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Introducing the Mapping Attitudes, Perceptions and Support (MAPS) dataset on the Colombian peace process

Weintraub, M.; Steele, A.; Pantoja-Barrios, S.; Nygård, H.M.; Dahl, M.; Binningsbø, H.M.

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Introducing the Mapping Attitudes, Perceptions and Support (MAPS) dataset on the Colombian peace process

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Michael Weintraub 

Universidad de los Andes

Abbey Steele 

University of Amsterdam

Sebastián Pantoja-Barrios 

University of Amsterdam

Håvard Mogleiv Nygård

*Norwegian Agency for International
Development Cooperation (NORAD)*

Marianne Dahl

Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO)

Helga Malmin Binningsbø 

Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO)

Abstract

This article introduces the Mapping Attitudes, Perceptions and Support (MAPS) dataset, which provides rich survey data from more than 12,000 respondents in Colombia. Our panel survey – carried out in two separate waves in 2019 and 2021 – is representative at the level of each ‘Program for Development with a Territorial Focus’ (PDET, for its acronym in Spanish), the most war-affected regions and those targeted for peace agreement implementation. We describe the sample and compare support for the peace agreement in MAPS to other recent surveys in Colombia, showing how MAPS reveals regional variation obscured in nationally representative surveys. Regression analyses illustrate how the panel data allow us to explore how and why people’s perceptions of the agreement shift over time. The MAPS data will enable scholars to gain insights into the microfoundations of peacebuilding over time and across space.

Keywords

Colombia, levels of analysis, microfoundations, peace agreements, peacebuilding, post-conflict, surveys

Introduction

Rebuilding societies and consolidating peace following armed conflict are critical challenges. A growing literature on ‘bottom-up’ approaches highlights community efforts to create and maintain peace, emphasizing that citizens are not passive recipients of assistance but agents who influence peacebuilding outcomes (Mac Ginty & Firchow, 2016). Understanding communities’ priorities for peacebuilding is important because civil wars unfold differently across territory and social groups (Kalyvas, 2006). Yet most surveys in post-conflict countries are representative at the national level, limiting the proportion of the sample exposed to insurgent violence, rebel governance, state repression and peacebuilding efforts. Our understanding of post-conflict environments, therefore, is partial. How might our views about peacebuilding and peace agreement implementation change if we

were to systematically incorporate war-affected communities’ views?

In this Special Data Feature, we present the Mapping Attitudes, Perceptions and Support (MAPS) project in Colombia, a panel survey of war-affected communities. In 2016, the Colombian government and the country’s largest rebel group, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC-EP), signed a peace agreement after nearly five decades of conflict. In late 2019 we fielded the first wave of the MAPS survey in all 16 regions of Colombia targeted for peace agreement implementation, a designation determined based on historic exposure to violence and poverty. These ‘Programs for Development with a Territorial Focus’ (PDETs, for its acronym in

Corresponding author:

mlw@uniandes.edu.co

Spanish) cover a massive area: at 411,029 square kilometers they represent 36% of all Colombian territory, making them larger than countries such as Japan, Norway and Zimbabwe. Our survey is representative of each of the 16 PDETs.¹ The total number of respondents in 2019 was 12,052 individuals, making ours among the largest surveys ever deployed to study peace agreement implementation, and the only in Colombia representative of each PDET.² The second wave occurred in the summer 2021, and included 11,864 respondents, of whom nearly two-thirds participated in wave 1.

This article has two goals. First, we introduce and make available the MAPS microdata, allowing researchers to explore attitude formation in post-conflict environments and to merge in administrative data to answer important theoretical and policy-relevant questions. Second, we demonstrate two advantages of MAPS: its large sample in war-affected communities permits analysis across peacebuilding areas, while its panel structure allows for rigorous comparisons over time. We do so by comparing findings from our survey with others, showing how MAPS reveals regional variation obscured in nationally representative surveys. This comparative exercise illustrates the trade-offs of using other sampling frames when studying conflict-affected populations. To demonstrate the advantages of the panel, we show how perceptions of conflict and security, assessments of peace agreement implementation, and feelings of trust and reconciliation influence shifts in citizens' support for the agreement over time.

The Colombian conflict and the MAPS survey

The five-decade Colombian civil war involved left-wing insurgents against state forces and right-wing paramilitaries, most often targeting civilians rather than fighting directly. The war killed an estimated 450,000 and internally displaced over 8 million, one of the largest IDP populations globally (Comisión de la Verdad, 2022). After nearly 50 years, the largest leftist insurgent group, FARC-EP, signed a 2016 peace agreement with the Colombian government following four years of negotiations.

The agreement was narrowly rejected via referendum in October 2016, prompting changes to the accord.

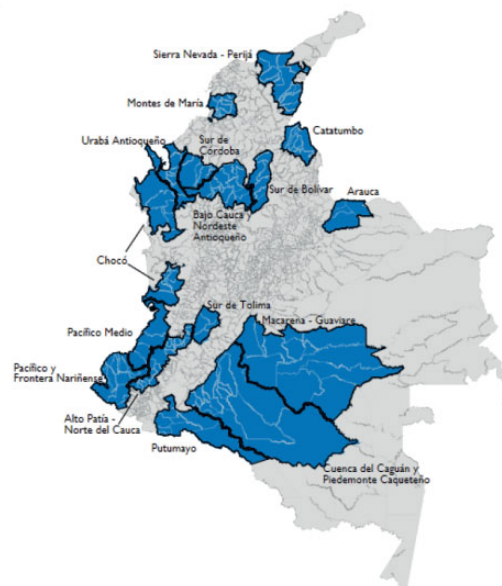


Figure 1. Regions prioritized for peace agreement implementation in Colombia (PDETs)

Following these adjustments, the government accepted the agreement and sought congressional approval for it in November 2016. The nearly 400-page text includes six pillars: rural reform, political participation, curbing the illicit economy, reparations for victims, disarmament and reintegration, and implementation and verification. The agreement focuses on 16 regions, selected based on exposure to violence during the conflict and measures of poverty. These territories, known as PDETs, vary in terms of geography, demography and civil war dynamics (see Figure 1). While the northwestern Urabá region experienced significant violence by paramilitary groups and the FARC in the early 1990s, the southwestern Pacific coast became a theater of war more recently. The Bajo Cauca region is known for illicit mining, while southern Tolima and the Macarena were historic redoubts of the FARC. Finally, Catatumbo and Arauca border Venezuela, and are contested by Colombia's largest remaining rebel army, the National Liberation Army (ELN).

The MAPS survey was a collaboration between the Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO), Universidad de los Andes and UNDP Colombia. We conducted pilot surveys in late 2017 in two municipalities – Tumaco (department of Nariño) and Mesetas (department of Meta) – and then applied the revised questionnaire in January 2019 in two PDETs: Arauca and Tolima. Following both pilots we again revised the questionnaire in line with feedback from enumerators and stakeholders.

¹ In August 2020, two new PDETs – both within Bogotá – were approved. Our survey does not include these PDETs.

² The South-East European Social Survey Project from 2003–2004 includes 22,000 respondents and covers experiences and social attitudes following the Balkan wars (Simkus & Ringdal, 2017), but does not focus on agreement implementation.

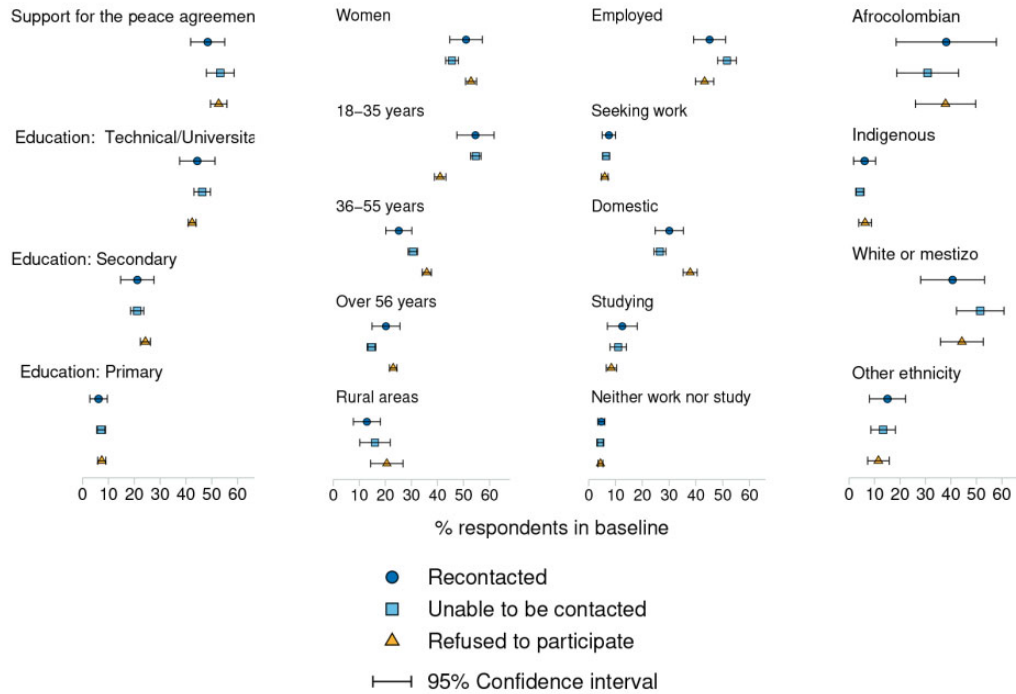


Figure 2. Comparison of sample composition across waves, including attrition

The full first wave in the remaining 14 PDET’s surveyed 12,052 respondents.³

In the second wave, between June and August 2021, we surveyed 11,777, two-thirds of whom were surveyed in the first round. The same sampling strategy was used for the second wave. When unable to resurvey a respondent from the first wave, we randomly selected another dwelling on the same block and then selected an adult within that dwelling to respond.

In Figure 2 we compare the sociodemographic characteristics of respondents who were (1) successfully recontacted, (2) unable to be recontacted, and (3) recontacted but refused to respond in the second wave. The only statistically significant differences across these groups are age-related: those effectively contacted were more likely to be in the 36–55 age group than those refusing to participate in the second wave.

The population universe of the MAPS survey is adults (18+) residing in the *cabecera municipal*, or municipal seats, and *centros poblados*, or rural hamlets consisting of at least 20 homes, in the 170 PDET municipalities.⁴ According to DANE’s 2018 National Population and

Housing Census, this is equivalent to more than 3 million individuals. We provide more information about sampling procedures in the Online appendix.

The survey instrument includes six modules: (i) demographic data, (ii) trust and political participation, (iii) the peace agreement with the FARC-EP and its implementation, (iv) wartime experiences, (v) transitional justice, and (vi) perceptions of social services and community needs. The overarching goal is to catalog how ordinary citizens evaluate the agreement, its implementation, and priorities for future peace-building efforts.

Advantages of the MAPS survey

The MAPS survey has two unique qualities for scholars of conflict, peacebuilding, public opinion and Colombia. First, it has an unrivaled sample of respondents from conflict-affected communities. Because our data are representative of each region, we assess how violence and peacebuilding efforts affect perceptions and attitudes at a more fine-grained level compared to other surveys. This includes studying variation among regions and across groups such as indigenous and Afro-Colombian respondents.

Second, the panel allows scholars and practitioners to assess how perceptions shift over time, as any changes detected among the recontacted can be attributed to

³ We also conducted 28 focus groups (two in each PDET’s, excluding Arauca and Tolima) and semi-structured interviews in 28 municipalities.

⁴ The ‘dispersed’ rural population was not included.

shifts in attitudes rather than sample composition.⁵ Because our survey disaggregates the peace agreement – asking respondents to report attitudes towards 12 provisions, and to assess local implementation – the survey can help guide policymaking.⁶

The MAPS survey is not without limitations. A two-wave panel with a relatively short gap between waves does not permit measuring slow-moving attitudinal changes. Additionally, the first wave of MAPS occurred in 2019, nearly three years after the peace agreement was signed. A baseline survey earlier would have been ideal.

Despite these limitations, the next two sections illustrate the strengths of the MAPS survey by comparing it with two other surveys and by exploring variations in support for the peace agreement across regions. We further assess shifts in support over time based on individuals' perceptions of security, 'top-down' peace agreement implementation and 'bottom-up' processes of peacebuilding.

Do Colombians support the peace agreement?

Given that peace agreements reflect compromises between warring parties, the public may find these concessions difficult to accept. Who supports the compromises enshrined in peace agreements? What explains the persistence of support for the agreement in the face of setbacks? Ordinary citizens' opinions about peace agreements and their implementation have been studied in Bosnia (Morgan-Jones, Stefanovic & Loizides, 2021), Cyprus (Loizides et al., 2022), Sri Lanka (Carey, González & Gläsel, 2022) and Nepal, Guatemala and Northern Ireland (Dyrstad, Binningsbø & Bakke, 2022).

Since the 2016 peace agreement, several studies on Colombia have used nationally representative surveys to catalog civilian perceptions about peacebuilding. Tellez (2019) and Kreiman & Masullo (2020) argue that respondents in conflict-affected areas seek safety, and support peace agreements because they mitigate personal risk. Direct victimization, however, may leave people indifferent (Liendo & Braithwaite, 2018) or even more negatively predisposed to approve of agreements (Hazlett, 2020). In the Colombian context, elite

⁵ To our knowledge only one other panel survey on Colombians' perceptions towards the peace agreement exists: Carlin et al. (2020) conducts two waves prior to the signing of the agreement, making the data less suitable for studying perceptions of the peace agreement implementation and how these change as implementation proceeds.

⁶ The Online appendix includes the complete instrument.

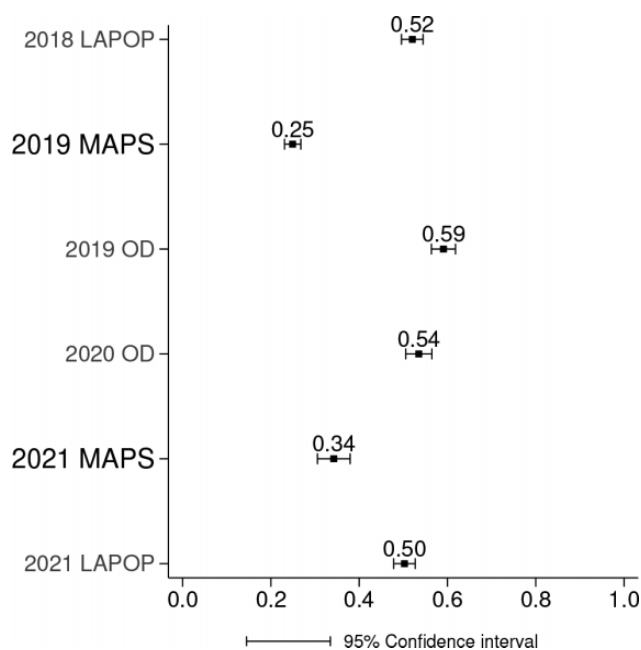


Figure 3. Support for the agreement across surveys and samples

manipulation of media messaging or affective polarization may have deemphasized the role that risks mitigation plays in determining support for the 2016 peace agreement (Matanock and García-Sánchez, 2017).

Few studies, however, consider changes in respondent views over time. We compare the MAPS survey to other surveys in Colombia that ask about respondents' support for the peace agreement. LAPOP, a research lab at Vanderbilt University, conducted two nationally representative surveys in 2018 and 2021, while the Observatorio de la Democracia at Universidad de los Andes (OD) interviewed 4,000 Colombians covering 80 municipalities (half within PDETs) in 2019, and a nationally representative sample in 2020. In both LAPOP and OD, the relevant peace agreement support question is: 'The government of President Juan Manuel Santos and the FARC have signed a peace agreement. To what extent do you support the peace agreement?', to which respondents replied on a 1–7 scale from 'not at all' to 'a lot.' The comparable MAPS question is: 'In general terms, how satisfied are you with the content of the Peace Agreement signed by the Government and the FARC-EP in 2016?' with a 1–4 scale from 'not at all satisfied' to 'very satisfied.' To make these scales directly comparable, we performed a linear transformation, with each measured on a 0–1 scale. The results, with survey weights applied, appear in Figure 3.

We highlight two takeaways from this across-sample comparison. First, levels of support from both waves of

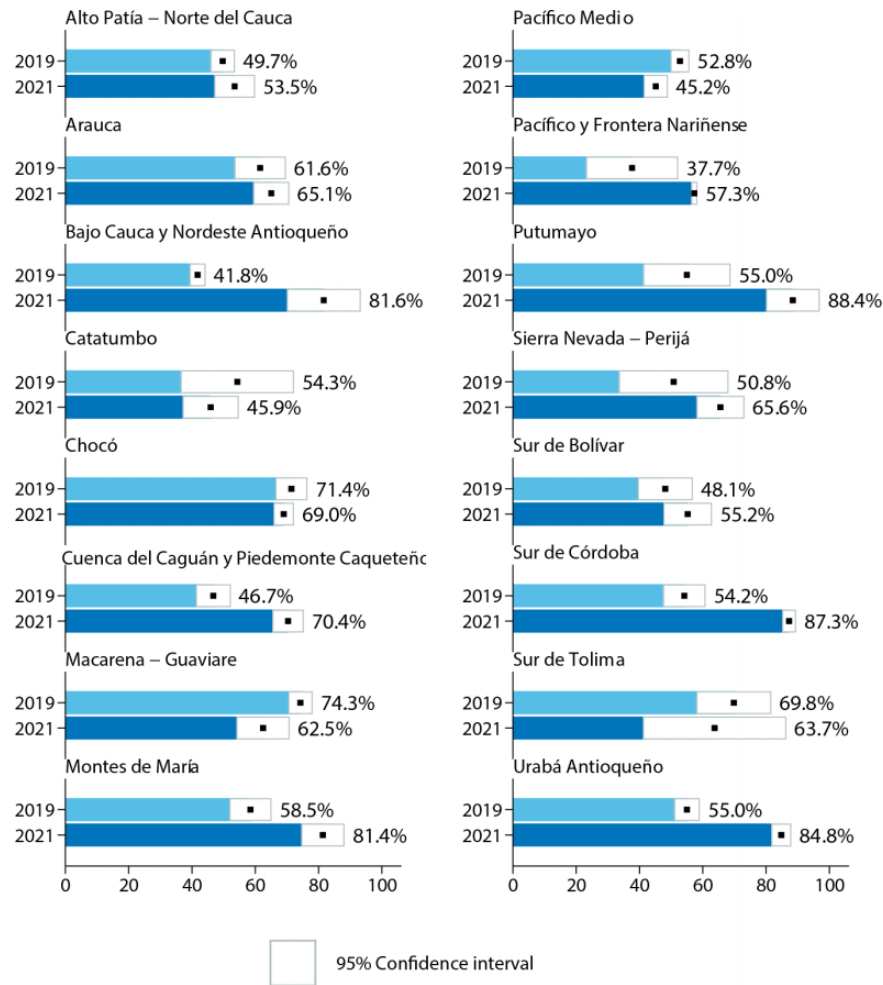


Figure 4. Support for the agreement across PDETs and waves

the MAPS survey are lower than those in other samples (LAPOP and OD), regardless of when the question was posed. Given slightly different wording, we cannot rule out that this might account for these differences: perhaps respondents are more likely to support the peace agreement in general (what LAPOP and OD ask about), but are more skeptical about its specific ‘content’ (what MAPS asks about). A second takeaway is that we estimate a statistically significant increase in support for the agreement between the first and second waves of the MAPS panel.

Investigating the MAPS data further, Figure 4 shows substantial differences in levels of support across PDETs. We see variation across regions during the first wave, and between the first and second waves. In 2019, some regions (e.g. Chocó, Macarena, Arauca) were substantially more supportive of the agreement, while others (e.g. Pacífico y Frontera Nariñense, Bajo Cauca) were less so. In seven PDETs we see statistically significant increases in satisfaction between 2019 and 2021, while

in the remaining nine PDETs we observe stable levels of satisfaction. Importantly, none of the PDETs demonstrate a statistically significant decline in support for the agreement between 2019 and 2021.

What explains shifts in peace agreement support over time?

MAPS respondents were more supportive of the agreement in 2021 than in 2019, but this increase was not observed among the national-level samples. Why? We explore both regional and within-respondent variation over time to address this question.

Perceptions of security

One possible explanation is that respondents in the seven PDETs where we observed increased support for the agreement experienced improvements in security. Figure 5 shows MAPS respondents’ perceptions of security in their neighborhoods in the prior 12 months, from both 2019

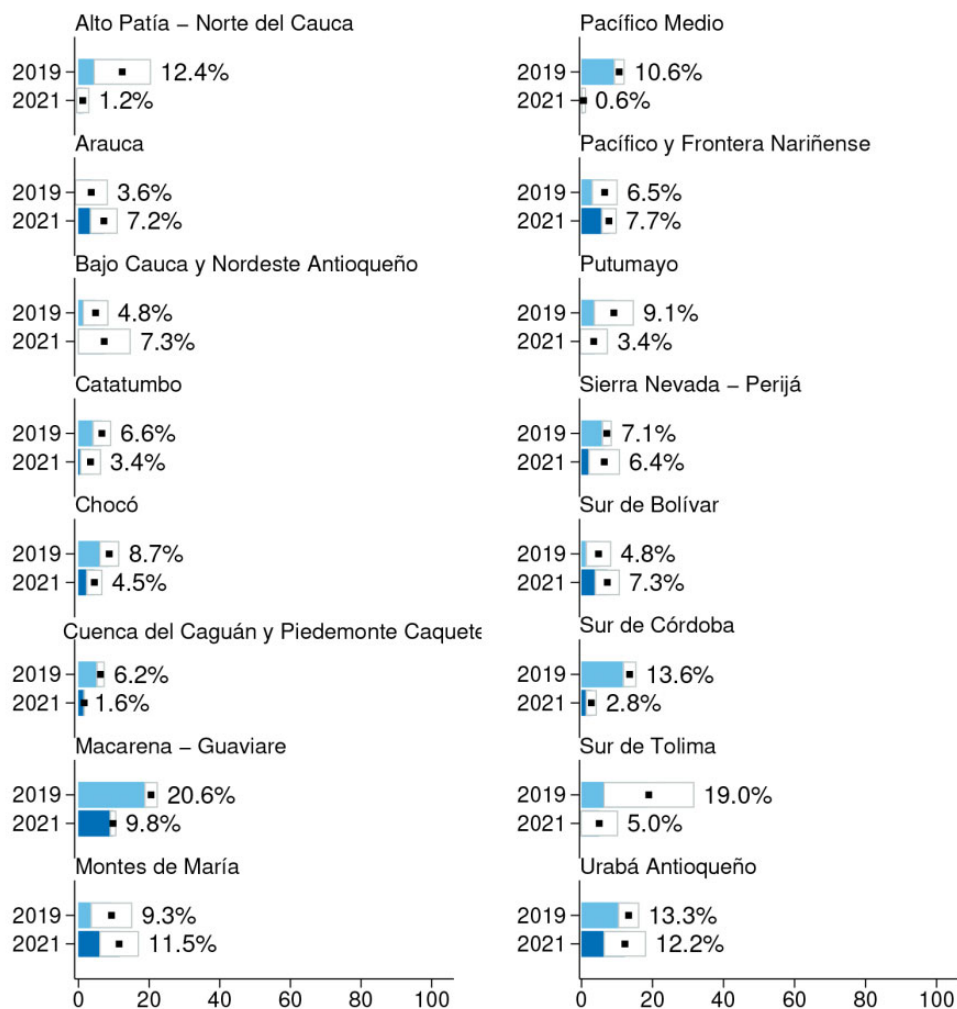


Figure 5. Improved perceptions of security in the previous 6–12 months

and 2021. Those who report improved security are a small minority in both waves and across regions.

These overwhelmingly negative perceptions are consistent with administrative data showing the persistence of violence in PDET's in the post-conflict period. Between 2017 and 2020, fighting between armed groups and Colombian forces increased as groups have sought to fill power vacuums left behind by the FARC-EP following its demobilization (Blair et al., 2022). In 2019, the average homicide rate in PDET municipalities was 56.2 per 100,000 inhabitants, nearly double the national average (24.3), while massacres and targeted assassinations of social leaders have increased (Indepaz, 2022).

Perhaps when questioned, the *kind* of security that came to respondents' minds was related to petty crime, rather than armed conflict and the peace process. We therefore turn to a more direct question: 'Do you believe

the armed conflict will return to your community in the future?' Respondents could answer: 'yes,' 'no,' or 'the armed conflict persists in my community.' In 2019, 53.3% of PDET residents were optimistic that the armed conflict would not return, 27.6% said that it would, and 19.1% reported that the armed conflict persisted where they lived. As Figure 6 shows, perceptions *deteriorated* in 2021. Although pessimism about the future remained roughly the same, those reporting the persistence of armed conflict rose 19.3 percentage points, reaching 38.5%. In four regions,⁷ a majority of those who in 2019 expressed fear of renewed conflict subsequently reported in 2021 that the armed conflict was

⁷ Alto Patía-Norte del Cauca, Chocó, Pacífico Medio and Urabá Antioqueño.

currently active. In other words, some dire forecasts in 2019 came to fruition in 2021. Figure 7 shows variation by region from the second wave. Though we see substantial regional variation, we do not see a tight correspondence with increases in support for the agreement: in three of the seven regions, more than 60% of respondents report ongoing conflict (Pacífico y Frontera Nariñense, Urabá, Bajo Cauca), while in others a much

smaller minority report that the conflict persists (Putumayo, Montes de María, Cuenca del Caguán), with Sur de Córdoba in between.

These findings suggest that the reduced prevalence of crime, armed conflict and violence cannot account for the surprising increase in support for the peace agreement between 2019 and 2021, at least at the PDET level. We now turn to regression analysis to explore these relationships, exploiting the panel structure of the MAPS survey.

Table I estimates whether perceived levels of security are correlated with peace agreement satisfaction. (Here we use survey weights, and report models with municipality fixed effects in Table A3 in the Online appendix.) We estimate whether respondents think that security within their neighborhoods has improved over the last 12 months (column 1), and whether perceptions about potential conflict recurrence in respondents' communities (column 2) affect levels of support for the agreement. We then harness the panel and examine changes in these factors on support for the agreement (columns 3 and 4). Because we are interested in both the baseline level and changes from the first to the second wave, we limit the sample to respondents participating in both waves.

Those who reported improvements or stability in security over the prior six months were far more likely to be satisfied with the peace agreement versus those reporting a deterioration, our reference category (column 1). Those indicating that the conflict was still active in their community or likely to return were, on the other hand, less likely to express

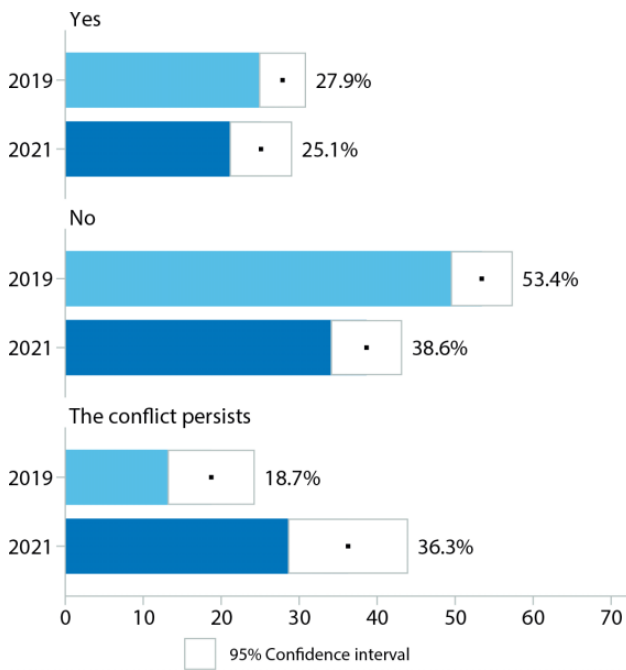


Figure 6. Do you think conflict will return to your community?

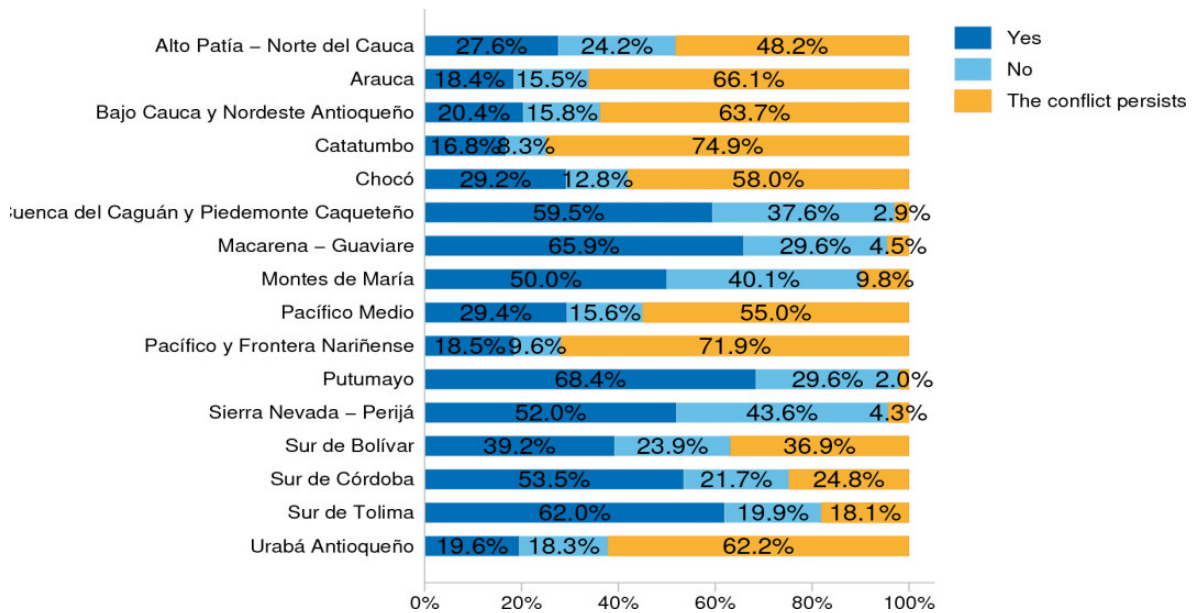


Figure 7. Do you think conflict will return to your community? Across PDETs, 2021

Table I. Perceptions of security and satisfaction with the peace agreement

	Wave 1	Wave 1	Change	Change
Security improved (last 6 months)	0.352 *** (6.16)		0.447 *** (4.23)	
Security same (last 6 months)	0.153 *** (4.92)		0.225 ** (2.86)	
Armed conflict still active		-0.287 *** (-6.20)		-0.141 * (-2.43)
Armed conflict will return		-0.121 *** (-3.76)		-0.103 (-1.92)
Victim	0.0619 (1.80)	0.0767 * (2.20)	0.0593 (1.21)	0.0905 (1.77)
Woman	-0.145 *** (-4.23)	-0.155 *** (-4.58)	0.0778 (1.92)	0.0682 (1.70)
Age	0.0322 ** (3.06)	0.0338 *** (3.49)	-0.0388 ** (-2.85)	-0.0403 ** (-2.83)
Edu: Primary	0.0608 (1.81)	0.0591 (1.65)	-0.0509 (-1.08)	-0.0447 (-0.88)
Edu: Secondary	-0.0859 * (-2.29)	-0.0825 (-1.99)	-0.0173 (-0.30)	-0.0312 (-0.49)
Edu: Technical degree	-0.0640 (-1.47)	-0.0456 (-1.10)	0.0195 (0.31)	0.00505 (0.09)
Edu: University+	0.268 *** (4.86)	0.257 *** (4.24)	-0.206 * (-2.03)	-0.232 (-1.99)
Constant	1.720 *** (17.75)	1.962 *** (22.42)	0.143 (1.07)	0.383 ** (3.04)
N	7319	7023	6371	6413

t statistics in parentheses

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Regressions include recontacted respondents, with survey weights.

Reference categories are: Security level is worse and Armed conflict will not return.

satisfaction with the agreement when compared to those who reported no conflict in their community (column 2).

We find similar results when using the panel: positive changes in security assessments between 2019 and 2021 are correlated with increases in satisfaction with the agreement relative to reported deterioration in security conditions (column 3), and this effect is even larger than that reported in column 1. Using the change in responses between wave 1 and wave 2 for conflict activity (column 4), we still see a negative relationship between active conflict and more negative assessments of the agreement, but these results are only marginally statistically significant. At the individual level, therefore, perceptions of security and expectations about future violence *are* associated with support for the peace agreement.

'Top-down' peacebuilding: Perceptions of implementation and support for the agreement

While peace agreements often receive publicity and praise at their signing, challenges emerge once attention fades

and implementation begins. More costly provisions tend to be postponed, while symbolic, less costly provisions are implemented (Jarstad & Nilsson, 2008). Concrete implementation measures have the potential to bring economic development, transitional justice and other changes to communities, which may affect perceptions about the peace process itself. Is support for the peace agreement linked to satisfaction with its implementation?

The growing literature on how peacebuilding affects civilian attitudes and behavior has not focused on the implementation of specific provisions.⁸ For example, research on transitional justice investigates how those living in conflict-affected societies view peace agreement provisions addressing past wrongdoing, and whether people believe victimizers should be forgiven or prosecuted (Samii, 2013; Dyrstad & Binningsbø, 2019). How

⁸ While most post-conflict public opinion surveys include general questions about peace agreements, few ask about the agreement's content (see Dyrstad, Bakke & Binningsbø (2021) for an exception).

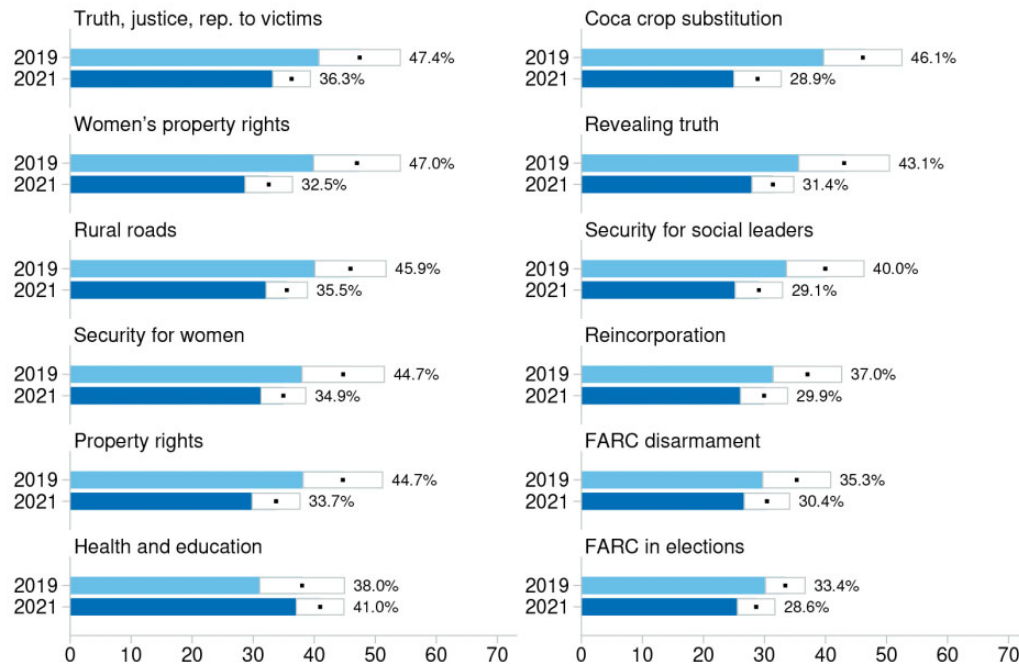


Figure 8. Perceptions of peace agreement implementation by issue and wave

citizens evaluate the ongoing implementation of transitional justice provisions, however, is rarely asked.

We find significant concerns about peace agreement implementation across a range of issues, displayed in Figure 8. No single issue achieves either a 'good' or 'very good' rating by a majority of respondents (on a 1–4 scale from 'very poor' to 'very good'). Health and education receive the highest marks (41.4% report 'good' or 'very good' implementation). The incorporation of the FARC into the Colombian political system via elections receives the lowest level of approval, likely because levels of support for the provision itself are low: nearly 57% of respondents in 2021 said that they either 'completely disagreed' or 'disagreed' with it.

Of more concern is the across-the-board erosion in perceptions about implementation between 2019 and 2021, including providing truth, justice and reparations to victims, improving women's inclusion in land titling processes, ensuring safety for social leaders, and coca crop substitution programs. For each of these areas, we estimate statistically significant declines in perceptions of effective implementation. Of 12 issues, only one displayed improved perceptions when compared to 2019 – health and education – although this difference is not statistically significant.

When assessed by specific policy area, increases in support for the agreement over time are not correlated

with improved perceptions about implementation. However, when examining satisfaction with overall implementation by region (rather than issue area), we see substantial variation, including large, statistically significant increases in eight regions, shown in Figure 9. Importantly, seven of eight regions reporting improved perceptions of implementation also report statistically significant increases in support for the agreement (the eighth, Sierra Nevada, also reports increased support, though not statistically significant at the 95% level). In no region do we witness a statistically significant decline in satisfaction with implementation.

We now turn to regression analysis in Table A4 – again restricted to recontacted individuals – to assess whether increased satisfaction with implementation is associated with increased support for the agreement. We find that it is, both when using a general measure of satisfaction with the agreement (column 1) and nearly all specific issue areas (columns 2–13).⁹ Results are less clear when examining changes in satisfaction with implementation (Tables A6 and A7): while increased satisfaction with implementation is positively correlated with overall satisfaction with the agreement, changes in

⁹ For 10 of the 12 issue areas, we find statistically significant and positive effects of satisfaction with implementation on support for the agreement.

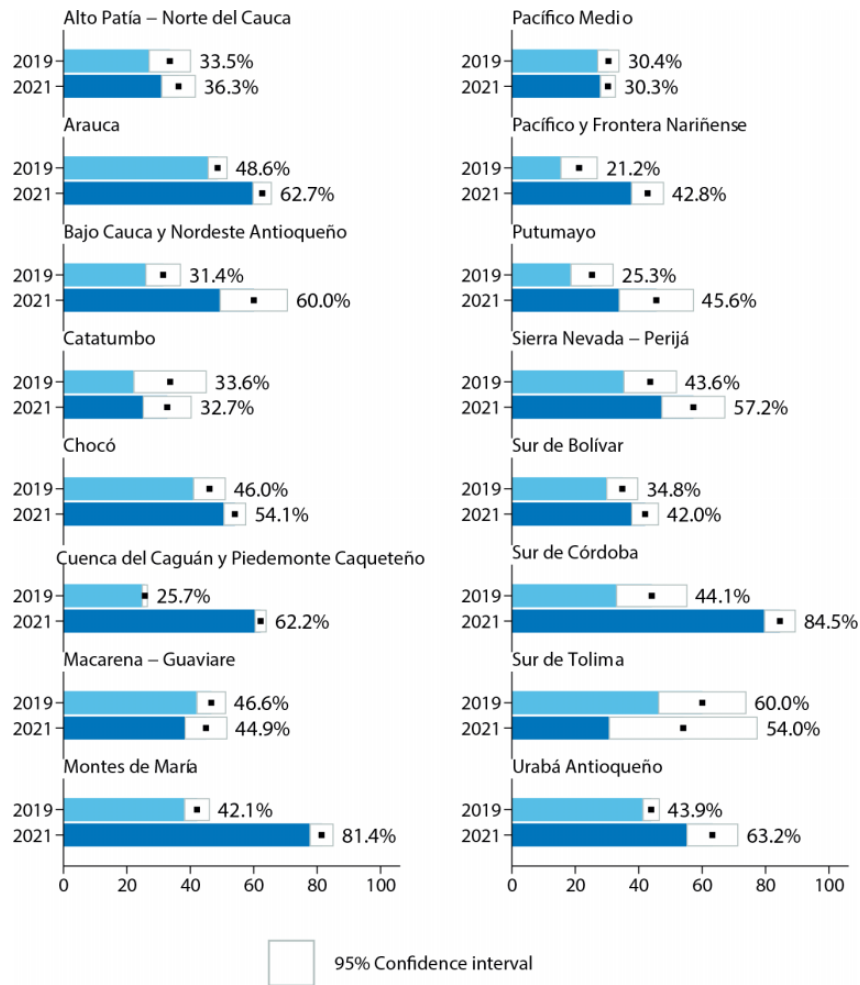


Figure 9. Satisfaction with peace agreement implementation by region

satisfaction with implementation for individual measures is rarely statistically significant at conventional levels.

In addition to more ‘top-down’ state interventions, bottom-up processes could also increase support for the agreement over time. We turn next to reported trust among neighbors and trust in ex-combatants to see whether this is the case.

‘Bottom-up’ peacebuilding: Trust and satisfaction with peace agreement

Reaching a peace agreement may foster opportunities for increased trust and reconciliation among neighbors, and between civilians and ex-combatants. Measuring trust in areas affected by conflict is crucial, given that violence and armed conflict erode interpersonal trust and trust in institutions (Cassar, Grosjean & Whitt, 2013), and trust is fundamentally important to a host of outcomes that might help communities recover from violent legacies (Hardin, 2002). Trust is also at the core of peace

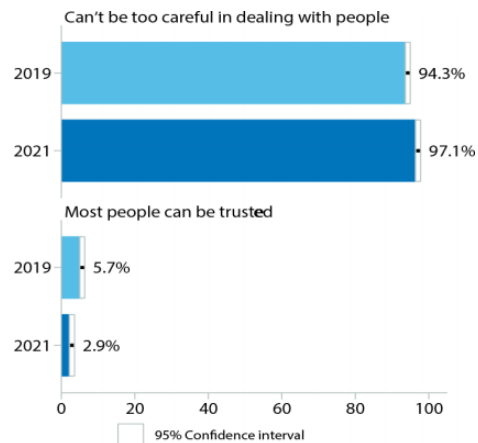


Figure 10. Generalized mistrust

agreement implementation itself: if ex-combatants do not trust the government to uphold the agreement, they might not demobilize or they might rearm (Walter,

1999). If citizens do not trust ex-combatants who have gone through reincorporation and reintegration processes, stigma towards ex-combatants will undermine

their reintegration across social, political and economic domains, increasing their social isolation.

We use the canonical World Values Survey question to study interpersonal trust, asking ‘Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you need to be very careful in dealing with people?’ As Figure 10 indicates, we estimate (with survey weights) that 94% of PDET residents in 2019 and 97% of residents in 2021 believe they need to be very cautious when dealing with most people. This is consistent across all 16 PDETs (Figure A1 in the Online appendix).

To gauge levels of trust in FARC ex-combatants, we asked respondents whether they would feel comfortable having a FARC ex-combatant as a neighbor. As Figure 11 shows, in 2019 nearly 27% reported feeling comfortable, while in 2021 that declined to nearly 19%, a statistically significant difference. The erosion in trust towards ex-FARC combatants is particularly concerning given that 95% of ex-combatants who are demobilized remain

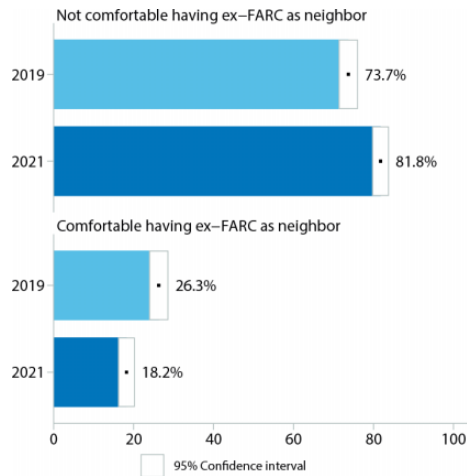


Figure 11. Trust in FARC ex-combatants

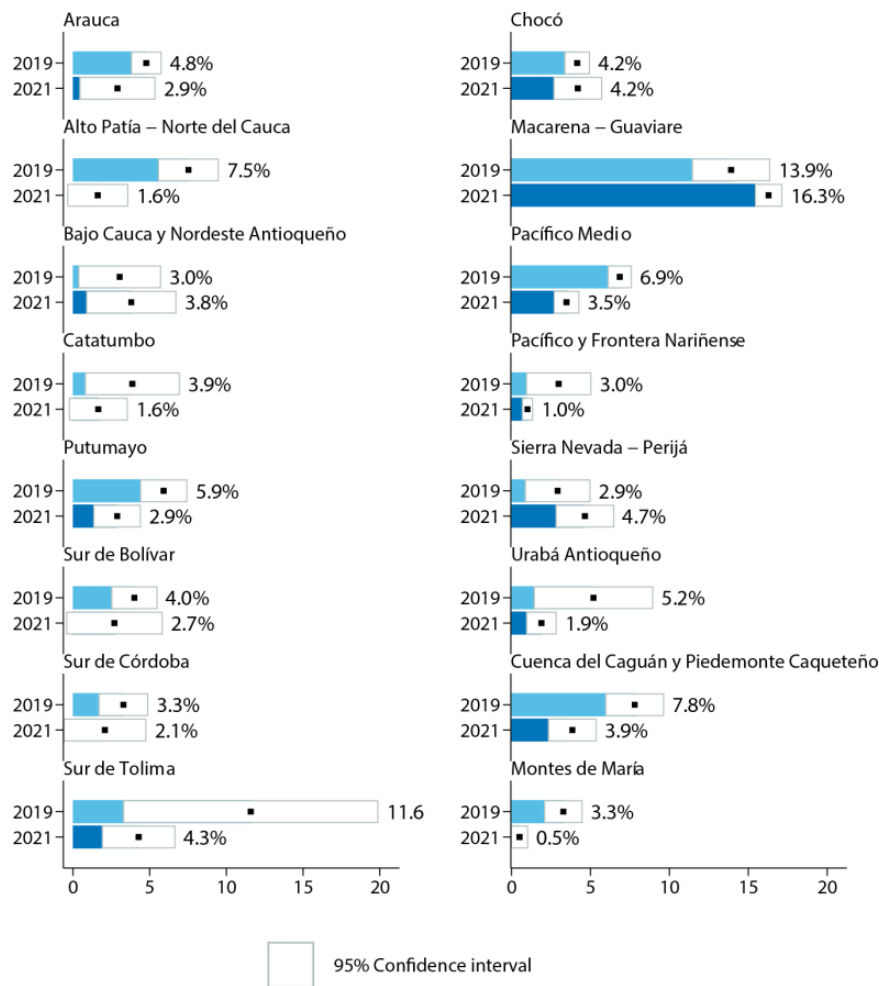


Figure 12. Trust in FARC ex-combatants by region

committed to their reincorporation processes. While at the individual level increases in reported trust are associated with increased satisfaction with the agreement, at the regional level we find no aggregate shifts in trust that correspond to aggregate increases in satisfaction.

We observe regional variation in trust and reconciliation attitudes, as Figure 12 shows: where the FARC historically sustained territorial control, respondents report higher levels of trust in ex-FARC members. For example, in Macarena-Guaviare, in 2019 nearly 13.9% reported feeling comfortable having a neighbor who was in the FARC, which increased to 16.3% in 2021. Trust towards ex-combatants in this region remains significantly higher than in other PDETs. Where territorial control was more contested, and where paramilitaries ultimately ousted the FARC (such as in Sur de Bolívar, Sur de Córdoba and Montes de María), reported levels of trust in former FARC combatants are far lower.

Is trust in neighbors, ex-combatants and social leaders related to satisfaction with the peace agreement? Tables A8 and A9 show robust, positive associations between these factors and satisfaction, both when assessing baseline levels and changes between waves.¹⁰

Conclusion

This Special Data Feature introduces the MAPS survey and demonstrates its two key advantages: representativity at the PDET level and its panel structure. MAPS features a large sample of individuals living in war-affected communities, allowing for comparisons within and across populations most affected by conflict in Colombia and communities targeted for peacebuilding activities. Its panel structure allows scholars to measure changes in attitudes and beliefs related to the peace agreement, security, reconciliation and transitional justice, and more over time. Tracking opinions among the same individuals over time should allow researchers to tackle important questions such as how economic or violent shocks affect attitudes towards the state and the peace agreement, or how specific peacebuilding interventions alter public opinions. The large sample size also permits heterogeneous treatment effect analysis of such interventions across regions and groups (e.g. gender, race, victim status). Describing and explaining perceptions and attitudes should allow scholars and policymakers to gain insights into community needs related to peacebuilding, while identifying potential threats to peace.

We illustrated the dataset's potential by comparing regional-level patterns with panel analyses. The regional patterns diverged from individual-level analyses: for instance, regions that report more severe security concerns are also those that report an increase in support for the agreement between 2019 and 2021, but individuals who report an improvement in security also report increased satisfaction with the agreement. How can we reconcile the aggregate, regional patterns with the panel analyses of individuals' shifts over time? One takeaway is that while micro-level data are essential for establishing the microfoundations of peace, they potentially obscure important macro-level phenomena (Haass, Hartzell & Ottmann, 2022). Positive associations between individuals' perceptions of security, for example, likely cannot account for the overall increase in support for the agreement we estimate between 2019 and 2021. We hope that the rigorous comparisons across levels of analysis afforded by the MAPS survey will lead to new insights into peacebuilding.

In addition to improving scholarly understandings of peacebuilding across regions and over time, tracking perceptions of those most affected by conflict privileges those whose lives and livelihoods have been transformed by violence. Rigorously studying war-affected communities' perceptions should enable peacebuilders to make evidence-based policy decisions that are more responsive to citizens' concerns (even as we acknowledge that policymakers are not always responsive to citizens' preferences (García-Sánchez, Matanock & Garbiras-Daz, 2023)). Where the state fails to forge trusting relationships with local populations, existing or reconstituted armed groups have the leverage to establish territorial control, undermining peace agreements themselves (Blair et al., 2022).

Conducting large panel surveys that target populations most affected by violence in post-conflict contexts may not always be feasible, due to high costs and ongoing security challenges. We worked with UNDP Colombia to obtain financial support from Norway and the UN Multi-Partner Trust Fund for Peacebuilding (MPTF). This partnership produced many other advantages, including unusual access to policymakers and communities themselves, which the UNDP subsequently briefed about survey findings. Second, working with Colombian survey firms with extensive experience conducting surveys in difficult regions was essential, as was a concrete plan to mitigate security challenges. We describe ethics in greater detail in section A-3 in the online Appendix.

Third, although the project required significant investments at multiple levels, the potential payoffs in

¹⁰ Having an ex-combatant as a neighbor and trust in ex-FARC do not meaningfully explain changes in satisfaction with the agreement.

gaining systematic insights into war-affected populations over time justify efforts to replicate this approach elsewhere. We hope that MAPS will contribute to scholarly understandings about peacebuilding, in Colombia and beyond, while also orienting policy decisions that could solidify hard-fought gains as Colombia struggles to consolidate a fragile peace.

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Replication data

The dataset, codebook, and do-files for the empirical analysis in this article can be found at <http://www.prio.org/jpr/datasets>.

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ORCID iDs

Michael Weintraub  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2918-6588>
Abbey Steele  <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1126-9235>

Sebastián Pantoja-Barrios  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5161-2443>

Helga Malmin Binningsbø  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3976-2067>

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- MICHAEL WEINTRAUB, b. 1983, PhD in Government (Georgetown University, 2014); Associate Professor, Universidad de los Andes (2016–); current interests include crime, violence, and experiments. Recent articles published in *American Political Science Review* and *Journal of Politics*, among others.
- ABBEY STEELE, b. 1979, PhD in Political Science (Yale University, 2010); Associate Professor, University of Amsterdam (2015–); current interests include displacement, state capacity, peacebuilding. Author of *Democracy and Displacement in Colombia's Civil War* (Cornell University Press, 2017).
- SEBASTIÁN PANTOJA-BARRIOS, b. 1992, PhD candidate in Political Science (University of Amsterdam); current interests: subnational democracy and political participation.
- HÅVARD MOKLEIV NYGÅRD, b. 1983, PhD in Political Science (University of Oslo, 2014); Director of Knowledge, Norwegian Agency for International Development Cooperation (NORAD, 2021–).
- MARIANNE DAHL, b. 1983, PhD in Political Science (Norwegian University of Science & Technology, 2017); Senior Researcher, PRIO (2016–); current interests: civil resistance and autocratic breakdown; articles published in *American Journal of Political Science* and *European Journal of International Relations*.
- HELGA MALMIN BINNINGSBØ, b. 1978, PhD in Political Science (Norwegian University of Science & Technology, 2011); Senior Researcher, PRIO (2011–); current interests: conflict-related justice, peacebuilding, public opinion; recent articles published in *International Peacebuilding* and *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, among others.