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Author: Sylvie Nail

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# Memory and resilience: a two-pronged approach to natural spaces in Colombia's transition to a peaceful society

Sylvie Nail

Facultad de Finanzas, Gobierno y Relaciones Internacionales, Universidad  
Externado de Colombia / Faculté des Langues et cultures étrangères,  
Université de Nantes (France)

sylvie.nail@univ-nantes.fr

## Highlights

- Studying urgent biophilia in Colombia implies greening initiatives in the places where the conflict took place and in the cities where displaced populations have arrived
- Memorialisation processes through tree planting and urban agriculture can foster social-ecological systems.
- Public policies should focus more on living memorials and on urban agriculture as a means to promote food security, community empowerment, social inclusion and ecosystem services

## INTRODUCTION

As demonstrated in numerous anthropological studies, trees are metaphors of individual and social health and constitute emblems of continuity, memory and regeneration (Rival, 1998, Schama, 1995). Tree planting therefore translates a quest for continuity and life creation. The study of spontaneous environmental initiatives undertaken in the specific circumstances of conflicts or disasters (Helphand, 2006) has led to a growing research field in social science, “greening in the red zone”, which focuses on the potential of community-based stewardship of nature through tree planting or urban agriculture as a source of intertwined social and ecological benefits and resilience “in the face of severe hardship” (Tidball and Krasny, 2014).

The case of Colombia adds a twist to the scope of these studies: on top of causing one of the largest international diasporas (UNHCR, 2016), the 50-year conflict which officially ended in November 2016 has led to the highest number of internally displaced population worldwide (UNHCR, 2016).

Contrary to Murray and Zautra's work (2011) on forced displacement, which analyses the phenomenon from one country (Sudan) to another (Australia), the focus here is on internal migration. It necessarily involves a double perspective to assess the possible benefits of

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