

See discussions, stats, and author profiles for this publication at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/327539976>

The affective state and precarious citizenship: Conflict, historical memory, and forgiveness in Bojayá, Colombia

Article in *Contemporary Readings in Law and Social Justice* · January 2018

DOI: 10.22381/CRLSJ1012018

CITATION

1

READS

96

1 author:



Lina Buchely

ICESI University

46 PUBLICATIONS 50 CITATIONS

SEE PROFILE

Some of the authors of this publication are also working on these related projects:



Burocracias callejeras [View project](#)

THE AFFECTIVE STATE AND PRECARIOUS CITIZENSHIP: CONFLICT, HISTORICAL MEMORY, AND FORGIVENESS IN BOJAYÁ, COLOMBIA

LINA BUCHELY

lfbuchely@icesi.edu.co

Universidad Icesi, Cali, Colombia

ABSTRACT. From an ethnographic approach to the discussions that preceded the delivery of the black Christ by the FARC to the Bellavista community (Bojayá), this article discusses the role of affection and emotions in the processes of state construction, taking as a framework for its analysis, the debates that have emerged within the field of the anthropology of the state, as well as some recent developments in the legal ethnography. In relation to the anthropological approaches to the processes of state formation, the article takes an additional step with respect to the discussed dichotomy absence/presence of the state, by characterizing the types of bureaucracies that have been present in Bojayá. The main findings show the predominance of *soft bureaucracies* over *hard bureaucracy*, and how it has led to the precarization of citizenship, in which the discussion on the basic needs of villagers is displaced by the moral benefits and affective care provided by the officials of the soft bureaucracies present in the region. The article also problematizes the category of victims of the armed conflict as that privileged place of enunciation for those subjects who are recognized as such, showing how they enjoy a certain “moral superiority” in their negotiations with the soft bureaucracies, as well as in their faculty to grant pardon. Thus, the article shows how forgiveness moves into a moral orbit, but also the way in which politics and its bearers – in this case the victims of the Bojayá massacre – administer it in their interactions with state bureaucracies, creating a different form of citizenship.

Keywords: anthropology of the state; citizenship; postconflict; Colombia; transitional justice; pardon

How to cite: Buchely, Lina (2018). “The Affective State and Precarious Citizenship: Conflict, Historical Memory, and Forgiveness in Bojayá, Colombia,” *Contemporary Readings in Law and Social Justice* 10(1): 7–34.

Received 13 August 2017 • Received in revised form 10 January 2018

Accepted 12 January 2018 • Available online 29 January 2018

Introduction

We were late for the meeting. They were waiting for us were in the parish house in Bellavista Nueva (New Bellavista) and not in Bellavista Viejo (Old Bellavista), where the 2 May massacre took place, 14 years ago. As we entered, a leader of the Victim's Committee of the Second of May (CVDM) was speaking. He had accompanied us two weeks ago in Cali at an event at the Center for Afro-Diaspora Studies, and we owed it to him that we were able to come to Black Christ of Bojayá meeting.

At the meeting, there were more or less 50 representatives from all the communities: Bellavista, Pogue, Tanguí, Puertoconto, Tadó, among others. The CVDM leader spoke about the difficulty of taking the Black Christ out of Havana, about the number of procedures and amount of paperwork needed to do so, about the fact that the Christ's two-meter-long arms had to be mutilated in order to get him into a plane. Everyone listened carefully. The Black Christ was a gesture of repentance delivered by the FARC to the town of Bojayá, to redeem their guilt after having caused an explosion in the San Pablo Apóstol Church. Jesús Santrich and Iván Márquez, two of the ex-commanders of this guerrilla that led the signing of the two peace agreements had hired a sculptor friend in Cuba to sculpt the statue of the Christ. It was, for them, a "Revolutionary Christ." The community was gathered here in order to decide what to do with the over two-meter-tall plaster statue, which was, right now, being polished in a near-by community.

The first woman to speak, after giving people the floor, was someone well known. DC, as they called her, is a close neighbor of the Bellaluz neighborhood and well-known singer of songs of praise. In her intervention, she proposed a number of important points. The first was that the community saw the Christ as something imposed by the FARC. How is it possible that the FARC did not even ask them whether they would accept the Christ before beginning to make it? How come they were not asked whether they felt comfortable with this mechanism of "symbolic reparation," as the guerrilla referred to it? Why a Christ, the object of their faith? In her second point, DC highlighted the original Christ of the church of Bellavista: mutilated, it survived the massacre and maybe it is precisely for this reason that it enjoys special devotion. Bellavista already had its Christ and it didn't need another one. It was fine if another community wanted the Christ but, for DC, Bellavista didn't need it, or at least this had been discussed in previous meeting among neighbors. The mutilated Christ was their Christ, precisely because it was mutilated – as they were – by the violence perpetrated by the FARC.

The next to speak was a man from Pogue, NA. His position was completely different to the woman who had just spoken. He spoke of forgiveness and peace and of the importance of accepting the Christ as a symbol that would help in the signing of the Havana peace agreements. He insisted that the Christ should stay in Bellavista, as the "epicenter" of the massacre. The Christ, despite being an outsider, could speak of the greatness of the Bojayá community, its capacity for forgiveness,

its nobility. Many glances of contempt were shot his way. His reading of the situation was not well received.

Two women from Bellavista followed his intervention. The first referred to the imposition and violence of the gesture. It was an imposition that was telling them how to forgive, with what to forgive, and which gifts to accept. It was also offensive that the gesture should include an object of faith. It was a joke, a mockery. The second woman spoke of the pain that it would cause to see the FARC's Christ in the place in which the gas cylinder had exploded. She mentioned the splinters in her left leg, the cramps that kept her awake at night, the injustice of the gesture. And if that were not enough, she said that here it was the victimizers, and not the community, that were deciding how to compensate them. She needed medical attention, not a Christ. She needed a better health center, a house that was habitable. She needed material compensation.

After this intervention, the discussion heated up. A number of the women told the only man open to receiving the Christ to take their "messages" to the guerrilla. This bothered NA, who began to discredit these opinions. It was evident that the frontiers between the victims and the victimizers were not clear. The accusations intercrossed in a complex manner and the links of shared responsibility were visible.

Can a Christ speak to us about the state? Can a Christ condense the state to its minimum material expression? How do pain, forgiveness and grief show us manifestations of concrete statehoods that speak of forms of the state that pertain to a post neoliberal scenario? The above ethnographic vignette gathers fragments of my field diary written on visits to the Bellavista community (Bojayá) in 2016 and 2017.¹ As expressed in the story, this text explores the political dimension of forgiveness and the emotional nature of the state through ethnographic work. Using approaches pertaining to the anthropology of the state and a turning towards affectivity produced in the social sciences following the work of Deleuze, my analysis contributes to the understanding of how emotions can be recognized as constitutive expressions of statehood and citizenship in fragmented and fragile contexts, such as those present in post-conflict Colombia.

The contribution in this text emerges from the interaction between these two conceptions: how the state is rearticulated as emotion/affect and how this affective dimension constructs particular modalities of citizenship. Once this is established, I argue that such construction of citizenship has an effect not only on the quality of affections experienced by citizens, but also on the way in which actual entitlements (rights, benefits or provisions) are allocated or not. Thus, state recognition compromises the ways in which the citizens relate to the state and make their demands. The point is that this "compromise" happens by a complex bargain of citizenship elements that are revealed through pain and suffering in a so-called *precarious citizenship*.

This idea of *precarious citizenship* is central for the analytical proposal of the article. Through it, I articulate ideas of the construction of victimhood, the role of the state, and pain and suffering as “bargaining currency” within the context of political post conflict. As illustrated by the ethnographic vignette, the idea of precarious citizenship comes from the powerful categorization of the Bojayá population as victims vs. non-victims, since non-victims do not possess as much power as victims, in the political scenario that turned pardon into an exchange capital.

Victims, in contrast, have power conferred to them through being disempowered by violence. Hence, pain and death become currencies that the disempowered can use to negotiate with the state, but the state remains instrumental in deciding who “deserves” to be classified as a “victim” and who doesn’t. This constitutes the precariousness of the citizenship.

The way in which precarious citizenship appears in the process of state construction unveils the idea that the state is monolithic, coherent, and unitary. Affection and emotion clearly illustrate the way in which contradiction and tension better describe state operations. In the orthodox and liberal approaches to state construction, the state often claims to “understand” the needs of its own population like no other entity could. But, at the same time, states are frequently the worst abusers of human rights. Hence, the state-citizen relationship is complex and contradictory and law should be able to either mirror or transform this relationship. This contradiction also appears in pain administration. If it is “pain” that allows a victim to effectively interact with the state, what happens in situations where the state refuses to recognize the “pain” of certain groups. Therefore, the state only recognizes certain pain of so-called “deserving victims.” This selective recognition is certainly connected to the idea of precarious citizenship (the state controls the amount of pain, demands, and who can make them).

The article has six main sections. The first one, “Bojayá and the violence in Colombia,” talks about Bojayá and the Colombia’s postconflict context. The second and third sections, “State, ethnography and emotions” and “Legal ethnography and the anthropology of the state,” offer an analytical framework for the question of emotions and affection in a political context, by using the literature of the anthropology of the state and so-called legal ethnography. The next section, “Christ and the state,” unpacks the main findings in the Bojayá case by using the metaphor of the Christ to explain how the affective state and the precarious citizenship work. Finally, the sections “The affective state within us: Colombian realities” and “The Christ and the State: Fragmentation, saturation, fragility, and efficiency,” offers my analytical reading of the findings and my contribution to the debate on affective states.

Bojayá and the Violence in Colombia

I will start with Bojayá. Bojayá is located in the Medio Atrato, a dispersed rural settlement, which can only be reached by river transport going between Quibdó and Bellavista. The journey takes between three and five hours and costs eighty thousand Colombian pesos (30 USD,² paid to boat drivers on the shores of the Atrato in Quibdó, near the cathedral).

What happened in Bojayá on the 2nd of May 2002 is emblematic of the internal armed conflict. On that day, more than 80 people were killed in clashes between Front 57 of the FARC EP and the AUC's Élder Cárdenas Block.³ Those killed were sheltering from the attacks in the Bellavista parish.

Fifteen years later, the public prosecutor has not yet identified all the bodies, and the victims' families have not yet been able to carry out their mourning rituals. According to a NCHM (National Center for Historic Memory) report, 126 people still have shards in their bodies and other health problems derived from the attack. Most of the affected population has not received the medical and psychological assistance they need. Eight people died of cancer after the massacre, and the community directly associates the pathology with the explosion of the artifact made with gas cylinder parts on the 2nd of May.

According to data from the last census carried out by DANE, Bojayá is home to 9941 inhabitants, 58% of which are Afro-Colombian and 41% Indigenous. The basic needs of 95% of the area's inhabitants have remained unsatisfied since 1993. Bellavista, county seat of Bojayá, only has one medical center, which is not a hospital. For those that do not live in the county seat, the only way to access medical services is by river transport as there is no other access way.

Within this context, on the 19th of September 2016, the Committee for Victims' Rights of the 2nd of May (CVDM) organized a meeting to discuss whether, as a sign of forgiveness, it would accept the Black Christ of Bojayá given to the community by FARC EP. The community did, in fact, accept the statue as a gesture of pardon but it conditioned its forgiveness to the full identification of those that had been killed in the attack and to medical assistance for the injured. It was agreed that the CVDM would keep the Christ until the conditions were met, and the statue is currently being kept in the La Loma community in Bojayá.

Bojayá has become an icon of pardon. The results of its votes in the recent referendum surprised the whole world. More than 90% of the population that took part in the elections – not much given the precariousness of the polling centers and the exclusion of the Indigenous population from such processes – voted for the Havana peace agreements.

Its experience attracted a great deal of media attention and, in the ceremony for the signing of the agreements in Cartagena on the 26th of September 2016, a group of women from Pogue, Bojayá, sang a song of praise that went viral on social networks. They sang:

Nos violaron el derecho,
en nuestra comunidad,
ni a la pesca ni al trabajo
nos dejaban llegar.
Queremos justicia y paz
que venga de corazón,
pa' que llegue a nuestros campos,
salud, paz y educación.⁴

Such songs of praise are part of Bojayá's mourning rituals. They are not set to music and they tell tales of woe with harrowing voices, and their power and beauty have been admired and documented by Colombian and foreign universities alike.

Icesi, the university in which I work, is associated to the Grupo Regional de Memoria (the Regional Memory Group), which has been studying the emblematic case of Bojayá, working together with the National Center for Historic Memory since January 2016. I have been to Bojayá five times in two years, and only twice to Pogue and La Loma. Within this framework, this work comes together as a set of personal reflections stemming from the fieldwork and it does not compromise the work of the Grupo Regional or the Centro de Memoria.

In this text, I develop a number of ideas that I have had in the field regarding something that I refer to as precarious citizenship. The case of Bojayá somehow sheds light on a tension of sorts that exists between the victims' symbolic and material reparation, and the importance of the massacre in Bojayá's community scenarios. This tension between forms of symbolic reparation is not documented in Law 1448,⁵ in which reparation needs to be comprehensive, nor is it present in the stories of the NCHM, which refer to actions implemented in the territory by the state.

State, Ethnography, and Emotions

My earlier work has been related to the way in which the anthropology of the state asks itself, documents, and studies the physical manifestations of the "state" or the processes of statehood that help to document the existence of the state in people's everyday lives. This work, together with my disciplinary training as a lawyer has left me with an obsession to study the phenomenon of state as a presence. In Bojayá, the exercise has been difficult. There, the state is present through a notable army presence, a few Public Health Service offices, a National Civil Registry, the Colombian Family Welfare Institute (ICBF) nurseries, and other state offices. Despite this, before being condensed into a fixed presence, Bojayá's experience speaks of the existence of the state as an emotion, as affection (Cabot, 2012). An oversupply of psychosocial services proliferates in an area in which ten years ago, all the houses were palaphitic, there are no basic public services and the electoral roll excludes over 50% of the population. The public services are effectively affective services, and the officials invested with the authority of the state attempt to "understand," "accompany," "support" processes of bereavement, forgiveness,

and pain. The public assemblies arranged by people who work for the state offices related to the services provided for victims are inevitably traversed by therapeutic and didactic processes that deliver love, care and affection.

However, despite the overexposure of the case of Bojayá as an emblematic one and the “festival” of international institutions (referred to by the inhabitants of Bojayá as “*feria de chalecos*”⁶), universities, and NGOs that have visited the area interested in documenting their processes, Bojayá has obviously been forgotten by the *hard bureaucracies* of the state.⁷ I call *hard bureaucracies* those state entities with central competencies in budgetary terms (the presidency, ministries, administrative departments). The state representatives present in Bojayá include people linked to the NCHM and the Victim’s Unit, both ascribed to the Department for Social Prosperity (DPS), a decentralized organism in charge of coordinating Colombian social politics, with meager budgets and provisional validity based on Law 1448 of 2011. These *soft bureaucracies* do not have permanent offices in the territory. Instead, they occasionally show up to accompany specific processes, which are always related to what I will refer to as affective procedures: the building of historical memory, bereavement, and proposals for forgiveness.⁸

In my observations, I could see that the Bojayá community is politicized, with strong participation and empowerment processes. In my visits, I went to at least three general meetings in which issues of collective interest were discussed with representatives from all the communities. All the issues were related to the massacre, the recognition of the community members’ as victims, and the reparation processes afforded them by the state.⁹

An aspect that called my attention in all the visits was the way in which the victim identity went hand-in-hand with powerful daily expressions. When it was issued, Law 1448 gave rise to many debates concerning the “label” legally used to refer to those affected by the armed conflict, its survivors, the displaced, and the victims. Each of the labels brought with it profound implications. Despite this, they were classified as victims, and to be victims in the current state of the postconflict – and I am referring to its most basic quotidian effects related to the procedures and actions of those affected in their daily lives – means to have a place from which to enunciate characterized by two elements: a) to be a special and priority beneficiary (discursively) of state benefits aimed at integral reparation; and b) to have something that the literature refers to as “moral superiority” in the transactions with the state bureaucracies. That is, the victim is the only person or legitimate figure with the power to grant forgiveness (Derrida, 2007).

The term makes me somewhat uncomfortable, as it grants these so-called “moral superiors” (and I want to emphasize the cruelty of the wording),¹⁰ a certain quality, which makes them impossible to question and affords them an upper hand of sorts to grant pardon. In fact, and focusing on the world of bureaucratic exchanges, this feature speaks of concrete actions such as the reversal of the burden of proof, the following of special protocols and the avoidance of secondary victimization in the interaction with state employees (Alviar and Jaramillo, 2012).¹¹

But this label too speaks of the political nature of forgiveness, of which the details are described in the ethnographic vignette. The victim, who can grant the gift of pardon, is able to administer it, retain it, assess it, and “condition” it. Pain and death are therefore political capitals visible in the statehood constructed in Bojayá (Derrida, 2007).

Now, what I refer to as “precarious citizenship” is derived from the previous constructions. The state’s affective management builds discourses regarding the protection of victims as a central element for their interaction. These scripts are empowering and they serve as triggers for the successful community processes experienced in Bojayá. However, this recognition compromises the ways in which the citizens relate to the state and make their demands. While the “affective” issue drives their interactions, material discussions on social citizenship are annulled.

The article constructs this argument through the figure of the black Christ, which condenses this political dimension of forgiveness and is also the material and symbolic expression of the national unity project implemented by the Colombian state in a post-agreement phase. Like the Christ, the state is fragmented and saturated, it is fragile, but at the same time efficient, as is the regional government. As such, the article demonstrates the central role of affections and emotions in subjects’ daily experience of the state, and in the processes of citizenship building, in which actors previously invisible to the eyes of the nation – like the inhabitants of Bojayá – reveal their existence through pain.

Legal Ethnography and the Anthropology of the State

That the state is not an entity but rather an experience of process implies a number of things, all of them related to the Weberian image us lawyers have constructed of the public administration (hierarchical, closed, controlled). For ethnographic perspectives: (i) The state is not timeless; it is anchored to people, rituals, and forms. (ii) The state does not exist as a subject/objet but rather as a process; it is a kind of statehood. The state is something that is built and recognized and which embeds itself in unforeseen political objects: the security of public building, the long queues of people making claims, the officers’ indolence, the citizens’ annoyance, the sensation of chaos and disorder, the illegibility of the official processes and impotence at the counters, the crucifixes in the courthouses, and the piles of paperwork and files. (iii) Statehood is contingent and the law is one of the elements that play a role in its complex construction. That is, in contrast to affirmations by Weber, the law cannot predict the actions of bureaucracy; rather, it is the bureaucrat that creates the law and the ways in which it is applied.

In contrast, the ethnography of the state is in charge of explaining how the state exists through actors and mundane elements, which are not political and not fundamental for the perspective of the liberal theories (frontiers, architecture, queues, railings, paperwork) and the sensations that this brings about, outside of the rational/irrational dichotomy. If the function of the state is to produce the appear-

ance of separation between society, the state, and the economy within a global economic order that was consolidated after 1990, ethnography is the method that reveals how this separation is built and presented before us (Navaro-Yashin, 2009).

For legal ethnography¹² specifically, these separations have a singular materiality and are anchored in daily life through sensations and effects that are linked in a complex manner to the regulations: waiting for an interpreter of the law, for example, produces the reality of the distance between the state and society (the queues have this same effect: they separate us). Legal forms, as another example, help build the myth of technocracy, the specialized language and the illegibility of the public, which serve to distance people from official processes, to create mistrust, detachment and ignorance (Martínez, 2015; Perelmiter, 2016).

If this is the object of legal ethnography, the study of frontiers, limits, emotions, affects, and distances is central to the field. Recent literature on law and ethnography has a particular interest in the issue of frontiers and transits as material existences in which the state and the law are anchored. Bureaucracy itself is seen as a limit, a frontier, a sort of contention. For the legal field, this is unsettling because it simultaneously focuses and makes visible that which was previously marginal and unobjectionable: the bureaucracies seen as mechanical agents of the operation of the principle of legality, as we have been discussing (Barrera, 2011, 2012). It is irregular from a classical legal perspective that objects, people and legal forms should be the simultaneous protagonists of the analysis of what the legal sphere produces in people's lives.

The variation introduced by ethnography of the state to ontological studies of the state is therefore to focus on all that which was previously not visible. In this sense, the sensations of distance and difficulty vis-à-vis the state are documented as constitutive of the state. They are not marginal expressions of a failed entity in politically peripheral contexts (failed state and law), they are forms in which the state is created, manifested, and made present as an expression of the world which holds an important symbolic power between people. It appears as neutral, powerful and omnipotent. The state as modern religiosity, guarantees gains for people, victories in the field of the public, and express powers. Despite this, the warning of the ethnographic analysis is that the state must not be taken as a macro per se, but rather that the researcher must come to understand how this sensation of inferiority and asymmetry before the state is produced: the impotence of weapons, surveillance of spaces, the solemnity of the procedures, the illegibility of the law. The state is therefore an incomplete process of the legitimation of a particular manifestation of power, which has a special place for us (Escalante, 2007; Rivas, 2011). While an ontological vision of the state assumes this asymmetry, thus inequality per se, ethnography focuses on showing how this evidence is produced.

I have already mentioned then that ethnography and bureaucracy are central to this process. Ethnography as a method that observes, documents, and describes is perfect for accounting for the state as a process, as an experience. And bureaucracy is central because – as mentioned by Abrams – beyond its ontological existence,

the state exists as an instrument: as bureaucracy. Bureaucratic ethnography was therefore a precise protocol to account for what the literature calls the “processual vision of the state” (Gupta & Sharma, 2006). The state is represented based on bureaucratic practices subject to ethnography. The legal represents forms that are simultaneously legible and illegible for the inscriptions of power.

Emotions lie at the heart of the discussions focusing on the state from Deleuze’s affective turn and other relevant discussions in the anthropology of the state. In Hobbesian theory of contractualism, for example, the Leviathan is formed to control people’s fear of dying in a state of threat in which everyone is against everyone. The state, thus, is the answer to fear (Hobbes, 1999). In contrast, in critical theories, this fear is not instilled individually. The individual is not a unit of political transaction and it is the relationship with others like me, which allows me to recognize systematically asymmetric relationships (Althousser, 2003).

In contemporary theories, authors such as Partha Chatterjee speak to us of the way in which feelings of frustration and dismay build the body of contemporary societies. The liberal state project does not coincide with the reality experienced by most of the citizens of the world (given the vastness of the evil known as the Third World), rendering politics a kind of palliative care provided to diminish the disillusionment of the unfulfilled political project. Being citizens of the Third World teaches us that our political experience is related to a greater extent to the frustration for that which is not fulfilled than the satisfaction with what has (Chatterjee, 2004).

In this line of thought, the inclusion of the idea of affection in political life has been a visible factor of recent years (Navaro-Yashin, 2007). This discussion defines the state as a social subject present in everyday life, attending to the subjective experience of its power (in people’s lives), to the methods, intensities, and mechanisms through which the “state” as a form of government and discipline is reproduced on a daily basis. In this perspective, the state therefore appears as affective management that effectively interacts with people and, as such, is present in their lives (Navaro-Yashin, 2009).

This also breaks another important modern dichotomy, namely the public/private one. Affections were destroyed from the public scene because they are a private issue. But affection appears here as the door to an economic capital, to a political opportunity. Affection is a currency. State and public are not reducible, but the boundary of that difference is not clear either. The case of Bojayá has helped me to reflect on the boundary between the state, as a space for training and defense of the public, and the economy, as a private sphere that is governed by principles of individual interest. The collapse of such connections helps to read new forms of citizenship that derive therefrom. Setting a boundary between the public, the state, and the private refers, in this case, to political processes that draw an uncertain and ambiguous interaction between the state and the citizenship, which the state itself creates to interact with the latter (Mitchell, 1999).

In the same line, the literature on street-level bureaucracies (Lipsky, 2011) has already shown us how this affective management appears through people who, cloaked behind their authority, carry the idea of the state to the lives of the beneficiaries of its social programs. The state is, mainly, flesh and blood people. This way of seeing the state as persons and affection steers our attention away from the way in which it is in fact the figure of authority (institutional power) or the way in which it turns into material provisions (social citizenry). It is mere empathy that appears in people's lives (Reeves, 2011).

From this perspective, the state must no longer be understood as fiction to be deconstructed, as it is in the approaches prior to the anthropology of the state (Abrams, 1988). Instead, it needs to be seen as a substantive relationship. It is an interaction. An exchange of complaints, claims, appeals, and desires, which, based on affective registers, are inscribed in judicial forms that mediate these relationships (rights, privileges, prerogatives). The law is therefore a way to rename emotion and affection (Reeves, 2011).

Bureaucratic ethnography is what sparked the account of this detail. Ethnographers began to underline how street-level bureaucracies operated through the production and circulation of fear, hope and suspicion, as well as already classified governance tactics such as classification, inscription, and organization (Navarro, Yashin, 2009). The state is therefore an object of affective investment, a place of mutual fear, paranoia, and suspicion. This, of course, is a major advance for investigations that look into why the state materializes or how it appears in people's lives. The politization of affection of particular spaces or the act of connecting these affective manifestations with political and discursive signs is the way in which the state becomes tangible and regains a special or "real" existence. This form of appearance is of course a form of government and of the very state's "insubstantiality of power" (Taussig, 1992: 113).

The state thus needs to be understood not as a limited, invisible, abstract entity, but rather as a sounding board for emotions between different people and things (Taussig, 1997). Following this script, in the sections below, I will present a view of how this approach may be productive in terms of analyzing public processes for the construction of citizenry among the victims of the Bellavista, Bojayá massacre.

In terms of these visions, what is notable about bureaucratic ethnography is that it shows the fragmentation and physical incoherence of that which seems unitary and powerful within the traditional scripts of both social and political theory, like the theory of law (Martínez, 2015). Before unity, ethnography shows the bureaucracies as complex networks of meaningless juxtapositions that take on a meaning more as holograms than as rational organizations. By doing so, ethnography uncovers at least five enclaves of statehood and irrationality that are gathered differently in the emerging literature: (i) proceduralism (the fetishization of the documents) as protocols of operation and existence; (ii) the generation of expectation as emotional management that renews and consolidates the state's legitimacy (bureaucracy as a hope-generating machine); (iii) bureaucracies as instruments of

control and discipline that create performances and go through our bodies; (iv) bureaucracy as an ideology (legitimizing of official discourses); and (v) the bureaucrat as the promoter of individual political projects. Here, the state is contingency.

From this ethnographic approach, this article discusses the role of affection and emotions in the processes of state building, within the frame of the legal ethnography. In relation to the anthropological approaches to the processes of state formation, I want to propose an additional step with respect to the discussed state absence/presence dichotomy, and a progress in the characterization of statehood. To participate in this discussion, I characterize the types of bureaucracies present in Bojayá and labeled as *soft and hard* bureaucracy, as I have said before. This characterization is related to the level of sturdiness represented in the budgetary disposition, the structural centrality, and the hiring of personal for the organization. I basically study two institutions that are present – but alone – in Bojayá: The Victims Unit (VU) and the National Center of Historical Memory (NCHM). As I mentioned earlier, this institution operates more as a state broker than a state institution, due to its weak link with the central state processes and a small budgetary provision. Besides this, the main findings of this work show the predominance of soft bureaucracies over the hard bureaucracy in Bojayá – which is a paradox if we consider the centrality of the case in Colombia's peacebuilding process – and how this determines the precarization of citizenship. Here, the Bojayá case talks about how an affective state and soft bureaucracy creates a precarious citizenship as a counterpart, which promotes affective care interactions rather than social and economic provision. I am going to illustrate how this happens in the next section.

Christ and the State

To take the tension out of the environment, the leader of the Victim's Committee of the Second of May (CVDM) intervened to remind everyone why such scenarios are key to strengthening themselves and that all the opinions were valid (he had to calm down the discussion). Similarly, those from the Historical Memory Documentary Centre (CNMH) reminded the audience of a number of issues: first, that Bojayá was no longer Bojayá; it was the entire nation giving messages of reconciliation. The result of this assembly, the community's forgiveness shown by receiving the FARC's gesture was very important in this situation (we were days away from the referendum vote in which the Colombian people could vote for peace). Second, that there were more than just two options. They were not faced with a decision of whether to accept it or not. The community could also use the scenario to receive the Christ as a gesture of reconciliation, but to condition the reparation to a number of important points such as the exhumation and identification of the dead, health interventions, the revision of the trustee compensation systems. Thus there were ways in which they could "capitalize" on the situation, stretch out the gesture and take advantage of it.

The leader of the CVDM ended this part of the session speaking as a member of the community, and not as a member of the Committee. For him, the Christ had to be recognized as a symbol of forgiveness that put a date to certain actions that had to be carried out by the FARC. The community, for him, had to think seriously about what would happen if it did not receive the Christ, and what symbols and messages it would send to the rest of the country at this particular time.

The political and the emotional have always been closely related. The story with which I began this text speaks of two forms of this emotional dimension of the political in the worldly life of the state. Both things also mention the fragile rationality of the modern state and the irrational magic and emotions that construct it.

The story of the Black Christ speaks of the policy of pardon, or pardon as policy. The story depicts pardon not as an act produced in an instant but rather an action that requires a process in order to be realized: a negotiation (Derrida, 2007). Forgiveness is a full transaction to which there is more than mere redemption. It necessarily involves compensation, regret, a moral and public judgment of the victimizer and the moral and symbolic dignity of the victim. The victim status guarantees your goodness (Bruckner, 1995) and the pain becomes a currency to be exchanged. This is how reconciliation becomes a political transaction.

The victim identity is not a gift; it is also a state recognition. Soft bureaucracies that arrive by river have protocols, rules, dynamics that give that status as a moral virtue. In Bojayá, there is no infrastructure to run the victims census (that exists). There are emotional dynamics that require people to speak from their pain. The audience of the Black Chris speaks of such scenes. Pardon needs time to be conceded and it is the process of pardon, as a policy, which requires the victimizer to be punished, for the elevated dignity of the victim and the dynamic of the social relationship and historical event in which there is an appearance of the possibility of pardon between the victim and the victimizer (Uprimny & Saffon, 2010). The pardon referred to in the story of the Black Christ is an act of pardon, mediated by the political and economic interests of the victims, the victimizers, the state officials, and the imagined and abstract community of “Colombia in the peace process.” This political pardon is not redeeming, it is not unconditional. It is a power that is constructed.

Pardon as a policy delivers recognition to what happened to the victims only to seek the reconstitution of state unity. The victims, fragile, know that it is only through their pain that they will be able to interact with the state: “For successful pain” they say. The immanence of the subject that has the right to forgive is therefore annihilated on the basis of the transcendence of the political, social, and economic interests that surpass this possibility to forgive (Derrida, 2007), exactly as revealed in the initial story. There are other things at play in pardon, but what for CNMH officers is a transit towards peace, for the victims, is life itself: the possibility to negotiate, demand, speak. Their pain makes them citizens.

But here, forgiveness is mediated by a Christ; a spurious Christ, one that speaks, paradoxically, of statehood; a Christ that, in its materiality, condenses the – unthinkable – union between the state and the guerrilla, or between the state and the FARC. The objects make deliberation impossible and there, expelled in ruins, with its colossal size and artificial, made up wounds, the Christ speaks of a different kind of statehood in Bojayá: a statehood which is now being built between the government and the guerrilla, for the first time playing on the same side. The Christ reconfigures the scenario; it merges the actors, and synthesizes political relationships as yet weak in the public sphere. The Christ is the state and it is peace; it is the representation of a failed pardon, but also that of a new form of state in Colombia.

In view of these perspectives, what is notable about bureaucratic ethnography is that it shows the fragmentation and physical incoherence of that which seems unitary and powerful within the traditional scripts of both social and political theory, like the theory of law (Martínez, 2015). Before unity, ethnography shows the bureaucracies as complex networks of meaningless juxtapositions that take on meaning as holograms rather than rational organizations. By doing this, ethnography uncovers at least five enclaves of statehood and irrationality that are gathered differently in the emerging literature: (i) proceduralism (the fetishization of the documents) as protocols of operation and existence; (ii) the generation of expectation as emotional management that renews and consolidates the state's legitimacy (bureaucracy as a hope-generating machine); (iii) bureaucracies as instruments of control and discipline that create performances and go through our bodies; (iv) bureaucracy as an ideology (legitimizing of official discourses); and (v) the bureaucrat as the promoter of individual political projects. Here, the state is contingency.



The Christ in La Loma. September 2016
(Photo: Lina Buchely)

The Affective State within Us: Colombian Realities

We stopped for lunch, during which the officers of the Historical Memory Documentary Centre (CNMH) recognized the complexity of the situation. They talked about how unfair it is to put the community in such a difficult situation and they questioned the FARC's actions. What were they thinking of? Why precisely a Christ? We were in a really difficult situation.

After lunch, the spirits seemed to be different. Once again food was able to build in the community what deliberation could not. After the break, we assessed the proposals for accepting the Christ as a gesture of reconciliation and forgiveness and to send it to the Museum of Memory of Bogotá (which the CNMH would be reduced to in 2021). The possibility of receiving it without conditions or the idea of delivering it to a different community were dismissed; finally, it was agreed to receive the Christ as a gesture of reparation and we went on to discuss the points to propose to the FARC as key to the reparation and that would permit the conditioning of the community's acceptance of the Christ. The Victim's Committee of the Second of May would be put in charge of receiving the Christ.

At the end of this session, an elderly man mentioned that this was like writing in the air, before the agreements were signed. "We don't have anything, peace is not ready and, therefore, safety for the community doesn't exist either." Thus the meeting ended with an invitation to vote "yes" and the filming of a video in which the community leaders talk to urban centers, reminding them that rural inhabitants need peace to be able to work and live peacefully. It was a political declaration that I myself helped to film.

To see the Christ as a form of state existence and manifestation is a paradox. To see it as emotion and affect is too. Despite this, the affective state is everywhere. I could build an argument here that takes into account how the "affective state" exists in far-away, remote areas affected by violence. I have to admit that this was my first impulse. However, distance is not an explicative factor when I talk about the state as affective management.

I seem to see the same things regardless of whether I am in a District Center for Specialized Attention (CADE) in Bogotá (Colombia's capital city) or in any of Cali's Municipal Offices (EMCALI). I see raging customers at service counters, making powerful complaints of dissatisfaction and of bad service. In other words, I am witness to "bureaucratic altercations." I see the same affective interaction when people make requests in accountability processes or when there is a public audience in processes for official agreements in the Financial Fund for Development Projects (FONADE). The existence of the state as affection does not necessarily constitute a form of precarization.¹³

It is undeniable, for example, that the NCHM is the most visible state presence in Bojayá. In an interview with a CDVB leader, he said, "they are the madmen of the state." They are there and they devote themselves to crazy things. "Crazy"

describes, in his narrative, an irregular transit in public functions: they concern themselves with the construction of memory, for reparation, for forgiveness. But they also represent the state in a place in which the state has been systematically absent.

Despite the fact that it is a low-budget entity and that it is precarious in terms of its visibility in the public organization chart, NCHM has been especially effective in instilling emotion as the center of the public debate in the Bellavista community. This community – and I don't want to be misunderstood here – is made visible by its pain. The massacre put Bojayá at the heart of debates on the civil victims of the armed conflict. It is an emblematic case for the power of its incredibly painful facts and signs: an attack on a parish in which civilians, children, were killed. It crosses also with structural elements of abandonment as Chocó, Medio Atrato, with its Afro and Indigenous population.

The attack has made Bellavista different to other communities in Bojayá. Its houses are the product of partial compensation provided by President Uribe and they are noticeably more comfortable than the huts in the other villages. Bellavista has marked out streets, parks, and monuments. Its community lives, as I mentioned at the beginning, with their basic needs unmet. But the precariousness in the nearby communities is greater, and that is undeniable.

The centrality of the violent event and the community being recognized as victims has led to such aspects dominating the political scenarios, to raise awareness of the collective “us” in the way in which we imagine ourselves (field notes from field trip 1). The massacre is an important part of its political life, a foundational event. Since then, the labor of mourning, pardon and the pain is a political tool for them.

The NCHM was created in order to gather and recuperate material related to the violation mentioned in article 147 of the victim's law and land restitution. Its Do No Harm principle emphasizes the territory's non-extractive interventions, its dignifying interaction with the victims, and the importance of community processes that empower the victims. It speaks of memory, bereavement, and forgiveness. It carries out therapeutic activities that seek to strengthen the community's social fabric, respect its voices, and echo its resistance (field notes, field trip 5). They are caring and careful in determining what the community wants to be told and how it wants it to be told.

Somehow, state presence through the NCHM has contributed to the inflammation of the victim identity as a form of politization. In this sense, interactions with the state are constantly mediated by requests related to the massacre and they are inscribed within their events and their memories. This is something that is constantly brought to light by the representatives of public entities. It was very illustrative, for example, when an official at the Victim's Unit mentioned, in a meeting at Bellavista, that it was not possible to build a hospital, because the actions for reparation allowed by law 1448 had to leave the locality in the same state it was before. They didn't have a hospital before and they cannot have one now (field notes from field trip 1).

The emphasis on the affective existence of the state has displaced citizen requests. And I am not saying that asking for water, health and education is not an affective issue. What I am saying is that politicizing the community around the massacre and its identity as a victim compromises its relationships of citizenship and puts it in places where state contact is marginal. In this sense, what the NCHM and the Victim's Unit do in Bojayá is to "bargain" hard state benefits (Chatterjee, 2004).

The precarious citizenship is constructed within this scheme of bargaining. Rousseau speaks to us about a citizenship derived from the dignity of popular sovereignty. It is a citizenship that empowers, demands, speaks, moves. In contrast, the citizenship of victims in Colombia is one that rises out of frustration, of a lack of respect, and of indignity (Lemaitre, 2009). It is, therefore, a precarious citizenship, a post-citizenship.

At the beginning of this text, I characterized NCHM as a *soft bureaucracy*. I use the adjective to emphasize its marginality (it is ascribed to the DPS), its temporal nature (Law 1448 of 2011 grants it a lifespan which ends in 2021), and its precarity (it has a meager budget) (field notes, interview 1 with an official). In the words of some officials, the NCHM spends a significant part of its time trying to "articulate" public competencies to make sure that victims' rights are granted fully. To do so, they meet with the ministry of education, health and housing but the interactions often fail (field notes, field trip 3).

This becomes even more striking when, in the Victim's Unit's offices in Quibdó, they refer to members of the Bojayá Victims' Committee (the CVDM itself) as the official representatives of what happens in the municipality (field notes, field trip 2). While these community representatives represent a state that betrays them, the officials in the territories recognize them as "official mediators" (field notes, field trip 2). Despite not being lawyers and not having any experience of official bureaucracy, the members of the committee for victims have been the heads of the processes of struggle before the massacre, they have also led the documentary management system, the delivery of official requests, mediation with international entities such as the UN, and they have guided the permanent community assemblies. They represent the state condensed. They are like living files that clearly remember interactions with the state, and their personal memories are the official memories of the conflict (Interview 2 with CVDM leader). The state, here, is a subject.

Despite such feelings, the CVDM representatives have systematically refused to act as legal persons or other legal figures that imply formal representation of the community. They have sustained this position, despite the fact that the public prosecutor has refused to recognize their leadership or mediation until they become legal persons. This is paradoxical given that it is not only the state officials that recognize the leadership and legitimacy of CVDM members. The community too frequently remembers and ratifies their leadership, their solidarity, their voice. Both national and international processes recognize the visibility of their management (Riaño, 2012).

One of the visible arguments of the CVDM leader interviewed is that the formation of a legal figure of representation is the responsibility of the state. For him, a legal figure would grant one of the members of the community the responsibility for the victims, when this responsibility is, in fact, exclusively the state's (Interview 2 with CVDM leader).

Now, being a victim and a visible one at that is a complex process; it is frightening and painful. It enshrines victims within the drama, and wares them out (Interview 2 with CVDM leader). Despite this, this leader recognizes this identity as the only thing that has allowed his contact with public entities, the recognition of his community, and visibility within his territory. "It is only because of their pain that they exist," he says. Being a victim concentrates, contradictorily for these people, all past misfortunes, but at the same time, it brings together the dignity of present recognition and hope for a better future.

Entering the public sphere as a victim also builds a number of political dimensions. Forgiveness as a central manifestation of Christianity is replaced by the political logic of the transactions and the victim therefore derives from this his social and material capital of the capacity for pardon. The victim has the power to grant forgiveness, to redeem guilt, to process atonement. Conflict and suffering has given the victims the possibility to transit through the political sphere, despite the fact that "forgiveness" is so complex, impossible even: "you wouldn't forgive a bad joke, would you? So why should I forgive the death of my whole family?" (field notes, field trip 1).

The Christ and the State: Fragmentation, Saturation, Fragility, and Efficiency

A number of factors could be mentioned regarding this process. The process of state construction to which I referred at the beginning of this text has four fundamental characteristics in this context: (i) fragmentation, (ii) saturation, (iii) fragility, and (iv) efficiency. It is paradoxical that these characteristics coincide with the physical characteristics of the Black Christ with which I began this story.

Fragmentation refers to the idea of the state as something that is split, fragmented. It is easy to see the fragmentation of the state in these territories: the competencies of these entities are diffused, weak, dispersed, and disjointed. Public offices (those of the Victim's Unit, for example) are not located within condensed administrative centers (as happens in some cities according to the principles of urban planning) but rather in peripheral zones, which are not well connected with other administrative centers (town halls and police stations).

In addition to this, that state is fragmented into ambiguous figures which emulate its presence without representing its existence: CVDM members, community leaders, the women that cook for the community in the assemblies, NCHM officials with precarious contracts and an ephemeral presence. The figure of the Christ is also fragmented, its parts dismembered, its destination truncated, its extremities broken.



The mutilated Black Christ. September 2016
(Photo: Lina Buchely)

Saturation is the antonym of fragmentation. While I can recognize the state as being fragmented in Bojayá, its inhabitants only see the density of its presence. They feel suffocated by constant meetings, they are constantly exposed to tedious and paralyzing technical vocabulary, and they are harassed by unusual presence and interpellations in their territory. The state for them is represented by saturation. It is fully present through the intimidating soldiers in the park, their weapons, their voices. It is saturated as the bleeding wound of the Christ. It is seen as robust in the sophisticated discourse of the officials, in their feeling of being watched, in the unease brought about by constant visits by unknown guests. The saturation, of course, also of the Christ, intimidates us with its presence; it imposes a pressure to forgive, to expand, and renders political needs material.



The wounds of the Black Christ. May 2017
(Photo: Lina Buchely)

Fragility is contradictory when we speak of saturation. How can the state be simultaneously saturated and fragile in these territories? I have already written extensively about the precariousness of state presence in the Medio Atrato. This precariousness is born of the softness of soft bureaucracies and the forcefulness of the hard presence. The state is represented in the weapons carried by the soldiers in the park, but it escapes from the papers in the NCHM assemblies or the visits made by the Victim's Unit. It becomes fragile when what it brings is attention but not hospitals, when the community is listened to but it is not given a school, when there is management but no results (Interview 2 with CVDM leader). Here, the state is becoming a kind of therapy, a concern for the emotions, which is the only way in which it can be present in the territories. In the same way, the Christ lying in the church in ruins to which it has been confined is also fragile. The state is mediated for the river, and arrives and leaves like the boats.



Atrato River and Bellavista Port. May, 2017.
(Photo: Lina Buchely)

Finally, I mentioned that the state and the precarious citizenship are efficient. This efficiency is derived from the foundational sensation of the operation of a liberal developmental state (Eslava, 2014). It is the state that is not there, that does not want to be there, but that has to struggle, regardless, with people's expectations of its presence. So it appears in these forms. It appears as an entity that helps people in their bereavement, listens to people's pain, and reconstructs memory. And the paradox is that while it keeps its promises of presence, it betrays a structural absence, dissipates legal claims, and tangles up political vindications. This is the affective management of precarious citizenship. Like the state, the Christ too represented efficiency. The pardon it represented was the materialization of a transaction, of requests, of victories and of conditions. The Christ brings the President Santos to Bojayá. The Christ, as the state, is efficient.

Fragmentation, saturation, fragility and efficiency may be recognized in the experiences of Bojayá as an emblematic case of the Colombian violence. The scenario itself speaks to us of the centrality of affective exchanges as representations of the state in territories such as Bojayá. The way in which people enunciate their disapproval, the way in which the space is arranged and organized, and the way in which people display their opinions show how used they are to being used to speaking about this: forgiveness, resentment, tears, pain. It is about grief as an exercise of citizenship.

The scenario also reveals the way in which the state reaches these spaces. It arrives by river and leaves the same way. It shows its concern in the same way as the discontent and indignant CNMH officials do. They listen to the community, they know it, and they see to its needs, they recognize the people's voices, their names and they even know where they live. The role of the CNMH officials reverts Weber's iron cage: they are close, aware, and compassionate. They speak of pardon, of the importance of dignity, of their voices as victims. They are guarantors of "Do No Harm." They are people, not structures. They are individuals, not services. But while all this goes on, oblivion prevails; there is no water, no electricity, and no peace. But there are two Christs: the adored and the rejected. And these Christs speak in many ways of the state.

The inhabitants of Bojayá see this contradiction very clearly. For them, there is no such "integral reparation" that is mentioned in Law 1448 of 2011 and on which NCHM officials insist (field notes, field trip 5). The reparation is symbolic and material. There is a clear division, as clear as the fact that the latter has not yet arrived. Thus, when gathered to speak about forgiveness, the participants speak about their injuries, the hospitals, their living conditions, and their forgiveness, which, at that time, was forgiveness granted for the whole country, the Colombia of the saturated state that asked them for a gesture of forgiveness and of reconciliation.

Bojayá speaks of the existence of the state as emotion, as affection. The victim has made pain his exchange currency, his master key. The state, meanwhile, has kept for itself the magical power to recognize which pain is legitimate, it is important, it is recognized. And it does it with the same old spells: the law, the protocols, the bureaucracies. I have tried to argue here that the case of Bojayá speaks to us of this affective existence of the state and its correlative precarization of citizenship processes. This precariousness alters political transactions, the way in which the state manifests itself, the way in which people make their demands, but also the way in which the public is built in a post neoliberal arena.

Thus, precarious citizenship emerges from the consciousness of marginality, combined with the dignity of pain, from the permanent feeling of sadness, of injustice, and from the waiting at the river port, watching if someone with "power" appears. It emerges from the use of the Christ, from the instrumentalization of forgiveness, from the political strategy around pain. It emerges as a bargain. It emerges in spaces where we only have that little dignity that we call citizenship, in

front of bureaucracies that now can only give us affection. It is the moment of the *affective state* and the *precarious citizenship*.



The abandoned Christ. May, 2017.
(Photo: Lina Buchely)

Concluding Remarks

Colombia is going through one of the most difficult moments in its history. After over 60 years of confrontations with the FARC EP guerrilla forces, the Havana talks reached a positive conclusion on 26 September 2017, with the government and the FARC finally signing the long-awaited peace deal. The Colombian government is faced with the challenge of building a “presence” in those territories where its penetration was sparse due to the armed conflict. Bojayá and the middle Atrato is one such territory. Perturbed by the reality of the massacre, the villagers of this dispersed rural area approach the massacre as the only event that has given them visibility vis-à-vis the government. Their relationship with the massacre is ambiguous as, despite the great pain and anguish it has caused them, it has, simultaneously, provided it with new political possibilities.

By labeling them as “victims,” the Colombian state has deployed several interaction strategies with the people of Bojayá. Despite difficult access to the area, the Colombian state frequently sends officials from the Victims Unit and the National Center of Historical Memory to Bojayá. The relationship between the officials and the victims is mediated by the massacre and the public consequences it generates: state responsibility, the need for compensation, and the duty of attention. The encounter between these two realities – that of the state and that of the victims – reveals a number of characteristics relating to public interactions that have also been recognized in other post-neoliberal scenarios. It is a deeply affective, emotional interaction. The new public arena is a management of affection.

The seldomly hired officials of public institutions, with precarious salaries, are moved by the atrocity of the tragedy and give beyond what is required to connect with the victims. Victims, on the other hand, learn the political profitability of pain and suffering and it is only through this pain and suffering that they have appeared in the news, on forms, and before the state.

Using the field notes on the discussion surrounding the reception of the Black Christ as a gesture of forgiveness, I tried to characterize the type of emotional management and manifestation of citizenship that derives from this form of state building. My thesis is that this citizenship, out of pain and suffering as political capital, is a precarious one. In a vicious circle, precariousness is determined by the paradoxes in which the victims are locked: only pain legitimizes their voice, but only the state recognizes the real pain. At the same time, pain confers them a position – which did not exist before – in which they can make claims before the state, but it also limits the kinds of demands that victims can make. While pain and forgiveness are negotiated as political transactions that take up the energy of officials and victims alike, there is no water, blackouts are frequent, and food is scarce. The affective state and the precarious citizenship are symbolically powerful, but they do not assume material costs. There is only pain, forgiveness and forgetfulness.

Bojayá speaks of the presence of the state as emotion, as affection. The victims experience their political existence as an effect of their suffering and the state appears with soft bureaucratic schemes that recognize pain as a political capital. These public interactions in the form of “bargaining” build a particular form of citizenship, in which people connect with the state through forgiveness and understand how much they can claim from it. This is what I call the affective state and the precarious citizenship.

Epilog

After leaving the meeting, we went to look for the polemic Christ in la Loma, where it had apparently been housed for months while the Cuban artist finished it. The Black Christ of Bojayá was on the floor in an old abandoned church. [...] I was impressed first by its size. Then, I have to say; I was frustrated by its image. It

wasn't as well made as I had imagined. It hadn't been finished yet. It had to be painted and it was still rough, as it hadn't yet been sanded down. Its legs were thicker than normal; its hips, in contrast, were narrow. Its face was polemic. Its features were Afro and he had a few dreadlocks hanging down as his hair. "He is not an Afro from the Pacific," said one of my colleagues. "It would cause a lot of problems in the community," said another, "they'll think, as it is Cuban, that it is cursed," she affirmed. The Christ's size was exaggerated and contrasted with the size and grace of the Christ of Bojayá, which survived the day of the massacre (which wasn't even a fifth of the size of the Cuban Christ). The expression on its face was indifferent and did not correspond to the machete wounds on his body (exaggerated and open) and its whole body seemed to reflect brusqueness, apathy and indifference. "The Christ did not transmit the pain that it was supposed to represent, its compassion, its regret," said other voices.

For Enrique Angulo, the Cuban artist who had created the statue, the sculpture included three symbols of resistance, which made it hard to understand why the community would reject it. He told us this in an interview that we finally managed to arrange with him. For Angulo, the Christ's feet, for example, resisted being nailed to the cross. They were feet that put up a struggle, like the feet of a "revolutionary" Christ, made by a communist atheist. The second symbol of resistance was its color: the only other two black Christs were black as a result of fires. To make a Black Christ seemed to be an act of rebellion for him. Finally, the last symbol of resistance was the wounds on its back, which were much deeper, with its blood much more visible. It was, without a doubt, a way of speaking about the massacre and its magnitude.

However, for the community, the Cuban Christ couldn't be further from them. Its blood and suffering were artificial, mere make up, paintings in the most banal sense. And just thinking that their pain and dignity could be reduced to this seemed offensive and degrading. They wanted their Christ, their suffering Christ, the Christ that had been mutilated by the same violence that attacked them and was now looking for atonement.

We went back a year later to see the Christ. The work of Angulo and its cross never came out of the exile they were confined to (far away from the victims which it sought to compensate) and it was doomed to ruins. The community never received it. Very few Bellavista inhabitants even saw it. And its image remained, relegated by the revolution and failed pardon.

Months later, when the referendum had already taken place and President Santos had been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize; I was coincidentally in London in one of the recognition ceremonies for President Santos. In the airport, an Englishman who works at Heathrow Airport said, "Your country is so brave, we've seen so much excitement these past few days. It's full of very happy people. I was surprised at how they came here and got their flags out after going through so much pain" (field

notes, field trip 6). And all I could think was whether this pain he was speaking of is the same pain I had seen in the people of Bellavista, whether pain, like the state, travels and finds new places and whether people escape to hide from it.

An assembly on forgiveness had taken place in London with acts of recognition, dignity, peace, acts that symbolize hope. I travelled to Bogotá happy. When I got here at dawn, a hungry child that, at 4 am, asked me for money for food, reminded me of the distances between different types of pain. The affective state and the precarious citizenship speak of such contradictions, of the limited existence of signs, of the fragility of affective processes.

NOTES

1. Bojayá is categorized as a scattered rural area (located in the middle Atrato, Chocó, Colombia). Bellavista is the municipal capital of Bojayá.

2. \$30USD represents, in terms of purchasing power, almost 15% of the national minimum salary.

3. This refers to the Colombian ideological map. FARC EP is a leftist guerrilla inspired by Marx and Lenin's economical readings, while the AUC is an extreme right-wing armed group (known as paramilitaries in Colombia). These groups are local self-defense entities that claim that there is little or no state presence to protect their property and safety.

4. They violated our rights, in our community; they didn't even let us get to work or to fish. We want justice and peace, which comes from the heart, so that health, peace and education can reach our fields.

5. Passed in 2011, this law is known as the "Victims' and land restitution law." For a number of authors, this is the country's first exercise in the consolidation of the framework of transitional justice (Uprimny & Saffon, 2010).

6. Literally something like a "carnival of vests," alluding to the colorful vests of the numerous NGOs working in the area.

7. The topic of the state's "consistence" can be seen as one of these hard bureaucracies (its materiality, its relative "hardness," its "flaccidity" etc.) as a way to endorse "beliefs" and condition the "performativity" of the acts of authority. In this sense, the question is not so much whether the state is there or not (absence/presence) but rather "how it makes itself seen," how it manifests, both ordinarily and extraordinarily. I use adjectives that refer to the hardness/softness of the bureaucracies precisely as a descriptive effort to show how the state allows itself to be seen before our eyes (Fergusson & Gupta, 2002).

8. Another apparent characteristic of soft bureaucracies is their leverage in private organisms (such as universities and research centers) to advance their work.

9. In this article, I take the Bojayá massacre as a critical event in the region's political mobilization. Although this has had a significant impact on the region's communities' participation processes, the long organizational trajectory of the Medio Atrato, which dates back to the 1980s and the creation of the region, must not be forgotten. Is important to remember the basic ecclesial committees promoted by the Claretian missionaries, which gave rise to the mobilization of the black communities of the Pacific region around their territorial rights and the emergence of organizations such as the ACIA, nowadays considered as one of the pioneers in the defense of the communities' collective right to the territory. In fact, before the 2002 massacre, ACIA had already come a long way not only in

the struggle for the recognition of the rights of black populations, but also in the adoption of different coping strategies for the armed conflict.

10. In 1995, Pascal Bruckner published *The Temptation of Innocence* that presents another way of explaining this “moral superiority” (not without debate). He argues that excessive individualism leads, paradoxically, to tribalism and moves into the dichotomy part of the group / outside the group. In societies like ours, individuals are responsible for their own identity, happiness and success. “Everyone has to sell themselves as a person to be accepted,” writes Bruckner. We all constantly compare ourselves with others and feel inferior. The greatest anxiety is moral. We all have to write our own gospel, which defines our own virtue. The simplest way to do so is to tell a tribal story of oppressor / oppressed and build your own innocence about your *victim status*. Almost everyone can find a history of personal victimization. Once you have identified the opponent of your pack (the neoliberal order, the media elite, the white men, whatever) your goodness is safe. It is an obligation without obligation. Nothing is your fault. “What is the moral order today? Not so much the realm of people who think correctly, but the one who suffers correctly, the cult of daily despair,” continues Bruckner. “I suffer, therefore I am worth ... Suffering is a change to baptism, a title that introduces us to the order of a higher humanity, rising above our fellowmen.”

11. It is fascinating to see how this feature of the literature is not recognizable, for example, in the victims who begin their claim processes in Cali (a city with three million inhabitants known in Colombia as the capital of the Pacific department). In places such as the UAO, the victims of the conflict do not speak of “privileges” granted them by the state bureaucracies, but rather about the mistreatment and indignation derived from their situation (Recalde, 2016).

12. Here, we will call legal ethnographies the processes of indignation in terms of the legal field that uses the ethnographic techniques of description and observation to explain how the legal constitutes, modifies, and alters the scenarios that it occupies.

13. As I explained above, I do not mean for the adjectives hard and soft, used to describe bureaucracy, to be read as a projection of my own ideas of the state or as my own fetish (hard bureaucracies). On the contrary, these adjectives are used to describe the consistency of the processes of statehood present in the place analyzed.

REFERENCES

- Abrams, P. (1988). “Notes on the Difficulty of Studying the State,” *Journal of Historical Sociology* 1(1): 58–89.
- Alviar García, H., & Jaramillo Sierra, I. C. (2012). *Feminismo y crítica jurídica : el análisis distributivo como alternativa crítica al legalismo liberal* [Feminism and legal criticism: the distributive analysis as a critical alternative to liberal legalism]. Bogotá, Colombia: Siglo del Hombre; Universidad de los Andes.
- Althusser, L. (2003). *Ideología y Aparatos Ideológicos del estado* [Ideology and ideological mechanisms]. Buenos Aires: Nueva Visión.
- Barrera, L. (2011). *Más allá de los fines del derecho: expedientes, burocracia y conocimiento legal* (Dossier).
- Barrera, L. (2012). *La corte suprema en escena: una etnografía del mundo judicial*. Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI editores.

- Bruckner, P. (1995). *The Temptation of Innocence. Living in the Age of Entitlement*. New York: Algora.
- Cabot, H. (2012). "The Governance of Things: Documenting Legal Limbo in Greek Asylum Procedure," *Political and Legal Anthropology Review* 35(1): 11–29.
- Chatterjee, P. (2004). *The Politics of the Governed. Reflections on Popular Politics in Most of the World*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Derrida, J. (2007). "Sobre el Perdón," in Chaparro, A. (ed.), *Cultura, Política y Perdón*. Bogotá: Editorial Universidad el Rosario, 19–37.
- Escalante, F. (2007). "Baile de máscaras. Conjeturas sobre el Estado en América Latina," *Nueva Sociedad* 210(July/August): 64–77.
- Eslava, L. (2018). "'I Feel Like a Dog with the Tail Between its Legs': On the Limits of Protest and Urban Law in Our Decentralized World," in O. Sircar et al. (eds.), *Human Rights Beyond the Law*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. *Forthcoming*
- Ferguson, J., & Gupta, A. (2002). "Spatializing States: Toward an Ethnography of Neoliberal Governmentality," *American Ethnologist* 29(4): 981–1002.
- Gupta, A., & Sharma, A. (2006). "Globalization and Postcolonial States," *Current Anthropology* 47(2): 277–307.
- Hobbes, T. (1999). *Leviatán: la materia, forma y poder de un Estado eclesiástico y civil* [Leviathan: matter, form and power of an ecclesiastical and civil state]. Madrid: Editorial alianza.
- Lipsky, M. (2010). *Street-level Bureaucracy: Dilemmas of the Individual in Public Services*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Martínez, S. P. (2015). "Funcionarios y colonos: la formación del estado en el suroriente Colombiano," *Íconos. Revista de Ciencias Sociales* 52(May): 79–98.
- Mitchell, T. (1999). "The Limits of the State: Beyond Stasis Approaches and Their Critics," *American Political Science Review* 85(1): 77–96.
- Navaro-Yashin, Y. (2007). "Make-Believe Papers, Legal Forms and the Counterfeit: Affective Interactions between Documents and People in Britain and Cyprus," *Anthropological Theory* 7(1): 79–98.
- Navaro-Yashin, Y. (2009). "Affective Spaces, Melancholic Objects: Ruination and the Production of Anthropological Knowledge," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 15(1): 1–18.
- Navaro-Yashin, Y. (2012). *The Make-Believe Space: Affective Geography in a Postwar Polity*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Perelmiter, L. (2016). *Burocracia plebeya: la trastienda de la asistencia social en el Estado argentino*. Buenos Aires: UNSAM Edita.
- Recalde, G. (2018). "'En lo que esté a mi alcance les ayudo.' Los funcionarios de base y las víctimas en el proceso de declaración para la inscripción en el Registro Único de Víctimas del conflicto armado" [I'll do anything within my power to help. The grassroots officials and victims in the declaration process for registration in the Victim's Register], in Jaramillo, I. & Buchely, L. (eds.), *Etnografías Burocráticas* [bureaucratic ethnographies]. Bogotá: Universidad de los Andes. *Forthcoming*
- Reeves, M. (2011). "Fixing the Border: On the Affective Life of the State in Southern Kyrgyzstan," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 29(5): 905–923.
- Riaño, P., & Eines, B. (2012). "Cuando el archivo está en el testigo: documentación en escenarios de inseguridad crónica," *Análisis político* 74(Jan/April): 49–70.

- Rivas, A. (2011). “‘El problema es la falta de estado.’ La dificultad de estenografiar al estado,” in Chaves, M. (ed.), *La Multiculturalidad Estatalizada*. Bogotá: ICANH, 43–48.
- Taussig, M. (1992). *The Nervous System*. New York: Routledge
- Taussig, M. (1997). *The Magic of the State*. New York: Routledge.
- Uprimny, R., & Saffon, M. P. (2010). “Uses and Abuses of Transitional Justice in Colombia,” in Bergsmo, M. & Kalmanovitz, P. (eds.), *Law in Peace Negotiations*. Oslo: Torkel Opsahl Academic EPublisher, 354–394.

Field notes

- Field trip 1 – Bellavista – Commemoration of 14 years of the massacre (April 29–May 3)
- Field trip 2 – Quibdó – Meeting with the Victim’s Unit and CVDM (June 2–3)
- Field trip 3 – Bellavista – Local holidays (July 13–20)
- Field trip 4 – Bellavista and Pogue. Assembly of the Black Christ of Bojayá (September 19–22)
- Field trip 5 – Bellavista and La Loma. Fifteenth anniversary of the massacre (May 2–5, 2017)
- Field trip 5 – Bogotá – Regional Memory Groups Meeting (October 21)
- Field trip 6 – London – Recognition ceremony for the awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to the President of the Republic of Colombia (November 6–12)
- Interview 1 – NCHM official – March 18 (Cali)
- Interview 2 – CVDM leader – September 9 (Cali)