

Music and Reconciliation in Colombia: Opportunities and Limitations of Songs Composed by Victims

MARÍA ELISA PINTO GARCÍA

Program for Social Communication for Peace | Santo Tomas University | Colombia

CEO | Prolongar Foundation | Colombia*

ABSTRACT

Colombia is a war-torn society where an important number of conflict-related songs have been composed by victims at the grassroots level. In order to develop a better understanding of the scope of music as a tool for reconciliation, this paper examines some of these songs and analyzes the extent to which this music may or may not contribute to reconciliation in both the audience and the composers. To do so, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the composers, and a focus group exercise with ex-combatants was organized in order to analyze the impact of these songs on the listeners.

The results of the analysis indicate that these songs entail opportunities but also limitations regarding reconciliation. On one hand, they have constituted storytelling tools that contribute to the historical memory of the conflict in Colombia in a way that is accessible for all types of publics. In addition, the process of composition by victims and the musical activity itself are an outlet through which composers release feelings and redefine identities. Moreover, in an audience made up of ex-combatants, there were some expressions of sympathy, understanding, and trust. However, the research shows contrary effects as well. The content of some songs may incite revenge, reinforce stereotypes and mistrust, and enlarge differences between the sides instead of reducing the distances. The results indicate that music may embody several opportunities but also limitations as a tool for reconciliation.

* Carrera 48 #91-94 Bogota D.C., Colombia

INTRODUCTION

It is generally accepted that music may be a tool for peace. Ranging from drumming workshops in Burundi for Hutu and Tutsi young people that have helped them to re-humanize each other (Cohen, 2005, p.14), to the Colombian musician Cesar López who has turned shotguns into guitars creating *Escopetarras*,¹ there are numerous examples of music being used as an instrument for peace around the globe. However, there is not a wide range of research on the role of art and music in reconciliation. Although the literature has increasingly recognized that symbols, rituals, and arts may play an important role in building relationships within divided societies, further exploration is needed.

Specifically regarding music, research is even more limited and there is little development on the conditions, capacities, and methods with which to make music a powerful tool for reconciliation. With few exceptions, the literature on peace studies related to music tends to be overoptimistic and anecdotal. Little theoretical and grounded evidence is given to support the argument. In addition, the literature neglects music's effect on the listeners, an important aspect that needs to be considered.

In order to contribute to the assessment of the role of music in reconciliation, this article seeks to move beyond a simplistic approach that asserts that 'music is good for reconciliation' to a richer articulation of *how* and in *what cases* music may or may not contribute to reconciliation. To do so, the research examines several songs with conflict-related lyrics composed by victims of political conflict in Colombian and analyzes three elements: the content of the lyrics, the effects and reasons for creating these songs related to the composers, and the reactions of the listeners.

Colombia has faced an intense violent conflict since the 1980s, with the presence of guerrilla forces, paramilitary groups, drug dealers, and other criminal bands. Civilians have become their central target. A recent report from the Historical Memory Group consolidated the data for the period 1985-2012 ("Estadísticas del conflicto", 2013). In total, 166,069 civilians were killed (from 1985 to July 2013), and the violence has generated 5,712,506 internally displaced people, 27,023 kidnapping victims, 11,751 massacres victims, 25,007 forced disappearance victims, 1,754 sexual violence victims, 10,189 landmine and unexploded ordnances victims, 23,161 selective assassinations victims (from 1981 to 2012), and 5,156 illicit recruitment victims.

In 2003, after the signature of the "Santa Fe de Ralito" Peace Agreement, the Colombian government started a Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration process (DDR) 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 also for the fulfilment of victims' rights to know the truth, to find justice, and to be awarded reparations. Within this broad context, victims have used lyrics set to music as a storytelling tool to describe past events of the internal conflict and to express emotions connected to those events. Given this evolving situation, this paper answers the following questions: Why have victims in Colombia decided to compose songs related to the conflict? To what extent do these songs contribute to reconciliation in both the listeners and the composers?

¹ Escopetarra is a name derived from the Spanish words *escopeta* (shotgun) and *guitarra* (guitar). For more information, see "Colombian musicians organize online" (2011).

If we understand why victims in a conflict choose using music to deal with past experiences, and what kind of effects this music represents in terms of reconciliation, we will better understand the precise role that music may play as a tool for peacebuilding at the grassroots level. Furthermore, we will learn more about music as a method to achieve important aspects of reconciliation such as truth, memory, identity change, acknowledgement of guilt, and sympathy between opposing parties. Essentially, we will better understand the scope of music as a tool for reconciliation.

The present paper argues that these songs entail opportunities, but also limitations in the process of reconciliation. On one hand, they embody storytelling tools that contribute to the historical memory of the conflict in a way that is accessible for all types of publics. In addition, the process of composition and the musical activity itself embody an outlet through which composers release feelings and redefine identities. Moreover, in an audience made up of ex-combatants unrelated to the composers, there were some expressions of emotional resonance, support and understanding. On the other hand, the research shows contrary effects as well. The straightforward and harsh content of some songs may reinforce mistrust, emphasize stereotypes, and enlarge differences between the sides instead of reducing the distances. Music as an instrument for reconciliation may entail opportunities but also limitations.

METHODOLOGY

The present study used a qualitative approach based on ethnographic methods. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and a focus group exercise conducted in Bogotá, Colombia during August 2010. First, five informal interviews were conducted with officials, artists, psychologists, and volunteers who had been involved directly or indirectly with victims-composers. These conversations did not only constitute an important resource to understand why victims in Colombia have decided to compose conflict-related songs, but these informants also assisted me in contacting the victims-composers who were interviewed for the purposes of this article.

Second, three semi-structured interviews were conducted with victims-composers who had written conflict-related songs in the recent past. These victims were selected either because they lived in Bogotá, or because it was possible to contact them through a telephone call. These interviews focused on gaining an insight into the reasons, needs, and motivations for creating songs and choosing music as a means of expression. Similarly, the effects of the process of composition and the actual playing of the music as steps towards reconciliation were also examined (See Appendix 1 for the interview protocol.)

Third, a focus group exercise was organized with six ex-combatants – three women and three men – who listened to the song *Homenaje a Nuestros Mártires* (in English, “Tribute to our Martyrs”) composed by *Renacientes*, a rap group of victims from the Chocó region.² The contact with this group of people could only be established through the Colombian Agency for Reintegration, the official entity that is in charge of the DDR process. In other words, this organisation selected the group of participants for the exercise. The aim was to examine which emotions stirred within the participants when listening to music composed by victims, and also which

² For the entire lyrics of the song “Tribute to our Martyrs”, see Appendix 2, section B.

attitudes they would adopt towards the singers after listening to the song (See Appendix 1 for this focus group protocol.)

Finally, Although the process of gathering the songs composed by victims entailed various difficulties, thirty-three songs were gathered during the field research in the capital city, Bogotá. This number of songs is small compared to the actual number of song themes that may exist in rural areas of Colombia. Through the interviews conducted with officials, artists, psychologists, and the composers themselves, it was discovered that a significant number of these songs remain in distant areas and are not publicly known since they are not recorded or broadcast through any means of communication. As a matter of fact, some of the songs collected in this research were sang *a cappella* by the composers during the interview.³ In general, these songs are not broadcast on local or national radio stations, only a few have been recorded on commercial CDs or YouTube videos, and the majority of them subsist in a purely oral form. However, the thirty-three songs gathered here are considered to be a sufficient sample for the qualitative analysis carried out throughout this research (See Appendix 3 for this sample list of songs).

THE STATE OF KNOWLEDGE

The term reconciliation has long been employed by researchers and practitioners in the field of peace studies; however, over the last two decades, reconciliation began to emerge as a specific area of study parallel to conflict resolution and peacebuilding (Bar-Tal and Bennik 2004, p. 11). Bar-Siman-Tov (2004) distinguishes two approaches in the literature on reconciliation: the liberal approach and the social-psychological approach. The liberal approach in international relations “emphasizes the need to accelerate the security, economic, and political cooperation between the sides, thereby, enabling the peace to spill over from the ruling elites to all sectors of the population” (Bar-Siman-Tov 2004, p. 5). The social-psychological approach focuses on the relationships of the opposing parties, giving importance to the emotional and cognitive aspects of reconciliation (Asmal *et al.*, 1997; Bar-Siman-Tov, 2004; Bar-Tal, 2000; Bar-Tal and Bennik, 2004; Cohen, 2005; Eskamp, 1999; Fisher, 2001; Galtung, 2001; Halpern and Weinstein, 2004; Kaufman, 2006; Kelman, 1999; Kelman, 2004; Kriesberg, 2001; Kriesberg, 2004; Lederach, 1997; Long and Brecke, 2003; Marrow, 1999; Montville, 2001; Ross, 2004; Schirch, 2001; Staub, 2006; Volkan, 1990).

In view of the fact that the arts may play an important role in reconciliation on both the sensory and cognitive levels of human experience (Cohen, 2005, p. 5), this literature review focuses on the social-psychological approach. More specifically, this paper carefully examines the aspects of reconciliation related to memory, truth, acknowledgement, identity, sympathy, and releasing and mourning loss, since music may embody an outlet to express and experience these processes. The paper also reviews the literature related to art and music in the field of peace studies, which continue to be scarce despite of the growing number of scholars interested in the topic.

THE SOCIAL-PSYCHOLOGICAL APPROACH

There is a general lack of consensus on the definition of reconciliation in the literature, and also in the social-psychological approach. Some of the authors define

³ A *Capella* refers to music sung without accompanying instruments.

reconciliation as a desired outcome determined by peaceful and harmonious relationships with mutual acceptance and understanding (Asmal *et al.*, 1997, p. 46; Bar-Tal and Bennink, 2004, p. 15; Marrow, 1999, p. 132; Staub, 2006, p. 868). Others define reconciliation as a continuum or a process that essentially consists in transforming relationships of hostility into relationships of harmony (Cohen, 2005; Kaufman, 2006; Kriesberg, 2001; Kriesberg, 2004; Lederach, 2001; Ross, 2004). A third branch defines reconciliation in terms of 'elements', 'components', 'dimensions' or 'tasks', where the concepts of truth, justice, and security are pointed out as necessary conditions to achieve reconciliation (Bar-Tal, 2000; Cohen, 2005; Kelman, 1999; Kriesberg, 2004; Lederach, 1997).⁴

In this paper, reconciliation will refer to a process of changing relationships of hostility, mistrust and resentment into relationships of trust and mutual understanding. This process entails various aspects and steps, ranging from the absence of violence and a mere coexistence between the parties, to harmonious relations based on trust and mutual understanding. I will focus on various aspects that are recognized by the literature as significant steps towards reconciliation with which music may play an important role: (a) the release of emotions and mourning, (b) the reconstruction of violent events to avoid their recurrence, (c) the exposition and recognition of the different parties' narratives, (d) the acknowledgement of guilt and responsibility, (e) the redefinition of identities, and (f) the emergence of sympathy between the opposite parties.

Releasing emotions and mourning loss constitute basic steps towards reconciliation in the aftermath of violent conflict. Both are psychological processes that help individuals to accept loss by removing strong or violent emotions stemming from painful experiences. Without this catharsis, the accumulation of anger, resentment and rage can lead to the recurrence of violence, or the transmission of trauma to forthcoming generations (Cynthia, 2005, p. 26).

Reconstructing the historical memory of conflict is another important step towards reconciliation. This reconstruction is primarily aimed at avoiding the recurrence of past atrocities. It does this by raising the collective moral consciousness about violent events through an exposition of the truth by all parties.

However, the reconstruction of the past often entails multiple narratives and versions of the truth, which not only need to be told, but also need to be recognized by all parties. That is why there is also a wide agreement on the importance of a collective reconstruction of the past and the recognition of the different parties' narratives in the process of reconciliation. Within a conflict, each side holds a partial version of the truth that often focuses on the other group's mistakes and on the justification or victimhood of the in-group (Bar-Tal, 2000, p. 359). Partial truths typically justify anger, hostility, and vengeance (Kriesberg, 2004, p. 83). Hence, it is important to work on a collective reconstruction of the conflict's history that either includes a consensual and balanced version of the past (Bar-Tal, 2000; Kriesberg, 2004), or at least, a version where the "other's truth is admitted into one's own narrative" (Kelman, 2004, p. 123).

Another aspect of the process of reconciliation is the acknowledgement of guilt and responsibility of the different parties. For some scholars, it is not enough that truth and grievances are known; they must also be acknowledged by the rival group (Asmal

⁴ However, as it can be observed, even throughout the works of one scholar it is possible to find different or complementary definitions of reconciliation.

et al., 1997; Kelman, 2004; Ross, 2004). Others go a step further to argue that forgiveness and healing are also necessary (Lederach, 1997; Long and Brecke, 2003; Montville, 2001; Staub, 2006; Tutu, 1999); yet, there is no agreement regarding this specific issue throughout the literature (Bar-Tal and Bennink, 2004, p. 19). Nevertheless, it is generally assumed that a positive step towards reconciliation consists in recognizing the responsibility and guilt of the wrongdoing.

A redefinition of identities is also an important step towards reconciliation (Kelman, 2004; Long and Brecke, 2003; Ross, 2004; Schirch, 2001). During intractable conflicts, parties develop ideas, beliefs, and attitudes to interact with the other side. This often entails the negation of the opposing party as a central component of one's own identity (Kelman, 2004, p. 119), or a unidimensional view of oneself and the other that eliminates possible shared identities (Schirch, 2001, p. 150). In this sense, the redefinition of the parties' identities could only be built through logics that go beyond these images and allow the sides to create new relationships based on mutual trust and understanding.

Finally, in this redefinition of identities, sympathy may emerge between the parties as an important step in the process of reconciliation. Sympathy is about experiencing shared emotions with the other. It is a moment of emotional resonance that enables identification with the other and that highly contributes to rehumanization (Halper and Weinstein, 2004, p. 574). Although Halper and Weinstein (2004, p.574) themselves outline the limitations of sympathy in relation to empathy in the sense that "it is limited to the moment of emotional resonance," sympathy facilitates the recognition of the other as an emotional being and entails leaving aside a "dominant mood of resentment," which are both positive steps to start building relationships between opposing parties.

These six aspects of reconciliation may be achieved through different practical efforts that have been referred in the literature, *e.g.*, truth and reconciliation commissions, public trials (Bar-Tal and Bennink, 2004; Long and Brecke, 2003), "problem-solving workshops" (Kaufman, 2006, p. 207-208; Montville, 2001, p. 133), or "interactive conflict resolution" (Fisher, 2001). Although there are alternative approaches that are gaining space in the literature which promote the use of symbols, rituals, and art for achieving reconciliation, art still tends to be neglected or tangentially mentioned in the social-psychological approach of the literature on reconciliation.⁵

On the other hand, reconciliation has been primarily associated with top-down methods, *e.g.*, formal and informal dialogues between leaders, trials, truth and reconciliation commissions, and workshops with influential representatives, rather than bottom-up methods, *i.e.*, practices that emerge from the actors of conflict to deal with painful experiences and injustices at the grassroots level. Although some scholars and practitioners have researched the activities that may be conducted at the community level (cf: Lederach, 1997; Zelizer, 2008), these activities generally consist of methods to be conducted by outsiders rather than reinforcing the local people's practices. In other words, what the actors of conflict at the grassroots level – victims, survivors, and perpetrators – are doing to deal with painful memories and build new relationships needs to be further studied.

⁵ One exception is the work "Creative Approaches to Reconciliation" of Cynthia Cohen (2005), which mentions art and cultural work as "critical" to promoting reconciliation, and gives insight on how different types of cultural expressions may contribute to it. Her work is certainly an important contribution to the literature, although it is rather general without focusing on one type of art, region, or conflict scenario.

ART AND MUSIC IN THE LITERATURE ON PEACE STUDIES

An increasing number of scholars in peace studies have turned their attention to the role of art in reconciliation and healing. Art is considered a tool that allows people to find each other's humanity, release and share emotions, heal personal and/or collective trauma, communicate their version of the truth, appreciate the narrative of the other, deal with identity issues, and, in general, transform relationships and bring people together (Baily, 1999; Bergh, 2008; Cohen, 2005; Epskamp, 1999; Lederach, 2005; Laurence, 2008; Rik, 2008; Robertson, 2010; Shank and Schirch, 2008; Schirch, 2001; Skyllstad, 2008; The Institute of Democracy and Human Rights and CERI, 2008; Urbain *et al.*, 2008; van den Dungen, 2008; Zelizer, 2003, 2007).

Regarding music specifically, an important question that first arises is whether music is inherently peaceful. In the volume "Music and Conflict Transformation" edited by Olivier Urbain, George Kent describes several examples in which music has often been used to "celebrate war, viciousness, hate and humiliation" (Kent 2008, p.104). The author also argues that music may be manipulated for the ends of "those who control the context." He gives as an example the manipulation of classical music with propaganda purposes in the Nazi Germany (Kent, 2008, p. 106). Similarly, Bergh and Sloboda review the literature on music in conflict and also point to several examples where music has been used "to maintain boundaries between enemies, either by performing music that emerged during a conflict, by creating new music that commemorates a conflict, or through music that highlights latent conflicts to foment war" (Bergh and Sloboda, 2010, pp. 4-5).

Acknowledging that music is not inherently peaceful, I turn to the literature that examines the role that music may play in reconciliation, which is focused on the concept of conflict transformation (Baily, 1999; Beckles, 2009; Bergh, 2007; Bergh and Sloboda, 2010; Cohen, 2005; Lederach, 2005; Robertson, 2010; Sanfelieu, 2010; Urbain *et al.*, 2008; Zelizer, 2003).⁶ Ranging from music therapy to multicultural festivals, scholars outline various initiatives that employ music for conflict transformation. I will focus on those aspects of the literature that connect with the theme of reconciliation, and which are relevant for the purpose of this paper and its case study: songs composed by victims of the Colombian conflict.

A number of authors highlight music's capacity for emotional expression (Baily, 1999; Bergh, 2007; Cohen, 2005; Lederach, 2005; López Vinader, 2008; Rik, 2008; Skyllstad, 2008; van der Dungen, 2008; Zelizer, 2003). Music is not only a means through which feelings and emotions are communicated in verbal and non-verbal ways; music may also stir emotions and inspire people. These features lead to processes of healing and sympathy that are referred both by scholars from the peace studies area, and by the increasing literature from music therapists on conflict transformation (Bergh and Sloboda, 2010, p. 7).

Music likewise constitutes a means through which people tell their own stories and truths, recreate memories of the past, and also get to know the narratives of one another (Cohen, 2008; Gray, 2008; Rik, 2008; Robertson, 2010; Skyllstad, 2008). Music may also serve to mobilize protests and raise awareness about injustices, especially in contexts where the freedom of expression is not fully assured (Abi-Ezzi, 2008; Gray, 2008; Zelizer, 2003).

⁶ The concept of conflict transformation emerges as a new perspective that challenges certain assumptions of *conflict resolution* and *conflict management*. The idea of transformation does not entail the elimination or control of conflict, but rather regards conflict as a natural motor of change (Burgess and Burgess, 1997).

Despite of all these aspects, the literature on art and music within the peace studies has various shortcomings. In general, there is an overrated optimistic view of the effect of art in conflict transformation scenarios. Furthermore, this emphasis is often based on anecdotal or descriptive papers, rather than academic works with theoretical and grounded evidence (Bergh and Sloboda, 2010, p. 4; The Institute of Democracy and Human Rights and CERI 2008, p. 18-19). This problem is also evident in the literature related specifically to music, although the works of Bergh (2007; and Bergh and Sloboda, 2010), Robertson (2010), Shank and Schirch (2008), and Zelizer (2003) have all contributed to reduce the gap between theory and practice.

Finally, and similar to the literature on reconciliation, music in conflict transformation scenarios is primarily associated with top-down interventions – artists involved in peace projects, music workshops led by music therapists, multicultural festivals organized by Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) – rather than musical practices emerging at the grassroots level of conflict-affected communities (apart from Bergh, 2007). As Bergh and Sloboda affirm (2010, p.11), “there is tendency to interpret and observe the use of music in conflict transformation in a distinct top-down manner.” This paper intends to go beyond this trend. Rather than an investigation of projects aiming to improve the situation with music, it is an analysis of the conditions, realities and capacities on the ground in relation to music in some conflict-affected areas of Colombia.

THE MUSIC OF VICTIMS

The Caribbean and Pacific coast regions of Colombia are well known for their musical tradition. Famous Colombian rhythms like cumbia, vallenato, porro, puya, and currulao originated in these areas, where the African descendants of the slave communities profoundly influenced the creation and fusion of music (Ministerio de Cultura, 2005). Yet, these regions have also been extremely affected by the internal conflict. Being strategic zones for drug and arms trafficking, cattle, gold and oil exploitation, and commercial agriculture such as banana and African oil palm, paramilitary groups and guerrilla forces, among other illegal armed groups, have constantly competed and fought against each other to gain control over these territories. Consequently, concerning merely internally displaced people (IDPs), the Caribbean region has registered around 700,000 IDPs from 1987 to 2008 (Verdad Abierta, 2010), and the Pacific region registered a total record of 722,265 in 2009 (Territorio Chocoano, 2010).

These regions do not only stand out because of the number of victims of violence, but also because of the number of songs composed by these victims. For instance, in the case of the Bojayá massacre – a small town in the Pacific region – the massacre victims composed more than 100 musical pieces, including *alabaos*, *champeta*, reggae, and rap rhythms (Revista Cambio, 2009). Other tragedies of the conflict located in the Pacific Coast region (such as the massacres of Trujillo and the massive forced displacements in the Atrato river basin area) and in the Atlantic Coast region (such as the massacre of El Salado and the forced displacement of Bahía Portet, Trojas and Las Pavas) have generated an important number of conflict-related songs composed by the victims as well

For the purposes of this paper, only two violent tragedies that occurred in these regions are presented: on one hand, the massive forced-displacement of Cacarcá in the Department of Chocó; on the other, the massive forced-displacement of Las

Pavas in the Department of Bolívar (see Figure 1). Although many types of violence have occurred in Colombia within the conflict, as mentioned earlier, forced displacement accounts for the highest percentage of victims in the country (98%).

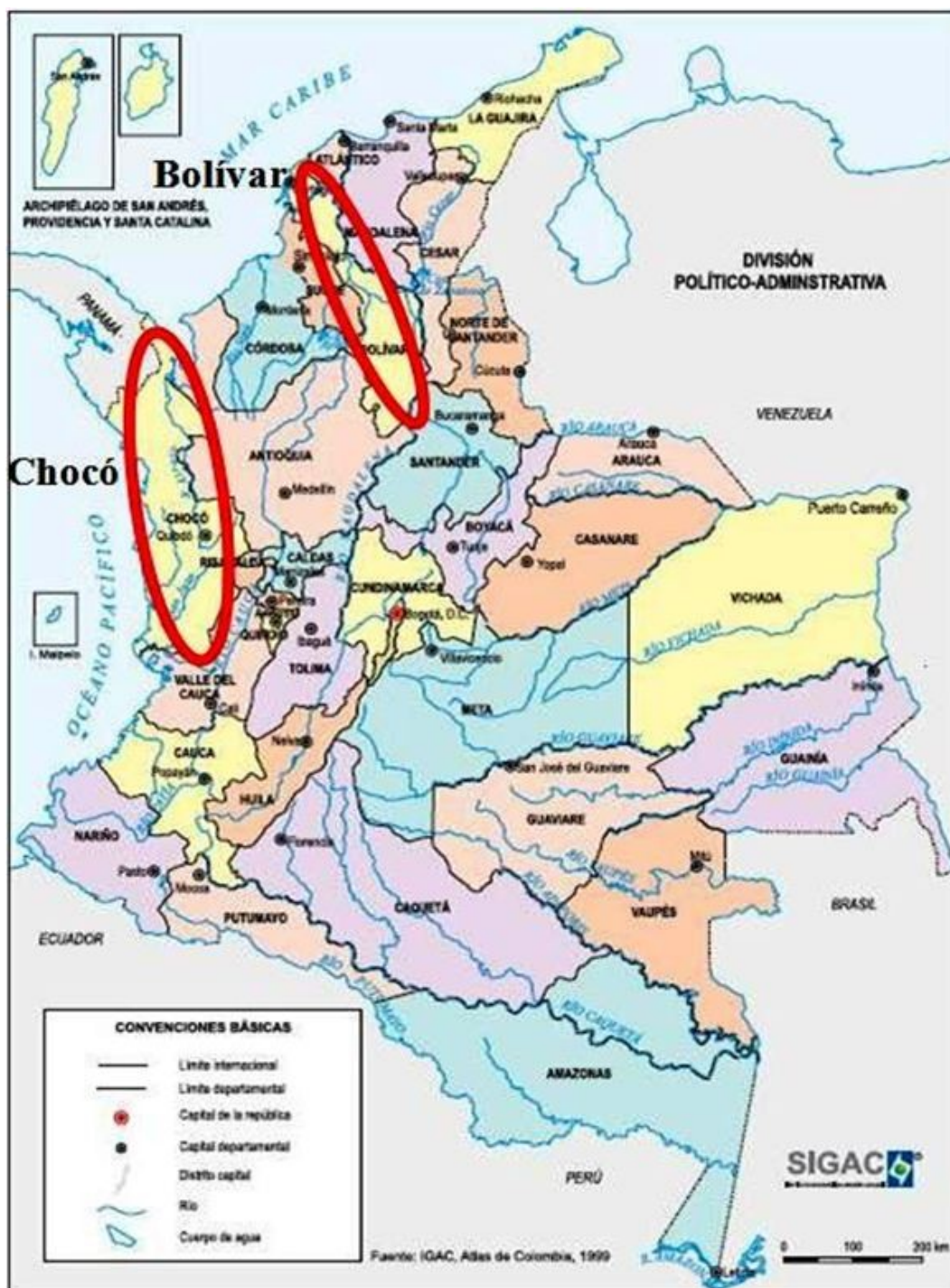


Figure 1. Provinces of Colombia

First, the study briefly describes the events and quotes some of the songs related to the tragedies that have been written by victims. Second, the opportunities and limitations of this music are presented regarding reconciliation by analyzing three elements: the content of the lyrics, the effects and reasons of composing these songs for the victims, and the reaction of the listeners. The first two elements will be useful to answer why victims in Colombia have decided to compose songs related to the

conflict. Complementary, by analysing the three elements together, I aim to answer the question referring to the contribution of these songs within the framework of reconciliation for both the composers and the listeners.

EVENTS AND LYRICS

In this section, I provide some background on the two case studies mentioned above, and present some of the songs composed by victims and survivors of the tragedies to recreate their experiences and emotions.

1. THE CACARICÁ MASSIVE FORCED DISPLACEMENT

In February 1997, during the so-called Genesis Operation, paramilitary troops operating in alliance with the national army entered the region of the Cacarcá river basin, forcing the mass displacement of 3,500 residents (Martin, 2000). After two years of living in degrading conditions in the stadium of a small town, people were able to return to the region. However, they continued to be labelled as guerrilla-collaborators and around 100 disappearances and murders of peasants and leaders have taken place since that time (Maritze Trigos intvw, Bogota, August 2010).

Augusto Gómez, a victim of the mass displacement, composed the song *Cómo fue* (in English, “How It was”) to tell what happened that day. His song is recorded in the CD *Óyeme Chocó* that contains fifteen songs from members of the community, five of them with conflict-related lyrics. Through *vallenato* rhythm – a Colombian folk music played with accordion and other instruments – Gómez narrates how he lived the tragedy and how the military was involved. The following is an excerpt of his song:

Les vengo a contar la historia de nuestro desplazamiento/cómo fue que sucedió estando allá en el Chocó/Esto es un caso muy duro para que el mundo lo sepa/Nos sacaron a la fuerza/Con bombas y metralletas/Ay! fue la pública fuerza [...] Un lunes de mañanita estando allá en Montañita/La gente se levantaba pa’ sus tareas cotidianas/Cuando del cielo escuchamos unos grandísimos ruidos/Que los pájaros metales que venían a su destino/que venían a su destino, a sacar al campesino. (Gómez, 2000)

English Translation:⁷

Here I come to tell you the story of our displacement/How it happened when we were there in Chocó/this is very hard and I want the world to know/We were forced to leave/with bombs and rifles/ Ay! And it was the national army [...] One Monday early in the morning being there at Montañita/People woke up for their daily activities/ When suddenly from the sky we heard tremendous noise/the metallic birds that came to complete their fate/to complete their fate, to expel the peasants.

The rap song “Tribute to our Martyrs” is another text that uses detailed and harsh lyrics to describe appalling travesties that the community of Cacarcá suffered in 1997. The song was composed by *Renacientes*, a rap group formed by five young men from the region. Throughout the lyrics they do not only make a tribute to members of their community that have been killed during the conflict, but they also denounce paramilitary groups and politicians who have been involved in crimes perpetrated in the area. This is a short excerpt from the lyrics:

Fecha inolvidable como el 97/Donde mataron hermanos con motosierra y machete/es triste recordar tanta gente que corría/mujeres embarazadas y niños que

⁷ Translation of songs made by the author.

nacieron ese día/pero algo doloroso en nuestras mentes se quedó/ver como torturaban tanta gente en el Chocó/De forma inhumana un hermano mataron/cortándole la cabeza y con ella jugaron/Hermano Marino López has regresado a tu tierra/lo triste que son tus restos esto es producto de la guerra/Tú y otros hermanos que la tierra cobijó/El culpable es el gobierno y Rito Alejo porque ordenó/que porquería desgraciado que al senado se lanzó/haciéndose el inocente después que el pueblo sangró/Vimos que desunidos no se puede seguir/entonces nos organizamos para poder resistir. (Renacientes, 2009)⁸

English Translation:

Unforgettable date in year 97/Brothers were killed by chainsaw and machete/It is sad to remember so many people running/pregnant women and children who were born that day/But something painful in our minds stayed/to see how they tortured so many people in Chocó/in an inhuman way they killed a brother/they cut off his head and played with it/brother Marino López you have returned to your land/how sad are your mortal remains which are the result of the war/you and other brothers who were sheltered by the land/the culprit is the government and Rito Alejo since he ordered this/what a scummy, despicable person who ran for Senate/pretending to be innocent after he made people bleed/We realized that we cannot continue being separated/so we organized ourselves in order to resist.

2. LAS PAVAS FORCED DISPLACEMENT

The second case is the massive forced displacement of the community of the district Las Pavas, located in the small settlement of Buenos Aires (municipality of El Peñón) in Bolívar. In this area, 120 families were displaced five times by different illegal armed actors since the 1990s (Molano, 2010). In the most recent displacement, the African oil palm enterprise Daavon has been accused of involvement. According to the local peasants, several NGOs, and various papers from the press, Davoon sought the eviction of families to develop a new oil palm plantation (Business and Human Rights Resource Centre, 2010, Christian Peacemaker Teams, 2010, The Observer, 2010).

Edwin Torres Moreno, better known by his nickname “El Monchi Pavero”, is one of the peasants who were displaced. He has composed at least three *vallenato* songs whose lyrics are related to the tragedy. One of them is *Un Día será Mañana* (in English, One Day will be Tomorrow). Through its lyrics he does not only describe the way he was forced to leave Las Pavas, but also how he expects God to carry out a revenge on his behalf with a plague over the oil palm crops:

Les voy a contar la historia que ha pasado aquí en mi pueblo/me quemaron la casita que tenía allí en Las Pavas/Por culpa de las palmeras yo he quedado a la deriva/Por culpa de las palmeras tengo un dolor en el alma /Pero yo no me preocupo porque se que el día de mañana/viene la peste cogoyera para la palma africana/Como yo no tengo fuerzas para hacer una venganza/se lo dejo al Dios del cielo que es el dueño de mi alma/Yo vivía esperanzado en este bendito gobierno/Y ahora les digo cantando que esto no sirvió de nada/cuidan es al de la plata/Y al pobre sí lo desplazan/para quitarle la tierra y sembrar palma africana. (Zinelite Films, 2009)

English Translation:

I am going to tell you the story that has occurred here in my town/They burned out the little houses I had there in Las Pavas/It was the palm trees' fault that I have been left without anything/It is the palm trees' fault that I have a pain in my soul/But I

⁸ For the entire lyrics of the song, see Appendix 2, Section B.

don't get worried since I know that in one day in the future/ the cogollera plague will come for the African palm tree/Since I do not have enough strength to make revenge/I will leave this revenge to God in heaven who is the owner of my soul/I had hope on this government/And now I am telling you by singing that this was useless/They take care of the one that has money/And they do displace the poor person/In order to take his land and plant African palm.

Likewise, Edwin Torres Moreno also composed the song *Martín Valiente* (in English, Martin the Brave) to tell the story of a relative that was also displaced. He mentions how the man lost his sugar cane crops with the displacement – his main means of earning a living – and how he also lost his daughter due to the lack of income. In addition, he accuses Colombian former president Álvaro Uribe of being implicated in the forced displacement. These are the lyrics of his song:

Martin valiente ahora se encuentra muy triste/Porque el 14 de julio la palmera lo desplazó/y ahora se encuentra con el alma destrozada Por su matica de caña que se le perdió/Martin Valiente se encontraba muy contento porque el doctor Uribe era su legislador/Pero cuando se dio cuenta que lo desplazaba Martin valiente de Uribe renegó/Le he contado todo y no he contado lo más triste que a Martin valiente después le sucedió/se le enfermó una de sus hijas y por no tener dinero la niña falleció/Martin Valiente ahora se encuentra muy triste/Porque el 14 de julio la palmera lo desplazó/Y ahora se encuentra con el alma destrozada porque su hermosa niña solito lo dejó. (Torres Moreno intvw, a *capella* versión, August 2010)

English Translation:

Martin the Brave is now sad/Because on July 14 the oil palm displaced him/And now his soul is destroyed because he lost his sugar cane plant/Martin the Brave was very happy since Mr. Uribe was his legislator/But when he realized that he was displacing him Martin the Brave complained about Uribe/I have told you everything but haven't told the saddest thing that happened to Martin the Brave/One of his daughters became sick and since he didn't have money the girl died/Martin the Brave is now sad/Because on July 14 the oil palm displaced him/And now his soul is destroyed because his beautiful girl left him all alone.

OPPORTUNITIES OF THE MUSIC OF VICTIMS

Based on the songs with conflict-related lyrics that were found in the field research, and the interviews conducted with some of the composers and the group of listeners, it may be argued that these songs afford several opportunities in the process of reconciliation in Colombia. In this paper, opportunities will refer to the presence of the aspects of reconciliation highlighted in The State of Knowledge section earlier in this article. First, I concentrate on the process of composition, analyzing the content of the lyrics and also the effects on the victims while composing these songs. Second, I focus on the listening exercise conducted with a group of ex-combatants and illustrate the findings.

COMPOSITION

After reviewing the songs composed by victims, an issue that first arises is the importance of the lyrics in the context of reconciliation in Colombia. Essentially, this music is a genuine expression of the narratives of victims, an opportunity to know directly their version of the truth and how they were subject to serious violations of human rights. These songs constitute important accounts for the historical memory of the Colombian conflict, a crucial step in reconciliation aimed to avoid the

recurrence of past atrocities and to raise moral consciousness about violent events. In addition, the lyrics also illustrate the rural environment where these tragedies took place and reveal other social and economic features of victims, such as low levels of education and poverty. These issues should be observed and addressed in complementary peacebuilding processes through long-term measures that go beyond the temporary assistance often received by IDP.

I will now focus on the process and reasons behind the composition of the music. One of the main purposes pointed out by the composers is to inform people about the events so that these tragedies are not lost from memory or repeated again. As mentioned earlier in this article, within a conflict partial truths and misinformation predominate. The case of Colombia is no exception, and although the situations have improved, the entire reality of these tragedies is often unknown by the public. Jeferson Orejuela, a member of the rap group *Renacientes* explained that they wanted to communicate what was actually occurring in their region since the media was not reporting it (Jeferson Orejuela intvw, Sept 2010).

Composers also explain how their music constitutes a communication strategy that allows them to reach people in a rational and more emotional way. For them, music constitutes a more accessible means to connect with wider publics. Through these songs, the composers send a message and reach audiences more effectively compared to the press, formal reports, or other art forms. As described by Noel Palacios, another victim-composer that was interviewed, “music transforms the message so that it can reach any kind of audience” (Noel Palacios intvw, Bogota, Aug 2010). In addition, music stirs emotions in the listeners, an important goal for the composers. As Elkin Torres Moreno described, “culture reaches the heart [...] I do not like to take a look at a written complaint, but as soon as I listen to a complaint that is sung, it immediately touches me” (Elkin Torres Moreno intvw, Bogota, August 2010). This feature of music is crucial given that reconciliation seeks to address both the cognitive and emotional level of individuals.

However, music is not only a means to stir emotions; it is also a means through which feelings are communicated and emotions are released, another crucial step in the process of reconciliation. Regarding this issue, Noel Palacios declared in his interview, “I feel that it is an outlet to release my feelings, I take a load off [...] I do not know what I would do if I could not tell, if I could not write these lyrics, if I could not sing” (Noel Palacios intvw, Bogota, August 2010). Similarly, in a special report of the Colombian Magazine *Cambio* (Revista Cambio, 2009) about the songs of victims, music is highlighted as a possible catharsis which gives one the opportunity to overcome the pain, forget the hate, and start a new life. The report illustrates how a young internally displaced musician from Cauca – a Colombian province in the Pacific region– affirms: “music allows us to reconcile and cling to life.” Likewise, Noel Palacios declares in this report: “We sing to forget the hatred, because, as the song of the famous salsa artist Ruben Blades states, ‘sing and forget your pain because the one who sings says more and suffers less.’”

In the case of the rap group *Renacientes*, these songs have also been an opportunity to redefine their identity, another important aspect in the process of reconciliation. In the interview, Jeferson Orejuela explained that they wanted to create lyrics that allowed the Cacarcá community to identify itself as civil population in the middle of the conflict. This redefinition of identity was crucial especially in the case of teenagers, who were easily recruited by the armed groups and ended up attacking

their own community (ignoring the fact that they were once victims of these groups). Rap music was ideal to reach this audience, offer some sort of guidance, and additionally strengthen identities that had been threatened by the conflict. He also affirms that these songs make them feel proud of their territory, their traditions, and their people, and also enhances the empowerment of the community (Jeferson Orejuela intvw, September 2010).

Finally, these songs have also been means through which victims express grievances and support the mobilization of their own communities in a pacific way. As mentioned earlier, in a context where freedom of expression is not fully assured, music has served throughout history as an agent of protests and raising awareness about injustices. This is the situation in Chocó where serious violations of human rights and abuses against the civil population continue to occur. Noel Palacios, victim of this region explains, “Music is a good vehicle to express what I feel and to avoid threats on my life” (Noel Palacios intvw, Bogota, August 2010).

MUSIC LISTENING

We now need to consider what kind of effect the music of victims may have on its listeners. In the focus group exercise where six ex-combatants listened to the song “Tribute to our Martyrs” composed by *Renacientes*, various opportunities were found regarding the aspects of reconciliation illustrated earlier. First, the results suggest that after listening to the song, ex-combatants discovered several shared identities with the victims, although their “role” in the conflict was completely opposite. They all expressed feelings of nostalgia and sadness for the reality of the conflict in Colombian rural areas. One of the interviewees said, “It is a reality that we have all lived in the countryside, but not many people know about” (focus group, Bogota, August 2010). On the other hand, they also identified themselves with the tragedy of being an IDP since, once they surrendered and joined the government’s reintegration program, they had to start a new life in another town or city.

Second, the song unleashed sympathy among the ex-combatants regarding the victims. In other words, ex-combatants were able to experience similar emotions as those expressed by the lyrics. Despite the harsh content of the rap song, the groups of ex-combatants expressed that they understood them and that they even shared the sadness and anger of the victims against the government. One of the ex-combatants asserted, “They are releasing their anger and they have the right to do so since things have been left unattended over there, the army is never in those places.” There were also expressions of trust since they affirmed that they believed in everything that was described throughout the song; “They are honest, everything is real; they are telling a story that really happened” (focus group, Bogota, August 2010).

Third, after listening to the song, two out of six ex-combatants admitted to feeling guilty. This suggests that exposing the truth of past atrocities through songs to demobilized ex-combatants may enable some of them to acknowledge guilt and remorse and to understand others’ pain, a crucial step to rebuild relationships between perpetrators and victims. Finally, they also highlighted the role of music when they were combatants. One of the interviewees explained how some songs made him reflect on what he was doing, “Music tells you true things, therefore, one tries to reconsider the situation [...] there are many songs that have a strong content, so one realizes that this was a mistake” (focus group, Bogota, August 2010). Likewise, another participant of the focus group exercise said that music was often forbidden in the illegal armed groups because music could “demoralize” people.

LIMITATIONS OF THE MUSIC OF VICTIMS

Although there are various opportunities in the songs with conflict related lyrics composed by victims of the Colombian conflict, there are also limitations regarding reconciliation. As it is illustrated in the songs “Tribute to our Martyrs” of the rap group *Renacientes*, and the song “One Day will be Tomorrow” composed by “El Monchi Pavero”, there are some compositions of victims whose straightforward and harsh content may enlarge the differences between the opposing sides and encourage vengeance.

Through the rap song “Tribute to our Martyrs” and other compositions, the members of *Renacientes* redefine their identities as civil population in the middle of the conflict, strengthen identities that had been threatened, and raise awareness about injustices. These are all important opportunities for reconciliation. However, the vocabulary and expressions used in this specific song stereotype entrepreneurs and reinforce mistrust against the government. Expressions such as “today we tell people to keep struggling so these rich bastards don’t continue enslaving us” and “what a scummy, despicable person who runs for Senate” reinforce a latent conflict and enlarge the differences between the sides instead of reducing the distances.

Again, in despite of the opportunities that music may entail in terms of pacific mobilization, there are also some limitations regarding the song “One Day will be Tomorrow” composed by Elkin Torres Moreno. First, in his song he asks for a divine revenge from heaven, an idea that instead of calling to conciliate difference, urges punishment for the palm entrepreneurs. Second, he also stereotypes the government and in general reinforces mistrust towards politicians with expressions such as, “I had hope in this government, and now I am telling you singing that this was useless...They only take care of the one that has money, and displace the poor people”. Indeed, his song essentially reflects what he affirmed in the interview: “I want to give strength to my fellows and on the other hand, discredit the government who is the one that has screwed us. [...] I do not trust the government; I have never trusted the government” (Elkin Torres Moreno, intvw, Bogota, August 2010).

Through his songs he seems to reinforce a “one-dimensional understanding” of the government, a common feature of fractured societies that emphasizes negative aspects of the counterpart and focuses on only one aspect of its identity (Schirch 2001, p. 150-151). As mentioned earlier, reconciliation seeks the opposite of fracture, the highlighting of shared identities. Thus, despite the opportunities described in the previous section, some of these songs may also reinforce differences between victims and perpetrators, and therefore constitute an impediment to the process of reconciliation.

CONCLUSIONS

The analysis of songs composed by several victims in Colombia reveals a number of opportunities for reconciliation. In a conflict scenario where partial truths and misinformation predominate, they have used music with the purposes of telling the truth, reconstructing the historical memory of conflict, and avoiding the recurrence of violent events. In addition, they have also disclosed identities that were unknown or threatened by the conflict, and released repressed emotions about painful experiences of the past.

Colombian victims consider that music stands out for its emotional expression. It is not only a healing and cathartic experience that allows them to remove strong or violent emotions stemmed from traumatic experiences, but it is also a vehicle through which victims reach people in a rational and emotional way. In addition, music is a suitable means to express grievances and raise awareness about injustices. In general, it constitutes a type of art that is present in their daily life and that enables them to stir emotions through their own rhythms, metaphors, and words.

Despite all these opportunities, the present paper warned about some limitations that music may embody as a tool for reconciliation. The harsh and straightforward content of some lyrics may reinforce latent conflicts and enlarge the differences between warring parties instead of reducing the distances between them. Music may emphasize negative aspects of the other and marginalize possible identities that may be shared with the counterpart.

Most of the literature related to music in peace and conflict studies aims to evaluate musical projects that are implemented in order to bring people together or to heal individuals through music. In other words, music is primarily associated with top-down interventions – renown artists involved in peace projects, music therapists' workshops, and multicultural festivals organized by NGOs – rather than musical practices emerging at the grassroots level of conflict-affected communities. This paper focused on bottom-up practices with music that have emerged from the actors in conflict to deal with painful experiences and injustices. The research is an assessment of the conditions, realities, and capacities on the ground in relation to music and reconciliation in some areas of Colombia affected by the internal conflict.

The opportunities found in this paper embody potentialities at the grassroots level in the country that may be reinforced or enhanced through future projects on reconciliation. Rather than projects to be conducted by outsiders, this paper proposes a bottom-up approach where the musical abilities of victims may be developed through the right tools, while taking into account the limitations that the use of music entails. A first step of this process would be the disclosure of some of these songs. Although there are some compact discs, videos, and reports that have collected this music, most of the songs remain unknown and the victim narratives they contain continue to be ignored by the broad public.

Finally, the opportunities and limitations identified in this paper contribute to developing a better understanding of the scope of music as a tool for reconciliation, but numerous areas for further research and development still remain. The relationship between text and music, the influence of rhythm and performance in the way the music is received, the proper method to enhance these musical practices, and a categorization of these practices by regions in Colombia are a few examples of how a comprehensive analysis of the role of music in reconciliation in the country may be attained. What is more important is to transcend the tendency of researching music with an overestimated optimism based on subjective evaluations that barely assess individuals' lived experiences. Music, as any musical instrument, has an enormous potential but also some natural limitations.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

María Elisa Pinto García holds a Master of Arts in Peace and Conflict Studies from the Tokyo University of Foreign Studies. She also holds a B.A. in Government and International Relations from Externado University (Colombia). Her experience and studies have been related to peacebuilding, landmine action, and the link between art and conflict transformation. Currently, she is Professor of Peace Studies at Santo Tomás University in Colombia and Executive Director of Prolongar Foundation, where she recently launched Kaleidoscope, a program for art-based peacebuilding activities in Colombia. Email: mepinto@fundacionprolongar.org

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS

A. Semi-structured interview guide with victims-composers

Background

1. Full name
2. How old are you?
3. Where were you born?
4. Until what age did you live in that region?
5. How were you displaced? Which armed group did it?

Link between music and reconciliation

1. When did you begin to compose songs about the conflict?
2. Many people keep those memories for themselves; they often decide not to talk about it. Why did you choose to communicate these events through songs?
3. Why do you use music as a means of communication (and not other means like legal instances or other type of art like poetry, painting, etc.)?
4. What needs, goals, and ideas you wanted to address by composing songs? What do you want to say, to communicate?
5. Specifically, when and why the song _____ is created? (In what context is created and what did you want to accomplish with the song?)
6. Do you think the song _____ is just a narrative of the conflict? If not, why?
7. What do you think the song produces in a common listener?
8. Which is the inner effect of composing and singing these songs for you?
9. What is reconciliation for you?
10. Do you think your songs have helped to the reconciliation in Colombia? Why?

B. Focus group guide with ex-combatants

1. What is the song is about?
2. What did you feel when you heard the song?
3. What type of feelings does the singer generate in you?
4. Would you change something in the song? If yes, what would you change?
5. Did you feel comfortable with what you heard? If not, why?
6. Would you go to a concert of this singer?
7. Could you live in the same neighbourhood or town with this person?

APPENDIX 2: SONG LYRICS

A. "How it Was"

Composer: Augusto Gómez

Here I come to tell you the story of our displacement
How it happened when we were there in Chocó
this is very hard and I want the world to know
We were forced to leave/with bombs and rifles
Ay! And it was the national army

This shouldn't be done with people who work
It was on February 24 of the year 97

One Monday early in the morning being there at Montañita
People woke up for their daily activities
When suddenly from the sky we heard tremendous noise
The metallic birds that came to complete their fate
to complete their fate, to expel the peasants

Being already 7 hours it really hurt me
Constantly, bombs exploded over there in Saliqui
From the Kafir planes flying there very fast
Fulfilling their mission to terminate the population
To terminate the population fulfilling their mission
Fulfilling their mission in that gorgeous region

My God, put your hand in, so that this war stops and no more displaced people appear.

Being already 6 in the afternoon the situation worried me
Over there in the community, the public forces also got involved
With bursts of machine-guns and also throwing bombs

When we run away escaping towards the mountains
And in my arms I was carrying a girl that was crying
a girl that was crying her desperate mother!

B. "Tribute to Our Martyrs"

Composer: Renacientes

Holly and blessed land where we live
dreaming living in community and loving our brothers
People used to get up to their daily areas
so they wouldn't die of hunger lying on their beds
People that are happy surrounded by fauna
a fauna that is nothing without our dear pacha mama
However, the most unexpected day came
The gray morning and it is still summer

Unforgettable date in year 97
brothers were killed by chainsaw and machete
It is sad to remember so many people running
pregnant women and children who were born that day
But something painful in our minds stayed
to see how they tortured so many people in Choco
In an inhuman way they killed a brother
they cut off his head and played with it.

Brother Marino Lopez you have returned to your land
how sad are your mortal remains which are the result of the war
you and other brothers who were sheltered by the land
The culprit is the government and Rito Alejo since he ordered this
what a scum, despicable person who ran for Senate
pretending to be innocent after he made people bleed

We realized that we cannot continue being separated
so we organized ourselves in order to resist

Chorus
My people cry remembering the missing brothers

We want to tell the world everything that it is happening
with these projects that are damaging us
Today we tell people to keep struggling
so these rich bastards don't continue enslaving us
With pain many brothers crossed the border
they arrived to Cupica and there they took refuge
Endless days of pain and bitterness
Brothers were killed, common graves were tombs

With sorrow in our souls due to what happened to us
we came back to Cacarcá to resist with love
unfair situations we have lived
for defending this suffered population's rights
enterprises that devastate our biodiversity
Once more we affirm this in front of this court
today we clearly state what is happening to us:
multinationals are massacring us

Supporting paramilitarism with economic resources,
So that they go to the countryside to massacre peasants.
We had to undergo difficult moments
In the coliseum of Turbo so that we could return.
Everybody cried due to the persecution
by the same government that displaced us.
With submachine guns and bombs we were drawn away from here.
Tangible evidence remains in Salaqui
Where one bomb that didn't explode still exists.
Tell whether it is justice what happened in Choco.

Unforgettable date the one of Curbarado
Where a girl was shattered because she got scared and ran.
We want to remember the memory of Marino
Our outplayed martyrs in this war with no mercy.

Plans over plans in my territory.
Here we are today to defend our heritage.

Chorus

Untimely criminals that increase our poverty,
Cheating on the people and keeping their land.
What a misfortune the one experienced in these Colombian villages.
Let's unify proposals and fight as brothers.
Today we remember Orlando in Jiguamiando.
Who fought for his people, but it cost him his life.
His body is not here, his spirit supports us.
Here we are the Renacientes who preserve his memory.

C. "What Happened In Bojayá"
Composer: Noel Palacios "Javimán"

It was 6 in the morning buddy
when a very serious case happened

it was the sound of a rifle hu!, it was an AK
it was the sound of a gun and the paras responded
they came to Bojayá and the thing got even worse
the shooting started to be weaved and the scared people

had the idea to run to the church
since they were safe there, since nothing would happen to them there
since it was God's place, the Lord would help them

Buddy what a sad thing what happened in Bojayá, right?

The FARC threw the pipeta when they least expected it
it drop right into the church
ending many lives (bis)

Around 3 seconds
after the explosion
Many of our relatives had been ended up ruined

People run, children cried
After seeing their damaged town
I cannot believe, neither imagine
That actually what happened there in Bojaya could have occurred
Many sons and daughter without their parents
Many parents without their children

Because of the violence
They finish with the peasant
I cannot believe, neither imagine
That actually what happened there in Bojayá could have occurred

D. "Alabao"

Composer: Moira Mosquera

Oh Virgin of Carmen and Virgin of Las Mercedes
Intercede for us so that this war ceases

To all the Colombian people there is something I want to tell
Because if I don't do it I cannot unburden myself
In May second of 2002
the town was asleep and the shot woke it up
all this happened when it was barely 6 in the morning

Oh Virgin of Carmen and Virgin of Las Mercedes
Intercede for us so that this war ceases

An exchange of shots began between guerrilla and paras
And the desperate people could only throw themselves to the floor
But this is nothing I am telling you what this town lived
Because of the violent people many people died

Oh Virgin of Carmen and Virgin of Las Mercedes
Intercede for us so that this war ceases

We have been keeping crying for our pupils and friends
But we also thank for those who are alive
On September first that we returned
the town was sad and the houses had been looted

Oh Virgin of Carmen and Virgin of Las Mercedes
Intercede for us so that this war ceases

Nobody expected what this town lived
Because to tell the truth it was outside of the conflict
All what I am telling you happened a year ago
And still we are waiting for the so called relocation

Oh Virgin of Carmen and Virgin of Las Mercedes
Intercede for us so that this war ceases

The teachers and students that lived this violence
Ask to the Lord to give as a lot of strength
With this one I say goodbye I don't want you to get tired
It only remains requesting to God that this doesn't happen ever again

E. "My Brother"

Composer: John Jairo Medina

My friend live has a destiny
By knowing that live is strong
You were my brother, my relative, my family
You were my friend, my confidant

Today Hoy se ha quedado un decir
By knowing that live is stronger
Compared to death
Because you had to go there

Chorus

There is a mystery silence the stigma of a violence
Of a life of a memory
It has been possible to accept your absence
There is a mystery silence
One has to be strong
One has to say present
And although I cannot see you, you always live in my memory

You were gunned in a criminal act
Innocently they put an end to your life
You were a young man who knew how to value yourself
and in El Salado everyone loved you
My friend listen to me the melodies when we used to go out and compose
Inspirations that came out from our souls
those are the songs of a past, of a former day

Chorus

F. "Martin the Brave"

Composer: Monchi Pavero

Chorus

"Martin the Brave" is now sad
Because on July 14 the oil palm displaced him
And now his soul is destroyed because he lost his sugar cane plant

"Martin the Brave" was very happy since Mr. Uribe was his legislator
But when he realized that he was displacing him "Martin the Brave" complained about Uribe

Chorus

I have told you everything but haven't told the saddest thing that happened to "Martin the Brave" afterwards
One of his daughters became sick and since he did not have money the girl died

“Martin the Brave” is now sad
 Because on July 14 the oil palm displaced him
 And now his soul is destroyed because his beautiful girl left him all alone

G. “One day will be tomorrow”

Composer: Monchi Pavero

I am going to tell you the story; I am going to tell you the story
 I am going to tell you the story
 That has occurred here in my town
 They burned out the little houses I had there in Las Pavas

It was the palm trees’ fault that I have been left without anything
 It is the palm trees’ fault that I have a pain in my soul (Bis)

Chorus

But I don’t get worried since I know that in one day in the future
 the cogoyera plague will come for the African palm tree
 Since I do not have enough strength to make revenge
 I will leave it to God in heaven who is the owner of my soul

I had hope on this government
 And now I am telling you singing that this was useless
 They take care of the one that has money
 And they do displace the poor person
 In order to take his land and plan African palm

Chorus

APPENDIX 3: SONG SAMPLE

	Song Title	Translated Song Title	Composer	CD or Link
1	Óyeme Chocó	Hear me Chocó	Deyanira Mosquera	Oyeme Chocó: Melodías de la Esperanza - Comunidades en retorno - Alcacaricá, Chocó
2	El sofoco	Suffocation	Julia Valdemar	
3	Mi Sufrimiento	My suffering	Jorge Díaz	
4	Violencia Brava	Angry Violence	Javier Dávila	
5	La Guerra	War	Henry Angulo	
6	Como Fue	How it was	Augusto Gómez	
7	El Gobierno	The Government	Augusto Gómez	
8	Mi Viejo Salado	My Old Salado	Edilma Cohen	Las Voces del Salado http://tinyurl.com/lyljfhe Las Voces del Salado
9	Mi Hermano	My Brother	Jhon Jairo Medina	
10	Retorno Histórico	Historical Return	Darly Cárdenas	
11	Trabaja y Busca Semilla	Work and Search for Seed	Unknown	
12	Nuestra Resistencia	Our Resistance	Unknown	
13	El Retorno	The Return	Unknown	
14	La Vida Sigue	Life Goes On	Unknown	
15	Adios al Salado	Goodbye to Salado	Unknown	

16	Mi Testamento	My Will	Unknown	http://tinyurl.com/lyljfhe
17	Bienvenidos a El Salado	Welcome to El Salado	Unknown	
18	Tenemos Tabaco	We Have Tabacco	Unknown	
19	Toros en El Salado	Bulls in El Salado	Unknown	
20	La Tarde se Hizo Lenta	The Afternoon Became Slow	Unknown	
21	Mujer Salaera	Salarea Woman	Unknown	
22	Mujer Pulmón de mi Pueblo	Woman Lung of my Town	Unknown	
23	El Dolor que Toitos Sentimos	The Pain That We All Feel	Unknown	
24	Homenaje a Mi Pueblo	Homage to My Town	Unknown	
25	Cuando Todo se Sepa	When Everything is Known	Unknown	
26	Alabado	Praised	Moira Mosquera	None
27	Homenaje a Nuestros Mártires	Tribute to our Martyrs	Renacientes	http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SJpBmPYMw3c
28	Lo que Pasó en Bojayá	What Happened in Bojayá	Noel Palacios "Javiman"	https://myspace.com/javiman1/music/songs
29	No Más Secuestro	No More Kidnapping	Noel Palacios "Javiman"	http://www.citytv.com.co/videos/31198/
30	Un Día Será Mañana	One Day will be Tomorrow	Monchi Pavero	http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=40VPM5skscQ
31	Martín Valiente	Brave Martín	Monchi Pavero	http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gfd4iGrFyp8
32	Qué pasa con nuestro pueblo?	What is Happening with Our Town?	Unknown	None
33	Que no haya más violencia	Let There be no More Violence	María Eugenia Panezo	None