

Thesis: “*The politics of Post-war Reintegration*”

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Summary:

At war’s end, the international community faces the challenge of a massive displacement of population and the legacy of divided societies. These challenges have been tackled with either partitioning territories, or making institutional power-sharing arrangements among conflicting parties. Nevertheless, proponents of those solutions cannot explain the variation of post-war realities across time and space that observe societal divisions, as much as reintegrated societies. This work wonders why some societies remain divided, while others reintegrate? To what extent and under which conditions is ethnic reintegration possible after internecine conflict?

In order to answer such questions, this thesis first conceptualizes the four possible outcomes of majority-minority relations in post-war societies (reintegrated, assimilated, enclaved, and homogenous) in a two by two table intersecting minority return (demographics) and minority participation. Understanding the effects of war on the social fabric and studying their reversal after a peace agreement has been signed, requires relying on analytical tools that could identify the varied forms in which societal relations take place. This thesis offers such tools.

In order to explain such variation and answer the abovementioned questions, this thesis uses arguments that build on existing explanations, while focusing on opening the box of the complexity of local dynamics and its relevant actors. I develop a *theory of post-war reintegration* that accounts for variation in post-war outcomes as a function of three main factors: local elites, ethnic kin elites and third party intervention. Local elites want to consolidate their power and survive politically,

ethnic kin elites support local elites for diverse political reasons, and third parties’ peace-building goals drives them to seek policies that could facilitate reintegration.

I posit that after the war local elites (of majority and minority groups) keep societies divided (in homogenous and enclaved scenarios) through a *majorization pattern*¹ that is also supported by their ethnic kin (national elites, host and kin state). Such a majorization pattern relies on three mechanisms: 1) circulation of resources within patronage networks, 2) obstruction to non-groups from accessing those resources, 3) manipulation of displaced co-ethnics to increase their own demographics.

Timely third party intervention in disrupting the *majorization pattern* contributes to ethnic reintegration success when conditions of homogeneity exist. For such disruption to be possible, third parties have to challenge the exclusivity that local elites have over their resources, the legitimacy they build when they engage in *majorization* practices, and the support base that is provided by their ethnic kin. Nonetheless, an assimilated scenario is also theoretically possible despite third party intervention whenever it does not occur on time. In such cases local elites allow the expansion of minority participation in order to continue deriving resources from peace-builders, while they keep obstructing the return process.

The return process challenges the power base of elites through demographics more than opening spaces for participation do. In cases of enclaved scenarios I expect local elites to be more eager toward minority return, which increases their demographics, than toward minority participation, which challenges their power. That is why I assume that in cases of enclavization timing is not a necessary condition to

¹ Briefly defined, *majorization pattern* refers to the activities in which political elites engage with in order to consolidate power conquered through war, or to survive politically within the post-war scene. Such activities are oriented to increase own group population, to circulate available resources within its group and to exclude population belonging to other groups from accessing those resources.

advance to reintegration. However, disrupting the power base support of enclaved elites is. Therefore, to move from an enclaved scenario to one of reintegration requires that third parties work to disrupt the support of ethnic kin elites to the majorization pattern. I also expect that political elites in enclaved communities opt for political survival –considering the option of reintegration- whenever the enclave lacks resources to sustain over time.

Within the debate of positive or negative contributions of third party intervention, I take a stance that I call “responsible engagement” to signify that third party intervention is a positive contribution to reintegration only under specific circumstances. These circumstances are: their timely engagement, their work in disrupting majorization patterns and its ethnic kin support, their capacity to facilitate the creation of economic opportunities to sustain reintegration. Moreover, economic resources might not explain why people reintegrate, but they might explain why some reintegrated scenarios are sustained over time, like in Jajce; while others, like Bugojno, move toward an assimilated scenario even despite reintegration being achieved.

I also distinguish between two different mechanisms, one to reach ethnic reintegration and another to sustain such reintegration. The mechanisms that take place in the first effort do not impact on the second, because they are two separated instances. My theory is largely about how to move toward ethnic reintegration from homogenous and enclaved scenarios. However, I briefly address some of the expectations for reintegration sustainability as well, leaving it to others to follow with further research.

Extensive powers have been granted to (and used by) the international community in Bosnia; thus, helping reintegration might need more than fighting

obstructionism and patronage networks, as Jenne (2010) rightly proposes. I expect that for third parties to tackle the conditions that keep societies apart, they have to challenge the exclusivity that local elites have over the resources they control, their legitimacy to implement a majorization pattern without legal constraints, and the support of extra capacities provided by their ethnic kin.

To investigate my research questions I conducted ethnographic field research and intensive historical analysis via process-tracing in order to identify the sources of variable post-war reintegration in the cases of Bugojno and Jajce (in the Central Canton of Bosnia and Herzegovina), between 1995 and 2012. I also generalize findings to the Serb enclave cases in Northern and Southern Kosovo, between 1999 and 2015.

I found support to my argument that third party intervention in disrupting the majorization pattern established by political elites and their respective ethnic kin support, is necessary for moving toward reintegration. Failure of third parties in doing so may render their role in post-war settings pointless or, worse, as contributing to the survival of the very same issues that originated the war in the first place. This work also demonstrates that what deters societies from reintegration is more related to the role assumed by political elites in post-war scenarios, than to societal mistrust and fears as argued by partitionist scholars and supporters. Thus, post-war reintegration is not only a desirable conflict management strategy to pursue, but also a feasible one.

Summing up, this thesis focuses on understanding post-war variations of societal divisions and reintegration, and demonstrating that ethnic reintegration after internecine war is possible and desirable. Thus, not all societies remain divided, and when they do, it is due to factors that could have been challenged or prevented. This is a call for policy makers engaged in post-war societies to check the assumptions

they have regarding the post-war setting before planning their intervention and policies in those societies.