Perceptions of and Experience with the Peace Process in Colombia

The larger effort to build peace after more than 50 years of conflict in Colombia is at a crossroads. The question of when and how Colombia and Colombians will be able to realize the peace dividend remains unanswered. Whether or not the deal will foster an enduring peace depends strongly on people’s perceptions of and experience with this peace process.

This report summarizes findings from a pilot study that examines support for individual provisions of the agreement and attitudes towards their implementation among a representative sample of respondents in the municipalities of Tumaco and Mesetas (located at the Departments of Nariño and Meta, respectively). Throughout, our survey highlights how important it is that people experience the tangible benefits of peace. Only then will the peace process receive the popular support it needs to be sustainable. We find that while respondents report high levels of support for many of the key pillars of the peace accord, the majority remain deeply concerned about the pace and progress of the implementation of these key components. This is an important signal that all actors – local, national, and international partners – must take to heart.
We would like to recognize the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the UNDP Oslo Governance Centre for their support and financial contribution in preparation of this publication. The document is a product of the Monitoring Attitudes, Perceptions and Support of the Peace Process in Colombia (MAPS), in which PRIO, the Universidad de los Andes and UNDP in Colombia collaborate.
Perceptions of and Experience with the Peace Process in Colombia

Report on pilot study from Mesetas and Tumaco

Helga Malmin Binningsbø (PRIO)
Marianne Dahl (PRIO)
Håvard Mokleiv Nygård (PRIO)
Michael Weintraub (Universidad de los Andes)
PRIO encourages its researchers and research affiliates to publish their work in peer-reviewed journals and book series, as well as in PRIO’s own Report, Paper and Policy Brief series. In editing these series, we undertake a basic quality control, but PRIO does not as such have any view on political issues. We encourage our researchers actively to take part in public debates and give them full freedom of opinion. The responsibility and honour for the hypotheses, theories, findings and views expressed in our publications thus rests with the authors themselves.

© Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO), 2018

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced. Stored in a retrieval system or utilized in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without permission in writing from the copyright holder(s).

ISBN 978-82-7288-858-8 (print)
978-82-7288-859-5 (online)

Cover design: www.medicineheads.com
Cover photo: Marco Suárez / CC BY / Wikimedia Commons.
# Table of Contents

Acknowledgement .............................................................................................................................................................. 4

1 Executive summary ........................................................................................................................................................ 5

2 Introduction ................................................................................................................................................................. 8
   - The MAPS project .................................................................................................................................................. 9
   - Case selection ....................................................................................................................................................... 10

3 Methods ......................................................................................................................................................................... 15
   - Questionnaire ....................................................................................................................................................... 15
   - Conducting the survey ........................................................................................................................................ 21

4 What determines support for the peace agreement? .............................................................................................. 23

5 Women and the Colombian peace process ............................................................................................................... 29

6 FARC reintegration ..................................................................................................................................................... 35

7 Perceptions of land reform and land titling ........................................................................................................... 42

8 Substitution of illicit crops ........................................................................................................................................ 49

9 Transitional justice .................................................................................................................................................... 53

10 Institutional trust ....................................................................................................................................................... 59

11 Conclusion ................................................................................................................................................................. 66
Acknowledgement

This report, and the pilot surveys it is based on, would not have been possible without the very generous funding from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Oslo Governance Center. The UNDP Colombia Country Office, in particular Pablo Ruiz Hiebra, Juliana Antia, and Tamara De Oliveira Simao, provided invaluable assistance and advice to the report team at numerous crucial stages of the work. Indeed, this project would not have been possible without the close collaboration between the UNDP and PRIO, and the Universidad de los Andes. We also would like to thank *Cifras y Conceptos* for conducting the survey. The report team would also like to extend their deep gratitude to Gee Berry, Martin Tegnander, Karim Bahgat, and Julia Palik (PRIO), and to Juan Pablo Mesa (Universidad de los Andes), for language and copy editing, type setting, production, production of graphics, and research assistance.
Executive summary

On November 24, 2016, the Colombian government and the FARC-EP signed a comprehensive peace agreement, which was revised following the rejection of the initial accords via popular referendum.

Independent reports indicate that a number of the components of the agreement have been implemented according to schedule, yet we know little about public attitudes towards implementation, particularly in locations deeply affected by conflict-related violence. This report summarizes findings from a pilot study that examines support for individual provisions of the agreement and attitudes towards their implementation among a representative sample of respondents in the municipalities of Tumaco and Mesetas (located at the Departments of Nariño and Meta, respectively). Throughout, our survey highlights how important it is that people experience the tangible benefits of peace. Only then will the peace process receive the popular support it needs to be sustainable.

Overall level of satisfaction with the peace process varies substantially between the two locations. Figure 1 shows the level of support on a 6-point scale in Tumaco (left) and Mesetas (right). Respondents in Mesetas report much higher levels of satisfaction with the peace process than residents in Tumaco. Such regional disparities could lead to further polarization in an already highly polarized country and should therefore be addressed in Colombia’s peacebuilding efforts.

In their reports on verification of the technical implementation of the peace accord, the Kroc Institute has argued that the level of progress can be interpreted both as a glass half full or a glass half empty. Our findings support and reiterate this interpretation. In particular, we find strong overall levels of support for key provisions
of the peace accord but, at the same time, very low levels of satisfaction with the implementation of the peace process to date. This might suggest that the peace accord itself is on the right track, but the components are not being implemented at a pace people are satisfied with.

Figure 2 exemplifies the **glass half full** interpretation; it shows average level of support for the different peace accord components in Tumaco and Mesetas. In both locations the picture is the same: high levels of support for almost all of the key provisions. The levels of support for the different components, from disarmament to land reform, are indistinguishable from each other. The only component that stands out is the reintegration of the FARC ex-combatants into political, economic and social life. In both Tumaco and Mesetas, respondents harbor grave misgivings about reintegrating the FARC. As we detail in this report, this extends to both leaders and rank-and-file members, and covers not just the FARC’s new political role but also their reintegration into civilian life. At the time of writing, the official negotiations with the ELN have ground to halt and currently face unknown progress; undoubtedly the ELN is watching the process with the FARC closely.

But there is also a **glass half empty** story, illustrated in Figure 3. This Figure shows people’s perceptions of how the implementation of the peace accord is progressing. Whereas people, on average, are highly supportive of the peace accord components, they by and large perceive the actual implementation of these same provisions as being more off track than on track. In short, people support the peace process, but they are dissatisfied with its implementation. This holds for both Tumaco and Mesetas, and again we find only

---

1. The ex-combatants launched their political party in September 2017 under the name of **Fuerza Alternativa Revolucionaria del Comun** (FARC), which translates to **Common Alternative Revolutionary Force**.

2. **Ejército de Liberación Nacional** (ELN), the last standing guerrilla in Colombia with considerable geographic presence and manpower across the country.
small or indistinguishable differences between the perceived levels of progress for different components of the peace process.

Figure 3: Attitudes to implementation, Tumaco and Mesetas

The piloted survey reported on here constitutes the first step in the Monitoring Attitudes, Perceptions, and Support of the peace process in Colombia (MAPS) project, which seeks to develop an innovative survey to measure people's perceptions of the peace agreement and its specific provisions; provide an assessment of the current situation in the country, including implementation of the accord related to security and social services, among other factors; and measure opinions about transitional justice and peacebuilding efforts more broadly.

The larger survey stemming from this project will cover all regions of Colombia, yet with a special focus on conflict-affected areas, and produce systematic knowledge and representative data at the regional level. The survey will also be directly useful for local-level efforts to measure and track several of the new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially those that pertain to SDG 16 on achieving peaceful, just, and inclusive societies. The project will serve as a tool for policymakers and international organizations implementing and overseeing the implementation of the peace accord, helping to inform the design of public policies by diagnosing local needs and examining whether changes in "objective" local conditions produce corresponding changes in perceptions. The survey will also produce novel academic knowledge on peace processes more generally, with the aim of developing a survey tool and set of findings from Colombia that can be applied beyond Colombian borders. The primary goal is to allow international, governmental, and civil society actors in Colombia to better understand complex processes of attitude formation and transformation in areas heavily affected by conflict. Our contention is that this is a necessary step in the construction and consolidation of a lasting peace in a country that faces its best hope in more than half a century of escaping vicious cycles of violence.
Introduction

Whether or not the deal will foster an enduring peace depends strongly on people’s perceptions of and experience with this peace process. Should ordinary citizens fail to see tangible benefits of peace, the successful implementation of the peace deal will be made considerably more difficult, if not impossible.

In November 2016, following more than four years of negotiations, the Colombian government and the country’s largest and oldest rebel group, the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia – Ejército del Pueblo (FARC-EP), signed a peace agreement that put an end to their more than five decade-long armed conflict. While the precise number of victims during this period is difficult to estimate, the country’s Center for Historical Memory puts the total number of deaths at more than 220,000, while the Victims’ Unit catalogues more than 7,000,000 victims of forced displacement, more than 35,000 victims of kidnapping and over 150,000 victims of forced disappearances, placing it amongst the deadliest internal armed conflicts in history.

What explains the origins of the conflict? Explanations vary, but most scholars agree that some combination of inequality (especially regarding access to land, an issue at the core of social tensions and widely regarded as one of the conflict’s main triggers), poverty, and limited opportunities for meaningful political participation all played a role in the initial stages of the conflict, while various geopolitical and economic forces – including increasing demand for cocaine in the United States and Europe, and Cold War politics – helped shape how deadly the conflict would ultimately become.

Consolidating peace after generations of armed conflict is no easy feat, nor will it be for Colombia. Indeed, Colombians’ perceptions about the peace process have been quite polarized: given failed peace processes in the past, during which the FARC-EP used lulls in fighting to strengthen itself militarily, the public is understandably wary of whether promises will be honored or not. Whether or not the deal will foster an enduring peace depends strongly on people’s perceptions of and experience with this peace process. Should ordinary citizens fail to see tangible benefits of peace, the successful implementation of the peace deal will be made considerably more difficult, if not impossible. To this end, a systematic tool for measuring people’s perceptions is needed to understand citizen attitudes as implementation proceeds.
The MAPS project

The Monitoring Attitudes, Perceptions, and Support of the peace process in Colombia (MAPS) project, a collaborative effort between PRIO, the Universidad de los Andes, and the United Nations Development Programme (Oslo Governance Centre and Colombia Country Office), with the help of many local partners in Colombia, has developed an innovative survey to measure ordinary civilians’ perceptions of and experience with the peace process in Colombia. These surveys will provide knowledge to the international community and policymakers at the national, regional and local levels to assess how peacebuilding activities shape citizen attitudes towards the peace agreement and perceptions regarding its implementation. The MAPS project is carried out in close collaboration with local partners in Colombia, including in particular the Colombia office of the Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies (the Kroc Institute has the mandate for verifying the technical implementation of the accord as stated in the peace agreement).

This document reports on the pilot phase of the project in which surveys were applied in Tumaco (Department of Nariño) and Mesetas (Department of Meta). As we report on here, this project provides crucial insights into how ordinary civilians overall support specific provisions of the agreement, even as they demonstrate significant skepticism about how well it has been implemented to date.

Our aim is to be able to scale up this project, so that the survey can cover all 16 sub-regions prioritized by the Colombian government (Programa de Desarrollo con Enfoque Territorial, or PDETs) due to their histories of armed conflict and high levels of poverty. These are the most challenging but also the most critical locations to survey, given that the peace will be won or lost in areas with persistent state weakness and long histories of conflict-related violence. Despite the importance of these sub-regions for peacebuilding, ongoing efforts to measure citizen attitudes towards the peace agreement in Colombia rarely move beyond five or so urban areas, even fewer seek to track the attitudes of the same individuals over time, and none evaluate the impact that specific peacebuilding actions have on citizen perceptions. MAPS will undertake all three. In this sense, the MAPS project seeks to directly contribute to the success of the implementation of the peace agreement and to help understand attitudes towards potential durable solutions to the ongoing armed conflict with the ELN. Indeed, the success of the agreement with the FARC is far from guaranteed. A large literature has shown how fragile peace processes are: the average country emerging from conflict will revert to fighting within seven years. Both scientifically and operationally, we still have only a limited understanding of the dynamics and determinants of successful peace processes. Popular support for the ongoing implementation of peace agreements is a critical determinant of implementation success.
Having piloted the survey tool, we are confident in its ability to provide valuable information to policymakers. The scaled-up version of the MAPS project will reach respondents in all 16 highly-prioritized regions of the country, focusing on areas most affected by conflict in order to build a comprehensive understanding of public perception across Colombia. To our knowledge, it will be the first systematic survey initiative to monitor shifts in public opinion, attitudes, and perceptions towards peace in Colombia. Indeed, such invaluable tools have not been systematically used in any peace process. This project seeks to fill this gap in existing data and research and provide innovative tools for peacebuilding.

Case selection

Our decision to survey residents of Tumaco and Mesetas was informed by a number of factors. Here we describe important facets of the two municipalities – including their experiences with conflict and violence – to help contextualize the survey results that we present in subsequent sections of this report.

Tumaco

Tumaco is ground zero for a number of interrelated and complex post-conflict challenges. Its geographic characteristics have made it an attractive location for organized crime and guerrilla activity. Sitting on the Pacific Ocean and close to the Ecuadorian border, Tumaco has suffered waves of violence born of competition among different armed groups, due to its strategic location. Coca and its refined end product, cocaine, pass through Tumaco en route to Central America and Mexico. Indeed, the rural part of Tumaco, composed mostly of Afro-Colombian and indigenous communities, among others, now claims the dubious distinction of producing the most coca of any municipality in Colombia.

In the aftermath of the FARC-EP’s demobilization, competitive dynamics among armed groups have heightened, leading to a sharp increase in violence. This has involved the targeted assassination of social leaders. For these reasons, Tumaco is a high priority for the Colombian government, which is currently leading a set of initiatives directed at reducing the community’s reliance on coca, undercutting the influence of armed groups, and promoting economic development.

Mesetas

As part of the peace accord, the FARC-EP and the government agreed to develop 26 demobilization and reintegration zones scattered across the country, allowing former FARC combatants to lay down their weapons and demobilize under the supervision of the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia. Just as importantly, FARC ex-combatants were also to be reintegrated into civilian life in these camps, receiving training on crucial skills and rudimentary education. Mesetas is currently home to one such large
FARC reintegration zone (currently called Espacios Territoriales de Capacitación and Reincorporación – ETCR). One of the largest ETCRs is located in a rural area of Mesetas. Measuring residents’ perceptions of the peace process in situ, where people live near former combatants, is crucial. In addition to its important new role in the path towards a demobilized FARC, Mesetas is located in a region that was considered a FARC stronghold for much of the conflict. Indeed, the area was essentially ceded to the FARC during a peace process in the late 1990s, and historically has seen limited state presence. In this in Mesetas, the rebel group built a sprawling network of roads and heavily invested in the cultivation of coca. The FARC was also able to administer ‘justice processes’ to civilians who violated the norms decided by the group. Inhabitants have therefore spent prolonged periods of time under FARC-EP influence. As the Colombian state attempts to reassert itself in areas previously governed by outlaw armed groups, understanding people’s attitudes towards the peace process, and their perceptions of progress in its implementation, will be critical.

**Patterns of violence**

Both Tumaco and Mesetas have been deeply affected by conflict-related violence. Yet the historical patterns of violence that they experienced, as well as the current insecurity and governance challenges they face, are not the same. The figures below use data on victimization from the Colombian government’s Victims’ Unit to demonstrate how violence has historically ebbed and flowed in both of these municipalities. Figure 4 and Figure 5 show that both Tumaco and Mesetas saw a surge of violence in the late 1990s and early 2000s, when competition among paramilitary groups and left-wing guerrillas for territorial control led these communities – and much of Colombia – into a state of crisis.

**Figure 4: Number of homicides in Tumaco**
Levels of homicides and displacement in both locations show significant victimization: at its most violent, Mesetas experienced 145 homicides in a given year, an appalling number given that the municipality is only home to 11,000 inhabitants. Tumaco likewise experienced extraordinary levels of lethal violence, at its worst surpassing 500 for every 100,000 inhabitants, well above epidemic levels.

Displacements also deeply affected both municipalities: Figure 6 and Figure 7 show that while displacements of residents from Mesetas fell during the mid-to-late 2000s, the opposite occurred in Tumaco. Given an incomplete demobilization of paramilitary groups nationwide in the mid-2000s, which saw many paramilitary fighters reconstitute criminal organizations, competition for control of illegal markets has continued to produce high levels of displacement in Tumaco. A new type of criminal network, BACRIM (*bandas criminales* or criminal bands), has become the dominant criminal force in the Colombian underworld. These networks are overseeing cocaine trafficking and have established illicit empires in illegal mining, extortion, and the trafficking of everything from people to weapons.3

---

3 InSight Crime, ‘InSide Colombia’s BACRIM’. Available at: [www.insightcrime.org/investigations/inside-colombias-bacrim/](http://www.insightcrime.org/investigations/inside-colombias-bacrim/)
Figure 8 and Figure 9 show that the identity of perpetrators – as self-reported by victims themselves – does not vary dramatically between Tumaco and Mesetas: respondents indicate that left-wing guerrillas were chiefly responsible for their victimization, while “unidentified” perpetrators are the second-most reported authors of victimization. One striking difference, however, is that in Tumaco the number of those reporting victimization by “unidentified” individuals seems to increase dramatically in the early 2010s, potentially reflecting the growing role of the BACRIM networks.
In sum, both municipalities where we conducted surveys in late 2017 have experienced significant and sustained levels of violence. Today, Tumaco remains subject to the whims of competing criminal factions, while Mesetas has become a focal point for the potential of reintegrating FARC fighters in the construction of a more inclusive Colombian society.
Methods

The MAPS survey is designed to capture ordinary Colombians’ experiences with and views on the more than 50-year-long-conflict, their support for the peace agreement and assessment of its implementation, as well as attitudes towards reconciliation, transitional justice and reintegration of combatants.4

The questionnaire takes the Post-Conflict Attitudes for Peace (PAP) survey as a starting point (Dyrstad et al., 2016),5 but is tailor-made to the Colombian context.

Questionnaire

The questionnaire was originally developed in English, and translated into Spanish by Cifras & Conceptos, a Bogota-based firm which specializes in public opinion surveys. On average, it took 30 minutes to complete the survey.

The first three parts of the survey focus on the individual’s sex, age group, employment status, religion and religiosity, social status, and education (section 1). In section 2, we want to know about people’s social trust and ask questions commonly used in the World Values Survey and similar global studies to grasp the level of interpersonal trust in a society. The third section consists of questions about people’s interest in politics, participation in different political activities (such as working in a political party, having contacted various political and/or community leaders, having participated in a strike), and voting behavior (including whether the respondent voted in the October 2nd, 2016 referendum on the peace agreement).

The following module (section 4) includes more potentially sensitive questions about institutional trust and opinions on when/if violence can be justified. We ask the respondents to express on a one-to-six scale how much they trust the following 15 different institutions: the Congress of the Republic; the President; the Mayor; the Municipal Council; the Juntas de Acción Comunal (citizen organizations at local level); the national army; the national police; the judiciary; the ombudsmen; ethnic and indigenous authorities; mass media; labor unions, sindicatos y gremios (unions); the Catholic Church; Christian churches; and the United Nations. Trying to capture people’s actual behavior and confidence in the effectiveness of state institutions, we include a scenario about a man who is robbed at

---

4 Additionally, the questionnaire includes basic questions about socio-economic status, political participation and trust, and future prospects.
5 Karin Dyrstad; Helga Malmin Binningsbø; Kristin M. Bakke and Arne Henning Eide (2016) ‘Attitudes for Peace: Public opinion in three post-conflict countries’, presented at International Studies Association Annual Meeting, Atlanta, 16.03.16–19.03.16.
knifepoint and recognizes the robbers as people from a neighboring town. We ask the respondent to select where the man should turn for assistance: the police, local government official or the Mayor, a FARC representative, or “other”. The next question then asks the respondent to describe on a one-to-six scale whether the chosen action would help or not.

The fourth section continues with a set of five statements about when/if violence can be justified. Again, the respondent describes on a one-to-six scale whether s/he agrees or disagrees with these statements. Whereas these five statements are general in nature and are modified from questions used in other surveys as well, the MAPS survey also includes a set of ten statements about the justification of violence that are specifically designed for the Colombian context. Using the same one-to-six scale, respondents answer whether they agree or disagree that violence would be justified if: the state treats some regions or groups more favorably; the FARC’s candidate wins in a presidential election; economic inequality increases; the FARC refuses to use its resources to provide reparations to victims; the government turns repressive or violent; local social leaders are systematically killed; the military becomes too powerful; the FARC’s new political party gains popular support; land access for the poor does not improve; and the state is unable to provide personal safety. The section ends with a question about which rules and customs should be used to solve conflicts and problems between members in the respondent’s community.

Section 5 concerns the armed conflict in Colombia. The first question in this section contains ten statements about the causes of the conflict, for which the respondents have to describe how much they think different issues or actors contributed to the conflict: the absence of the state; poverty; inequality; injustice; interference from the United States of America; aggressiveness of Colombians; influence of communism; state repression; lack of culture; and greedy insurgents. The next question introduces similar statements about various actors during the course of the conflict, which the respondent has to agree or disagree (on a one-to-six scale) with:

- The FARC-EP was primarily defending the rights of poor peasants
- The Colombian army committed grave human rights violations during the conflict
- Movements such as FARC-EP have sought to turn Colombia into Venezuela (under a Castrochavism political, social, economic model)

---

6 The five statements are: The use of violence is justified only in self-defense; political power comes from weapons; it is generally possible for citizens to protect their rights without violence; family members often have to use violence or the threat of violence to protect each other; and it is justified to fight with (against) the police or other forces responsible for public security.

7 The answer alternatives are: laws of the state; rules provided by armed groups; rules and customs of the community; each individual’s rules; do not know; and other.
• Paramilitary groups have primarily protected the Colombian people

• The FARC-EP was only interested in profits from drug trafficking.

Next, the questionnaire asks which group was the main responsible for most of the violent events in Colombia, as well as which group was the second most responsible. The respondents could choose between seven alternatives (in addition to “do not know” and “refusal”): the armed forces; the national police; paramilitary groups; FARC-EP; ELN; illegal armed groups; and others.

We then turn to questions about the peace agreement. First, the questionnaire asks how well the respondent knows the accord, making them choose between (a) have read the entire agreement, (b) have read the summary, (c) only from the media, (d) only from what s/he has been told, and (e) do not know. The next question introduces six statements about the peace agreement which the respondent has to agree or disagree with (on a one-to-six scale):

• The peace agreement violates Colombian law

• The peace agreement was necessary to end the war with the FARC-EP

• The peace agreement reflects the will of the Colombian people

• The peace agreement was forced upon Colombia by the international community

• Successful implementation of the peace agreement depends on international support

• The peace agreement promotes Castrochavism in Colombia.

The questionnaire further asks a general question about the respondent’s level of satisfaction with the peace process in Colombia. The general question is followed by a set of questions on what people think about nine specific provisions in the peace agreement. The respondents have to describe their support for these specific provisions. In conjunction, they will answer to what extent they think the implementation of these nine provisions are off or on track. The nine provisions are:

• Laydown of weapons and demobilization of FARC-EP members
• Allowing the FARC-EP to join the political system and participate in elections

• Prioritizing improved healthcare and educational services in areas affected by conflict

• Requiring perpetrators of conflict-related crimes to provide material benefits to their victims

• The state offering material incentives for farmers to plant crops other than coca

• Conducting land reform and land titling to redistribute the land

• Re-construction of the rural road network

• Improving the security situation for leaders of social organizations

• Efforts to provide truth, justice, reparation and non-repetition.

Next, the survey includes questions about the respondents’ attitudes towards the actors of the conflict and their post-conflict life. There are two questions about whether people would be comfortable having former FARC members, and former members of the paramilitary forces, living in their neighborhood. There then follows a set of questions that ask which actions the respondents believe should be taken towards three actors – the FARC, the ELN, and the armed forces – who have committed human rights violations: amnesty for all, amnesty for rank and file soldiers, and punishment for all.

Separating between the same three actors, as well as between commanders and rank and file soldiers, the questionnaire further asks if people think former combatants should be permitted to occupy positions of power in society today. The last questions in section 5 on the armed conflict ask about people’s experiences with and attitudes towards disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programs. First, the survey asks if the respondent or members of their family have participated in a DDR. Then, the survey presents three statements about DDR that the respondent should state whether they disagree or agree with, on a one-to-six scale: (a) It is important that ex-combatants go through DDR programs before they are reintegrated into society; (b) Even if ex-combatants have been through a DDR program, I simply do not trust them; and (c) It is not fair that ex-combatants who used violence and committed crimes get benefits through DDR programs.
The sixth section contains questions about people’s attitudes to transitional justice and reparations to victims. A general question asks the respondent to describe how important it is to discover the truth about what happened during the conflict. In a similar question, the respondent has to choose between two statements about the same: (1) It is better not to open old wounds by talking about what happened in the past conflict, or (2) It is better to discover what happened during the conflict. The respondents are further asked to select which transitional justice institutions in Colombia they know about: the Truth, Coexistence, and Non-Recurrence Commission; the Special Unit for the Search for Persons deemed as Missing; the Special Jurisdiction for Peace; and the Victims’ Unit.

Thereafter, the questionnaire contains four statements for which the respondent is asked to express their level of agreement:

- Minors who fought within the ranks of the FARC-EP should be treated as victims under Colombian law
- Reparations should be given to communities as a whole, not directly to specific individuals
- The reparations given to victims of the conflict in Colombia have been sufficient
- Individuals who were forcibly displaced should have a right to reclaim their land even if the current owners acquired them in good faith.

The last question in this section asks which policy areas the respondents would suggest the government prioritized if 10% of the taxes should be used to improve the living conditions for people in the Colombian countryside. The policy areas are: (1) Agrarian reform; (2) Road infrastructure; (3) Delivery of lands to indigenous communities; (4) Delivery of lands to Afro communities; and (5) Land formalization.

Section 7 contains a set of sensitive questions about people’s experiences from the armed conflict in Colombia. We ask if the respondent or any of their family members were victims of different traumatizing events during the conflict. The respondent can select all relevant actions from the following list: disappearance; displacement; homicide; kidnapping; invasion/destruction/theft of property; physical aggression; sexual aggression; and extortion. The respondent is then asked to identify, if possible, the affiliation of the person who committed the crime they experienced. For this question, they can select all
relevant actors among: the national government; the national police; the paramilitary groups; the FARC; the ELN; illegal armed groups; and family members or acquaintances.

The questionnaire further asks whether the respondent or his/her family has received any form of reparation to recover from the conflict, and whether the respondent is registered in the Colombian Registry of Victims. The remainder of section 7 contains questions that capture the respondents’ emotional wellbeing, asking whether they have any negative feelings or reactions if they think about a stressful experience from the past.

In the eighth section, the questionnaire asks the respondents to assess the present situation in Colombia and their own life. First, the survey lists seven different issues that the respondents should evaluate: unemployment and poverty; corruption/corrupt authorities; political violence; risk of a new armed conflict; health system; insecurity in the streets (pickpocketing, stealing); and absence of justice.

In the next three questions, the respondent is asked to evaluate some developments in Colombia since the peace agreement was signed: the economic development in the country, the respondent's own personal economic situation, and the degree of political polarization in Colombia. The six last questions in this section ask the respondent to evaluate the current quality of schools, health services, and security in the neighborhood, as well as compare the current status of these issues compared to one year ago.

The last section of the questionnaire contains a survey experiment with six statements about suggested policy changes that the respondents are asked to disagree or agree with. This section exists in two versions that were distributed randomly among the respondents. The two versions are identical with one important difference: the actor that suggested the policy change. In one version, the actor is referred to as “some people” for all statements, whereas in the other version the actor is identified as FARC, the armed forces, the national police, the United Nations, the ELN, or the Catholic Church. We included these two versions of the section in order to capture whether people’s true preferences about central actors in Colombia could be different from what we are able to assess when asking only direct, and potentially very sensitive, questions about the actors.
Conducting the survey

The survey was carried out in November–December 2017 by Cifras & Conceptos. The study aimed at including an equal share of men and women aged 18 years and older, as well as including people from both rural and urban areas. In Tumaco, the proposed sample size was 1000, with 600 respondents from the urban and 400 respondents from the rural areas, while the proposed sample size in Mesetas was 425, with 300 from the urban and 125 from the rural areas.

The two municipalities included in this study are, as described elsewhere, heavily affected by violence. The legacy of conflict violence, as well as criminal violence – in Tumaco, in particular, related to the production and trafficking of narcotics – make violence a daily and imminent threat in people’s lives. This also affected the fielding of the survey, when an initial visit to Mesetas had to be canceled because of a massacre on possible family members of former FARC rebels.

Tumaco was also heavily affected by violence at the time of the survey, including murders and a massacre during the two weeks the survey was carried out. The interviewers were occasionally not able to carry out the interviews as planned, and were restricted from entering some areas. It also proved difficult to get in touch with the indigenous population, partly because of lack of access, but also because they felt overburdened with polling and the absence of benefits from answering the questionnaire made people unwilling to participate. In general, the high levels of insecurity in the municipality made people skeptical of participating in the study. In Mesetas, conducting the survey was undramatic and it took the interviewers 7 days to carry out 417 interviews.

Cifras & Conceptos used the last general census and population projections for 2017, from Colombia’s National Administrative Department of Statistics (DANE), as basis for the sampling frame for the population aged 18 years or older. For security reasons, the sampling design in the urban and rural areas differed.

To carry out the survey in the urban areas, the metropolitan areas of Tumaco and Mesetas were divided into 19 and 12 zones, respectively. For each zone, a maximum of 32 (Tumaco) and 25 (Mesetas) individuals were selected for interviews, aiming at an equal share of men and women. In each zone, a random number of blocks were selected, and within each block, a maximum of 8 interviews were carried out (maximum two per side). Only one household was selected in each dwelling, and within the household, one individual above 18 years of age was selected randomly for the interview.

For the rural areas, Cifras & Conceptos carried out surveys by interception in market areas or around the churches on Sundays. Before conducting the interviews, the interviewers made sure that the interviewee normally lived in rural areas, and thus could be a representative of the rural population.⁹

Due to the nature of the survey, some of the questions are sensitive and could provoke emotional distress for the respondents. Although individuals were skeptical to participating in the survey because of the security situation, and some expressed frustration over the lack of benefits from participating in it, there was little disapproval of the questions themselves. The respondents were assured that all answers were anonymous and confidential, that they could withdraw from the interview at any time they wanted, and that they could refuse to answer a question if they did not want to answer. Overall, however, people were willing to answer the questions in the survey, and the share of respondents refusing to answer a particular question is most often below 3 percent.

Although some people were skeptical towards participating in the survey, civil society organizations working in Mesetas and Tumaco commended our survey for enabling the inhabitants to freely express their opinions and concerns, rather than tell them what do, which often was the case with other polling in the areas.

⁹ In Tumaco, some of the rural interviews were conducted in eight villages.
What determines support for the peace agreement?

What determines overall support for the peace accord between the FARC-EP and the government of Colombia? This section looks at support for the peace accord at a more aggregate level.

In the sections that follow, we take a deeper look at some of the key provisions of the accord: FARC reintegration into the political system; land reform; provisions relating to transitional justice and reconciliation; and agrarian reform, especially pertaining to efforts to incentivize farmers to stop growing illicit crops.

Figure 10 shows the levels of support for the peace process overall in Mesetas and Tumaco. We find stark differences between the two municipalities. Residents of Mesetas, on average, report being quite satisfied with the overall peace process: a majority of respondents report they are somewhat or very satisfied, and very few, only 6%, report the lowest level of satisfaction.

Mesetas is an area that has had little or no state presence during the armed conflict, or indeed throughout Colombian history. The challenges ahead for the state as it tries to assert its authority and to provide public services in this area are considerable. These overall rather positive figures on people’s satisfaction with the peace process may indicate that the people very much welcome this...
process, but it is possible that attitudes may change substantially if the state is unable to deliver on its commitments.

In sharp contrast, residents of Tumaco (left-hand graph in Figure 10) are not at all satisfied with the overall peace process: a majority of respondents, indeed almost three out of every four respondents, report that they are only minimally or somewhat satisfied. Given the amount of violence still seen in Tumaco and the wider region, and the considerable work that remains in terms of reconstruction and improving state services, this is not surprising.

Nonetheless, Tumaco is a municipality that voted overwhelmingly (71%) in favor of the peace agreement in the 2016 plebiscite. In our survey, people that voted in favor of the peace accord also report, on average, that they are more satisfied with the peace process. This may indicate higher levels of support for the peace process to date. Across the two municipalities, we find a substantial but not dramatic effect of having voted for the peace accord on current overall satisfaction with the peace process. On the 6-point satisfaction scale, seen in Figure 10, the average respondent reports a score of 2.8.\textsuperscript{11} We find that a person who voted for the peace accord is most likely to now give their satisfaction of the peace process a score of 3.5, while a person who reports having voted against the peace accord gives their overall satisfaction a score of 2.4. How people voted in the plebiscite is important for understanding how they view the overall peace process, but clearly many other factors are just as or more important than what vote they cast in 2016.\textsuperscript{12}

Results from both Tumaco and Mesetas underscore that people do need to experience the tangible benefits of peace in order to support the process. In Mesetas, as we discuss further below, people’s perceptions about the actual implementation of the accord are more positive than in Tumaco. This could very well indicate that respondents in Mesetas have seen some tangible benefits of the peace process, at least to a larger extent than respondents in Tumaco. In Tumaco, the quality of the peace remains woefully inadequate.

Connected to this is the question of how much information people actually have about the peace process. In order to gain insight into this, we ask people to report how well they know the text of the peace accord. In Figure 11, we see respondents’ average level of satisfaction according to whether they have read the entire agreement (very few respondents have), have read a summary, heard about it from the media, only know what others have told them, or they do not know much about it at all. We find that the level of knowledge is important. Respondents who report having read the entire agreement are much more satisfied with the peace process. We do not find, however, that people’s overall satisfaction is much influenced by where they get their information from — respondents

\textsuperscript{11} The standard error is large: 1.7.

\textsuperscript{12} Note that a substantial number of our respondents, 40%, refuse to give any answer at all to the question of how they voted.
that gained their knowledge about the accord from other people are overall as satisfied with the process as those that have heard about it from the media.

**Figure 11: How well do people know the accord?**

![Bar chart showing knowledge of the accord among respondents.](image)

---

**Armed conflict experience**

As laid out above, the more than 50-year-long armed conflict in Colombia led to tremendous bloodshed. Countless people have experienced horrors at the hands of various armed actors. In our survey, we ask a number of questions about people’s experience of the armed conflict. Not surprisingly, we find that this armed conflict experience influences how people view the overall peace process, but not always in the straightforward manner we might have expected.

Millions of people were victimized by the conflict. Among our respondents, we have individuals that report having witnessed the death of a household member, kidnapping, displacement and many other atrocities. Somewhat surprisingly, we do not find that people that have experienced some form of victimization in general tend to be less satisfied with the peace process. On the contrary, people who report having been victimized are, on average, somewhat more satisfied with the overall peace process. The effect is clearly discernable, but not very large: less than half a point on the 6-point scale. A somewhat different pattern emerges if we focus on who was responsible for the victimization. Overall, we find that among our respondents the FARC-EP is responsible for the most victimization – of the people that report having been victimized, 29% say this happened at the hands of the FARC-EP. This is closely followed by paramilitary groups (21%) and illegal armed groups (19%). This matters for people’s overall satisfaction with the peace process. People that report having been victimized by the FARC-EP, or to an even larger extent the ELN, are on average around 1 point less satisfied with the overall peace process than other people.
The same type of victimization can have very distinct after-effects for different people. In an effort to gauge this, we ask respondents, among other things, to report the extent to which they experience “repeated, disturbing memories, thoughts, or images of a stressful experience from the past”.\(^{13}\) Here, we do find that the extent to which people are essentially reliving these highly stressful experiences affects how they view the overall peace process. The more extreme people report these stresses as being, the less satisfied they are with the peace process. This touches on an important topic: in addition to improving people’s material and security situation, a peacebuilding effort also needs to address people’s mental health. This is especially important in a conflict that has had such wide-ranging temporal and spatial scope, and where many people, often in very different ways, have been victimized.

### Attitudes towards the conflict

In addition to individuals’ experiences of the internal armed conflict, people’s attitudes towards the conflict itself could be important for shaping current overall satisfaction with the peace process. This particularly includes issues such as what the primary drivers and causes of the conflict were; who was responsible for the violence during the conflict; and whether the accord was necessary to end the conflict.

Views in Colombia on the extent to which the peace accord was necessary to end the conflict with the FARC-EP vary substantially. We ask people to rate on a 6-point scale the extent to which they agree with the claim that the accord was necessary to end the conflict. On average, we find that respondents are more likely than not to report that the accord was necessary to end the conflict. Figure 12 breaks this down by region, and we see that people in Mesetas are more likely to believe that the peace accord was necessary than people in Tumaco. Moreover, we find that respondents who agree with the statement that the accord was necessary to end the conflict also, on average, are more satisfied with the overall peace process. The difference in overall support for the peace process between people that completely agree and completely disagree with the statement is around 1.5 points on the 6-point scale.

\(^{13}\) This is one of a series of questions that are routinely used to ascertain the extent to which people suffer from post-traumatic stress.
Not surprisingly, people who strongly agree with the claim that the peace agreement violates Colombian law are much less satisfied with the peace process. Recall that an average respondent rates their satisfaction with the peace process as 2.8 on the 6-point scale. Respondents who feel very strongly that the peace agreement violates Colombian law are likely to report their satisfaction as low as 2, while respondents who strongly disagree with the view that the accord violates Colombian law on average report their satisfaction as close to 4.

**Respondents’ backgrounds**

Support for the peace process appears to be quite evenly distributed across different types of social and occupational groups, at least in Tumaco and Mesetas. The left-hand graph in Figure 13 shows overall support for the peace process across various educational categories. By and large, no firm conclusions can be drawn from this. Respondents with a technological education express, on average, somewhat lower levels of satisfaction, but the differences are not very large. Across all the other groups, including those that report no education, it is only the small group of people that report having a postgraduate degree (PhD), less than 1% of respondents, who are somewhat more supportive than others. Respondents with primary, secondary, and technical educations, groups that together comprise more than 80% of our respondents, exhibit no differences in the overall level of support between themselves.
A very similar picture emerges if we instead consider people’s employment status (right-hand graph of Figure 13). Here, we see that both employed and unemployed respondents have essentially identical levels of satisfaction with the peace process. Students, both those that report only being students and those that combine studies with work, are the only groups that stand out. On average, students are less supportive of the peace process than other occupational groups.

The same patterns hold if we compare respondents with different religious affiliations, respondents that are landowners with those that are not, or respondents that report different levels of political engagement. Overall, these background factors seem not to be important for understanding people’s overall level of support for the peace process. This may be surprising, but it is also encouraging. It implies that the different ‘categories’ people belong to, or the broad contours of their backgrounds, are not determining people’s attitudes to the peace process. Such categories are often more or less immutable, or at least can only be changed quite slowly, and it would thus be problematic if such factors fundamentally influenced how people viewed the peace process. Instead, we show that other factors are much more important – in short, people’s attitudes change with changes on the ground, underscoring the actual work of building peace as the key ingredient to the success of the peace process. Even more, it shows that this peace process is not limited to only one or some classes, but embraces the many social strata of Colombia.
Women and the Colombian peace process

Men and women may have diverging perceptions and attitudes towards different aspects of the peace accord. Moreover, men and women may also have radically divergent experiences with different aspects of the peace process. Understanding these dynamics is important in order to get a holistic view of people’s perceptions of and experience with the peace process in Colombia.

Equality and inclusion, and especially gender equality, is a central tenet of the peace accord between the government and FARC. The accord states that social and institutional conditions have prevented women from gaining access to the assets of production and to public and social benefits. To remedy this and to ensure an inclusive peace process that leads to real and effective equality, the accord takes an explicit gender-based approach to peacebuilding. Men and women may have diverging perceptions and attitudes towards different aspects of the peace accord. Moreover, men and women may also have radically divergent experiences with different aspects of the peace process. Understanding these dynamics is important in order to get a holistic view of people’s perceptions of and experience with the peace process in Colombia. To this end, we take a more focused look at the extent to which there are important differences between men and women’s perceptions of the peace process and their support for important components of the peace accord.

Gender equality in Colombia has seen fundamental changes over the last few years. In 2011, the Gender Gap Report ranked Colombia as number 80, while in 2016 it was ranked as number 39. That is a rather astonishing improvement. The change from 2011 to 2016 mostly reflects positive changes for women with respect to economic participation and opportunity and political empowerment. With respect to education and health and survival Colombia did fairly well in both 2011 and 2016.

Women have made up a sizeable part of the different guerrilla groups in the Colombian conflict. Between 25 to 40 percent of FARC-EP and ELN’s combatants have been women. Of the former FARC-EP members demobilizing, women make up 23% (Security Council Report, 2017). Critics of the reintegration plan have argued that it does not address the particular obstacles women face in order to successfully reintegrate into society. In a previous public service campaign, the Colombian government is trying to incentivize female combatants to demobilize. It reads: “Guerrillera, feel like a

14 Verdad Abierta, ‘El sufrimiento de mujeres combatientes y desmovilizadas’, 27 January 2015. Available at: verdadabierta.com/testimonios-de-mujeres-exguerrilleras-que-desertaron-de-grupos-armados-legales/
woman again. Demobilize.” It promises women that they can “smile and become the mother [they’ve] always dreamed of being.” One of the main challenges facing former female combatants is that men, even former guerrillas, often perceive women who have been members of rebel armies as ‘damaged goods’. This makes it far more difficult for these women to reintegrate into Colombian society.\(^\text{15}\)

In order to obtain a more gender sensitive approach to both reintegration and security, the National Reintegration Center Council has created a working group on gender. Moreover, the National Commission on Security Guarantees has established a technical commission on developing a territorial and gender-sensitive approach, and women’s organizations have called for a greater representation in the commission. They have developed their own strategy for reintegration through their committee on women, gender and sexual diversity. Moreover, the Commission communicates regularly with national platforms of women’s organizations, in addition to regional and local organizations (Security Council Report, 2017).

**Gender and satisfaction with the peace process**

For the peace process to be successful, it needs to be seen as legitimate by both men and women. In our survey, we look at whether women and men have different perceptions of the peace process. While there are some differences, the general trend is that men and women tend to see most aspects of the process quite similarly. Women are somewhat less satisfied with the peace process than men. Somewhat surprisingly, our survey shows that a larger percentage of women voted for the peace process.\(^\text{16}\) However, women tend to evaluate the general political and economic development in Colombia since the signing of the peace agreement less favorably than men.

---


16 Note that a substantial number of respondents refuse to say whether they voted in favor of or against the peace accord.
Figure 14 shows that men are somewhat more satisfied with the peace process than women: as many as 38% of women report no satisfaction with the peace process. The corresponding number for men is 27%. On our 6-point measure, the average score reported by men is 3.1, while the average amongst women is 2.7, placing the average female viewpoint at the bottom half of the scale. These differences are statistically significant. There are many possible explanations as to why this is the case. It could be that women were generally less satisfied with the process at the outset, or that there are aspects of the implementation itself that have been less satisfying to women than men.

Figure 15: Plebiscite vote and support for peace accord

17 These differences are statistically significant.
Figure 15 shows a small, yet notable, larger share of women than men voted in the peace plebiscite, and that a higher share of women report that they voted in favor of the peace accord. This demonstrates that women were not less, but in contrast, more, in favor of the peace accord at the outset. Therefore, there is reason to believe that there are aspects of the implementation process that have been less satisfying to women than to men.

Figure 16: Support for peace accord provisions and evaluation of implementation, by sex

Figure 16 shows men and women’s support of the different components that make up the peace agreement, as well as their perceptions of the implementation process. What is clear is that the level of support is quite high for each of the peace agreement components, and that there are only minor gender differences. The only notable difference with respect to support is that women show less support when it comes to the reintegration of FARC. Furthermore, it shows that both men and women tend to be far more pessimistic when it comes to the implementation of the peace process. While there are some components that men on average give a higher score than women, the differences are rather small. Again, attitudes on the reintegration of FARC are where differences are most notable.

**General development**

In the survey, we ask the respondent whether they believe the quality of schools, health service and the security situation in their neighborhood has improved during the last year. These are important aspects of most people’s lives, and we would expect development here to partly explain divergent views on the peace process. If women tend to be less satisfied with the development here, it might explain why they are also less satisfied with the peace process. However, as illustrated in Figure 17, men and women are about equally (dis)satisfied with the development on all three dimensions. The average score is below the mid-range on the scale, indicating that most people think that the situation has become
worse than it was one year ago. In particular, people are dissatisfied with the development of schools in their own neighborhood. It is worth noticing that the dimension that people are the least dissatisfied with is changes when it comes to the level of security. This should not be that surprising; this is the dimension where one would expect the most immediate positive changes, as a peace accord is signed and a cease-fire is implemented. The lack of a positive score here, however, shows how challenging it is to bring peace to a country that has been ravaged by armed conflict for half a century.

Figure 17: Assessment of security situation

Figure 18: Assessment of economic development
We also asked respondents about their own personal economic development, as well as the economic and political development in Colombia, since the signing of the peace accord. While not large, Figure 18 shows that there are some gender differences with respect to these three dimensions. While it is clear that people are very pessimistic about these developments since the signing of the peace agreement, men tend to have a somewhat more positive view on these than women. It is notable that the average Colombian man and woman believes that personal economic development and the Colombian economic and political development have worsened since the signing of the peace agreement. On the scale ranging from 1 to 6, in which 1 indicates *much worsened* and 6 *much improved*, the average score for men is 2.2 for personal economy, 2.5 for the Colombian economy, and 2.3 for political development. For women, the respective scores are: 2, 2.2 and 2.2, showing a significant difference between views on the development in their own personal and Colombian economy. The difference in views on political polarization is not significant. This means that both men and women believe that things have gotten worse since the signing of the agreement. Indeed, only 14% of men and 10% of women believe that the Colombian economy has gotten somewhat better or a lot better during this period. This small, yet notable, difference in men and women's views on economic development might be one reason as to why women tend to be less satisfied with the peace process.
The reintegration of FARC ex-combatants into civilian life, and the integration of FARC into the conventional political system as a political party, are crucial steps of the peace accord.

The Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia – Ejército del Pueblo (FARC-EP) is one of the world’s oldest rebel group movements. Alongside the Colombian state, FARC-EP has been the primary actor in the Colombian armed conflict since 1964. As part of the peace accord between FARC-EP and the government, FARC-EP has agreed to lay down their weapons and demobilize. The reintegration of FARC ex-combatants into civilian life, and the integration of FARC into the conventional political system as a political party, are crucial steps of the peace accord. The laydown of arms of the FARC has already been concluded and certified by the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia.

The first FARC demobilization phase took place in 26 zones (Zonas Veredales Transitorias de Normalización) that were off-limits to the state security services and meant to be a safe zone in which FARC ex-combatants could lay down their weapons and, crucially, get some rudimentary skills training and education to help them reintegrate into civilian life. This phase has culminated with the laydown of weapons and consolidation of the bilateral and definitive ceasefire verified by the United Nations. However, at the current stabilization phase taking place at the ETCRs there are signs of problems. Multiple reports from ex-combatants describe intolerable living conditions in the zones, and many are opting to leave the zones altogether. While these are important issues, they do not fall within the scope of this report.

The armed conflict between the FARC and the government has lasted for more than 50 years. During this period, the conflict has remained far from static. The number of actors involved in the conflict has changed throughout the period of fighting, with the demobilization of smaller rebel groups in the early 1990s and the rise of paramilitary groups in the mid-to-late 1990s; the aims of the armed actors involved have changed, as international geopolitical winds have shifted and as new sources of financing have come online (including, most notably, the demand for coca, which exploded in the early 1980s); and the geographic scope of the conflict has remained far from constant, with the conflict remaining relatively geographically contained until 1982, when the FARC-EP committed to a broad and ambitious geographic expansion.

It is not surprising that, coming out of this conflict, many Colombians have grave misgivings about reintegrating FARC ex-combatants into civilian life. Many have suffered directly at the hands of the FARC, although by no means exclusively – the government, other rebel groups, and paramilitary groups are also
responsible for tremendous bloodshed. Nonetheless, for peace to be sustained, Colombians must find a way to live with a demobilized and disarmed FARC as a normal part of political life. Indeed, this process will also directly influence on-going discussion between the ELN and the government. How the FARC is treated, and specifically how their reintegration is handled and how perceptions of FARC evolve, is sure to influence the ELN’s discussions of how to move forward.

Figure 19 shows overall support among respondents for integrating FARC into the political system. The solid vertical line inside the boxes in the two graphs show the averages, the boxes themselves show the 25th and 75th percentile, while the lines shows the maximum (and minimum) values. We use these so-called box-and-whiskers plots to be able to illustrate the full distribution of our survey results, and not just the averages. The left-hand graph shows support in Mesetas and in Tumaco. Across the two municipalities, support for integrating the FARC into the political system is low, and much lower than what we see for other key provisions in the accord. On our 1 to 6 scale, where 1 represents the lowest level of support, and 6 the highest level of support, the average is a score of 2. We see absolutely no differences in support for these provisions across the two locations.

The right-hand graph breaks the results down by sex. Somewhat worryingly, here we see larger differences. On average, men are more supportive of efforts to integrate the FARC into the political system than women. The averages for the two groups are similar, but note that many more men are more supportive of reintegrating the FARC than the average, compared to women. As we discuss further below, women are, on average, more concerned about the security system, and this could also be influencing their views of integrating FARC into the process.
Perhaps not surprisingly, support for this particular provision also correlates strongly with a number of other important factors. We find, for instance, that people who report having voted in favor of the peace accord during the 2016 plebiscite express, on average, much higher levels of support for integrating FARC into political life. The same is true for people who generally agree with the statement “The FARC-EP was primarily defending the rights of poor peasants”. More generally, we find that FARC enjoys very low levels of support. When asked whom they would vote for if the parliamentary elections were held today, only 0.2% of people (the figures are roughly similar in Tumaco and Mesetas) report that they would vote for the FARC.

Figure 20 digs a little deeper and focuses on the extent to which people believe the implementation of the peace accord provisions on integrating the FARC are off or on track. On average, people have a more positive view of how the implementation of this particular provision is progressing, compared to their overall support for the provision itself. This is interesting, since for most provisions we find the opposite to be the case. There are no dramatic differences between Mesetas and Tumaco, although we find that people in Mesetas are, if anything, less certain about what they think of how the implementation is going. In Mesetas, we have many more people, compared to Tumaco, reporting low scores. For implementation, we also find a possibly worryingly large difference between men and women – on average, many more men believe the reintegration of the FARC into the political system have progressed further compared to what women report.

We have information about respondents’ attitudes towards allowing FARC (and ELN) members to occupy positions of power in political or social groups. For both groups, the overwhelming sentiment is

---

18 These differences are statistically significant.
negative: for the FARC and the ELN, around 80% of respondents say they are against allowing former commanders to occupy positions of power. The same pattern holds if we instead ask about former rank-and-file members, in the FARC or ELN. Again, around 80% of respondents are against allowing even such individuals to hold political power.

**How attitudes and perceptions about conflict history and conflict dynamics affect support for reintegrating FARC**

Next, we examine how support for reintegrating the FARC into the political system, as well as the respondents’ assessment of how this process is going, varies according to people’s views about some key aspects of the dynamics of the more than 50-year-long conflict. In Figure 21 we show how support for reintegrating the FARC in the political process (left) and assessment of how this is going (right) varies according to who respondents believe committed most of the violence during the conflict. Before we delve into this, it is worth noting that in both Tumaco and Mesetas, a plurality of respondents report that FARC was responsible for most of the violence during the conflict (44% and 26% respectively say FARC committed most of the violence).

Perhaps somewhat surprisingly, we do not find that respondents who report that the FARC was responsible for most of the violence are, on average, less supportive of the peace accord provisions on reintegrating the FARC into the political system. By and large, people’s support for this provision does not seem to be driven by who they believe was behind most of the violence. With perhaps one exception, people that report that the national police perpetrated most of the violence are, on average, much more supportive of integrating the FARC into the political system than other respondents. The same patterns hold if we instead examine people’s assessment of how the implementation of this provision is going.
Colombians disagree on what exactly the FARC’s motives were for their 50-year-long insurgency. We find that these attitudes substantially affect respondents’ support for integrating the FARC into the political process. Respondents that report that they agree with the claim that the FARC-EP was primarily defending the rights of the poor are much more likely to support the integration of the FARC. The same is true for respondents that agree that the peace accord was necessary to end the conflict. In contrast, respondents who believe that the FARC-EP was primarily interested in profiting financially from the drug trade, and that this was their primary motivation for fighting the government, are much less supportive of integrating the FARC. People that report that the FARC-EP, and movements like it, are trying to turn Colombia into Venezuela (under a Castrochavism-like regime), a common ‘talking point’ among opponents of the peace accord, also are much less likely to support the integration of the FARC. Somewhat surprisingly, we do not find that people that report having been victimized by the conflict, on average, are any less supportive of integrating the FARC into the political system.

Living with the FARC

The hope is that the FARC, now demobilized, become a part of the conventional political system, and that former FARC ex-combatants will continue to enter and adapt to civilian life. That the Colombian society at large is willing to welcome the FARC in this new capacity will be critical for the long-term sustaining of peace in the country. It is easy to see how FARC ex-combatants could be tempted to return to their fight areas and again take up arms if they are rejected by society at large. There is a substantial scholarly literature on how and under what conditions disarmament processes are successful and under what conditions ex-combatants are likely to return to violence. That is not our focus here. Instead, we use our survey to shed some light on how willing, at the moment, respondents in Mesetas and Tumaco are to welcome the FARC in its new role. We have already seen that, on average, people are more skeptical of the peace accord provisions related to reintegrating the FARC than they are of most other provisions. We find that this skepticism also translates into very low levels of support for FARC’s political party and, more worryingly, strong antipathies towards living with the FARC. We asked respondents whether they would be comfortable having former FARC members as neighbors.
Results, broken down by municipality, are shown in the left-hand graph in Figure 22. Here we find substantial regional variation. First, in Tumaco, on the right, respondents report a strong antipathy towards having former FARC members as neighbors – as much as 80% of respondents say they do not want former FARC members as neighbors. These results are similar across many different socio-economic characteristics: across age, employment status, sex, religious affiliation, and whether the respondent is a landowner, we consistently find strong negative views towards having former FARC members as neighbors.

We do find, however, that the more satisfied people are with the overall peace process, the more likely they are to report that they are positive towards having former FARC members as neighbors. Recall that, in general, people in Tumaco report very low levels of overall satisfaction with the peace process. The right-hand graph in Figure 22 shows how attitudes towards having former FARC members as neighbors change as people’s general level of reported satisfaction with the peace process increases. At the very highest end of satisfaction with the peace process, 55% of people report that they would not like FARC members as neighbors, compared to more than 80% at the low end of satisfaction. This strongly indicates that when people are satisfied with the overall peace process – and as the peace process progresses, we very much would both hope and expect satisfaction to increase – people’s antipathy towards the FARC will decline.

Overall, the tendency in Mesetas (left panel in the left-hand graph) is that people are much less skeptical towards having former FARC members as neighbors. The spread is roughly 45% to 55%, with a

---

19 The shade shows the confidence interval. These are narrow, indicating that this tendency is statistically significant.
majority reporting that they would not like to have FARC members as neighbors. This difference is much smaller than in Tumaco. This could be a function of the long history of the FARC in the Mesetas region. While FARC in Tumaco might be mostly associated with drug trafficking and violence, in Mesetas people may still associate the FARC with relatively benevolent rebel governance – indeed, the FARC built a large road network in this area that surely benefited inhabitants. It is possible that this is still influencing perceptions about having FARC members as neighbors.
Perceptions of land reform and land titling

Given the importance of land as one of the most frequently cited origins of the Colombian armed conflict and the importance of land reform as one of the pillars of the final peace agreement signed between the government and the FARC-EP, we want to better understand people’s perceptions of these provisions.

As already noted, there is no consensus on the origins of the conflict between the government and the FARC-EP. Nonetheless, some combination of inequality, especially regarding access to land, poverty, and limited opportunities for meaningful political participation all played a central role in the initial stages of the conflict. Indeed, Colombia has amongst the highest levels of inequality in land ownership in the world: the 0.1% largest farms control as much as 60% of all agricultural land in the country.\(^{20}\) The struggle for land reform has been central to FARC-EP’s struggle since the very beginning, and in their first political manifesto they promoted radical agrarian reform.\(^{21}\) Since then they have substantially moderated their demands, but land reform remains one of the central pillars of the peace accord. Land reform was perhaps the critical topic during the peace talks, and it remains a crucial challenge to ensure FARC’s continued reintegration into civilian life. Given the importance of land as one of the most frequently cited origins of the Colombian armed conflict and the importance of land reform as one of the pillars of the final peace agreement signed between the government and the FARC-EP, we want to better understand people’s perceptions of these provisions. To that end, we ask a range of questions enquiring as to the perceptions of the inhabitants of Mesetas and Tumaco in relation to land.

\(^{20}\) See Arantxa Guereña (2017) *A Snapshot of Inequality: What the latest agricultural census reveals about land distribution in Colombia*, Oxfam International. Available at: oxfam/2ENK7FS

Land reform and land titling are at the heart of the first clause of the peace accords, and we find that these provisions command considerable popular support. The results indicate that in both Mesetas and Tumaco many people agree with these provisions. As Figure 23 shows, aggregated data of both municipalities indicate that 58.6% of the respondents strongly agree with land reform and land titling, while only 7.2% strongly disagree. Average support in both municipalities combined is 4.8 on a scale of 1 to 6, indicating considerable support. Support for land reform is high among both men and women. After disaggregating the data by sex, Figure 24, no large differences can be found: the difference between average support among men (4.83) and women (4.79) is very small and is not statistically significant.

Support for land reform provisions are also similarly high if we compare respondents in Tumaco and Mesetas, see Figure 25. This disaggregation shows that there are substantial levels of support for
land reform and land titling in both locations. In fact, there is no statistically significant difference in the average level of support for these provisions between the two municipalities. There is, however, a statistically significant difference in both municipalities in the percentage of respondents that strongly agree with the land reform and titling provision and the percentage that strongly disagree. These differences suggest the existence of significant polarization within Tumaco and Mesetas regarding the problem of land in post-conflict Colombia. In other words, even though most respondents agree with the importance of land reform, a substantively important (and statistically significant) group of respondents very strongly disagree with these provisions. This group is of course likely to be vocal in their opposition to the land reform as it is implemented. The government would be wise to take heed of this polarization and attempt to address it.

Figure 25: Support for land reform and land titling, by municipality

As already noted, there are no important, statistically significant differences in support for land reform in either Mesetas or Tumaco when disaggregating by sex, above. Moreover, as is shown in Figure 26, support for these provisions among men and women are similar across municipalities – men or women are not more or less likely to be against or in favour of the provisions across the municipalities.
The socioeconomic status of an individual is, of course, highly correlated with factors such as land ownership. The socioeconomic status of respondents might therefore fundamentally shape their views on land reform: those who are economically vulnerable, in particular, might be the most supportive of efforts to redistribute land. Yet the data show that, for example, in Mesetas there is almost no difference in average levels of support for land reform and respondents’ socioeconomic levels. The only statistically significant difference, in Mesetas, concerns the number of individuals who strongly agree with land reform: those with a higher socioeconomic level (59.2%) are more likely than those with a lower socioeconomic level (48%) to express the strongest level of support for land reform. This suggests the necessity of further research on the relationship between socioeconomic level and support for land reform and land titling in Mesetas.

In Tumaco, as was the case in Mesetas, results indicate that regardless of socioeconomic class “strongly agree” is the most common answer for respondents when we ask about their support for land reform provisions. While the proportion of those who “strongly agree” with land reform is considerably greater among socioeconomic levels 3 and 4, compared to socioeconomic levels 1 and 2, these differences aren’t statistically significant. This means that, unlike the findings of Mesetas, there do not appear to be different levels of support in Tumaco for land reform and titling depending upon the socioeconomic levels of the respondent.

22 It is worth noting that all respondents belong to either the lowest (1) or second-lowest (2) socioeconomic level.
23 Unlike in Mesetas, in the Tumaco sample we have individuals who belong to socioeconomic levels 1, 2, 3 and 4.
Assessment of progress in conducting land reform and land titling

Next, we asked respondents to report not just their support for land reform measures but also to assess the progress in land reform and titling to date. On a scale of 1 to 6, where 1 means a negative assessment and 6 a positive one, the average assessment of Mesetas and Tumaco combined was 2.2, a considerably negative evaluation.24 Again, this underscores a central finding in this report: respondents on average report high levels of support for key provisions but low levels of satisfaction with the implementation to date – depending on your frame of reference, that means either a glass half full or half empty. Figure 27 shows that 40.8% of respondents have a negative assessment of progress of land reform and titling, while only 2.6% have a positive one. At the municipal level, results show small differences between the average assessment in Mesetas (2.3) and Tumaco (2.1). However, as Figure 28 shows, in Tumaco the percentage of respondents with a negative assessment of progress of land reform and titling (47.8%) is about 20% greater than in Mesetas (27.2%), a difference that is statistically significant.

Men and women do not seem to differ on their assessment of the implementation of the land reform. However, it is worth mentioning that in Mesetas the percentage of women with a negative assessment of progress (30.9%) on this issue is greater compared with men who provided the same assessment, a statistically significant difference.

---

24 These results and the following exclude those respondents who selected the option “don’t know” or who refused to answer.
As Colombia emerges from more than 50 years of conflict, the government and people of Colombia will have to make critical decisions on how to prioritize scarce resources. There are any number of worthy causes that the government, and the international community, should support, but decisions on what to focus on will have to be made. We are interested in knowing more about people’s perceptions of how the government should handle this prioritization. In short, what are citizens’ post-conflict priorities? We presented respondents with a hypothetical case in which, to improve life conditions of the Colombian countryside, the government would assign 10% of each citizen’s taxes to prioritize a particular issue. The question offered several potential issues, all shown in Figure 29, and asked respondents to select two to which they would like to direct the taxes. Land reform was by far the issue most respondents in both municipalities selected (35.6% of the total), surpassing the second most-selected issue – construction of roads – by more than (a statistically significant) 10%.

At the municipal level, we see variation in responses to this question: as Figure 29 shows, a preference for distributing state resources for land reform is much greater in Mesetas (54.4%) than Tumaco (27.8%), a difference that is statistically significant, suggesting that the problem of land is more important to Mesetas residents. However, it is important to note that, as mentioned above, there isn’t a large difference between average levels of support for land reform in Mesetas and Tumaco, suggesting a need to further investigate the relationship between support for land reform and preferences for how the state spends citizen tax contributions.
We do not find important differences between the preferences of men and women of Mesetas regarding how to spend the aforementioned hypothetical tax. However, results for Tumaco indicate that women rate land reform as less of a priority than men, a statistically significant difference. This finding contrasts with previous results that show that, among respondents of Tumaco, there is no difference in levels of support between men and women for the land reform provision of the agreement.
Substitution of illicit crops

Ceasing the production of coca lies at the crux of ending the conflict in the long run. The importance of this is reflected in the peace agreement, in which one of the main pillars is crop substitution and solutions to the illicit drugs problem.

The production of cocaine lies at the heart of the conflict in Colombia. Cocaine production was for decades a critical source of income for guerrilla groups, and this helped sustain the conflict. Today, large-scale violence and suffering is related to the cocaine production. Cocaine production fueled the conflict by providing financial opportunities and by enabling the guerrillas to continue fighting.\(^\text{25}\) FARC-EP controlled as much as 70% of the coca-growing areas in Colombia, and its involvement in the trade is estimated to have produced earnings ranging from $200 million to $3.5 billion a year.\(^\text{26}\) At its peak, FARC-EP was one of the richest rebel organizations in the world.\(^\text{27}\) Ceasing the production of coca lies at the crux of ending the conflict in the long run. The importance of this is reflected in the peace agreement, in which one of the main pillars is crop substitution and solutions to the illicit drugs problem. The PNIS (Programa Nacional Integral de Sustitución de Cultivos de Uso Ilícito) is included as point four in the peace accord. It aims to bring a “Solution to the Illicit Drugs Problem” and to end the illicit cultivation of coca, cannabis, and opium poppy. To this end, the government is signing accords at the community level as well as with individual families, in which the farmers commit to “voluntarily” eradicate their coca in exchange for immediate cash compensation during the first year and small project investments in the second year.\(^\text{28}\)

Our survey shows that the large majority of the population supports the substitution of illicit crops. It is the component in the peace accord that enjoys the highest level of support in Tumaco, and second highest in Mesetas, outranked only by the rural road network reform. Figure 31 shows that almost 70% of the population in Tumaco are highly supportive of the coca reform, while the number


\(^{26}\) Christopher Woody, ‘Colombia is about to end a 52-year war, but a bigger, tougher fight is looming’, Business Insider, 27 July 2016. Available at: www.businessinsider.com/colombia-farc-ceasefire-and-cocaine-production-2016-7?r=UK&IR=T&IR=T


for Mesetas is 55%. Only 19% in Tumaco and 23% in Mesetas score 3 or below (on the 6-point scale), indicating no or very low levels of support.

Figure 31: Level of support for coca reform, Tumaco and Mesetas

The high level of support for the substitution of illicit crops could indicate that a large part of the population sees the drug production as a major societal problem. While we do not offer a direct measure of this, we do ask people what they believe has been the main driver of FARC-EP’s engagement in the conflict. We suggest three different reasons: FARC-EP has primarily been defending the rights of poor peasants; FARC-EP has sought to turn Colombia into Venezuela; and FARC-EP has only been interested in profits from drug trafficking. Figure 32 shows that the characterization of FARC-EP’s motivation that most people agree with is the last one: that FARC-EP is only interested in profits from drug trafficking. This could suggest that most people see the coca production as a major problem that must be resolved in order to build durable peace. As such, it should be no surprise that the substitution of illicit crops is as popular and complex as it is.

Figure 32 shows that the first option, which characterizes the FARC-EP as being primarily motivated by grievances, is the one that the least respondents agree with. On a scale ranging from 1 to 6, in which 1 indicates that the individual does not agree with the statement, and 6 that the individual completely agrees, the average score for this provision in Mesetas and Tumaco is 2 and 2.3, respectively. Indeed, only 14% score 4 or above on this in Mesetas, and 23% do so in Tumaco.

---

It might be worth noting that these have not been presented as mutually exclusive alternatives, and it is possible to show a high level of support for more than one of these options.
The second characterization – that FARC-EP has tried to turn Colombia into a version of Venezuela’s Castrochavism regime – enjoys substantially higher levels of agreement. The average score in Mesetas is 3.2, and in Tumaco, 3.6. The last suggestion, that FARC-EP has only been motivated by profits from drug trafficking, is by far the most popular suggestion. The average score in Mesetas is 3.8, and in Tumaco, 4.5. The regional difference in the answers is substantial, and while more than half of the sample in Tumaco said that they completely agree, only 27% did so in Mesetas. This should not be that surprising, as Tumaco has been and remains the main seat of the coca production.

*Implementation of the substitution of illicit crops*

Figure 33 shows that while people are generally very positive towards the aim of the substitution of coca crops, they are far less satisfied with the implementation of the process. Most people believe that the process is off track. On a scale ranging from 1 (off track) to 6 (on track), the average person reports a score of 2.4 when asked about their perceptions on the implementation of the substitution process. Overall, people in Mesetas are somewhat more satisfied with the implementation process than people in Tumaco. While the average score in Mesetas is 2.6, the average score in Tumaco is 2.4, but this is not statistically significant. The most notable difference is that the population in Tumaco appear to be far more divided on this question than the population in Mesetas.
Greed, crop substitution and general level of support for the peace agreement

While most people tend to be positive towards the substitution process, we find no link between coca substitution process support and whether they voted for the peace agreement, and whether they are satisfied with the peace process. This could indicate that the substitution process is important to people, but that the progress has not lived up to – and indeed is not living up to – people’s expectations. It could also indicate that the coca substitution process is not what is presently shaping people’s perceptions of the peace process.

We do find that people who agree with the statement that FARC-EP has only been interested in profiting from drug trafficking are less likely to be satisfied with the peace process. In contrast, people who believe that FARC-EP has mainly wanted to defend the rights of poor peasants are more likely to be satisfied with the peace process. These two divergent findings remain robust also when controlling for the general level of trust.

Figure 3: Assessment of implementation of substitution of illicit crops
Transitional justice

While substantial skepticism towards the final accord remains, in particular with respect to allowing former human rights abusers from the FARC-EP to participate in the political system, the peace agreement is also praised for its ambitious approach to transitional justice and the provisions adopted to deal with the crimes and victims of the past.

An important reason why a majority of voters rejected the Colombian peace agreement in the 2016 plebiscite was a perception that the accord was too lenient in dealing with the human rights abusers from the conflict. For example, the original Cartagena Accord provided for reduced sentences for perpetrators who confessed their crimes – including grave human rights abuses – as well as “effective restrictions of liberty” instead of ordinary prison terms. In the revised version, the government tried to appease some of the criticism by clarifying how the restriction of liberty would be effectuated and by specifying the role of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace. While substantial skepticism towards the final accord remains, in particular with respect to allowing former human rights abusers from the FARC-EP to participate in the political system, the peace agreement is also praised for its ambitious approach to transitional justice and the provisions adopted to deal with the crimes and victims of the past.

Chapter 5 in the peace accord specifies the needs and roles of victims, and calls for the creation of a Truth, Coexistence and Non-Recurrence Commission; a Special Unit for the Search for Persons Deemed as Missing in the context of and due to the conflict; and a Special Jurisdiction for Peace. The agreement also provides for renewed efforts to implement the Victims’ Unit established in 2011 to register and provide reparations to victims of the conflict. These important are not necessarily well received in Colombia, as we have shown in this report. Indeed, ordinary Colombians may not even know about some or any of them. When asked (see Figure 34), the majority of our survey respondents reported that they had not heard about the central institutions set up within the peace agreement’s Comprehensive System for Truth, Justice, Reparations and Non-Recurrence to address the scars of conflict (a somewhat larger share of respondents in Mesetas know about them than in Tumaco).

The noteworthy exception to this picture is the Victims’ Unit. Approximately two-thirds of the respondents know about this institution (59% of respondents in Tumaco and 70% in Mesetas). This may not be surprising, given that this unit was already established in 2011, but it may nonetheless signal that Colombians acknowledge the state’s efforts to take victims’ considerations and needs into account.

Similarly, 68% of those who have experienced traumatic events during the conflict report that they know about the Victims’ Unit. While the number of people who know about the Victims’ Unit is high, our survey also shows that close to 30% of the respondents with traumatic experiences do not know that the institution exists and, presumably therefore, are not aware that it is mandated to provide reparations to victims of the conflict. Consequently, many people eligible for reparation under the Victims’ Law may not apply for or receive such reparations.

That people in rural areas such as Tumaco and Mesetas know about the Victims’ Unit sends strong signals to the government about expectations for compensation to victims of the conflict, creating considerable pressure to actually comply with the law’s promises. Another question in our survey supports this contention; when we asked whether people think that the reparations given to victims have been sufficient, a clear majority answered “no”.

Figure 34: Knowledge of transitional justice institutions, by municipality

- Truth, Coexistence & Non-Recurrence Commission
- Special Unit for the Search for Persons deemed as Missing
- The Special Jurisdiction for Peace
- Victims’ Unit

The chart shows the knowledge of transitional justice institutions in Mesetas and Tumaco, with the Victims’ Unit having the highest knowledge rate.
Figure 35: Evaluation of reparations to victims by municipality, sex, and victimization

![Bar chart showing evaluation of reparations by municipality, sex, and victimization.]

Figure 35 reveals that there are no particular differences in the share of respondents that evaluate the reparations as insufficient, whether we compare municipalities, sex, age, or victimization. Across the board, more or less 80% of the respondents are unsatisfied with the reparations given to the victims of the conflict. Registering as a victim and requesting reparations through the Victims’ Unit may lead to re-traumatizing for individual victims. Indeed, various forms of retelling stories of war trauma, by witnessing for a truth commission or in court, may cause additional suffering.

On a scale from 1 (not important) to 6 (very important), respondents in Tumaco are more inclined than those in Mesetas to respond that it is not important to uncover the truth about what happened during the conflict. Further, women consider uncovering the truth as less important than men, on average. Respondents who do not report any traumatic experiences also have a tendency to view truth telling as less important. Still, more than half of the respondents in both Tumaco (53%) and Mesetas (66%) have selected the two highest response categories, 5 or 6, on the scale.

We also asked respondents to choose between two contrasting statements on revealing the truth about what happened during the conflict, either selecting “Better not to open up old wounds by talking about what happened in the past conflict” or “Better to uncover what happened during the conflict” (Figure 36). A clear majority agree that it is better to uncover what happened, although a large minority, almost 30%, feel it may be better not to open old wounds. Interestingly, a relatively large share of the respondents report that they “do not know.” This is especially true in Tumaco.
(12%), among women (11%), and among those who do not report any traumatic experiences (16%).

Figure 36: Support for uncovering what happened during the conflict, by municipality, sex, and victimization

Figure 37: Support for uncovering what happened during the conflict, by actor responsible for violence

* Groups are based on who the respondent believes is the main responsible for the conflict.
Perceptions on these issues appear to depend on which actor the respondent believes was responsible for most of the violence during the conflict, see Figure 37. Among respondents who think the armed forces were most responsible, less than half (46%) support uncovering the truth. Among respondents that report that the ELN was most responsible, just above half (52%) support truth telling. When respondents believe the FARC-EP was responsible for most of the violence, they are more in favor of revealing the truth (65%); the same holds for those who report that the paramilitary (64%) or criminal (60%) groups, the national police (67%), or other actors (61%) were most responsible.

Regardless of the transitional justice provisions established in the peace agreement, we asked respondents what actions they believe should be taken towards former combatants who had committed human rights violations. Under the Special Jurisdiction for Peace, the peace agreement allows for perpetrators who fully cooperate with the system to receive alternative sanctions. Rather than jail sentences, they may be sentenced to community service in a given area for a number of years. Figure 38 shows that a clear majority of respondents, however, want all those responsible for human rights violations to be punished. We asked whether people thought those who had committed human rights violations should be punished, and more specifically about such perpetrators of human rights violators from the FARC-EP, the ELN, and the armed forces, separately. Across the board, over 60% of the respondents favor punishment.

When comparing the two municipalities in our study, people from Mesetas are more favorable towards punishment than people from Tumaco. Regardless of which group we asked about, around 80% of the respondents in Mesetas answer “Yes” to a question about “Punishment for all”; 79% for FARC-EP, 85% for ELN, and 82% for human rights violators from the armed forces. Almost none of the respondents answer “Do not know” or refuse to answer. People in Tumaco are more doubtful, as one quarter of them rejects punishment for all human rights violators (26% for FARC-EP, 27% for ELN, and 30% for the armed forces). In addition, approximately 10% do not know, and 3–4% refuse to answer.
There does not seem to be much difference in opinion about punishment for human rights violators between men and women, although women tend to be a bit more uncertain than men. The shares in favor of punishment for all are similar for both men and women, regardless of whether we asked about FARC-EP, ELN, or the armed forces.

Whether respondents experienced traumatic events during the conflict or not is not associated closely with any particular views on punishment for those who committed human rights violations. However, there is a small difference in opinion on human rights violators from the armed forces depending on victimization. People without any reported traumatic experiences are less supportive of punishment for all (28% answer “No”) compared to victimized respondents (24% answer “No”).

When it comes to views on punishment depending on which group one blames as being most responsible for conflict violence, a noteworthy finding is that those who blame the ELN have the lowest percentage of respondents answering “Yes” to punishment for all. Whereas 63%–79% of respondents agree there should be punishment for all human rights violators, regardless of which group the respondents consider most responsible for the violence, when the ELN is considered most to blame, only around 55% are in favor of punishment.31

---

31 Among the 84 respondents blaming the ELN for most of the violence, 56% say yes to punish all ELN violators, 55% want to punish all FARC violators, and 55% all human rights violators from the armed forces.
Institutional trust

Internal armed conflicts create distrust and suspicion among the citizens of the countries where they take place, and Colombia is no exception. Similarly, it is reasonable to assume that 50 years of continuous armed conflict has lowered individuals’ confidence in the governing institutions of Colombia.

Internal armed conflicts create distrust and suspicion among the citizens of the countries where they take place, and Colombia is no exception. The high levels of political and criminal violence, as well as the often unclear fault lines and the uncertainty around who the perpetrators of violence are, tend to cause low levels of interpersonal trust. Similarly, it is reasonable to assume that 50 years of continuous armed conflict has lowered individuals’ confidence in the governing institutions of Colombia. This applies no less to Tumaco and Mesetas; both municipalities have been severely affected by armed conflict. Indeed, the respondents in our survey do report low levels of social trust. Figure 39 shows the distribution of responses when we asked people how much they trust other people. 72% in Mesetas report that “You need to be very careful in dealing with other people”, compared to only 28% who think that “Most people can be trusted”. In Tumaco, the difference is even greater: 82% think that you cannot be too careful when dealing with others, while only 14% find most people trustworthy (5% do not know or refuse to answer). We also find that women are significantly less trustful than men, with only 16% of the female respondents supporting the statement that most people can be trusted compared to 23% of the men. There are no particular age differences, and, perhaps surprisingly, people who report to have experienced traumatic events from the armed conflict are not less trustful of others than people without such victimizing experiences.

Figure 39: General trust in other people, by location and sex

![Bar Chart: General trust in other people, by location and sex]

- Mesetas: 72% “You need to be very careful”, 28% “Most people can be trusted”.
- Tumaco: 82% “You cannot be too careful”, 14% “Most people can be trusted”.
- Women: 16% “Most people can be trusted”, Men: 23%.
- No particular age differences.
- Traumatic events experience does not affect trust levels.
We also asked more detailed questions about which groups the respondents trust or distrust, such as their family, neighborhood, and people from other religions, other socio-economic groups, or other regions of Colombia. Figure 40 shows that people in Tumaco are more skeptical than people in Mesetas. In particular, there are noteworthy differences in how much the respondents trust people within their own neighborhood or village. In Mesetas, the average score is 3.5 on a scale from 1 (do not trust at all) to 6 (trust a lot), while in Tumaco the average is 2.6, close to one point lower than in Mesetas. The highest trust levels are in one’s own family, but also within the family people in Tumaco are more skeptical than in Mesetas.32

Social, or interpersonal, trust is important for reconciliation in war-torn societies (Bakke et al., 2009).33 However, people’s confidence in the institutions that govern their country is also crucial for post-conflict stability and peace (Dyrstad et al., 2016).34 In postwar societies, trust in the state may be low or completely absent (De Juan and Pierskalla, 2016).35 In some cases, the state itself is responsible for human rights violations and civilian targeting; in other cases, the state has not been able to protect its civilians from violent attacks. These challenges are highly relevant for Colombia. The BASTA YA! Colombia: Memories of War and Dignity report from The National Centre of Historical Memory in 2013 documented 1,982 massacres

32 All differences between Tumaco and Mesetas are significant.
34 Karin Dyrstad; Helga Malmin Binningsbø; Kristin M. Bakke and Arne Henning Eide (2016) ‘Attitudes for Peace: Public opinion in three post-conflict countries’, presented at International Studies Association Annual Meeting, Atlanta, 16.03.16–19.03.16.
in Colombia between 1980 and 2012. The report blames paramilitary groups as responsible for 1,166 massacres, rebels as responsible for 343, and government security forces as responsible for 295. When survey respondents in Tumaco and Mesetas were asked to indicate which actor was most responsible for the violence during the conflict in Colombia, the largest share of them blamed the FARC-EP (26% in Tumaco and 44% in Mesetas). The other respondents selected, in decreasing order, paramilitary groups (18%); illegal armed groups (17%); other actors than those listed (13%); “Do not know” (7%); the ELN (6%); the army (5%); refusal (2%); and the national police (1%).

While only 5% of the respondents blame the state for being primarily responsible for the conflict, it is still plausible that the state is suffering from low levels of trust due to the conflict. Indeed, asking people how much they trusted 15 specific institutions, choosing a value on a scale between 1 (do not trust at all) to 6 (trust a lot), our survey reveals low levels of trust. Overall, the correlations between trust in these 15 institutions are relatively high, meaning that people who trust one institution are also more likely to trust any of the others. Combining nine public institutions into one “Trust in public institutions” index, we find that the average trust score is 2.3 on a 1 to 6 scale.

Similar to the findings on social trust, respondents in Mesetas report higher levels of trust in public institutions than respondents in Tumaco (Figure 41). There are no particular differences between

---

36 The English version of the 2013 report was published in 2016. See the National Center for Historical Memory (2016) BASTA YA! Colombia: Memories of War and Dignity, Bogotá: CNMH, page 42. Available at: www.centrodememoriahistorica.gov.co/basta-ya-menu-destacado-informes

37 Respondents who reported that “others” were to blame for the violence often suggested that “everyone” was responsible.

38 The index is calculated by adding the individual’s trust values for each of the nine public institutions and dividing the sum by nine.
sex, age groups, or victim categories, while it seems that those respondents who blame the FARC-EP or paramilitary groups for most of the violence during the conflict have significantly higher trust in the public institutions than those who blame the armed forces (Figure 42). Additionally, respondents who do not know or blame “others” for the violence are significantly less trustful of the public institutions. We also see a significant correlation between those who are satisfied with the peace agreement and those who show overall support for the public institutions.

When distinguishing between the specific institutions, the core finding is still that respondents in Tumaco report lower levels of trust than respondents in Mesetas. Women show somewhat weaker trust in the Congress than men, but overall there are no particular differences between the sexes. Confidence in the President, for example, is equally low for both men and women, with an average value of 2 (on a 1 to 6 scale). There are also no age groups that report significantly different levels of trust than other groups, regardless of which institution is examined.

People who experienced traumatic events during the conflict report rather unexpectedly higher levels of trust than those who did not report any traumatic conflict experiences. This relationship appears for many of the institutions asked about, including trust in the Congress or the President, as well as in local governing institutions, the armed forces or police, the mass media, the Catholic Church, or the United Nations.

**Figure 42: Trust in public institutions by which actor was most responsible for the violence**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Actor</th>
<th>Trust Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The armed forces</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National police</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paramilitary groups</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FARC-EP</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELN</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criminal groups</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not know</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refusal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Those who refuse to answer whether they experienced any traumatic events during the conflict quite often report similar trust levels as those who did, whereas the “do not knows” more often have diverging views. This may be a coincidence, but may also suggest that the refusal category includes people with painful memories from the past they are not willing to share.
As mentioned, people in Mesetas and Tumaco generally have low trust in Colombian institutions. The national army and police are the only exceptions, with higher support levels compared to the others. For the sample as a whole, the average trust level in the Armed Forces (combining the two institutions in one index) is 3.2 on a scale from “do not trust at all” (1) to “trust a lot” (6). Figure 43 shows that the level of trust is lower in Tumaco than Mesetas, but also in Tumaco more than a third (35%) of the respondents select trust levels of 4 and above. In Mesetas, 59% report similar levels. The boxes in Figure 44 display the middle 50% of the responses (between the 25th and 75th percentile) and the average (solid line) trust in Colombian State Armed Forces depending on which actors

Figure 43: Trust in the Colombian State Armed Forces by municipality

Figure 44: Trust in the Colombian State Armed Forces by which actor was most responsible for the violence

As mentioned, people in Mesetas and Tumaco generally have low trust in Colombian institutions. The national army and police are the only exceptions, with higher support levels compared to the others. For the sample as a whole, the average trust level in the Armed Forces (combining the two institutions in one index) is 3.2 on a scale from “do not trust at all” (1) to “trust a lot” (6). Figure 43 shows that the level of trust is lower in Tumaco than Mesetas, but also in Tumaco more than a third (35%) of the respondents select trust levels of 4 and above. In Mesetas, 59% report similar levels. The boxes in Figure 44 display the middle 50% of the responses (between the 25th and 75th percentile) and the average (solid line) trust in Colombian State Armed Forces depending on which actors

39 The index is calculated by adding the individual’s trust values for the national army and the police and dividing the sum by two.
are most blamed for violence during the conflict. Trust in the Colombian State Armed Forces is significantly higher among the respondents who place most responsibility for the conflict violence on the FARC-EP and paramilitary groups, compared to those who blame the army. Similar to public trust, those who blame “others” have lower confidence in the Colombian State Armed Forces.

Local governing institutions may play a larger role in people’s daily lives in remote areas such as Mesetas and Tumaco, and may be viewed as more trustworthy than the national institutions. In Figure 45 we show the level of trust in local governing institutions when people’s trust in the Mayor, Municipal Council and Juntas de Acción Comunal is combined into one index. The figure reveals, however, that these institutions are also viewed with skepticism among the survey respondents. The average trust in local government is 2.9 in Mesetas and 1.8 in Tumaco (on a 1 to 6 scale).

Further, respondents in Mesetas and Tumaco do not report much trust in the Judiciary (1.95), the mass media (2.7), nor in the United Nations (2.7). People’s trust in the Catholic Church is somewhat higher, with an average of 3.4 (the average trust in Christian churches is 2.6). Once again, respondents in Mesetas report higher trust levels, with an average of 4, compared to 3.1 in Tumaco. No other particular groups stand out as substantially more or less trustful of these four institutions.

The United Nations plays a major role in post-conflict Colombia. It was in charge of monitoring and verifying the ceasefire, as well as confirming the handover of weapons, and is now in charge of verifying the reintegration of FARC-EP members into civilian life and the guarantees of security for ex-combatants, social leaders and community in general. Despite the UN’s success in overseeing

---

40 The index is calculated by adding the individual’s trust values for each of the three local governing institutions and dividing the sum by three.

41 See Juana García ‘The UN’s new role in Colombia can strengthen the peace process during its most vulnerable phase’, LSE Blog, 14 July 2017. Available at: blogs.lse.ac.uk/latamcaribbean/2017/07/14/the-uns-new-role-in-colombia-can-strengthen-
FARC’s ceasefire and laydown of weapons, its involvement in the peace process has not resulted in high trust levels for the UN. The average level for all respondents is 2.6 on a one-to-six scale; for people living in Mesetas, it is 3, and for those in Tumaco it is 2.6.

**Trust relations**

Low levels of social trust, as well as low levels of trust towards both local and central governing institutions, clearly create obstacles for the peace process. However, this is not unique for Colombia, as many post-conflict societies struggle with low interpersonal trust and meager support for the state institutions. It is crucial that initiatives taken by the peace agreement to create reconciliation among Colombians are followed through, hopefully increasing the general levels of social trust in the country. Similarly, confidence in governing institutions depends on the performance of these institutions. Such trust has to be earned, and by committing to the promises in the peace agreement the Colombian government has a golden opportunity to increase its popularity among its citizens.
Conclusion

From our pilot surveys in Tumaco and Mesetas, we document that respondents remain deeply concerned about the pace and progress of the implementation of key components of the peace accord. This is an important signal that all actors – local, national, and international partners – must take to heart.

The larger effort to build peace after more than 50 years of conflict in Colombia is at a crossroads. As we write this, the peace negotiations between the government and the ELN have broken down; reports of disillusioned FARC ex-combatants leaving the reintegration zones appear to be increasing; and the level of violence in many locations throughout the country remains worryingly high. Indeed, as we conducted this survey in Tumaco, seven people were killed in a horrendous massacre. The question of when and how Colombia and Colombians will be able to realize the peace dividend remains unanswered.

Against this backdrop, it is not surprising that Colombians harbor significant doubts about the direction and progress of the peace accord. From our pilot surveys in Tumaco and Mesetas, we document that respondents remain deeply concerned about the pace and progress of the implementation of key components of the peace accord. This is true regardless of the extent to which people supported the peace accord in the first place, and it also holds if we break down respondents along a range of different socio-economic groups. This concern about the implementation of the accord also holds if we break it down by respondents’ view of the core drivers of the conflict. In short, respondents, almost regardless of background and outlook on the conflict, report that the way in which the peace accord is being implemented leaves much to be desired. This is an important signal that all actors – local, national, and international partners – must take to heart. As we have stressed throughout this report, for sustainable peace to be possible, people need to experience the tangible benefits of that peace.

We do not find, however, that people are disenchanted with the peace process. Quite the contrary: even though people overall report low levels of satisfaction with the peace process, when we ask about their support for specific provisions or probe further regarding their desire for peace, we find a deep reservoir of support. In short, people do want peace, and they appear to be highly supportive of most of the key pillars of the peace accord. This is cause for optimism. It hopefully indicates that people are willing to give the peace process the benefit of the doubt for now. At some point, however, implementation has to, at least to some extent, live up to people’s overall expectations. This means that policy makers need both to invest in these pillars of peace, and to be diligent in informing people about the process itself. Policy makers should be explicit
about what is being done and how it is being done, and they should inform people of the challenges and pitfalls that the process faces, as well as the promises of peace it delivers. This is true for government officials, but also for FARC leaders.

Indeed, we find that FARC faces particular challenges as it reinvents itself and prepares to enter life as a political party and social movement. Overall, respondents are wary of this new role. The FARC needs to establish that they are and will be a trustworthy custodian of peace, and a constructive partner in Colombia’s post-conflict recovery. Of course, the ELN will undoubtedly watch this process with particular interest.

This report has summarized findings on people’s perceptions and attitudes towards the peace process. We believe the report has demonstrated the immense utility of having a scientific tool to systematically and rigorously track people’s perceptions of and experience with the peace process. Ideally, this needs to be done often and at a sufficient level of representation at the local level to ensure that all voices are being heard and that no one is left behind. Only then will we be able to understand the processes and events that shape people’s attitudes to peace. In the next iteration of this project, we hope to be able to combine such data with fine-grained information about the actual objective implementation of peace accord.
Perceptions of and Experience with the Peace Process in Colombia

The larger effort to build peace after more than 50 years of conflict in Colombia is at a crossroads. The question of when and how Colombia and Colombians will be able to realize the peace dividend remains unanswered. Whether or not the deal will foster an enduring peace depends strongly on people’s perceptions of and experience with this peace process.

This report summarizes findings from a pilot study that examines support for individual provisions of the agreement and attitudes towards their implementation among a representative sample of respondents in the municipalities of Tumaco and Mesetas (located at the Departments of Nariño and Meta, respectively). Throughout, our survey highlights how important it is that people experience the tangible benefits of peace. Only then will the peace process receive the popular support it needs to be sustainable. We find that while respondents report high levels of support for many of the key pillars of the peace accord, the majority remain deeply concerned about the pace and progress of the implementation of these key components. This is an important signal that all actors – local, national, and international partners – must take to heart.