by Box’s test of equality of covariance matrices (p > .05).

**Hypothesis 1.** It suggested that there will be a relationship between self-efficacy and acculturation which will be moderated by the level of education, age at migration, gender, and current level of employment. A one-way Multivariate Analysis of Covariance (MANCOVA) was run to determine the effect of education, age at migration, gender, and current level of employment on self-efficacy and acculturation. Overall, predictions suggested a relationship between self-efficacy and acculturation ($F = 2.41; d.f. = 5, 73; p < .05$) (de Saissy, 2009) Contrary to the initial prediction, dependent variables (self-efficacy, heritage and mainstream) were not-significantly related to covariates $F (3, 149) = 2.03, p = 0.262$. Additionally, the effect size was small between the dependent variables and the covariates (partial eta-squared = 0.15).
Multiple regressions were conducted to examine the extent to which covariates adjusted dependent variables. None of the covariates which included level of education, age at migration, gender, and current level of employment provided significant adjustment to self-efficacy, adherence to mainstream values, or adherence to heritage values. The results of the MANOVA are provided in Table 14.

Table 14. MANOVA- Differences in Self-Efficacy, Adherence to Heritage, and Mainstream Values Interactions Levels.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>$F$</th>
<th>$df$</th>
<th>$p$</th>
<th>Squared</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age at arrival</td>
<td>0.004</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>0.113</td>
<td>0.336</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>1.073</td>
<td>2.503</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.143</td>
<td>0.218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree</td>
<td>0.127</td>
<td>4.202</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.262</td>
<td>0.150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of employment</td>
<td>0.761</td>
<td>.341</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.904</td>
<td>0.128</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hypothesis 2. It was predicted that there would be a difference in self-efficacy between Albanian immigrants with a four-year college degree and Albanian immigrants who do not have a four-year college degree. A one-way Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) was run to determine the effect of level of education on self-efficacy. Participants were divided in two groups, those who had obtained a high school diploma or associate degree ($n = 85$), and those who obtained a baccalaureate degree or higher ($n = 68$). Participants with less than a four-year degree reported lower levels of self-efficacy ($M = 3.14$, $SD = 0.61$), compared to participants who have earned a four-year degree or higher ($M = 3.21$, $SD = 0.51$). Wilk’s $\lambda$, = 0.209, $F(4, 149) = 0.346$, $p = 0.649$,
indicated non-statically significant effect of education on self-efficacy, despite the mean difference, this hypothesis was not supported\(^2\).

\textit{Table 15. MANOVA: Effect of Level of Education on Self-Efficacy}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent variable</th>
<th>Means</th>
<th>Degree</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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Levels of self-efficacy were compared between male and female participants regardless of their educational background. Women’s self-efficacy scores (M = 3.27, SD = 0.51) were higher than men’s (M = 3.14, SD = 0.55). Further comparisons were made between Albanian immigrants and individuals from two neighboring countries, Greece and Italy. A one-way MANOVA was conducted to determine if there was a difference between natives of these three countries. Albanian immigrants in the US (n = 153) reported higher levels of self-efficacy (M = 3.24, SD = 0.58), than Greek citizens (n = 100) (M = 3.08, SD = 0.40). Similarly, Albanian immigrants reported higher levels of self-efficacy (M = 3.17, SD = 0.55) than Italian citizens (n = 144) (M = 3.10, SD = 0.39). These differences were not statistically significant \(F(2, 394) = 2.634, p = .073\).
and more closely distributed around the mean that men’s self-efficacy scores ($M = 3.17$, $SD = 0.55$). However, these results were non-statistically significant $F(2, 151) = 1.198$, $p = 0.276$.

Figure 4.8 Self-efficacy score comparison between male and female participants.

![Box plot comparing self-efficacy scores between males and females](image)

Data analysis were run to explore any differences in self-efficacy among female participants based on their level of education. Similar analysis was run to compare self-efficacy scores among male participants based on their level of education. Among female Albanian immigrants, women who had obtained at least a baccalaureate degree, reported higher levels of self-efficacy ($M = 3.34$, $SD = 0.37$) compared to women who did not obtain a four-year degree or higher ($M = 3.15$, $SD = 0.69$). This difference was non-statistically significant $F(2, 151) = 4.99$, $p = 0.308$, based of equal variances not assumed. It is important underline the fact that the scores of women with at least a four-year degree showed less dispersion around the mean, compared to their peers without a college degree. This means that the typical self-efficacy scores for the latter group tended to be further from the mean.

Figure 4.9 – Self-efficacy scores among women participants
Levels of self-efficacy were explored for all male participants based on their reported level of education obtained by the time of this study. Among male Albanian immigrants, men who had obtained at least a baccalaureate degree, reported higher levels of self-efficacy ($M = 3.24$, $SD = 0.76$) compared to men who did not obtain a four-year degree or higher ($M = 3.07$, $SD = 0.76$). This difference was non-statistically significant $F (2, 99) = 3.33$, $p = 0.135$, based on equal variances assumed. Unlike scores of female participants, scores of male participants were equally distributed around the mean regardless of education background. This suggests less variation in scores of self-efficacy among men compared to women. This data also revealed that the ratio of college-educated female Albanian immigrants in this sample was higher than their male counterparts. Among all study subjects, female participants accounted for 35% of the sample. Among college-educated participants, they accounted for 40% of this cohort. Among participants who obtained at least one four-year degree or higher in the US, female Albanian immigrants outnumbered their male counterparts. Within the US educated cohort, women accounted for almost 69% of the participants.

Among the group of participants who held at least a four-year degree or higher, women reported higher levels of self-efficacy than men.
Albanian immigrants reported high homeownership (78.4%). A comparison between participants who owned their homes and those who rented their dwellings reveals statistically significant differences in self-efficacy, F(22, 131) = 5.18, p < 0.1. Homeowners’ self-efficacy scores (M = 3.22, SD = 0.55) were higher than renters’ self-efficacy scores (M = 2.94, SD = 0.30). As seen in figure 4.11, self-efficacy scores of homeowners were dispersed further from the mean than self-efficacy scores of renters. Caution should be used in interpreting this data because the majority of the scores for renters was located below the mean.
Among recent Albanian immigrants, 33% (n = 51) of participants reported being underemployed or working below the level of education they had completed. There was a statistically significant difference in self-efficacy, \( F(1, 151) = 6.487, p < 0.1 \). Self-efficacy scores for underemployed participants were overall lower (M = 3.13, SD = 0.33), than self-efficacy scores of participants employed at education level (M = 3.68, SD = 0.26).

Table 16

<table>
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<td>152</td>
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</table>
Figure 4.12 – Self-efficacy scores among participants based on level of employment.

Age at migration varied among participants. The majority of participants arrived prior to age 30 (n = 83). They were less likely (42%) to have obtained a college degree by the time of migration, compared to the older cohort (60%). They were also more likely to have pursued college degree in the US, compared to their peers. Self-efficacy scores with age at migration as an independent variable were statistically non-significant $F(1, 152) = 1.363, p = 0.245$. There was a small difference ($M = 3.15, SD = 0.498$) for immigrants who arrived in the US prior to age 30 compared to their peers who immigrated after age 30 ($M = 3.25, SD = 0.57$).
Hypothesis 3. It was predicted that there will be a difference in acculturation between Albanians with various levels of education. A one-way Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) was run to determine the effect of level of education on acculturation, assessing adherence to heritage and mainstream values. Participants were divided in two groups, those who had obtained a high school diploma or associate degree, and those who obtained a baccalaureate degree or higher. The Vancouver Index of Acculturation scale was used to assess this hypothesis. Scores were analyzed based on its mainstream and heritage subscales. When assessed for adherence to mainstream American values, participants with less than four-year degree (n = 85) scored higher ($M = 7.79, SD = 1.79$) than the participants who had obtained a four-year degree or higher (n = 68, $M = 7.54, SD = 1.20$). The scores on adherence to heritage Albanian values were lower among participants with less than a four-year degree ($M = 6.49, SD = 1.4$) compared to the scores of participants with a four-year degree or higher ($M = 6.77, SD = 1.66$). Separate univariate ANOVAs on the outcome variables revealed non-significant effects of education on adherence to
Hypothesis 4. It was hypothesized that there will be a difference between self-efficacy and acculturation levels among Albanian immigrants who obtained a college degree prior to immigrating to the United States and Albanian immigrants who obtained a college degree after immigrating. Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) was run to determine if the location where the college degree was obtained had any effect on self-efficacy or acculturation subscales. Participants were divided in three groups: (a) those who obtained a college degree in Albania; (b) those who obtained a college degree in the US; (c) those who obtained a college degree in both countries.

Participants who obtained a college degree in the US reported higher levels of self-efficacy ($M = 3.49, SD = .563$) compared to participants who obtained a college degree in both ($M = 3.34, SD = .220$) or those participants who obtained a college degree only in Albania prior to immigrating ($M = 3.07, SD = .470$). Adherence to mainstream values was higher among participants who obtained their college degree in Albania ($M = 7.65, SD = 1.13$), compared to participants who obtained their degree in both countries ($M = 7.59, SD = 1.16$), followed by participants that obtained their degree only in the US ($M = 7.22, SD = 1.477$). Adherence to heritage values was higher for participants who obtained their degree in both countries ($M = 7.34, SD = .637$), compared to those immigrants who obtained their degree only in the US ($M = 7.12, SD = 1.378$), followed by immigrants who completed their college education prior to their arrival in the US ($M = 5.86, SD = 1.278$).

The difference between groups on the combined dependent variables was statistically significant $F (2, 65) = 2.644, p < 0.05$; Wilk’s $\lambda = .789$, partial $\eta^2 = .112$. Follow-up univariate
ANOVAs showed that adherence to heritage values was statistically significant \((F(2, 65) = 7.633, p < 0.05; \text{partial } \eta^2 = .264)\) depending on which country Albanian immigrants obtained their college degree. Bonferroni post-hoc tests were used because of unequal group sizes. Post-hoc tests showed that participants who completed their degree in the US only, had statistically significantly higher adherence to heritage values \((p < 0.05)\) than participants who completed their degree in Albania. However, the mean difference on adherence to heritage values was not statistically significant between participants who obtained their degree in the US, compared to those who obtained a college degree in both countries. The difference observed in scores of self-efficacy or adherence to mainstream values was statistically non-significant.

**Hypothesis 5.** It was hypothesized that there will be a relationship between self-efficacy and acculturation among Albanian immigrants who have a 4-year college degree. A Pearson’s correlation was run to assess the relationship between self-efficacy and acculturation subscales. Preliminary analyses indicated a non-statistically significant negative linear relationship between self-efficacy and adherence to mainstream values \((r = -0.158, n = 68, p = 0.202)\). The same preliminary analysis indicated a non-statistically significant positive linear relationship between self-efficacy and adherence to heritage values \((r = 0.262, n = 68, p = 0.081)\).
CHAPTER 5
DISCUSSION

Chapter Summary

This chapter presents a description of the findings that examined self-efficacy and acculturation among recent Albanian immigrants in the US. These independent variables were observed in relation to level of education, age of participants at time of migration, sex-gender, homeownership, and employment.

The Feminist Ecological Theory (FET) (Ballou et al., 2002) was the theoretical framework used in this study. According to FET, human existence is multifaceted, and it continuously undergoes changes influenced by individual characteristics and the surrounding contexts. Individual values, norms and beliefs are constantly evolving as they are influenced by the microsystem which includes family and friends. The larger social, economic, and political forces further shape the individual’s view of self and of the world (Ballou et al., 2002). FET helped examine the associations between self-efficacy, education, acculturation and a number of individual dimensions.

This chapter is organized in three main sections. First, readers will find brief summaries of self-efficacy and acculturation, the main constructs of this study. The relationship of individual characteristics with the main constructs is addressed using descriptive statistics and drawing similarities with previous research. Second, a discussion of other factors that might have changed the direction of the relationship between the dependent variables and education, gender, employment, and age at arrival is presented. The chapter concludes with the contributions of this study to current literature, limitations and suggestions for future research.
Summary of Demographic Data

The goal of this study was to examine the relationship between self-efficacy and acculturation of recent Albanian immigrants to the United States. Self-efficacy is defined as an individual’s beliefs in his or her capabilities to accomplish tasks in daily life (Bandura, 1997). These beliefs directly affect thinking, behavior, and motivation, as individuals engage in a thought process to make changes in their lives (Kennedy, 2010; Kung, 2009; Pajares & Graham, 1999). When setbacks happen, individuals who believe in their ability to exercise control in their lives are more likely to bounce back and continue their efforts in accomplishing the tasks that they initially pursued or other similarly challenging tasks (Bouffard-Bouchard, Parent, & Larivée, 1990; Martin & McLellan, 2013).

For the purpose of this study, acculturation is defined as the alteration of attitudes, values and behaviors that occur when an individual from one culture comes into sustained contact with another culture (Berry, 1980; Graves, 1976). Two constructs further define the idea of acculturation: adherence to the majority culture, in this case American norms and values, and adherence to the heritage culture, which in this study refers to Albanian norms and values (Ryder, Alden, & Paulhus, 2000).

Participants in this study were all recent immigrants who arrived in the US between 1991-2010 from the South European country of Albania. Some of their demographic characteristics mirrored the results of previous studies and included average age, gender, marital status, and industries in which these immigrants are currently employed. In 2010 Mane and Waldorf reported in their study that almost three quarters of participants were married. The average age of subjects was 47.5, and age at time of entry was 33.1.
Nedelkoska and Khaw (2015) found the mean age of Albanian immigrants in Massachusetts to be 39. According to the authors, this mean age suggests a larger concentration of Albanians over the age of 50 in Massachusetts compared to other states such as Michigan or New York, both of whom have large Albanian communities. Similar to the present study, Nedelkoska and Khaw reported that Albanian women are much more educated than non-Albanian women in the US.

Within the Albanian diaspora in the US only 32% of the Albanian immigrant population in the US has been estimated to have completed a four-year degree or higher. Albanians who have settled in Massachusetts have the highest reported rates of four-year degree or higher (39%), compared to similar communities in Michigan or New York (Nedelkoska & Khaw, 2015). Participants in this sample were better educated, with almost 42% holding a baccalaureate degree or higher. Rates of unemployment among Albanian immigrants in Massachusetts is at 5.8%, lower than other similar communities in Michigan or New York (Nedelkoska & Khaw 2015). In the present study, 5.2% of participants were retired, and the remaining reported to be gainfully employed. Regarding occupations Albanians are overrepresented in low skilled jobs such as maintenance, construction and service industry (Nedelkoska & Khaw 2015).

However, in this sample, women were underrepresented (34%), when it has been estimated that Albanian women comprise 46.3% of the community. To better understand this large difference, additional literature review focused sex-gender ratios of Albanians, both in their native country and in the US. There are no major differences in Albania between birth rate of male and female neonates. The latest report from the Albanian Statistics Institute (2018) indicates that for every infant female born, there are 1.1 male infants born. An in-depth look at male to female ratio
EDUCATION AND SELF-EFFICACY AMONG ALBANIAN IMMIGRANTS

among Albanians ages 21 and older, currently residing in their homeland, reveals that 50.1% identify as male and 49.9% identify as female (INSTAT, 2018a).

Almost 53% of Albanian immigrants between ages 21 – 65 in the US identify as male (US Census, 2018a). In the current study, 66% of participants identified as male. The larger ratio of male participants in this study could be attributed to a few other factors. It is not uncommon among immigrant communities for men to outnumber women (Donato, Alexander, Gabaccia, & Leinonen 2011). Men are often the first to leave their communities, with wife and children joining them later. Stecklov, Carletto, Azzarri, and Davis (2010) suggested that Albanian women are less likely to immigrate than Albanian men. Their cross-sectional study of over eight thousand subjects in Albania suggested that Albanian women are 56% less likely to immigrate permanently compared to Albanian men. When Albanian women immigrate, it is usually to follow their spouses who are lead migrants. They are less likely to engage in independent migration. Stecklov, Carletto, Azzarri, and Davis (2010) suggest that Albanian women, particularly those over 40 years of age, are more likely to migrate because of gender roles and household obligations. In a recent study conducted with 450 participants in Albania Dauti and Zhllima (2016) many household obligations and caregiving tasks were done by women. In this study 88.9% of respondents stated that women do house chores, while 82.1% reported that women cook. Women are more likely to take care of sick children (86.5%) or take the day off from to take care of a sick child (48.7%). Men were found to be more likely to do house repairs (77.3%). Dauti and Zhllima (2016) compared data gathered in rural areas with data gathered in urban areas. They found that in study participants in rural areas were more likely (81%) than participants in urban areas (70.4%) to endorse the statement that a good wife should obey to her husband to ensure peace in the family. Higher level of education of
participants was found to have a positive correlation with increased independence and decision making for women in the family.

Considering these expectations, it is not surprising that unmarried women are more likely to immigrate in pursuit of better education and employment opportunities. Their economic opportunities are more likely to improve if they immigrate, compared to married or unmarried women who choose to remain in Albania.

Attempts to recruit more female participants increased after the pilot phase of the study. During the pilot phase, 75% of the participants were recruited at local cafés. Introduced by the Ottoman Empire in its occupied territories (Mikhail, 2014), cafés in the Albanian culture serve as gathering places where people socialize and receive support from each other. As part of their microsystem (Ballou et al., 2002), Albanian immigrants, mostly men, continue to maintain their “coffee culture.” Women are not forbidden to participate in these informal gatherings, but are often accompanying their spouses. Albanian women are more likely to socialize in the house, at family events, or at community gatherings such as local festivals or concerts. There are no laws in Albania dictating socialization of women. Gender segregation that is seen today among middle age and elder Albanians is a residue of a number of social factors in the exosystem such as cultural and religious influences, which will be discussed more in detail further in this chapter.

From a political and human rights perspective, women’s suffrage movement has followed similar timeline to those of other European countries. According to Interparliamentary Union (2006) voting rights to women in Albania were granted in 1920. Women in Albania have the same legal rights as men. Yet, they are underrepresented in in decision-making positions such as the Albanian Parliament (21%) or Supreme Court (25%). New enterprise ownership (28%), has increased in recent years, but there are major differences between more traditional areas of the
country such as Kukës where only 16% of business owners are women, compared to the capital Tirana, where 31% of registered businesses are owned by women (INSTAT & UN Women, 2015).

Because of the large proportion of men recruited at cafés during the pilot phase, recruitment efforts for the overall sample focused on distributing flyers throughout the community, or identifying community gatherings in which Albanians were likely to participate. This increased effort yielded similar ratios of the overall sample with 66% of the participants identified as male and 34% of the participants identified as female.

In the demographic questionnaire none of the participants identified as other, which is not surprising as the Albanian exosystem, which includes the social norms, cultural customs, and traditions, and the political system (Ballou et al., 2002) and is still evolving regarding same-sex relationships. During communism, same-sex relationships of any kind were punishable by incarceration as revealed in the Albanian Penal Code (1977) where Article 137 stated that

"Pederasty\(^3\) is punishable with up to ten years of freedom privation."

Only in the last decade, has the Albanian LGBT community received some legal protection; however, same-sex unions are not recognized by the law (Dittrich, 2017a). Although the political dimension is changing slowly, social norms continue to remain rigid. Albania continues to be a traditional patriarchal society, where coming out is still taboo. The Albanian LGBT community continues to report discrimination and slow efforts on the part of the government and society to promote inclusion and legalize same-sex marriage (Dittrich, 2017b).

The influence of the exosystemic (Ballou et al., 2002) on the individual is spread beyond gender roles. Centuries old Albanian norms, values, and beliefs influenced the family, an important pillar of the Albania society (Murzaku & Dervishi, 2003; Omari & Luarasi, 1986).

\(^3\) Same-sex relationships
Traditionally, family starts with the marriage of a heterosexual couple. Throughout centuries marriage has held an important value within the Albanian society (Elsie, 2018). Fifteenth century customary law often referred to as “Kanuni i Lek Dukagjinit” (11, § 28), presented marriage as an obligation for both men and women

“To create a household, [...] both for labor and for increasing the number of off-spring” (Gjeçovi, 1933; Omari & Luarasi, 1986).

During the communist dictatorship, the ruling class placed an important value on marriage. The Family Code of Popular Albanian Republic (1965), in its first article stated:

“The family is the nucleus of [our] society. A family is created through marriage and follows the principles of communist tenets.”

Regime change at the end of 1990 did not change attitudes toward marriage. Political regimes change faster than individual or social beliefs and attitudes. At the present time, marriage continues to be a highly valued norm in the Albanian society; a norm which immigrants bring with them to the new homeland. For example, according to the EUROSTAT (2018b), the marriage rate in Albania is reported at 7.8 per 1000 persons, higher than any other European country. Divorce rates have doubled in the last 30 years, with 1.9 divorces per 1000 persons; however, they are similar to other European countries (EUROSTAT, 2018b; INSTAT, 2018c). Only in this last decade have attitudes towards marriage and divorce begun to slowly change, likely influenced by western cultures both through access to Western media and immigration. Albania has one of the highest rates of migration in Europe. As of 2015, the Albanian Ministry of Internal Affairs (AMIA) reported that over 33% of the entire country’s population resides outside of Albania, with the majority of immigrants settled in Western Europe and North America (AMIA, 2015). The alteration of attitudes, values, and behaviors toward marriage and divorce for Albanians both in
and outside of their native country is likely changing as the result of sustained interactions between the Albania culture and Western societies, where singlehood, cohabitation, and divorce are more accepted.

Albanians born after 1990 report more permissive attitudes toward cohabitation and divorce compared to previous generations (Xhaferraj & Tase, 2012). However, the majority of participants of this study (98.2%) were born before 1990, and raised at a time when marriage was seen as an important milestone which provided stability for individuals joining in this institution, as well as their future children (Murzaku, & Dervishi, 2003). Demographic composition of subjects in this study mirrored previous research. Recent Albanian immigrants residing in the Northeast of the United States are more likely to be male and married. Their identified gender and marital status are typical for Albanian immigrants whose formative years were spent under communism, as society at that time perpetuated clearly defined gender roles of male and females. Marriage and family are normative of this cohort.

Marriage rates were higher among men (100%) than women (82%). Of the remainder of female participants, two reported being single and two reported being divorced. Both single women were in their late 20s and reported holding a graduate degree. One divorced woman was in her 30s and one was in her 40s and cohabitating. Although there were only a few (9.1%), single or divorced women in this study, all of them held at least an undergraduate degree. The education level of the unmarried women in this study is similar to previous findings that female Albanian immigrants who are younger and not married are more likely to have completed a four-year degree or higher (Stecklov, et al., 2010). The widowed women were all over the age of 55, and none of them held a college degree. While marriage continues to be the norm among Albanians (Murzaku, & Dervishi, 2003), education of women is promoted (Stecklov, et al., 2010), as long as it does not
replace marriage. Expectations of marriage and conventional gender roles make it more likely for men to immigrate and their spouses to follow. A single, adult Albanian woman is more likely to immigrate if she defies some of the control society put on her. The most acceptable form of defiance is pursuit of higher education.

**Self-Efficacy and Education**

The relationship between self-efficacy and education has been the target of research in many studies. The bidirectional positive relationship between these two constructs (Denissen, Zarrett, & Eccles 2007; Kennedy, 2010; Kung, 2009; Pajares & Graham, 1999; Reid, 2013; Riconscente, 2013; Wilhite, 1990) suggests that when children believe they have control in shaping the trajectory of their lives, they are more likely to engage in more challenging academic endeavors (Bouffard-Bouchard, Parent, & Larivée, 1990; Kung, 2009; Martin & McLellan, 2013). Academic accomplishments have been found to reinforce self-motivation and sustained efforts to persist (Bandura, 1997; Kennedy, 2010). Individuals who achieve loftier academic goals are more likely to persevere in more challenging tasks during their life.

To enrich previous research, this study explored the relationship between education attainment and self-efficacy. It was hypothesized that recent Albanian immigrants who completed a four-year degree or higher, were more likely to report higher levels of self-efficacy. Findings in the present study revealed a non-statistically significant difference in levels of self-efficacy between participants who held a baccalaureate or graduate degree compared to individuals who only held a high-school diploma or an associate degree. This finding suggests that Albanian immigrants with less than a four-year degree, report similar levels of beliefs in their capabilities to accomplish tasks and persist in case of failure as their peers with a baccalaureate degree of higher. Thus, a baccalaureate degree did not predict higher levels of self-efficacy. With education
producing non-statistically significant results, it is likely that other individual dimensions such as age at migration, employment, homeownership, and gender influenced self-efficacy.

**Self-efficacy and Age at Migration**

Upon arrival in a new country, immigrants explore community resources, create and reinforce social connections in the new country, improve language proficiency, and learn new customs and traditions. One of the individual dimensions (Ballou et al., 2002) that affects this process of learning and adaptation is age at migration. Variations of age at migration have been correlated with different life outcomes for immigrants, which included differences in income, language acquisition and health outcomes. Among immigrants who arrived in the US as adults, those who entered at a younger age reported higher income and more years of education (Bleakley & Chin, 2010). The process of language acquisition, although it slows down in adulthood, appears to be more successful among younger adult immigrants (Bleakley & Chin, 2010). Non-Hispanic emerging and young adult immigrants report better health outcomes than peers who immigrated later in life (Gubernskaya, 2015). Other studies have suggested that advancement of technology and its use both on the job and in everyday life has been found to negatively affect self-efficacy of older adults (Maurer, 2001; Schreder, et al., 2013).

In the present study a rich and diverse picture emerged when immigrants were divided in two groups: (a) those who arrived prior to age 30; and (b) those who arrived after age 30. Demographic data reveled that participants who immigrated prior to age 30 (n = 83), were less likely to have obtained a four-year college degree prior to arrival. Only 42% had obtained a college degree before immigrating, compared to 60% of their peers who immigrated after age 30. Although less likely to be college educated, younger immigrants reported better English fluency and higher personal and family income. They were also less likely to be underemployed.
In exploring the intersectionality of age at migration with educational achievement, the picture that emerged from this group of immigrants did not quite mirror previous literature findings (Bandura, 1997; Denissen, Zarrett, & Eccles 2007; Kung, 2009; Riconscente, 2013; Robb, 2012), which suggested positive correlation between self-efficacy and academic attainment. Although more likely to hold a four-year college degree or higher, the older cohort levels of self-efficacy were very similar to the younger participants. For the older cohort higher education did not predict higher levels of self-efficacy. It is likely that for younger immigrants (< 30 years old at time of migration) familiarity with technology and a more successful process of language acquisition, have created better employment opportunities which increased the belief they have in their capabilities to accomplish tasks which affect daily lives (Bandura, 1997).

In addition to less familiarity with technology and limited English proficiency, what might have affected lower self-efficacy among the older cohort in the US has to do with limited network of friends and acquaintances that might have helped in obtaining better employment in their native country. Albania is a small country, where in some smaller cities and towns it is not difficult to find relations who might help you accomplish a task or another. Even in the capital Tirana, many people have a web of connections and relations which help them accomplish tasks. This web of relations is denser for older individuals, particularly those who have lived in the same city for decades, or those who have been in political, social, or economic positions of power, opportunities given to them partially do to education attainments.

The older cohort of Albanian immigrants found few connections at best upon arrival. For those used to rely on their relations to find jobs at skill level, it must have been a challenge to start from scratch in building their network. Even when a network was present the method of interaction had changed. For example, hiring process is somewhat less formal in Albania compared to the US,
particularly for non-leadership public positions or jobs in the private sector. A public position is posted and candidates are screened within few weeks. In the private sector job posting is rarer, with employers relying on their network to find suitable candidates. Compared to this, job search and interviewing process is more formal in the US. Older Albanian immigrants would have had to learn not only a new language, new skills, but new ways of communicating with employers and co-workers. In addition, they now were competing with a younger cohort who did not have as much work experience, but had other characteristics desirable by the American market, such as language knowledge and technology skills.

**Self-efficacy, Location of Degree and Employment**

Previous literature has suggested that being employed has a positive impact on self-efficacy (Jackson & Scheines, 2005). Higher levels of self-efficacy predict better employment outcomes (Bandura, 2006; Nelson, Gray, Maurice, & Shaffer, 2012). Unemployment (Bandura, 1997) or underemployment has negative effects on self-efficacy (Kennedy & Chen 2012). Underemployment is defined as involuntary part-time or low wage employment that is lower than the vocational skills an immigrant has. Typically, it carries lower status and lower wages (Crouter, et al., 2006; Friedland, & Price, 2003) compared to jobs that require more advanced skills.

Of all participants of the study 33% (n = 51) reported being underemployed. All participants who reported underemployment had completed their education in Albania. Among underemployed participants there were individuals who worked as engineers (n = 8), doctors (n = 3), agronomists (n = 2), accountants (n = 2), artists (n = 6), college professors (n = 3), or military career officers (n = 3) or other highly skills jobs prior to migration. These same individuals reported working in the US as janitors, HVAC repair technicians, store clerks, administrative
assistants, or other professions that require fewer professional qualifications than previous occupations.

Higher skills and knowledge acquired during their education and vocational career in Albania were likely to be of little use in accomplishing the tasks of their current job assignments. One participant was working as an agricultural engineer in Albania. However, since arriving in the US, this same participant has been doing building maintenance. Most of the skills and knowledge acquired in his previous job, are not needed for his current position. The comparison between these two professions according to the US Department of Labor (2018), diverges significantly, with the latter requiring very low skills and knowledge. For an older Albanian participant, like his peers who reported underemployment, skills and knowledge acquired in their chosen profession are likely of little use in their current jobs in the US. This immigrant, like many of his peers made a commitment to his family, both in the US and in Albania, the commitment of taking care of them, no matter the circumstances. As such no job is below him, even though it requires less skills and knowledge. This job serves the purpose of accomplishing his obligations as a caretaker, and he is able to do this in “America.”

On the other hand, for participants with less than a four-year college degree, 39% reported holding similar jobs before and after immigration, such as drivers, quality technicians, short-order cooks, machine operators, or mechanics. Another 33% of participants with less than a four-year college degree reported being self-employed. Restaurant/café owner and real estate agent were two of the most common professions among those who were self-employed. The lower levels of self-efficacy among college educated Albanian immigrants are likely influenced by the fact they are not currently using the academic skills (Batalova et al., 2016) which they acquired in Albania, and they are more likely to be underemployed (Bandura, 2006). It is likely that this downward drift
is affecting not only the sense of self-efficacy but mental health over all. Immigrants, once accomplished in their professions to which they had dedicated years of studies and practice, realize now that the investment in their future has lost most of its value. The effects of this personal loss are further magnified by the effect of group membership. Underemployment is now visible to group members as well as the individual himself, which does clearly see the loss of status which an individual had gained due to employment. It is thus possible that underemployed immigrants might be experiencing symptoms of depression such as low self-esteem, feelings of guilt, isolation and avoidance of the community and ruminations on the past.

The situation of Albanian immigrants who hold a college degree is not unlike that of 40% of foreign-born immigrants in the US that report underemployment and hold a college degree (Batalova et al., 2016). College educated immigrants face many barriers when they try to enter the US workforce using previously earned professional knowledge and credentials. Recognition of foreign college qualifications is a poorly regulated (US Department of Education, 2008) and expensive process. Lengthy recertification processes, English proficiency requirements, and type of degree, particularly in social sciences, communication, or education are some of the barriers that contribute to the underemployment of college-educated immigrants (Batalova et al., 2016). These barriers remain for Albanian immigrants despite the fact that like other Eastern European immigrants they are more likely to immigrate legally as relatives of US citizens or through the Diversity Lottery Visa Program (Martin, 2013). In the meantime, immigration through employment, which requires both professional qualifications and English proficiency is more likely to happen for immigrants arriving from Western Europe, many of which are non-English speaking countries such as Luxemburg, France, Belgium, or Denmark (DHS, 2017). Citizens of the above-mentioned countries are also less likely to immigrate to the US compared to citizens
from Central and Eastern Europe (DHS, 2017). Ongoing political, social, and economic stability of Western Europe is likely to influence the pathway of migration and status in the eyes of DHS. Tumultuous sociohistorical events in Eastern European countries, poorer economic outcomes, and limited access to quality healthcare are some of the factors that shape the desire of their citizens to pursue emigration as a better alternative. These exo and macro system factors (Ballou et al., 2002) play an important role in the decision of immigrants to resettle in the US. Rather than an asset, upon arrival in a new land, prior college education which cannot be used or benefitted from, is likely perceived as a loss. Particularly for college educated immigrants who arrived in the US after having established a career in their chosen profession, being underemployed might be perceived as another reminder of lost status. Yet, they have chosen to remain in the US motivated by their sense of duty and honor toward their children, parents, and relatives. Several participants who left their homeland in middle adulthood stated that their move was motivated by the “many educational and economic opportunities” their children would gain in the US. Some participants used the word “sacrifice” in referring to the career and social status they walked away from in order to improve their children’s life opportunities. It is possible they knew, prior to immigration, that their professional opportunities in the US would be limited, not only due to English proficiency but also to challenges in parlaying their educational and professional experience into a similar career as the one they had in Albania. As other immigrants before them, these middle-age participants knew that they were going to lose their social status upon migration. Yet, they still took the risk and decided to move over 3,000 miles away from their homeland. Better life opportunities for their children is likely one of the reasons college educated Albanians left. Despite holding a college degree and a highly skilled jobs such as those mentioned above, Albanian immigrants left their country, their extended family, and a higher social status in pursuit of better economic
opportunities for themselves, but, most importantly for their children. Additionally, an American passport offers much freedom of movement, as it eliminates the need for a travel visa in the majority of the countries around the world. Even if they could not achieve the social status they held in Albania, highly educated immigrants, even when underemployed were making their best efforts to provide their children with opportunities to achieve the “American Dream.”

As members of a collectivistic society (Hofstade 2016), wellbeing of group members is important for Albanians. Even underemployed college-educated Albanian immigrants likely earn several times more than college educated professionals in Albania (CIA, 2017). Like many other Albanian immigrants around the world, participants of this study likely contribute to the welfare of their relatives in their home country. From the United States alone, Albanian immigrants send close to $80 million in remittance each year to their homeland (World Bank, 2016). Remittance to Albania is one of the country’s major sources of income. Better economic conditions (Mai, 2001), and the importance Albanians place on family relations, could play a role in the decision to pursue a job that requires less qualifications, rather than remain unemployed (Mai & Schwandner-Sievers, 2003), and not being able to provide for those left behind. Despite the sense of obligation toward others within their community, low levels of self-efficacy reported by participants with a college degree or higher, are a possible indicator of the sense of loss and “sacrifice” that accompanies immigration.

It is worth noting that 18% of participants declined to share their earnings. This withholding of information can be attributed to two factors. One, there could have been a general sense of unease to disclose individual income to a stranger. But the second factor is most likely related to fear of being judged by others, even though the questionnaires were anonymous and participants were informed of confidentiality restrictions of the researcher. Money is an emotionally charged
topic in many societies. People attach to it personal value and power. Judgment and criticism are likely to follow, if a person discloses how much they make. Such disclosure becomes more charged if one is asked to disclose their income as a member of a small ethnic community. It is likely to raise other unwanted questions or comments which a person might not want to answer. Thus, due to the value that money holds, some participants chose not to disclose their income as not to draw unwanted attention from other community members.

Self-efficacy and Homeownership

The Albanian immigrants who participated in this study reported higher homeownership (78.4%) than the native US population which has been calculated at 67.5%, (CIS, 2012; U.S. Census Bureau, 2018b), minority populations in the US which varies between 44.5% - 60%, (CIS, 2012; Hirschl, & Rank, 2010), foreign-born nationals at 52.6%, (CIS, 2012; Trevelyan, Acosta, & de la Cruz, 2013), or other recent white immigrants at 64.5% (CIS, 2012; Painter, & Qian, 2016). Literature findings are inconsistent in regards to the direction of the relationship between homeownership and self-efficacy. Some research suggests that purchase and maintenance of a home is correlated with higher levels of self-efficacy for American-born individuals (Christy-McMullin, Shobe, & Wills, 2008). Similarly, Clark (1997) found a positive correlation between self-efficacy and homeownership among African Americans. On the other hand, Rohe and Stegman’s (1994) longitudinal study did not find an effect of homeownership on self-efficacy. In this study, correlations between self-efficacy and homeownership were not statistically significant. In the present study homeownership was comparable between the group of Albanian immigrants with a four-year college degree and those without a four-year college degree. However, those who obtained at least one degree in the US reported higher rates of homeownership when compared to those who only obtained a degree in Albania. Additionally, immigrants who were older at the time
of arrival reported higher levels of homeownership, regardless of type of education they had obtained at the time of this study. Considering the high rate of homeownership, it is clear that the Albanian community of immigrants highly values owning a home. Homeownership is a visible sign of financial success and economic progress.

From a political and historical point of view, Albanians who grew up under communism were deprived of their right to homeownership (Sjörberd, 1994). Albanians had no control over housing or relocation within or outside the country. A number of systems and institutions controlled housing. The location and quality of a dwelling depended on the connection a person held to the ruling class or members of Politburo (Sjörberd, 1994). Upon coming to power in 1945, the Albanian communist government followed the example set by Bolsheviks in 1918 in regards to private property. One century ago, after the successful outcome of the October Revolution (Steinberg, 2017), Vladimir Lenin signed “The Decree of Land”, which abolished private property and redistributed privately owned land (Central Executive Committee, 1918). Influenced by the global macrosystem the Albanian ruling party members abolished private property and homeownership through laws and regulations. Almost all private property was confiscated (Stanfield, Bruce, Lastarria-Cornhiel, & Friedman, 1992). Those who refused to hand over their properties, were jailed “in the name of the [Albanian] people,” and their families sent to internment camps. While the exosystem legalized government control over housing, the microsystem exhorted control by making sure everyone complied with the law. Family members, friends, and neighbors would report to the government individuals who made attempts to acquire any type of private property, homes included. In the rare cases when a home purchase occurred, the transaction received the approval of the communist party members.
Similar to other countries behind the Iron Curtain (Smrčková, Huber, Montag, & Sunega 2018), privatization of government-owned housing started after the change of regime. It gave Albanians the opportunity to own their dwellings for the first time in more than five decades. Currently 91.8% of Albanians living in their homeland own their houses (INSTAT, 2018b). This rate of homeownership is higher than the majority of other European countries, but similar to other Balkan countries (EUROSTAT, 2018a).

Considering social, historical, and political factors, for an Albanian either in their homeland or abroad, homeownership could be perceived as one of the indicators of the belief that one is capable of successfully reaching a milestone. It is also visible to the microsystem surrounding said immigrant (Ballou at al., 2012) of the economic success one has achieved. Since the microsystem values homeownership as much as the homeowner does, it is likely it will reinforce the sense of accomplishment of the latter, thus reinforcing the individual’s belief in oneself. Being able to buy a home is a visible signal of economic success that an individual gives to their community. By purchasing a home an immigrant sends a message that they have been able to accomplish an important goal, despite being foreign-born, with no or very limited connections, with possibly limited English fluency and formal education. In this study, rates of homeownership among participants who obtained their last degree in Albania were similar, regardless of the level of that degree. Similarly, homeownership rates were similar among immigrants with little or working mastery of English, but higher for those who reported being fluent. Overall homeownership of recent Albanian immigrants is higher than the general population.

In summary, college education is only one of the factors that influences one’s belief in being able to accomplish daily tasks. In the case of recent Albanian immigrants there are other individual dimensions such as age at migration, ability to purchase a home, and underemployment,
and they all exerted their influence on self-efficacy. Younger study participants (< 30 years old) are more likely to endorse mainstream values and have better English fluency, despite their level of education. Older study participants are more likely to have at least a four-year college degree and be homeowners, but they are also more likely to be underemployed and have more limited English fluency. At least three of these individual dimensions can change with time, educational attainment, and homeownership, and so will their impact on self-efficacy. Therefore, it is not possible to confirm the second hypothesis of a positive correlation between college education and self-efficacy, due to intersectionality of individual dimensions.

**Self-efficacy and Gender**

Data analysis indicated that female participants reported higher self-efficacy than male participants. However, these differences were not statistically significant. Albanian women in this study reported higher educational attainment than the overall Albanian immigrant community members surveyed in previous studies (Mane & Waldorf, 2010; Nedelkoska & Khaw, 2015) or male participants in this study. Among female participants, 57.7% (n = 30) had obtained a baccalaureate degree or higher, compared to 37.6% (n = 38) of the men who completed the questionnaires. These women were also less likely to be underemployed and had a similar income as their male counterparts.

Every society attributes particular gender roles and expectations to male and female members of said society (Arnett Jensen, 2012). Some of these roles and expectations include acceptable personality traits, private and public expected behaviors, housework and childrearing obligations, and career choices (Koening, 2018; Levesque 2011). Collectivistic cultures expect women to be more docile than men and take care of children and other family members (Cheung
& Chan, 2007). Women more than men are expected to put the needs of their family before career advancement (Schmitt et al., 2016).

Gender has been found to be a predictor of self-efficacy, as previous research suggests that women report lower levels of self-efficacy than men (Chesla, Kwan, Chun, & Stryker, 2014; Lopez, 2014). Previous studies of immigrant women have found lower levels of self-efficacy in overcoming cultural barriers when compared to immigrant men (de Saissy 2009; Ngo et al., 2016). However, when the environment/societal expectations of women increased, so did their self-efficacy (Chen, 2009a.; Chesla et al., 2014).

Gender roles in Albania have been influenced by centuries long historic, social, and economic developments. While freedom of speech and many human rights were negated, the Albanian communist government, at least on the surface, vigorously promoted women’s emancipation. The following paragraph from the Albanian communist Constitution of 1976, article 41 states the following:

"The woman, liberated from political oppression and economic exploitation, as a great force of the revolution, takes an active part in the socialist construction of the country and the defense of the homeland.

The woman enjoys equal rights with man in work, pay, holiday, social security, education, in all social and political activity, as well as in the family”.

Illiteracy for women was virtually eliminated under the communist regime in Albania. During the communist dictatorship, dual-earner household became the norm. In a stark difference from the gender segregation of a few decades before, women began working outside of the house, next to men. The Albanian women who came of age under communism were expected to perform the same tasks, have similar jobs, and contribute the same in every aspect of the society; this, in
addition to child rearing and household chores. The communist party implemented minimum quotas to ensure participation of women in government, leadership, and diversified male-dominated professions.

During dictatorship, the communist propaganda promoted women’s equality through all types of propagandistic avenues. Paintings, movies, and novels sanctioned by the communist government (Lepuri, et al., 2016) promoted the idea of the “new woman” as honest, hardworking, and capable of accomplishing the same tasks as men. However, educational and professional achievements were expected to come only after an Albanian woman fulfilled her role obligations as daughter, wife, mother, or grandmother (Elsie, 2018). A woman who challenged expectations and stereotypical gender norms embedded in the micro and exo systems experienced adverse consequences (Osmanaj, 2014). Individuals in the microsystems would target forward thinking women in an attempt to protect the status quo of gender roles. The propaganda machine would further reinforce these traditional roles and priorities. The role of women in the family then became one of the few points where communist laws and expectations met with traditional laws and traditions. A woman’s pursuit of education was seen as an additional opportunity by the propaganda machine to spread communist ideas, as long as she complied with familial obligations to marry, have children and take care of the elderly (Lepuri et al., 2016).

Low self-efficacy among non-married women in this study could be related to the fact that marriage is valued more in the Albanian society than education. Being married would be considered a more privileged individual dimension than being highly educated. This is likely to hold true for men as well, considering the high rate of marriage among male participants. Whether in homeland or diaspora, Albanians highly value marriage. The normative value of marriage is set for an Albanian adult by the community of people with whom they interact on a daily basis. This
community includes parents, relatives, friends, and other acquaintances. It is this microcosmos of individuals that provides direct pressure on an Albanian who has come of age to marry and create a family. Because this norm is ingrained in the collective subconscious, it is seldom questioned or challenged (Ballou et al., 2002). This “equality paradox” is observable today in some public behaviors that Albanian women engage, both in their home country and in the US. For example, if a woman has reached other educational and professional milestones, but is still single, or divorced, the microsystem might question their capabilities to meet highly valued societal expectations. When comparing different life achievements, single or divorced women might feel less capable of exerting control in their lives, since they have not accomplished something that in the eyes of the Albanian community holds a higher place than college education, that is, marriage.

**Acculturation and Education**

Acculturation is a bidirectional, ever-evolving psychological process (Berry, 2003; Sam & Berry, 2010; Schwartz, Unger, Zamboanga, & Szapocznik, 2010), which is consistently influenced by interactions between native and host cultures. In this study, participants were asked to disclose their preference about mainstream and heritage values, in an effort to determine adaptation in the US. It was hypothesized that Albanian immigrants who held a baccalaureate or higher would prefer mainstream values more than their peers with less education attainment. Multivariate analysis suggested that as a group, college educated Albanian immigrants were more likely to endorse heritage values, while participants who held less than a four-year degree were more likely to endorse mainstream values. This finding suggests that values, beliefs, and attitudes of immigrants with a four-year college degree are less likely to be aligned with American values, beliefs and attitudes (Ryder et al., 2000). Due to this lack of statistical significance, data was analyzed further.
Previous literature suggested that higher educational attainment helps immigrants better identify host cultural norms, values, and beliefs and adapt to them (Nagel, 2003). Language proficiency facilitates the process of adaptation in the new country (Karni et al., 2013; Jiang et al., 2009; Noels et al., 1996). Nagel (2003) suggested that personal characteristics such as gender, length of stay in host country, and level of education influence selection and adherence to heritage and mainstream values, beliefs, and norms which sometimes differ in private and public life. In her study Nigel (2003) reported that Arab women in the UK cultivated sameness in clothing and body markers in order to be perceived as Westernized in their work environment. However, they were more likely to adhere to Arab orientated family values in private.

In this present study data analysis revealed some significant differences in adherence to heritage and mainstream values within the four-year college educated subgroup of immigrants. Immigrants who obtained their college degree only in Albania reported higher adherence to mainstream values, similar to non-college educated immigrants.

To further investigate this outcome for this cohort, participants were divided in three groups: (a) immigrants who obtained a four-year degree or higher in Albania, (b) immigrants who obtained a four-year degree or higher in the United States, and (c) immigrants who obtained a four-year degree or higher after studying in both countries. The scores for adherence to mainstream values of participants who obtained a college degree only in Albania, were similar to the scores of participants who did not hold a four-year degree. Immigrants who completed all their studies in Albania reported lower levels of adherence to heritage values than the other two sub-groups.

While scores among immigrants who completed their education in Albania are similar, the reasons behind stronger adherence to mainstream values likely vary. What immigrants left behind
in their homeland and what gained in their adopted country is likely to have played a role in responding to the questionnaire.

Participants with less than a four-year college degree reported either similar or better employment outcomes in the US when compared to the job they held in Albania. Their median individual income was higher than the median individual income of participants who obtained a four-year college degree in Albania alone. In particular, immigrants who obtained an associate degree in the US, reported similar incomes to Albanian immigrants who obtained a baccalaureate degree only in the US. It is however worth mentioning that they were either self-employed as contractors, or work in industries such as Information Technology, that have higher starting salaries for individuals with associate degrees (US Department of Labor, 2018). Homeownership rates and English proficiency was similar between these two groups. High school and associate degree holders were able to take advantage of professional and training opportunities offered by the US society. They are prospering economically similarly to college educated peers. Lack of a baccalaureate degree did not hinder their pursuit of the American dream. Their social status in the US was comparable to that of college educated Albanian immigrants. Income and homeownership rates were similar too. It is possible that in preferring mainstream values, they expressed their appreciation of the opportunities the American exosystem provided for these immigrants, who within two decades or so from immigrating, have been able to achieve highly valued milestones such as financial wellbeing. On the contrary, the college educated immigrants who only obtained a baccalaureate degree in Albania, reported lower median individual income than all the other subgroups. Considering the challenges immigrants face in converting college degrees obtained in the country of origin to get recognized in the host country (Batalova, Fix, & Bachmeier, 2016), it
is possible that those who did not pursue education further held lower expectations of acceptance and integration in the American society.

One possible psychological explanation for adherence to mainstream culture of underemployed baccalaureate degree holders lays in the defense mechanism of sublimation. Initially popularized by Freud (1905/2000) at the beginning of the 20th century, working definitions of defense mechanisms have evolved over the last century. Vaillant (1992) defined ego defense mechanisms as mostly unconscious patterns of behaviors, thoughts, or feelings an individual experience or engages in order to deal with anxiety during stress-provoking situations. Building on the work of his predecessors, Vaillant presented four different categories of defense mechanisms, placing sublimation in the last category “Mature defenses.” Perceived as an adaptive ego defense mechanism, sublimation is used when an individual transforms a questionable objective, to an acceptable one. Such change, allows an individual to function in a socially conventional way (Vaillard, 1992). If an immigrant has made the decision to stay in the US due to necessity, it might be more beneficial for their mental health to identify aspects of the American society that are pleasurable, aspects that somehow compensate for other losses, such as jobs, or status in the homeland. Thus, subconsciously adherence to mainstream values helps justify the permanent move to the US, and eases pain from the losses.

Immigration per se is a very stressful process, regardless of social, economic, or political background. In this study recent Albanian immigrant who obtained a four-year college degree prior to their settlement, were more likely to be middle age or older men, underemployed, mostly with working English proficiency. Within the American society, their social location is likely to be lower than the one they were likely to have back in Albania where they were doctors, engineers, or college professors. At the same time, immigration to the US allowed these college educated
immigrants to provide better life opportunities for their children and likely submit remittance to their extended family in Albania. On the one hand immersion in a new culture created stress and anxiety, on the other hand it provided an opportunity to provide for vulnerable members of the family. It is likely that to cope with these push-pull effects, these underemployed, aging college graduates turned their anxiety into motivating internal forces (Kim, Zeppenfeld, Cohen, & King, 2013). More than any other subgroup, this cohort is likely finding themselves in a liminal zone between trying to make amends with their “sacrifice” a.k.a. leaving behind their social location (Henslin, 2012) and meeting the needs of group members as expected within a collectivistic society. It is possible that higher preference for mainstream values is serving as a way of making amends with personal losses, but microsystem gains within the American society. As a concession for the loss of hard-earned knowledge and status, the American society provided economic opportunities for group members who would not have been able to access them, if these college graduates had not migrated (Kitayama, Snibbe, Markus, & Suzuki, 2004).

Therefore, these highly educated immigrants accepted a lower social status than the one they held in Albania, in exchange of the opportunity to live and work legally in the US, so their children could have better life opportunities. It is possible that if the children of highly educated, but underemployed recent Albanian immigrants are accepted and integrated in the American society, the parents’ preference is likely influenced by subconscious gratitude that their children have better life opportunities.

Immigrants who were educated partially or fully in the US reported higher levels of adherence to heritage values. Some of the factors likely to have influenced maintenance of Albanian cultural values and traditions by this cohort may be the freedom to promote and practice heritage culture (Ruggiero, Taylor, & Lambert, 1996). The continuous exposure to heritage values,
norms, and traditions reinforces them, despite the distance of more than 3,000 miles between Albania and the US. Endorsement of heritage values is likely influenced by a number of systems surrounding Albanian immigrants. Community organizations and local places of worship which Ballou et al. (2002) position in the exosystem promote heritage values. There are a number of education and cultural events that take place in Massachusetts, sponsored by Albanian non-profit organizations that foster heritage values. The Albanian festival organized every two years by the Saint Mary’s Albanian Orthodox church in Worcester, Massachusetts draws thousands of participants from New England. Local traditions, food, folkloric songs and dance are promoted, with older generations volunteering in disseminating heritage values, and younger generations being exposed to them. Similarly, the Albanian language school in Boston enrolls many young children, where trained Albanian teachers continue the decades’ long practice of promoting language and traditions to younger generations. Thus, Albanian immigrants, both young and old continue exposure to heritage culture, while interacting daily with mainstream culture.

Additionally, study participants likely have no US government travel restrictions and can freely travel to Albania, another opportunity to maintain heritage values. On the other hand, it is harder for Albanian citizens to visit the US, as they must obtain a travel visa. This process is costly for Albanian citizens. Non-refundable fees for a visa application without any guarantees one would be able to obtain permission to travel, are sometimes more than the average monthly income. As a result of travel restrictions to the US for Albanian citizens, the burden of travel falls on their immigrant family members. It is through these travels that Albanian immigrants continue to submerge themselves in their native culture and further reinforce maintenance of heritage values and traditions.
Beyond continuous exposure to their native culture, there is likely another reason why Albanian immigrants who obtained at least one college degree in the US preferred heritage culture despite reporting higher individual incomes, higher levels of homeownership and less underemployment. These results could be impacted by a phenomenon addressed in recent publications, “the integration paradox”, (de Vroome, Martinovic, & Verkuyten, 2014; Tolsma, Lubbers, & Gijsberts, 2012), which refers to the negative experience that highly educated immigrants have in the host culture (de Vroome, Martinovic, & Verkuyten, 2014; Tolsma, Lubbers, & Gijsberts, 2012; Tseng, Wright, & Fang, 2015; Verkuyten, 2016). This phenomenon has been observed more among immigrants whose degree has been obtained in the host country (Doorn, Scheepers, & Dagevos, 2013). The interaction with American institutions and individuals that represent them, influences and is influenced by the perception of US-educated Albanian immigrants in regards to the American culture and adherence to its values. In referring to the above-mentioned studies, recent Albanian immigrants who were educated in the US adhered to mainstream values less than peers educated only in Albania possible due to exposure to experiences which made them more attuned to discrimination and microaggressions. It is not unusual for highly educated minority individuals to become target of intentional or unintentional insults and snubs solely based on their group membership (Robinson-Wood, et al. 2018). This is true for immigrants particularly when they outperform native professionals (Kane & Kyyro, 2001; ten Teije, Coenders, & Verkuyten 2012; Wodtke, 2012). Due to their education and employment, these immigrants are likely to interact with more facets of the American culture and society such as the education, social and political systems, which Ballou et al. (2002) in their FET place in the exosystem. In light of these studies, it is possible that Albanian immigrants who hold four-year college degrees or higher, which they obtained in the United States, as previous studies with other
immigrants have suggested, are perceiving higher levels of disrespect, which makes them turn away from adherence to mainstream values. Lack of opportunities to advance professionally or economically (Verkuyten, 2016), more exposure to derogatory or sensational comments in media (Doorn, Scheepers, & Dagevos, 2013; van Heerden, de Lange, van der Burg, & Fennema, 2014), more awareness of group discrimination rather than toward a single individual (Verkuyten, 2016), and feelings of relative deprivation such as a perception of being at a disadvantage compared to others and that disadvantage is perceived to be unfair (Smith, Pettigrew, Pippin, & Bialosiewicz, 2012).

At the present time US educated recent Albanian immigrants have a firmer social position than their other peers. This social position is based on a combination of individual and microsystem dimensions. These immigrants are likely to hold a terminal degree which is recognized by employers, they are fluent in English, they have higher individual and family incomes, and they own their homes. These factors likely increase their confidence in disclosing lower preferences for mainstream values.

**Acculturation and Age at Migration**

Another factor that plays a role in acculturation in the current study is age of arrival. As with self-efficacy, immigrants who arrived to the US prior to the age of 30, were more likely (58%) to only hold a high school diploma or an associate degree, compared to immigrants who arrived in the US after the age of 30. Among the older cohort 60% held a four-year college degree or higher. Younger adult immigrants were more likely to adhere to mainstream values. One of the reasons, is their interaction with different forms of entertainment in the US, including movies and music. This exposure improves language acquisition which in return reinforces the enjoyment from art and culture and increased adherence to mainstream values.
Contribution and clinical implications of this study

Contributions

This study explored the experience of recent Albanian immigrants who arrived in the US between 1990 and 2010. They were all born and raised in this small southern European country and came of age at the time when the ruling communist party controlled most aspects on an individual’s life. Settlement in the US placed these immigrants in a very distant country, with a different language, and cultural norms, beliefs, and values. On a personal level they brought personal beliefs and values acquired in their native lands. Among personal beliefs, there is self-efficacy which refers to one’s viewpoint that they possess capabilities to accomplish tasks which affect daily lives (Bandura, 1997). Higher self-efficacy is positively correlated with higher education attainment and better employment opportunities. Unlike the hypothesis, there was no statistically significant difference between Albanian immigrants who held a four-year college degree and those who did not. Upon settling in the US higher educational background did not necessary translate in highly skills job, higher income, or homeownership. In particular immigrants who only completed their four-year degree in Albania, reported being underemployed. It is likely that the loss of social status, inability to use previously acquired skills and abilities, affected their belief in being able to successfully accomplish daily tasks. Additionally, this study found that there were no major differences in some economic indicators such as personal or family income or homeownership. The latter was particularly high among immigrants without a four-year degree. Considering the value that the Albanian community places on homeownership, being able to purchase one’s dwelling sends an important and tangible message of success to the whole community. And for those without a college degree it is a reinforcer of the idea they have control over the outcome of their tasks, regardless of level of education.
Adherence to mainstream and heritage values was also assessed during this study. Unexpectedly there was a difference in adherence to mainstream values among college educated immigrants. Initially it was hypothesized that they would report higher levels of adherence to mainstream, American values. However, data indicated differences among immigrants with four-year degree or higher, based on what country they obtained their degree. Immigrants who graduated in Albania reported similar levels of preference of mainstream values as their compatriots with a high school diploma. On the contrary, immigrants who obtained at least one or more degrees in the US seemed to prefer heritage values. One of the factors affecting preference for heritage values among US educated immigrants, is that they are more likely to be exposed to prejudice and discrimination, therefore more likely to reject mainstream values. This phenomenon known as “integration paradox”, suggests that although educated in the same institutions as their American peers, having the same language proficiency and professional skills, these highly educated immigrants struggling when interacting with the mainstream society.

Despite its limitations, this study further enriches the small body of research that exists on Albanian immigrants in the US. This study contributes to the literature by using the Feminist Ecological Theory in a sample of recent Albanian immigrants. Moreover, it provides a meaningful enhancement of FET when exploring the interaction of individual factors with micro and macro systems for Albanian immigrants whose formative years were spent under a communist regime. It creates a framework in exploring sociocultural influences on self-efficacy, adherence to mainstream and heritage values in this population. In using a quantitative approach, this study gained a more comprehensive understanding of the process of acculturation encountered by Albanians.
This study sheds light on the recent Albanian immigrant community, particularly the challenges those with four-year college degrees face in their adoptive country. They arrived in the US as adults, carrying with them pre-existing values, beliefs, and norms, which were formed under the influence of the environment in their native land. In the US, they had to learn new norms, values, and beliefs in their existing schemas. Considering social, cultural, geographical, and legal differences, Albanian immigrants likely have had to deal with cognitive dissonance and found novel ways to adapt to the new environment. This is the first study that focuses on Albanian immigrants and the new construct of “integration paradox”, which has been observed among other highly educated immigrants.

Clinical Implications

The demographic data collected in this study increases cultural knowledge for mental health providers. The therapeutic relationship will likely benefit if providers remember social norms and values recent Albanian immigrants carried from their homeland, such as the importance they place on marriage and value of education for both men and women. The majority of participants as presented in the previous chapters were married. Divorcees were a small minority. Marriage in Albania has been highly valued for many centuries, (Doja, 2010). Divorce, particularly during communism was very rare, and remaining single was considered a misfortune. This study captured this marriage pattern, which appears to be widespread among participants.

Albanian gender norms and values adhere to those of a collectivistic society. Women are more likely to hold a lower social status than men, despite educational attainment and professional achievements. Mental health providers should be aware of gender expectations and roles within the Albanian immigrant community. The therapeutic process will likely benefit if clinicians explore with clients their proximity to gendered expectations and power dynamics, particularly
when the gender of the provider differs from that of the client. In a similar vein, same-sex relationships have not been embraced openly by the Albanian society. An Albanian immigrant who does not adhere to binary gender roles, is more likely to experience increased stress as they navigate the collectivistic and traditional norms of their heritage culture. Therefore, mental health providers can serve as role-models of acceptance and provide the support for an Albanian to explore their gender identity and gender roles.

Family involvement in many aspects of the individual’s life is to be expected. First, unmarried Albanian emerging adults are more likely to live with their parents. Second, as in many collectivistic societies, confidentiality of medical and educational records of a family member might be a novel construct, which a mental health provider should take the time to explain to the clients and their families.

In working with middle adulthood or older Albanian immigrants, mental health providers should take time to explore the educational and professional history of their clients prior and after immigration. This exploration can shed light on the immigrant’s current level of education or employment. Albanian immigrants in this study are making efforts to contribute to their household and the American society, even when their qualifications are higher than the position they have been hired to work. In focusing on the value a client puts on their personal achievement, can help them identify if these values come in conflict with obligations to provide better opportunities for their children and financially support their family.

For mental health providers native to the immigrant community they serve, it is important to remember that acculturation process is unique for every individual, even when there are many commonalities among people from the same social, educational and economic communalities. Mental health providers, who are native to the community need to be aware of false beliefs that
because they grew up within the community, they know how to better treat its members. This false sense of proficiency can hinder the therapeutic relationship. Therefore, it will be beneficial for mental health providers native to the immigrant community they serve to engage in ongoing review and training on ethical principles and best practices for working with small communities. At the same time, considering the fact that immigrants continue to maintain strong ties with their homeland, it will be beneficial for their providers to remain abreast of new social and political developments in Albania.

Given these results, it is important for health professionals to consider interventions that take into account the unique individual characteristics of the immigrants who request services, without assumptions or bias. Studies like this could be beneficial as they provide an opportunity for clinicians to understand an ethnic community, and develop interventions with more cultural sensitivity. This study expands understanding of the Albanian immigrant beliefs and attitudes in the US.

On self-efficacy this study suggests that one’s belief in being able to accomplish daily tasks ebbs and flows in life. While some previous significant personal accomplishments like obtaining a baccalaureate or graduate degree increase self-efficacy, ongoing personal setbacks later in life are likely to decrease it. In order to maintain a positive sense of self, the individual is then forced to reevaluate personal tasks and potential outcomes. If a baccalaureate degree does not hold the same value as it did in the past, to maintain high self-efficacy the individual must find other tasks such as being able to care financially for several family members.

**Limitations of the Study**

This study focused on one single ethnic group, immigrants who came from Albania within a particular time period. The communist regime influenced their upbringing, as all participants
were born and spent some or most of their formative years under the influence of propaganda. Although such specific participation criteria help in eliminating other confounding variables, they also narrow the potential for generalizing the findings.

The selection of self-reporting measures presents another limitation of this study. Such measures rely on the insight and objectivity of the participants to report to the best of their abilities how they feel about the relevant topic. When distributing such questionnaires, one has to take into account participants’ willingness to report their position accurately. In an attempt to manage how they appear to the researchers, it is not uncommon for participants to select responses that put them in a more positive light. Additionally, self-reported measures rely on some level of introspection from participants. Despite the willingness of participants to share what they know or how they feel, it is possible that they might have limited insight into their self-efficacy or how they related to the American or Albanian values, norms and beliefs.

Another limitation was the sampling method. Snowball sampling does not involve a random selection of participants. Because of the lack of randomization, it is impossible to assess a sampling error. This technique makes it difficult to determine for sure that the sample is representative of the population, in this case, Albanian immigrants in the United States.

Unequal size subgroups of male and female participants in this study might have influenced the results. Although extra efforts were made to boost response rate of female participants, gender imbalance remained, particularly among currently unmarried women. It is possible that despite a significant number of female participants, there might not have been sufficient power to detect interaction effects.
Future studies

Feminist Ecological Theory served as the theoretical framework of this study. Future research using the same conceptual framework can be conducted with Albanian immigrants who reside in other countries with more collectivistic culture like Greece or Turkey. Of interest would be a comparison of self-efficacy and acculturation with other immigrant groups living in the US, particularly those who do not identify as white.

This study focused only on native Albanians living in Massachusetts. For this group education was not a predictor of self-efficacy. However, the Albanian community in the US is very diverse. It might be of interest to see if there are differences between Albanians who immigrated from Kosovo, Macedonia, Serbia, Montenegro, or other territories where ethnic Albanians live. Despite sharing the same ethnicity, geographic location, political, economic and social circumstances have shaped different values.

Similarly, adherence to mainstream values is likely to differ particularly among Albanians from Kosovo. During the Kosovo War between 1998-1999, the United States played a crucial role in what led Kosovars to proclaim their independence from Serbia. The US-NATO military intervention that ended the war was highly praised. Now, twenty years later it would be of interest to assess adherence to mainstream values, particularly among Kosovars who arrived in the US as war refugees.

Underemployment and “brain waste” of highly educated immigrants has important social and economic repercussions on the individuals and the society in which they live. The level of acceptance or rejection of host cultures should be further investigated to understand if there are factors that hinder social mobility for highly educated immigrants. It would be of interest to further explore how ethnic markers of Albanians such as their given names or location of education on a
resume change access to qualifying jobs. A comparison of such experience in states with lower Albanian immigrant population, compared to stated where Albanians have been settling for centuries might shed light on how prolonged exposure of a community, particularly of highly educated, but underemployed immigrants has changed perception of US-born individuals. Further research can continue to highlight this phenomenon, highlighting the resources and talents highly educated immigrants can contribute to the American society.

Considering the findings of this study, a qualitative approach can further enrich the understanding of self-efficacy and the process of acculturation encountered by Albanian immigrants.
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APPENDICES
APPENDIX A

Vancouver Index of Acculturation (VIA)

About: This scale is a self-report measure of acculturation.
Items: 20
Reliability: Cronbach’s alphas between .63 and .97
Validity: Not reported
Scoring: The heritage subscore is the mean of the odd-numbered items, whereas the mainstream subscore is the mean of the even-numbered items. Researchers studying acculturation in other mainstream contexts may wish to change ‘North American’ to another descriptor such as ‘American’ in the United States or ‘British’ in Great Britain.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>All questions</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reference:

Administration:
Please circle one of the numbers to the right of each question to indicate your degree of agreement or disagreement.
Many of these questions will refer to your heritage culture, meaning the original culture of your family (other than American). It may be the culture of your birth, the culture in which you have been raised, or any culture in your family background. If there are several, pick the one that has influenced you most (e.g. Irish, Chinese, Mexican, African). If you do not feel that you have been influenced by any other culture, please name a culture that influenced previous generations of your family. Your heritage culture (other than American) is: __________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>I often participate in my heritage cultural traditions.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>I often participate in mainstream American cultural traditions.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>I would be willing to marry a person from my heritage culture.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>I would be willing to marry a white American person.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>I enjoy social activities with people from the same heritage culture as myself.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>I enjoy social activities with typical American people.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I am comfortable interacting with people of the same <em>heritage culture</em> as myself</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>I am comfortable interacting with typical American people.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>I enjoy entertainment (e.g. movies, music) from my <em>heritage culture</em>.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>I enjoy American entertainment (e.g. movies, music).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>I often behave in ways that are typical of my <em>heritage culture</em>.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>I often behave in ways that are typically American.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>It is important for me to maintain or develop the practices of my <em>heritage culture</em>.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>It is important for me to maintain or develop American cultural practices.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>I believe in the values of my <em>heritage culture</em>.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>I believe in mainstream American values.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>I enjoy the jokes and humor of my <em>heritage culture</em>.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>I enjoy white American jokes and humor.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>I am interested in having friends from my <em>heritage culture</em>.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>I am interested in having white American friends.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX B

General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSE)

About: This scale is a self-report measure of self-efficacy.

Items: 10

Reliability: Internal reliability for GSE = Cronbach’s alphas between .76 and .90

Validity: The General Self-Efficacy Scale is correlated to emotion, optimism, work satisfaction. Negative coefficients were found for depression, stress, health complaints, burnout, and anxiety.

Scoring:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>All questions</th>
<th>Not at all true</th>
<th>Hardly true</th>
<th>Moderately true</th>
<th>Exactly true</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The total score is calculated by finding the sum of the all items. For the GSE, the total score ranges between 10 and 40, with a higher score indicating more self-efficacy.

Reference:


Administration

Please circle one of the numbers to the right of each question to indicate your degree of truthiness.
APPENDIX C

New General Self-Efficacy Scale

About: This scale is a self-report measure of self-efficacy.
Items: 8
Reliability: Internal reliability for NGSE = Cronbach’s alphas between .86 and .90
Validity: The New General Self-Efficacy Scale has high content validity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>All questions</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Administration:
Please circle one of the numbers to the right of each question to indicate your degree of agreement or disagreement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>I will be able to achieve most of the goals that I have set for myself.</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>When facing difficult tasks, I am certain that I will accomplish them.</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>In general, I think that I can obtain outcomes that are important to me.</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>I believe I can succeed at most any endeavor to which I set my mind.</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>I will be able to successfully overcome many challenges.</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>I am confident that I can perform effectively on many different tasks.</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Compared to other people, I can do most tasks very well.</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Even when things are tough, I can perform quite well.</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**APPENDIX D**

**Demographic Questionnaire**

About: This section has been created to gather demographic data to determine the breakdown of participants in order to differentiate between subgroups.

Items: 19

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questionnaire</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Current age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Year of arrival</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Current city/town</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Sex (circle one)</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Marital status (circle one)</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Divorced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. How well can you speak English? (circle one)</td>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>A little</td>
<td>I can have a simple conversation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. How well can you read newspapers in English? (circle one)</td>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>A little</td>
<td>I understand most of what I read</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. How well can you write a letter in English? (circle one)</td>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>A little</td>
<td>I can write a simple letter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Highest degree obtained (circle one)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. 8th grade, 9th grade, 10th grade, 11th grade, 12th grade, associate degree, undergraduate degree, graduate degree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Where did you obtain your degree? (circle all that apply)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Albania</td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>Other Country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 Are you employed? If yes, what do you do?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 How many hours do you work each week?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 If possible, would you add more hours each week?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>15 How many different jobs do you have now?</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 Are you in the profession for which you obtained training?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 Property (house) owned in the US (circle one)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 Individual single annual income</td>
<td>Less than $5,000</td>
<td>$5,000 through $14,999</td>
<td>$15,000 through $19,999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$20,000 through $29,999</td>
<td>$30,000 through $39,999</td>
<td>$40,000 through $49,999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$50,000 through $74,999</td>
<td>$75,000 through $99,999</td>
<td>$100,000 and greater</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Don't know</td>
<td>No response</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 Family annual income</td>
<td>Less than $5,000</td>
<td>$5,000 through $14,999</td>
<td>$15,000 through $19,999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$20,000 through $29,999</td>
<td>$30,000 through $39,999</td>
<td>$40,000 through $49,999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$50,000 through $74,999</td>
<td>$75,000 through $99,999</td>
<td>$100,000 and greater</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Don't know</td>
<td>No response</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>