D I S K U S

Religious Emotions and Religious Peacebuilding:
The Case of Bojayá (Colombia)

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ABSTRACT

This article analyses the role of religion in the transformation of social emotions after an atrocious event but when the conflict is still occurring. In this case, the creation of feeling and meaning of suffering has been influenced by religion. Religious emotions can help people cope and to manage the negative emotions that victims experience. The sociological study of religious emotions can help to enhance the analysis of religious peacebuilding. The paper focuses on the case of Bojayá (Colombia) where in 2002 a massacre occurred in a Catholic church.

The massacre was a result of the confrontation between extreme right wing paramilitaries and leftist guerrillas, with complicity of some of the members of the official army; 78 civilians died, 48 of them were children. The local grassroots Catholic Church has contributed to the social reconstruction of memory oriented towards denunciation of crimes against human rights and the reduction of violence. Local grassroots religious peacebuilding in Bojayá has helped to manage victims' emotional patterns from emotions associated with the experience of suffering such as pessimism and humiliation to emotions associated to a process of resistance, such as dignity. The information has been collected through revision of documents, fieldwork (April-May 2012 and July-August 2012), and interviews with religious peacebuilders, victims, and social leaders working in the jurisdiction of the Diocese of Quibdó.

The article argues that the concept 'religious peacebuilding' will be broadened by introducing aspects of religious emotions and social memory. The application of this broadened concept of religious peacebuilding can help to make it a more suitable category of analysis for societies undergoing transition from a conflict that is not religious in nature, but in which religion is a relevant component of social analysis.

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Societies in transition are confronted with atrocious pasts while they attempt to create peaceful futures in which perpetrators, bystanders and victims can learn to live together in a nonviolent fashion. This dilemma is often framed in a zero sum game of justice versus peace, where truth is in the middle way of supporting a process of justice probably placing peace at risk. In this context many compromises are made in order to pay respect to victims' suffering, bring justice, and move towards peace (Brewer 2010). The task of building a social memory of crimes against human rights has been traditionally carried out by victims/survivors but it has been progressively recognised as a state's duty. This is not only an action that favours justice but it represents a good opportunity for the transitional governments to control how the past is remembered and to bring legitimacy to some weak transitional governments.

Elster (2004) explains that in the history of transitional justice, there have been different efforts to remember, to forget, and to deny atrocious pasts. Societies like Sierra Leone, South Africa or Spain have given different treatment to the way in which the past is remembered or forgotten. However, despite of the diverse goals and methods that are used to confront the past, there is the common realisation that the experiences lived by actors in the conflict (victims, perpetrators, and bystanders) may constitute a time bomb that is fuelled by painful memories and emotions such as anger, revenge, humiliation; these cannot be simply ignored. In order to target these negative emotions, some authors have claimed the necessity to transform negative emotions through processes of reconciliation and forgiveness (Amstutz, 2005; Biggar, 2003). In this context religious peacebuilding has explored in detail the possibilities for encouraging forgiveness and reconciliation from a restorative justice perspective.

The restorative justice tradition and the role of religion in peacebuilding has been criticized for the risk of "cheap forgiveness" for victims; for focusing on the emotions of perpetrators rather than on victims' emotions (Brewer, 2010); and for universalizing normative claims that otherwise should correspond to individual private decisions such as forgiving (Brudholm and Cushman, 2009). Another important criticism comes from situations in which the conflict has not

yet stopped, because it is impossible to forgive the wrongs that are still to come. In this article I analyse some ways in which religion can help to transform and manage victims' emotions even when the conflict is still on-going. I present a case study of the community of Bojayá, a village on the Colombian Pacific coast.

During a confrontation between extreme right wing paramilitaries and leftist guerrillas, with complicity of some of the members of the official army, a massacre occurred in a Catholic church in 2002. In the massacre 78 civilians died, 48 of them were children. In the aftermath of the massacre, religious actors in the region have contributed to building social memory oriented towards denunciation of crimes against human rights and the reduction of violence. These strategies have helped to build peace and resistance in the middle of a conflict that has not yet stopped. The information has been collected through revision of documents, fieldwork (April-May 2012 and July-August 2012), and interviews with religious peacebuilders, victims, and social leaders working in the jurisdiction of the Diocese of Quibdó.

The first section of this paper explores some theoretical issues on the relevance of the study of emotions in societies in transition. The second section presents the relationship between religious emotions and the construction of social memory of past atrocities. The third section briefly explains the case of the massacre of Bojayá in the context of a conflict that is still taking place in the region while there are attempts to implement measures of transitional justice. Finally the last two sections analyse how religious emotions have influenced the way victims manage the way they feel about and interpret their past. This case highlights a rich spectrum of religious peacebuilding actions that help to understand the relationship between religion, emotions, and social memory in the context of transitional societies.

Emotions in societies in transition

Experiences of atrocious events leave profound emotional prints in the memory of those who have suffered them. Those memories and their correspondent emotional responses are triggered beyond victims' control.

Such kind of memories is often called traumatic memories because they appear as "intimate scars and holes in the biographies of the individuals that perhaps will never be fully mastered and have belated effects" (Lacapra, 2001, p. 41). However, despite their horrific nature, individuals often struggle to name that which is unspeakable, and there is a continuous effort to understand the nature of pain and suffering. Victims' memories are often socially constructed around heroic or victimised narratives that have a deep impact in the way victimhood identity is built (Blustein, 2005; Brewer, 2010; Kosicki, 2007). These narratives about past atrocities are shaped by particular "voices" that are provided by the membership in a group (Wertsch, 2002). For instance, the way an atrocity is remembered changes the membership to a minority group, a victimised group, a perpetrator group, or a bystander group. In the case of past atrocities, the "voices" that shape social memory can help to give meaning to suffering and to change the way social emotions of past atrocities are constructed.

A social analysis of the relationship between memory of past atrocities and emotions explains that not only emotions are triggered by the unwanted recollection of atrocious events, but that which affects us at an emotional level is more easily recalled in our memory (Elster, 2004). A "voice" that helps to make sense of what happened can affect as well the way we feel about the event. In that sense social emotions act as gatekeepers of memory, by bringing to the present that which emotionally affects us; but also the narratives of memory can affect the construction of social emotions related to them.

Memories of atrocious events often constitute milestones in a group's identity: massacres, disappearances, genocide, etc. All of them are atrocities that figure as uncompromisable memories that deeply affect the sense of worth and dignity of a victimised group. Some acts of social remembrance often reignite emotions that otherwise would probably fade away with time; the parades in Northern Ireland can offer an example of this. One of the challenges for a peace process would be to integrate an appropriate balance in the construction of social memory that is not only fair to the victims'

suffering but that can avoid sustaining social emotions that could provoke or reignite violence (Brewer, 2010).

Volf (2006, p. 214) has answered this problem by claiming, from a Christian perspective, that first our emotions are healed, and then we are ready to release our painful emotions. Volf argues that the healing of the heart will have as a logic consequence the releasing of our painful memories. In a similar vein Forsberg (2003) claims that there is no dichotomy between either remembrance and punishment, or forgetting and forgiveness, which means that we can remember and still forgive. In this way forgiving would be a way of releasing the painful emotions while keeping the memories of atrocious pasts. In the analysis of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Elshtain (2003, p. 62) proposes a balance between remembering and forgetting in order to build processes of memorialisation that contribute to peace "not in the sense of collective amnesia, but in an altogether different way: as a release from the full weight and burden of the past." Even though healing associated with forgiveness present a release of the burden of painful memories for the victim, it also presents moral and social problems.

Forgiveness has been the preferred positive emotion to be pursued in the literature on religious peacebuilding and peace processes (Biggar, 2003; Gopin, 2000). However, as it will follow from the analysis of the peace work of religious actors accompanying the process of the community victim of the massacre of Bojayá, forgiveness is only one of the possible emotions that could help in a process of peacebuilding even after truth and memory recovery has been achieved. Negative emotions do not always mean a broken heart that needs to be repaired; they can be expressions of moral disapproval. According to Blustein, emotions also have an important moral character that is "intimately bound up with the moral integrity of the victim" (Blustein, 2010, p. 590). Furthermore, emotions help to draw the boundaries of the sense of self-worth and self-respect of victims. The ethical problem with the rejection of negative emotions is that it could result in an avoidance of the fact that a victim was inexcusably wronged; furthermore it would mean to let the victims' dignity go with the negative emotions.

Blustein argues that we should keep negative emotions in order to hold memory alive, but in order to pursue a peace process we would only include non-angry emotions. However, how to filter out non-angry from angry emotions? I consider that the literature and experiences of religious peacebuilding can contribute to discern social emotions that can influence positive transitions towards peaceful societies. This is possible since religion has the symbolical, doctrinal, and performative tools to help creating a transformation in the feeling rules of victims who need to learn to live with perpetrators in the aftermath of violence.

Religious emotions and social memory
Social remembering is constructed in the religious arena through dogma (beliefs) and rituals oriented towards the perpetuation and recreation of memories about revealed truths (Halbwachs 1925/1992, p. 93; Hervieu-Leger, 2000). Religious symbols, rituals, and discourses can help to preserve social memories even if they are not part of a religious arena. The use of religion in the construction of memory of non-religious events is particularly relevant to the interpretation of atrocious pasts such as massacres. Davies (2002, p. 211) calls deaths in these conditions "offending deaths" because they occur in circumstances that offend public attitudes and trigger mass protests that are, fundamentally, "words against death". Protests that aim to memorialise traumatic death are not religious in nature but are related to the human existential condition; they "therefore provoke strong utterances of grief and of social and political disaffection" (Margry and Sanchez-Carretero, 2011, p. 4). Social construction of memories of collective deaths and social suffering is established in the liminal area between the secular and the religious.

Religion appears to be a spontaneous answer for many victims who try to make sense of the horrors that they have suffered. Religious narratives often help to cope with past sufferings by shaping social memories in order to achieve healing and restoration for believers. The symbolic resources of religion provide a path to transform the way the past is interpreted by victims (Lehtsaar and Noor, 2006; Janzen, 2005; Stier and Landres, 2006; Tankink,

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2007; Villa, 2007). A classic way in which this phenomenon has been studied is through the concept of theodicy. Theodicy is understood in sociology as the question of "how is it that a power which is said to be at once omnipotent and kind could have created such an irrational world of undeserved suffering, unpunished injustice, and hopeless stupidity" (Weber, 1958, p. 122).

Alexander (2004) explains that the religious arena can be one of the institutional arenas in which a representational process of creating a new master narrative of social suffering can happen. According to Alexander (2004, p. 15), in the religious arena memories of atrocities are linked to theodicy, in which an explanation of evil at the same time becomes a coping mechanism. I argue that even though the explanation provided by the theodicy helps to make meaning of suffering, it is not powerful enough to transform the emotions of victims, which are intimately connected to the experience of the body. Suffering has occurred in the body and in the mind and it has had consequences in their culture and social identity. Therefore, religious responses to suffering support cognitive (analytical) and emotional transformation in victims.

According to McGuire (1990, p. 287) religious responses to suffering should not be limited to the concept of theodicy; they should not be understood as "epiphenomenal add-ons, something the mind was doing after the body was suffering." It is necessary to emphasise that there is not a clear division between suffering experienced in the body and suffering experienced in the mind/spirit, rather suffering is experienced by the whole person. This is both true for an illness that is experienced alone and for people who have collectively survived a massacre. In addition to McGuire's observation, in cases of genocide and ethnocide experienced in countries such as Guatemala, Peru, and Colombia, suffering is something that is experienced by the whole community. Thus, religious responses to suffering are not merely part of a cognitive process; they are also felt and acted in the individual body and in the community.

The analysis of emotions produced in a religious context helps to understand

the religious experience as a body-mind-self connection, in which the bio-cultural nature of emotion is emphasised (Davies, 2011). The study of the role of religion in the processes of memorialisation allows analysing how religion helps to produce coping mechanisms that create both meaning and feeling. In consequence the attention is not only oriented towards narratives that explain evil but narratives and rituals that express and create emotions. In this sense, not only the study of theodicies but the study of social emotions related to memorialisation of atrocious events in a religious context is an appropriate path to understanding the role of religion in the "creation of a new master narrative of suffering" in Alexander's terms.

The definition of religious emotions encompasses both negative and positive emotions framed by supernatural and transcendental motives. These motives are expressed and constructed through ritual and dogma (beliefs) and are expressed in a narrative. Religious narratives give a framework to emotions and they are present in language (oral: speeches and conversations, and written); they can also be present in the use of rituals and symbols (Riis and Woodhead, 2010) and unarticulated in silences, voice modulation, and turn-taking in conversations (Edwards, 1999).

Religious peacebuilding has the potential for facilitating emotional transitions from emotions associated with victims' experiences of suffering to victims' experiences of political and social resistance. According to Riis and Woodhead (2010, p. 82), "an emotional transition is a significant shift in the structure of personal sensibility that involves a dis-ordering and re-ordering of emotion, a de-patterning and re-patterning of emotions." Some of the strategies employed by religious peacebuilders in Bojayá are oriented towards the social memorialisation of the massacre and at the same time help to create an emotional transition in victims.

The methodological issues raised from researching emotions in social contexts are related to their alleged incommunicability: "many people are not self-aware of their feelings, and, even if they are, they may not be able or willing to articulate them" (Riis and Woodhead, 2010, p. 222). Emotions can

be deceptive, real, controlled or pretended and that presents methodological challenges for the research. A way of overcoming this challenge is through the attention to people's emotion displays independently if they are considered to be an involuntary reaction, if they are done under the control of the agent, or as a manipulation in the discourse. Since it is impossible to analyse the deep meanings of actions in which emotions are supposed to rely, in this research emotions are studied in a social context. Rather than compromising this study with issues of "deep" and "surface" emotions (Hochschild,1983) that creates a binary between superficial emotions that are displayed in public settings and those emotions that people really feel; here emotions are analysed as acts of communication, a reaction to something that is produced and reproduced through social interaction (Edwards, 1999). The methodology of analysis of religious emotions used in this paper is influenced by discursive psychology. Discursive psychology focuses "on text and talk as social practise in their own right" (Potter, 2011, p. 202). The study of emotions in discursive psychology "examines empirically how they are invoked, and what kinds of discursive work such invocations perform" (Edwards, 1999, p. 272). Emotions are studied as discursive phenomena, "as part of how talk performs social actions" (Edwards 1999, p. 279). The analysis focuses on oral and written narratives in religious contexts, by religious actors or when actors use religious references in their narratives.

Religious emotions are relevant for the management of negative emotions that are attached to experiences of past suffering. Religious emotions such as forgiving, hope, or dignity are part of a rhetoric that is relevant to transitional societies. Nevertheless, the relation between religious emotions and the construction of social memory has not sufficiently explored in the literature. I consider that this relation is a fertile venue for understanding the development of distinctive "voices" or narratives in the construction of social memory led by religious peacebuilders. The case of the experience of the victim community of the massacre of Bojayá represents an insightful opportunity to understand the transitions and the intersections between religion, memory and emotions in contexts of past atrocity and present conflict.

The Massacre of Bojayá

Bojayá is a municipality of Chocó on the lowlands of the Pacific Coast of Colombia. Ninety per cent of its population is Afro-Colombian and six per cent is indigenous, in a country in which Afro-Colombians only comprise less than twenty per cent of the national population. Despite its geopolitically strategic location and its bio-diverse and mineral riches, in the department of Chocó, seventy percent of the population lives in poverty, compared with the national level of forty five percent. In 1993, Law 70 granted Afro-Colombians collective property right over their territory. In 1996 the Main Council of the Peasant Integral Association of Atrato (COCOMACIA) received collective title over 800000 hectares. Under Law 70, these lands are to be "inalienable, imprescriptible and non-attachable" (McDougall, 2010). This legal recognition was achieved thanks to the struggle of the ethnic organisations and the support of the local Catholic Church, the Diocese of Quibdó.

Since the late seventies the region has coexisted with the presence of leftist guerrillas of the FARC (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia - Armed Revolutionary Forces from Colombia) but they did not severely affect the socioeconomic environment of the communities. In 1996 the extreme right wing paramilitaries AUC (Autodefenzas Unidas de Colombia - United Self-Defence of Colombia) entered the region. Their pretext was to clean the communities of guerrilla supporters and started a violent crusade that resulted in the collective displacement of dozens of communities. The paramilitaries were working in joint operations with the official Army in some areas of Chocó. On 17 April 2002, paramilitary troops entered the region of Bojayá. Seven early warnings were issued by the Diocese, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights of the United Nations (OHCHR), the Ombudsman, the Diocese of Quibdó, and other NGOs (GMH, 2010).

During the confrontation the paramilitaries used the church San Pablo Apostol as a shield, where more than 300 civilians had sought refuge. The guerrillas launched explosives in stray gas cylinders (a rudimentary weapon of notorious inaccuracy and prohibited under international humanitarian law), one of them hit the church. The cylinder entered through the roof; it hit the altar and

exploded. The remains of the bodies were impacted onto the floor and blood covered the walls (GMH, 2010, p. 59). Father Antun, even though he had been injured, led the 650 survivors to the river, where they could improvise an escape by boat. The civilians in the boats were waving white flags and chanting: "Who are we? Civilians! What are we asking for? Respect for our lives!"

> It was a mass of dead human flesh was all that was left. It was like a wall in the middle of the Church. I was in the priests' house and I was thrown against the door due to the impact. (Interview with Isaias, a young male survivor of the Massacre, 20 April 2012).

Despite of the carnage of the day, shootings did not stop. In the aftermath there was machine-gunning from the air by the Colombian army (Gomez, 2012). Some of the paramilitaries hurt in combat took clothes of the civilians and were treated and removed by the Army (Conferencia Episcopal de Colombia, 2002). On 6 May, members of the national army and President Andres Pastrana arrived in the zone. A couple of weeks later, an "investigation by the office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights confirmed that the government ignored the local population's warnings and found that government forces permitted the paramilitaries to pass undisturbed into the Bojayá region. Following the attack, some 5,700 people fled Bojayá and became displaced. A group of about 1,000 of the displaced returned to their homes in September. UNHCR, the government agency for the displaced, UNICEF, and various local organisations assisted the returnees" (U.S. Committee for Refugees World Refugee Survey, 2003). The report was strongly criticised by the Colombian government, the national attorney office and the army (GMH, 2010, p. 263).

Help arrived in a discontinuous and disorganised manner. The displaced people from Bojayá spent four months in Quibdó, attending to several workshops and giving dozens of interviews. The suffering of their loss was enhanced by the frustration of the lack of appropriate response to their situation. They decided to go back to Bellavista, trusting in the promises of the

Social Solidarity Network (Red de Solidaridad Social, a governmental organisation in charge of attending victims' humanitarian needs) if they returned (GMH, 2010, p. 79). However, the violence in the zone was still persistent and it had taken a different turn. The application of the "democratic security" military strategy has made the military action continuous and located within the territory. Hence, the FARC guerrillas were less willing to release the territory. The continuity of the displacement in the Chocó is an evidence of the persistence of violence in the zone. Between February and March 2011 "more than 1,800 people in the Pacific Coast departments of Valle del Cauca, Cauca, Chocó and Nariño have sought shelter in safer areas for fear of being caught in an increasingly violent struggle between illegal armed groups to control mining and coca growing activities" (UNHCR, 2011). Furthermore, the conflict has changed in recent years, being more subtle but still inflicting repression; victims have to suffer the stress of national and transnational agri-businesses and mining companies that are interested in their lands.

Religious emotions and Religious Peacebuilding in Bojayá
The grassroots Catholic Church in Chocó has been working with the Afro-Colombian and Amerindian communities since late 1970s. According to Father Sterlin, leader of the Afro-Colombian pastoral office at the Diocese, "the reality in Chocó made impossible to practise a conservative pastoral work. A pastoral work characteristic of our own communities (pastoral propia) was developed during the 1980s-1990s; the pastoral propia creates an ethic dimension, an attitude for accompaniment and resistance" (Father Sterlin, field notes April 2012). The work of the Diocese and its missionary teams (Diocesan clergy, the Community of the Claretian Missionaries, Lay Claretians, The Society of the Divine Word, the Missionary Sisters of Mother Laura, and the Missionary Sisters of St. Augustine) was influenced by liberation theology and an inculturated perspective that assimilated the teachings from the Vatican Council II, Puebla, and Medellín. The missionary teams have developed several initiatives that have supported the creation of ethnic organisations, development, and initiatives for supporting welfare of the Afro-Colombian and indigenous communities; they also have carried out pastoral dialogues with the armed actors in order to reduce the effects of

conflict in the communities (Hernandez, 2012). In this article I focus on their works for management of victims' emotions associated with the massacre of Bojayá.

Shortly after the massacre, the communities started to return from their displacement, the missionary teams, particularly the Augustine Sisters visited each one of the riverside communities and led workshops on recovery of memory. Sister Carmen Garzón explains their motivation for carrying out this kind of work:

> In a very short time we started talking about the need to recover memory, and as a matter of fact we got a little booklet that explained the importance of conserving memory. And we went by every community, because people wanted to forget this, in *a way that they wanted and they did not want to know about this*, perhaps they did not even want it to be written because they wanted to forget. But we went to every community, we left them some material, a booklet, telling the importance of recovering memory, and like that, little by little people were realising that we did not have to forget… that we had to write about this, and that we should not be afraid, even though we should be careful to whom we would tell our stories. (Sister Carmen Garzón, interview 30 April 2012).

I emphasise Sister Carmen's remark about the ambiguity of victims' acceptance of their past: "victims wanted and they did not want to know about this." The ambivalence in victims' desire for remembering such kind of suffering is the first step of the work of religious actors with victims. The missionaries had supported the principle that it is important to remember in order to build hope but also in order to transcend from an individual memory to a social memory that could have an echo in a legal arena. The work of reconstruction of victims' memory in the Diocese of Quibdó has been led by the Life, Justice, and Peace commission (COVIJUPA) created in 1987. The commission has been in charge of promoting and supporting the defence of human rights in the region. According to Sister Elsa, who has been over thirty

years in the region and who is member of COVIJUPA:

> People initially were very scared of talking about their dead
> relatives, and to say who killed them… but people can recover their
> strength, the memory work was very incipient, to remember… a
> hundred people talking about their case, and before they did not
> want to know anything. There are still places in which people do
> not want to know anything; there are people who say I can't tell you
> that, because it is still too fresh; it has been five or seven years, but
> they feel like they were still living it; and we respect that. But there
> is also other people who say I want to break my silence; I want
> justice; I want this to be denounced; I want the picture of my son, of
> my wife to be there… It is possible that the contact they have had
> with other victims and with other processes at an international level
> has also motivated them… we tell them this [the results of their
> work] will not come neither today nor tomorrow; perhaps you will
> not see it, neither your children will see it, perhaps your
> grandchildren will; you can see how the Women from Plaza de
> Mayo [Argentina], many of them have already died, many of their
> children have. (Sister Elsa Rueda, interview 13 April 2012).

After the highest peaks of violence had passed, COVIJUPA's work could
finally start to concentrate on building a systematic register of the abuses of
human rights in the communities. They developed a consistent
accompaniment to victims; they supported the creation of memorialisation
events, like the Memory Chapels, which contain nearly 300 photographies of
victims with their name, age, armed actor who perpetrated his/her murder,
and place and date where the murder occurred (see image 1, below).

The management of victims' emotions is part of the religious peacework of
social reconstruction of memory after the massacre. As Sister Elsa explained,
victims' fear is a reality that needs to be addressed in their work of
denunciation. The source of their work is the testimonies of victims collected
thanks to their trust in the local grassroots Church. However, this is only

possible when the conditions of safety are granted in a less direct kind of confrontation. The experience of the religious peacebuilders working in the Atrato region is challenged by the fact that atrocious events are still fresh and the conflict is still alive even though the armed confrontation has been reduced.

In the nineties, the missionary teams led the creation of handcraft workshop groups. These groups have been oriented towards improving the material conditions of existence of peasant families but also they were working as therapeutic centres for victims:

> The groups started in 1997, by initiative of father Jorge Luis Mazo and the Augustine sisters. That was when the violence started in May 1997 when the paramilitaries entered for the first time in the town. Then, people were afraid, that fear that one always had; when it was six in the afternoon and one had to be locked in the house, which was not habitual… many women of the community got together and we talked to the Sisters about what we were going to do, because one was just there, thinking, who was the next, who was going to get caught, whom they were going to kill. During those days, with their company, we met and they asked what we would like to do, and we started a sewing workshop, with small napkins we started. (Jessica, victim of the massacre of Bojayá, interview 22 April 2012).

Groups such as Guayacán in Bellavista helped victims to organise themselves and to reinforce links of solidarity while the terror was trying to be imposed by the armed actors. Victims report that these groups were very important for getting together and reflecting upon their situation and the need for starting a record of the abuses against human crimes. Groups were also a mechanism of organising victims of displacement in Quibdó, who were living in inhumane conditions in the stadium of Quibdó. When women met at the doors of the stadium to embroider, they felt they were doing an action of passive resistance that helped them to avoid a forceful eviction by the authorities

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(Interview with Choibá group, 25 July 2012).

Some of the initiatives of recovery of memory of the massacre comprise theatre groups, dance groups, and a group of women (Mujeres de Pogué) who elaborated impressive funerary songs of African tradition that told the story of what happened and the debts that the government still have with the town. The group of women through needlework made a curtain with every name of the victims who perished in the massacre embroidered on it. The women got together and worked through a therapeutic process of talking about their deceased loved ones:

> After the massacre, the curtain has been a psychological treatment because a mom who has lost her little child; she says that it was a healing process to embroider his name with the little pieces of cloth that were used to make the curtain, where the lady held the little piece of cloth as if she were holding a baby, with such tenderness, with such love, she cried, she talked, and remembered beautiful things. Then it was some kind of healing that allowed women to return in order to keep struggling and resisting, despite of all the situations, they had to carry on. This is the process of all these women that are sewing the life… this project came from Bellavista and soon was spread throughout the region. (Sister Auria Saavedra, interview 10 April 2012).

These actions can be considered therapeutic and a way to reconstruct the memory of the events, working through the negative emotions of despair, horror, and guilt due to the lack of funerary rituals for the victims (Bello et al., 2005; Millan, 2011). However, the transformation of victims' emotional patterns has not been oriented towards forgiveness and reconciliation with perpetrators. In this context, forgiveness is a difficult emotion charged with political content. The responsibility of the state has been exposed in the report of the Historic Memory Group (2010), however the state has not recognized its accountability in the events, like its role in the support of the paramilitary troops. The scarce reparation received by victims has been framed as charity

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and the government self represents in solidarity with victims. The victims of massacre of Bojayá, instead of being recognised as victims, have been treated as beneficiaries of the government's charity. Furthermore, for victims is impossible to forgive the violence that is still to come, in a place where reintegrated paramilitaries coexist with civilians while still engaging in illegal activities.

Religious transformation of social emotions in Bojayá

The massacre of Bojayá was an event of extreme violence that marked the history of the conflict in Chocó. However, this was not the last of the violent events that would affect the communities who are constantly threatened by the possibility of a forceful displacement. After the reintegration of paramilitaries in 2005, victims perceive that perpetrators' actions have been legalised by the state. Despite of the reintegration of paramilitaries and the initial conversations between guerrilla and government, the conflict still continues in the Middle Atrato. In this context negative emotions of terror, despair, anger, and humiliation are still present among the victims, both those who have stayed in marginal conditions of reparation and those who have left in poor conditions of displacement to the cities. A continuous sense of risk and pessimism is shared by victims due to the presence of armed actors and their precarious conditions of subsistence, some victims have little hope for a change in their situation.

One of the challenges in the work of religious peacebuilders in transforming victims' emotions has been dealing with this pessimism of the community. It has not been easy to make a priority out of the claims of justice and truth for the victims, which are a trademark for the work of these religious actors inspired in liberation theology. In the Pastoral Diocesan Assembly in Carmen de Atrato in 1998, Bp. Castaño, former bishop of the Diocese of Quibdó, explained the necessity of transformation of their pastoral strategies in order to meet communities' needs facing the conflict:

> The days we are living are not easy at all… I must confess that
> we are experiencing with some of our evangelising groups pain,

> sadness, deep concern, and total impotence in front of acts that
> are clearly violating human dignity and they show totally
> disrespect for life. These acts leave us with big questions about
> what we have done so far, and what we should do, from the
> Gospel perspective, in order to radically change this atmosphere
> of death into new realities of peace and life for everyone. (Bp.
> Castaño, 1998, pp. 526-7).

The religious peacebuilders in Chocó struggle with victims' pessimism resulting from perpetrators' impunity and the slow and inefficient processes of reparation. Pessimism is a result of a feeling of harm and humiliation. The harm was done by the armed actors and a long history of poverty and exploitation of Chocó's resources. The humiliation comes from the government and the larger society. This is a result of the paradox that the government represents legality and justice; however members of the government have been working with paramilitaries under total impunity. Humiliation comes from the bureaucrats in charge of the victims' reparation offices and welfare institutions, which treat them as charity beneficiaries and the larger society who re-victimises the displaced by stigmatising them.

The mixture between humiliation and impunity gives as a result a feeling of pessimism. It has been ten years since the massacre happened and even though a new town has been built, there has not been integral reparation for the victims of the massacre of Bojayá. Pessimism is an expression of numbness. As a social emotion this kind of pessimism represents a rupture in the role of social emotions as a moral compass that points at what is right or wrong in society. Then, the risk that comes from this rupture is the normalisation of violence. It is possible that the idea of "terror as usual" (Taussig, 1989) enters to dominate the sphere of the "feeling rules" and then terror becomes normalised (Jimeno, 2007). There is a feeling of normalcy of violence when atrocities are expressed as an expected result in a chain of violence.

This normalisation can be found in the narratives of the massacre of Bojayá

expressed by victims' organisations: "this is nothing" compared to the long chain of injustice and exploitation that has submerged the Afro-Colombian communities (field notes, May 2012). Locating the massacre in the larger narrative of structural violence aims to expose the economic and social crimes committed against these communities, and in certain way to shame those who are seen as perpetrators. The normalisation of violence is then different from trivialisation of violence, it is an effort to transform the chaos resulting from horror and terror towards an internalisation of experiences of terror and suffering as ordinary and worldly.

These negative emotions by themselves do not lead to actions of resistance, or "emotional communities" as political communities. As Jimeno (2011) explains, the transformation of victim identity through the process of construction of social memory produces "emotional communities", which are political communities with solidarity links that are reinforced by common narratives. Negative emotions of pessimism and emotions associated with normalisation of violence are a coping mechanism that helps to transform the identity of survivors and victims not only as a town that is considered "de malas" (bad luck) but strong enough to resist whatever comes to attack them.

Religious peace workers have taken these emotions as a point of departure for their work. They still consider that this is part of the chain of violence but in the same way to transform this sense of abused victim into a dignified victim. In this sense the emotion of dignity has been a valuable outlet to conduct a transformation of the negative angry emotions associated with the feeling of pessimism. In words of Father Jesus Florez (2012, p. 630):

> It has not been easy to accompany these people with their territory that is theirs, granted by history and that others want to neglect it… with this nature that they have tried to respect and that others disrespectfully exploit… however, we need to do it, in the name of the Gospel, because this is a cause that if it does not have gospel justice, it runs the risk of becoming violence.

The emotion of dignity is a paradigmatic emotion that brings together the sense of worth of victims. Dignity is a positive emotion that is associated with the feeling of worth as a human being and it has deep emotive roots in social identity (Davies 2011, p. 91). Perhaps ontologically a person cannot be stripped of her/his dignity; however there are symbolical practises that can be oriented toward the dehumanisation of a person such as extreme acts of violence like massacres: "Those who carry out the massacres have before them strangers who do not belong to their world, archetypes of the unspeakable: physically close but spiritually distant. As such, what we have in Colombia is a deadly game of representations and self-representations trapped within a perverse and inhuman logic" (Uribe, 2004, p. 95).

Thus, efforts at transforming negative emotions into the emotion of dignity as victims, helps to transform the social identity of victims and to build a new master narrative of suffering in the form of a process of social construction of memory. The process of reinforcing the emotion of dignity is challenged by the pressure of imminent violence. Evidence of the social management of the emotion of dignity by religious peacebuilders can be found in the decision of victims accompanied by COVIJUPA of not accepting the individual administrative reparation agreements sponsored by the government, since they do not consider them to be up to their collective demands. Rather, they set up negotiation meetings with the government, like the one that took place on the tenth anniversary of the massacre, their slogan was "Bojayá Ethnocide 10th Anniversary, Bojayá on the path towards dignity" (see image 2, below). Dignity inspires their demands for truth, justice, and reparation despite of the presence of armed actors in the region.

Conclusions

The work of the Diocese of Quibdó has helped to build the emotion of dignity in the victims of the massacre of Bojayá. As Davies (2011) explains, dignity has deep emotional roots to the feeling of being perceived as worth of respect. An important feature of religious peacebuilding in Chocó has been the support of the transformation of negative emotions of humiliation and harm that result in pessimism, into emotions of self-respect and dignity. The

emotion of dignity has been religiously grounded in the language and rhetoric used by the missionaries. Their efforts in inspiring victims to denouncing atrocities are framed in a notion of time that is this-worldly; in the sense that the claims of justice and reparation are to be practiced in this world. But their notion of time is at the same other-worldly since victims might not be able to see the results of their struggles. This perception of "sacred time" (Hervieu-Leger, 2000) allows connecting non-religious experiences of atrocity with religiously inspired narratives that result in creative ways of resistance for Afro-Colombian communities.

The sense of dignity is also inspired in the local interpretation of liberation theology. Their demands towards the state are framed in the need of being rightful to victims in terms of reparation, truth, and justice, which makes possible to talk about peace building even though the conflict still continues. The focus of the Church in the accompaniment of victims and afro-Colombian communities in general have made the perspective of victims part of their integral work of denunciation, this makes the Diocese of Quibdó's work diverge from claims of forgiveness and reconciliation, which are the common trademark in religious peacebuilding literature. The victims' perspective is included in the Church's work of denunciation and construction of social memory.

Social emotions by themselves have not created "emotional communities" in Bojayá nor paths for peacebuilding. The risk of pessimism as a form of numbness experienced by the victims has been confronted with the involvement of religious peacebuilders, who have tried to managing and transforming the negative social emotions of victims. The transformation of social emotions creates possibilities for supporting processes of transitional justice from below in Colombia (Rios, forthcoming 2013).

Image 1. Memory Chapel at the Convent in Quibdó. On the walls there are the names and information of victims of the conflict in the region.

Image 2. Banner used by the Bojayá victims' organisations: "Ethnocide Bojayá X anniversary. Regional assembly of black and native communities. Bellavista, 29 April – 3 May 2012. Welcome. Bojayá on the path towards dignity".

http://www.basr.ac.uk/diskus/diskus15/Rios.pdf

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