

# Introduction: reconceptualising displacement

...no one lives in the world in general. (Geertz 1996: 262)

At the end of 2016, Colombia counted more than seven million people displaced due to violence and conflict, a number which places it at the very top of the global statistics. The recurrent nature of the phenomenon, which has shaped the country's demographics, makes displacement seem a natural occurrence. A somewhat contradictory process is going on. The greater the number of the displaced, the more desensitised Colombian society seems to be towards displacement. As an employee of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) commented, the displaced asking for money at the traffic lights have become part of the common landscape. They simply are. They have become a fact. Contrary to logic, the high numbers of the displaced have contributed to their invisibility.

But who are these people? How do they experience displacement? What is displacement? What does it mean to be displaced? What does it mean to them and to millions of other internally displaced persons (IDPs) around the globe? The number of forced migrants, particularly IDPs, is on the rise. If the media and the politicians are serving us with images of numerous refugees attempting to reach western countries on dingy boats fighting off the winter currents, hiding in and under trucks, travelling on top of trains or walking hundreds of miles along rail tracks, battling with barbed wired fences or passing through environments as hostile as the desert, the number of those who stay within the borders of their own countries, who remain hidden from cameras' views, but whose plight is no less severe, is disproportionately larger. The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC 2017) places the number of internally displaced due to violence and conflict above forty million at the end of 2016. The prospects are so bleak that Elisabeth Colson (2003) concludes that rather than attempting to affect policymaking, scholarly research into internal displacement is done more realistically in order to inform ourselves what we are to expect if displacement affects us. Keith Basso (1996a) laments that in the age of uprooted populations holding on to places will become a privilege and a gift. And Arturo Escobar (2008) with world-weariness concludes that today's resettlement schemes and camps really are just pilot projects for the future. Displacement is indisputably a pressing issue that

will continue to affect millions around the globe. It is also an issue that warrants greater and more nuanced scholarly attention.

There is a gap between displacement-producing and displacement-preventing mechanisms which is increasing and untenable (Escobar 2008). Knowing people's plight might be insufficient to convince armed actors to stop waging power over their territories, to deter the forces of modernity which are generating displacement, to encourage criminal groups to give up their activities affecting lives of so many people, or indeed to persuade respective governments to curb such processes since they themselves often have a stake in them. Nevertheless, even if we are unable to stop displacement, an engagement with the phenomenon and those who are going through the process is crucial. After all, only a better understanding of the process might help restrain displacement and address the often poor policy responses. And only a better understanding of people's experiences and attention paid to individual stories can help give back people the humanity they have lost through being grouped together and categorised as IDPs.

This book is an attempt to reveal the complexities of displacement processes. As Doña Flor and Martina, two of the research participants, pointed out, it is difficult to fully grasp the process if you have not lived through it yourself. Even if you do, displacement is so individualised that the meanings given to it differ. No two experiences are the same. The displaced might share certain similarities and aspects with others, but very personal circumstances such as one's social role, the point in one's life when displacement occurred, or one's biography generally speaking make displacement a highly personalised experience. Explaining displacement might therefore seem an impossible task for the scholar.

Nevertheless, without undermining this diversity, there is a way to discuss the long nights, the fear, to interpret the loss, the hope, the anger, the disillusionment, the difficulties with forming attachment to a new place, the negotiation of relationships among the displaced and their 'hosts', grappling with the new identity, agency and the seeming impossibility to leave the past behind. It is possible to think of a general framework which allows for differences, contextualises displacement and which helps bring people's experiences closer to our understanding. I propose to do so through conceptualising displacement as a process of loss and subsequent making of place. Displacement is not only about loss, trauma and struggle, but also about agency, getting to terms with the situation and an attempt to move on in life. Both the loss and the making of place are its essential and indivisible components (Celestina 2016; Turton 2005). In this introduction I make a theoretical case for thinking about displacement through such an approach. But before doing that I introduce the country where I listened to people's stories of displacement – Colombia.

## **Conflict and displacement in Colombia**

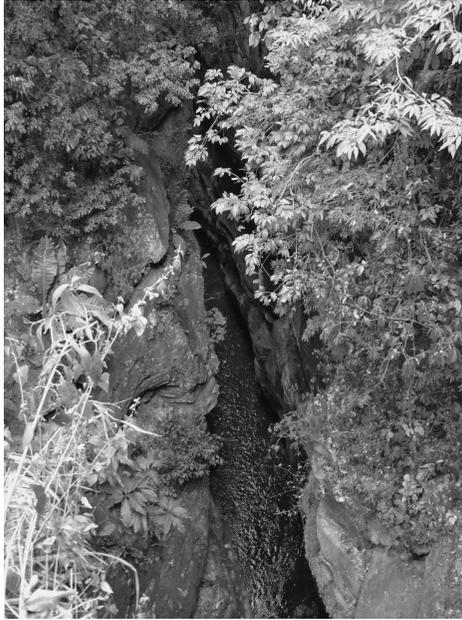
When I first travelled to Colombia in 2009, I was arriving in an unknown territory. Having read widely about conflict, violence, displacement, disappearances, recruitment of minors, sexual abuses and human rights abuses in general, I was

surprised that at the Bogotá airport, apart from greater than usual presence of armed officers, conflict seemed as something belonging to a different place. The two months I spent in the country at the time left an impression that the country, and Bogotá itself for that matter, are living a number of different realities. While some regions are involved in fully fledged conflict, others are enjoying relative peace. While some Colombians are struggling to survive and make a living, others are leading luxurious lives. While some are attempting to heal the wounds of violence and conflict, for others these are a distant reality which they do not and wish not to engage with. These impressions only deepened during my ten-month stay in Colombia in 2011 and 2012, when I was gathering the narratives on which the material in this book is based. Between my first, second and third visit, the number of internally displaced steadily rose. A Colombian non-governmental organisation (NGO) CODHES, *La Consultoría para los Derechos Humanos y el Desplazamiento* (Consultancy for Human Rights and Displacement) recorded 286,389 new cases of displacement in 2009, 280,041 in 2010, 259,146 new cases in 2011 and 261,050 in 2012 (CODHES 2013).<sup>1</sup>

For over a century a number of diverse actors have been trying to realise their opposing interests, aiming to get control over Colombian territory and its people. A chapter in a book would not be sufficient to describe and analyse the twenty-five national civil wars and about sixty regional wars Colombia experienced since its independence from Spain in 1810 (Ruiz *et al.* 2006) or to cover the numerous regional particularities of the conflict since almost every region is a story to itself. Other scholars (see for instance Hylton 2006; Palacios 2006; Pearce 1990; Sánchez and Meertens 2001) have in detail covered major historical events which have shaped the country. Here, I only briefly discuss the reasons and the actors involved in displacement at the national level.

Displacement is not a new issue in Colombia. Conflict and violence have accompanied much of the country's history and have persistently affected civilian population. Displacement was present in the nineteenth-century civil wars, the War of a Thousand Days (1899–1903) and, in more recent history, the first major displacement took place during the period known as *La Violencia*, which started in 1948, with the assassination of Jorge Eliécer Gaitán, a Liberal party leader.<sup>2</sup> *La Violencia* is usually thought of as a clash between the Liberal and Conservative parties for political dominance. Nevertheless, socio-economic circumstances, including persistently unresolved land question, should not be ignored. Rather than categorising it as war, Palacios (2006: 138) describes *La Violencia* 'as some twenty years of crime and impunity facilitated by political sectarianism' (see Figure 1). One of the consequences was extensive displacement; estimates say that up to two million people were displaced (Roldán 2002).

Conflict and tensions did not end with *La Violencia*. Social inequalities and discontent gave birth to various guerrilla groups in 1960s.<sup>3</sup> The most important were the largest guerrilla group *Las Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia* (The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia); the FARC, which has recently undergone demobilisation under the administration of Juan Manuel Santos; *Ejército de Liberación Nacional* (National Liberation Army); the ELN, which is still



**Figure 1** The view from the natural bridge close to Porvenir, where truckloads of corpses were allegedly thrown into the River Sumapaz during *La Violencia*.

active at the time of writing of this book but in process of peace negotiations; and *Ejército Popular de Liberación* (Popular Liberation Army), the EPL, which gained importance mainly in Urabá, and which demobilised in 1991. The guerrillas gained support among the peasantry, since small-scale peasants were under constant harassment from the big landowners who enjoyed military support. Nevertheless, some of that support has been lost since then, partly due to guerrillas' involvement in drug trade and in part since some, including some of the interviewees for this book, believe the guerrillas no longer follow the initial political principles.<sup>4</sup>

The fighting between the guerrillas and the military gained new dimensions when a new actor entered the stage – the paramilitaries. The paramilitaries were financed by landowners who wished to cleanse regions of guerrillas and their supporters. They joined under an umbrella organisation *Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia* (United Self-Defence Forces of Colombia), AUC.<sup>5</sup> The paramilitaries collaborated with the military and often did their 'dirty work'. They are accountable for some of the greatest atrocities committed in the country and they were also the armed actor that generated most of displacement. Among others they contributed to greater land concentration or 'counter-reform' (Machado 2004). They drove people off their lands and enabled drug traders to buy large plots of land.

AUC demobilised during Álvaro Uribe Vélez' administration (2002–10).<sup>6</sup> The demobilisation was unsuccessful and new neo-paramilitary groups have emerged. Their structure is unclear but a visible link to the drug trade exists. They operate

like private armies and use the same practices as the demobilised AUC, but unlike the latter they do not unite. They have territorial disputes among themselves, form temporary alliances with criminal groups and the guerrillas for the purposes of the drug trade. Since the number of registered IDPs in 2008 (380,863) was almost as high as at the height of conflict in 2002, the increase in the number of the displaced was linked to the existence of these drug-related emergent groups (Meertens 2010: S152).

In recent years in particular, there has been a stronger link between official national development projects, conflict and population exodus. Power, road and rural infrastructure projects coincide with the areas where armed conflict is most prevalent. In these areas there has been evidence of (neo)paramilitary involvement in displacement. Displacement has been present especially in regions where development projects are designed around the mono-cultivation of the African palm, where the lands 'have to be "prepared" – emptied – for the entrance of capital-induced development' (Oslender 2007: 759), which might otherwise lead to local resistance.<sup>7</sup>

Displacement in Colombia has therefore been generated from more than one source. Like conflict and violence it has been shaping the population, and the cultural and political mosaic of the country. The same as with conflict, the pattern of uprooting differs from region to region. Perhaps unsurprisingly those most affected by displacement come from the disadvantaged parts of the country's society, where state protection is not a priority. These are *campesinos* (peasants), Afro-Colombians and the indigenous;<sup>8</sup> people who, as Daniel Pécaut (2001) so adequately puts it, have never fully enjoyed their citizenship rights and for whom displacement is not a simple circumstance but is almost always lived as a permanent social condition.

The great majority of the displaced are in urban centres. They usually stay on the fringes of the cities, where they mix with the urban poor population. Therefore, while the areas they move to lie within cities, they are at the same time outside the cities in social, economic and physical terms (Salazar *et al.* 2008). Most displaced people come from a rural background and are not accustomed to urban life. This increases their alienation as well as the residents' anxiety about the displaced's impact on the city. The displaced are not welcome because the poor hosts and local governments see them as a burden for the public utilities and limited job market (Jaramillo *et al.* 2004; Salazar *et al.* 2008), since they increase poverty belts in urban suburbs (Osorio Perez 2000) and since their presence drives up property prices (Vidal López *et al.* 2011). Due to such problems and higher numbers, urban IDPs have received more academic attention.

In this book, in contrast, I explore the rural context. Not paying attention to those in the rural areas risks maintaining *campesinos* in an inferior position compared to urban inhabitants. Keeping them at the periphery of interest and concern reflects the historical position of smallholders and arguably also the countryside in Colombia. Lack of studies into rural lives and attempts at resettlement gives a false impression that those resettled into the rural environment do not face challenges in adaptation in the same way as the displaced in urban settings; in

short, a *campesino* is believed to be a *campesino* everywhere, a general feature of urban bias towards the peasantry. Furthermore, in the advent of the current land restitution process, exploration of place-making in the countryside is pertinent. Estimates say that 8.3 million hectares of land have been appropriated (Grupo de memoria histórica 2013: 76). A better understanding of place-making practices, be it at a new location or an old one, is crucial for a constructive approach that goes beyond the mere land allocation. Finally, the countryside and land issues have been at the core of the conflict. It thus makes sense to explore conflict and displacement from the countryside perspective.

I examine the trajectories of loss and making of place of displaced people who resettled in two small hamlets in Cundinamarca, in the locality of Sumapaz. Respecting people's anonymity and due to honest fear some expressed that they might still be followed, I changed my interviewees' names and named the two hamlets as Esperanza and Porvenir. Those who are trying to create a new home in Esperanza came from Urabá, whereas the displaced who are now in Porvenir came from different parts of the country, but predominately from neighbouring Tolima. Both hamlets are in relative proximity of Bogotá: Esperanza just over two hours and Porvenir around four hours by a combination of buses, *busetas* and walking. While the readers cannot find the two hamlets on the map, they can imagine Esperanza as a hamlet in *tierra fría* (cold land). The bus connection to the village leaves you at an altitude of around 2,200 metres, after which there is a good forty minute relatively steep descent towards the hamlet's scattered houses. It sometimes takes hours for the sun to reach and warm the soil of the *fincas* (farms) further up the slope. Porvenir, on the other hand, lies at an altitude of around 1,600 metres with a moderate climate warm enough for coffee cultivation, and an array of fruit trees including occasional banana and plantain trees.

Esperanza and Porvenir may appear hamlets just like any other; however, a closer look reveals a negotiation of place greater than in villages where there are no displaced people. It is where new relationships are not forged to the degree they could be, where some relationships have even been lost, and where everyone involved, the displaced and the non-displaced, claim the right to belong; a right which might exist on paper but does not always materialise. Below I examine the concept of place to give a meaning to these negotiations and to provide a lens through which we can better interpret people's displacement experiences.

### **Displacement and place**

Displacement is often considered as a phenomenon with time boundaries. As Brigitte Sørensen (1997: 146) states, the main narrative 'demarcates displacement as a historically limited experience running from uprooting to integration.' The international Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement and respective national legislations speak of the displaced as people who have left their areas of origin and this act of leaving becomes the starting point of displacement. At the same time, return, resettlement and local integration are considered the so-called 'durable solutions' (IASC 2010) to displacement. As the word 'solutions' itself

entails, the three allude to an end state, to termination. The limited timeframe reflects institutions' view and does not necessarily reflect people's experiences. Displacement is not just about movement of leaving and settling in a place. It is much more. Displacement is 'uniquely political' (Bakewell 2011: 17). It tears apart the social fabric. It destroys collective identities since it destroys symbolic and social worlds of individuals (Bello 2001). It dismantles social organisation, fragments communities, and it presents the loss of natural and man-made capital (Cernea 1997: 1575). It can also incite strong psychological responses. If we think of displacement as having these consequences, considering it as a historically limited experience becomes impossible.

At the same time, the sole focus on loss of relationships, capital, the self and other types of loss, can be misleading. It can unfairly present the displaced as lacking agency, skills or ability to recover. The displaced not only experience the pain of leaving their places of origin behind, of broken relationships and tarnished identities; they also attempt to form renewed belonging to new or old place(s). Despite challenges and uncertainties they plan and think of the future. The displaced are therefore victims and agents at the same time. They might lose social relationships but this does not prevent them from forming new ones. They might have lost capital, but they might also be able to recover it. They might have lost the sense of self, but they did not necessarily lose it permanently. One way of capturing and also contextualising the interplay between victimhood, loss, struggle, resistance, agency and (re)making of self is through analysing displacement and individuals' experiences through the prism of place.

In the past few decades the importance of place has been undermined. Research and discussions have emphasised globalisation, travel and diaspora, and stressed mobility as source of identity. However, the romanticisation of mobility is inappropriate in the context of those who have been forced to move. For some displaced people 'the ability to not move may appear as a luxury denied them' (Ballinger 2012: 391). It is also 'foolish' to expect forced migrants and other unprivileged populations to embrace a notion of 'dispersed belonging' (Stefansson 2004: 185). Steff Jansen rightly finds 'rootless fantasies ... cruelly naive to those violently expelled from "their" places' (Jansen 2009: 44). Places indeed matter, especially for those who have been forced to move, who have lost their local attachments and who are looking for a new place to settle down to continue with their lives. Nevertheless, rather than assuming that being grounded means being fixed and that being mobile means being detached (Ahmed *et al.* 2003: 1), place attachments – an affective bond between an individual and a specific place, and detachments – need to be examined analytically.

To fully appreciate the importance of place and its suitability for the examination of displacement experiences it is necessary to understand what constitutes a place. The concept of place is attractive due to its seeming simplicity as it forms part of a basic vocabulary. Nevertheless, it is the frequency of use and familiarity of the term that obstructs a more developed comprehension of what place is (Cresswell 2004). Places are not territorialised units rather relationship between people and their territory. Tuan (1977) and Relph (1976) were among first prominent human

geographers that stressed this relationship and who emphasised individual's emotional attachment to place. Places touch most intimate aspects of our lives, our sense of self, and our sense of being at ease (or not) with where we are. The appreciation of place is therefore a highly subjective manner. Nevertheless, this subjective recognition is under the influence of objective factors. The broader context impacts the manner in which we relate to places and how we experience them. Places are not simply inactive physical locations or 'inert containers. They are politicized, culturally relative, historically specific, local and multiple constructions' (Rodman 1992: 641). They are contested and struggled over.

One of the most all-encompassing frameworks for the understanding of place which captures both its objective and subjective features is that proposed by John Agnew (1987: 5–6). Agnew defines three aspects of place: locale, location and sense of place. Locale refers 'to the structured "microsociological" content of place'. It is the setting for social interaction where the everyday life unfolds. Location, is place as located in the geographical space, which also represents 'the impact of "macro-order" in a place'. This impact for instance, is seen through the influence that governmental policies have on uneven economic development, or segregation of social groups. Finally, there is the sense of place which denotes subjective emotions and affection to place. It manifests itself through place attachment (or lack of it), and sentiments of (non)belonging. Agnew's framework captures the very micro, personal level of place that is embedded in the broader political, social, historical and economic context. As I argue, displacement is a multifaceted process reaching all aspects of people's lives; as such it requires a complex and comprehensive analysis including both personal feelings as well as objective circumstances.

In this book I take Agnew's three aspects of place as the general framework of analysis. I consider how features of location such as the positioning of a place on the world map, the specific climate belt within which it lies, the availability of natural resources or soil fertility in the region, the place's geostrategic position, its situatedness on the periphery or in the centre of the country, the infrastructure and development afforded to the location, market forces, and the unresolved land question influence the locale, the setting for everyday interaction. Within these everyday settings I pay particular attention to physical and social landscapes. That is to people's engagements with the natural, built environment including land cultivation, and to relationships between the displaced and their 'hosts', and among the displaced. Besides the influence of the location and locale on people's sense of place, I explore people's cognitive landscapes, consisting of emotions and memorialised images people brought with them.

In addition to these features I also explore the consequences of categorisation of people as *desplazados* (Spanish for IDP). Rather than looking at the categorisation as replacing people's identities, I use Brubaker and Cooper's (2000) framework of external identification, internal identification or self-understanding and groupness to demonstrate how categorisation cuts across the three aspects of place. I look at how the external identification undertaken by the government affects location through segregation of social groups. This segregation, the external identification of people as *desplazados* undertaken by the receiving populations, as well

as assumed groupness of the displaced, has repercussions for the social relations at the everyday settings.

Finally, all the enumerated factors combined with the displaced's self-understanding influence the sense of place and displacement. What becomes clear is that the three aspects of place cannot be considered in isolation, but are interconnected. As Agnew so compellingly states, 'local social worlds of place (locale) *cannot* be understood apart from the *objective* macro-order of location and the *subjective* territorial identity of sense of place. They are all related' (Agnew 1987: 28, emphases in the original).

Places are relational. It is their relationality that makes them dynamic. They present a 'throwtogetherness' (Massey 2005) of people, things, powers and interests which need to be negotiated. As Doreen Massey puts it, places get their specific characters 'out of a particular constellation of relations, articulated together at a particular locus' (Massey 1993: 66). They are not enclosed spaces but rather get their meanings through interaction. Places are constructed on relationships between places. The very local is what it is due to the influences of other places, including at the global level. Without 'fetishized insistence' on this kind of global relationality at the expense of 'in-place lived experiences' and recognition that places get their uniqueness also from the particularities they possess (Oslender 2016b: 34), relationality between at least two places cannot be ignored in the analysis of displacement.<sup>9</sup> These are the place of origin and the place where place-making endeavours are in process. These places are relational through continued contacts and relationships with those who stayed behind, through cultural and other practices that the displaced continue realising in the new place, and through the sole process of memory construction of life in the place of origin and its influence on current place-making efforts. The local place can be affected by the global in many ways but it still has its own idiosyncrasies. Places are also constructed out of relationships within places. They consist of social landscapes, arising from relations and interactions among people. Relationality is visible at an even smaller level – through (non)belonging sensed through significant others. How those close to us experience a place, shapes the place as we perceive it.

Place, when understood in its complex terms, is particularly fit for studying displacement. Like displacement, place means different things to different individuals. It draws attention to personal and communal experiences as well as examining the political context. It is an effective tool to study experiences of people who are relatively powerless (Cresswell 2004: 83). It allows us to portray those who are usually absent from analysis as 'fully present' (Feld and Basso 1996: 5). Besides, its suitability for the analysis of displacement arises through its temporal character. Places are processual and always in the making. As such, place can challenge the assumptions that displacement is a historically demarcated experience beginning with the flight of people and ending upon their resettlement, return or integration.

The processual nature of place is especially noticeable after physical relocation, when people settle in a new location and need time to learn to live in and with a place and to develop a sense of place. If place-making takes time, there might also be different temporalities when it comes to the loss of place. Not everyone

necessarily leaves their areas of origin instantly. They might be confined to the place (Kelly 2009), resist occupation (Todd 2010) or simply persist hoping that things would eventually calm down. For these people, the loss of place is not necessarily abrupt; the unmaking of place can unwind gradually. Conflict and violence can lead to 'livescape reconfiguration,' to the changes made to place and people's practices; due to such reconfiguration people may be 'displaced in place' (Lubkemann 2008). That is, they may be displaced, without having actually migrated. Stephen Lubkemann makes an imperative case for considering those who stay trapped in conflict. Nevertheless the livescape reconfiguration pertains not only to those who stay, but also affects those who persist in the area of origin for substantial time and only eventually move. Their displacement entails not only the unmaking of a known place but also consists of attempts at (re)making it at a new location. The sense of temporality of places therefore manages to capture these processes, while the previously mentioned relational character of places provides the ground for examining the link between them. As I argue in this book, to get a grasp of displacement we need to examine both the loss and making of place, as well as the relationship between the two processes. Such an approach challenges the perspective of thinking of displacement in statistics, as a number of people moving from location A to location B, brings to the fore personal narratives, and also stresses the political in displacement – a phenomenon that is too often considered in merely humanitarian terms.

### Outline of the book

This introductory chapter challenged the often uncritical understanding of displacement. It proposed to think, analyse and conceptualise displacement through the lens of place, examining both the processes of loss and making of place. Through this lens I explore the terror, resistance, break-up of social relations, journeys, the struggle and the process of endowing places with meaning. Chapter 2 discusses the difficulties of traversing landscapes of (dis)trust when working with conflict-affected populations. Coming from the proposition that trust entails elements of vulnerability and risk (Hardin 1992; Mayer *et al.* 1995), the chapter identifies some of people's vulnerabilities. It demonstrates that trust is dynamic and that it can co-exist with distrust. The chapter additionally introduces some of the protagonists of the book with whom I negotiated trust.

Chapter 3 focuses on the process of loss of place. I ask the question when displacement starts in order to draw attention to people's lives before they physically relocate. I examine displacement experiences of *urabeños* (the inhabitants of Urabá) since their persistence in the region despite widespread violence specifically marked their displacement.<sup>10</sup> I concentrate on paramilitary terror and violence which unravelled on the ground. The analysis of terror produced at the very local level is often overshadowed in state discourses (Oslender 2008). Yet it highlights the adverse conditions people caught in conflict experience, whether they relocate or not. The chapter shows how violence and terror changed the microsociological content of place through the impact they had on people's social, physical and

cognitive landscapes. It demonstrates how the transformation of place brought upon by violence altered the sense of place and set off the displacement process before people actually migrated.

Chapter 4 reinforces the argument of processual nature of displacement. It looks at the route taken by the displaced travelled in order to point out that people's journeys form an essential element of their displacement. Journeys are coupled with insecurity of not knowing where to go, of fear of being caught, and they also provide the first setting for the transformation of family roles. The analysis of the journey is crucial because it provides an insight into how people managed to secure the land for resettlement. The latter is not a mirror of effective policy but rather reflects years of IDPs' struggle, sacrifice and persistence. The two hamlets, however, are not necessarily the final point of the journey. The chapter discusses how policy that is supposed to help the displaced keeps them in place but can also compel them out of their places. It can, in short, 'displace' them again.

Chapter 5 is one of the three chapters that examine the consequences of categorisation of people as *desplazados*. Categorisation is one of the macro-forces that most prominently shape people's places after physical relocation owing to the effect it has on people's social world. The chapter focuses on external categorisation undertaken by the government. It provides a short background on how the category *desplazado* came into existence and then looks at the bureaucratic, decontextualised approach to categorisation. It shows that becoming a *desplazado* is not necessarily a process mediated by conflict, but is largely directed by bureaucracy.

One of the influences on people's place-making is their self-understanding as *desplazados*, which is at the core of Chapter 6. Even though being labelled as a *desplazado/a* is 'a mark of the beast', a deeply negatively felt othering, a great number of the displaced persistently recourse to it more than a decade after physical relocation. The chapter examines why this is the case. I move away from the usual focus on instrumental use of the category to explore its non-instrumental, symbolic uses. The chapter argues that the symbolism behind self-categorisation and self-understanding alludes to its long-lasting use. The deeply individualised self-understanding confirms just how heterogeneous the displaced are.

The supposed groupness of the displaced is the focus of Chapter 7, which undermines the idealised notion of 'displaced communities' and challenges it in a number of ways. The chapter examines the measures the displaced take to differentiate themselves from other displaced. They create 'displacement hierarchies', which they base on the level of suffering, the degree of severity of their displacement, but also on a hierarchy of moral behaviour. The differences among the displaced affect their social interaction and social landscapes, while the loss of the community also leads to renewed sense of displacement.

Chapter 8 continues with its focus on social landscapes. The displaced were resettled to a place which had already been meaningful for other people; they thus need to negotiate their place with those who are already there. In Chapter 8 I examine the social interactions between the displaced and their non-displaced receiving population, some of whom are landless peasants. Years of sharing the

same place have not erased social boundaries between people. The displaced's prioritised treatment in policy coupled with absence of visible destitution has contributed to deep divides between the two populations. Deepening this divide even further is also the receiving population's belief that the displaced have brought displacement upon themselves. The chapter looks at the driving force behind such beliefs and analyses how the thinking that the hosts are sharing space with potential liars, guerrillas and thieves affects place-making of everyone involved.

Even though the displaced may have land – the base to build on – this is insufficient for the sense of belonging. Besides having to negotiate their social landscapes, they also need to deal with the challenges of forming land attachment. This is what I discuss in Chapter 9. Physical nature of places has received little attention in studies of place attachment (Lewicka 2011). And yet, the material dependence, 'the potential of a particular setting to satisfy the needs and goals of an individual', is one of the main contributors to place-making (Cross 2015: 513; Raymond *et al.* 2010). Even though the displaced are all peasants, they have faced a number of challenges trying to tame the land. In this chapter I explore how the continuation or disruption of old cultivation practices shapes place attachment. The chapter also shows that whether the physical landscape is perceived as hospitable or hostile also depends on an individual's family role and the extent to which the land allows them to meet that role.

Chapter 10 deals with cognitive landscapes. It shows that while people left behind a physical place, the social and cognitive aspects of the old place live on. The memories – which result in two main emotions; nostalgia and fear – influence the present place-making endeavours. The chapter looks at how the dissatisfaction with the current state of affairs has given way to retrospect place-belonging. It argues that while nostalgia is not static or complete, and can even help people survive, it nevertheless stands in the way of greater appreciation of place of resettlement. Rather than decreasing with years, nostalgia can grow. Fear, on the other hand, has been decreasing. Through time, greater caution, lack of tranquillity, vigilance and restraint have replaced the initial strong reactions to sounds or suspicious sights. Nevertheless, the sustained uneasiness continues affecting people's interactions and sense of place. The chapter demonstrates that witnessing and living in a place endowed with violence leaves consequences for post-migration lives, linking past to present.

Since one of the early chapters addressed the question of when displacement starts, the concluding chapter questions the 'end' of displacement. In so doing it stresses the need to listen to the displaced, their views, concerns and wishes. The chapter also re-emphasises the necessity of a longer time frame when studying displacement.

Taken together, the chapters bring individuals' displacement experiences to the fore. I work from the premise that what displacement entails is insufficiently understood. This is particularly true in relation to temporality of the phenomenon. The focus is too often placed on either the life before physical relocation and even more so on the life after physical relocation. Such an approach breaks

up the two time periods which are undoubtedly interlinked. Before setting off to the core of the book, it is worth mentioning two more things. The first is that while in the book I problematise categorisation, I nevertheless use the category IDP or *desplazado/a* in the book. On the one hand, in order to challenge it, it is impossible not to use it. On the other, it reflects the vocabulary the displaced and non-displaced villagers of Esperanza and Porvenir use. Second, I aim to present the displaced as ordinary human beings who happen to be displaced, with their strengths but also their flaws. Idealising them, presenting them as ‘pure and innocent’ would only add to the already distorted beliefs of who is a deserving and who a non-deserving victim. Therefore, while I recognise that the displaced are undoubtedly indisputable victims, I also treat them as people.

## Notes

- 1 There is discrepancy in terms of numbers of the displaced recorded between CODHES and the government. The government statistics includes only the numbers of those whose displacement status has been confirmed, whereas CODHES has no such requirement. The two entities use different methodologies and have started recording the number of the displaced at distinct times. CODHES keeps a register of people from 1985 onwards, whereas the government from 2000 onwards. For a more detailed discussion on the two entities’ ‘war over numbers,’ please refer to Oslender (2016a).
- 2 Gaitán promised to unite subordinate groups in Colombia regardless of their class, race and their region of origin. He managed to gain a lot of popular support and was due to run for presidential elections in 1950.
- 3 Liberal guerrilla groups formed already during *La Violencia*. A US-sponsored counter-insurgency strategy known as *Plan Lazo* (plan lasso) was designed with the aim to isolate the liberal guerrillas from their supporters. In 1964 *Plan Lazo* failed drastically when *Operación Marquetalia* (operation sovereignty) was launched (Hylton 2006: 56). In response to the bombing carried out in this mission, peasants from different independent republics formed mobile guerrilla groups. The guerrilla leaders organised themselves into *Bolque Sur* (Southern block) in order to design a new agrarian programme. The FARC was born during their second conference.
- 4 The FARC first opposed the cultivation of coca but then gave in under pressure from the farmers, who could not find any other comparably lucrative crops (García de la Torre and Aramburo Siegert 2011). Despite the initial resistance, coca later became important for the operation of the FARC.
- 5 Paramilitary groups existed already during *La Violencia*. These were *chulavitas*, the police aligned with the Conservatives, and *pajaros* (birds). The aim of both groups was to oppose the liberal guerrillas of the time. The paramilitary groups’ intervention formed part of the civic-military programme enshrined in law. These ‘not-quite-official counter-insurgency forces’ already then carried out dirty acts instead of the military (Palacios 2006: 190).
- 6 Uribe’s administration passed *Ley de Justicia y Paz*, the Justice and Peace Law, which gave the paramilitaries near impunity. At the time that the law was passed, the paramilitaries controlled the Congress. According to two paramilitary leaders, Mancuso and José Vicente Castaño, this control amounted to 35 per cent of seats in the Congress (Hylton 2006: 114).

- 7 The African palm, which has an important role in the Colombian national development plan, was promoted as an alternative to coca cultivation under Plan Colombia.
- 8 There have long been no statistics that would consider people's ethnicity and currently different organisations cite different percentages. In these estimations, the share of Afro-Colombians displaced by violence varies between 10 and 37 per cent (Oslender 2016a).
- 9 There may be more such places of influence especially when people's journeys include stops where they spend a substantial amount of time. Additionally there is also the centre-periphery influence.
- 10 Due to security issues I did not travel to Urabá. Since I was unable to interview anyone who stayed behind, I decided to retrace their perspectives through the lens of those who had moved.