César López and the Escopetarra: The Power of Communication in Music-based Conflict Transformation Initiatives

Introduction

The concept of conflict transformation emerges as a perspective that challenges certain assumptions of conflict resolution and conflict management (Lederach, 2003). The idea of transformation does not entail the elimination or control of conflict, and rather regards conflict as a natural source of change, which is reflected in the transformation of attitudes, assumptions and behaviours, among other elements. This transformation may be attained through an important number of methods and approaches, which include music as an activity that involves emotional and cognitive elements.

The present study aims to explain how attitudinal change may occur through music-based initiatives and campaigns which seek this transformation using persuasive messages. In particular, this research examines the work of César López with the “escopetarra,” a shotgun turned into a guitar invented by him. César López is a Colombian musician and peace activist who has participated in various peace projects in Colombia. He named this symbolic musical instrument by linking the Spanish words “escopeta” (shotgun) and
“guitarra” (guitar) and widely plays the *escopetarra* within his peace projects and workshops, as a symbol of peace. In addition, López and the *luthier* Alberto Paredes have built several *escopetarras* that have been given to musicians, peace activists and institutions around the world.

By understanding why music-based conflict transformation initiatives may be effective in order to change people’s attitudes and behaviours, and what the variables of their communicative power may be, we will be able to design music-based approaches that address specific attitudinal changes, facilitating conflict transformation processes. Therefore, this study seeks to respond to the following questions: to what extent is César Lopez able to effectively communicate with his audiences to persuade them and achieve a change in their attitudes and behaviour? Is he able to persuade them or not, and why? And also, what role does music play, if any, in this?

Colombia has faced an intense violent conflict since the 1980s, with the presence of guerrillas,\(^1\) paramilitary groups, drug dealers and criminal bands. From 1985 until July 2013, 166,069 civilians have been killed (GMH, 2013, p.32)\(^2\). Moreover, Colombia registers one of the highest numbers of Internally Displaced People (IDPs) in the world: although the government claimed that there were 3.9 million IDPs up to October 2011, the NGO Codhes registered almost 5.5 million IDPs during the period 1985-2011 (Codhes, 2013).

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\(^1\) Currently, there are two guerrilla groups: the *FARC-EP* guerrilla –Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo (in English, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia-People’s Army) and the *ELN* guerrilla –Ejército de Liberación Nacional (in English, National Liberation Army).

\(^2\) This number does not include the 11,238 civil victims documented by the Historical Memory Group (GMH) during the period 1958 - 1984, and the war casualties, which are 44,787 (GMH, 2013, P.32).
2011). Colombia also registers one of the highest numbers of landmine and unexploded ordnances victims in the world: 10,607 up to October 2013.

In 2003, after the signature of the “Santa Fe de Ralito Agreement”, the Colombian government started a Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration process with the paramilitary groups. The “Justice and Peace Law” – law 975 of 2005 – was enacted as the main legal framework of this process, setting the legal dispositions for the reintegration of ex-combatants and the fulfilment of victims’ rights to know the truth, to find justice, and to be awarded reparations. Within this broad context, Cesar López works with victims and ex-combatants of the Colombian conflict through workshops that involve dialogue, experiences exchange, and music.

**Methodology**

The present study used a qualitative approach mainly based on ethnographic methods. Concerning the work of César López, a review of secondary sources was conducted, as well as an informal interview with the musician. Regarding his audiences, data were initially collected through a focal group exercise organized in Bogotá, Colombia on December 19, 2011, with fifteen IDPs that participated in a workshop lead by César López using the *escopetarra*. The exercise focused on gaining insight into the reactions of the participants, as well as their opinion regarding the *escopetarra* itself, Cesar López as a peace activist, and the fact of using music as a tool during the workshop (See Appendix 1).

In addition, an online survey was conducted in January 2012 in order to examine the thoughts and opinions regarding César López and the *escopetarra* after watching a video of
him playing this instrument in front of an audience. The survey, which aimed to examine the impact of the *escopetarra* in terms of attitudinal and behavioural change towards the Colombian conflict (See Appendix 2), was distributed through people of high and medium income level, who were not victims of the internal conflict (with one single exception).

The purpose of collecting data through these different methods was to analyze the reactions of the two audiences to which César López mainly addresses his work. On the one hand, he concentrates on an audience of people who are either related to the armed conflict (victims and ex-combatants) or live in vulnerable conditions. The usual method to reach these persons consists in workshops or small concerts, like the one attended by the victims of this study. The second audience, in contrast, is composed of Colombians who have not experienced the conflict directly, who reside in urban areas or abroad, and might be indifferent to the conflict. This second audience knows about César López and the *escopetarra* mostly through the media.

**Theoretical Framework**

In his book *“Preparing for Peace: Conflict Transformation across Cultures,”* John Paul Lederach suggests a framework for conflict transformation. Throughout the chapter “A Framework for Building Peace;” he explores the meaning and scope of the word *transformation* within the theory and practice of peacebuilding, placing emphasis on the

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3 To watch the video, please see: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ROCla9dvxxg](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ROCla9dvxxg). This video was selected because the escopetarra’s sound is clearly heard and the instrument is plainly visible. Although there are other videos where César López is performing with the instrument, he appears within broader orchestras or scenarios where the escopetarra is not the leading instrument.
descriptive and prescriptive nature of the concept. Transformation does not only describe the dynamics of conflict; it also makes reference to the main purpose of peacebuilding, which essentially consists in transforming relationships and seeking systemic change, in order to increase justice, reduce violence, and promote social and individual empowerment, forgiveness and reconciliation (Lederach 1995, 23).

Transformation provides a language that more adequately approximates the nature of conflict and how it works and underscores the goals and purposes of the field (...) It describes more accurately the impact of conflict on the patterns of communication, expression, and perception. Transformation suggests a dynamic understanding that conflict can move in destructive or constructive directions, but proposes an effort to maximize the achievement of constructive, mutually beneficial processes and outcomes (Lederach 1995, 18-19).

In addition, he emphasizes the contribution that nonviolent resistance and advocacy make to conflict transformation endeavours. Nonviolent advocacy raises awareness of basics interests and needs in a society, and seeks to shake out the state of silence and conformism to achieve social transformation and justice through peaceful means (Lederach 1995, 14-15). This change and awareness may be reflected in a transformation of attitudes, assumptions and behaviours of individuals towards different aspects of the conflict such as the relationship with the former enemy, with the victims, with their own community, and with the conflict itself.

Acknowledging the role that nonviolent advocacy may play in conflict transformation, this study examines an instrument frequently used in political activism, yet understudied in the literature: music. Several well-known artists have used music to raise awareness or support some social movement; John Lennon, Bob Marley, Mercedes Sosa and Ruben Blades are some examples of this. Additionally, many social movements or non violent advocacy have
used music as an instrument to achieve different goals. Music may be instrumentalized to communicate internally and externally, to attract more participants to the movement, to connect emotionally, to influence certain audiences, and to mobilize resources, among others (Adams 2002, 27).

Some of the small number of authors who have turned their attention to the link between music and conflict transformation highlight music’s capacity to trigger emotional expressions. These may lead to processes of personal or communal healing, as well as expressions of sympathy⁴ between former enemies or other parties that were just indifferent to each other (Abi-Ezzi 2008; Baily 1999; Beckles 2009; Bergh 2008; Cohen 2005 and 2008; Epskamp 1999; Lederach 2005; Pouligny 2003; Robertson 2010; Sanfeliu 2010; Shank and Schirch 2008; The Institute of Democracy and Human Rights and CERI 2008; Urbain et al. 2008; Zelizer 2003 and 2007).

Music may also transform or foster relationships through people performing music together (Baily 1999; Bergh 2008; Cohen 2005; Robertson 2010). In some cases, this collective activity may lead to the construction or discovery of new shared identities, which entails a change of attitudes, assumptions and behaviours regarding the other. Drum workshops in Africa, for example, have helped former enemies to discover their common humanity, or to endow each other with a new identity: instead of thinking about the other as a prosecutor,

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⁴ Halper and Weinstein outline the limitations of sympathy in relation to empathy in the sense that “it is limited to the moment of emotional resonance.” However, they acknowledge that sympathy facilitates the recognition of the other as an emotional being and also entails leaving aside a “dominant mood of resentment”, which are both positive steps to change relationships between opposing parties. (Halper and Weinstein 2004: 574).
victim or survivor, enemies start seeing each other as drummers, equal members of a group of people making music (Cohen 2005, 14). In other cases, the collective performance strengthens cultural identities that are in risk of being forgotten (Baily 1999), or celebrates the encounter of cultural diversity (Bergh 2008; Robertson 2010).

Hence, music’s capacity to transform relationships, attitudes and behaviours within musicians and their audiences is recognized by the literature. However, the variables to influence audiences in order to attain effective changes continue to be an understudied topic. In general, the literature pays little attention to music’s effect on listeners, assuming that the musical meaning is translated to receptors without any transformation in the communication process. Abi-Ezzi, Bergh, and Cohen have begun to explore this space between what is intended and what is received, highlighting how the discourse behind music, the level of involvement during the performance, and the values and emotional predispositions of listeners are all factors that influence the way music is perceived and may generate changes (Abi-Ezzi 2008; Bergh 2008; Cohen 2008). However, these authors remain as exceptions in the literature and more research is needed in this direction.

**Music and the Power of Communication**

In this paper, it will be assumed that art in general and music in particular, are means of communication. In this sense, it is particularly helpful to turn the attention towards

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5 It is important to highlight that some authors do not conceive music as a means of communication. Some musicologists argue that there is no meaning found within musical experience other than the musical material itself (Adorno, 1976 and Neubauer, 1999, among others).
literature on strategic communication, a perspective that approaches the gap between what is intended and what is perceived by the audience through several criteria.

The literature on strategic communication acknowledges the double power that communication entails. As Rafael Alberto Pérez explains, on the one hand, communication induces political and economic changes based on entrepreneurial/political/institutional goals; on the other hand, it may give rise to situations where some actors gain a dominant position while others obtain a less favourable one (Pérez 2008, 449).

Recalling what Lederach stated about conflict transformation, this last statement could be regarded as a way to achieve conflict transformation when a “weak” actor gains a better position thanks to the power of communication, transforming unequal relationships towards more constructive ones. It may be also a way to maximize the achievement of constructive, mutually beneficial processes and outcomes, and a contribution to Nonviolent advocacy and its aim to raise awareness and achieve social transformation through peaceful means.

Once this power is recognized, it is important to channel it into what is intended (the goals) and what is received (interpretation), leading to the expected behavioural and attitudinal change in the target audience. There are four variables that need to be carefully considered in order to build a communication strategy (Pérez 2008, 454):

1. The selection of the audience, which includes a characterization of their values, beliefs, assumptions and behaviors, to really understand who they are.

2. The selection of the key message, in other words, what will be communicated.
3. The selection of the strategy by which the message will be sent (means), including the channels and the content proposal (picture, video, radio, graphics, music, etc.)

4. Time: The selection of the time and frequency of the message (when and how often the message will be sent).

As mentioned before, music-based activities in conflict transformation scenarios aim to influence and persuade an audience to raise awareness and transform relationships towards peace. This is also the aim of César López and the symbolic instrument called escopetarra which case study offers useful inputs in the task of transforming relationships, attitudes, assumptions and behaviours in a society through music and art, as it will be outlined in the following section.

**César López and the escopetarra**

César López is a well known musician who was nominated in 2006 as a “Nonviolence messenger” by the United Nations. From this time on, he created and led a project called "Generation of Nonviolence," an initiative that brought together young artists committed to peacebuilding in several regions of Colombia. He has also developed a high number of workshops throughout Colombia with vulnerable communities, victims and ex-combatants for almost ten years. From these exercises, he created the album “Toda Bala es Perdida”

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*In Spanish, “stray bullet” is expressed as “Lost bullet”. The album is named “Every bullet is lost,” meaning that all bullets are worthless while taking the expression of “lost bullet.” In English the translation “Every bullet is a stray bullet” clearly does not reflect the sense of the album title.*
composed of sixteen songs about peacebuilding and his most pressing concerns about the internal conflict in the country.

The idea of the *escopetarra* came to López after seeing a soldier holding a rifle like a guitar, in 2003, when he built the first one. In 2006, after the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) process with the paramilitary groups, he received, from the Colombia’s peace Commissioner’s office, twelve AK-47 assault rifles that were handed over during the disarmament by the ex-combatants. With this material, the artist built additional *escopetarras* that were given to high-profile musicians and organizations, and kept one of the instruments for his own concerts and workshops.

When asked about his work, César Lopez explained that “he wants to be the voice of those who have no voice”; he wants to bring stories from one place to the other so people learn from each other, change their perception of the conflict, and do something about it. However, he does not only want to raise awareness about the conflict, but also about stories of transformation, reconciliation and peace that he has witnessed or heard during his work. In sum, he pursues two different purposes: to raise the awareness of those who are indifferent to the conflict and to convey a message of hope and empowerment to those who have suffered the consequences of war or live in vulnerable conditions (López, 2010).

**A Workshop with Cesar López**

In this section, I will describe the workshop led by César López in December 2011 in which fifteen IDPs participated and which is one of the ethnographic methods employed in this study to analyze the power of communication of the *escopetarra*. 
He began the activity with the introduction of the participants, encouraging people to go beyond their names and tell more about themselves. With a background music played by the artist on a standard guitar, the participants shared an important amount of information regarding their lives, their memories, their thoughts and also their feelings about their recent history. In general, it can be stated that it was a cathartic experience mediated by background music.

After listening to the stories of the victims, César López took out the instrument from its case, showed it to the participants and narrated its story: the AK-47 assault rifle employed in building his *escopetarra* belonged to a cargo of weapons that was sold to the FARC guerrilla in a very peculiar way: they were dropped with parachutes from the sky in the jungle in the southern part of the country. Since it was rumoured that the weapons could have a chip that could be detected, the guerrilla decided to abandon them and they were taken by paramilitary groups. Finally, in 2006 a member of the southern block of these paramilitary groups decided to disarm and demobilize, and handed over his weapon which was transformed into the *escopetarra* that López was holding in his hands.

From that moment on, César López played some songs, using the *escopetarra* from time to time while telling some stories he had collected during his work as peace activist. He also shared some of the thoughts about the *escopetarra* as symbol of peace and transformation: “the *escopetarra* represents the victory of the good things over the negative ones (…) if the weapon can change, then certainly human beings can change.” He also stated: “There was a time when a teacher, after seeing the instrument, told me ‘A man needs one single finger to
kill a person, but uses ten fingers, his brain and his heart to communicate emotions and play a guitar.”

He also recalled the DDR context that preceded the instrument:

The escopetarra is in my hands because a former soldier, a living human being who decided to disarm himself, who decided to transform his life, handed over the rifle in the context of a peace process. The transformation can be clearly seen through this instrument: before, the combatant and his gun were a source of fear, of intimidation, of pain. Nowadays, he is a man with another plan for his life, maybe a family, maybe a small enterprise; and the rifle now shoots musical notes instead of bullets, and gives life instead of death.

During the workshop, he also encouraged participants to share not only their thoughts but also their feelings towards the escopetarra. Many of them were frightened since the experience reminded them about their history as residents of conflict-affected areas. Many others were surprised when they realized it was a guitar and not a gun. Either way, it was definitely an instrument that caught their attention and elicited many reactions. In the end, he persuaded the participants to tell their thoughts and plans for the future while promoting a message of empowerment and hope.

In general, it was a space mediated by his music and the escopetarra where people expressed their emotions, shared thoughts regarding the symbol, released their feelings and

7 César López, focal group exercise, December 2011.
8 Ibid.
emotions, but also received the message of the escopetarra effectively, as will be outlined in the next section.

**The persuasion of the escopetarra**

It is important to reiterate that César López mainly focuses his work with the escopetarra upon two audiences and contexts. The first audience includes people in vulnerable conditions, most of them directly affected by the conflict. They get in contact with the escopetarra through workshops led by the musician, who says that his overall goal is “to be the voice of those who have no voice” and bring a message of hope, empowerment and reconciliation. The second audience is composed of Colombians who have not experienced the conflict directly, who reside in urban areas or abroad, and may be indifferent to the conflict because they have not suffered from it directly. Most of them have heard of César López and the escopetarra through the media.

Through the workshop, it was clear that César López was able to persuade this audience to a high extent and achieve his communication goals. The victims of the conflict that participated in the exercise felt represented by him and perceived the escopetarra and its message in a very positive way. These are some of the sentences pronounced by the participants during the focus group exercise carried out after the workshop:

“To us, the escopetarra represents those old days full of sadness and fear, but at the same time, it represents a beautiful transformation,”

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9 One of the participants even sang a song that he had composed regarding his personal history, with tears in his eyes.
“The escopetarra is a symbol of peace,”

“The escopetarra is a symbol of peace,”

“It is a symbol of peace,”

“César López encourages us to look forward into the future instead of going back into the past,”

“We feel represented by him,”

“Sometimes one believes that when there is a mistake people cannot change, that things will continue this way, but look at that transformation! A youth, a child, an adult can change.”

In addition, when participants were asked about their opinion regarding the escopetarra, they took ownership of the story and conveyed messages similar to those recounted by the musician: “if the weapon can change, then people’s life can change.” In sum, he basically succeeded in delivering his message of transformation, empowerment, hope and reconciliation, as well as being the voice of those who have no voice (the victims), since they felt represented by the musician, his songs and his message.

Regarding the second audience, a number of online articles about César López and videos uploaded on YouTube were reviewed and it was observed that an important percentage of the public’s comments were negative, rejected the initiative, questioned its originality, and mocked the escopetarra. As a matter of fact, one of the most important columnists in

10 Focal group exercise, December 2011

11 This review was made up to September 2011. The following videos and articles were reviewed:

Colombia, Daniel Samper Ospina, has written three articles making fun of the instrument and the initiative.\textsuperscript{12}

In addition, an online survey answered by 35 individuals was conducted, addressed to people of high and medium income level not related to the internal conflict. In the survey, a video where César López performs with the \textit{escopetarra} was shown, since television, radio and Internet are the most frequent means employed by the artist to reach out to these people.

For the purpose of the analysis, it is important to recall his goals regarding this audience: he wants to send an alert to, and raise the awareness of those who are indifferent to the conflict and who have not experienced its consequences directly. He wants to change their perception about their role in Colombian society so that people may feel motivated to take more responsibility.

The results of the online survey indicated that almost forty percent of the people have a negative or sceptical idea about the \textit{escopetarra}, while sixty percent gave a positive opinion about it. These are some of the positive statements:

- “A symbol for our country: reawakening from darkness,”
- “It is one of the most outstanding ideas that a citizen has had with the purpose of changing the conflict perception,”

“It brings a message of transformation and change. It is better understood in concert.”

In contrast, these are some of the negative opinions:

“It is really sad to see how we have ended up with this kind of campaigns,”
“It is pathetic,”
“I doubt about its impact,”
“It is violent, in one way or another he is saying that guns are worth something” (Online Survey, January 2012).

In other words, the analysis suggests that César López is partially successful in communicating with this second audience and achieving a change in their attitudes, assumptions and behaviours towards the internal armed conflict. Although the majority of the people in the survey acknowledged his message of awareness regarding the conflict, and felt connected with his message of peace, there is also an important percentage who reject the escopetarra and his music, doubts its impact, or does not understand its meaning. Finally, only one person out of thirty nine affirmed that her/his perception of the Colombian conflict changed after watching the performance with the escopetarra.

To understand the reasons behind such a significant difference between the first audience and the second audience the literature on communication constitutes a particularly useful tool. As mentioned before, if we aim to persuade certain audiences through music-based peacebuilding activities, that is, if we want to channel the power of communication towards our objectives, we need to take into account the four basic variables of any communication strategy: audience, message, means and time.
With the first audience, composed of victims and ex-combatants, but also of people in vulnerable conditions, César López employs a very effective channel to reach them: the workshops/concerts. Since he begins the workshop by listening to their personal stories, thoughts and feelings, he is able to connect with the audience in a more profound and personal way; in other words, he has more information about the audience he is reaching out and can use it to develop a better way to address them. Second, he explains in detail the history behind the “escopetarra” and the meaning of the symbol, clarifying the message of conflict transformation and reconciliation he aims to convey through his invention. Regarding the means, the message is communicated through words and music, which enable a cognitive and emotional connection with the audience and therefore enhance the power to communicate his message.

In contrast, the second audience barely knows about the story behind the instrument. Although it is very important to highlight the disarmament and demobilization of the previous owner of the escopetarra, in order to better explain its symbolic transformation, many people ignore this detail. There are two videos with long interviews with César López where he actually tells the story and explains the message of the escopetarra. However, there is no website where the instrument is explained, or even a song that actually carries its message.

That may also cause the confusion between his instrument and the guitar of Peter Tosh, a reggae singer of the 70s. This musician was given a custom-built guitar in the shape of an M16 rifle by a fan, which he used in several public appearances. Although the instrument is not made from a rifle but only has its shape, several people on the Internet, and even one of
the respondents of the online survey, criticized Lopez’s work by questioning its originality.\footnote{To see the guitar given to Peter Tosh, see: http://jahblemmuzik.tumblr.com/post/4258135668/the-hunt-for-peter-tosh-s-m16-guitar (retrieved November 2011).}

In addition, it is important to acknowledge that Colombia is a country that has faced a protracted conflict and people are bored of art expressions that illustrate violence, such as the large number of Colombian films (and even Hollywood movies) related to drugs and war. This may also be an important factor that is preventing César López’s escopetarra from reaching the second audience, because it may be neither attractive nor interesting; therefore, the way the information is presented becomes crucial.

The attractiveness of many art initiatives actually lies in the story behind them. People like and react to stories or music that connects with their beliefs, emotions, memory and identity, as argued by Craig Robertson in this volume. The power of the escopetarra, as many other symbols, is based on the story that it represents: a story of transformation, the victory of positive things over hateful ones, a story of reconciliation. If the story is not told, the symbol may be misinterpreted, misunderstood or criticized and may not lead to conflict transformation.

In other words, the escopetarra of Cesar Lopez, as a conflict transformation project, would better achieve its goals if the power of communication of music-based conflict transformation initiatives were acknowledged. Being also a nonviolent advocacy project, which seeks to raise awareness in Colombian society and inspire solidarity and empathy
with victims and ex-combatants, it is crucial to reach all his audiences in a more effective way.

As mentioned in the theoretical framework, music may be a potential means to attract more participants to a social movement; to connect emotionally and influence the audience; to mobilize resources; to promote personal or communal healing, as well as expressions of sympathy between former enemies; and to celebrate the encounter of cultural diversity.

The variables to influence these audiences in order to attain effective changes lie on the power of communication and how we can channel it for conflict transformation. By understanding the audience with their beliefs, emotions, memory and identity features; the specific conflict transformation message; and the best time and frequency to deliver it, we can create more persuasive music-based conflict transformation activities, leading to the expected behavioural and attitudinal change in the target audience.

**Conclusions**

The analysis of the escopetarra initiative through the lenses of communication reveals some of the variables that determine the effectiveness of music-based initiatives within conflict transformation scenarios. An effective campaign or message with music needs to consider the characteristics of the audience, the message to be sent, the means through which the message is delivered, and the time and frequency of the message. Neglecting any or all these issues may lead to ineffective strategies or unwanted effects that prevent the endeavour from contributing to a constructive transformation towards peace. As referred in the theoretical framework, music-based initiatives have the potential to transform
relationships and change the attitudes, assumptions and behaviours of their target audiences. However, when their power of communication is not strategically channelled towards what is intended in terms of peace building, there is a risk of failure and of people perceiving these experiences as “just another peace campaign.”

Appendix 1: Focus Group Guidelines

1. Did you previously know César López?

2. What do you think about the escopetarra? What does this instrument represent for you?

3. What emotions and feelings did you feel when you heard the escopetarra?

4. What reflection did César López's song lyrics generate in you?

5. Do you feel represented by his lyrics?

6. Do you believe this kind of workshop would be the same with a regular guitar?

7. Do you think this workshop would be the same if it were done without music?

8. Do artists like César López have power in society?

Appendix 2: Online Survey Questions

1. City where you live

2. Occupation
3. What is your social income level?"¹⁴

4. Have you been a victim of the Colombian conflict?

5. Do you know César López?

6. We invite you to watch the following 3 minute video
(http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ROCla9dvxxg) and answer the following questions:

In a short sentence describe what the video transmits to you:

7. What elements of the video did you think were more important?

8. What is your opinion about the escopetarra?

9. Would you go to a César López concert?

10. After listening to this song, did your perception of the Colombian conflict change in any way?

References


¹⁴ Socio economic strata: is a tool of the Colombian government (Ley 142 de 1994, Artículo 102 ) to classify real estate properties in accordance with the classification of the DANE that evaluate the real estate unit based on poverty levels, public services, location, indigenous population and others. This classification determines the level of taxation, the fare of public services (water, energy, phone and gas), access to the free health services, fares at public universities, access to poverty alleviation programs etc. In most cases estratos 1 and 2 get subsidies from the upper estratos 4,5 and 6.


López, César. 2010. Informal interview, June 22, 2010

Neubeuar, John, “Overtones of Culture”, Comparative Literature Vol. 51, No. 3 (Summer, 1999), 243-254


