War-Affected Communities in Colombia: Survey Report

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Abstract

This report describes the initial findings of a survey of 1,517 respondents in a sample of 63 Colombian communities in conflict areas. The communities, which are located in 20 municipalities, experienced some form of non-state armed group presence at some point between the 1960s and 2012. The survey collected data on individuals' and communities' attributes and their experiences during conflict as well as after the signing of the peace agreement between the Colombian government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC). Specifically, the survey covers individuals' demographics, experiences of violence during the war, and current security conditions, socioeconomic indicators, political behavior, and social relations. It also explores state presence and public goods provision in their communities as well as sources and perceptions of local authority. In this report, we provide a brief overview of the context of the Colombian armed conflict, our survey design, and the main findings.

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Contents

Acknowledgments

1 Project Overview

The Colombian conflict has been a protracted, irregular civil war between the Colombian state, left-wing insurgent groups (most notably, the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia, FARC), and right-wing paramilitaries. For over five decades, individuals and communities have been impacted not only by violence but also by profound transformations brought up by the presence of armed organizations, the responses of state actors, and the ways in which different sectors of the population reacted to the dynamics of war.

In 2016, the Colombian state and the primary insurgent group of the conflict, FARC, negotiated a peace agreement that resulted in the disarmament and demobilization of FARC's members. Though rejected in a popular plebiscite in October of the same year, wherein 50.2% of voters voted against a negotiated end to the conflict, the peace agreement has moved forward (Registraduría Nacional del Estado Civil 2016). The wide-reaching and comprehensive peace agreement is one of the most extensive peace agreements authored worldwide and includes provisions to achieve rural reform, robust democratic political participation, the end of the violent conflict between FARC and the Colombian state, curbing trafficking of illicit drugs and their influence on Colombian society, and appeals for justice and reparations for victims of the conflict (Bell et al. 2021). Now, almost 6 years out from the signing of the Havana Accords, progress toward the stated benchmarks of the agreement has been modest (Isacson 2021). Violence is extremely high in certain regions of the country; attacks against civic leaders have risen to unprecedented levels, with more than seven hundred assassinations since the signing of the agreement (Indepaz 2019). Additionally, another guerrilla group, the National Liberation Army (ELN) as well as several criminal groups continue to operate in various regions of the country. Nonetheless, violence has decreased in most regions of the country and the number of new reported victims of conflict-related violence has diminished in recent years (Red Nacional de Información 2022).

This survey is part of a larger project that seeks to trace the effects of local wartime dynamics on the social and political life of individuals and communities in the post-conflict stage. Recognizing that war is not only a shock of violence but, rather, a complex web of changes, this project investigates how distinct experiences of war at the local level impacts individual behavior and social and political dynamics in the post-conflict period. In particular, the project focuses on how patterns of governance in conflict zones can influence the social and political life of individuals and communities in the wake of war.

The survey is part of the first longitudinal study of individuals and communities both during and after civil war. It focuses on a random sample of around 80 communities that lived

under the sustained presence of guerrillas, paramilitaries, or both at any point throughout the war. The first wave of data collection took place in 2012, when Arjona (2014, 2016) collected detailed evidence on the presence and activities of armed groups throughout the war, the responses of local communities, and the ensuing forms of order and governance that functioned in conflict zones. The second wave of fieldwork consisted of a survey that Arjona conducted in 2016, a few months before the demobilization of FARC. This survey, conducted in the fall of 2021 as part of a collaborative project by Arjona and Moore, is the third stage of data collection and seeks to gather information on how individuals and communities have navigated the transition after the demobilization of FARC.

The survey is part of the Drugs and (Dis)Order project, which focuses on war-to-peace transitions in conflicts with illicit economies. One of our goals is to investigate the distinct experiences of communities with coca crops, drug trafficking, or both, and how these illicit economies can influence communities' trajectories after the signing of the peace agreement.

Finally, the survey aims to provide detailed evidence that can help researchers and policy makers to better understand the unique challenges and opportunities that distinct types of conflict zones face. Considering this variation is essential as Colombia continues to navigate the difficult path toward peace and reconciliation.

1.1   Methodology

The study aimed to collect data on conflict zones—that is, territories that have endured the ongoing presence of non-state armed groups. For this reason, the goal was to select a representative sample of communities where at least one non-state armed group had been present for at least six months at any given point from the 1970s to 2012.

Given that there are no records of armed group presence—only of armed group violence—the universe of cases included, initially, all the municipalities of the country. Municipalities were only excluded when, based on both the absence of primary records and conversations with contacts in the field, there was no indication of presence of armed groups at any point since the 1970s. The sampling proceeded in three stages. First, the Colombian territory was stratified in three regions, excluding 6 of 33 Colombian departments or provinces.[1] Each region had the same number of municipalities. In order to ensure variation along important dimensions, a random sample of 22 municipalities was then selected, stratified by

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[1]The departments of the Amazonian region (Vichada, Guainía, Guaviare, Vaupés, and Amazonas) as well the island groups (San Andres, Providencia, and Catalina) were excluded on the basis that the populations in these territories are sparse and conflict had only recently arrived there, thus sustained armed group presence has historically been limited.

state presence, ethnic composition (as measured by the population share of Afro-Colombians or Indigenous people in the municipality), and population distribution in urban and rural settlements. Data on these stratification variables comes from official Colombian sources.

In the second stage, the presence of armed groups was corroborated in each selected municipality on the basis of primary and secondary sources as well as interviews with experts and field contacts. Only the municipalities where at least one armed group had been present in the past for at least 6 continuous months were included in the sample. If all field contacts failed to confirm the sustained presence of armed groups in the municipality, the municipality was replaced with another randomly selected from the eligible municipality list.

In the third stage and once the list of municipalities was finalized, localities (i.e. villages, hamlets, or neighborhoods) were chosen on the basis of their wartime experiences. A short survey with individuals knowledgeable about the municipality gathered evidence on the forms of social order the operated in each community over time based on vignettes.[2] Participants were asked to give their responses related to as many communities that they had reasonable expertise about. A sample of between 2 and 4 localities per municipality was thus selected, attempting to preserve the distribution of social order scores among all surveyed localities. The *cabecera* of each municipality (the equivalent of a county, municipal, or district seat in other contexts) was included in the selection of communities in each municipality for this wave of fieldwork.

The final sample of 64 sub-municipal communities are located in 20 municipalities covering 13 different departments.[3] The following map shows the geographic distribution of the sampled municipalities and their respective departments, as well as a table of each department-municipality pair. The territories highlighted in yellow are the departments included in the sample.

Turning to our enumeration strategy, the survey was carried out in a sample of households in urban and rural areas of the selected municipalities. The sampling strategy was different in urban and rural zones based on available territorial information. In urban zones, survey enumerators received grid level map information in the selected municipal section. Each municipal section was divided into different blocks. Within each block, enumerators were required to complete a maximum of 8 surveys, 2 on each side of each block. Upon arrival to each selected housing development, the household that answered the door was selected as

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[2]See Arjona 2016, Appendix I and II for more information on this survey and subsequent coding processes.

[3]There are less communities than in original fieldwork waves as we excluded all municipalities from the first round of fieldwork as well as communities where current security conditions made it impossible or dangerous to complete the survey.

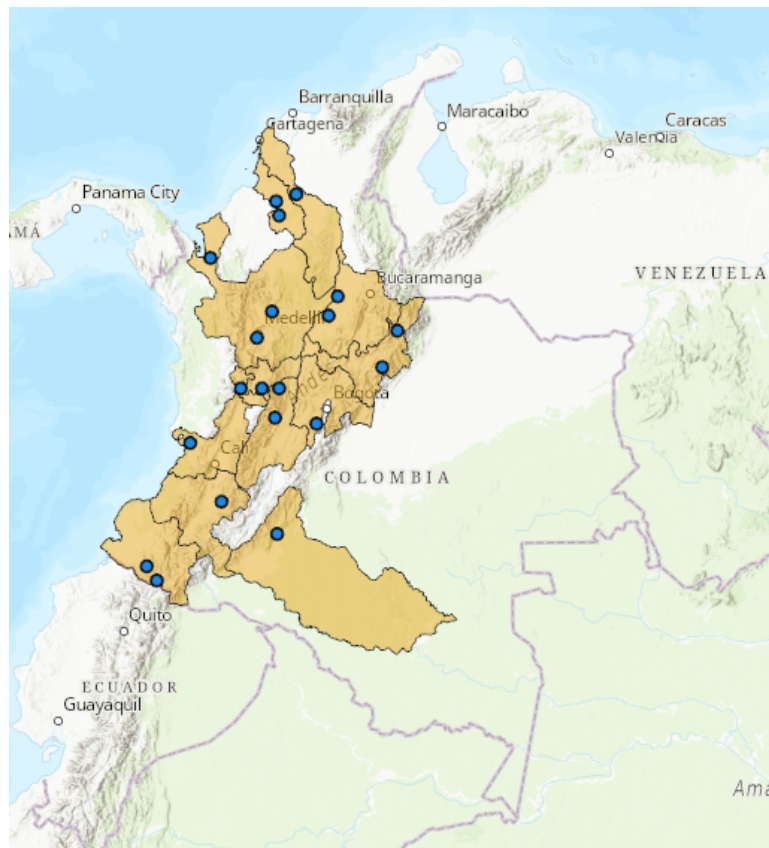Figure 1: Sampled Municipalities: Treatment Group

Table 1: Municipalities and Departments in the Sample

Department	Municipality
Antioquia	Apartadó
Antioquia	Caroline del Principe
Antioquia	Itagüí
Bolívar	Magangué
Boyacá	Aquitania
Boyacá	La Uvita
Caldas	Manizales
Caquetá	Puerto Rico
Cauca	Silvia
Cundinamarca	Pasca
Nariño	Cumbal
Nariño	Ricaurte
Risaralda	Santuario
Santander	Barrancabermeja
Santander	Puerto Parra
Sucre	Caimito
Sucre	El Roble
Tolima	Ibagué
Tolima	Casabianca
Valle del Cauca	Buenaventura

the interviewed household.

In rural zones, enumerators conducted a sweep of the residences in each cardinal direction from a point of reference. The point of reference might be a police station, a school, or an intersection of roadways. During this sweep, enumerators visited households to complete the requisite number of surveys for each population settlement.

In both urban and rural areas, the person selected to complete the survey in each household was the person 25 or older[4] with the closest birthday among those present in the home at the time. Enumerators were instructed to alternate between men and women respondents from household to household to achieve parity between the percentage of women and men respondents.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, survey enumeration was delayed multiple times from 2019 to 2021. However, due to limited levels of community transmission of the novel Coronavirus in Colombia, existing presence of local survey enumerators employed by the survey firm, and the development of safe survey fielding methods, the survey firm conducted the survey between November and December of 2021.

As of 2021, we have detailed community-level data regarding the types of armed group governance that these localities experienced over time as well as of many other community dynamics during the war. We also have detailed data on the attributes of individuals and communities right before the FARC demobilized as well as five years after the signing of the peace agreement. Following these communities both during and after the presence of armed groups will allow us to trace the impact of various wartime experiences on individuals, families, communities, and local governments.

1.2   The Survey Instrument

We surveyed individuals on the following domains of their lives as well as on aspects of their community and municipality:

- Demographics

- Experiences of violence during the war

- Security conditions and basic rights after the peace agreement

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[4]Since we are interested in historical trends regarding the conflict as well as in people's views on the peace agreement, we required that all survey respondents were at least 16 years old in 2016, when the peace agreement was signed.

- Current socioeconomic situation

- Service provision

- Political behavior and state-society relations

- Social relations

- Local power and authority

- Reconciliation and Peace

This report presents some of the survey results on each of these domains of individual and collective life in communities affected by the armed conflict.

2 Survey Results

2.1 Demographics

Among the 1,517 respondents, 49.8% are women (n=756), 50.1% are men (n=760), and 1 respondent (0.06% of the sample) identified as another, unspecified gender identity.

Given that we are interested in historical trends regarding the conflict as well as in people's views on the peace agreement, we required that all survey respondents be 25 or older. The age distribution among our respondents is shown in the following graph (Figure 2):

About 65% of respondents stated they have no racial or ethnic identity. About 13% are Afro-Colombian, 8% are indigenous, 2% are Palenquero(a), Raizal or Romani, and 3% identify as another race or ethnic heritage. Around 9% of the total sample did not respond to this question at all or were unsure of how to classify their race or ethnicity.

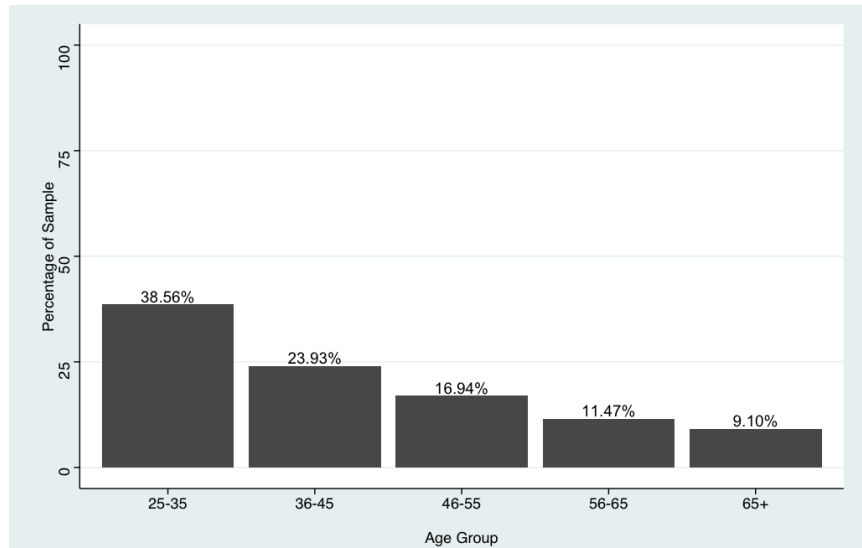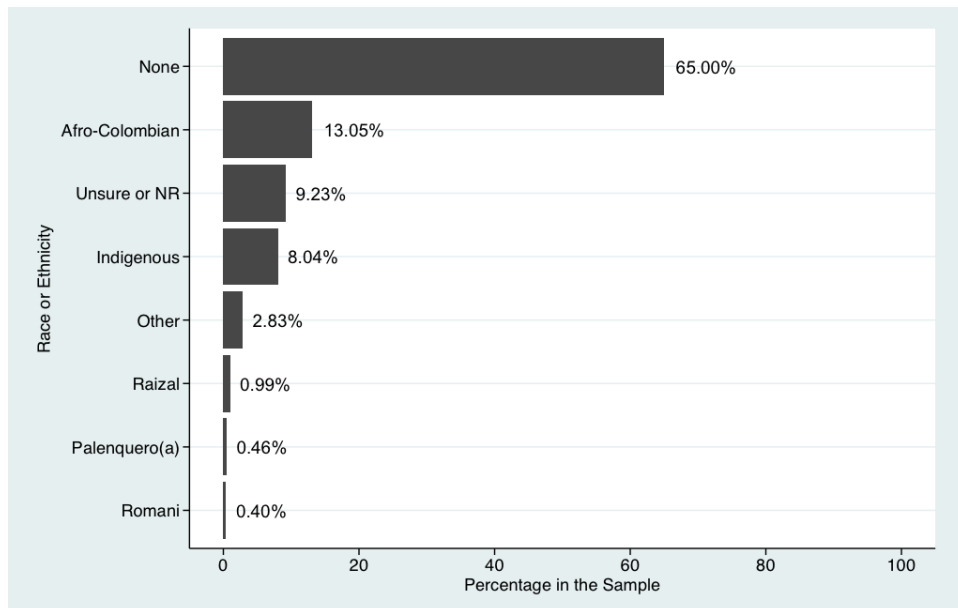Figure 2: Distribution of the Sample Across Age Cohorts

Figure 3: Race or Ethnic Heritage of Respondents

Most respondents profess a Christian religion, with 67% reporting being Catholic and 16% professing some other denomination of Christianity. Around 12% of respondents do not profess any religion, while the remainder of the sample is composed of individuals professing Judaism, some other, unspecified religion, or not providing a response.

Over a majority of the respondents in the sample (55%) responded that there are no children in the care of the household. Among those that do have children, the median number of minor children in the care of the household is 2. Almost 5% of respondents said that at least one of their children were deceased, among whom 33% (n=24) reported that their child or children died at the cause of the armed conflict.

The respondents in the survey have a wide distribution of educational experiences, as shown in Figure 4 below. Among respondents who provided information on their education level (n=1,499), 8% percent of had no formal schooling, 32% completed or began primary education, 45% completed or began secondary school, and 15% had some form of post-secondary education. In cases where respondents had left school (n=824), 71% indicated that they left their studies due to lack of resources. Other stated reasons for leaving school were distance from school (7%), pregnancy (4%), lack of educational institutions (6%), care of siblings or other family (4%), the armed conflict (3%), or some other reason not listed previously (4%).

Figure 4: Respondent's Level of Education
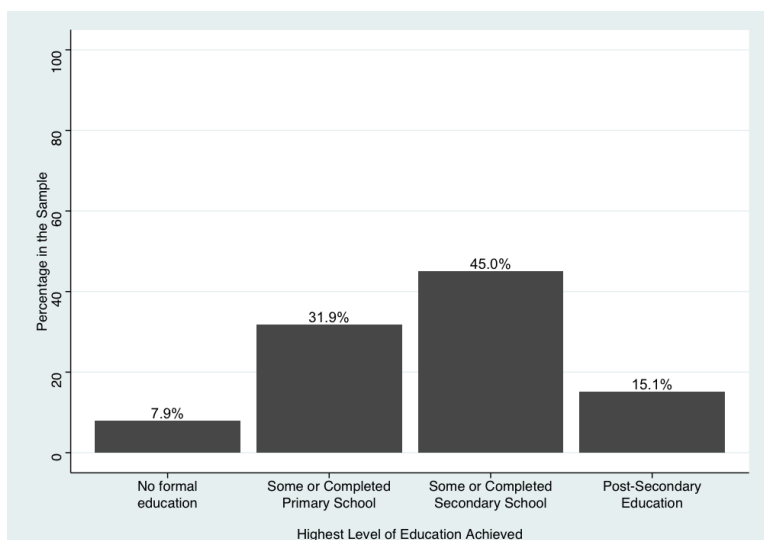
Regarding respondents' occupational status over the last 30 days (Figure 5), 55% reported that they were employed, 24% stated that they were engaged in household duties or homemaking, 11% stated that they were unemployed or retired, and 6% stated that they were

engaged in studies, though some of them are also working. The remainder of respondents stated that they were engaged in some other activity, were unsure, or did not respond.

Figure 5: Stated Occupation Over the Last 30 Days
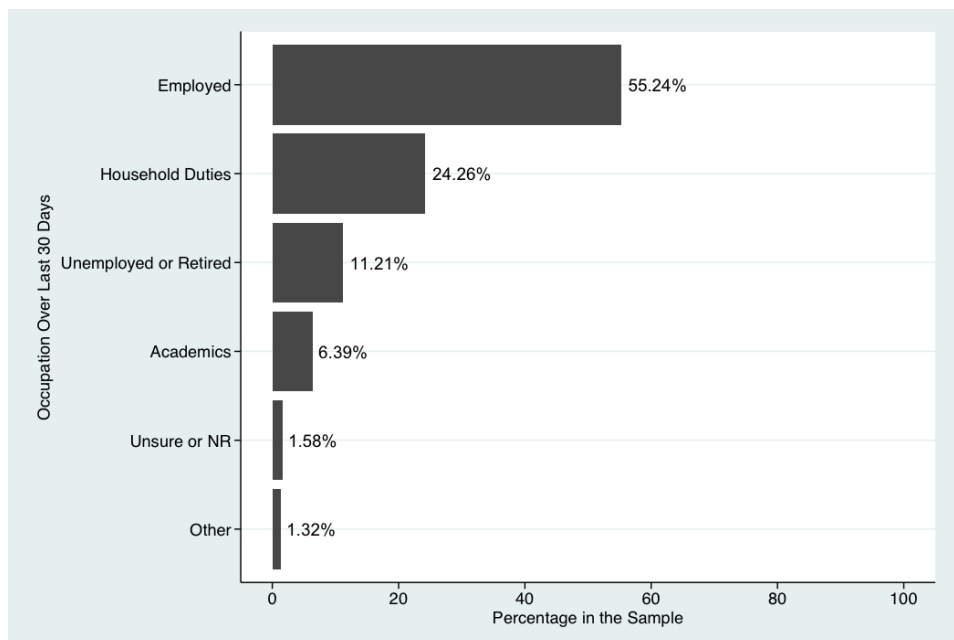
2.2 Experiences of Violence During the War

We asked participants whether they or someone in their immediate family had been victim of a violent event in the context of the armed conflict since the 1970s. Of the total sample, 17% responded that this was the case, and 21% were unsure or did not respond. The remainder responded that they or someone in their immediate family were not victims of conflict-related violence. There is, however, tremendous variation across communities: while in some places less than 2% of respondents reported victimization, in others more than 94% of participants did so. We further asked respondents to identify which types of violent events they had been exposed to. Table 2 shows how the percentage of respondents that reported that they or someone in their immediate family had been victim of each of the listed violent acts.

Though we do not go into further detail on this data here, we also collected information as to who was the direct victim of each type of violence (i.e. the relationship of the victim to the respondent), the year in which the violent event occurred, and the group or entity responsible for the violence. There is wide variation in the types of violent events that afflicted communities as well as in the specific time periods when violence occurred.

Table 2: Conflict Related Violence: Victimization Among Respondents

| Type of Violence	Percentage
Forced Displacement	9.8%
Dispossession of Land or Belongings	5.3%
Threats	5.7%
Homicide, Massacre, or Forced Disappearance	4.8%
Kidnapping or Torture	0.6%
Sexual Violence	0.5%
Recruitment of Minors	0.3%
Mines	0.2%

2.3 Security Conditions and Basic Rights After the Peace Agreement

We asked respondents to rate how much their community has worsened or improved across different dimensions since the signing of the peace accords. Respondents gave an answer from 1 to 6, with 1 signifying that the dimension of life had worsened a lot and 6 meaning it has improved a lot. We collected responses related to security, quality of life, work and business opportunities, access to state services, freedom of expression, political freedom, and opportunities to migrate. The average responses across each dimension ranged from 3.32 to 3.59, meaning that there were no dimensions that respondents indicated worsened particularly horribly nor did they improve particularly dramatically (Figure 6). The assessment that respondents gave of each of the post-peace agreement conditions is not significantly different across individuals that stated that they or someone in their immediate family is the victim of conflict violence versus those who did not state so, however there are significant differences among respondents in rural municipalities relative to those in urban municipalities across all dimensions.[5]

In terms of more nuanced questions related to peoples' perceived basic rights and liberties in their community, the answers are more hopeful. Survey participants were asked to rate their degree of freedom while living under the presence of an armed actor as well as after the signing of the peace agreement on a scale from 1 to 6, where 1 is not free at all and 6 is absolutely free. They were asked about how free they felt to vote for their preferred candidate in elections; run for office; practice their religion; protest peacefully; move within

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[5]Urban localities are those located in cities with a population greater than 100,000 inhabitants. Therefore, all communities selected in the municipalities of Apartadó, Magangué, Itagüí, Manizales, Barrancabermeja, Buenaventura, and Ibagué are considered the sample's urban localities.

Figure 6: Degree of Improvement in Various Life Dimensions Post-Peace Agreement
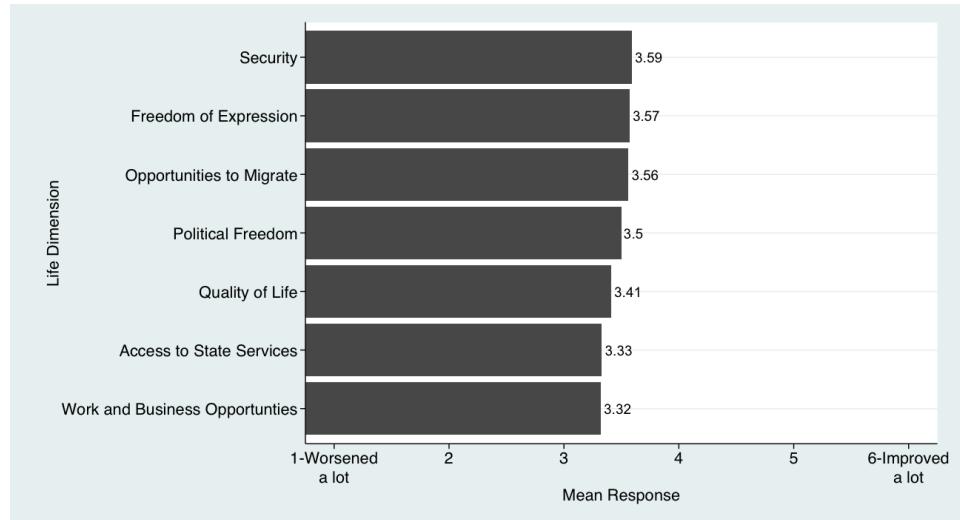
and outside their community; express their views; create a civic or community organization; join a political party; and choose a romantic partner. As Figure 7 shows, the mean level of perceived freedom in each of the listed activities was significantly lower in periods of armed group presence than the mean responses associated with the current situation.

When asked about whether or not respondents feel safe in their community, 24% stated that they felt very safe, 40% stated that they felt a little bit safe, 21% feel a little unsafe, and 6% feel very unsafe, while 6% were unsure of how they felt related to the safety of their community and 3% did not respond. Rural respondents rated their perceived security as higher relative to urban respondents. Only among those that provided a safety rating, 28% of rural respondents stated that they feel their community is very safe, versus 23% of urban respondents. Nearly 9% of urban respondents feel their community is very unsafe, as compared to 6% of rural respondents. The distribution between urban and rural respondents is otherwise very similar regarding feelings of safety in their communities (see Figure 8).

An important facet of the Colombian armed conflict has been the threat of violence toward social leaders. Almost 20% of respondents stated that there had been threats, attacks, or assassinations of social leaders in their community. These types of violence against social leaders were reported in 46 of the 63 communities in the sample, in 19 of the 20 municipalities. A considerable 29% of respondents were unsure if these transgressions were committed against their communities' social leaders, 8% did not respond to the question. With regard to the rural/urban divide, among those who provided a response, a slightly higher percentage of urban respondents stated that social leaders had been threatened or killed in their
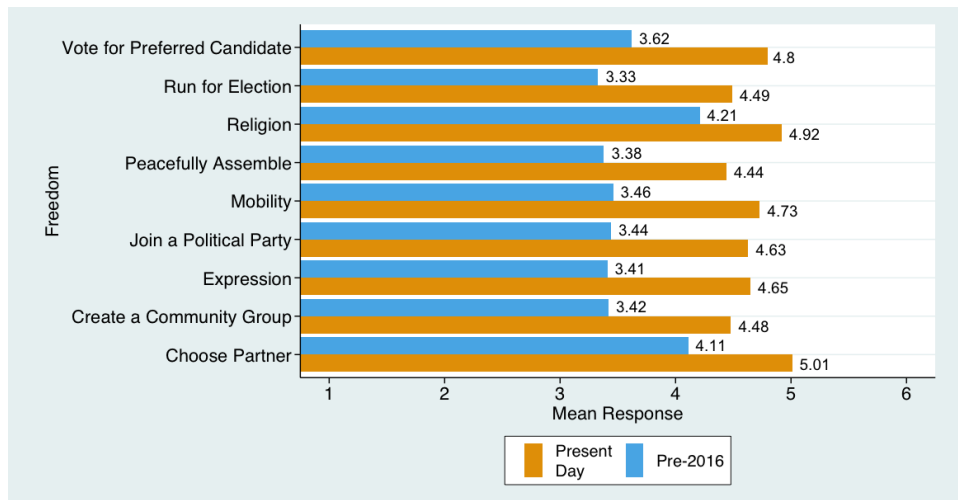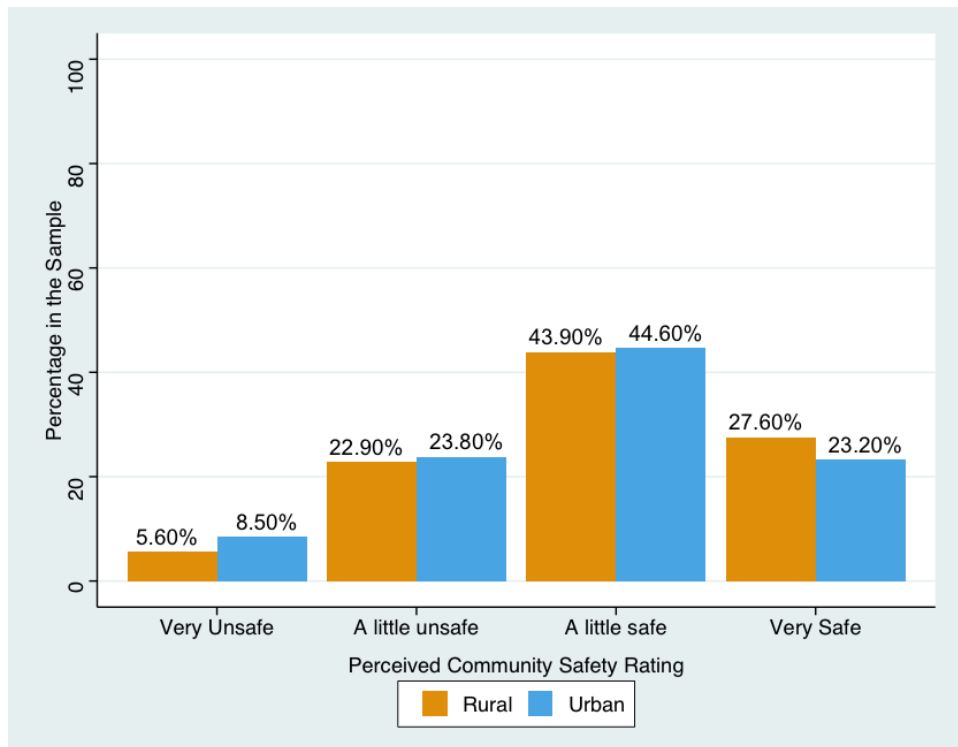
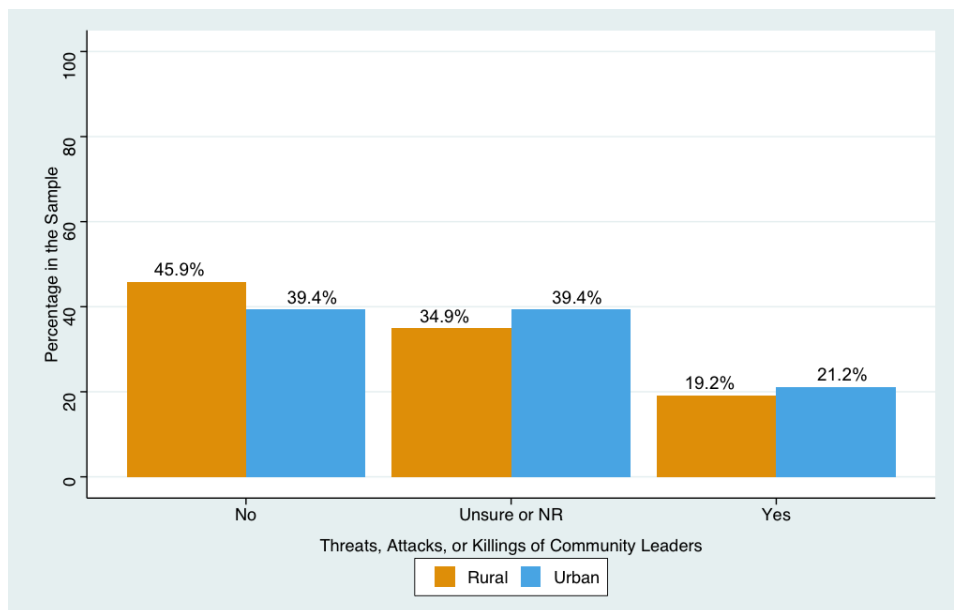Figure 7: Mean Freedom over Time

Figure 8: Reported Feelings of Safety in Respondent Communities

communities relative to urban respondents (see Figure 9).

Figure 9: Reported Threats, Attacks, or Killings of Social Leaders in Respondent Communities

2.4 Current Socioeconomic Situation

The survey included several questions about respondents' current socioeconomic situation. To measure relative economic class status, we asked respondents about their self-perceived socioeconomic status compared to the rest of their community (Figure 10). Respondents were asked where they would place themselves if the community was divided into rich, upper middle class, lower middle class, and poor. In response, 1% stated they consider themselves rich, 7% consider themselves upper middle class, 48% consider themselves lower middle class, and 41% consider themselves poor. The remaining 4% did not respond.

To measure household scarcity and poverty levels, respondents were asked to indicate whether the household income was not enough, just enough, or more than enough to cover minimum expenses (Figure 11). About 31% indicated that the household income was not enough to cover the minimum expenses, 61% indicated that they were enough to meet expenses, and 8% indicated that the income was more than enough to cover minimum expenses.

As an additional measure of economic scarcity, respondents were asked if there was any point in time during the last 12 months in which the household went without food due to
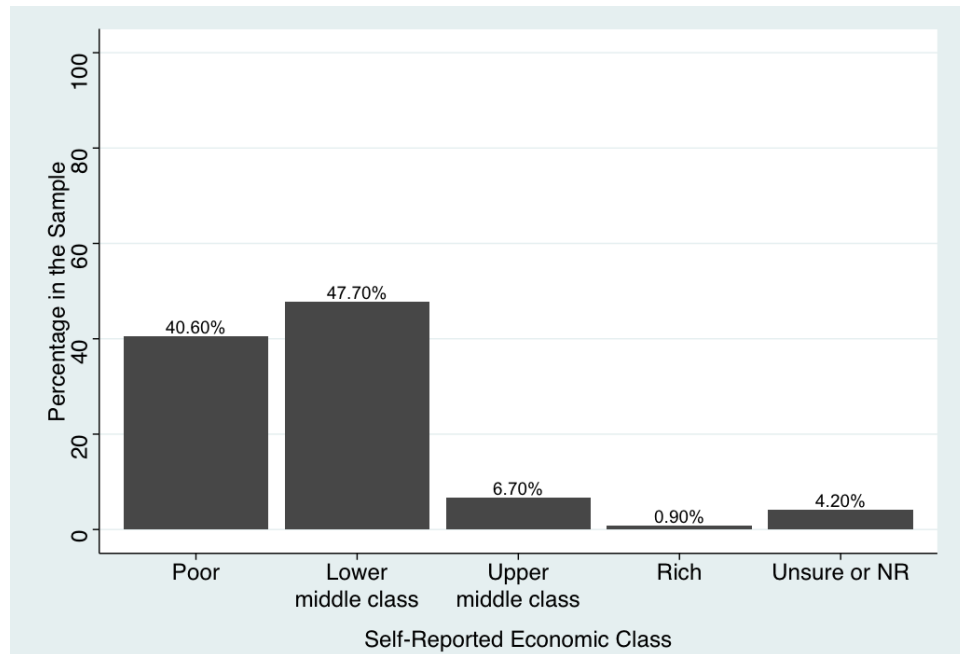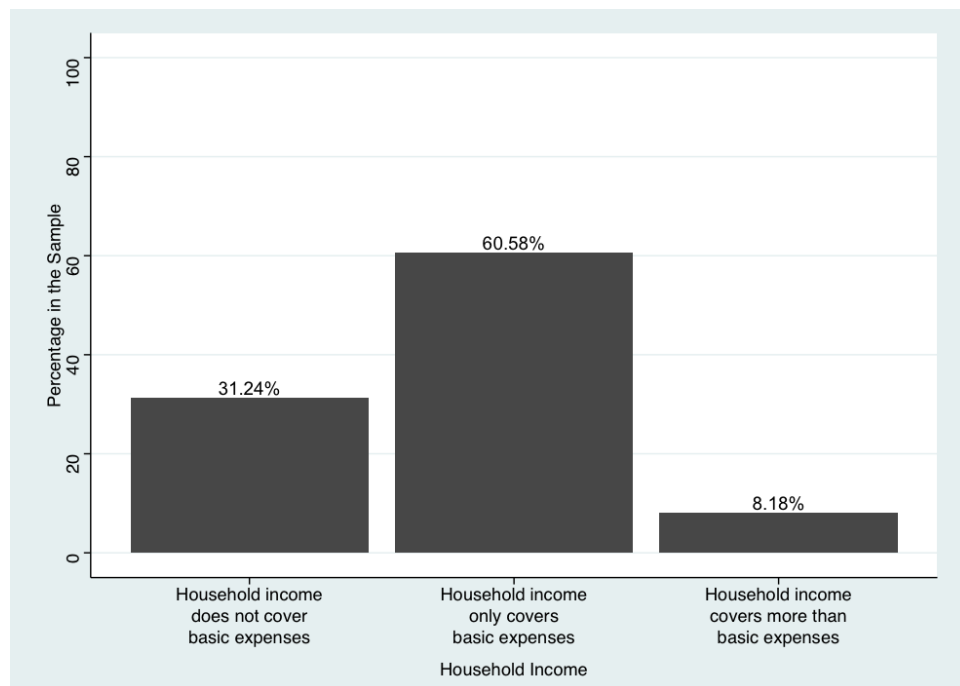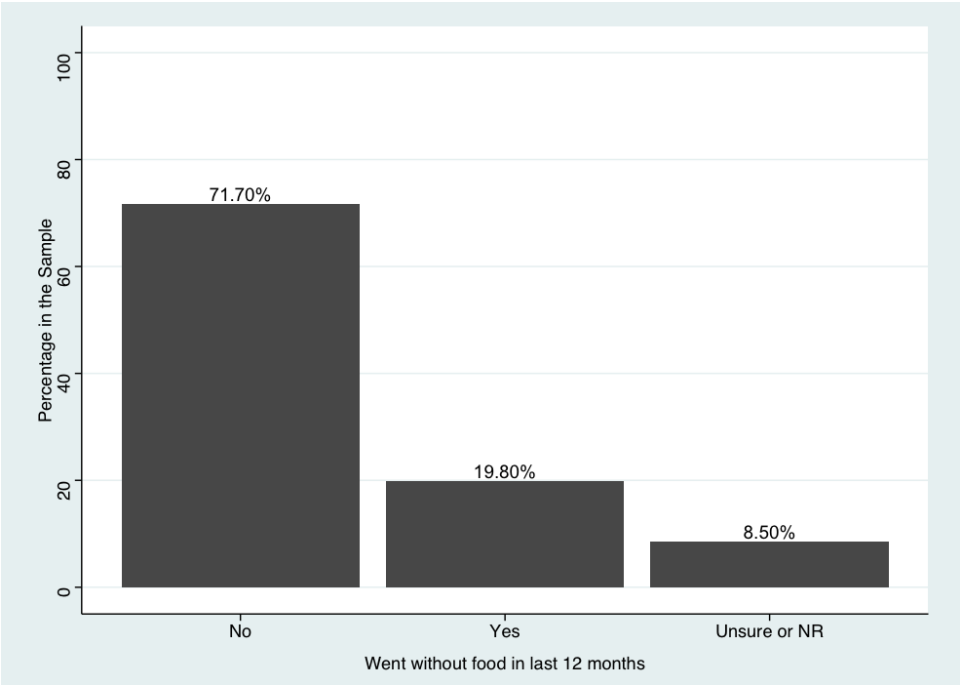
16

Figure 10: Self-Reported Economic Status

Figure 11: Self-Reported Economic Status

lack of money or other resources (Figure 12). Almost 20% of all respondents indicated that
this did occur in the last 12 months.

Figure 12: Economic Scarcity and Poverty

The survey also collected data on state subsidies. Over 41% of respondents stated that
the household received support from at least one governmental subsidy in the last year.
Among those that have received a subsidy (n=625), 1% stated that they are participants in
the government's national coca crop substitution program.

To measure wealth in a further nuanced way, rather than merely asking for income or
estimated monetary holdings, we asked respondents to indicate whether or not the household
has the following belongings or services: radio, television, bicycle, motorcycle, car, refrigera-
tor or freezer, washer, tractor, or internet service (or cellular data). Table 3 below shows the
percentages of respondents that stated that their household owned, or at least had access
to, some of these items.

When asked about land or property ownership, 17% of respondents stated that they or
someone in the household is currently the owner of rural property. Among those that stated
that they or someone in the household is the owner of rural property (n=262), 66% stated
that they have a public title or deed formalizing their ownership, 20% stated that they do not
have a title or deed to formalize their ownership, and 11% were unsure if they had possession

Table 3: Percentage of Respondents with Access to Various Household Items

Item	Percentage
Television	85.4%
Refrigerator	62.0%
Radio	57.4%
Washing Machine	45.2%
Motorcycle or Car	40.0%
Internet Service (including cellular data)	25.8%
None of these	4.2%

of the title or deed. The remaining 2% did not respond regarding the question of a public title or deed.

We also asked how many smartphones and computers people in the household own to further measure connectivity and internet access. While most respondents (77%) reported that there was at least 1 smart phone in the home, 70% stated that there were no computers or tablets in the household. The remaining 30% reported that there was at least one computer or tablet. Figure 13 shows the distribution of the quantity of smartphones and computers in respondents' households.

Figure 13: Quantity of Smartphones and Computers among Members of the Household
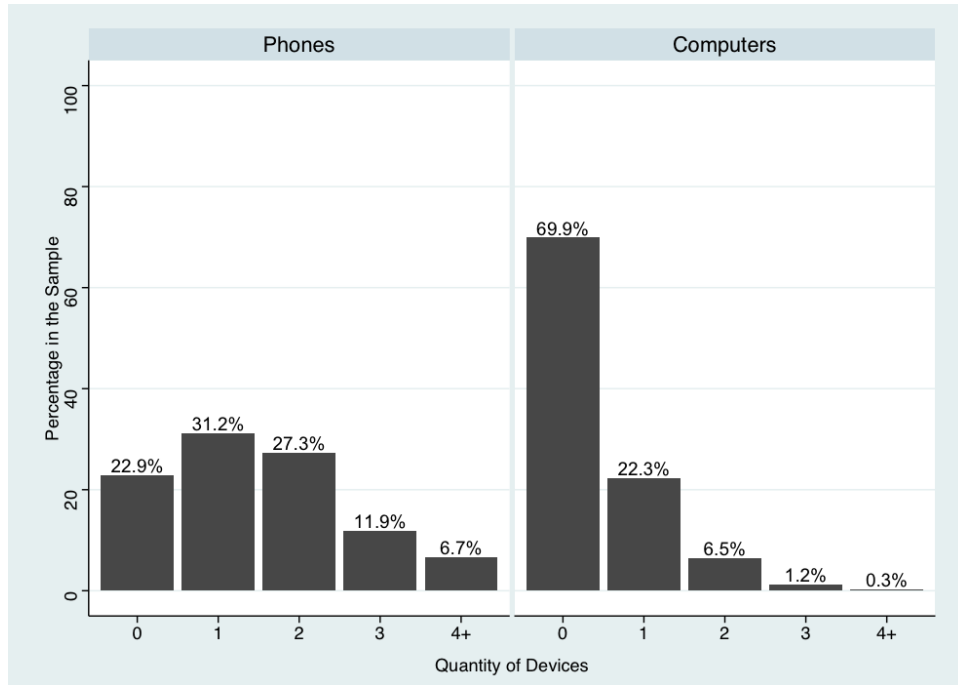
Table 4: Household Access to Basic Services

Service	Access	*Public*	*Private*	*Communal*
Drinking Water	62.8%	72.0%	18.7 %	9.3%
Sewerage	52.3%	83.4%	9.9%	6.7%
Wastewater Treatment	24.1%	65.8%	18.6%	15.7%
Aqueduct	66.4%	73.4%	11.7%	14.9%
Electricity	91.4%	68.6%	25.0%	6.4%
Gas	50.9%	47.6%	48.0%	4.4%
Television	58.7%	52.2%	43.8%	4.0%
Trash Collection	37.4%	73.0%	13.0%	14.1%

2.5   Service Provision

The survey also collected information on participants' access to different kinds of services, as well as their assessment of the quality of those services. We first asked respondents about their household's access to various public, private, or communal services. The following table shows percentages of how many respondents stated that they have access to the following services: drinking water, sewerage, wastewater treatment, aqueduct, electricity, gas, television, and trash collection. Furthermore, we show the percentage breakdown of whether households rely on the services from public, private, or communal providers.[6]

Household access to public services is further dependent on geographic location. Although a municipality might have a health clinic in the municipal seat, some communities are 2-3 hours away from the town center and transportation may only run on certain days of the week. So, we asked about how long in minutes it would take someone to arrive to various services or public functionaries, using whatever mode of transport would be typical for them. To arrive to the closest health clinic, the median time is 20 minutes. The median time to arrive to the police station is 30 minutes. The median time to arrive to the closest primary school is 10 minutes, and to the closest secondary or middle school the median time is 10 minutes. The median response to arrive to the closest court is 10 minutes. The median time required to arrive to the mayoral office is 30 minutes. The differences in mean time between individuals living in rural municipalities versus in urban municipalities was significant with relation to travel time to health clinics, police stations, primary schools, secondary schools, and courts. Despite the median time being relatively constant across each place, there was

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[6]Percentages regarding whether the service is public, private, or communal reflect only those who provided a response to this question. Anyone who responded unsure or did not answer is omitted from calculating the percentages.

wide berth in the answers provided.

Regarding respondents' satisfaction with public services, we asked them to rate state-provided health services on a scale from 1 to 6, where 1 is completely unsatisfied and 6 is completely satisfied. The mean response is 2.86, meaning that people are largely dissatisfied with the health services they receive from the state. Figure 14 below shows the distribution of responses. There is no significant differences between respondents in urban municipalities versus rural municipalities.

Figure 14: Rating of State-Provided Health Services
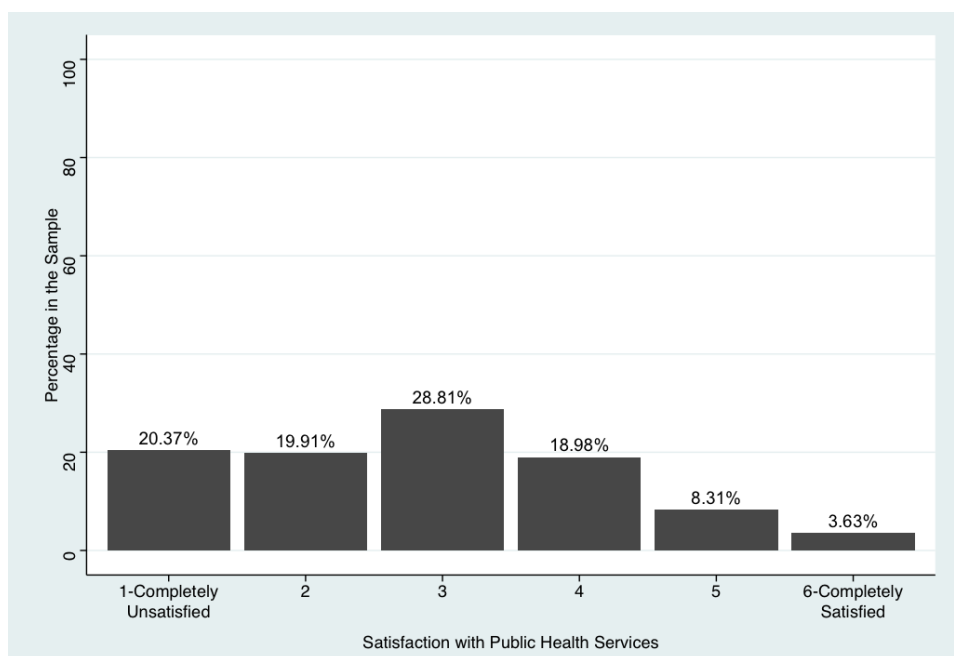
Among households with children, 77% have at least one child that attends school. We asked these respondents about their satisfaction with the public education that their children receive. Respondents were asked to state their level of satisfaction on a scale from 1 to 6, where 1 is completely unsatisfied and 6 is completely satisfied. Figure 15 below shows the distribution of responses. The mean level of satisfaction in children's public education is 3.7. There are no significant differences between rural and urban respondents with regard to mean satisfaction with public education.

Similarly, respondents provided their rating of dispute resolution in their community. Disputes may be resolved by non-state entities, so these responses may reflect assessments of non-state service provision. Again, this response was scaled from 1 to 6, where 1 is completely unsatisfied and 6 is completely satisfied. The mean response is 3.45. The full

Figure 15: Satisfaction with Children's Public Education
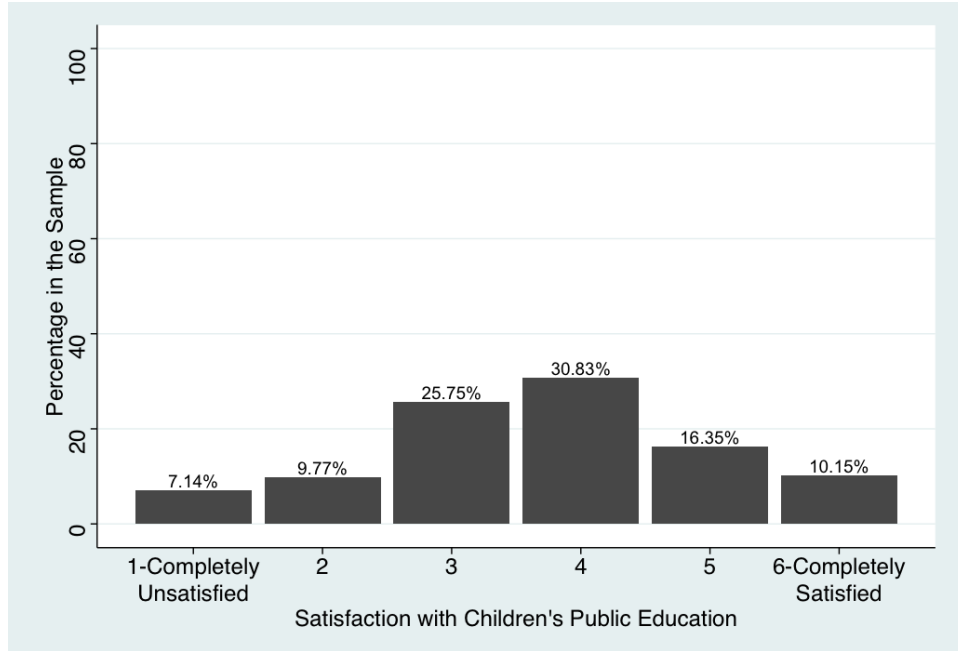
distribution of these responses is shown below in Figure 16. There are significant differences in the mean satisfaction with community dispute resolution among rural respondents (3.57) relative to urban respondents (3.23).

2.6 Political Behavior and State-Society Relations

2.6.1 Attitudes Towards Democracy

A portion of this survey was dedicated to assessing both democratic values and potential authoritarian practices at different levels of governance. First, we asked respondents to identify their degree of satisfaction with how democracy functions in Colombia. Respondents provided a satisfaction rating on a scale from 1 to 6, where 1 is completely unsatisfied and 6 is completely satisfied. The mean response was 2.9 (Figure 17). Though substantively small, there are significant statistical differences between rural and urban respondents regarding their ratings of Colombian democracy: while the mean among respondents in rural municipalities is 2.99, the mean among respondents in urban municipalities is 2.75. There are no significant differences between those that stated they or an immediate family member was a victim of conflict related violence, and those that were not.

Respondents were then asked to assess how democratic their municipality and their com-

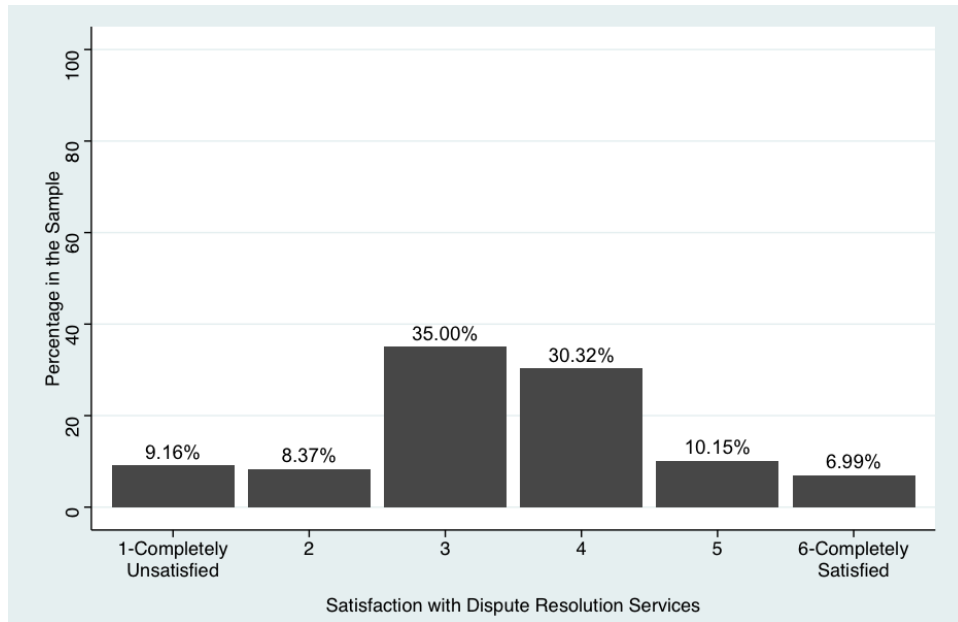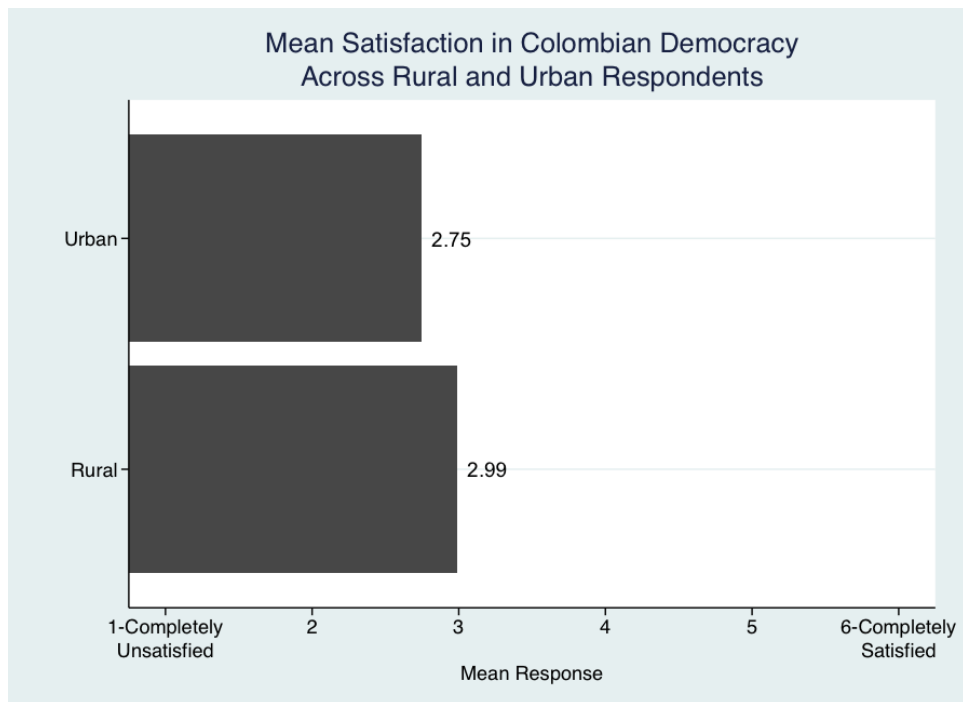Figure 16: Satisfaction with Dispute Resolution in the Community

Percentage in the Sample

9.16%   8.37%   35.00%   30.32%   10.15%   6.99%

1-Completely   2   3   4   5   6-Completely
Unsatisfied   Satisfied

Satisfaction with Dispute Resolution Services

Figure 17: Satisfaction with Colombian Democracy

Mean Satisfaction in Colombian Democracy
Across Rural and Urban Respondents

Urban   2.75

Rural   2.99

1-Completely   2   3   4   5   6-Completely
Unsatisfied   Satisfied

Mean Response

munity are. The response was provided on a scale from 1 to 6, where 1 is not very democratic and 6 is very democratic. The average degree of democracy at the municipal level was 3.2, whereas at the community level it was 3.28 (Figure 18). The difference between the average assessment of democracy at the municipal level and the community level is not statistically significant. However, with regard to urban and rural municipalities there is a statistically significant difference: the mean perceived degree of democracy in rural municipalities is 3.33, whereas it is 2.97 in urban municipalities.

Figure 18: Degree of Local Democracy
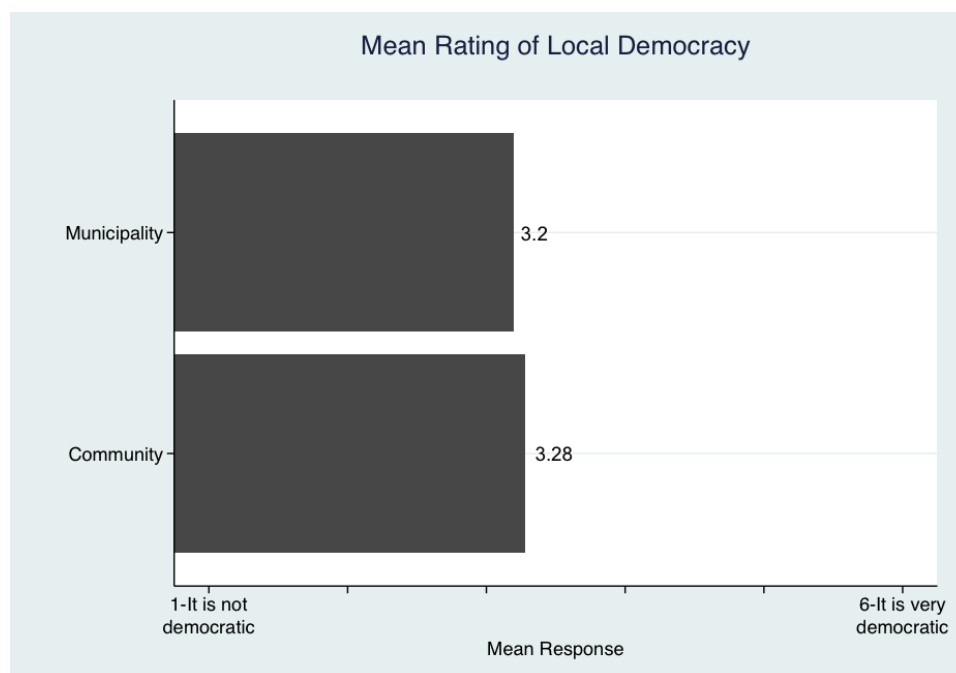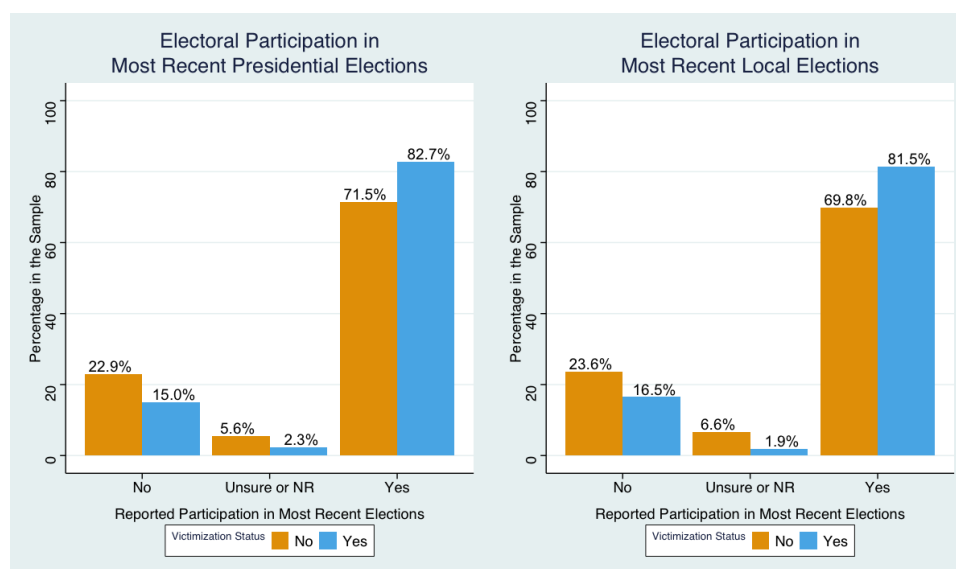

2.6.2   Political Participation

The political participation section of the survey collected data on respondent engagement in concrete forms of political participation, such as voting in specific local and national elections or the 2016 plebiscite. We also collected data related to more indirect forms of political participation and civic engagement, such as participation in local organizations or reading news information from different sources. Furthermore, we collected data related to the quality of political participation, asking respondents about their encounters with political patronage or bribery or the degree to which they feel represented by Colombian political parties.

Regarding participation in recent elections, survey participants were asked whether or not they had participated in the most recent presidential elections in 2018, when Iván Duque was elected, and the most recent local mayoral elections in 2019. The rate of reported participation in both elections was similar; 68% respondents stated that they voted in the most recent presidential elections and 67% respondents stated that they voted in the most recent mayoral elections. The non-response rates between these elections are similar as well: 10% of respondents did not know or did not respond to the question regarding presidential elections and 11% did not know or did not respond to the question regarding mayoral elections. Reported participation does not differ significantly between rural and urban municipalities, however there are significant differences between individuals that reported that they or an immediate family member were victim to conflict related violence. Considering only those that stated they voted, the percentage of individuals that reported voting in the 2018 presidential elections that stated that they or a family member were a victim of conflict related violence was 8% higher than those that stated that they or their family was not a victim of conflict-related violence. This difference is statistically significant and robust to consideration of the data clustered at the municipal level. The difference is also apparent in the reported participation rates in local elections. Individuals that were affected by conflict-related violence have reported participation rates in 2019 local elections 7% percent higher than those that did not claim they were victimized. This difference is also robust in consideration of the municipal-level clusters. The following graph (Figure 19) shows the reported turnout levels between the presidential and local elections, differentiated by whether or not a respondent identified themselves or their family members as having been victimized by conflict related violence.

In regard to individuals' motivations for participating in presidential elections, we asked participants whether they felt forced to vote or voted freely. Most respondents stated that they participated freely in these elections (96%), while 1.6% responded that they voted due to pressure to do so. We also asked whether they received some sort of material benefit, such as gifts or money, from voting and 3.0% stated that they did, and around 10% did not respond the question. When asked if they voted for the party or candidate they liked, a large majority (67%) said they did and 10% did not answer the question.

When asked about their participation in local elections, the results are very similar. Most people claim they voted freely (95.9%), and very few due to pressure (2.1%); a majority voted for the party or candidate they liked (66.7%); and again very few claim they received some material benefit for their vote (3.3%). Non-response rates are similar to those related to

Figure 19: Relative Electoral Turnout Among Reported Victims and Non-Victims

presidential elections.

Aside from voting, we asked survey participants whether or not they had participated in other forms of politics. Specifically, we asked if they had signed petitions, participated in demonstrations or strikes, wrote to or contacted a politician, reported a problem to a local authority, or were volunteers on a political campaign. Figure 20 below shows the percentages of people that participated in each of these means of political action, only among those that provided a response. Overall, participation in non-voting political activities is modest but consistent across the rural/urban divide. The only non-voting actions that are significantly different among rural and urban municipalities are writing petitions, where rural partici-pation is higher, and contacting politicians, where urban participation is higher. However, there are significant differences among those that stated that they or someone in their im-mediate family had been victims of conflict violence, particularly regarding participation in demonstrations, contacting politicians, being a political campaign volunteer, and reporting issues to local authorities.

To know more about civic participation and membership in social groups, we asked respondents about their participation in various organizations that might be present in their community, such as unions and agricultural associations. For brevity, we do not list all different types of organizations that we asked about in the survey. Instead, we just show the distribution of the number of organizations that respondents stated that they participate in (see Figure 21). Most respondents reported that they do not participate in any community

26

Figure 20: Respondent Participation in Non-Voting Political Action
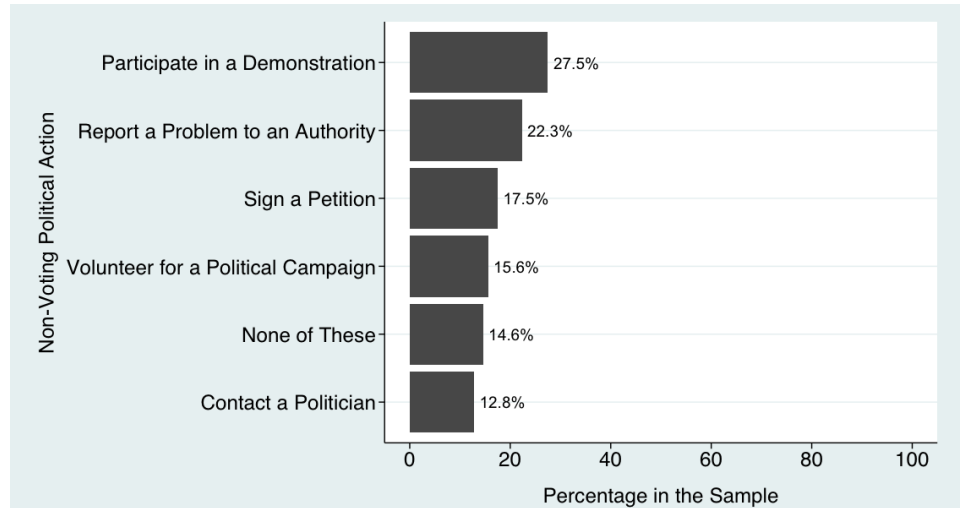
organizations. Note that respondents were only able to respond regarding their membership if they had previously stated that a given type of organization was present in their community.

We were also interested in the sources people rely on to obtain information about current events and how often they seek that information. Therefore, we asked respondents to indicate their frequency of engaging with newspapers, radio, television, internet, social networks, and their social circles to obtain information about what is going on in Colombia. Respondents were able to respond whether they engaged with each source daily, once a week, once a month, a few times a year, or never. The following graph shows the distribution of responses for sources that respondents stated that they engage with daily or once a week (Figure 22). As the graph indicates, people seem to engage with newspapers least and engage with television and their social circle with the greatest frequency.

2.6.3 Attitudes Toward the State

Many questions on the survey focus on respondents' interactions with the state and how individuals perceive the state and its institutions. Individuals were asked what emotions they feel toward the state among fear, admiration, respect, gratitude, rage, hate, or indifference. Figure 23 shows the corresponding percentage of participants that selected each word.

Some participants provided a different, unprompted word of their own to describe the emotion that they feel toward the Colombian state. The below word cloud (Figure 24) accounts for these different responses, and the size of each of the shown words corresponds to its relative frequency among participant responses.

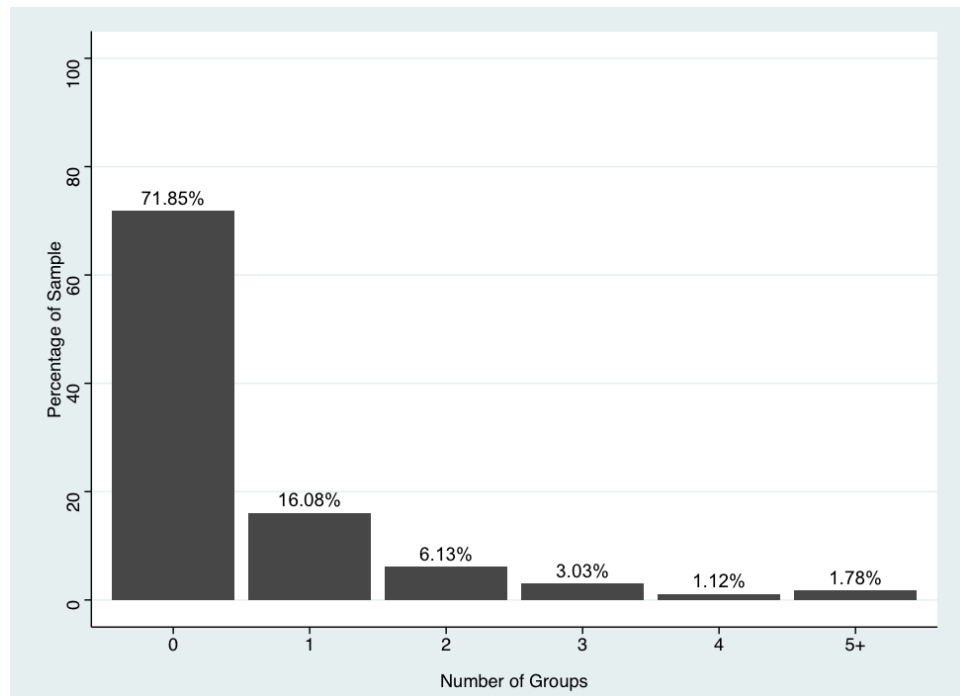Figure 21: Number of Community Groups of Respondent Participation

Figure 22: Respondent Sources of News Information and their Frequency of Use
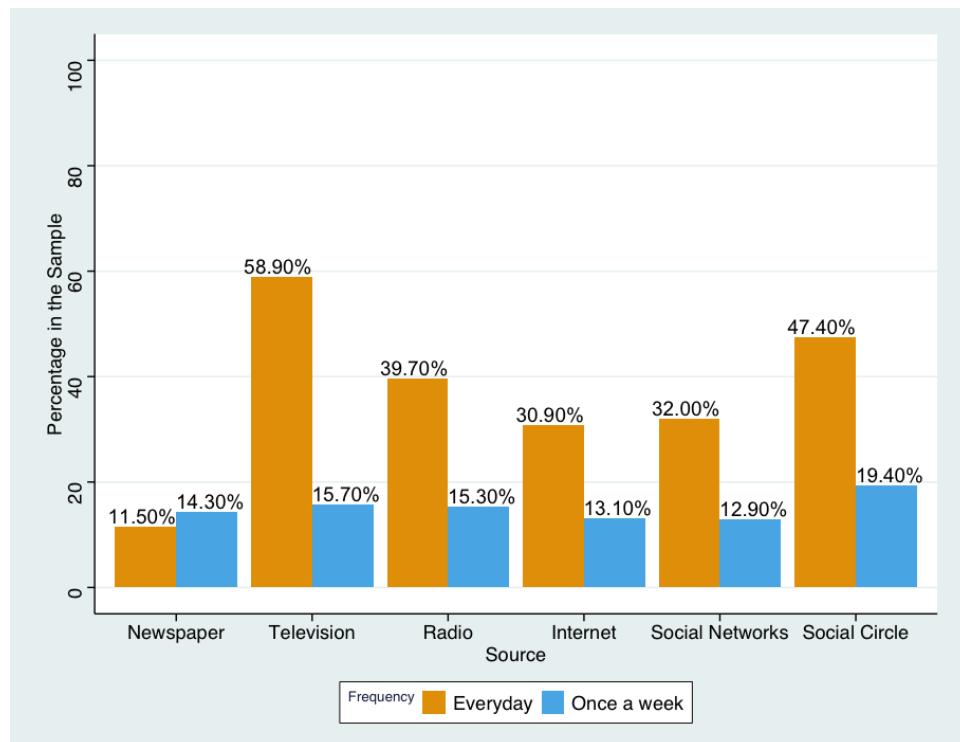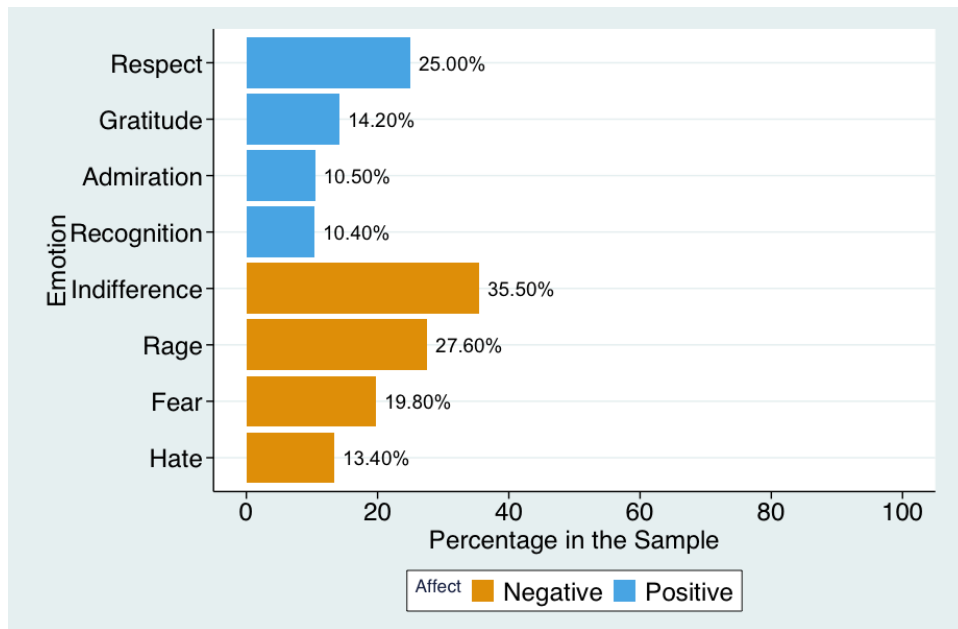
Figure 23: Emotional Affect Toward the State

Figure 24: Emotional Affect Toward the State, Additional Responses

In an effort to better assess how respondents perceive the state, we gave them seven pairs of words or phrases and told them to choose the word they would use to describe the state for each pair. The phrases posed to participants were the following:

1. Just or Unjust

2. Repressive or Defender of liberty

3. Transparent or Corrupt

4. Promotes equality or Promotes Inequality

5. Generates wealth or Generates poverty

6. Violent or Peaceful

7. Treat everyone equally or Treat some better than others

Overwhelmingly, survey participants chose the negative word or phrase among each pair. This and the other responses mentioned before show that individuals in conflict zones tend to have a negative emotional affect toward the state. To reinforce this finding, when asked whether or not they felt abandoned by the state, 59% of respondents said that they did, 29% stated that they did not, and 12% of participants said they were unsure or did not respond. Furthermore, 35% stated that they felt mistreated by the state and 14% were unsure or did not respond to whether or not they felt mistreated by the state(see Figure 25).

We then asked survey participants questions regarding the perceived corruption among different state-related entities: the police, municipal government, judges, the Institute of Family Well-being (ICBF), the Ombudsman (known better as the Personería), and politicians in general. Politicians in general are perceived to be very corrupt by most people, while the ICBF and the Personería are perceived as not corrupt by more people relative to other institutions. However, the amount of people that feel that any of these institutions are not corrupt is fairly low (Figure 26).

The survey shows that, at the community level, participants feel that treatment by the police is good or tolerable (72%), 8% feel that it is bad, and 5% feel that it is terrible. Regarding civil-military relations, 66% of respondents feel the that the military treats people of the community well or normal, 4% feel the treatment is terrible, and another 4% feel it is bad, while 14% of respondents stated that there was not presence of military forces in the zone. The following graph (Figure 27) shows the distribution of responses across each

Figure 25: Feelings of Abandonment or Mistreatment on Part of the State
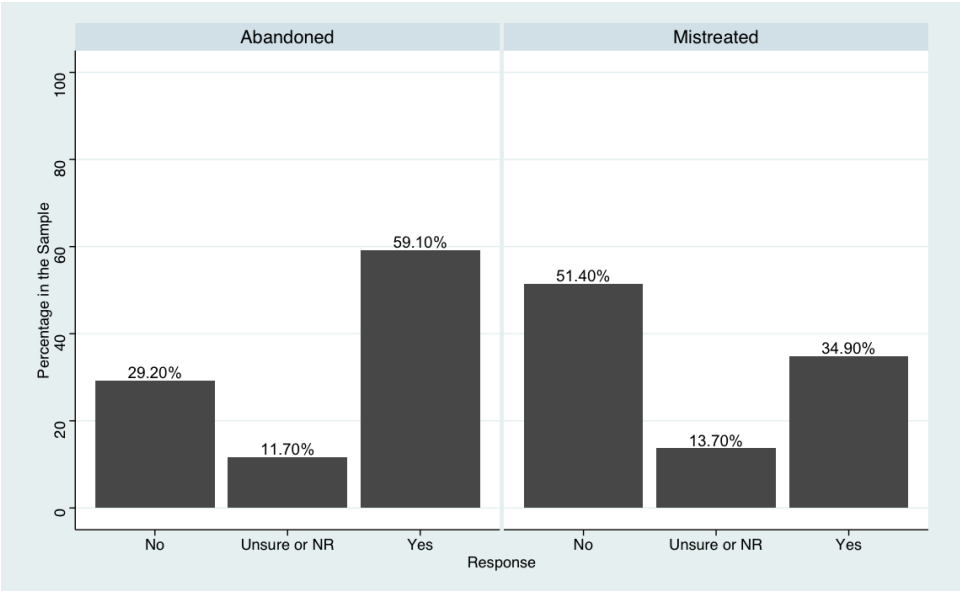

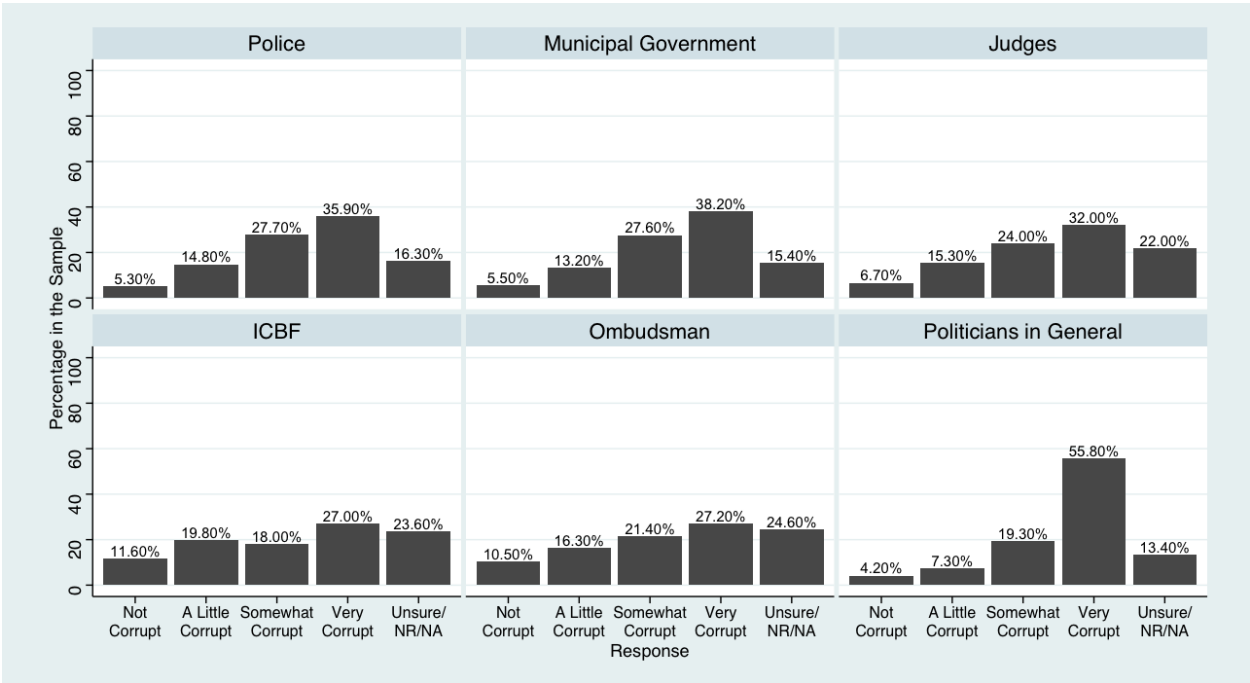Figure 26: Level of Perceived Corruption of Various State Entities
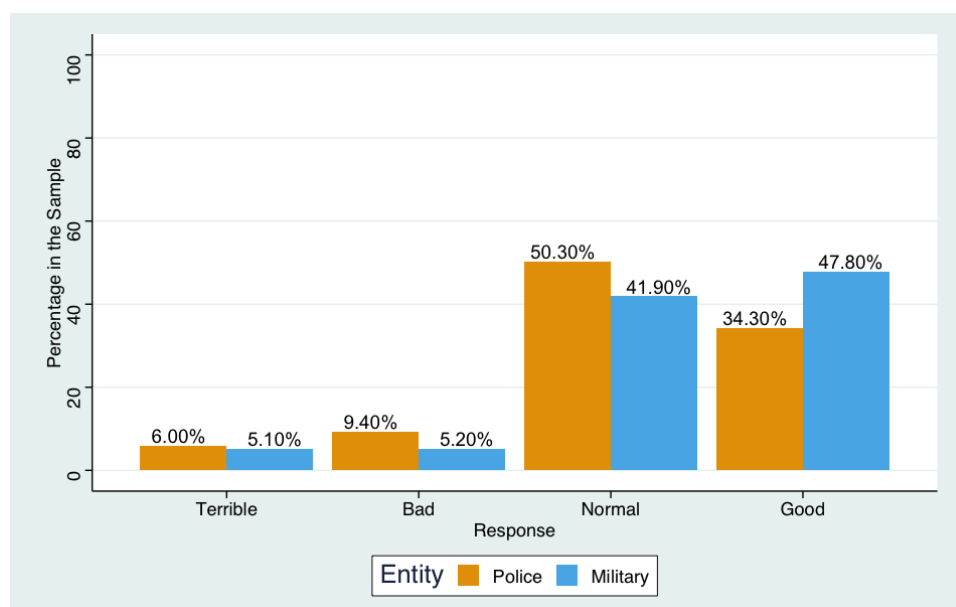
Figure 27: Perceived Community Relationship with Police and Military Forces

potential rating, only inclusive of those that responded that there was military presence in the area.

2.6.4 Attitudes Toward Peace and Reconciliation

As mentioned in the introduction, in 2016 the Colombian government held a plebiscite to gauge public opinion regarding the peace accords and a negotiated end to the conflict with the FARC. We asked respondents whether they participated in this plebiscite: 43% stated that they did whereas 40% stated they did not and 17% were unsure or did not respond. The reported participation rate in the sample is higher than that of the total eligible voting population across the country (37%). Regarding how people voted, of the reported plebiscite voters (n=649), 72% voted YES, 17% voted NO, and 11% were unsure or did not respond. Figure 28 shows the visual representation, the left graph showing the participation rate, and the right showing the distribution across YES/NO votes in the plebiscite.

Now that it has been nearly 6 years since the ratification of the Havana Accords, people may have different outlooks on its implementation, and whether or not promises of the peace agreement will be kept. We asked individuals whether or not they thought the state and FARC will comply with the terms of the peace agreement. The responses regarding each actor were similar, with 14% of people thinking the state will follow through on the promises and 13% believing that FARC will follow through. In both cases, 33% of respondents were

Figure 28: Participation and Vote Orientation in 2016 Plebiscite
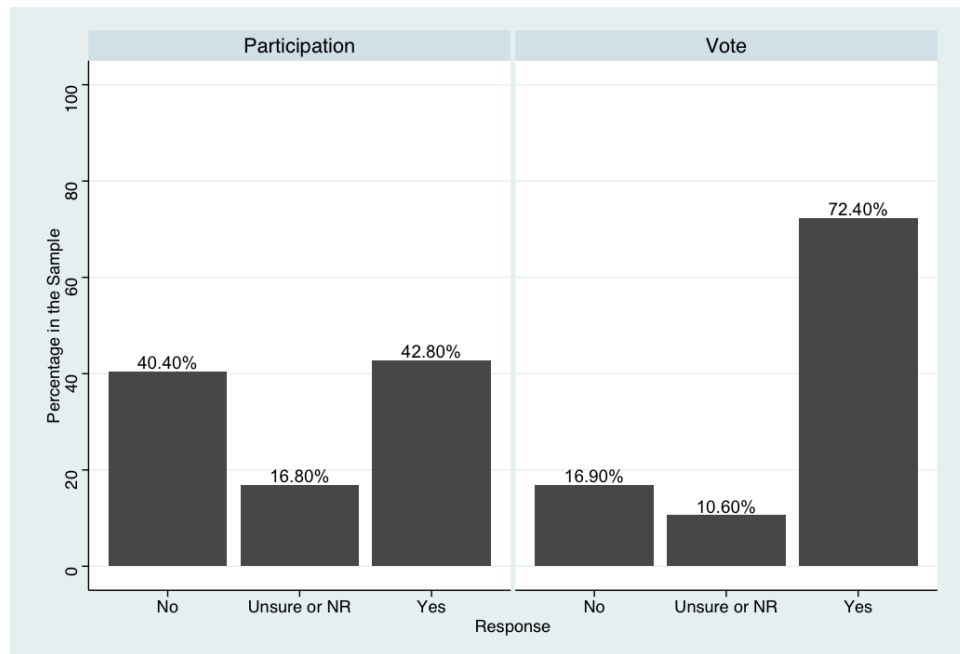
unsure or did not respond.

We were also interested in what people think reconciliation ought to look like and asked respondents about their degree of agreement with the following statements:

1. I support a negotiated solution, not a military one, to the conflict.

2. I believe that reconciliation and forgiveness or pardon to the members of FARC is possible.

3. The accords seek to guarantee the right to the truth, justice, and non-repetition of conflict to the victims.

4. Ex-guerillas should never occupy public office.

Responses were given from 1 to 6, where 1 is completely disagree and 6 is agree completely. The following table shows the mean response for each statement (Table 29).

Participants were also asked about their attitudes towards demobilized ex-combatants. We first asked them if they would permit the following related to ex-combatants:

1. Would you accept that they access state assistance programs in this municipality?

2. Would you give them work?

Figure 29: Support for Various Statements Regarding Reconciliation
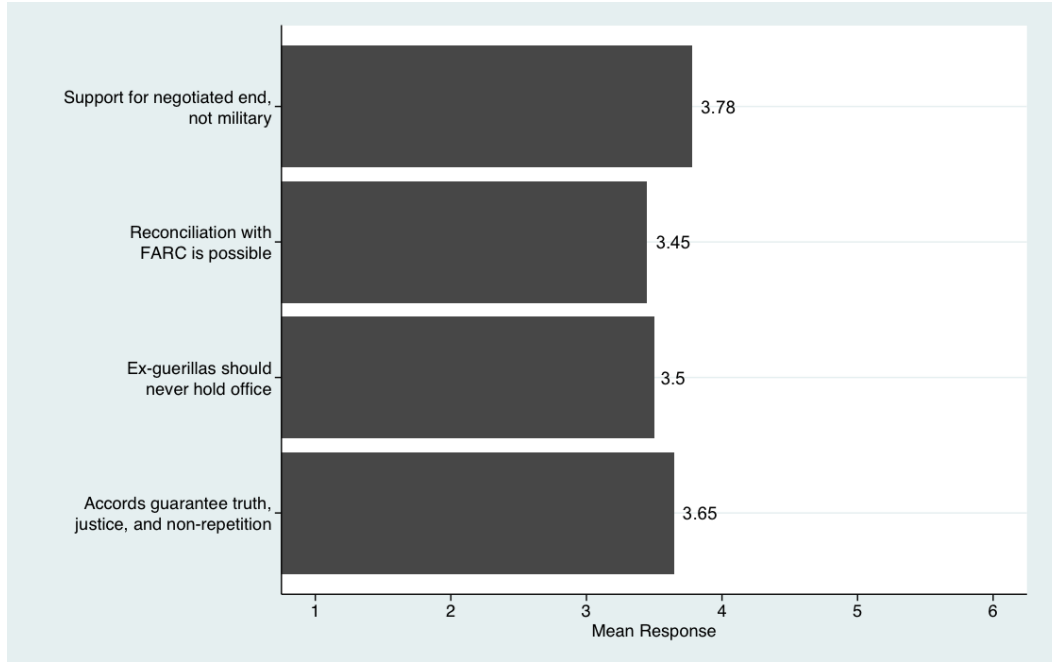
3. Would be open that they participate in politics, and if were elected, that they govern?

4. Would you accept that they were the partner, boyfriend, or girlfriend, of your son or daughter, or someone else in your immediate family?

Many were unsure or did not respond to these questions, but in all cases a majority responded negatively. Figure 30 shows the distribution of responses across all scenarios.

Lastly, survey participants stated their preferences, among a list, as to what the state should do regarding ex-members of armed groups that have demobilized or that will demobilize. While 30% stated that ex-members of non-state armed groups should be sent to jail to fulfill their punishment, 31% stated that they should receive lesser sentences when and if they tell the truth and redress their victims, and 9% stated that they should be left alone with the condition that they tell the truth and redress their victims. The remaining 30% did not provide a response or were unsure what the state should do.

2.7 Social Relations

War can also transform social relationships and identities in meaningful ways (Wood 2008; Bauer et al. 2016). We asked respondents to identify their relationships to different people inside and outside of their community, specifically with regard to their trust in these groups.

Figure 30: Acceptance of Certain Reintegration Scenarios of Former Combatants
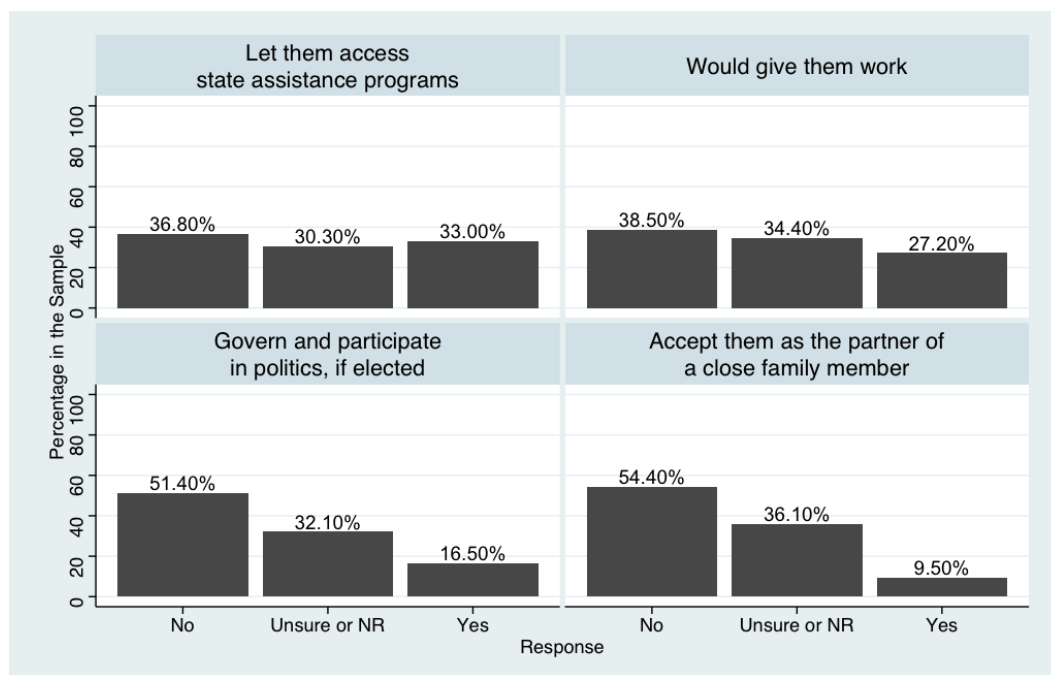
On a scale from 1 to 6, where 1 signifies they do not trust at all, and 6 means they trust a lot, we asked respondents to state how much they trust family and friends, people of their community, people outside of their community, people from outside of the municipality, and strangers in general. The degree of trust among each group of people decreases as the groups become less associated with respondent local communities. The average level of trust in each of these groups is shown across rural and urban municipalities in Figure 31.

We were also interested in people's perception of cohesion in their communities and asked participants about their level of agreement with the following statements:

1. People in this community are willing to help their neighbors.

2. This community is very united.

Participants gave their responses on a scale from 1 to 6, where 1 is completely disagree and 6 is completely agree. The following graph (Figure 32) shows the average responses across rural and urban municipalities.

The survey also posed different scenarios for participants to deem how likely it would be that a neighbor would intervene in a given situation. First, we asked how likely it would be that a neighbor intervened if they were to see another person's child being disrespectful to an adult. Then, we asked how likely it would be that a neighbor intervened if a fight broke out

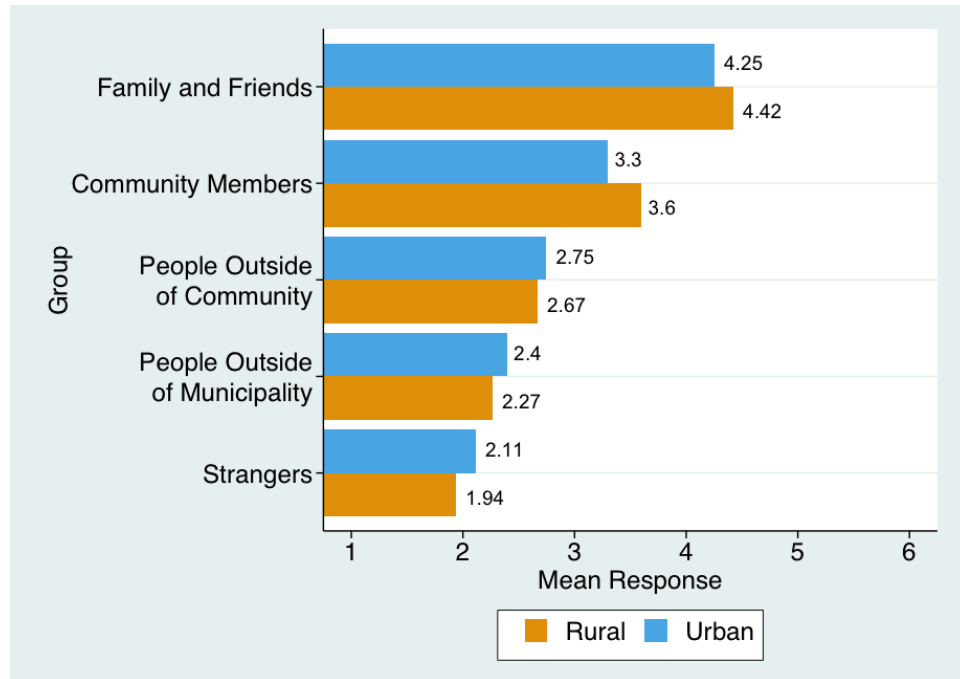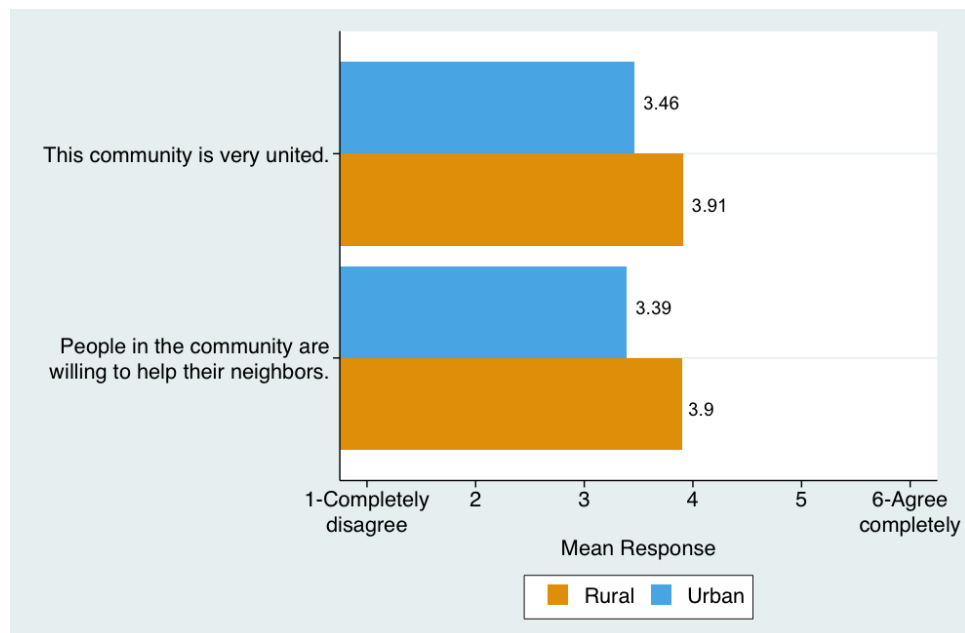Figure 31: Level of Trust in Different Social Groups

Figure 32: Social cohesion

between other neighbors in front of the neighborhood. Responses were given as very likely, somewhat likely, a little likely, or very unlikely. Figure 33 below shows the distribution of the stated likelihoods. In both scenarios, more than half of the respondents stated that intervention was very likely or somewhat likely.

Figure 33: Likelihood of Neighbor's Intervention in Neighborhood Problems
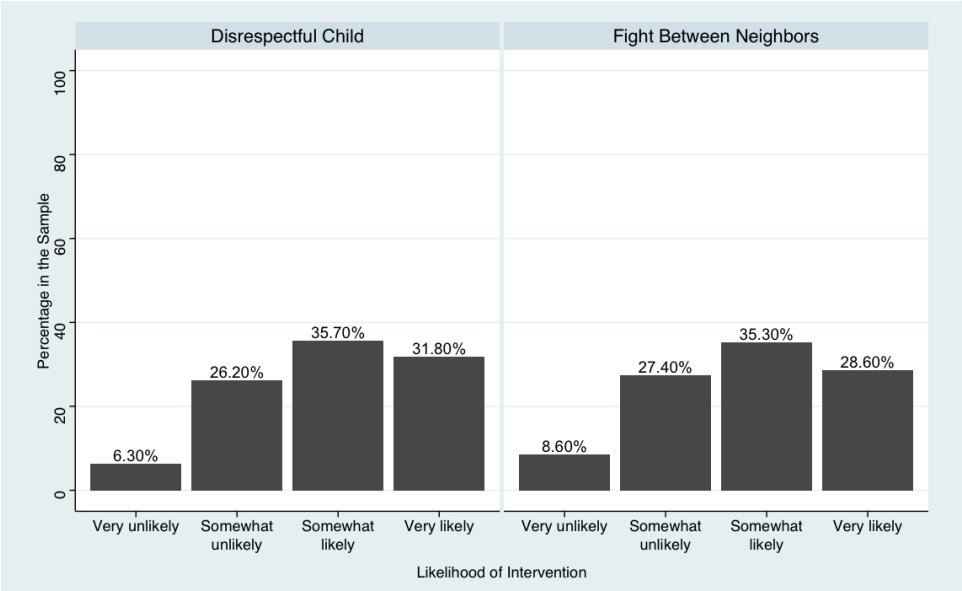
2.8   Local Power and Authority

Community politics vary across Colombia in terms of sources of local authority. Influential people in one town might be landowners, whereas in the next it is the presidents of the local community action boards (known better by their Spanish acronym, JAC– Juntas de Acción Comunal). So, we asked respondents to tell us who in their community is an influential person now and in two periods of armed group presence. Here (Figure 34) we show merely the results for the current period. We note three findings when comparing the levels of influence of different actors before and after the signing of the peace agreement. First, teachers, presidents of JACs, merchants, municipal government, police, and religious leaders have all grown in their influence over time; second, the influence of people with money and traditional families is fairly constant; and third, the influence of armed group commanders and landowners has decreased.

Given the time period of the survey's enumeration, we also asked relevant questions related to community management and leadership related to Covid-19. First, we asked

Figure 34: Actors with Influence in the Community
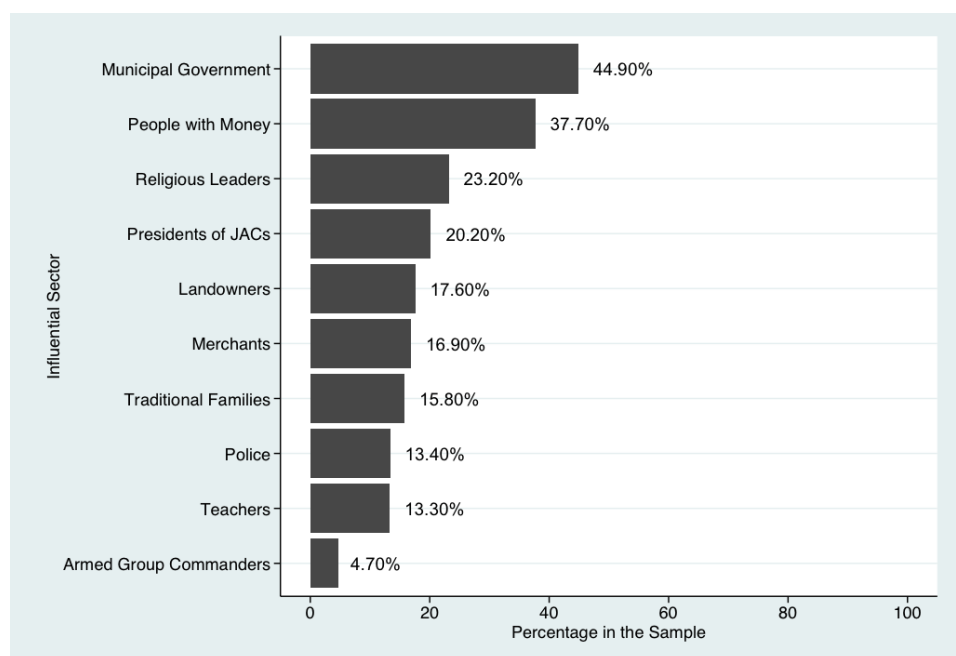
who led the community's response to the coronavirus. People listed very many different responses. Among them, people listed mayors, the state, hospitals, social leaders, presidents of local action groups, the Secretary of Health, among others as instrumental in leading the community's response. Some also mentioned that they did not know who led the response, that each person was responsible for themselves, or that no one led a response to Covid-19.

Responses vary substantially as to who survey participants state was effective in enforcing norms related to stopping the spread of disease. Figure 35 shows the distribution of responses. The largest percentages of survey participants attributed Covid-19 management to either the municipal or national government, or responded no one was effective in managing the coronavirus in their community.

Lastly, we asked which actors were effective in providing economic help to those affected economically by the pandemic. Again, respondents stated that the municipal or national government was the most effective in this regard, but others still stated there were no actors that were effective in securing economic help. Figure 36 shows the distribution of responses across actors.

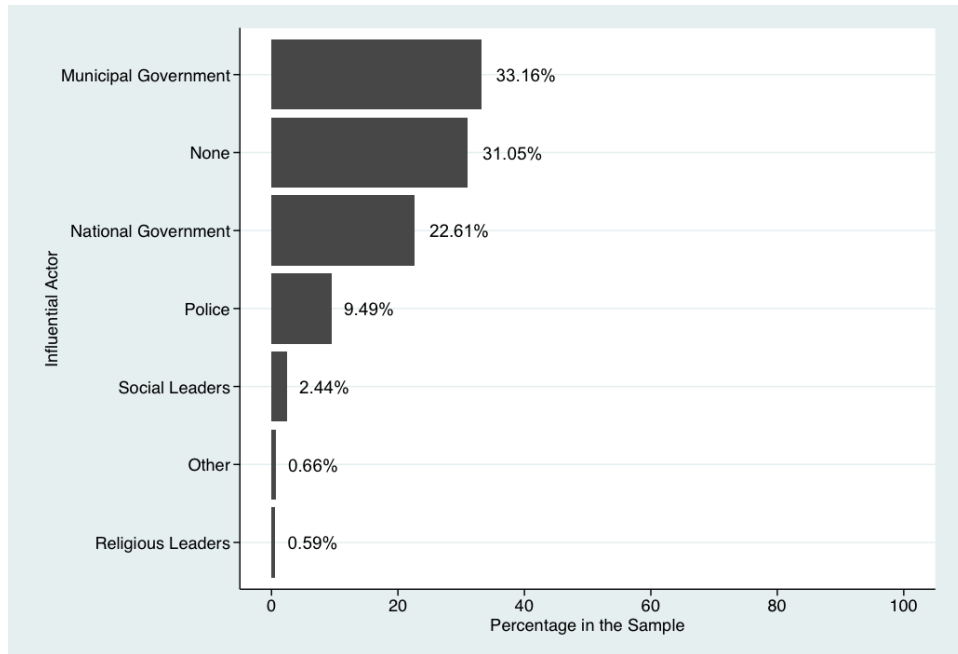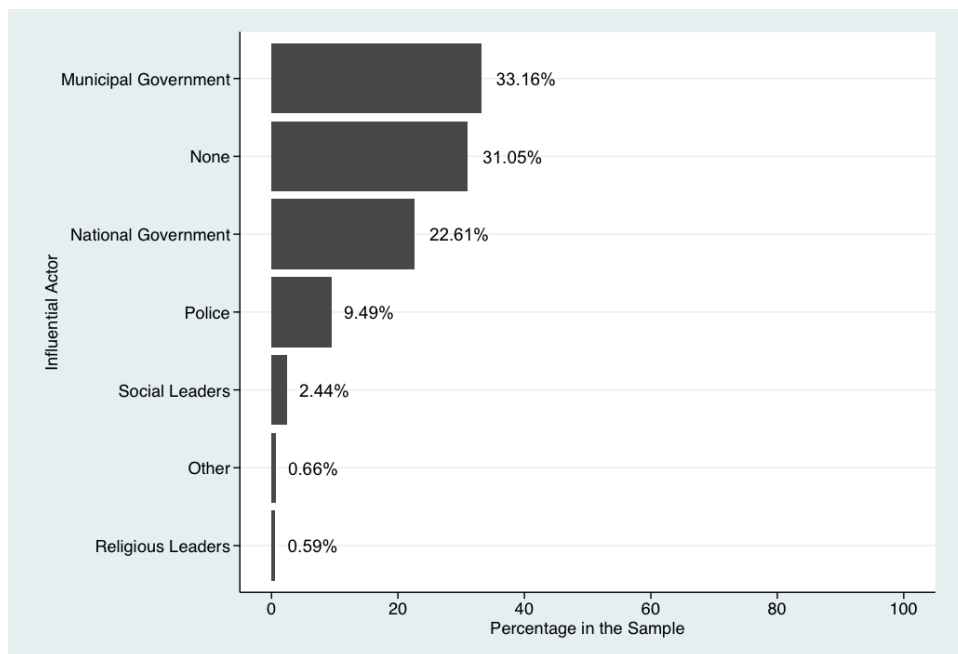Figure 35: Who led the response to COVID in your municipality?

Figure 36: Which actors provided economic help during the pandemic?

3 Conclusions and Avenues for Future Research

This survey collected detailed evidence on individuals and communities in territories that lived under the presence of guerrilla or paramilitary groups at some point in the past four decades. Some of these conflict zones continue to endure the activities of these or other types of armed organizations while others have lived without such actors for years. The data describe some of the difficulties that these communities face while also showing that there is tremendous variation in the social, political, and economic life of their populations.

A first important finding is that, on average, violence affected almost one out of five persons in these communities. However, there is substantial variation across territories. In about 25% of the sampled communities more than 30% of respondents reported that they or a family member had been victimized. Conflict zones face, therefore, different needs associated with a history of victimization. What is more, even though many respondents consider that security has improved in their communities after the signing of the peace agreement,

Yet, the survey also shows that even communities where people report comparatively low levels of violence have also suffered during the war and continue to face important challenges. Many continue to live with remarkable violations of their rights and liberties and over one third consider their communities to be very unsafe. Almost half consider themselves poor and one in five have gone without food in the past twelve months. Many lack essential services and the quality of public goods is often low.

Political participation in these communities varies substantially across municipalities but, on average, non-voting political participation is low. A large majority of respondents have a negative perception of the state. Attitudes towards ex-combatants are seldom positive and optimism about the implementation of the peace agreement and the prospects of reconciliation is moderate.

Finally, there is variation across communities in respondents' perceived level of social cohesion as well as in who has power in their community. Different actors—both state and non-state—exert influence in community affairs and real representation is still lacking. On the positive side, however, only a few participants reported armed actors to have power or influence in their communities.

In our future research, we will explore how variation in wartime experiences influence communities' trajectories as they transition from war to peace. We will also investigate how the presence of illicit economies mediates the legacies of war dynamics. Our work will pay special attention to the ways that war dynamics shape political behavior, politics, democracy, and governance at the local level. Tracing these consequences of war is important not just

to advance knowledge about civil war but also to better inform debates about policies and interventions.

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