

## A Transnational Feminist Analysis of the Experiences of Return Migrant Women to Kosova

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**Abstract :** Displaced populations have received increasing attention, yet the experiences of return migrants remain largely hidden within social sciences. Existing research, albeit limited, suggests that policies which impact return migrants, especially those forced to return to their home countries, do not reflect their voices. Specifically, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees has adopted repatriation as a preferred policy solution, despite research which substantiates that returning to one's home country is neither durable nor the end of the migration cycle; as many of 80% of returnees decide to remigrate. This one-size-fits-all approach to forced displacement does not recognize the impact of intersecting identity categories on return migration, thus failing to consider how ethnicity, gender, and class, among others, shape repatriation. To address this, this qualitative study examined the repatriation experiences of return migrant women from Kosovo and the role of social workers in facilitating return. In 2015, Kosovars constituted the fourth largest group of asylum seekers in the European Union, yet 96% of them were rejected. Additionally, since 1999 Kosovo has ranked among the top 10 countries of origin for return migrants. Considering that return migration trends are impacted by global power dynamics, this study relied on a postcolonial and transnational feminist framework to contextualize the mobility of displaced peoples in terms of globalization and conceptualize migration as a gendered process. Postcolonial and feminist theories suggest that power is partly operationalized through language, thus, Critical Discourse Analysis was used as a research methodology. CDA is concerned with examining how power, language, and discourses shape social processes and relationships of dominance. Data collection included interviews with 15 return migrant women (eight ethnic minorities and seven Albanian) and 18 service providers in Kosovo. The main findings illustrate that both returnee women and service providers rely on discourses which 1) challenge the voluntariness and sustainability of repatriation; 2) construct Kosovo as inferior to EU countries; and 3) highlight the impact of patriarchy and ethnic racism on return migration. A postcolonial transnational feminist analysis demonstrates that despite Kosovars' challenges with repatriation, European Union countries use their power to impose repatriation as a preferred solution for Kosovo's government. These findings add to the body of existing repatriation literature and provide important implications for how return migration might be carried out, not only in Kosovo but other countries as well.

**Keywords :** migration, gender, repatriation, transnational feminism

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