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Ethnic Violence, Local Security and Return Migration: Enclave communities in Kosovo

Sandra F. Joireman*

ABSTRACT

Forced migration has become commonplace in the international political landscape. In 2015, 60 million people were displaced by violence, more than ever before recorded (UNHCR, 2015). While we know that violence leads to displacement, we know little about return migration after conflict – who comes back and where they settle. This article seeks to engage and supplement the literature on return migration after conflict, advocating for a broader understanding of the security choices made by displaced people. Emphasized here is the importance of a local understanding of safety and the role played by enclave communities in providing a secure context in which people can enjoy the society of their co-ethnics.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- What does the Kosovo experience have to teach us about returns and about the international public policy on post-conflict return migration? The first lesson is that achieving durable solutions may be more difficult after ethnic conflicts in which there is a clear winner and a clear loser in specific geographic areas. In Kosovo, people return to enclaves because they provide both society and security; they can interact with people like themselves and, in some places, they have political protections as a result of the Ahtisaari Plan. Is return to an ethnic enclave sufficient from an international policy perspective? It is return to the country of origin; by that measure, it is a success. At the same time, returns to ethnic enclaves are far from the imagined multiethnic and restored community. Indeed, they materially exhibit the reality of ethnic divisions reinforced by violence.
- The second and related lesson is the futility of trying to restore a state or community to the status quo before violent ethnic conflict. International public policy needs to be responsive to the needs and desires of people whose lives have been radically changed by the experience of violence. This may mean privileging property restitution rather than return; recognizing that even people who reclaim their property may not want to live there; and recognizing that only some family members will want to return home, while others may choose local integration.

INTRODUCTION

This article begins with a discussion of the international policy regarding durable solutions to displacement and what we currently know about return migration after conflict. The second part of the article introduces the case of Kosovo. In Kosovo, ethnic Serbs were displaced during a war in which

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they lost sovereignty over Kosovo, and few have returned. Best estimates are that around 10 per cent of those displaced have returned. We present and test three hypotheses regarding return migration in Kosovo based on what has happened in other contexts. The results of this analysis identify a pattern of return to ethnic enclaves in Kosovo, which people appear to be choosing for reasons of security and society. Evidence used comes from multiple methods: interviews; the construction of a violence index; correlation analysis; and mapping. The last section of the article describes how this finding can influence our understanding of post-conflict migration, suggests some lessons for international policy on returns, and proposes testable hypotheses for future research.

RETURN MIGRATION AFTER VIOLENT CONFLICT

There are three recognized "durable solutions" to forced migration: voluntary repatriation to country of origin, resettlement in a different country, and local integration in place of refuge. In the post-Cold War era, voluntary return to the country of origin has been the favored policy for people displaced by conflict. In a 2011 memo the Secretary General of the UN argued for "... prioritizing sustainable return to the place of origin as the preferred option" (Ban, 2011).

Both the UN and its constituent states prefer voluntary return. First, it eliminates the need for displaced people to wait for long periods of time in refugee camps until they find a country that will take them in. Second, resettlement is less logistically complicated as people have homes and property to which they can return. Third, return is symbolic of a reestablishment of the status quo ante in countries torn by violent conflict. In the case of forced migration, returning to the country, and even the homes and communities of origin, appeals to a sense of justice and facilitates post-conflict reconstruction.

Although return is the preferred policy option for states, aid organizations, and the UN, people fleeing violence have different desires to return to their place of origin based on their experiences before leaving, their economic situation, and family characteristics. It is clear that after initial displacement, households weigh the benefits of remaining where they are against the costs of returning. The type of livelihood pursued by household members impacts their opportunities at the place of refuge. Those that are engaged in wage labour or who have better opportunities in their area of refuge are more likely to stay than those who are unable to find suitable employment (Deininger et al., 2004b; Sert, 2008). Young people who are displaced are not always as eager to return to their place of origin as are those who are older and have more established ties to the community. For those moving from rural areas to urban places of refuge, a return to the difficulties of life in rural communities is often unappealing (Bascom, 1996; Holt, 1996).

The longer the displacement, the more likely a household is to view themselves as a part of the community in their new location and to make new lives for themselves. Liz Alden Wily notes "Millions of people cannot be expected to endure or participate in the horrors of war, leaving their homes, sometimes for a decade or more, and not develop marked new awareness, skills and aspirations" (Alden Wily, 2009: 34). These changes in circumstances and perceptions lead to varying desires to return.

While household characteristics, economic situation, length of displacement and experiences prior to leaving are all important in the decision of a household to return, the most important issue is security. Before a household begins to assess the issues involved in return, the violence and insecurity that made them flee in the first place must be absent.

The literature on return migration focuses on the question of who returns. In this article, we consider this and examine the related question of where displaced people return. Are they willing to return to communities which experienced violence or ethnic cleansing? The 'home' that they return to will be much changed by events, even if they are able to reclaim specific property such as

houses and businesses (Stefansson, 2006; Warner, 1994). Moreover, while it is common for members of the majority population to return after a conflict, "the failure of minority populations to return is not an exception but the norm" (Adelman and Barkan, 2011: 1).

A SHORT HISTORY OF THE KOSOVO WAR

The Kosovo War was a separatist civil war occurring in 1998 and 1999, in the context of the disintegrating Yugoslav state. The population of Kosovo is 92 per cent ethnic Albanian with the remainder composed of Serbs, Roma, Ashkali, Egyptian, Gorani and Bosniaks (Kosovo Agency of Statistics, 2011). Within Yugoslavia, the Albanian population was a politically and economically insignificant minority. Albanian factions in Kosovo began agitating for greater autonomy within Yugoslavia in 1981. By 1989 their efforts resulted in a strong backlash from the Serbian-controlled government, rescinding all of Kosovo's autonomy in the areas of security, justice, defence, and planning. In April of 1990, Kosovo's assembly was dissolved and it was ruled directly by the Yugoslavian state.

In Yugoslavia at that time, internal economic and nationalist pressure was mounting, leading to the 1991 secession of Slovenia, Croatia and Macedonia. In 1992, the Bosnian War began when Bosnia became independent and Bosnian Muslims, Croats and Serbs struggled for territorial control. The Bosnian War ended in 1995 and is remembered for its particular brutality, as ethnic cleansing was used by all sides to encourage the displacement of civilians. Slobodan Milosevic was the Serbian president at that time, the architect of the ethnic cleansing on the Serb side, an ardent nationalist, and supporter of Serb paramilitary forces within Bosnia.

As the Yugoslav Federation began to disintegrate, Kosovo was left as part of Serbia and Montenegro (Montenegro peacefully seceded after a referendum in 2006). This compounded problems already in place for the largely Albanian population in Kosovo, which was progressively excluded from government jobs and educational opportunities. Between 1990 and 1998 the Albanian population peacefully protested against the school curriculum in the Serbian language, the dismissal of Albanians from government jobs, and violations of human rights. Albanians established parallel systems for education and healthcare as part of their dissent (Pula, 2004).

The Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) made its first appearance in 1996 and began targeting Serbian state symbols and security forces with violence (Phillips, 2012: 81). By the middle of 1998 the KLA controlled territory and was pursuing independence through open rebellion. At the beginning of the Kosovo War, the Serbs had the upper hand. They were much better armed and trained than the Albanians. Western countries were afraid that Kosovo would become another venue for Slobodan Milosevic to become "a serial ethnic cleanser" (Phillips, 2012: 106). This anxiety intensified after a incident of ethnic cleansing at Račak in Kosovo in which 45 ethnic Albanian civilians were killed. The Račak Massacre riveted the attention of Western governments and led to diplomatic efforts to negotiate a settlement to the war in February of 1999 in Rambouillet, France. The talks failed when Serbia refused to accept autonomy for Kosovo.

After Rambouillet, the second phase of the Kosovo War began with the NATO decision to intervene. NATO began bombing Serbia on 24 March 1999, to force it to abandon efforts to control Kosovo. Serbia responded, not with acquiescence, but with an attack on the Albanian population. Violence targeted at Albanians forced them to flee to neighbouring countries (Miller, 1999; US Department of State, 1999). The US State Department estimated that in early 1999 there were 600,000 internally displaced Albanians and 700,000 Albanian refugees in neighbouring countries, with 90 per cent of the Albanian population displaced from their homes (US Department of State, 1999). There were, and are, other ethnic groups in Kosovo affected by the violence – Roma, Ashkali, Egyptians, Bosniaks, Gorani, and Turks – but their smaller numbers have made them secondary actors in the dominant Serb/Albanian narrative.

By the middle of 1999, Serbia capitulated to the NATO bombing and on the 20th June 1999 Serbian forces withdrew completely, allowing Kosovo to establish de facto autonomy. Albanian refugees in bordering states and the internally displaced were able to return to their homes and most of them did so quickly (Adelman and Barkan, 2011). So began the third phase of the conflict. Security Council Resolution 1244 called for the complete disarmament of the KLA but this never happened. Instead, there were retaliatory attacks against Serbs remaining in Kosovo; "…groups of armed Albanians all over Kosovo took advantage of the security vacuum to perpetrate a campaign of vengeance, score-settling, and plain apolitical crime. Hundreds of homes belonging to Serbs and other minorities were burned and looted" (King and Mason, 2006: 50). There was no police force yet established in the proto-state, nor were perpetrators of violence against Serbs later punished. Crimes of revenge against Serbs were largely tolerated (Adelman and Barkan, 2011; Skendaj, 2014).

Approximately 220,000 Serbs were displaced by the violence in Kosovo during the war and in the ethnic riots that occurred in 2004 (OSCE Mission in Kosovo, 2014). Serbs have not been quick to return to Kosovo. Indeed, best estimates from the OSCE are that of the 220,000 people displaced by violence in Kosovo during 1999 and after the riots in 2004, only 25,430 have returned (OSCE Mission in Kosovo, 2014: 6).

PROMOTING RETURN MIGRATION

The UN and the European Union (EU) engaged in reconstruction after the war. While the institutions of the state were being established, Kosovo was administered by the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK). Kosovo then declared independence in 2008. In an effort to encourage Serb returns, UNMIK invested personnel and monetary resources in trying to address property restitution for the displaced. EU programmes designed to bring Serbs back to Kosovo complemented UN efforts.[1] Serbia was supportive of this policy as "Belgrade wanted to implant sizeable communities in Kosovo, which it saw as its best way of maintaining a Serb population that would substantiate Serbia's continuing claims on territory." (King and Mason, 2006: 155). That policy has now changed somewhat as the Government of Serbia also tries to assist with the local integration of Serbs displaced by the Kosovo War who do not wish to return.[2]

The return of the Serbian population to Kosovo has been important to the EU. Serb returns would be evidence of a government commitment to a multi-ethnic state. While Kosovo was still under UNMIK administration, Marti Ahtisaari, developed a plan for Kosovo to become independent while protecting the Serbian minority community. This plan, known as the Comprehensive Settlement Proposal (CSP), or the Ahtisaari Plan, eventually became part of the Constitution of Kosovo. In it, the multi-ethnic character of the state was recognized and the Kosovan Serb population was provided special protections including the creation of new municipalities with Serbian majorities. Since municipal government is the only layer of political organization apart from the central government, this allowed minority communities substantial control. There were also national level protections such as reserved seats in the Assembly for the minority communities and a commitment to allow the use of the Serbian language in government offices and documents. In spite of these protections, Serbs have not returned in the numbers anticipated or desired.

HYPOTHESIZING RETURN

We now revisit the original questions that drive this article. What makes people want to return to home communities after conflict? Where do people return when they have the opportunity to do

so? The assumed narrative is that those who are displaced will want to come home. But this is not always correct. Adelman and Barkan note that in their research they did not find "any significant refugee return to an area where that refugee group would constitute an ethnic minority, unless supported by a preponderant use of force" (Adelman and Barkan, 2011: 20). So where did the few Serbs who returned choose to go and why? We examine these questions through a series of three hypotheses drawn from the literature and logical inference.

The literature on displacement identifies four factors that impact the decision to return to a home area after basic security has been restored: economic opportunities; demographic characteristics of the household; the trauma of the displacement process; and, the duration of displacement. Examining the first factor – the economic opportunities available in the place of refuge and home area – we would predict that few Serbians would want to return. Kosovo has limited economic opportunities overall and there is competition for available jobs. Regional labour statistics demonstrate lower levels of unemployment in Serbia where the unemployment rate is 23 per cent as opposed to 30 per cent in Kosovo (Kosovo Agency of Statistics, 2014: 26). In this context, being a minority group member, particularly a Serb, can be a barrier to employment. There remain a few places in Kosovo where the security of Serbs is still in question.

Experience of trauma also impacts the desire to return home. Many Serbians witnessed or experienced violent attacks in the third phase of the war when NATO bombing stopped and the KLA took control of the country. There was little effort to protect Serbs in Kosovo and many instances of retaliatory violence took place. It is estimated that 70 per cent of the Serbian population fled Kosovo either to avoid reprisals or because of better opportunities in Serbia (del Re, 2003). Attacks on Kosovan Serbs after the NATO withdrawal occurred were retaliatory in nature, designed to displace and punish Serbs. This 'reverse ethnic cleansing' occurred at a time of political transition when the Albanians were taking control of the state for the first time. The retaliatory violence had a dual impact in the Serbian community. It pushed some Serbs out for reasons of safety and also sent a message that the Serbs would not be treated well under an Albanian state in Kosovo. We would therefore expect that few Serbs would want to return to areas with a large number of violent incidents.

H1. The number of Serbian returns to an area will be inversely correlated with the violence experienced in the last phase of the war when the Serbian government withdrew.

We expect that municipalities in which Serbians were targeted for retaliatory violence will not have large numbers of returns. Rather, we would anticipate that Serbs who are returning to Kosovo would choose to go to large cities, both because that is where many originally had their homes and because it is a pattern borne out in other countries.

Poor economic opportunities in Kosovo combined with a lengthy displacement will make people more reluctant to return. While EU programmes targeting resettlement of Serbs are specifically intended to overcome this reluctance through financial incentives for home reconstruction and business opportunities, we anticipate that barriers will remain, given that the economic opportunities are better in Serbia. We would posit that those returning to Kosovo have employment options, perhaps because of better educational levels. Experiences in other contexts around the world, such as Colombia and Liberia, both of which had violent civil conflicts and massive forced migration, show that displaced people prefer to settle in urban areas when they return (Butman, 2009; Joireman and Meitzner Yoder, 2016; Deininger et al., 2004a; Williams, 2011).

H2. Given low levels of return for the Serbian population displaced by the conflict and the limited economic opportunities in Kosovo, Serbs that do return to Kosovo will settle in urban areas.

We know that, before the war, many of the displaced Serbs were living in urban areas where many of them held key positions in government and local administration. Pristina used to be an area in Kosovo with a concentration of Serbs. It would therefore be reasonable to assume that these educated technocrats would be able to find employment opportunities after the war. It is also possible, however, that political protections at the municipal level will be most important to returning Serbs. We therefore propose a third hypothesis.

H3 We anticipate that the greatest returns will be in areas where there is a Serb majority municipality created under the Ahtisaari plan.

In the Serb majority municipalities the impact of the shift to Albanian control should be mediated. Serbian communities received recognition at the time of Kosovo's independence when the Ahtisaari Plan provided for separate municipalities in Serb majority areas, thereby creating a legal/political framework for Serbs, and potentially other minority groups, to control municipal governance within Kosovo. The Ahtisaari Plan provided minority protection at both the national level through consociational institutions and at the local level through municipal mechanisms designed to protect minority concerns.[3] Four of the Serb majority municipalities (Leposavić/Leposaviq, Zubin Potok, Zvečan/Zveqan, Mitrovica/Mitrovicë North) are close to the border of Serbia and are something of a no man's land of sovereignty as they operate outside of the control of the government of Kosovo, nor are they entirely administered by Serbia. We do not have data for these areas, but there are other Serbian municipalities in Kosovo for which we do have data: Novo Brdo/Novobërdë; Gračanica/Graçanicë; Ranilug/Ranillug; Parteš/Partesh; and Klokot/Kllokot. These are all Serb–majority municipalities created by the Ahtisaari plan that are under the control of the Government of Kosovo.

DATA

Data used for testing these hypotheses comes from three sources. The dataset on violence during the civil war in Kosovo comes from the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED).[4] The data for Kosovo include 1625 separate incidents. 1551 incidents had specific dates attached. These data points are counts of individual incidents, not of how many people died in each. Sometimes there is additional information regarding the number of people the incident affected, such as an incident which carries the additional information "6 people killed". In other cases the numbers are extremely vague, for example a notation that a village was shelled, people killed, and villagers displaced. As a result we do not use the number of deaths or the number of people affected. So, for example, when the ACLED data set reported a shelled village and the fleeing of villagers, we recorded that as one incident of shelling and one incident of forced expulsion. The issue of numbers affected has been noted elsewhere as a problem with the data, as well as insufficient information about the perpetrators and quality control in the coding (Eck, 2012). All of these issues have been evident in the use of this dataset and mitigated whenever possible. In the absence of other comparable data for Kosovo, we use this with an awareness of its limitations and flaws.

The GREG dataset on the georeferencing of ethnic groups identifies locations of Serbian and Albanian areas within the borders of Kosovo prior to the war. This dataset is based on the Soviet Atlas Narodov Mira (ARM) ethnic data. Cederman et al. (2010) discuss the methods used in the development of this dataset. In the GREG dataset the two main ethnic groups in Kosovo are Serbs and Albanians with two small enclave communities of Croats near Pristina and Kacanik.[5]

Data on returnees was provided by the UNHCR in Kosovo. The data do not include age or sex, to protect the anonymity of the returnees. The data run from 2000 through to the end of 2012 and detail returns by year, ethnicity, and the municipality to which they returned. We do not know from

this dataset whether people are returning to the places that they left, as their municipality of origin is not included. There are other difficulties with using this data to measure returns. First, the return data on Serbs will be impacted by the fact that not all Serbs left. A family would be less likely to have left their home if they were in one of the communities bordering on Serbian territory, such as the four majority Serbian municipalities in the northwest. There is also a municipality, Kamenicë/Kamenica, in the northeast of the country bordering Serbia where there was a concentration of Serbs. Secondly, people who returned without notifying UNHCR and receiving their assistance would not be included in this dataset.[6]

ANALYSIS

The return of the minority Serb community who were living in Kosovo prior to the war has been a contentious issue. Since 2000 there have been three completed programmes funded by the European Union (and one underway) to encourage Serbians and other minority communities previously resident in Kosovo – Roma, Ashkali, Egyptians and Gorani – to return. These programmes work with both the returnees and the host communities to establish a stable and secure environment. They have largely failed. "…15 years after the 1999 conflict, in spite of substantial international assistance and targeted programmes, large numbers of persons displaced both within and outside Kosovo remain without durable solutions. The number of returns to Kosovo is decreasing every year"(OSCE Mission in Kosovo, 2014: 22).

Our first hypothesis suggests that returns will correlate with the number of violent incidents that occurred during the final phase of the war. Breaking the data down into the three different phases of the war tells a complex story about the linkages between violence and return in Kosovo. The key difference between the last period of the conflict and the earlier two periods is that the Serb armed forces had abandoned the territory. They had given up the fight after NATO bombing, leaving a vulnerable Serbian minority in Kosovo without the protection of an armed group. We would expect that those areas which had more violent incidents during that time period would see a lower number of returnees. Table 1 shows the number of incidents of violence indexed by population against a ranking of the raw numbers of Serbian returnees per municipality. A violence index has been used elsewhere to get a sense of the frequency of violent incidents within particular geographically limited areas in which census information was 'highly questionable' (O'Loughlin and Witmer, 2011: 184). For the Kosovo municipality index, we used census data from 2011, which is problematic in its own right, as it is well after the war, rather than during it. All municipalities with more than 10 Serb returnees are listed.

When we take this same data on violent incidents and run a nonparametric correlation analysis using IBM SPSS Statistics 21 between the number of violent incidents in a municipality and the number of Serb returnees we see a significant and counterintuitive result, shown in Table 2. The number of Serbian returnees after the conflict is correlated with the number of violent incidents, but positively. In other words, the more violent incidents occurred, the more likely we are to see Serbs return. In interpreting these results we need to beware of the small sample size, which is 37, the number of municipalities. Even though our data on violent incidents is geocoded and could be easily broken down into smaller geographic areas, the UNHCR data is by municipality.[7]

Kendall's tau b and Spearman's rho both measure the statistical dependence between two variables without assuming a normal distribution. Since our data are discreet and the n is small this is a helpful strategy for assessing correlation and minimizing the effects of outliers. While it is not surprising that there is a correlation between violent incidents and return of the Serbian population in Kosovo, it is counter-intuitive that this correlation is positive. The more violent incidents occurred the higher the rates of return.

Using the UNHCR dataset we can see where returns are occurring and if, consistent with the experience of other countries, specifically if Serbs are returning to municipalities where there was

TABLE 1

RETURNS AND VIOLENCE

Municipality Albanian/Serbian	Number of Returnees	Violence Index all	Pre–NATO	NATO	Post-NATO
Klinë/Klina	863	1.61	0.29	0.52	0.78
Novobërdë/Novo Brde	**637**	**1.78**	**0.00**	**0.15**	**1.49**
Istog/Istok	572	1.58	0.18	0.71	0.66
Gjilan/Gnjilane	550	1.31	0.00	0.21	1.10
Vushtrri/Vučitrn	550	0.80	0.34	0.33	0.11
Prizren	492	0.52	0.10	0.15	0.26
Pejë/Peć	462	1.16	0.22	0.47	0.41
Kamenicë/Kamenica	454	0.67	0.03	0.08	0.55
Gracanicë/Gračanica	**429**	**1.03**	**0.00**	**0.09**	**0.94**
Ferizaj/Uroševac	324	0.65	0.13	0.29	0.14
Obliq/Obilić	267	1.48	0.19	0.93	0.28
Rahovec/Orahovac	263	1.05	0.16	0.46	0.39
Prishtinë/Priština	242	0.89	0.15	0.36	0.31
Viti/Vitina	230	0.64	0.09	0.11	0.45
Lipjan	224	1.68	0.12	0.76	0.78
Partesh/Parteš	**167**	**3.36**	**0.00**	**0.00**	**3.36**
Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje	159	0.83	0.14	0.29	0.26
Shtërpcë/Štrpce	**125**	**1.73**	**0.14**	**1.30**	**0.14**
Ranillug/Ranilug	**120**	**1.03**	**0.00**	**0.00**	**1.03**
Skënderaj/Srbica	83	0.96	0.31	0.57	0.06
Mitrovicë/Kosovska Mitrovica	71	0.89	0.33	0.22	0.32
Kllokot/Klokot	**68**	**2.35**	**0.00**	**0.00**	**2.35**
Average		1.03	0.18	0.32	0.49

Serb-majority municipalities created under the Ahtisaari plan are in bold type.

TABLE 2

CORRELATION BETWEEN SERB RETURNEES AND VIOLENT INCIDENTS IN THE KOSOVO WAR

	All periods	Pre–NATO	NATO	Post-NATO
Kendall's tau b	.312**	.039	.197	.502**
Sig (two–tailed)	.008	.748	.100	.000
Spearman's rho	.437**	.051	.294	.673**
Sig (two–tailed)	.007	.766	.077	.000

violence during the last part of the war, large urban areas, or to Serb majority municipalities. It is evident that the Serbs who register with UNHCR and return through sponsored programmes are not coming back to large cities. Instead, most returnees have gone back to rural areas. Figure 1 below shows a gradient of population which the three highlighted areas being the three municipalities with the largest numbers of returnees: Klinë/Klina, Novo Brdo/Novobërdë; and Istog/Istok. These three areas are predominantly rural, as indicated by the lighter shading on the map.

Interestingly, two of the three municipalities with the largest numbers of returnees are not Serb-majority municipalities created under the Ahtisaari plan. Of the top three municipalities only Novo Brdo/Novobërdë is a Serb-controlled municipality. Table 1 shows that of the top ten receiving municipalities, only two are Serb controlled.[8]

While it might be perplexing why these particular municipalities received Serb returns, the ethnic map of Kosovo from the GREG data, which georeferences the location of ethnic groups prior

FIGURE 1
SERB RETURNEES AND POPULATION DISTRIBUTION
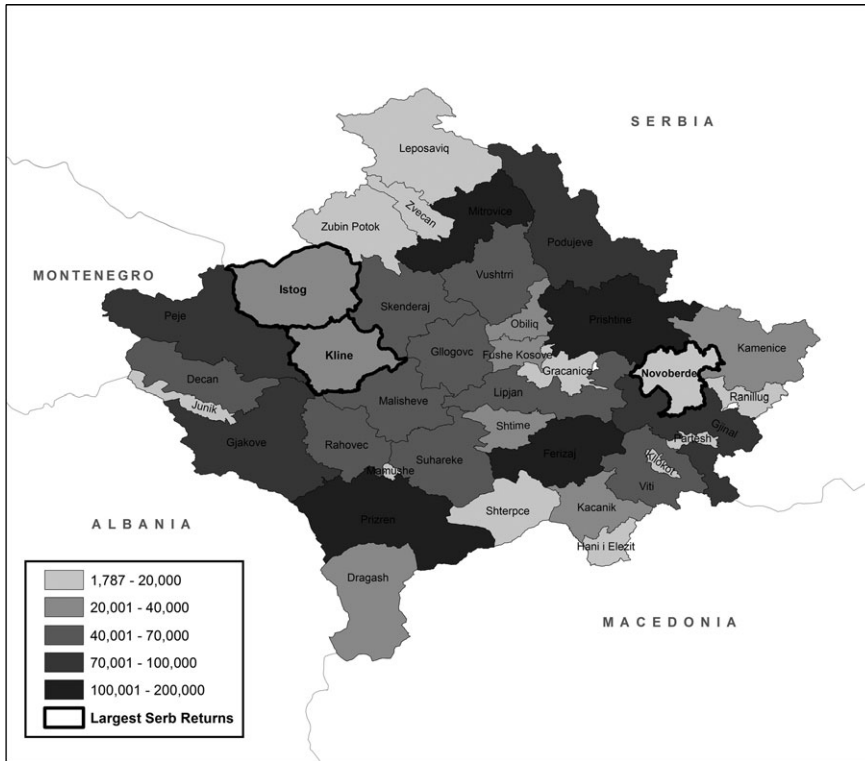
to the beginning of the conflict, shows that these are historic Serbian settlement areas. The dark areas in Figure 2 indicate where Serbs were concentrated prior to the Kosovo War. We have again highlighted in black the three municipalities with the highest number of returnees. One can see from the map how they overlap with traditional Serbian areas. Other dark areas are the four northern municipalities of Leposavić/Leposaviq, Zubin Potok, Zvečan/Zveqan, Mitrovica/Mitrovicë North) all of which have Serb majorities but refuse to report any census data or data on returns. Pristina, the capital city and the area around it is also dark, as many Serbs lived there prior to the war.

The fact that Serb returnees prefer to return to rural areas tells us a bit about who is returning and what they are doing. Most of the livelihood options in rural areas of Kosovo revolve around agriculture: farming, viticulture or the raising of livestock. Those who return to rural areas of the country are unlikely to be educated, young, professionals because of the limited job opportunities. They are far more likely to be farmers or retirees, returning to land they had in Kosovo prior to the war. This finding is inconsistent with the literature that would suggest that people are more likely to return to urban areas. Moreover, those Serbs who left urban communities in Kosovo are more likely to have the skills to take advantage of economic opportunities in Serbia.

ENCLAVES AND THE DESIRE TO LIVE IN THEM

A small number of Serbs are returning, but they are returning to places where there was a higher incidence of violence during the most critical period of the conflict for them and to rural areas.

FIGURE 2
SERB RETURNEES AND ETHNIC ENCLAVES
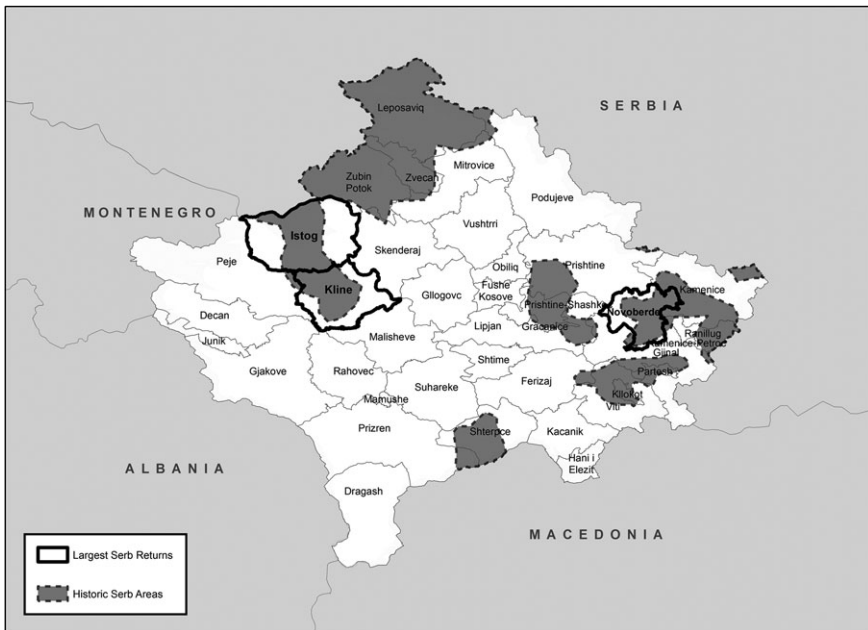
One explanation for these findings is that when Serbs return to Kosovo they are returning to Serbian enclave communities – areas that were historically Serbian and where there is still a large concentration of Serbs, whether or not that area is a designated Serbian municipality. For those voting with their feet, these areas are preferred over urban areas in terms of return. The data demonstrate that return is not conditioned so much by the violence that happened or even by political representation, but by the nature of the community before and after the conflict.

What is particularly interesting in this study is that the two of the top three municipalities for returns, Klinë/Klina and Istog/Istok, are not Serb controlled municipalities, although they have a large Serb population. These political/geographic rural enclaves proved more attractive to Serbian returnees than urban areas perhaps because they are isolated from a (sometimes hostile) majority population. In many areas Serbian returns are resisted, as evidenced by the frequent attacks against ethnic minorities and returnees. Between 2012 and 2014, OSCE reported 1,181 security incidents in minority regions with almost 20 per cent of these (232 total) targeting return sites of Kosovo Serbs (OSCE Mission in Kosovo, 2014). Attacks against returnees ranged from burglary and land occupation to verbal and physical harassment, shooting and arson (OSCE Mission in Kosovo, 2014). In interviews conducted with Serbs who have not returned to Kosovo, several cited security concerns.[9] One subject talked about his visit to his home area in 2016 to take some pictures of his land he said "These pictures were taken at our own risk. We went to —— by bus then took a cab to the village and took photos quickly. You can't enter the village if you are a Serb. When the Albanians realized we were there, they organized themselves to attack us... We quickly took some photos and then fled from the village."[10] His fears of safety are likely to lead him to remain in Central Serbia, rather than returning to Kosovo.

Enclaves isolate people from the ethnic other. In a 2012 study of Kosovo, almost 70 per cent of Albanians and 46.5 per cent of Serbs had no contact with someone outside their ethnic group in

the past three months (Garzon et al., 2012). While isolation may not be desirable in terms of recon-ciliation between ethnic groups, it enables people to feel secure in their daily environment. Enclave communities encourage return through the promise of being surrounded by co–ethnics, addressing the dual needs of society and security.

This finding in the data is reinforced by interview data from Kosovo. In 2012 and 2013, we con-ducted interviews in several municipalities in Kosovo regarding the factors that were influencing Serbs to return. In these interviews with Municipal Officers for Communities and Returns, it was clear that Serbs who returned and stayed were those coming back to Serbian enclaves within Kosovo. One of the Municipality Returns Officers made it very clear what would make for a viable community in describing what led Serbs to return to his municipality:

"In 2000 it was around 55 families who returned and decided to stay. There are around 500 Serbs here now. Not the whole amount of people who were here before the war, but enough to make a community. They have everything they need for a community, a youth center, a secondary school, a primary school, girls for the boys to marry".[11]

What happened in Kosovo, with the returnees coming back, but choosing to live in ethnic enclave communities is similar to what happened in Bosnia. "What was previously a marginal spa-tial form on the palimpsest of Bosnia-Herzegovina - so–called ethnic enclaves - has become the dominant pattern" (Toal and Dahlman, 2011: 307). It is unclear in Kosovo whether returns to eth-nic enclaves are made easier because property restitution has been facilitated in the ethnic enclaves whereas it is clearly more contentious in the cities. In Bosnia, property return impacted all ethnic groups who then were able to use their property to finance relocation to other areas if they chose. In Kosovo it is the minority communities who lost property and are still struggling to reclaim it and rebuild their homes.

CONCLUSION

The focus of this article has been examining where the Serbian minority community has returned in Kosovo. A small percentage of the Serbian population has chosen to return to Kosovo, and sur-prisingly they are not going back to large urban areas or exclusively to Serb-majority municipali-ties. Instead, they are returning to some of the least populated municipalities in the country, where there are few employment options, but a large number of co-ethnics. Also surprising is that they are returning in greater numbers to those areas of the country with higher incidents of retaliatory violence in the last phase of the war.

This demonstrated preference for return to ethnic enclaves is an important finding for several rea-sons. At the most basic level it informs what we know about the decisions that people make regarding return after forced migration due to ethnic violence. Data from Kosovo allow us to know where people returned to in their country of origin, as opposed to other contexts, such as Liberia, where we can only know if they repatriated. At a different level, knowing the preference for a return to ethnic enclave communities can begin to inform international public policies regarding return migration.

New insights from the civil war literature show that violence is often parochial in nature, the result of a settling of vendettas or localized discord wrapped up in a larger enabling political con-flict (Autesserre, 2010; Kalyvas, 2003, 2006). The choice of enclaves by minorities in the return process demonstrates a similar interaction between the local and the national setting, except in this case it is security that is localized rather than violence. The security and society available in ethnic enclaves isolates members from the larger political experience and in Kosovo, where some of those enclaves have political recognition and minority leadership, enclaves allow a local experience far different from national level politics.

Rather than ending with a clear conclusion, this article ends with a new hypothesis. We know that minority returns are unlikely in the wake of ethnic conflict and forced displacement. Where

minority returns do occur we hypothesize that they will take place in ethnic enclave communities that offer some isolation from the broader political community and provide the key elements of society and security. We should therefore, look for ethnic enclaves in the wake of new instances of forced migration as they may be the most desirable option for return of displaced minority populations. Sadly, the large numbers of forcibly displaced people today suggest that the next decade should bring sufficient opportunity for the testing of this hypothesis.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

NOTES

1. The EU and the government of Kosovo have spent millions of Euros over the past decade to bring Serbs back to Kosovo and re--establish an ethnic balance similar to that which existed before the war.
2. Milisavljevi, Dejan. 2016. Adviser, Department for Reception, Accommodation and Returnees Upon Readmission, Commissariat for Refugees and Migration of the Republic of Serbia. Interview in Belgrade, Serbia, May 26.
3. There are four mechanisms in each municipality designed to protect the interests of minority populations in the municipality: the Communities Committee; the Municipal Office for Communities and Returns; the Deputy Chairperson of the Municipal Assembly for Communities; and, the Deputy Mayor for Communities.
4. Although all of their recent work is in Africa, the first version of the dataset included data from The Balkans.
5. There are occasional problems with identification in the dataset, such as the inclusion of the Muslim Gorani in Dragas in the same category as Serbs because they are both Slavic people. This error was corrected in the maps shown here.
6. Data problems are challenging in Kosovo, as is typical in post-conflict settings where data is scarce and/or politicized. Having worked on return migration in other settings such as Uganda and Liberia, we found data in Kosovo to be inconsistent but comparatively abundant, largely as a result of international interest in tracking returns. That said, we follow a multi-method technique using statistical analysis, mapping and interviews to develop the most comprehensive picture of the situation.
7. This is further complicated by the fact that five municipalities were created relatively recently in an attempt to give better minority representation and follow through on the Ahtisaari plan: Mamuşa/Mamushë/Mamuša created in 2005, Gračanica/Graçanicë, Hani I Elezit/Djenerel Jankovic, Junik, and Partesh/Partes all created in 2010. Using georeferenced data on violent incidents with the current municipality boundaries allows us to ascertain the impact of violent incidents by location.
8. There is no available data on returns or population for the four northern Serb municipalities.
9. 103162. 2016. Interview. Belgrade, Serbia, October 3, 103163. 2016. Interview. Belgrade, Serbia, October 3.
10. 103163. 2016. Interview. Belgrade, Serbia, October 3. Places and names have been redacted to protect the confidentiality of the subjects.
11. Interview with Municipal Officer for Communities and Returns. 2013, Rahovec/Urosevac, February 5.

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