

Collective Rituals, Emotional Climate and Intergroup Perception: Participation in “Gacaca” Tribunals and Assimilation of the Rwandan Genocide

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Fifty survivors of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda and 50 prisoners accused of being responsible of genocidal acts completed four scales 45 days before and 45 days after their participation to a gacaca trial. The scales assessed (1) negative emotions presently felt with regard to the genocide, (2) perceived emotional climate, (3) negative stereotypes of the outgroup, and (4) perceived similarity among outgroup members. Building upon Durkheim’s (1912) theory of collective rituals, we predicted that participation to the gacaca would involve a reactivation of negative emotions in both groups and would also impact negatively on perceived emotional climate. In contrast, we expected positive consequences for intergroup perception under the form of a reduction of (1) the prejudicial reactions of survivors and prisoners toward each other and (2) the perceived homogeneity of outgroup members. The collected data supported all four predictions.

Tagiuri (1968) introduced the concept of climate in organizational psychology to capture noticeable differences existing in the environments of different organizations. He viewed climate as a relatively enduring quality of an organization’s environment. Such a quality could be described in terms of values of a particular set of characteristics or attributes of the environment. To illustrate, perceived friendliness or openness to suggestion are fruitful descriptors of climate. Qualities of these kinds are felt by the occupants and they influence their behavior. They are experienced as external to the actors and as part of the environment.

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Building upon Tagiuri's ideas, de Rivera (1992) extended the concept of climate to the investigation of nations or states. *Emotional climate* thus points to the quality of the environment that surrounds people and affects their behavior at the level of a nation. It is clearly distinct from a nation's emotional atmosphere. An emotional atmosphere—or collective mood—pertains to the collective behavior that a group or society manifests when it is focused on a common event, as is the case when a crowd becomes a mob or when a group attends a ceremony. By contrast, an emotional climate refers to the collective behavior that a group or society manifests when it is focused on the emotional relationships existing between members of the society. Thus, an emotional climate is more lasting than a local emotional atmosphere and does not simply refer to collective feeling or behavior but to how people of a society emotionally relate to one another—for example, whether they care for one another or are afraid of each other. de Rivera (1992; de Rivera & Páez, this issue) stressed that sociopolitical events can be particularly instrumental in the creation of collective affective fields which, when they persist, progressively constitute an emotional climate. Thus, for instance, Páez, Asún, and González (1994) described the powerful emotional climate of fear which persisted in Chile for some 15 years after General Augusto Pinochet seized power in 1973. Under his leadership, the nation's army imprisoned every citizen who was suspected of potential political opposition and murdered a thousand of them. During this period, people in Chile were experiencing fear because they lived under continuous threat. Anybody could be arrested at any time because of expression of political criticism, because of incautious behavior or simply because of a mistake of the police. Social norms permanently called for caution, thus preventing people from disclosing their thoughts. The ubiquitous anticipative fear rapidly led to a situation of generalized social isolation.

The present study addresses the issue of whether an emotional climate prevailing in a nation can be modified by social interventions relying upon the use of collective tools. More specifically, we wondered whether collective rituals instigated at a sociopolitical level could alter in a significant manner the emotional climate prevailing in a population as a result of past conflicts, violations of human rights, or massacres. In Rwanda, between April and July 1994, it is estimated that some 1,000,000 Tutsis were killed in a genocide. Additionally, tens of thousands Hutus were killed during the same period for being too moderate, too sympathetic to Tutsi, too wealthy, or politically inconvenient. A decade later, much of the state and the economy has been rebuilt. However, emotional harms in the Rwandese society are still far from being repaired. A complex emotional climate prevails involving at one and the same time feelings of anger, resentment, shame, sadness, and distrust. In this context, achieving justice and reconciliation represents a particularly critical challenge. Some 130,000 persons accused of participation in the genocide are currently imprisoned and more of them die in prisons each year than are judged. To deal with this challenge, a traditional Rwandan community-based

conflict resolution system called *gacaca* was transformed and adapted for judging all those accused of participation in the genocide. This modernized *gacaca* constitutes an unprecedented legal-social experiment in its size and scope. Throughout the country, *gacaca* tribunals have been created. They are composed of persons of integrity elected by the inhabitants of cells, sectors, districts, and provinces. Prisoners are brought before the tribunal in the community where they allegedly committed a crime. In their presence, survivors and the entire community discuss the alleged acts, providing testimony and counter-testimony. Prisoners who confess before the proceedings and ask for forgiveness can benefit from important reductions in sentences.

Our research question was whether *gacaca* tribunals would exert an impact on the emotional climate prevailing before their introduction. As *gacaca* tribunals can be seen as instances of collective rituals, following a suggestion from former work (Martin Beristain, Páez, & González, 2000; Páez, Rimé, & Basabe, 2005; Rimé, 2005), we relied upon Durkheim's (1912) classic model of social rituals to formulate predictions for individual and collective effects of *gacaca* tribunals. Durkheim's (1912) theory of social rituals addressed collective manifestations gathering members of a given society in a ceremony proper to recreate the moral community to which they all belong. It often involves group symbols (flags, emblems. . .) and collective expressions (singing, yelling, telling words or sentences, shared movements, music, and dance), which aptly awaken the latent social dimension of every human being. Particularly central to Durkheim's view is that in such a context, individuals' consciousnesses echo one another. Any expression of emotions among participants vividly elicits analogous feelings in people around. This reciprocal stimulation of emotion is particularly propitious to install a collective state of emotional communion in which participants' salience of their self is lowered and their collective identity is enhanced. Durkheim thus considered social rituals to boost participants' feelings of group belonging and of social integration. By the same token, their shared beliefs and collective representations are set at the foreground, thus consolidating their faith in their cultural beliefs and their confidence in collective action. A good deal of observations from current social psychology is consistent with Durkheim's views stressing the positive social consequences of shared emotional expression (see e.g., Páez, Rimé, Martínez, & Basabe, 2006). We are now in a position to formulate a number of predictions with regard to individual and group consequences of participation to *gacaca* trials.

As regards consequences for individuals, following Durkheim's model, intense emotional manifestations by people who publicly share their past dramatic experience would elicit strong empathetic emotional feelings in the audience which would in turn stimulate further the sharing of person's emotional expression. Thus, a first prediction is that *gacaca* trials would end up reactivating emotional upset among all participants, whether survivors or prisoners. In line with former observations of Truth and Reconciliation Commissions (e.g., Hayner, 2001), participation

in such social rituals would have consequences that are at odds with a “cathartic” or discharge view of emotional expression in social contexts. Negative emotions should be increased rather than decreased after participation.

As regards consequences for emotional climate, the fact that gacaca trials would necessarily reactivate the memory of the dark shared past of both parties concerned leads to expect that after gacaca trials, participants’ perception of the emotional climate in their community should evolve toward a more negative one, with an enhanced perception of sadness, fear, and anger around themselves. However, Durkheim’s model also lead to expect collective rituals to encompass positive consequences for participants’ feelings of group belonging and social integration. As far as some degree of emotional communion would be reached by participants, perceived societal cohesion should be enhanced which should favor their perception of a positive emotional climate, together with higher perceived feelings of solidarity. Negative and positive emotional climates being relatively independent variables, both mentioned effect could co-occur (see Páez et al., 2006; Rimé, this issue). However, the prediction regarding a positive emotional climate is formulated with caution. Compared to rituals described by Durkheim’s theory, gacacas represent a special case. They bring together members of a same community composed of two distinct groups which opposed each other in an enduring conflict that culminated in a devastating massacre.

For reasons already mentioned (penalty reduction), most prisoners involved in gacaca trials would plead guilty. Because trials in which convicts plead guilty facilitate abundant expression of feelings and emotions by members of both parties, we would argue that, at the very least, such situations are likely to entail positive consequences for intergroup perception (for reviews, see Dovidio, Glick, & Rudman, 2005; Mackie & Smith, 2002; Oskamp, 2004; Schneider, 2004; Yzerbyt, Judd, & Corneille, 2004). Thus, as far as emotional aspects of intergroup perception are concerned, whereas members of an outgroup are generally the target of negative prejudice or unflattering stereotypical views, gacaca situations may well end up reducing the prejudicial reactions of victims and prisoners toward each other and improve somewhat the views that each one of these two groups has about the members of the other group. Turning to more cognitive aspects of intergroup perception, whereas outgroups are generally perceived as homogeneous and outgroup members as more similar to one another than are ingroup members, gacaca situations could entail a decrease of the perceived homogeneity of members of the group of prisoners in the eyes of victims, as well as a decrease of the perceived homogeneity of members of the group of victims in the eyes of prisoners. The hypotheses about stereotyping and homogeneity will thus be considered as the third and fourth prediction in the study to be reported.

The above predictions were tested in a study conducted on a sample of 50 accused prisoners and 50 survivors. Both groups of participants agreed to complete a number of questionnaires before and after their participation in the gacaca court

in which they were directly concerned. Thus, the study design consisted of a 2×2 factorial with repeated measures on the second variable. Measurements comprised a scale assessing the intensity of a number of negative primary emotions felt at the individual level, a scale assessing emotional climate, a scale measuring negative stereotypes of the outgroup, and a scale investigating the perception of similarity among outgroup members.

Method

Participants

Survivors of the genocide and prisoners accused of being responsible for the genocide, all living in the region of Kigali and awaiting their participation into gacaca trials, were contacted and invited to complete the study forms before and after the trials. Potential participants had to be able to read and write in the Kinyarwanda language. Survivors had to have been, at the time of the genocide, themselves and/or their family, residents of the area concerned by the next gacaca trials. Prisoners had to have been, during the entire period of the genocide, residents of the area concerned by the next gacaca trials; they had to have been aged at least 18 at the time of the genocide and to be imprisoned for genocide-related crimes alone. Among 150 survivors who were contacted, 70 of them accepted to contribute to the study. Among these respondents, 50 correctly completed all the forms before and after the gacaca trial. Aged between 18 and 53 years ($M = 31.7$; $SD = 8.8$), they were predominantly female ($N = 34$, or 68% of total). Among prisoners, 150 were contacted and 70 agreed to contribute, with 50 of them who completed all the forms before and after the trial. They ranged in age between 28 and 54 years ($M = 37.0$; $SD = 6.8$) and were predominantly male ($N = 42$, or 84% of total).

Procedure

Official authorization was first obtained to contact prisoners in two prisons of the Kigali area awaiting to take part soon in gacaca trials. Prisoners were then informed of the investigators' visit by the prison authorities. The investigators were psychology students in their last year of study at the department of clinical psychology of the National University of Rwanda. At their visit to the prison, they contacted prisoners who had registered themselves to take part in the next gacaca trials in the area. Virtually all of them declared that they had made up their mind during their term in jail, that they intended to plead guilty, and that they were willing to complete the study forms. Survivors were contacted at their home in areas in which prisoners involved in the study were living at the time of the genocide and thus also awaited to take part into the same gacaca trials as would

the first ones. Local official had provided authorizations to include them among participants.

At the first contact, all participants, prisoners and survivors, were told that they were invited to contribute to a scientific investigation in which the data collected would remain confidential and their anonymity would be guaranteed. They were said that they were entirely free to decline participation and that in case of acceptance, they would be free to stop their participation at any time without any consequence for themselves or for their family. In addition, they were informed that the study requested respondents to complete similar forms twice, once before the gacaca trial and the other after it.

Dates of gacaca trials varied from district to district. Respondents completed the study forms first 45 days before the gacaca trial in which they would participate and then 45 days after the trial.

Questionnaires

Intensity of primary emotions felt in relation to gacaca trials. This questionnaire assessed the intensity of residents' primary emotions felt in anticipation or in response to Gacaca trials. In a shortened version of Izard's Differential Emotions Scale (Izard, Dougherty, Bloxom, & Kotsch, 1974), respondents rated six primary emotion (Sadness/Grief, Anger, Fear, Disgust, Anxiety, Shame and Guilt), each on a seven-point scale ranging from 0 (= not at all) to 6 (= a great deal), in reference to the question: "Considering the fact that all inhabitants will/did take part to gacaca trials, to what extent do you feel the following emotions?"

Perceived emotional climate and social cohesion. The 10-item Emotional Climate Scale (Páez, Ruiz, Gailly, Kornblit & Wiesenfeld, 1996) assesses people's perception of their society's current emotional climate. It involves two dimensions, with negative emotional climate on the one hand and positive emotional climate and social cohesion on the other hand. A modified version of this scale was used in the present study. Participants first had to express their perception of the general emotional climate in the country through the following item "In the present context of gacaca trials, the general climate of the country is. . ." which they had to rate on a five-point scale anchored with 1 = very bad, 2 = bad, 3 = correct, 4 = good, and 5 = very good. They then expressed the extent to which they perceived the current emotional climate in their country to be positive and to involve social cohesion, or to be negative, by means of 14 items, each to be rated on a five-point scale ranging from 1 (= not at all) to (5 = very much). Eight items assessed positive emotional climate and social cohesion. Examples of items are: "In general, I have the feeling that people in Rwanda (1) manifest solidarity and mutual help, (2) trust their institutions, (3) feel joyful, (4) manifest mutual confidence, and (5) experience calm", etc. Another 6 items assessed negative emotional climate.

Example of items are: “ In general, I have the feeling that people in Rwanda (1) feel fear and anxiety, (2) experience hostility toward each other, (3) feel sadness and have lost their morale”, etc.

Leaving the general item aside, we conducted separate item analyses (PCA) on the positive and negative items measure before and after the gacaca. As far as the positive items were concerned, these analyses revealed that six of the eight items could be retained for the computation of a positive emotional climate score that had acceptable internal consistency, $\alpha = .80$ and $\alpha = .53$, before and after the gacaca, respectively. Turning to the negative items, item analyses indicated that the exclusion of two of the six items allowed to secure good levels of internal reliability on both measurement occasions ($\alpha = .71$ in both cases). We thus computed a score of negative emotional climate on the basis of these four items.

Negative stereotypes. A 12-item questionnaire assessed the extent to which participants endorsed negative stereotypes about the other group. The specific characteristics were chosen on the basis of a preliminary investigation in which we collected consensual stereotypes circulating among students who survived the genocide on the one hand and ex-prisoners on the other hand (for a recent illustration, see Judd, Park, Yzerbyt, Gordijn, & Muller, 2005). The questionnaire began with the prompt “Please use the following scales to rate the extent to which you consider that the following adjectives are characteristic of prisoners/survivors . . .”. The 12 adjectives followed (“nasty,” “selfish,” “dirty,” “aggressive,” “arrogant,” etc.) and each was to be rated on a nine-point scale ranging from 1 (= Not at all characteristic) to 9 (= Very characteristic). Participants’ answers were submitted to an item analysis, which indicated that the internal reliability of the two sets of 12 items was good, $\alpha = .75$ and $\alpha = .77$, before and after the trial respectively. As a result, participants’ answers to each one of the sets of 12 items were averaged to form two negative stereotyping scores.

Perceived outgroup homogeneity. This questionnaire intended to assess in each group of respondents—survivors and prisoners—the perception of the other group as being homogeneous or heterogeneous on a series of characteristics. For each of the five items, participants were to indicate the agreement on a nine-point scale ranging from 1 (= Not at all) to 9 (= Very much). The items read as follows “I think that, in general, (1) the (outgroup members) share the same negative views about the (ingroup members), (2) the (outgroup members) share the same hate about (ingroup members), (3) the (outgroup members) are all similar to each other in their personality, (4) the (outgroup members) are all similar to each other in their behavior, (5) the (outgroup members) are all similar to each other in their education”. An item analysis revealed that the internal reliability of the two sets of five items was good, $\alpha = .71$ and $\alpha = .79$, before and after the trial respectively. Participants’ answers to each one of the sets of five items were thus averaged to form two similarity scores.

Results

Primary Emotions

The seven primary emotions were analyzed separately by means of the same 2 (group: survivors vs. prisoners) \times 2 (time: before gacaca vs. after gacaca) mixed-model ANOVA. As can be seen in Table 1, we found a significant group main effect on anger, on fear, and, most interestingly, on guilt. Not surprisingly, prisoners expressed less anger and fear than survivors. In contrast, prisoners reported substantially more guilt than survivors. The time main effect came out significant for all seven emotions. With the notable exception of anger, which was experienced less intensely after the gacaca trial than before, primary emotions were reported to be stronger after than before the gacaca trial.

These main effects were all qualified by significant interactions. Three distinctive patterns emerged in the cell means. The first, which concerns sadness, fear, disgust, shame, and anxiety, is one in which the increase in emotional experience observed between the two measurement points was more important for survivors than for prisoners. For instance, survivors expressed a higher level of fear after than before the gacaca, $t(49) = -6.93, p < .001$. This increase was significantly more important than the increase observed among prisoners, $t(49) = -1.78, p < .09$. Quite a different pattern emerged for anger. The general decrease evidenced in the main effect was in fact only observed among prisoners. Indeed, prisoners expressed a lower level of anger after than before the gacaca, $t(49) = 3.97, p < .001$. In contrast, a nonsignificant increase was observed among survivors, $t(49) = -.25, ns$. Responses pertaining to guilt revealed yet another pattern. As

Table 1. Primary Emotions and Emotional Climate as a Function of Group and Time of Judgment

D.E.S.	Survivors		Prisoners		Group	Time	G \times T
	Before	After	Before	After			
Primary emotions							
Sadness	3.46 (.86)	4.50 (.86)	3.76 (.71)	4.16 (.93)	.03	38.51***	7.60**
Anger	3.64 (.77)	3.68 (.76)	3.72 (.94)	3.12 (.82)	3.67*	6.51***	8.51**
Fear	2.98 (1.02)	4.38 (1.10)	3.10 (1.21)	3.52 (1.21)	4.87*	34.36***	9.96**
Disgust	2.88 (.98)	4.48 (1.16)	3.56 (1.19)	4.04 (1.24)	.72	34.14***	9.89**
Shame	2.66 (.96)	4.26 (1.24)	3.22 (1.14)	3.96 (1.06)	.69	55.06***	7.43**
Guilt	2.52 (.73)	2.38 (.69)	2.72 (.64)	3.28 (.88)	28.92***	3.78***	10.50**
Anxiety	2.40 (.98)	4.50 (.97)	3.00 (1.35)	4.06 (1.20)	.22	105.70***	11.45***
Emotional climate							
General	2.52 (.50)	1.88 (.68)	2.60 (.53)	2.40 (.69)	11.92***	23.51***	6.45**
Positive	2.21 (.81)	2.03 (.34)	2.09 (.35)	2.00 (.37)	1.16	3.38*	.42
Negative	2.52 (.63)	3.58 (.67)	3.17 (.65)	3.35 (.37)	5.63*	57.63***	29.50***

Notes. Standard deviations are in parentheses.

*** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$, * $p < .10$.

would be expected, a significant increase was observed among prisoners, $t(49) = -3.76, p < .001$. In contrast, a nonsignificant decrease emerged among survivors, $t(49) = .89, ns$.

Emotional Climate

The three scores pertaining to emotional climate (general, positive, and negative) were analyzed separately by means of the same 2 (group: survivors vs. prisoners) \times 2 (time: before gacaca vs. after gacaca) mixed-model ANOVA. For the general emotional climate item, we found two significant main effects. As the means reported in Table 1 (below) reveal, prisoners generally thought that the emotional climate was better than what survivors indicated. At the same time, the general emotional climate was perceived to be worse after than before the gacaca trial. These main effects were qualified by a significant interaction. The pattern of the means reveals that survivors' impression of the general emotional climate deteriorated over the course of time, $t(49) = 5.47, p < .001$, whereas prisoners' impression remained fairly stable, $t(49) = 1.56, ns$. As far as the negative emotional climate is concerned, both main effects were significant. Globally, the emotional climate was perceived to be more negative after than before the gacaca trial. Also, compared to survivors, the prisoners generally thought that the emotional climate was worse. More importantly, there was also a significant interaction. The pattern of the cell means indicated that the deterioration was definitely more pronounced among survivors, $t(49) = -8.32, p < .001$, than among prisoners $t(49) = -1.74, p < .09$. Turning to the positive emotional climate, there was only a marginally significant main effect of time, $p = .069$. Together, prisoners and survivors were less inclined to agree that the emotional climate was positive. However, examining the source of this marginal effect across items composing the positive emotional climate scale, it turned out that only one out of the six items accounted for it. It regarded freedom of expression, which value had decreased after gacaca. Nonsignificant values occurred for all five remaining positive climate items, suggesting that the perception of positive emotional climate remained fairly stable before and after gacaca.

Negative Stereotyping

The negative stereotyping score was submitted to the same 2 (group: survivors vs. prisoners) \times 2 (time: before gacaca vs. after gacaca) mixed-model ANOVA. We found a significant group main effect, $F(1, 98) = 30.80, p < .001$. The stereotypes that survivors entertained about prisoners were more negative, $M = 5.44, SD = .60$, than the stereotypes held by prisoners about survivors, $M = 4.73, SD = .67$. There was also a significant time main effect, $F(1, 98) = 171.65, p < .0001$, showing that participants held less negative stereotypes about the members of

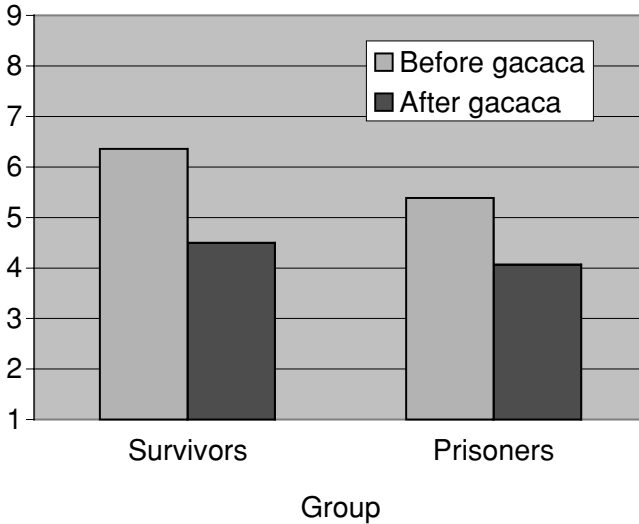


Fig. 1. Negative stereotyping of the outgroup as a function of group and time of judgment.

their outgroup after the gacaca trial, $M = 4.29$, $SD = .97$, than before, $M = 5.88$, $SD = .94$. Interestingly, the interaction came out significant, $F(1, 98) = 4.91$, $p < .03$. As can be seen on Figure 1, while survivors expressed markedly more negative stereotypes about their outgroup, $M = 6.37$, $SD = .64$, than prisoners, $M = 5.39$, $SD = .94$, before the gacaca trial, $t(98) = 6.08$, $p < .001$, this difference became less pronounced after the gacaca trial, $M = 4.51$, $SD = .98$ and $M = 4.07$, $SD = .92$, for survivors and prisoners, respectively, $t(98) = 2.31$, $p < .03$. Alternatively, the difference before and after the gacaca was more marked for survivors, $t(49) = 11.53$, $p < .001$, than for prisoners, $t(49) = 7.28$, $p < .001$, although the difference was significant in both cases.

Perceived Outgroup Homogeneity

The similarity score was submitted to a 2 (group: survivors vs. prisoners) \times 2 (time: before gacaca vs. after gacaca) mixed-model ANOVA with the first factor varying between participants and the last one varying within participants. There was a significant group main effect, $F(1, 98) = 24.50$, $p < .0001$. As can be seen on Figure 2, survivors perceived prisoners as being more similar to each other, $M = 5.39$, $SD = .63$, than prisoners perceived survivors to be similar to each other, $M = 4.71$, $SD = .73$. We also found a significant time main effect, $F(1, 98) = 72.50$, $p < .0001$, showing that participants saw the members of their outgroup as

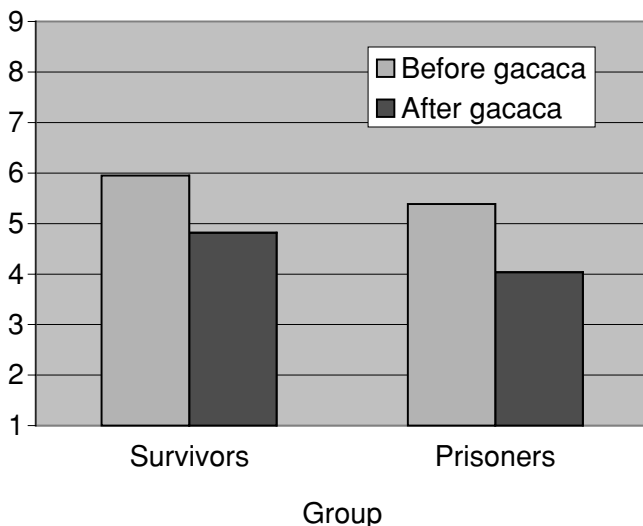


Fig. 2. Perception of homogeneity of the outgroup as a function of group and time of judgment.

being less similar after the gacaca trial, $M = 4.43$, $SD = 1.09$, than before, $M = 5.67$, $SD = 1.01$. The interaction was not significant, $F(1, 98) < 1.0$.

Relations Among Emotion, Stereotyping, and Similarity

We also examined how the changes at the level of the individual primary emotions were linked to the changes in the perception of the outgroup. We subtracted each of the seven primary emotions before the gacaca from their corresponding rating measured after the gacaca. A similar operation was performed for the negative stereotyping and the similarity scores. We then correlated the seven difference scores in primary emotions to the difference scores in negative stereotyping and similarity separately for the prisoners and the survivors.

The more prisoners experienced more guilt and shame after the gacaca compared to before, the more they saw survivors as forming a less homogeneous group, $r = -.434$, $p < .002$ and $r = -.396$, $p < .004$. However, the more they felt less anger, the less they saw survivors as forming a less homogeneous group, $r = -.413$, $p < .003$. Regarding survivors, the more they felt more ashamed after the gacaca compared to before, the more they saw prisoners as forming a less homogeneous group, $r = -.361$, $p < .01$. Also, the more they felt more afraid after the gacaca compared to before, the more they saw prisoners as forming a less homogeneous group, $r = -.304$, $p < .04$.

Discussion

Based on Durkheim's model (1912) and more recent work on emotional climates (Martin Beristain, Páez, & González, 2000; Páez, Rimé, & Basabe, 2005; Rimé, 2005), our first prediction was that at the individual level, negative emotions should increase after participation to the *gacaca* rituals in both groups. Our rationale was that the social ritual of *gacaca* elicits an emotional communion amongst participants that fosters intense emotional manifestations and re-evocations of the genocide. This prediction was well supported. With the exception of anger that decreased among prisoners and remained stable among survivors, all emotions (sadness, fear, disgust, anxiety, and shame) showed an increase after the *gacaca*, especially among survivors. Guilt increased for the prisoners but not for the survivors. In sum, all emotions that were congruent with the group experience—e.g., fear is more central to the re-evoked experiences of the survivors, and guilt to that of the prisoners—were enhanced by the participation to the *gacaca*. This is corroborated by the fact that, overall, survivors experienced more fear and anger, and prisoners, more guilt. As regards the increase in shame among survivors and the increase in guilt among prisoners after the *gacaca*, our observations are quite consistent with existing data. Shame is a frequent and important response in victims of human rights violations—particularly when perpetrators perform rape and sexual assault (Páez, Marques, Valencia, & Vincze, 2006). Shame implies the perception by the person of a failure attributed to the self-system (Lewis, 2000). *Gacaca* procedure probably reactivated feelings of degradation among survivors in general and among raped women in particular. Unlike the focus in shame on the global self, the focus in guilt is on the self's actions and behaviors that led to a failure (Lewis, 2000). Guilt is thus more related to violations of norms by specific behaviors and this can explain why it was generally higher among prisoners than among victims, and why it was still increased among the former after *gacaca* (Páez et al., 2006).

At the collective level, we had predicted that the *gacaca* should modulate the way people perceive their social environment both emotionally and collectively. Regarding emotional climate, in line with Durkheim's reactivation view of social rituals and given the reactivation of negative memories of extreme intergroup conflicts entailed by the *gacaca*, we predicted that a negative emotional climate would prevail in the period which followed. Scores of negative emotional climate indicated that this was indeed the case: the perception of a negative emotional climate worsened after the *gacaca*. As it turns out, the decline was more marked among the survivors than among the prisoners. It should be noted that, before the *gacaca*, the emotional climate was already perceived more negatively by the survivors than by the prisoners. Overall then, participants' perception of a negative emotional climate deteriorated following the emotionally and socially intense rituals of *gacaca*. The exposure of, and public debate about the atrocities committed some 12 years

ago in the community may well have reactivated the intense feeling of insecurity, especially among survivors. This is attested by our observations of the changes in emotional feeling state at the individual level. To the extent that the whole community is present during the gacaca, most of its members have been touched by this reactivation of traumatic and fear-inducing experiences. It is also likely that intense discussion and social sharing on these experiences took place among the community members immediately after the gacaca (see Rimé, this issue). Hence, emotion related to fear and to the genocide experience must have been prevalent in the community as whole. It is this impact that would be reflected in the change of emotional climate.

Regarding the perception of a positive emotional climate, to the extent that prisoners were pleading guilty, thus recognizing the victims in their status, and because a great many feelings were publicly expressed, thereby rendering out-group members more human (Leyens et al., 2000), we embraced Durkheim's hypothesis and predicted that gacaca rituals should enhance feelings of solidarity and a positive perception of climate. As it turns out, our assessment of the perception of a positive emotional failed to reveal the expected increment. Except for one item suggesting that the perception of freedom to speak regressed somewhat after gacaca among both survivors and prisoners, the perception of a positive emotional climate remained fairly stable before and after gacaca. Bearing in mind the dramatic conflicts that were evoked at gacaca for the first time and in the direct presence of the two groups concerned, the fact that the perception of a positive climate revealed no deterioration after the trials may well be the best outcome that could realistically be expected from Durkheim's theory in this specific case.

As was the case for positive emotional climate, we also predicted an enhancement of social cohesion. We approached this issue in two ways. First, social cohesion was evaluated by measuring the negative stereotypes towards the other group before and after the gacaca. We expected the negativity of stereotypic views to decrease after participation. Results showed that, as would be expected, survivors were more stereotyped against prisoners than the other way round. However, in line with our hypothesis, the negative stereotype toward the other group markedly decreased after the gacaca. This effect was particularly pronounced for the stereotypes held by survivors toward the prisoners.

Next to stereotypes, we also examined outgroup homogeneity. Research on stereotyping and intergroup relations has demonstrated that one signature of intergroup prejudice is to consider members of the outgroup as being similar to each other (for a collection, see Yzerbyt, Judd, & Corneille, 2004). This type of perception is also characteristic of groups having a past history of mutual destruction (Bar-Tal & Teichman, 2005; Staub, 1989). The perception of homogeneity denies individual and personal characteristics to outgroup members and reduces them to a mere instantiation of their category, thus sustaining prejudice and hostile social relations. In line with Durkheim's insights, our results revealed that

outgroup similarity decreased after the gacaca, both in the survivors and the prisoners samples.

Interestingly, overall, survivors perceived prisoners as being more similar to each other than the other way round. This finding may be explained by several factors. On the one hand, given the level of harm survivors suffered during the genocide, they are likely to be particularly prejudiced against prisoners. This is corroborated by the negative stereotype held by the survivors toward the prisoners. This prejudicial attitude may have fostered an illusion of similarity amongst outgroup members. On the other hand, the impact of contextual and social factors should not be overlooked. As a matter of fact, the prisoners are all dressed identically, and their life conditions are especially desindividuating (no private space, same schedule, same food, etc.). These conditions are likely to increase the perceived similarity amongst prisoners, independently of any a priori prejudice against them.

There is one general limitation of the present study which should be taken into account. Because there were (1) no multiple measurement of the dependent variables either before and after the gacaca, or (2) no control groups with no exposure to gacaca, we cannot exclude a confound between the effect of the gacaca and the effect of time or of repeated measurements (e.g., sensitization). Although the observed contrast between the effects on the emotional and the social-psychological variables lessens this possibility, additional work should try and address these issues.

To conclude, the present data are suggesting that the gacaca rituals have a profound impact, both at the emotional and at the social-psychological levels. Consistent with Durkheim's model, gacaca seems to have a negative impact in the emotional domain, both at the individual and collective levels. Gacaca increased the prevalence of negative emotions—especially in the survivors—as well as the collective perception of a negative emotional climate. However, any conclusion in terms of negative consequences of such rituals may be premature, and a longer perspective should be considered. Indeed, such reactivation of the traumatic experiences, both at the individual and at the collective levels, may well be necessary in order to process the trauma and to come to terms with it. At the individual level, several lines of clinical research point in this direction. Thus, a prevalent emotional information processing theory, Foa and McNally (1996) explicitly stated that the reactivation of intense emotion linked to a traumatic experience is a preliminary and necessary condition to come to terms with it. Likewise, bereavement theories postulate that adaptive and healthy grief is accomplished through a back and forth dynamic between, on the one hand, the reactivation of the memories of the deceased and the intense sadness affect linked to the loss, and, on the other hand, the investment in positive experiences in ongoing life (Bonanno & Papa, 2003; Stroebe & Stroebe, 1991).

It should be added that emotional expression is traditionally intolerable in the Rwandese culture. In recent years in particular, any such expression was strongly discouraged in order to prevent collective paroxysmic crises it elicited among survivors. Our results open the possibility that when contained within the social rituals of gacaca, expression and reactivation of the intense negative emotions linked to the genocide provided an opportunity to (re)process these traumatic emotions and to transform them in such a way that they can participate in a reconstructive process, both at the individual and collective levels rather than being strictly problematic.

In line with these considerations, gacaca trials seem to have both significant and positive consequences at the social-psychological level. In line with Durkheim's hypothesis, these emotionally intense social rituals ended up enhancing social cohesion in at least in two ways: by lessening the negative stereotypes attributed to the outgroup and by reducing the perceived similarity attached to outgroup members. Such a positive evolution in the perception of outgroups and of outgroup members may well reflect a change in meaning stimulated by the emotional reactivation involved in gacaca. At least, the marked positive correlations which were observed between changes in emotions on the one hand and changes in stereotyping and in similarity on the other hand, support such an interpretation of the data.

The positive evolution thus observed nicely concurs with current theoretical views about justice and reconciliation. For instance, Bloomfield's (2003) stressed that tribunals for "truth and reconciliation" are not expected to provide reconciliation, but to bring forward ingredients which can pave the way toward reconciliation. In his view, a crucial element to reconciliation is found in "*a questioning of the attitudes, prejudices and negative stereotypes that we all develop about "the enemy" during violent conflict*". This is precisely what the present study observed as resulting from gacaca. Such an evolution warrants a better psycho-social context in which prejudice is less likely to take place. In addition, gacaca trials ended up exacerbating guilty feelings among prisoners, thus creating suitable preconditions for them to express regret, to ask for forgiveness, and to be ready to contribute to material compensation such as their participation to the reconstruction of victims' houses destroyed during the genocide. All these aspects are of primary importance to make future contacts between victims and perpetrators possible.

In sum, the present data suggest that the gacaca rituals have a profound impact, both at the social-psychological and at the emotional levels. At the social-psychological level, gacaca fosters an increase in social cohesion and a decrease in prejudicial attitudes. At the emotional level, gacaca induces strong emotional responses by reactivating the affects attached to genocide experience. It will be the aim of future research to establish whether this emotional reactivation bears positive consequences for the social and emotional processing of the genocide trauma.

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