

**AN ALBANIAN IN THE HOUSE?
MEN'S AND WOMEN'S DIVERGENT EXPERIENCES
OF MIGRATION AND INTEGRATION IN ITALY**

By
Kathleen Livingstone

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Supervisor: Professor Eva Fodor

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Abstract

Paradoxically, Albanians are said to be at once the most integrated and most despised migrant group in Italy. Because of the indelible impact of gender on social processes and therefore migratory phenomena, in this study I examine the experiences and perceptions of migration and integration of a mixed-gender group of Albanian migrants through a gendered analysis of life stories to explore what has caused the asymmetrical integration found in the case of Albanians in Italy.

Firstly, I explore the context of the recent migratory trends in the region, linking the present labor gap and demand for workers in Italy to its weak welfare state, care work crisis, and gender equality woes, in parallel with the creation of a labor supply from politically and economically tumultuous Albania. Secondly, I demonstrate that male and female Albanian migrants have divergent migratory experiences in Italy because of gendered and ethnicized stereotypes present in both their native and host societies. Finally, I show how the combination of this environment with pre-existing gendered and ethnicized stereotypes structures migrants' ultimate integration, allowing for greater employment and legalization opportunities for women and, consequently, causing more migrant women to become deeply embedded in Italian society than men, despite the fact that female migrants explicitly suffer more hardship due to their gender. I relate these findings to Rubery's (1988) theory concerning the 'silver-lining' of gendered job segregation, concluding that gendered and ethnicized stereotypes have a similarly protective effect on migrant communities in Italy. Further, I propose using the concepts of 'inclusion' and 'integration' to differentiate between male and female migrants' insertion into host societies, respectively, so as to be able to better map and understand migrant group integration and individual migrant experiences and opportunities.

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1) Introduction

We landed in Bari in a field with high grass, a wild part of the beach where there weren't people. We were left there, me, my mom, and my brother. My mom had brought a change of clothes for us so we all changed so that we would look normal. My mom spoke Italian and had a little bit of money so it was okay. We went directly to the station and got the train for Bologna. In Bologna another scene, like the first one with my mom. There was my father waiting for us, and he couldn't look us in the eyes. This I can't forget. He got on his knees to hug us and he couldn't stop crying. Just crying. It was a little different with my mom [when we were reunited], but you know, she was a bit [stronger]. Women maybe have more balls [courage], because we suffer more, and we learn how to deal with it. In fact, the decision was made by my mother, super dangerous, to go to Italy, to come back for her children and bring them back. He wasn't able to do it. He was just crying, he couldn't even hug us or look us in the eyes because he felt so guilty.

-Elira

Every phase of the migratory process is colored, if not guided by, the migrant's gender- as evidenced above in Elira's recount of her reunion with her father. After escaping communist Albania and living in Italy for almost a year with her husband, Elira's mother could not stand to be separated from her children that had been left in Albania and fled back home, to the dismay of her husband. To reunite her family, her mother eventually took advantage of the only option she knew to reach Italy during that time, and paid to have her and her children illegally smuggled into southern Italy. As this anecdote shows, the experiences of female migrants are much more complex, textured, and particular than most research across disciplines reflects, wherein female migrants are blindly cast as dependent and agentless migratory partners. Critiques of this sort have been surfacing since the 1980s, when feminist scholars began pushing for a gendered analysis of the migratory processes and experiences of migrants on the assumption that, without this sort of hierarchical power analysis, no real comprehension of the phenomena at hand could be possible (Houstoun, 1984; Seller, 1975; Simon & Brettel, 1986).

Contemporary studies on migration are usually more sensitive to gender issues, especially in

light of some recent migratory channels which have been shown to be comprised primarily of women, a trend that has come to be known as the 'feminization of migration' (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2011). These accounts still often lack equal representation of migrant women's realities in their data and infrequently take into account the effects of gendered hierarchies on the paths followed and experiences had by migrants. As such, I will explore the gendered experiences of Albanian migrants in Italy to firstly create a seldom recorded account of said experiences and secondly to show that a gendered analysis is imperative in gaining an understanding of how migratory processes are largely dictated by a migrant's gender and the gender ideology of both the sending and receiving states. I argue that the pervasive gender stereotypes we find in Italy and Albania associating women with low-paid service sector work, emotional care work, and sexual promiscuity actually lend female Albanian migrants an advantage over male migrants in the Italian labor market despite the greater hardship they face throughout the migratory process, leading women to embrace and perceive more opportunities of employment and legalization, both legal and illegal (though not criminal), and resulting in a more complete and in depth integration of female migrants into Italian society. To borrow a term from Rubery (1988), I will call this the silver-lining of migrant job segregation and gender stereotyping.

To reach these ends, I have interviewed a mixed-gender group of Albanian migrants in Italy in order to understand how their experiences during all phases of the migration process are gendered and how these divergent realities manifest themselves in the opportunities and consequent integration of the migrant. Albanian migration to Italy is a perfect case study for this research because of Albania's unique political history that has led to the creation of a massive supply of migrant labor and the socio-political context now found in Italy that has generated a seemingly

insatiable demand for foreign workers, all within the last thirty years. In revealing the gendered experiences of migrants throughout the migratory process within the context of Italy, varying forms of and strategies for host culture assimilation can be identified between male and female migrants. These differing manifestations of integration are closely tied to the divergent experiences of departure, settlement, employment, and document legalization of migrant women and men, experiences which are dictated by the gender and ethnic stereotypes held by members of both the sending and receiving societies.

To demonstrate these realities, in Chapter 2 I will concisely review current literature on migration and gender scholarship and focus on ethnic enclaves, gendered job segregation, and migrant trust networks to understand in which discursive and discriminatory frameworks these migrants are operating and to identify how migrants become integrated within host cultures. To place my research in context and explain the large migratory trends we see between Italy and Albania, I will briefly discuss both of their recent social, political, and economic environments in Chapter 3. In Chapter 4, I discuss the methodology I used to collect the data for this research. I will then analyze interviews from eleven migrants in Chapter 5, identifying in which ways male and female experiences differ, relating these contrastive gendered experiences to the gendered stereotypes and discrimination found in the Italian context and within Albanian culture. In Chapter 6, I explore the relationship between these experiences and migrants' integration paths based on the assumptions and conclusions drawn in the previous section. Finally, I conclude by showing that this silver-lining of gendered job segregation and stereotypes is little less than a distractionary by-product of culturally reproduced gender inequality.

2) Theoretical Framework

2.1) Mapping Intersectionalities

2.1.1) At the Intersection of Migration Studies and Gender Studies

In depth gendered analysis of topics within migration studies did not become widespread until the 1980s due in large part to a persistent assumption that international migrants were universally money-hungry young *men*, making a gendered analysis unnecessary. Women, of course, have participated in international migration as long as men have, in many cases migrating at higher rates than that of male migrants (Pedraza, 1991). As in most other fields of study, gendered analysis has proven to be an indispensable tool for comprehending migratory systems and migrants themselves because gender plays a role in almost every aspect of the migratory process.¹ Since its inclusion in the field, gendered research attempting to understand migration phenomena has focused on six main areas, still leaving a great deal of space for more in-depth scholarship: 1) the acknowledgment of gender as an analytical framework and not simply another categorization for differentiation; 2) the exploration of the relationship between female migration, care work, and domestic work; 3) women and the borderlands they inhabit, structurally, discursively, interactionally, and agentially; 4) debates about women migrants, sex work, and sexual trafficking; 5) the inclusion of sexuality and issues related to heteronormativity and homophobia; and finally 6) the gendered ramifications of migration on children (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2011). In an effort to explain the realities lived by male and female migrants, the systems that cause these experiences, and the reflective consequences of these forms of social organization, I will focus on the first four areas of

¹ See: Bjeren, 1997; Anthias, 2000; Willis & Yeoh, 2000; Harzig, 2002; Pessar & Mahler, 2003; and Silvey, 2006

intersection and their interaction with migratory integration processes.

Many of the concentrations listed above came into being to combat some of the most widely held – albeit incorrect and problematic – beliefs concerning female migrants. For instance, the common assumption that female migrants have been and currently are passive accompaniments to migration is being challenged through quantitative and qualitative research throughout the world.² This scholarship has shown that women's decisions and opportunities concerning migration are not always tied to the family or male kin, practically or legally speaking, at any stage of migration – another common assumption. We must unpack the impact of discursive assumptions of this sort that ultimately serve to erase female migrants' unique experiences and processes from acknowledgment or consideration and remove women's agency (Pedraza, 1991). Importantly, this ideologically passive position has often made it harder for women to gain legal status, find legitimate employment, etc. Contrarily, male migrants are seen as active explorers who are operating on a completely economic agenda, more willing to 'do whatever is necessary' to arrive at and succeed in a foreign country (*ibid.*, p. 306). All of these gendered conceptualizations and classifications affect male and female migrants' job opportunities and their interconnected levels of integration.

Other significant assumptions and common 'findings' prevalent in migration studies concerning gendered realities and experiences involve the victimhood trope that places all female migrants into the category of agentless object (Harzig, 2002). Recent feminist scholarship has countered these assumptions with research telling another story, often from the perspective of female migrants, that attributes a great deal more agency to female migrants and suggests that past research findings were at least in part gendered by the lingering patriarchal assumptions and

² See: Houstoun, 1984; Seller, 1975; Simon & Brettel, 1986.

methodological practices of many of the authors, who interact in a field (like many other wings of the social sciences) that is dominated by men (Pedraza, 1991). This gendering and its resultant effects on our understanding of the agency and therefore opportunities of migrants is made blatantly clear in discourses related to the organized illegal transport of people across borders, for example. Most literature references men's illegal transport across borders as “smuggling”, a term that implies that the person being transported did so with at least his own willing participation if not initiative, while the term most often applied to female migrants who become part of this type of border-crossing are almost always referred to as “trafficked”, connoting a lack of agency and a general veil of victim-hood regardless of the woman's own role in taking the journey (Catarino, 2010). Migration experts who use a feminist perspective in their work point out these discursive inequalities and have shown that they skew our understanding of the migratory process and especially of the identification and integration mechanisms that function within the migrant (Pedraza 1991).

The complicated and multifaceted interaction between female migration, care and domestic work, globalization, and post-colonialist feminism has also garnered a great deal of attention in recent years because of the continuously increasing participation and visibility of foreign women within international migration and specifically the social service care work sector, also popularly encapsulated in the concept of the 'feminization of migration' (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2011). This intersectional experience of female migrants raises many interesting points concerning post-colonialism and exploitation.³ The increased demand for laborers in the domestic and care work sectors within the Western world in general is the result of a myriad of intersecting economic,

³ See: Chang, 2000; Parrenas, 2001; Lutz, 2002, 2008; and Hochschild & Ehrenreich, 2003.

cultural, and historical factors that collectively take advantage of culturally dependent and controlled roles and stereotypes associated with a binary system of gender to link certain jobs and practices with either men or women in an effort to maximize exploitation and profit from the migrant. The effects of such gendered treatment and opportunity schema are felt by the migrant throughout the migration process, from departure to integration or return, and become entangled in the host society's perception, instrumentalization, and acceptance of the migrant and his/her community.

One of the most popular new buzzwords that encapsulates debates concerning the feminization of migration rather well is *intersectionality*. Intersectionality refers to the mutually shaping relationships between such socially-constructed categories as race, class, and gender, that work to create the unique experiences that people who exist at these various intersections have; this is not the simple inclusion of gender in racial discourses or vice versa, but “an alternative theorizing that captures the combination of gender and race. Race is 'gendered' and gender is 'racialized', so that race and gender fuse to create unique experiences and opportunities for all groups – not just women of color” (Browne & Misra, 2003, p.488).⁴ Incorporating intersectional analysis into studies of power structures and inequalities is necessary to understand all social structures because of the continuous interactions between every type of social categorization and positioning (Crenshaw, 1991). In the context of this study, I examine the intersecting hierarchical social systems of gender, nationality, and resultantly class in Albanian migrants in Italy to understand the consequent experiences of migrants and how they affect their ability to integrate within Italian society.

⁴ Also see: Collins, 1999; Glenn, 1999; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994.

2.1.2) Gendered and Ethnized Stereotypes within the Labor Market

Trends in the clustering of certain ethnic groups around some specific job sectors or positions, often through migrant trust networks, have been flagged as an area in need of more study by sociologists and migration scholars. These 'economically-specialized' ethnic enclaves are able to virtually control economic sectors and resultingly offer specific types of life paths and opportunities to members of the migrant community that fit certain criteria defined by the group. Eventually, these concentrations become ethnic stereotypes, to the benefit or, more commonly, detriment of the migrant and the 'native' population's comprehension of the migrant group. Ethnic occupation clusters, though often referring to legal employment, can also be found in illegal and unregulated sectors. Women's sex work and the trafficking of women is of course hugely gendered and controlled mostly by specific ethnic groups, as is the sale of different types of drugs and other contraband (Pedraza, 1991).

For our purposes, it is important to understand the way gender stereotypes are constructed in relation to identity and ideology and the way they are absorbed by men and women alike. Gonzalez-Gonzalez and Zarco summarize gender stereotypes as “the set of popular beliefs regarding physical and psychological traits, roles, and occupations that characterize men and women” (2008, p. 442). Stereotypes like those associated with gender are largely prescriptive in measure, in that the element of policing others in the community for doing the 'right' gender role is often felt more than the self-descriptive explanatory behaviors associated with gender stereotypes. Gender roles are closely associated with societal gender stereotypes and operate through socialization in much the same way. Gonzalez-Gonzalez and Zarco find that:

Socialization acquires a fundamental role in the context of sexual differences. Here, one of its main

functions is to establish social categories for analysis—in this case, gender categories—which enable individuals to learn, understand and distinguish the various significant aspects of social reality. Likewise, this framework also gives rise to social stereotypes and especially to gender stereotypes since these are a consequence of the cognitive process of categorization... that lead[s] to the setting of expectations with regard to ourselves which also stem from our belonging to either [gender] (2008, p. 445).

Given the pervasiveness of societal gender ideals and stereotypes and their cyclical effects on our identity formation and interaction with others in society, the significance of their role in modern societies is not at question; instead, our purpose is to understand how this gendered reality is lived for migrants and how it shapes migrants' lives and the reception they receive by their host country and society.

Six and Eckes (1991) consider stereotypes to be psychosocial constructs that color the way we understand and envision both ourselves and others and that have an intensive effect on our behavior, individually and collectively (in González-González & Zarco, 2008, p. 442). The stereotypes of Albanians in Italy are wholly negative, centering on the belief that Albanians are an uncivilized, delinquent community whose men are thieves and traffickers and whose women are prostitutes. It has also been found that most people form gender stereotype sub-categories, almost universally dividing women into typologies of housewife, career woman, and sex object while men, an area of study where much less research has been done, are frequently seen as traditional worker/bread-winner, non-traditional modern/feminist, or derelict sex-machine (*ibid.*). As can be seen in the Albanian case, assumptions about both ethnicity and gender cause women to be mostly stereotyped into sexual objects or care-givers, while men, less adherent to the common categories, seem to become stereotyped as othered derelicts. Stereotypes always consist of a descriptive dimension that dictates the characteristics and traits of a 'normal' group member and a prescriptive dimension that judges 'suitable' and expected behavior of group members; gender stereotypes are

heavily prescriptive, relatively speaking, meaning they are heavily driven on policing and peer judgment. Interestingly, Glick and Fiske (1999) suggest that gender stereotypes are more prescriptive in nature because they are propelled and maintained by power interests; a dominant group of men depends on the uncompensated labor of a lower class of women to sustain their quality of life, therefore motivating men to protect and police gender stereotypes that promote inequality (in González-González & Zarco, 2008, p. 442).

Many authors have already connected the pervasiveness of these stereotypes with the negative portrayal of Albanians in their host society's media, whose programming is all too often guided by right-wing and racist politics (Mai & Vullnetari, 2009). Statements made in the media in Italy linking Albanian immigrants with organized crime reminiscent of the Italian mafia quickly translated to character judgments and generalizations about all Albanian migrants, inducing the exaggeration of crimes in the media thought to be committed by Albanians and the formation of a 'common sense logic' that Albanian = criminal (Kosic & Triandafyllidou, 2003, p. 1000). Thanks in large part to these stereotypes, in Greece where Albanians make up the largest percentage of the foreign population (like they used to until recently in Italy), researchers concluded that Albanian women were the most exploited of all the migrant groups, even in comparison to Albanian men (Lazaridis, 2000). Angel-Ajani also found that, although Nigerian women appear to make-up the majority of prostitutes in Italy (and suffer from an intersectional discrimination accordingly), most people in Italy believe that Albanian women are the source of the 'prostitution problem' and that they are to blame for the sex industry's existence and proliferation (2003).

Through casework with Brazilians in Portugal, Padilla found that the pervasiveness of stereotypes, in this case based on sexual expectations, can hinder women's insertion in the labor

market and integration into society (2005). Machado (2003, in Catarino, 2010) found that when certain characteristics were attributed to women, they were usually seen as negative (often as flirty and superficial), but when adopted by men were taken positively (usually interpreted as being serious and sociable), showing that “attributed competencies are the result of gendered and ethnicized processes” (Catarino, 2010, p.185). Similarly, Machado discovered that men who match themselves closely to gender stereotypes/'ideals' actually possess more social capital allowing them to have more success in the social sphere (like in the marriage market) and have a higher likelihood of benefiting and utilizing migrant social (trust) networks than women, to which there are a myriad of profits and drawbacks (2004, in Catarino, 2010). In Italy, this gendered and ethnicized xenophobia against immigrants in general and Albanians in particular governs migrants' experiences and opportunities, limitations that are shaped largely by the stereotypes about Albanians that Italian culture assume to be fact and the absorption of these perceptions into the framework of the migrants' trust network.

2.2) Gendered Opportunities for Male and Female Albanian Migrants in the Italian Market

2.2.1) The Instrumentalization of Gendered Job Segregation

Job segregation by gender is a phenomenon seen across the planet that continues to attract debate over discussion of its origins. As noted by Hartmann, the most commonly cited explanation for the sort of gender-based job segregation we see today lies in the proliferation of the capitalist system and its accompanying alteration of societal organization that restricted women to inferior jobs, necessarily based on the assumption that patriarchal hierarchical value systems were already in place at the arrival of capitalism and therefore job segregation was simply an accidental side effect of

the commercialization and mechanization of labor (1976, p. 137-8). Conversely, Hartmann believes that men exercised strict structured power over their families before the advent of capitalism and consequently already operated within a hierarchical ideology of dominance; job segregation, then, became a patriarchal tool to maintain dominion over women that has been mediated by the continued economic devaluation of sectors denigrated to become female 'ghettos' in what we call today the wage gap (1976, p. 138).

Hartmann's argument, however, does not take into account what Rubery (1988) calls the 'silver-lining' of gendered job segregation seen in the possible positive side effects of job segregation itself for the emancipation of women within the current imperfect capitalistic world system. Milkman has shown that, despite assumptions in the field of economics that women make up a 'reserve labor force' that is highly expendable in times of economic turmoil, women actually suffer less job loss and unemployment during financial crises than men due to gendered job segregation (1976). Women congregate in social service and public sector jobs that are somewhat protected during economic crisis due to their necessity to the functioning of the government. Women also tend to show more flexibility in accepting jobs below their qualification level or outside of their sectors of choice to withstand economic storms, while men have been shown more often to 'wait it out' until a better job opportunity presents itself, increasing their periods of unemployment by quantity and length (Rubery, 1988). Gendered job segregation seemingly shields women from the harshest consequences of economic market fluctuations, allowing them more stability and security – two essential aspects of the complete integration of migrants. Such considerations of the genesis and effects of gendered job segregation directly interact with the processes of insertion, acceptance, and integration of migrants because of the power positions, discursive or concrete, that job segregation

implements.

2.2.2) The Modus Operandi of Gendered Integration: Migrant Trust Networks

The gendered processes discussed above occur on many levels; because of migrants' high reliability on social networks formed amongst migrants of the same nationality for basic goods, information, and many economic opportunities, it is important to understand the functioning of this primary unit of socialization known as the trust network. Migration scholar Charles Tilly defines trust networks as “ramified interpersonal connections, consisting mainly of strong ties, within which people set valued, consequential, long-term resources and enterprises at risk to the malfeasance, mistakes, or failures of others” (2007, p. 7). Tilly identifies trust networks as playing a significant role in recruiting migrants, socializing them into the host country, segregating immigrant communities, and confining migrants to “a relatively narrow range of opportunities for work, housing, sociability, and welfare” (Tilly, 2007, p. 6). Trust networks, like all social organs, are constructed on a foundation of gender stereotypes and role expectations that govern individuals' participation, dependence, and resultant influence on the migrant. Quassoli found that male migrants seemed to take advantage of trust networks to a greater extent, possibly due to their greater presence in the public sphere and with public dealings, opening men up to more of the benefits and drawbacks of such networks (1999).

For migrants engrossed in their ethnic trust networks, both legal and illegal employment activities are often dictated and regulated by members of the trust network. Further, because most members of these networks gain employment, housing, and major products through acquaintances – those jobs, homes, and items available to migrants are dictated by what is made available by the

trust network. Tilly also found that migrants operating through trust networks are often willing to exploit others within the same network at higher rates and for higher stakes than any native-born (Gold, 2008). Negative and illegal behavior, such as drug trafficking and unstable rates of consumption, have also been shown to be transmitted through these communities (Matthei & Smith, 1998 as cited in Gold, 2008, p. 269), along with inequalities already present in the sending society (Sanders, 2002 as cited in Gold, 2008, p. 269). Wacquant ultimately found that, due to the many drawbacks of trust networks and their inherent hierarchies of social capital, the benefits of such communities fall incredibly short of making up for the discrimination and inequality felt by most migrants in most societies (Gold, 2008, p. 270). Trust networks are arguably the most influential tool on the micro-level for embedding migrants in Italy's flourishing underground economy and within certain gender-specific sectors and therefore play an instrumental role in a migrant's integration into a host society.

2.3) Gendered Integration: Assimilation, Inclusion, Insertion – or Something Else?

Integration, defined and classified differently across disciplines, is another inherently gendered process whose inner-workings reveal how instrumental an understanding of gender relations and analysis is to any systematic understanding of social happenings and the monumental effects that this type of social organization has on individual and societal experience and behavior. Integration is generally understood to be a gradual process of increasing acceptance of the migrant by the host society often times through stages of assimilation, coupled with the development of ties and a recognition of commonalities with the host society (past or newly formed) on the part of the

migrant (Liapi & Vaiou, 2010). The exact definition of the term 'integration' is rather hotly debated and is continuously being re-defined in different disciplines; Portes and Rumbaut recently proposed understanding integration as stages of varying forms of assimilation, while many simply differentiate between the superficial 'mimicking' associated with assimilation versus the changes in identity and acceptance that would signify integration (GCIR, 2001). For our purposes within the context of Albanians in Italy, I would like to discuss the particularities of two integration models, neither of which explicitly takes into account gendered interactions but that do leave space open for the insertion of such elements when read liberally, and that can help us visualize the interactions and structural processes that are affecting the integration of migrant groups in Italy.

In describing Albanian integration to Italy, King and Mai find that “the migrant group which is the most rejected by Italian society is that which, on several indicators, is also the most ‘similar’ to the host society, and moreover sees itself as such” (2009, p. 118). King and Mai attempt to map Albanians' integration by using Gordon's (1964) classic model which theorizes 'integration' as composed of structural and/or identificational assimilation: *structural assimilation* is migrant “engagement in multiple primary-group relations with the host society, entering into social institutions and structures” while *identificational assimilation* is the “taking on [of] a sense of host-society 'peoplehood'” (King & Mai, 2009). Indeed, recent findings in the field have shown Albanian migrants in Italy to be one of the best 'integrated' foreign populations in the country, yet still one of the most stigmatized and marginalized.⁵ As King and Mai point out, Albanians are far from free of unequal power differentials, various forms of discrimination, and damaging stereotypes

⁵ See Calavita, 2006; King & Vullnetari 2009; and King & Mai, 2009.

compounded by Albanians' high presence in the penitentiary systems⁶- coining the term 'Albanophobia' to describe the fear and disapproval expressed by Italian society collectively for the Albanian population (2009)⁷. In Gordonian terms, this means that Albanians have achieved acculturation and some forms of structural assimilation, but never reached the highest level of identificational assimilation that results in cultural acceptance. Acknowledging that male and female migrant sub-groups may undergo integration processes differently and therefore become integrated in the host society differently can explain asymmetric group assimilation and can help us understand the Albanian integration paradox in Italy- an application of gendered analysis that is missing from King and Mai's assessment.

To better understand what is happening to the Albanian community in Italy, I propose utilizing the pioneering work of sociologists Dimoulas and Papadopoulou (2004) who suggest distinguishing between *inclusion* and *integration*. Inclusion refers to the contextual “legalization processes and legal status, language training, labor market participation, and house stability” of the migrant (Liapi & Vaiou, 2010), or what Gordon would have called structural assimilation. Integration instead refers to “questions of family reunification, the participation of children in education, access to, and relations with, public sector services, participation in associations, networking, socializing with locals, and recognition of cultural identity/otherness” (*ibid.*).

⁶ Bonifazi and Sabatino found that Albanians were charged with about 11% of all crimes committed by foreigners in Italy (more or less equal to their proportion of the foreign population at large), but that much higher percentages of Albanians were incarcerated for crimes against individuals or families, public morality, and decency: Albanians made up 34% of foreigners charged with sexual assault, 35% of foreigners charged for per-meditated manslaughter, and 51% if those foreigners charged with prostitution-linked crimes. This 'criminal specialization' that seems to appear within the Albanian profile combined with the statistical gap existing between the number of Albanians charged (11%) and the number of Albanians sentenced (7%), indicates the probable practice of ethnic profiling by police against Albanians (2003, p. 990).

⁷ Although this term was used by King and Mai in reference to Italians' fears of the entire Albanian migrant population, it is important to note that much of intimidating rumors concerning Albanians in Italy are concerned

Accordingly, I argue that the processes and activities considered 'integrative' according to Dimoulas and Papadopoulou are those associated with more stereotypically feminine activities (family care, education, socializing, etc.), while those considered 'inclusive' are more commonly attributed to stereotypically masculine behavior (public, legal proceedings, career, etc.). As such, it appears as if the assimilation we name inclusive is that typically experienced by male migrants and that called integrative more aptly characterizes assimilation of female migrants. 'Gendering' these categories reveals firstly, an interesting bias within the theorization of this integration framework and secondly and more significantly for our discussion, that female and male members of a migrant group often experience integration differently and can therefore produce an overall non-uniform, asymmetric assimilation *as a group* within the host society.⁸

I argue that Albanian integration in Italy is not asymmetrical or 'paradoxical', as it is often considered (King & Mai, 2009), but the result of a conglomeration of starkly differing integration experiences of the male and female gendered sub-groups within the Albanian migrant community; in reality, Albanian integration is not 'paradoxical' but simply different for each gendered sub-group. For this reason, King and Mai were unable to accurately describe Albanian integration within one gender-blind integration framework. As I will show, Albanian women achieve classical integration while Albanian men, the primary subjects of Albanophobia, are stopped at inclusion because of the societal positions and accompanying opportunities allowed to them according to their genders. In Italy, the situation is compounded by a complicated labor gap in care work and a largely xenophobic

with violence and crime, an area of activity that is dominated by men. Therefore, Albanophobia is realistically a fear of Albanian *men*.

⁸ Henceforth, I will use Dimoulas and Papadopoulou's differentiation between inclusion (or of their counterparts like structural assimilation) and integration (referring to both host society acceptance/support and structural inclusion) throughout my analysis (2004).

society that gives migrants few options for legal employment outside of the service sector, where mainly women dominate the workforce. This phenomenon has resulted in female migrants having higher employability, connection with the Italian public, and resultant document legalization and integration in what I would call the silver-lining of gendered job segregation of migrant labor, akin to Rubery's silver-lining of job segregation protecting the female labor force in times of economic crisis. To illustrate my point, I will show the ways in which male and female Albanian migrants' experiences and perceptions differ throughout the various stages of migration (departure, arrival/settlement, insertion, and eventual 'assimilation') because of gendered identities and stereotypes, contextualized in a highly exploitative and xenophobic environment. My findings demonstrate the necessity of including gendered analysis of the effects of gendered job segregation on migrant integration, both positive (the silver-lining) and negative (unequal integration and male criminality).

3) The Modern Migratory Contexts of Italy and Albania

3.1) Trends in Italian Immigration

3.1.1) Immigration to Italy

Immigration into Italy is a relatively new phenomenon as of the 1980s, reversing the historic emigration of Italians that characterized the better part of the twentieth century. As such, Italy has struggled to quickly and adequately address the significant flows of migrants into the country, not drafting its first modern and comprehensive migration policy until 1986 with the Foreign Workers and the Control of Illegal Immigration Act. Italian immigration legislation has only been updated three times since then, with the current policy, entitled the Bossi-Fini Laws, resulting in an immigration scheme still based on a quota system though differing in some important ways, including the criminalization of those illegally residing in the country. The motives behind Italy's present-day immigration laws are largely based on the assumptions that migration into the country must be tightly regulated so as not to allow Italy to become 'overrun' by immigrants – who, according to current legislation, are people who do not deserve equal rights as those of native citizens because of their foreign status in the country (King & Mai, 2002). Nonetheless, Italy remains one of the easiest points of entrance for migrants hoping to settle throughout Europe, one characteristic among many that Italy shares with other countries throughout the Mediterranean. Pugliese and Maciotti have modeled the unique migratory trends witnessed in this region in what they call the Mediterranean Migration Model (1991, in Campani, 2010). The Mediterranean Migration Model attempts to map the evolution of migration of states like that were almost exclusively sites of

emigration for hundreds of years until the 1970s and that are now suffering from major labor gaps in care work because of changing gender roles and weak welfare systems.

The Mediterranean Migration Model represents the unique combination of several strong similarities that exists amongst the states of the Mediterranean, namely Italy, Spain, Greece, and Portugal. Essentially, migration in this region is noted for: (a) beginning in the 1970s; (b) migrants that come from a great range of destinations, close and far; (c) being driven in large part by labor demand in the service and care industries; (d) having a large female component upwards of fifty-nine percent of all migrants; and (e) host countries that (i) instate haphazard migration legislation, (ii) tend to adopt and promote anti-immigration stances, (iii) have weakly developed welfare systems, (iv) have a demographically aging population, and (v) issue emergency amnesties to regularize immigrants at seemingly random intervals (Pugliese & Macioti, 1991).

Italy is a prototype of this sort of migration, fitting the model's typology of state policy response and, significantly, suffering from a national welfare crisis that threatens to cripple the government. Italy has an aging population and a negative birth rate, with demographers predicting that the state will not be able to pay social security benefits or fund social security programs at the current compensatory levels or duration allowances even before the actual population rate becomes negative in 2038 (Segreti, & Dinmore, 2011; Davy, 2012). The Italian government is in desperate need of labor to generate tax income and laborers to work in the social services that, in a functioning welfare state, would be offered by the government to its population (Davy, 2011). Importantly, these sort of weak welfare states are often seen by feminist scholars as inherently patriarchal because they usually force women to do the work of the state, uncompensated, at the loss of other labor opportunities (King, 2002).

Historically, this welfare system has functioned in Italy because the extended family was the primary unit of protection and welfare for individuals; in recent times, however, the saliency of the family has declined while incomes that previously supported multiple dependents can no longer be used to keep a family afloat (*ibid.*). As will be discussed below, the changing roles of women, from unpaid family caretaker to compensated worker outside the home, have also placed more pressure on state welfare resources. A huge demand exists specifically for *domestici* (domestic workers): *badanti* (elderly caregivers/nurses) to care of the ever-growing elderly population, *colf* (babysitters and nannies) to look after youth (while both parents work), and *donne della pulizia* (housekeepers- literally translated to “women of cleanliness”) to clean the house. Krause found that the racist implications of many popular commentaries on Italy's declining fertility rate accompanied by the 'fear' of Italy becoming populated by non-(white)Italians and the inevitably gendered dimensions of the debate intersect in a dangerously ominous manner, leaving immigrant women little options outside of this sector (2001).

3.1.2) The Italian Feminist Movement and the Care Work Crisis

At the same time as these many economic changes, the Italian feminist movement peaked in the 1970s in Italy, pushing for equality of men and women under the law and especially in the workplace. The state of the epic battle between patriarchy and feminism seems to have taken a turn towards maintaining 'tradition', in that Italy is considered one of the most patriarchal societies of the OECD countries (King, 2002). Expansion of gender equality has been slowed to a virtual halt in Italy, due to a combination of many factors though, according to Seymour, much of the story has to do with Italy's history with the Catholic Church and its patrilineal family lines that have acted as the primary unit of economic and social development throughout Italy's modern history (2005). Many

women's organizations have formed to combat the persistent patriarchal inequalities suffered by 'native' women and migrants alike, but such organizations are only now gaining much recognition or respect (Pojmann, 2006).

Thanks to the modest gains of the movement, women did begin entering the workforce at higher rates and in previously all-male fields, earning several civil rights that were previously denied them – such as the right to divorce which only became law in 1974, and reaching higher levels of education than ever before. These changes in women's rights, however, involved changing men's behavior and obligations very little (Andall, 2000). 'Women's work', referring to the domestic sphere and the care of the family and the home, is still seen as the domain and responsibility of Italian women. This disconnect between the advancement of women's opportunities and men's involvement in the domestic sphere has created a labor gap that has historically been filled by Italian women carrying a double or triple burden, working full-time jobs while completing almost all of the domestic tasks needed and at times caring for elderly family members, small children, and/or studying for advanced degrees. Such an unequal division of labor is, of course, both unfair and unsustainable. Immigrants have since provided the easiest and cheapest 'solution' for this problem, prompting this comment from the Women's Lobby “In this patriarchal context, many Italian families consider the underpaid and undeclared work of immigrant women as a solution to have both a professional and familial life” (2004, as quoted in Campani, 2010). Andall discusses this seeming 'solution' to Italian women's double-burden problem, questioning how these sort of arrangements fit into the basic ideals of female emancipation, especially from the perspective of the migrant (2000).

The combination of the weak welfare state, the aging crisis, and current gender ideologies has created a significant labor shortage in care work and other menial service positions throughout countries characterized by this type of development. This demand for laborers is met because of the need of developing country nationals to follow work opportunities and the relative ease of access to this region, creating a strong pull for migrants. As mentioned, the most common form of labor required at the moment in Italy is care work, labor that is inextricably tied to the home and the domestic sphere. Because the domestic sphere has historically been women's domain, women are still seen today as the natural workers in the field, irrespective of experience or qualifications. Migrants become an easy 'solution' to the care work crisis due not only to their higher likelihood of taking such menial jobs, but also because their 'othered' status in the host society automatically places them lower on the societal hierarchy than 'natives', making power struggles over rights and benefits that might occur with 'native' employees much less likely (Anderson, 1997). Such societal gender-specific associations become extremely important in situations like this because they ultimately determine what type of person, according to their gender affiliation and nationality or ethnicity, is eligible for what position – severely dividing labor opportunity access along gendered categories of essentialized labor roles within a nationalistic framework (Andall, 2003).

3.1.3) Migrant Insertion into the Italian Market

In light of Italy's demographic situation, changing gender roles, and economic woes, the labor gap in care work has worsened significantly in the last decade. It has become such a prolific problem in Italy that it has forced the Italian government to issue special calls and quotas for visa applications for “qualified” domestic workers to guarantee their continued presence (signaling dependence), reserving 65,000 visas to migrant domestic workers in 2007 out of a total of 170,000

possible slots (including special places reserved for nationals from certain countries with which Italy has made bilateral agreements, like Albania).⁹ Seven hundred thousand applications were received that year (The Melting Pot, 2008).¹⁰ Unfortunately, the number of visas offered by the Italian government has always fallen incredibly short of both the real need for foreign workers and especially the presence of migrants seeking regularization. In 2007, the first application was received 1.134 seconds after the site opened, averaging 9,600 applications a minute to bring the first day's total number of applications to over 350,000 (Ministero Dell'Interno, 2007). In 2008, the migration quota was issued solely for domestic workers, dedicating all 100,000 available open slots to *domestici* and reserving 45,000 for domestic workers and other laborers from partner states (Ministero Dell'Interno, 2008). Since then, calls for visa applicants have included: solely seasonal (mostly agricultural) laborers in 2009, 2010, and 2013; another divided call for applicants in 2011 reserving 30,000 out of 100,000 places for domestic workers and receiving over 400,000 applications (Ministero dell'Interno, 2011), fifty percent of which were for domestic workers ("Decreto flussi: 'click day', i risultati registrati nel Sannio", 2011); and even fewer open places at the last open call in 2012 with 35,000 visas offered (Ministero dell'Interno, 2012).

The massive discrepancy between available visas and the number of applications year after year, especially given the number of irregular migrants that illegally use these calls to regularize their status, suggests that hundreds of thousands of migrants are currently residing and working illegally

⁹ As mentioned previously, Italy still regulates its in-migration by establishing annual* quotas for migrants from specific countries and for specific visa types. In reality, the quotas are sometimes issued bi-annually at the discretion of the government.

¹⁰ Fascinatingly, 2007 witnessed Italy's first clic-day – the official acceptance of applications online and the initiation of a new electronic ranking system that prioritized applications based on the order in which they were received, allowing for much faster processing of applications and a much more precise ranking of applicants than before (Ministero Dell'Interno, 2007).

in Italy, with the highest concentration in the domestic services field. As of the last published numbers of ISTAT, Italy's census bureau, 3.54 million migrants are living with resident permits in Italy, fifty-two percent of which are male and forty-eight percent of which are female (ISTAT, 2012). These statistics, however, do not take into account the high rate of illegality amongst migrants in the country, with varying sources estimating the number of actual migrants in the country to be between 600,000 and four million migrants higher, increasing the number of migrants in the country by between 17-115 percent, bringing the potential number of total migrants actually residing in the country to over eight million (Caritas, 2004). Most of these migrants work within Italy's thriving underground economy.

Combining the needs of the Italian market and its pre-existing, post-Fordist economic model with Italy's history as an emigration state not accustomed to in-migration from abroad has resulted in a situation wherein immigrants in Italy are largely segregated in ethnic-specific occupations that afford different benefits and options for development when legal, and differing levels of danger and legalization possibilities when illegal (Quassoli, 1999). Importantly, Italy is considered one of the most corrupt states in the developed world with one of the most intricate and established informal economies anywhere, responsible for an estimated twenty-seven percent of Italy's GDP in 2000 (Italy being the EU's third largest economy) and employing the largest percentage of any OECD country in the informal sector at thirty to forty-eight percent (Schneider, 2002).¹¹ This deeply interconnected and extremely significant portion of the Italian economy was established well before immigrants began arriving on Italian shores, despite common belief that it

¹¹ Albania is considered more corrupt than 113 other governments by Transparency International, an NGO which has created a corruption perception index of 176 of the world's states; Italy does not fare much better, ranked as 72nd most corrupt.

was the immigrants who imported their criminal network and allowed for its flourishing (*ibid.*). Given migrants' precarious legal status and resultant limited economic opportunities, many migrants – like many Italians – found themselves working in irregular and unstable employment with document statuses that were constantly wavering. This black market labor is compounded by migrant trust networks that reinforce ethnic stereotypes by initiating migrants into sectors and jobs that are dominated by male or female migrants of a certain nationality and recruiting migrants from specific geographical backgrounds for work in that field. In establishing these trust networks and solidifying gender roles, restrictions are placed on the migrants themselves in terms of available employment opportunities, both legally and illegally.

3.2) Albanian Emigration in the Post-Communist Era

Albania is a fascinating case study for both Migration Studies and Gender Studies because of its 'new start' after the end of its extremely closed communist regime, giving researchers a relatively straight-forward basis for comparison and comprehension and eliminating many of the usual complications concerning causal validity normally present in these types of studies (Stecklov, 2010). In addition, given the incredible rates of emigration since 1990, King and Vullnetari have called Albania's unique situation a virtual 'tabula rosa' of migratory history (2012, p. 210). Albania shares a complicated history with Italy and extremely close geographical proximity, resulting in the saturation of Albanian TV with Italian programs and hundreds of thousands of Albanians able to speak and understand the language – more so than any other foreign language (Piperno, 2002). On a more basic level, Albanians physically and in many ways culturally resemble Italians, making Italy a likely choice for emigration. This has resulted in a well-established migrant flow between Albania and

Italy, coinciding with the formation of trust and familial networks that make immigration, legal or illegal, easier to Italy for Albanians than to most other Western European countries (*ibid.*). Further, most Albanians moved to Italy by using these trust networks for financial and informational help, usually from a family member or associate of some kind (Mai, 2004). As such, Albanian migrants have established communities throughout Italy for decades and receive much of the brunt of anti-immigration sentiments (King & Mai, 2008). It was not until after the immigration movements beginning in 1990 that Albanians were demonized and became known as the “hidden enemy” within Italian society (Perlmutter, 2008).

Post-communist era emigration from Albania has been closely tied to domestic political events, experiencing great waves of migration particularly in 1990 as a response to the dissolution of the communist regime, in 1997 due to Albania's complete financial collapse, and again in 1999 in northern Albania because of the Kosovo crisis. The specific numbers of immigrants leaving Albania is extremely difficult to pinpoint because of the inconsistency and unreliability of the reporting agencies, largely thanks to the periods of political turmoil, and the incredible numbers of migrants that leave Albania illegally or for intermittent periods of time (King & Mai, 2008, p. 66). However, it is widely accepted that Albania has become a country of emigration, significantly more so than even other former Eastern bloc countries (King & Vullnetari, 2009). The World Bank estimated that at least 1.4 million Albanians were living abroad in 2010, currently equal to half of Albania's resident population according to Albania's 2011 census (King & Vullnetari, 2012, p. 210).

During the first emigration surge from what had become known as “the most isolated country in the world” under communism and came to represent one of the first major exoduses as a result of the end of communism, both the Italian people and center-left government led by prime

minister Prodi 'warmly' welcomed the Albanians as “wild” and “pitiable” peoples in need of Italy's charity and protection. The impression was given that the Italian government believed it had an obligation to aid Albania because it was the “America” for Albania, referring to Italians' emigration history to the U.S. (Perlmutter, 2008, p. 204). These first immigrants were given the status of political refugee instead of that of economic immigrant and were thus automatically given temporary visas allowing them to remain in Italy at least until their request for aid could be processed by the courts, a procedure that could take years. By 1991, however, when storage ships were arriving at the Apuglian shores teeming with Albanian refugees, Italians became weary of being overtaken by these foreigners and pushed for more regulation, influencing the publication of the Martelli Laws, Italy's second comprehensive migration legislation in 1990. An estimated 40,000 Albanians fled the country in this period (*ibid.*). It was at this point that the nature of Italian acceptance, tolerance, and understanding of immigrants and particularly of the *Albanian* immigrant forever changed. In fact, it is the instantaneous and large-scale manner in which Albanians immigrated into Italy that is believed to be the biggest factor that influenced the change in Italy's treatment and acceptance of immigrants in Italy (King & Mai, 2008).

When migration from Albania to Italy spiked again in 1997, the surge proved too great an exodus for the Italian government to handle gracefully. Italian military began patrolling the Adriatic to “convince” the migrants to return home (Perlmutter, 2008, p. 220). Eventually, the Italian government declared that those Albanians who landed on Italian shores that could demonstrate “grave danger to personal safety” were given permission to stay legally in Italy for two months, with a possible extension to three months. By strengthening their entry requirements, changing the technical status of the migrants arriving on their shores, and militarily patrolling the Adriatic while

sending in humanitarian missions to Albania: it became clear that any policy that kept Albanians in Albania was the best possible strategy (Perlmutter, 2008). In the end, Italy issued eight thousand permits of stay to these migrants while it is estimated that fifty thousand migrants landed ashore (Mai, 2002).

Although profiles of the characteristics of Albanian migrants are somewhat period-dependent and inherently lacking because of the incredible amount of unauthorized emigration occurring at any given time, some generalizations can be drawn. According to World Bank surveys in 2005, eighty-five percent of Albanian emigrants left for economic motives and the remaining fifteen percent left in order to be able to provide better futures for their children (King & Vullnetari, 2012). Most migrants: are under thirty years old and unmarried (though a much higher percentage of women than men come married), are only slightly more likely to be male (men are estimated to make up roughly fifty-five percent of Albanian emigrants), have a maximum of secondary school education (though highly skilled workers are studying and working abroad in increasing numbers making Albanian officials worry about a brain drain), have at least one close family member already abroad, and intend on being abroad only temporarily (*ibid.*). As occurs in many destination countries around the world, Albanians abroad are usually hired at positions below their qualifications and often without regular contracts (King & Mai, 2008). In terms of employment, Albanian men in Italy are overrepresented in the so-called 'male-gendered' construction and agricultural sectors accounting for sixty-five percent of all male employment, while legally residing Albanian women tend to congregate in the service and care industries in typically 'female-gendered' labor (King & Mai, 2008, p. 97). In terms of criminal labor, Albanians are believed to control the largest prostitution network in Italy, with fifty-four percent of those apprehended for exploitation or aiding and abetting in

prostitution being of Albanian decent. An estimated 40,000 Albanian women and (to a much smaller extent) men are sold into prostitution, about 5,000 of those minors – or about 1.3% of the current resident population of Albania (Pipierno, 2002, p. 7). Albanian women are believed to make up the majority of all prostitutes in Italy, with at least 20,000 at work on Italian streets (Angel-Ajani, 2003). These 'occupation' concentrations of men and women adhere to traditional roles of men and women in Albania and Italy.¹²

These roles are highly influenced by Albania's pervasive history of patriarchy, which reaches back to Albania's pre-communist clan history and antediluvian law based on the *kanun*.¹³ Once the communist government fell in Albania, a series of social, economic, and political crises swept the country, hugely damaging the countries social systems and infrastructure. Like in other similarly-situated countries, the end of communist era regulations in Albania also meant an end to equality quotas and other equalizing policies that had been enforced by the state previously¹⁴, resulting in some areas reporting that over ninety-two percent of full-time jobs were held by men when these same areas had reported almost equal employment rates for men and women prior to 1990 (Lawson et al., 2000 in Stecklov et al., 2010). Education levels of girls have also dropped as poverty has risen and the outreach of the state welfare system has disappeared, pushing women to pick up the slack in

¹² In recent times, however, the media has portrayed migrants as holding the biggest stake in the informal sector, especially in those areas that cross more into criminal rather than simply irregular or informal activities. Although a great deal of disagreement surrounds the debate of what is informal versus criminal, or if a difference even exists, many of the activities that most people would concede to be primarily criminal – such as human or drug trafficking – are seen as the domains of migrant criminal networks (See: Schneider, 2002). Whether the majority of these activities are realistically carried about by migrants is of course impossible to definitively answer, though it is important to note that the majority of those arrested for drug and human trafficking are of Albanian decent. Because of the possibility of discriminatory legal procedures and criminal processing, it is nearly impossible to determine if more immigrants are tried for trafficking because more migrants than Italians participate in such activities, or more are targeted by police and consequently charged and convicted of said crimes thanks to societal expectations and accepted proceedings (See: Ajani-Angel, 2003).

¹³ For further discussion, see: Stecklov, Carletto, Azzari, & Davis, 2010.

¹⁴ For further discussion of gender equality in the CEE under socialism, see: Ferge, 1997 and Plomien, 2006.

what seems to be a throw-back to pre-communist Albania for all its re-embracing of traditional and unequal policies and practices. In fact, King and Vullnetari find that “not only did patriarchy outlive communism, but it was even strengthened in the power vacuum accompanying the regime's collapse”, noting that the trafficking of women and girls for sexual exploitation did not begin until the turmoil of Albania's most recent political phase (2012, p. 213).

Since Albanian emigration to Italy began in the modern period, Albanians have consistently received between twelve percent and twenty-four percent of all Italian permits to stay with the trend being the issuance of less permits to Albanians every year. According to government data, the Albanian community was the most numerous non-EU migrant group in Italy until recently, with just under half a million Albanians legally residing throughout the country. Moroccan immigrants now make up the most numerous migrant community in Italy, outnumbering Albanians by about twenty thousand people as of 2011 (ISTAT). Illegal entry into Italy from Albania could mean that the actual number of Albanian migrants currently in Italy is closer to double that of official statistics (Caritas, 2004). However, traffickers used to smuggle migrants into Italy on small personal boats, as cargo on carriers, on ferries with illegal documents, and in a million other ingenious ways. Estimates suggest that illegal emigration from Albania has diminished in recent times, however. Scholars have noted that Albanian migration in the last decade has been less periodically intensive and instead consisted of a more or less continuous out-flow, has seen a shift from irregular to regular status amongst migrants due to amnesty schemes in the destination countries, and has become permanent instead of circular most likely because of increased regulatory measures within destination countries making it difficult to go back and forth (King & Vullnetari, 2009). In addition, as part of the EU accession plan, Albania forged agreements with most of Europe and all of the Schengen zone in December

of 2010, permitting Albanians to travel for up to ninety days within any country of Europe without acquiring a visa as long as the traveler possesses a biometric passport, decreasing the necessity for human smuggling (though possibly increasing migrant status irregularity) (BBC, 2013).

4) Data and Methods

I first became interested in the topic of Albanian immigration to Italy when studying abroad in Bologna in 2007. As a student, I came into contact with a great number of foreigners and was able to gain some access to migrant communities because of our similar statuses as outsiders within Italian culture. Notably, being an American student and later an American immigrant in Italy is *not* the same thing as being an Albanian or Moroccan immigrant in the same context because of the damaging nationalistic stereotypes present in Italy, but the basic similarities of otherness still gave me enough 'respectability' to become friends with many migrants, especially within the numerous Albanian community. In 2009, I completed a study on policy gaps in Italian migration legislation and their effects on Albanian migrants, concluding that this legislation is made in a way that consciously creates an illegal class of immigrants to be exploited in Italy's burgeoning black market.

Inadvertently, the interviews conducted to decipher the experiential consequences of the legislation in 2009 were solely done with men; upon recognition of this fact, I decided that more research needed to be done on the differential experiences of male and female Albanian migrants in Italy. As a result, for this study I interviewed a purposefully mixed-gender group of migrants with the idea of understanding whether gender greatly affects their experiences, perceptions, and resultant integration. I was able to secure interviews with eleven migrants, including one migrant that also worked as a translator for the court in migrant expulsion cases, a social worker with the commune di Bologna, and an NGO worker with *Donne di Strada* (a group that aides prostitutes)- for a total of eleven migrant interviews and two community worker interviews. The interviews with the community workers were mostly used for contextualization of research and confirmation of some of the information received from the migrants. Because of the sensitive material covered in these

interviews, I have changed the names of my interviewees to protect their anonymity. The basic information concerning the migrant interviewees can be seen in Table 1:

Table 1: Migrant Data from Interviews conducted in Bologna, Italy in April, 2013

Interviewee (pseudonym)	Arrival Documents	Arrived in	Years in Italy	Present Occupations
Ardita	Student visa	2002	11	Barista
Zamira	Student visa	2003	10	Sales Assistant
Elira	No documents- illegal	1992	21	Student/Interpreter
Lule	Family Reunification	2008	5	Sales Assistant
Mirjeta	Tourist Visa	2013	<1	Housekeeper
Shpresa	Family Reunification	1999	14	Housekeeper
Ari	Student visa	2001	12	Artist
Jak	Student visa	2007	6	Ceramicist
Ermir	Greek (EU) Permit	2005	8	Cook
Driton	Tourist Visa	2013	<1	Part-time Market worker
Pjeter	Student visa	2008	5	Student/Caterer

Some of the migrants were acquaintances of mine from when I lived in Italy, and most of the others were contacts of those interviewees in one way or another. Two of the female migrants were directly contacted through the help of the social worker. I was able to secure these interviews and have surprisingly candid conversations mostly because of my relationship with members of the Albanian community and specialized knowledge of the historical and current political, economic, and social situations in both Albania and Italy. As noted in the research analysis, some of the migrants are related to one another. Because of these relationships, some of the interviews were conducted on a one-on-one basis while others were in groups of close friends or family members. All of the migrants lived in Bologna, one of Italy's wealthiest cities on the cusp of the north with a vibrant student population and a large migrant community. Due to the significant differences in

infrastructure and culture in northern and southern Italy, the experiences of migrants in Bologna is almost certainly different than those of a migrant in, for example, Palermo. In focusing on migrants from one city, better comparisons can be drawn between men and women within a migrant group contextualized in the same reality and societal position. Another level of analysis would be necessary to compare the experiences of Albanian migrants in other cities and/or between differing migrant groups.

The migrant interviews followed the pattern of life history research, lasting from between fifteen minutes and two hours, largely structured by the narrative that the interviewee felt appropriate and a few specific questions/topics I made sure were discussed. In following the life history approach to interviewing, I allow the migrants to mention and emphasize whatever life events they consider significant, crafting their own narrative in the process. This allows us to learn not only about the lived experiences of the migrant, but also the ways in which the interviewee prioritizes her/his life and gives importance to certain aspects or events over others (Hirsh, 2002). This also allows us to see what discursive frameworks the interviewee enacts for discussion of certain topics, adding another layer of complexity to the analysis

In terms of ethical considerations, I was careful not to ask direct questions about subjects that were obviously upsetting for the migrant and to encourage them to tell me whatever they felt applicable for the overall topic at hand. I conducted these interviews in Italian and later translated and transcribed them into English. Although Italian was the second language for both the migrants and myself, communication was smooth and presented very few problems. Prior to each interview, I explained my personal and professional background to the migrant along with my research topic, attempting as best possible to avoid any direct or indirect references to my opinions or hypotheses.

In this way, I was able to see some surprising and unexpected trends in the experiences and beliefs of these migrants.

The interviews with female migrants lasted longer than those with male migrants and often seemed to go into greater depth. This could possibly be because the women felt that they could open up to me, as a woman, more than the male interviewees, both parties still rather conditioned by the gendered rules dictating appropriate communication and discussion topics often seen in highly gender-segregated societies (Cameron, & Kulick, 2003) like that present in modern Albania. With me, it seemed that the female migrants were confiding in a friend, while the male migrants were slightly more aloof and formal. This may account for some of the differences in the stories told by male and female migrants or the sometimes lack of substantial response by male interviewees.

Of course, having such a small pool of interviewees does not allow for grand conclusions to be conclusively drawn from this research. However, in conducting these interviews in the form of life stories to maximize our understanding of actual experiences and integration, a large number of interviewees, though beneficial, is not absolutely necessary. In focusing my research on a specific group of migrants at a specific place and time, we can better untangle the effects of the intersecting variables of gender and ethnicity on migrants' lives and identities.

5) Gendered Experiences of Migration

If you never have these experiences [of migration], you can never know what it's like. Sometimes, when you go to a poor country, the people understand you better because they understand what you've passed and survived. So I would say it was worth it. I learned a lot. It made me stronger... Once you've lived with that fear [of exportation/exploitation] for a while, nothing scares you any more- the spirit of adaptation. I'll always find a way. Even now I have friends that freak out about rent or whatever, if only they knew how it was [for me] before! This is nothing. This is easy. That's why I don't have that spirit of victimization. I just laugh about it all. I realize that there is a lot worse than whatever I'm living now. It'd be nice if this was more appreciated, but they [Italians/non-migrants] can't know what it's like. How applicable it is. That's also why I never like talking about my story. I don't want to be a victim and you're not going to understand what I'm saying anyway. No thanks. It helps to recognize that it could be worse. It has been worse.

- Ardita

Undergoing the experience of migration permanently changes people and their perspectives in a way that, according to Ardita, is almost impossible to grasp for non-migrants. The experiences of hardship and struggle that she personally endured migrating alone, and her explicit desire not to be labeled a victim, represent a break with classic migration literature that does indeed represent female migrants as agentless objects of migration instead of active participants in transnational movements with individual experiences and migratory trends. For this reason, it is imperative that we recognize and record the experiences of female migrants that have been largely ignored within the literature to understand how their trajectories may follow unique paths that lead female migrants in different directions than their male counterparts. The migrants I interviewed had rather different experiences settling and eventually becoming integrated in Italian society according to their gender.

Many unexpected trends concerning the experiences and perceptions of the women and men interviewed became clear in my research. Identifying these trends is extremely important because they help us to firstly understand the way male and female migrants experience migration differently, but also because they help explain how the categories of gender and nationality/ethnicity

are shaping, in cyclical fashion, the lives and ultimately futures of migrants and their roles within their host society. Men's and women's divergent experiences came across strongest in four particular aspects of migration:

- 1) *Departure*: Male and female migrants had rather different experiences and perceived options for departure from Albania; Men usually reported coming for economic motivations with or without their family's economic or emotional support, while women migrated for a wider range of motivations (many independently) by taking advantage of more departure options, tending to respect their familial obligations to a greater extent.
- 2) *Settlement*: The initial settlement circumstances varied greatly between men and women, with women seeming to face more challenges because of their gendered ethnicity.
- 3) *Employment*: Female migrants appear to have *more* work opportunities than male Albanian migrants, an imbalance favoring female employment that is not present in the native population of either Albania or Italy.
- 4) *Legalization*: The female and male migrants interviewed tended to take advantage of different ways of maintaining their legal document status and thus preparing the way for higher-level forms of integration.

The relationship between these seemingly contradictory phenomena can be clarified when examining in closer detail the intersection and resultant societal expectations of societal and identificatory categories based ethnicity and gender. Ultimately, I argue that female Albanian migrants are presented with and take advantage of a greater array of opportunities – even though they have more challenging periods of departure and settlement – and consequently, contrary to

much literature on the subject¹⁵, these same migrants have a higher rate of non-criminal employment that leads to their greater integration within Italian society, as we will see in Chapter 6.

5.1) Departure: Challenges to Leaving Albania

The first splintering of male and female experiences among Albanian migrants can be witnessed in their methods of and motivations for departure from Albania. Much research within migration studies has found that male migrants tend to take the initiative in starting the migratory process more often than female migrants, i.e. investigating the culture and work perspectives of the potential destination country, finding contacts both in the destination country (for help in the first days and for time to adapt) and in the sending country (to facilitate the actual leaving process), and often by migrating to the destination country before the other members of the family to lay the first foundations of the family's new life (Pedraza, 1991; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2011; and King & Vullnetari, 2011). As recent research has shown, however, women are not always followers within the migration process, though they do tend to take their families' wishes and needs into consideration more often – as Elira's quote in the introduction shows.

Of those I interviewed, all of the male migrants cited the decision to migrate to Italy as their own. Ari did not receive a place at the art academy of the University of Tirana, and therefore applied to the University of Bologna and received a scholarship to attend. His parents were happy to see him following his dreams. Pjeter had a similar story, going to Italy with his parents' blessing for academic opportunities. Jak migrated shortly after graduation from high school, for lack of other plans or opportunities, and with his parents' support. Ermir came to Italy from Greece where he

¹⁵ For further discussion, see: Pedraza, 1991.

had been living for six years, having decided to come somewhat on a whim; he did not place much weight on the worries of his family: *“My parents didn't want me to go, but I've always been like this, coming and going.”* Driton, Ermir's brother, came to Italy very recently. He is the only male interviewee that is married or has children, though his family stayed behind in Albania. He decided to come for potential work opportunities and plans on going back home if he cannot easily find a decent job. When asked why he would leave Albania if he had a decent job and an established family, he said:

Driton: *I always worked there, I didn't come here out of necessity. I had a lot of work and earned well. But it's not stable there. The work reality is worse there, and the pay is hilarious... now we're suffering because of the euro. Obviously we're here [in Italy] because life is a little bit better. But if I don't find something I'll go back. At least I tried.*

Ermir: *He isn't desperate yet.*

Driton: *I can bring my family here if I find a job. We'll see how it goes.*

A trend I witnessed in all of the male interviewees was a lack of concern over their unknown and unstable futures, as evidenced by Driton's response above. Most of these men referenced their uncertain situations as 'fine' and often claimed they had not thought about these sorts of issues in depth. Interestingly, they also seemed to place much less emphasis on the opinions of their families on their departure for Italy. Ermir first revealed that Driton had a family back in Albania, and only then did Driton go into great detail. He never mentioned his wife's opinions about his decision to 'give it a shot' in Italy, only directly revealing information about his immediate family after asked and with this statement: *“[My wife] used to work as a cook. When I left she stayed home because someone had to watch our daughter.”*

Although complete autonomy in deciding to migrate abroad did not characterize all of the female interviewees' stories, it was the catalyst to come abroad for the majority of my interviewees. Of the women interviewed, three women noted making the decision to come as independent of their familiar obligations. Ardita came up with the idea to go to Italy on her own, with her family's

approval, noting that: *“It wasn’t that I really wanted to go away, I just wanted to give [living abroad] a shot.”*

Zamira gives similar reasoning for coming, also commenting on the misguided perceptions of prosperity that many Albanians hold of Italy:

[Why did you come abroad to Italy?] Because I have a degree from Albania in Italian language and culture. I’ve always been in love with this country and culture so I really wanted to come, but it was a big disappointment. You know, studying the culture and literature and history gives you a certain type of idea about the country that isn’t true anymore. The TV paints Italy as if it were a country like America... for us Italy was like America.

When asked why she went to Italy, Mirjeta responded that she decided herself to come at the behest of her sister, defying her parents directly. Lule, her sister, offered to fund her trip and to host and help her once in Italy in order to save Mirjeta from becoming trafficked by her fiancé, another dangerous hardship rarely if ever experienced by male migrants:

Mirjeta: I came because I was engaged to an Albanian boy... he was violent... His ex-girlfriend called me and told me he only wanted me to sell. I didn’t believe her. But then his cousin called me and told me the same thing. And I was like, what the fuck is this?...

Lule: She didn’t tell our parents because she was afraid to tell them. It would have been worse. They would have imprisoned her even more and literally tied her down and made her marry him...

Mirjeta: I am so happy I escaped.

Elira is the only interviewee to have come to Italy as a child. When asked how her parents came to the decision of moving to Italy, she recognizes that it was a mutual choice made by both of her parents due to the deteriorating political situation in Albania at the time, in 1992. Elira's parents were able to initially move to Italy by befriending their neighbors, who happened to be the ambassadors to Italy and were able to easily secure tourist visas for her parents. Although many of the interviewees came to Italy on tourist or student visas, a significant amount of these migrants, like Elira's parents, did not intend on studying or remaining in Italy as a tourist. They came with the expectation of converting their entry visa to a work permit upon finding a stable job, hopefully within the allotted time according to the visa, but with plans to overstay the visa period if necessary.

Only one interviewee, Elira, initially came to Italy without any sort of visa. Her parents had had to go to Italy without her and her brother because they were unable to receive the correct documentation. They decided to remain in Italy and attempt to bring their children with them once their situation was stabilized, but after a year without seeing her children, Elira's mother chose to separate from her husband and go back to Albania to be with her children on her son's birthday. In order to exemplify the sort of difficult challenges some Albanian women (and necessarily men, though seemingly to a lesser degree) must confront, I present a longer quote concerning what happened to Elira and her family about a month after coming back, after her mother independently organized for her and her children to illegally go to Italy:

She decided to do a crazy thing. She contacted some Italian people near Valona that departed from Albania with little motorboats that seated 5-6 people, not those big ones. She asked how much it cost and ended up asking her brother for the money to pay for it, without saying anything to my father because he would have forbidden her. And my mom does this crazy thing one night, she wakes us up in the middle of the night, and tells us we have to go, to Valona. We were out of it of course, but she had us go and get on the small motorboat. We left and pretty quickly we start to hear shots- it was the Italian police. So we went back. We sleep, etc. I don't really remember those days to be honest. I'm telling the story as my mom has told me... I remember only on the second day, a grotto. We entered and hid inside a grotto. Somebody arrived and somebody [from our boat] fell in the water. And he stayed there. [Did you get him back in the boat?] We took him from the water back in the boat, but it was too late. There was nothing to be done. Apart from this, my mom never stopped. She decided to leave again the third day and everything went fine. We arrived in Bari, and here my memories start up again. I just don't remember those three days...

It is important to understand the context in which Elira's parents and especially her mother found themselves in order to understand Elira's last few thoughts referencing the strength and decisiveness of her mother. In Elira's case, her mother took the initiative in all phases of migration in order to reunite her family by planning the crossing of the Adriatic, securing the necessary money, organizing preparations for arrival, etc. She even placed herself and her children in grave danger – a feat that, according to Elira, could not have been carried out by her father yet was necessary for the

well-being of her family. Elira's mother's sense of responsibility to her children outweighed her obligation even to her husband, ultimately becoming the guiding force behind her migratory options and decisions. This is in contrast to Driton, for example, who seemed rather undisturbed at leaving his wife and child for an undetermined amount of time.¹⁶ This is yet another example of the obstacles women must sometimes overcome when migrating with their families and of the uncommon solutions they find for problems when necessary.

By contrast, both Lule and Shpresa came to Italy because they married Albanian men in Albania that had been living in Italy already. To join their husbands, they received family reunification visas. Lule had difficulty from the beginning, saying: *"I came to Italy because of him. He dragged me here. I didn't love him so of course I didn't want to come."* Shpresa was also married through a prearranged agreement and moved to Italy for her husband, but says: *"We fell in love. But he was too close to his mother and his family and never assumed the position of the husband. He let himself be conditioned by the opinions of his mother and family. He was a good guy but our relationship started to suffer [after moving to Italy]."* Once again, Shpresa is invoking typical gender stereotypes, lamenting that her husband did not act like a 'real man' and was too close to his mother, whom she credits with the downfall of her marriage. Again, said stereotypes run deep. In addition, these women's accounts emphasize how turbulent migration of couples can be for the joining and usually dependent (and then probably female) spouse.

In examining these departure experiences of the interviewees, some trends can be identified. Contrary to popular opinion, many female migrants did choose to move abroad on their own,

¹⁶ Such a difference in narration technique is also at least partially due to the preponderance of so-called 'gendered language', referring to the discursive techniques governing used to determine societally-acceptable masculine and feminine topics of discussion, terminology, and grammar among other characteristic (Cameron & Kulick, 2003).

though to a lesser extent than their male counterparts. Similarly, women seemed to consider the well-being and/or opinion of their families more often in their decisions, if that was not already her primary reason for migration. The male migrants also seemed much less preoccupied with the instability of their status or life path than female migrants, who generally came to Italy for explicit motives – like family or school – while the male migrants sometimes had these reasons, several of those interviewed seemed to treat the process as more of a none-too-significant experience that would not necessarily bring about life-changing consequences. The male and female migrants interviewed came to Italy by taking advantage of a variety of different entrance visas, but only women applied for family reunification visas. This is important to note because it shows that, at least in terms of legitimate entry visas, women seem to use more available options for obtaining documents than their male counterparts. Finally, female migrants seemed to suffer more in the actual process of leaving, most likely because they often had more poignant motivations for leaving or even “escaping” Albania (like avoiding become trafficked) and were willing to take more desperate measures to reach their goals (like Elira's mother). From these migrants' departure experiences, then, we see that women are inventive agents of their futures who prefer stable and clear plans that take their families' needs into consideration, unlike their male counterparts, who, unfortunately, seem to utilize fewer options for departure and consider their familial obligations less.

5.2) Settlement: An Intersection of Gender and Nationality

Female and male Albanian migrants appear to have equally divergent experiences in the process of settlement, due in part to their different experiences of arrival and the different receptions they receive upon first insertion into Italian society. In my interviews, I find that the

gendered nature of most of the discrimination towards Albanians makes it harder for women to settle because of beliefs concerning their negatively-framed gendered ethnic identities. Further, women tended to perceive more hostility in their relationships with members of the host culture upon first arriving and many admitted to initially living in more precarious and exploitative situations than their male peers. Male migrants, in general, glossed over their experiences of their first memories of Italy and reported few problems, possibly because of lack of events that they thought would be labeled notable or to avoid discussing an uncomfortable topic. I also found that, in general, women felt that their experiences of anti-Albanian or anti-foreigner sentiments were often secondary to the specific gendered stereotypes about their being foreign *women*. Unlike their female peers, most men felt as if they suffered very little from xenophobia apart from some negative experiences immediately upon arrival. These trends again imply that women follow a path riddled with more dangers than their male peers and seem to experience, or at least notice and comment upon, gendered derogatory language of a specifically ethnically-motivated type. Migration literature, which still emphasizes migrant men's life paths as the rule, is therefore not demonstrative of the female experience, does not take into account intersectional realities of gendered discrimination, and therefore cannot account for female migrants' unique paths towards integration.

Both of the married female interviewees suffered significantly once they arrived in Italy with their new husbands not only because of deteriorating personal relationships, but also due to the weak position many female migrants find themselves in due to legal restrictions and transnational familial obligations. Family reunification visas can place spouses (usually women) in dangerous territory by imposing certain conditions on the visa that are dependent on the migrant's relationship with the visa petitioner, making any action against violent spouses potentially self-harming. Shpresa's

first few months in Italy were extremely difficult, for example, because shortly after moving to Italy with her periodically violent husband they were joined by her husband's parents and extended family, placing the burden of caring for the entire family of nine on the shoulders of Shpresa as per Albanian tradition. This is an experience (almost) unique to female migrants. Eventually, this situation took a serious toll on Shpresa's health, as she recounts: *"I remember vomiting every day for nine months while I washed the clothes and cooked the dinner of nine people"*. Shpresa's situation did not change greatly until she left her husband, entered the shelter system, and was able to independently apply for documents and employment.

Lule suffered similarly with a stranger-husband and large live-in family-in-law, though her husband became physically violent consistently after moving away from his parents: *"We separated from them [his family] and he started beating me. I was pregnant with Sergi, he was kicking me in the stomach... I put up with it all. It got worse every day"*. Pregnancy is another condition that can make a female migrant's situation and settlement markedly more difficult than that of male migrants by permitting the mother to work only certain jobs (if any), requiring the mother to have a stable home, and requiring interaction with the Italian health system (which becomes extremely complicated if the mother is illegal since Italian doctors can report clandestine immigrants to the police). The sufferings of Shpresa and Lule were only possible because of the combination of weak legal and societal positions in which female migrants are placed upon arrival in destination countries that make their settlement markedly more difficult than that of men.

Female migrant positionality is also determined by the types of employment women are able to secure in Italy. All of the women interviewed began working in the care work industry at jobs typically labeled as 'women's work', only recognizing the exploitative nature of many of these jobs

later. A common form of exploitation within care work is seen when an employer takes advantage of the emotional relationships formed between employee and employer-family to ask the migrant to work well above and beyond the agreed terms of employment, frequently by attempting to guilt the migrant into doing extra work by appealing to her 'inherent motherly affection' and emphasizing that 'she is a part of the family' (Anderson, 2003). Zamira recounts finding work immediately as a babysitter but eventually being asked to help in ways not agreed upon:

I had a room in their house and was in charge of the baby at night while the mother worked so that I would have a place to stay without paying rent... We got along, more or less... she started to give me more work to do once I was there, asking me to clean the house, etc., that wasn't part of the deal. I had to study... during the day, I was working and studying and then with the baby at night. I put up with it for a year.

In this way, women are exploited for free labor based on gendered ideals attributed to them.

Female migrants are also often confronted with gendered stereotypes about their promiscuity. Ardita was not exploited because of her 'motherly love' for her employer, but was instead harassed at one of her first jobs because of her sexuality after finding work illegally as a waitress, as she described:

Once I was working in a restaurant under the table, earning [practically] nothing, but I really needed the work, and after two days the owner comes in and says that he could give me a bit more money if I wanted to buy a mini-skirt or some nice clothes. I asked him what he meant, and he's like for you! And I told him to be ashamed of himself, he was as old my father! I left... being a foreign woman is sometimes rough, because sometimes when they hear you're foreign they'll start flirting a lot more because they think it's going to be easier [to get with you] and they think they're Italian therefore they'll get what they want.

Importantly, Ardita was assumed to be sexually 'easy' only after her nationality became known, demonstrating an instance of intersecting discriminatory frameworks.

In Mirjeta's account we also see the strong link, even in Albanian society, between the gendered stereotype of female migrants inevitably becoming prostitutes, a stereotype only strengthened by the nationalistic xenophobia present in Italy that specifically pinpoints Albanian

women as harbingers of sex-work. This is yet another gendered stereotype that only female migrants must affront, making their acceptance in host societies more difficult. As mentioned above, the belief that most Albanian women in Italy are prostitutes is widespread and pervasive in the region, delegitimizing female migrants, increasing the distrust that already surrounds them as the 'hidden enemy' in Italy, and causing problems with family left behind as Lule and Mirjeta found when talking to their parents:

Mirjeta: I talked to my parents and his parents and they said it [his involvement in trafficking] wasn't true and they still wanted me to marry him. About two months ago he was arrested in Holland for trafficking. I told my parents I didn't want to marry him any more and they were very mad...

Lule: Eventually she told them they separated... They responded that it wasn't true and that she left to become a prostitute- that's why you went, you aren't really with your sister [they said]... If you think we're prostitutes, good for you. Yes, we're prostitutes, [I said]. But its not true! Not everyone that comes to Italy becomes a prostitute.

The effects of such gendered and ethnicized stereotypes can also be seen in Ardita and Elira's struggle admitting their nationality and being accepted by their peers. Both Ardita and Elira often hid or lied about being Albanian until very recently, frequently at the behest of friends who worried about the associations such a disclosure would draw. Elira recalls: *"My boyfriend of two years didn't tell his family [that I am Albanian] and he didn't want them to know. [He said] 'It's because I wanted to give them a chance to get to know you as a person before judging you', implying they'd obviously judge you first and foremost as an Albanian"*. Ermir also hid his nationality at first, though felt as if mastering the language and customs brought the end to any xenophobic comments and the necessity to hide his nationality. It is important to point out that these women have been living in Italy for over ten years and only recently felt comfortable admitting their nationality because of the gendered assumptions that accompany their Albanian identity, while Ermir felt comfortable being honest about his nationality in a shorter period of time- indicating that the process of 'acculturation' for female migrants seemed

to take longer, presumably because of the higher hurdles their gendered stereotypes placed in front of them that were nonexistent for male migrants.

Like Ermir, the other male migrants generally felt as if any issues over their nationality occurred only initially and quickly disappeared, noting no connections to any problems or benefits associated with their gender identities. Ari felt like this: *"I only heard people saying 'oh he's Albanian!' the first year. I didn't have that sense of inferiority. In later years I never felt it. I felt equal."* Both Pjeter and Jak reported similar experiences, attributing the cessation of negative experiences to their eventual comprehension and reproduction of Italian standards of conduct and language. None of the men interviewed could (or would) recall any specific memories of discrimination or discriminatory hardship and generally felt as if, although they understood that many Italians held negative opinions towards Albanians, these prejudices did not appear in their daily lives. Because the male migrant's experience is that usually taken as standard, the male interviewees' experiences of settlement reflect many common conclusions drawn about migratory paths in migration studies, including their fixation on economic development (Pedraza, 1991).

The original positioning of migrant vis-à-vis society sets the backdrop for understanding the path that male and female migrants take to begin the assimilation process on to the road to integration. In this research, Albanian men saw a relatively quick decrease of xenophobic nationalism after they mastered the Italian language and habits, while Albanian women instead experienced a transference of priority in the primacy of the type of discrimination, from that based on nationality to that of gender, lengthening the acculturation and acceptance processes. This results in an intersectional prism of inequality that acts to limit female Albanian migrants through gendered and ethnicized obstacles and opportunities that reinforce patriarchal hierarchies and processes.

Female migrants confront a series of challenges that exist because of their unique status of inferiority in ethnicity and gender, the latter seeming to carry the most weight given comparisons with male Albanians' experiences of settlement. In these trends, we see that gendered and xenophobic stereotypes combine in the case of female migrants making the feelings of acceptance and parity between migrants and the native population that are characteristic of an integrated migrant group (versus an included one) difficult to obtain. Men did not attribute any of the discriminatory remarks or treatment they received to be related to their gender; this, of course, does not mean that it was not. As shall be seen in the next section, most of the discourse on Albanians in Italy is fundamentally gendered.

5.3) Employment: The Pervasiveness of Gendered Stereotypes in Job Opportunities

As has been noted in many case studies concerning job sector concentration of migrants, the men and women interviewed for this study congregated almost exclusively around stereotypically male and female occupations, respectively, according to basic perceptions of masculine and feminine work present in both Albania and Italy (Massey et al., 1993 and Angel-Ajani, 2003). These tendencies to work in same-gender dominated fields characterized most of the work histories of all of the migrants interviewed. The perils of sex-segregated work sectors, particularly those composed primarily of women, have also been studied in great detail.¹⁷ The unique dynamics of these types of workplaces and workers' consequential position within societal and work power structures have been found to significantly affect employees. Depending on the context of the situation, such segregation can lead to incredibly different opportunities for both female and male migrants' employment and

advancement. Once again, this combination of discrimination systems results in a reality for migrants in which power hierarchies, founded on both ethnic and gender stereotypes, significantly alters the ways in which migrants are able to integrate within host societies. In this case, it becomes apparent that because of the deep labor gap in care work present in Italy and stereotypes from both Albanians and Italians about gender-appropriate labor, female migrants actually have a higher likelihood of finding employment, stabilizing documents, and becoming embedded in native social networks. In this way, gendered job segregation, which usually works against women by preventing vertical development and maintaining the wage gap, actually works in female migrants' favor by providing more employment and more in-roads into Italian society for women in what I would call the silver-lining of gendered job-segregation for migrant women.

Lule, Ardita, and Zamira were only ever successful at finding employment at feminized, service sector jobs, a reality of which Zamira – who holds two Bachelor's degrees and an Italian Master's degree in International Relations – is all too aware. Within the two years since she has separated from her husband, Lule has already worked *“as a housekeeper, in a pizzeria, in a hotel, as a hairdresser, at the internet point...”*. Ardita remembers working as *“a babysitter, then in restaurant work-dishwasher, preparatory cook, waitress, and then barista.”* As we have seen, Zamira's first job was as a babysitter, while all those she worked subsequently were also in the service sector as a sales assistant in women's clothing stores. Being one of the most educated interviewees, Zamira is painfully cognizant of the fact that she is overqualified for her job and that she gains little satisfaction from it, noting: *“I worked very hard and sold a lot, and so they wanted to keep me [offer me a contract]. But I'm not proud of this at all. I do it because I need a paycheck, not because I am passionate about selling underwear”*. In addition,

¹⁷ See: Hartmann, 1976 and Jacobs, 1995.

Zamira was extremely realistic about the opportunities she and other female immigrants had within the Italian labor market overall:

When I talk to female Albanians they are always so surprised that I work, and that I work in a store! For an Albanian woman, that is the most they could ever hope for. The majority work as housekeepers, if at all. Female students work as waitresses. But for women that haven't graduated, they either work as elderly caregivers or as housekeepers.

Zamira's own experience and her understanding of the labor opportunities available to female Albanian migrants shows not only that women's labor opportunities are extremely narrow and allow very little room for vertical advancement, but also that employment opportunities in these 'feminized' jobs are relatively plentiful and available to *female* migrants.

Zamira felt that male migrants were the real victims of this gendered job segregation, summarizing male Albanian employment as even more limited:

Most of them work in construction, and with the crisis, they've gone back [to Albania]- the men I mean... if a man wants to do something else, they don't do it. The maximum they can hope for is to manage a bar... Women have more opportunities for work and documents.

Zamira makes an extremely important point in linking the existence of the plethora of jobs within the category of care work, which are automatically labeled as feminine and therefore available only to women (Browne & Misra, 2003; Osgood, Francis, & Archer, 2006), and the higher number of opportunities for both work and documents (both important steps towards integration) that women seem to possess compared to men in Italy.

Similarly, Ardita has noticed yet another 'positive side effect' of gendered stereotypes and resultant job segregation. According to Ardita, because men (and therefore most employers/officials) believe that Albanian women are 'easy' and purchasable, they will attempt to keep Albanian women around (through the offer of a job, an apartment, a 'pardon' by the police, etc.) in hopes of eventually having sexual relations with them. Consequently, the gender stereotype

attributed to Albanian women of being sexually promiscuous, especially in exchange for something, actually works to the advantage of the female migrant, often making more job opportunities available to them despite the exploitative and abusive nature of such sexualized power relationships. As such, Ardita believes that although her employment opportunities are limited, those of her male peers are even more so:

Maybe they would have treated an Albanian man differently. Maybe as a woman, you might have more possibilities compared to an Albanian man. It helps to be a woman... [Because they see you as less dangerous?]?... No, because they hope some day they can get with you, that's all. [So you're saying they see you differently because you're an Albanian woman and not a man?] Yes. Maybe that we are easier, more desperate for money and will therefore do anything. I have noticed this. It happens even at the bar here, that old Italians will treat me respectfully until they find out at some point that I am Albanian and then they start with the comments and jokes.

This connection between stereotypes concerning migrant women's sexuality and greater opportunities is explicitly combated in Padilla's research in Portugal, where she concluded that such sexualized gender stereotypes combine with xenophobic stereotypes to eventually become attributed as characteristics to migrants, negatively affecting their ability to participate in society, form relationships with the 'native' population, and gain employment (2005). In my research, however, sexualized stereotypes seemed to give women a somewhat better chance at employment or contacts within the host population, increasing their ability to become stabilized and integrated within society. This is not to say that such associations did not also increase female migrants' hardship, harassment, and exploitation, however, some migrant women were able to spin these stereotypes to their favor. Controversially, some have argued that when voluntary, prostitution, stripping, pornography, and other sex work allows migrant women many more opportunities of employment than male migrants.¹⁸ Regardless, to continue the metaphor used previously, this paradoxical effect can be

¹⁸ For further discussion, see Overall, 1992 and Bernstein, 1999.

considered the silver-lining of typically damaging sexualized gender stereotypes from the standpoint of female migrants. Given the heterosexual dynamics of these power structures and the concentration of men in power, such preferential favoring works against Albanian men.

Interestingly, the female interviewees also seemed to have a much more realistic sense of the limitations placed on their work aspirations by the intersection of their gender and ethnicity. Zamira had greater dreams before settling in Italy and starting a family, but now is more or less content caring for her son. She recognizes that, as an Albanian *wife*, she is obligated to follow her husband's dreams and renounce her own. As an Albanian *woman*, she fears that she has already reached the peak of work opportunities available to Albanian women in Italy. She completed a Masters in Bologna after receiving two bachelor's degrees, one each in Albania and Italy, and had the opportunity to intern in Belgium:

When I went to Brussels, I was 30 years old. And I asked myself, what do I do? If I stay here [in Brussels], I am already 30, when will I have a baby? When will I get married? I would have to start over from the beginning. You know, you feel a little behind... I risk everything at this age? Because I didn't have anything there [in Brussels]. I would still need a job, a house, etc. Then to have Fatmir [her then-fiance] come, the issue with documents... It seemed too long, too hard. So I decided to return to Italy, where I had a base and a job - beh, a job, no – but I thought I'd find one. So I came back, and things didn't change. If I had been a man, a man at 30 years old thinks 'who cares?'. If he had been in my position, I would have stayed home with the baby and he would have followed his dreams... Ultimately, it's the woman who has to... follow. I don't mean to seem like a victim at all. I am not one... I just had a kid, and now that's all I think about... If I had a full-time career, I'd never seen him... I don't want to say I am hopeless, but...

Zamira is fully aware of her status as a female Albanian migrant in Italy and what life options are open to her as a result. For a highly educated person like herself, it is very difficult to reconcile her training and education with the sort of work she does now and the kind she expects in the future. Despite recognizing that as a female migrant she has more job opportunities open to her than a male migrant, in her aspirations she also acknowledges that these available 'options' do not allow

female migrants to progress professionally by creating a virtual ceiling that blocks female advancement to positions with higher salaries and more esteem and power. It seems as if women have more horizontal opportunities in their 'many' job options while men, like in non-migrant groups, have greater vertical opportunities for professional development. The prevalence of one gender over another in some occupations is a facet of most contemporary societies; what we can see from these findings, then, is that these trends in larger society are magnified within migrant groups to the point that migrants see only those jobs, designated to them according to their nationality and gender, as available and obtainable.

It is also important to point out that the type of service sector work that women concentrate in almost always requires a great deal of contact with members of the host society. Working in the home, as elderly care givers, babysitters, and housekeepers do for example, inserts migrants into Italian households and often family lives in a way that facilitates the absorption of culture and language in addition to the creation of personal connections and contacts (Hagan, 1998). Women working as waitresses, hairdressers, and sales clerks are also required to constantly interact with the Italian public and thus have the understanding of the culture and language necessary to successfully communicate while at the same time working in an environment that constantly exercises that same knowledge. In this way, not only are there more occupations available to women thanks to their 'inherent femininity', but women can go through the assimilation process faster by having more continuous and a higher concentration of contact with the Italian public, increasing the rate of their insertion into the society. Jak recognized the unfairness of the situation, referencing the gender stereotype of Albanian men being criminals in his comment about differences he sees in the treatment between male and female migrants: *"Well who's going to put an Albanian man in their house? No*

one”.

Like the migrant women interviewed, all of the male interviewees were employed in jobs that were considered 'masculine' by both Albanian and Italian standards and 'appropriate' for the migrant's identity, usually working in outdoor markets, within a restaurant as cooks or caterers, or within a home improvement occupation. For instance, Pjeter primarily studies but works at times in the food industry as a cater (seen as a step up from waiter) and Ari used to study and wait tables in his free time but is now pursuing art on a full-time basis. Ermir recalls that he also *“first worked in markets, then as a waiter, then as a delivery boy. Now I'm a cook [at a pizzeria]”*. Driton currently works part-time in the market as well, allegedly¹⁹ within the law. Likewise, Jak started out in the market: *“I worked in the market illegally as well, I worked with my brother illegally as a mover, and then I found my current job as a ceramicist- we make beautiful statues”*. As hypothesized, the migrant men interviewed showed very little job variation and tended to begin working illegally in the black market in male-gendered jobs, as the migrant women did in female-gendered jobs. However, unlike their female counterparts, not all of the male interviewees were able to permanently leave work in Italy's rich black market.

Jak initially came to Italy on a student visa without the intention to study, hoping to find a stable job quickly and convert his documents to permit him to work full-time.²⁰ Despite finding a good job as a ceramicist and following all of the legal procedures for conversion, his request was

¹⁹ I say 'allegedly' because Driton's explanation of how he obtained documents and the laws pertaining to them was contrary to both others' experiences and written law; by and far, work in Italian markets is notoriously unregulated and a hotbed of employment for illegal laborers.

²⁰ Paradoxically, it remains the case today that to receive a visa and stay permit for work purposes, a migrant must already have a job contract. Because very few Albanians are able to secure such documentation before departure, in the past many migrants came to Italy illegally or on student visas with the hopes of finding a job that would offer them a contract, and then returning to Albania or submitting the request for a visa from Albania (because to receive this visa and permit the migrant must apply from Albania) as if the migrant were still there in order to become regularized. Now, with Italy's new visa-free policies for tourists, many Albanians come to Italy hoping to find employment in the three months allotted to them automatically in their tourist visas so that they can easily receive a

denied. Upon the refusal of his documents, Jak lost his job and was obligated to return to Albania, but because he had already begun constructing a life in Bologna and had no desire to return, he decided to stay and work illegally. He picked up odd jobs here and there, eventually receiving invitations from some Albanian friends to help them steal some construction machinery, cars, and the like, selling them to buyers mostly abroad. After a year of this 'work' and several close calls with the police, Jak began trafficking drugs to various parts of Emilia-Romagna and was eventually arrested. For our purposes, the most pertinent aspect of this story is Jak's choice to begin working not simply illegally (unregulated, without paying taxes), but criminally. When asked why he did not try other ways to earn money, he responded that he had looked everywhere and spoken with everyone about possible opportunities for work, and always turned up empty-handed. It is unlikely, however, that he even looked for jobs as a domestic worker in the black market due to his own assumptions about who does *that* work and who should and would be hired, instead settling on male-gendered criminal work.

5.4) Legalization: Different Ways of Retaining Documents

Linked with male and female migrants' different ways of receiving their entrance visas and eventual settlement and employment in Italian society, the interviewees also pursued different manners of maintaining their stay permits- a basic necessity for migrant integration. Both female and male migrants referenced experiencing episodic irregularity in their document history, but female migrants showed more variety in the paths they used to procure permanent legal statuses. Lule, for example, has been trying to convert her documents from those associated with the

work permit for themselves once back in Albania.

reunification of her and her husband to those connected to her son that was born in Italy, reasoning that: *“My son was born here at least. I’m lucky in that way because if I lose my documents, I can get them through him. I can also get them through the Casa della Violenza [women’s shelter]. Easier through my son though”*. Similarly, Mirjeta plans on applying for documents through reunification with her sister and, although Zamira has maintained her documents through constantly studying and working full-time, she could now easily apply for reunification with her newly born son. None of the migrant men interviewed received documents through the laws concerning family reunification, reflecting a trend amongst Albanian male migrants to avoid this type of entrance visa. According to ISTAT, more than double the number of family reunification visas received by men were given to women in 2009, accounting for only thirty-two percent of visas given to men but sixty-nine percent of those given to women (2010). As demonstrated previously, this difference cannot be solely attributed to migrant women’s higher likelihood of accompanying men on their journeys abroad as agentless partners because many women have been shown to take the initiative and migrate independently. Instead, this shows a better use of available options for legalization by women.

Likewise, none of the male migrants received visas as domestic workers, another legalization strategy equally open to men as much as women but utilized much less often. About thirty percent of all domestic worker visas in Italy are given to men, but it is largely believed that the majority of these male ‘domestic workers’ do not actually work as domestic workers, but were close with or simply knew of an Italian family who agreed to go through the bureaucratic processing to secure documentation for the immigrant in question, almost always with the agreement that the migrant pays the necessary taxes or fees for the process but never has to actually work for the family (ISTAT

2011).²¹ Ari is considering this option. As previously mentioned, Ari and Pjeter came to Italy on student visas and renewed their permits yearly through their studies. As both of these interviewees are finishing or recently finished their studies, they must change their permits as Ari recounts:

Now I have a work permit so things are different. This has made things a lot easier. I changed the type of visa through work. It will expire again in one month and I should have another work contract, though I think there's now a new law to renew it even without a job. Anyways the law now gives you two months after the documents expire to renew it. So there's time, I'm not really thinking about it. Maybe a friend will make me a contract just to get documents, I don't know. I haven't decided yet.

Once again, we see a tendency amongst male migrants to ignore many options for legalization that have been gendered as female and focus on attaining a typical (masculine) work visa or, like in potential employment, lean towards male-gendered criminal 'solutions'.

As mentioned previously, Jak followed another common path to legalization in his first years by arriving in Italy on a student visa and attempting to convert it to a work permit. After years of processing, his documents were not renewed in time and he became clandestine, severely limiting his work opportunities:

I lost my job and everything changed. [What options did you have?] Either a good street or a bad one. The good street didn't exist anymore. I looked and I couldn't find anything. Then I met people and they showed me other options. It didn't go very well for me there either. I don't know really how it began, a little at a time, until I was inside.

Jak has been illegal for about half of his stay in Italy, and only recently received documents for the next two years after being arrested on drug trafficking, placed in jail for a few months, and released on parole. He has been given a permit to stay in Italy until his parole expires in about two years. When asked about his choices and especially his criminal activities, he says: *"That's a part of my life I wish I had never done"*, but also jokes that if he knew he could *finally* get documents just by spending a

²¹ For more discussion about the *decreti leggi* specific to *colf* and *badanti* (domestic workers) in Italy, see Stranieri in Italia at www.colfebadanti.it.

few months in jail, he would have gotten himself caught long ago. However, Jak probably could have kept his student visa if he had completed the minimum requirements to stay enrolled in university, as many migrants do, and given himself more time and more chances to receive the conversion from student visa to working visa. Instead, Jak did not see this as a viable option and pursued only the conversion, and when that failed, had very few opportunities for legalizing his status in Italy without at least returning to Albania for a significant period of time, a step he was not prepared to take. He did not consider family reunification (through his brother who is a resident in Italy) or calls for domestic workers as part of 'the good street' because these paths and jobs are labeled as feminine and therefore non-applicable to his cause. Zamira and Ardita also worked illegally upon arrival but were able to find work in the black market as babysitters and waitresses and avoid criminal activities. Jobs like these that Zamira and Ardita found relatively easily are gendered as female and therefore reserved for women only, not allowing men to take advantage of these supposedly plentiful, usually comfortable, and rarely dangerous illegal jobs- exploitative as they may be. Instead, men are forced to look elsewhere for immediate and irregular employment that is often much more risky.

Jak's story also highlights the dangers of remaining dependent on migrant trust networks as a primary source of support and networking. As noted, although migrant trust networks provide needed aid and emotional support to newly arrived migrants as a proxy for the kinship network left behind, they also severely limit migrant opportunities and the solidification of connections with people outside the network. Despite living in Italy for years, Jak was not integrated enough into Italian society to construct a wide enough safety net to protect him when his documents were in danger or when he was clandestine and needed work, pushing him to take advantage of the criminal

opportunities offered by the Albanian migrant network as the only ones he saw available. Jak's unfortunate experience is in contrast to that of Ardita, who gained documents and was often helped by an Italian family she met through volunteering, and Elira's family, who gained documents with the help of a charitable Bolognese signora who sponsored her as a domestic worker:

*My mom was the first to get documents. She was then able to apply for family reunification visas for my dad and us. In reality, we had to act like we weren't in Italy. According to the Italian government, we arrived in Italy in 1995-96 even though we were here from 1993.*²²

Jak's story shows that, regardless of the reality, many male migrants do not recognize the few options they could potentially have for legalization other than that attached to a work permit, not perceiving options related to the special domestic worker legislation, potential family reunification processes, or often even studying as applicable to themselves. Instead, they more often begin working illegally and often criminally through connections in the Albanian trust network under the belief that they tried every other option open to them as (male) clandestine Albanians in Italy. Once all of the male-gendered opportunities that migrant men seem to internalize as their only options of legalization are exhausted, *known* options in criminal activities within the Albanian migrant trust network become their *only* available options. This results in male Albanian migrants more often becoming involved in illegal activities that further distance them from Italian society and, in cyclical fashion, make it harder for them to integrate and become inserted into Italian society *and* to envision and take advantage of other opportunities (available to migrants that have more Italian contacts and a better comprehension of how the society works). Female Albanian migrants are more like this second group, composed of migrants who take advantage of a larger variety of options for

²² It is unusual that women apply for visas for their husbands, but the method Elira's family used to get the documents – arriving in Italy, staying illegally until a suitable job is found, and then applying for entrance visas and stay permits as if none of the migrants in question had ever come to Italy – is rather common.

legalization and employment. As evidenced previously, however, Albanian women in Italy also have the paradoxical experience of greater difficulty during departure from Albania, settlement in Italy, and harassment at work. Despite these challenges, women's greater use of available options for legalization and employment result in a deeper embeddedness in Italian society that ultimately allows them to become much better integrated within Italian society than their male peers.

6) Integration or Inclusion: Women's and Men's Differential Realities

Granting recognition to the gendered reality of the experiences of Albanian migrants in Italy and their corollary effects on the migrants' lives and insertion into Italian society allows us to begin evaluating the types and levels of integration found amongst these migrants. As seen in Table 1 in the *Data and Methods* section, the majority of both the male and female interviewees have resided in Italy for over five years and, according to most studies concerning integration, migrants are believed to feel an attachment to the destination country by this point and have already greatly loosened their ties with and dependency on migrant trust networks, leading many to simply label long-term migrants as 'integrated' (GCIR, 2001). My findings, however, show that the migratory experiences of Albanians are shaped by both the migrant's gender and ethnicity, ultimately causing female and male migrants to become inserted into Italian society differently and not simply based on the time spent in the host country. Understanding what this 'integration' means and whether it is actually occurring will shed light on the consequences of gendered migratory paths such as those followed by Albanians, helping us to understand how these paths were constructed and the larger implications of such forms of (assymetrical-)integration(/assimilation/inclusion).

Further, as shown earlier, opportunity systems mediated through either migrant trust networks or social networks in the host country ultimately dictate what migrants perceive as their options and thus in what they hope to achieve through their migration abroad. Because these opportunity frameworks are essentially gendered, the resultant goals and future plans of the migrants differ by gender, cyclically reflecting gendered pathways of integration. In understanding migrants' hopes and desires, we see how their thoughts are conditioned by the opportunity

framework (limited by their ethnicity and gender as migrants) in which they operate, helping to explain why male and female migrants may become inserted into Italian society differently, despite the purported availability of almost all work and legal opportunities to all, regardless of gender or ethnicity. By demonstrating these types of integration observed within these interviewees, I argue that the differing life paths of migrant men and women ultimately cause Albanian women to become classically *integrated* while men remain superficially *included* in Italy, resulting in asymmetrical integration and explaining King and Mai's and other author's (2009) difficulty in summarizing the overall integration of the Albanian community in Italy.

6.1) Men's Inclusion

The social networks in which we participate largely determine our opportunities for social relationships, economic development, and knowledge appropriation. As such, male Albanians' higher likelihood of retaining their initial migrant trust network as the primary social network greatly effects their participation in Italian society and limits their opportunities according to those discriminatory realities that shape structures within trust networks. These mechanisms interfere with Albanian men's insertion into and acceptance by Italian society, even though the migrants themselves seem to feel as if Bologna is 'their city' and their home, more so than their native Albania. Befittingly, the male interviewees that partook in other forms of established trust network that provided them with the necessary social capital to cut ties with the Albanian trust network did not seem to have the same difficulties as those still dependent on their original social network, but still did not express feelings of real acceptance by Italian society. For example, Ari and Pjeter, the two male students who were both heavily involved in their student communities, felt similar to the

female interviewees in that they were rather disconnected from the Albanian community and had very few Albanian contacts of which to speak. Nonetheless, Ari still felt slightly out of place in Italy despite being able to think of only two Albanians of which he considered friends in Bologna:

When I am in Italy, I am an abstract artist, not figurative. When I go back to Albania, I am a figurative artist. Because I have the contact, something that moves in my belly, you know? Here, they [the subjects] don't speak to me, I mean it's a cold relationship. If I have to do a portrait of you or someone here, it's cold for me. It doesn't warm me like the people from my country. When they tell me a story, in my own language, there's something that goes beyond. Instead when I'm here, despite trying, I've realized I have a very cold relationship with them [Italians]... My life is different than most Albanians in Italy I think. I have very very few Albanian friends, just Elira and her brother... It wasn't a choice... Albanians are much more closed, they stick with each other. I left that circle and I don't want to go back.

Ari's feelings of belonging in Italy but not real connection are a clear example of the difference between migrant inclusion and integration. In this case, Ari depends on his university and professional network for contacts and social relationships and has therefore disconnected from the typical migrant trust network and established himself amongst the structures of the 'native' population, yet he still only feels superficially immersed in the host society and must alter his artistic style when outside of Albania to honestly engage with his work. Conversely, despite having very few ties with Albania today, he automatically feels like he understands his countrymen on a deeper level and can therefore truly represent them in his art. This is the type of subtle difference that separates inclusion versus integration and characterizes experiences that are reported by men more often than women.

Ermir's and Jak's experiences also spoke to the difference between integration/host culture acceptance and feelings of belonging/ownership. Ermir found that, after living in Italy for eight years: “*My life is definitely here now. My girlfriend is here. I feel more or less Italian. I am pretty integrated now. I'm more used to life here than there, in my country.*” Ermir, however, still primarily relies on the Albanian trust

network for the majority of his social relationships (his friends, most contacts, etc.), most of which are men. He feels as if he is a part of Italian society and it is his home, yet still counts on the Albanian migrant network to form relationships and find aide. Jak is similar. He recognizes that his life is now in Italy, saying: *“I wouldn’t go back to Albania. I don’t want to. I have a house there. I went for two months and I still don’t like it. You can’t find work, they don’t pay”*, but has almost exclusively Albanian friends and is rather disconnected from the happenings of non-Albanian Bologna. Jak’s involvement in criminal activities, for which he was arrested, began through contacts he had through this trust network as well. Because of this continued dependency on self-limiting trust networks, their perpetual discomfort within Italian society, and the consequent lack of real linkages or melding within Italian society, I conclude that Albanian male migrants are more aptly categorized as ‘included’ rather than classically integrated, to the detriment of both the migrant and the host society.

When asked about their top priorities, male interviewees’ responses revealed their lack of integration into Italian society by being chiefly concerned with short-term, individualistic economic gains that exhibit a more basic level of inclusion of the migrant in Italian society. Moreover, male migrants rarely mentioned their families as priorities or even as influential in their decision-making about their futures indicating a lack of focus on integrative settlement.²³ Instead, a marked lack of deep concern over the common uncertainty surrounding their futures and a focus on work as a priority characterized the interviews of the male interviewees- a sign of superficial inclusion. For

²³ Obviously such an omission does not necessarily indicate that these men did not consider their familial obligations important, but is most likely also a product of cultural expectations placed on men not to discuss their families and not to seem as if any other people influence their decision making, a common attribute of traditional masculinity (Broverman, Vogel, Broverman, Clarkson, & Rosenkrantz, 1972).

instance, Jak immediately referred to securing his residence status in Italy as his first priority: *“Documents. That’s it. Work I have. I don’t have other priorities, it’s a bad moment.”* Ari was similarly concise in his response, naming his priorities as: *“Complete my art projects [his occupation], organize my document situation, and travel a bit more”*. Ermir hoped to: *“Open and run my own bar, though it’s not easy”*. Driton prioritized finding immediate work in Italy to guarantee his document status and would like to open a business, but does not feel any pressure and would be fine with returning home to his family. His succinct response to questions about his tenuous future plans was: *“If it doesn’t work, that’s fine”*. In thinking that employment is the ultimate goal, these migrants take little advantage of networking opportunities (which could of course increase their employability) and spend less time forming social relationships. This in turn prevents long-term connections (such as family-formation) and slows down the migrant's integration into the society.

6.2) Women's Integration

Women, conversely, were able to break away from these constrictive migrant trust networks easier and plant roots deeper in Italian society due to their attributed gender stereotypes that allow them higher employability, greater contact with the Italian public, and the formation of a new social support network. Regardless of the time spent in Italy thus far, the female interviewees more often expressed a sense of integration in and solidarity with Italian society than their male peers. This is an extremely intriguing finding given that these female interviewees had more difficulty originally establishing themselves within the foreign culture and faced additional perils unique to their gender, yet they ultimately still felt more 'Italian' and 'at home' in Italy at the time of the interview than the male interviewees. Tellingly, all of the female interviewees mentioned having very few Albanian

friends at this current point in their lives, beginning once their initial period of settlement had ended.

Ardita, despite having only her sister from her birth family in Italy, has not gone back to Albania for seven or eight years. She recognizes that her participation in society through work and volunteering significantly increased her insertion in and connection to Italian society while simultaneously distancing her from the restrictive Albanian migrant trust networks. noting that: *“I don't feel connected to Albania anymore. My life is here, I became integrated through volunteering, work, etc.”* Similarly, although Elira came to Italy when she was a child and thus understandably feels rather integrated in Italian society, she also talks about how easy it was for her to adapt while noting that for her brother, only a couple years older, acceptance was much more complicated:

Obviously for my brother it was a little different. He was teased and so on. He was more sensitive, a boy. He came when he was 11, that's rough... By 13 or 14 years old I denied my past. I didn't know how to speak or read Albanian anymore and I said I would never go back. I didn't want anything to do with it. I was Italian, Bolognese. Only my documents said otherwise.

Not only did Elira feel integrated in Italian society, she practically renounced her Albanian identity to be able to further embrace her new Italian one. According to her, her brother was suffering because of his difficulty relating with Italians and did not know how to reconcile his feelings, making him feel as if he were in a foreign country, not his new home. Issues of relateability are also affected by gendered stereotypes that dictate appropriate forms of relationships between same-gender individuals.

Migrant women in this study were often only able to begin deeper integration when they were no longer restricted by their kin or prevented from joining the workforce. For instance, Lule spoke as if her life in Italy did not truly begin until she separated from her husband and began working, apologizing for her language skills during the interview and explaining herself: *“I'm having*

some trouble speaking Italian. I've been here five years but I haven't gone out very much. I worked fifteen months as a hairdresser. That's how I learned to speak Italian". Acknowledging that she was not able to speak Italian well until she had her own job emphasizes the importance of contact with the host population for insertion and integration and again highlights the dangers of relying solely on one's migrant trust network.

Female interviewees tended to place the creation or comfortable maintenance of their families in Italy and/or Albania as a top priority, while the men interviewed almost always mentioned more individualistic goals concerning work opportunities. As opposed to male interviewees, the priorities expressed by female migrants concerning permanent settlement and the establishment of the family are only possible if these women had *already* attained a certain level of integration permitting such non-essential (for survival) goals and are working under the pretense of eventual, complete integration into Italian society. For example, when asked what her top priorities were, Ardita responded:

Family. I'd love it. I think it's extremely important. It's one of the reasons we're here. I think it's the hardest thing to have. Realistically, I would like economic stability, which would possibly help me find a family. Because at this point, it's not true anymore that the man will take care of you. Now families need two incomes and right now I don't have a stable income. So my priority right now is at least to get some economic stability so that eventually I could build a family.

Ardita is searching for economic stability most probably through employment like the male migrants' responses, but she prefaces this goal by saying it is in reality only a means to an end- the end being the creation of a family. Such advanced endgame hopes demonstrate both a high level of achieved integration and an existing assumption that further integration is probable and preferable. I argue that women's independence from their original migrant trust networks, higher levels of

employment and legalization, and societal ease in forming relationships allows women to become deeply integrated in Italian society unlike their male peers, despite suffering from greater hardships.

7) Implications and Conclusion

Gender stereotypes run deep, often across and between cultures, interacting with racial, ethnic, and nationalistic discourses in a “matrix of domination” (Collins, 1999) that dictates the experiences, opportunities, and integration of immigrants. The realities of both female and male Albanian migrants in Italy are shaped by the unique intersections of their nationality and their genders within an Italian labor context that is also highly gendered, resulting in markedly differing experiences of migration and integration. Stereotypes constructed around migrants' nationalities play a role in shaping male and female migrants experiences, differing between migrant groups and depending on the way that migrant group is positioned within the host society. Migrant trust networks facilitate these stereotypes, and migrants, usually female, who distance themselves from such networks tend to be able to overcome the realization of negative stereotypes and avoid criminal activity.

The power hierarchies apparent in these discriminatory structures are created in part due to the contexts between which these migrants are moving. Because of the changes that have occurred throughout the Mediterranean in the last half century and their political and economic consequences, countries like Italy are suffering from an aging crisis and the repercussions from a weak and only semi-functional welfare system that result in a labor gap in care work. Italy's stunted feminist movement, which called for equality in employment rates but did little to redistribute the burden of domestic responsibilities or allow women to reach positions of real power, has also contributed to the labor gap by 'requiring' the 'modern Italian woman' to work full-time and hire a (foreign) housekeeper, babysitter, and/or elderly care-worker to complete the tasks that she used to do for free. This is a transference of responsibility down the ethnic hierarchy present *between*

ethnicities *among* groups of women, in what amounts to an intersectional, post-colonial continuation of hegemonic rule. As such, Italy has the greatest number of work opportunities (and therefore legalization options) available in the service sector, dominated by migrant women.

At the same time, many post-socialist countries like Albania are seriously struggling economically, politically, and socially, prompting millions of migrants to emigrate both legally and illegally throughout the last twenty-odd years. Coming from a heavily patriarchal society with deeply entrenched gender role ideology and practices instills assumptions about appropriate labor possibilities in migrants even before arrival in their host countries. Contemporarily, female Albanian emigrants must face legal and social systems constructed on ideas that cater to the supposed typical male migrant, resulting in greater suffering and hardship for female migrants during both departure and settlement due to their weaker societal position and assumed sexuality.

Women's greater access to the labor market thanks to their 'essential feminine qualities' allows them to find more work, more often, than men within an environment that requires a great deal of personal contact with the Italian population but, in combination with the host society's gender stereotype of them as 'desperate prostitutes', increases their possibilities for and experiences of harassment and exploitation. More work and more experience communicating with Italians also allows women more chances to distance themselves from their primary trust network composed of their compatriots and begin forming new connections with the host population in a way that offers them even greater opportunities in a continuously exponential fashion, again despite the unique difficulties they face. Men, who do not see work in most of the social services as available to them and have more difficulty finding work and retaining their work documents, have a higher likelihood of becoming illegal. Once illegal, men congregate in criminal activities that are considered

'masculine', like trafficking or merchandise stocking. All of these experiences and individual reflections on the experiences and lived realities of the Albanian community are clearly being shaped by both the migrant's nationality *and* gender, in a continuous intersection that at times works to the benefit of one group over another. Becoming integrated into a host society, then, is a function of these and other societal positionalities, dependent on the depth to which such opportunities allow the migrant to become embedded within the structures and culture of the host country.

In recognizing the divergent migratory experiences of male and female Albanians in Italy and mapping their resultant levels of assimilation, it has become apparent that migrant men tend to achieve superficial inclusion while migrant women often become classically integrated in Italian society. Because the source of women's greater opportunities and understanding of available options lies largely in their actual and perceived employment and legalization possibilities, female migrants' consequential more advanced integration is akin to Rubery's silver-lining of gendered job segregation with the exception that it is occurring not because of economic crisis, but because of gendered stereotypes within a migration context. This silver-lining of gendered stereotypes and job segregation is an unexpected side effect of largely patriarchal processes that work against women in normal circumstances, but that seem to protect women in exceptional circumstances such as those found in economic crisis (Rubery, 1988) and niche migrant labor.

Although this study focuses on a rather particular instance of migration, the broad conclusions drawn from this research can be investigated in cases in other contexts around the world because of their central focus on gendered reasoning as a framework of analysis. Although precisely the same phenomena witnessed here may not be occurring worldwide, the state processes and cultural tendencies that have resulted in these conclusions are present in varying forms and to

varying degrees in every migratory trend, continuously affecting migrant's experiences and ability to become integrated in host societies and therefore always necessary to examine. As such, further studies of this type can and should be completed on different migrant groups in other host countries to understand how other combinations of gendered and ethnicized stereotypes affect migrants' experiences and resultant integration. In addition, because we know that both male and female migrants are severely limited in their employment opportunities albeit in different ways, more studies understanding the various vertical and horizontal restrictions lived by migrant men and women could clarify these inequalities in a way that would make them easier to combat.

What is more, further research is necessary on the effects of said gendered migration and integration on the sending and host societies in general. For instance, a great deal more research and theory is needed to understand how these complicated, interlocking power systems that govern migrant life paths affect the host society and population, especially in light of feminist ideals calling for the end of post-colonial exploitation of 'othered' women and the need to solve problems of gender inequality at the source, not through the addition of surrogate stereotypically feminine women. In similar fashion, more research needs to be completed on the link between male migrants' ostensible inclusion in host societies and their higher rates of criminality compared to migrant women.

Understanding the gendered natures of these phases which already exist within a nationalistic discourse helps explain the ways in which ethnicity and gender intersect to construct the structure in which these migrants understand themselves and must operate. By identifying these systems of power and opportunity, we can begin to deconstruct them in an effort to recognize their sources and ideally change those processes that are causing the inequalities between native and

migrant populations and between men and women within migrant communities. Understanding the evolution of such hierarchies is likely the most poignant way to begin to alter them.

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