

Peace, Preference, and Property

Return Migration after Violent Conflict

Growing numbers of people are displaced by war and violent conflict. In Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Myanmar, Syria, and elsewhere violence pushes civilian populations from their homes and sometimes from their countries, making them refugees. In previous decades, millions of refugees and displaced people returned to their place of origin after conflict or were resettled in countries in the Global North. Now displacements last longer, the number of people returning home is lower, and opportunities for resettlement are shrinking. More and more people spend decades in refugee camps or displaced within their own countries, raising their children away from their home communities and cultures. In this context, international policies encourage return to place of origin.

Using case studies and first-person accounts from interviews and fieldwork in post-conflict settings such as Uganda, Liberia, and Kosovo, Sandra F. Joireman highlights the divergence between these policies and the preferences of conflict-displaced people. Rather than looking from the top down, at the rights that people have in international and domestic law, the perspective of this text is from the ground up—examining individual and household choices after conflict. Some refugees want to go home, some do not want to return, some want to return to their countries of origin but live in a different place, and others are repatriated against their will when they have no other options. *Peace, Preference, and Property* suggests alternative policies that would provide greater choice for displaced people in terms of property restitution and solutions to displacement.

Sandra F. Joireman is Weinstein Chair of International Studies and Professor of Political Science at the University of Richmond.

“So far, few books have paid attention to the historical patterns of displacement, legal solutions, and IDP/refugee attitudes. Joireman successfully breaks the pattern of single-case studies in this area by providing an array of comparative empirical evidence and first-hand policy experience to demonstrate the misalignment of international law and preferences of victims of displacement. An excellent contribution to the field, re-orienting our understandings of durable solutions to displacement.”

—Neophytos Loizides, University of Kent



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Sandra F. Joireman

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