

## **Narratives of Losing and Remaking Home following Conflict and Displacement in Colombia**

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### **Abstract**

Drawing on the narratives of 72 participants who in the aftermath of conflict have fled within Colombia, this paper explores the extent to which and, in which ways, those who flee following conflict remake home. The paper's overarching argument is that despite displacement consistently results in a significant loss of home, home can be remade on the move. Analysis of detailed interviews shows that following conflict and displacement, the process of remaking home not only entails the reconstruction of a material shelter but foremost the reconstruction of a social world, a familiar landscape, and the emotional and existential feeling of being at 'home'. Material and symbolic dimensions of well-being therefore play a central role in the reconstruction of home. Indeed, for many, the reconstruction of home signified the reconstruction of their place in the world. The empirical findings also show that the reconstruction of home is not only shaped by social constraints such as experiences of violence and persecution, social structures such as gender, ethnic identity and life stage of those compelled to move, but also by the way the displaced use creativity and imagination to regain the feeling of being at home in the new cultural setting. Those who were able to bring photos and decorative objects from the place left behind and who recreate their social and cultural practices in the new place appear to be in a better position to remake home on the move. The paper ends by highlighting that material objects have not only material but symbolic and even existential meaning in the process of remaking home.