Trust and Public Support
for the Colombian Peace Agreement

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ABSTRACT: The 2016 Colombian peace agreement failed by a narrow margin when put to a public vote, but a month later, the legislature bypassed the need for public support officially ending the 52-year armed conflict between the government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia [FARC]. Today, few promises of the agreement have come to fruition, leaving Colombia's rural population in need and causing some ex-combatants to return to the FARC. While some attributed failure of the peace agreement to low voter turnout, a better understanding of the public's lack of support for the peace agreement is needed. This study uses logistic regression to analyze 2016 survey data from the Latin American Public Opinion Project to examine how institutional trust correlates with predicting support for the Colombian peace agreement. Variables such as public opinion regarding trust in government institutions (the legislature, executive, judiciary, and elections) and trust in the FARC, including a belief that the FARC will demobilize, are included within the study. The model supports the hypothesis that greater trust in institutions increases the probability that the respondent will support the peace agreement. Five of the six variables are statistically significant, and the trust in the national legislature variable is approaching significance. Future studies related to this topic should include greater analysis of Colombia's rural population who was most affected by forced displacement and other forms of violence during the conflict.

KEYWORDS: Colombia, armed conflict, peace agreement, public opinion, trust

Introduction

In early October of 2016, Colombia's long-awaited peace agreement with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia [FARC] was put to a public referendum where it narrowly failed (Tellez 2019a, 833). Despite this indication of insufficient public support, the legislature voted to pass a revised version of the agreement only a month later, and Colombia's 52-year armed conflict with the FARC finally came to a close (Revelo and Sottilotta 2020, 3). In the years since the conflict, the people of Colombia are still burdened with violence, tension, and unkept promises of reform and peace (Casey 2019). Some research suggests that

Though the agreement nominally ended the conflict, violence and tension persists in Colombia years down the line (Casey 2019), and the government has yet to bring its promises of peace and reform to the people. For agreements such as Colombia's, public support is integral to implementing peace (García-Sánchez and Carlin 2020, 245; Revelo and Sottilotta 2020, 5), which is why understanding the low support for the peace agreement during the 2016 referendum may be the key to strengthening the impact of the agreement.

This study will look at variables relating to institutional trust – more specifically, trust in the legislature, executive, judiciary, and elections as well as trust in the FARC and the belief that the FARC will demobilize after the agreement – and observe how these variables relate to support for the peace agreement. To make this analysis, data from the AmericasBarometer has been incorporated into a logistic regression model. Variables pertaining to trust have been chosen due to the healing role that trust plays post-conflict. Upon finding a relationship with the dependent variable, the trust variables may be used to predict whether or not a person supported the signing of the agreement in 2016. That could then provide insight as to how to public support for the agreement may be increased.

Historical Context

Colombia's armed conflict began in 1964 with the creation of the FARC. The conflict intensified as the FARC grew in size and influence, amassing 17,000 fighters and contributing to Colombia having the most coca fields of any other country by the late 1990s (Gentry and Spencer 2010, 456; Gutiérrez and Thomson 2020, 33). In 2002, President Álvaro Uribe Vélez took office during this intensified period of conflict spanning from the late 1990s into the 2000s (Gentry and Spencer 2010, 456). Uribe's approach to the conflict was aggressive and reliant on the military, but the *Seguridad Democrática*, his counter-insurgency strategy, was unsuccessful in ending the conflict (Revelo and Sottilotta 2020, 2).

After Uribe completed his two terms, President Juan Manuel Santos was inaugurated in 2010 and began negotiations with the FARC in 2012 in Havana, Cuba, demonstrating a contrast between the two presidents' approaches to the conflict (Tellez 2019a, 832; Liendo and Braithwaite 2018, 626). Ultimately, Santos' peacemaking would prove successful when both the government and the FARC finalized their peace agreement in 2016 (Revelo and Sottilotta 2020, 2; Tellez 2019a, 832).

The Havana peace talks covered six primary topics: land reform, political participation of the FARC, combatant reintegration and disarmament, drug policy reform, transitional justice, and peace agreement implementation (Revelo and Sottilotta 2020, 3; Tellez 2019a, 832-833). The Colombian government agreed to work on rural infrastructure, to allow the FARC guaranteed political participation as a sanctioned political party from 2018 to 2026 (García-Sánchez and Carlin 2020, 241), and to most ex-combatants not receiving prison time. Meanwhile, the FARC agreed to quickly disarm and reintegrate. Additionally, the FARC obliged with the government's request that a public referendum be used to pass the agreement (Tellez 2019a, 833).

The public referendum ended in opposition to the passage of the agreement, though this conclusion was reached by a narrow 50.2 to 49.7 per cent vote (Revelo and Sottilotta 2020, 2-3; Tellez 2019a, 833). After the failed referendum, both parties again assembled at the negotiating table where they adjusted the original agreement (Tellez 2019a, 833).

On November 24, 2016, only a month after the initial agreement, the updated agreement was passed in the legislature, bypassing the need for public support (Revelo and Sottilotta 2020, 3; Tellez 2019a, 833). Despite this nominal end to the armed conflict, promises have not been kept and conflict violence has persisted.

Trust and the Peace Agreement

The failure of the peace agreement at the 2016 public referendum is curious. Though the agreement could end the half-century civil conflict in Colombia, the referendum attracted low voter turnout, and those who did show ultimately voted against the agreement (Revelo and Sottilotta 2020, 2-3; Tellez 2019a, 833). While some blame the low turnout for the failure of the agreement, further analysis of the factors associated with public support for the agreement is needed.

Trust for the Legislature

During the 2016 referendum, both Colombia's House of Representatives and Senate lacked a clear majority party (Dávalos et al. 2018, 103). Instead, a variety of parties claimed the 102 Senate seats and 166 House seats. Amongst that variety was the *Partido Social de Unidad Nacional* [*Partido de la U*], founded by Santos, and the *Centro Democrático*, founded by Uribe. Despite Santos winning the presidency in 2014, his party earned few more congressional seats, allocated proportionally (Political Database of the Americas 2011), than

the *Centro Democrático*, a vehement critic of the peace process (Dávalos et al. 2018, 103). This varied composition of the legislature, continuing through 2016, may have given those strongly for and strongly against the agreement reason to perceive the legislature as disorganized and insincere.

Interviews conducted by researchers Revelo and Sottilotta (2020) during the year of the referendum also indicate dissatisfaction with congressional efforts towards the agreement. Respondents agreed with peace in the abstract but disapproved of the agreement itself, claiming "the congressmen still need[ed] to make a bigger effort to make [peace] happen" and noting insufficient congressional accountability for the agreement's implementation (Revelo and Sottilotta 2020, 13, 14).

Taken together, the legislature's political composition and the 2016 interviews point to a positive relationship between peace agreement support and trust in the legislature.

Hypothesis 1: People who trust the national legislature are more likely to support the peace agreement than those who do not trust the national legislature.

Trust for the Executive

Much of the politicization of the peace process involved former Presidents Uribe and Santos. Both served office shortly before and during the development of the agreement, and both carried strong beliefs relating to peace. For instance, Uribe refused to partake in serious negotiations with the FARC (Tellez 2019a, 832) and created the *Centro Democrático* to undermine the agreement (Liendo and Braithwaite 2018, 626; Revelo and Sottilotta 2020, 2-3). Santos, on the other hand, was quick to begin the peace process, which was responsible for several unpopular concessions to the FARC by the government (Liendo and Braithwaite 2018, 626).

Interviews conducted by Revelo and Sottilotta (2020, 9) in 2017 point to presidential politicization of the agreement as some respondents hinted that the peace process was no longer a priority as anti-corruption would instead be the focus of the upcoming presidential elections in 2018. Research conducted in 2016 also links the presidency to the peace agreement, finding that the peace process gained legitimacy as Santos gained public trust and vice versa (Carlin et al. 2016, 12).

Because trust of Santos as an individual president is significant, it follows that trust of the executive office will be significant as well. The involvement of the executive in politicizing the agreement points to a positive relationship between peace agreement support and trust in the executive.

Hypothesis 2: People who trust the executive office are more likely to support the peace agreement than those who do not trust the executive office.

Trust for the Judiciary

The possibility of criminal ex-combatants evading justice was a concern at the center of the peace agreement debate. Those who opposed the agreement claimed that criminal ex-combatants would not be punished (Revelo and Sottilotta 2020, 3), and the issue of justice was a deciding factor for some, with many greatly preferring punitive measures. For instance, those who voted "No" in the referendum would have been more likely to vote for the agreement had more retributive justice provisions been in place (Tellez 2019a, 836). Additionally, the *Justicia Especial para la Paz* [JEP], Colombia's transitional justice tribunal, was less supported when it dealt restorative rather than punitive sentences (Botero 2020, 317-318).

One study found that perceived effectiveness of the judiciary – measured by the belief that the judicial system "guarantee[s] a fair trial" and is likely to punish criminal – is related to increased support for the peace agreement (Montoya and Tellez 2020, 264, 273, 275). This

finding, taken with the preferment of retributive justice, indicates the possibility of a positive relationship between trust for the judicial branch and support for the peace agreement.

Hypothesis 3: People who trust the judiciary are more likely to support the peace agreement than those who do not trust the judiciary.

Trust for Elections

At a mere 37.44 per cent, the turnout for the 2016 referendum was the lowest Colombia had seen since the 2003 constitutional referendum (IFES Election Guide 2021) and is often cited as a factor behind the failure to pass the peace agreement (Revelo and Sottilotta 2020, 2-3). One explanation for low turnout in Colombia and other Latin American countries is perceived political corruption, and Colombia specifically may be especially vulnerable to low turnout because of its voluntary voting system (Carreras and Vera 2018, 87, 88).

Decreased political participation is not the only effect of perceived corruption, which also weakens trust in government institutions and satisfaction with democratic government (Carreras and Vera 2018, 87; Seligson 2002, 413, 423). Corruption negatively affects these areas even when the corrupt politician leads effectively and supports the community (Carreras and Vera 2018, 87). Because perceived corruption weakens attitudes towards political participation, government institutions, and democracy, it seems that low trust for elections will be associated with low support for the peace agreement and vice versa.

Hypothesis 4: People who trust the elections are more likely to support the peace agreement than those who do not trust the elections.

Trust for the FARC

The Havana peace talks initiated by Santos in 2012 were not the first time that peace between Colombia and the FARC was attempted, but every prior attempt at peace with the FARC had failed (Revelo and Sottilotta 2020, 2; Tellez 2019a, 832), despite the peace drawn between Colombia and other guerrilla groups, such as M-19 and the Popular Liberation Army [EPL] (García-Sánchez and Carlin 2020, 240).

Data from 2005 to 2014 indicates that less than four per cent of respondents claimed to trust the FARC. In 2016, when the peace agreement was finalized, trust increased to a mere 6.2 per cent (García-Sánchez and Carlin 2020, 242). This distaste for the FARC could be traced back to their violent reputation according to respondents in a separate survey (Revelo and Sottilotta 2020, 8).

The government made concessions to the FARC in exchange for demobilization and an end to the violence (Tellez 2019a, 832-833). The government operated under the assumption of sincerity on behalf of the FARC, so in this way, support for the peace agreement necessitates trust in the FARC.

Hypothesis 5: People who trust the FARC are more likely to support the peace agreement than persons who do not trust the FARC.

Belief that the FARC Will Demobilize

There was widespread disapproval of the peace agreement reintegration provisions (García-Sánchez and Carlin 2020, 240), which is unsurprising considering the lack of trust in the FARC. Of the provisions, the allowance and encouragement of FARC political participation as well as the approach to transitional justice were criticized most heavily (García-Sánchez and Carlin 2020, 240). The *Centro Democrático* in particular had been vocal in its opposition

of the allegedly lenient reintegration provisions since the beginning of the negotiations (García-Sánchez and Carlin 2020, 240; Revelo and Sottilotta 2020, 2-3).

The FARC was to enjoy the benefit of a guaranteed political voice and little jail time in exchange for their agreement to quick disarmament, which was one of the most significant provisions for Colombia during the negotiations (Tellez 2019a, 832-833). However, the process of quick disarmament is not one that can be viewed as a victory for Colombia or a success of the agreement if the public does not believe that the FARC will follow through.

Hypothesis 6: People who believe that the FARC will demobilize after the peace agreement are more likely to support the peace agreement than those who do not believe that the FARC will demobilize after the peace agreement.

Methods

To answer the question of how institutional trust relates to the 2016 Colombian peace agreement, I have used data from the 2016 AmericasBarometer, conducted by the Latin American Public Opinion Project [LAPOP], to create a multinomial logistic regression clustered by municipality (Table 1). The model includes 1,238 observations of six independent variables and explains approximately 30 per cent of peace agreement support. The six independent variables – trust in the legislature, executive, judiciary, elections, and FARC and the belief that the FARC will demobilize after the agreement – each correlate positively with support for the peace agreement (Table 2), supporting my hypotheses.

Support for the peace agreement is measured with data from question COLPROPAZ1B, which asks, "The government of President Juan Manuel Santos and the FARC signed a peace agreement. To what extent do you support this peace agreement?" The answers were originally on a one through seven scale. One indicated that the respondent has no support for the agreement and seven indicated that the respondent had a lot of support for the agreement (Latin American Public Opinion Project 2016) The variable was recoded to better reflect the data; now one through three represent "No" to support and four through seven represent "Yes."

The six independent variables were also recoded. The trust variables – trust in the legislature, executive, judiciary, elections, and FARC – were initially measured on the same one through seven scale as the peace agreement variable (Latin American Public Opinion Project 2016). After being recoded, one through three represent "No" to trust, four represents "Neutral" trust, and five through seven represent "Yes." The belief that the FARC will demobilize variable was originally coded on a scale of one to four with one representing demobilization as "Very Likely" and four representing demobilization as "Very Unlikely" (Latin American Public Opinion Project 2016). After the recoding, the FARC demobilization variable is now a dichotomous variable where one is "Unlikely" and two is "Likely."

In addition to the six independent variables, four demographic control variables were measured against support for the peace agreement. These include ethnicity, gender, level of education, and level of income. Despite the assumption that different circumstances and identities may affect a person's conflict experience, none of the control variables are statistically significant.

The control variables, except gender, were also recoded. Ethnicity was recoded so that one represents white, two represents mestizo, and three represents indigenous, black, mulatto, and other. Gender kept its initial coding where man is one and woman is two (Latin American Public Opinion Project 2016). Education is measured by years of schooling and recoded so that no schooling and one through 11 years of schooling is one and 12 or more years of schooling – which would signify some amount of post-secondary education – is two. Finally, level of income is measured through an income quartile.

Table 1. Logistic Regression

Support for Peace Agreement	Coefficient	Standard Error	z	P>z	[95% Confidence	Interval]
Trust in National Legislature	0.148	0.091	1.64	0.102	-0.029	0.326
Trust in Executive	1.004	0.117	8.55	0.000	0.774	1.23
Trust in Judiciary	0.272	0.103	2.64	0.008	0.070	0.475
Trust in Elections	0.237	0.089	2.65	0.008	0.062	0.412
Trust in FARC	0.730	0.147	4.98	0.000	0.443	1.018
Belief in FARC Demobilization	1.782	0.140	12.70	0.000	1.506	2.06
Ethnicity	0.117	0.086	1.36	0.175	-0.052	0.286
Gender	-0.044	0.115	-0.39	0.699	-0.269	0.181
Level of Education	0.230	0.162	1.43	0.154	-0.086	0.547
Income Quartile	0.021	0.069	0.31	0.76	-0.114	0.156
Constant	-6.064	0.385	-15.8	0.000	-6.818	-5.310
Pseudo R^2	0.3037					
47 clusters on municipality	*n* = 1,238					

Table 2. Variables

Variable	Label	Frequency	Percent
Support for the Peace Agreement	No	716	46.4
	Yes	827	53.6
	Total	**1,543**	**100**
Trust for the National Legislature	No	861	56.31
	Neutral	296	19.36
	Yes	372	24.33
	Total	**1,529**	**100**
Trust for the Executive	No	964	61.99
	Neutral	194	12.48
	Yes	397	25.53
	Total	**1,555**	**100**
Trust for the Judiciary	No	843	54.56
	Neutral	274	17.73
	Yes	428	27.7
	Total	**1,545**	**100**
Trust for Elections	No	883	57.04
	Neutral	294	18.99
	Yes	371	23.97
	Total	**1,548**	**100**
Trust in the FARC	No	1,351	87.9
	Neutral	90	5.86
	Yes	96	6.25
	Total	**1,537**	**100**
Belief that the FARC Will Demobilize	Demobilization is Unlikely	1,039	67.56
	Demobilization is Likely	499	32.44
	Total	**1,538**	**100**

Results and Discussion
Trust in the National Legislature

The trust in the national legislature variable originates from question B13 of the survey asking, "To what extent do you have confidence in the National Congress?" (Latin American Public Opinion Project 2016). The trust in the national legislature has a coefficient of 0.148, indicating that support for the peace agreement increases by 0.148 for every unit increase in trust in the national legislature. The variable approaches significance with a p-value of 0.102.

During the LAPOP survey conducted in 2016, only 24.33 per cent of 1,529 respondents reported having trust in their National Congress. Most respondents, 56.31 per cent, did not trust the national legislature (Table 2). The correlation between low trust in the legislature and decreased support for the peace agreement is a function of the public's perception of Congress's negotiation and implementation abilities.

Through the 2016 referendum, the public demonstrated to the legislature that they had failed the public's "implicit evaluation" (Montoya and Tellez 2020, 267) of their abilities as few showed at the polls and the agreement failed to pass (Revelo and Sottilotta 2020, 2; Tellez 2019a, 833). As previously discussed, the low trust in 2016 may be due to the absence of a majority party (Dávalos et al. 2018, 103), specifically because neither the *Partido de la U* in favor of the agreement or the *Centro Democrático* in opposition to the agreement held a majority. Colombia's past failures to draw a peace agreement with the FARC (Revelo and Sottilotta 2020, 2; Tellez 2019a, 832) may have been associated with the effectiveness of the legislature and thus also affected the public's trust.

Though low trust in the legislature may explain some of the lack of support for the agreement, the link between the two variables is still statistically insignificant, possibly due to political disinterest by the public (Revelo and Sottilotta 2020, 14). Such disinterest may not influence the executive and judicial branches' relations to the agreement as the executive and judiciary played clearer roles in developing and enforcing the peace agreement.

Trust in the Executive

The trust in the executive variable has its basis in question B21A: "To what extent do you have confidence in the president?" (Latin American Public Opinion Project 2016) and demonstrates statistical significance with a p-value of zero. The variable's coefficient provides for a positive relationship between trust in the executive and peace agreement support. For every unit increase in trust in the executive, support for the peace agreement increases by 1.004.

The significance and high coefficient indicate that a person's trust in the executive plays an important role in predicting their support for the peace agreement. This importance likely stems from the executive's role in implementing the peace agreement. Like the legislature, the executive was also responsible for negotiating and implementing the agreement, which may motivate the similarities between the variables. For example, the executive was also not well trusted by the public in 2016. Only 25.53 per cent of the 1,555 respondents who were asked question B21A reported confidence in the president (Table 2). Additionally, much like the relationship between trust in the legislature and support for the peace agreement, the relationship between trust in the executive and support for the peace agreement reflects the public's assessment of the government's ability to make peace. Just as the legislature failed the public's "implicit evaluation" (Montoya and Tellez 2020, 267), so did the executive.

Trust in the executive is a stronger indicator of support for the peace agreement than trust in the legislature and trust in the judiciary. This is likely because, though each branch was responsible for establishing peace, the actions of the executive office were most visible. This visibility is in part related to the more publicized presidential controversy, such as the deployment of the Colombian armed forces and the splintering of political parties due to the divisive nature of the negotiations (Liendo and Braithwaite 2018, 626; Tellez 2019a, 832).

Trust in the Judiciary

The trust in the judiciary variable is based on question B10A, which asks, "To what extent do you have confidence in the justice system?" (Latin American Public Opinion Project 2016). For every unit increase in the trust measured by this question, support for the peace agreement increases by 0.272. With a p-value of 0.008, these findings are statistically significant.

Like the other branches, the judiciary experienced low trust in 2016, when a mere 27.7 per cent of the 1,545 respondents to question B10A trusted the judiciary (Table 2). Trust in the judiciary is comparable to the trust observed for the legislature and executive as the judiciary was also responsible for part of peace process. The support for the peace agreement's relation to trust in the judiciary – like its relation to the other branches – indicates the public's perception of the institution's competence in fulfilling the promises of the peace

agreement. Therefore, the public's message to the legislature and executive through the 2016 referendum was addressed to the judiciary as well.

The judiciary is responsible for implementing transitional justice through the JEP, and the public has demonstrated a strong preference for retributive justice and punitive measures taken against ex-combatants (Botero 2020, 317-318; Revelo and Sottilotta 2020, 3; Tellez 2019a, 836) In this way, there is a clear relationship between what the public wants and how the judiciary can satisfy that want, which makes the link between the judiciary and the peace process both discernable and important to the public. Moreover, the political disinterest discussed with regards to the legislature likely did not have a large effect on trust in the judiciary. Even the politically disinterested described listening to what was said on the "radio" and "in social networks" in 2016 (Revelo and Sottilotta 2020, 14), making them susceptible to the spread of fear and hatred of ex-combatants, driving a preference for retributive justice which can only be achieved through the judiciary.

Trust in the Elections

Question B47A, asking "To what extent do you have confidence in the elections in this country?" (Latin American Public Opinion Project 2016), provides the basis for the trust in elections variable. For every unit increase in trust in elections, support for the peace agreement increases by 0.237. Because the p-value of the variable is 0.008, these findings are statistically significant.

While the variables previously discussed measure trust in government institutions and demonstrate the public's perception of the institutions' competency, trust in the country's elections is a function of trust in the government and is more closely related to perceived corruption. Just as trust in the legislature, executive, and judiciary was low in 2016, so was trust in the elections; only 23.97 per cent of the 1,548 people asked question B47A reported having trust in Colombia's elections (Table 2). This low trust in elections was reflected in the referendum, not by the success of the "No" vote but by the low turnout: 37.44 per cent compared to the average of 45.15 per cent turnout (IFES Election Guide 2021).

In its national elections, Colombia elects its president, Senate, and House of Representatives (IFES Election Guide 2021; Political Database of the Americas 2011). Accusations of both corrupt elections and corrupt conduct associated with those elected offices are widespread. Two presidents and a fourth of Congress were investigated for misconduct and abuse of power in 2013 (Gutiérrez 2013, 3), and there have been many other accusations of corruption in Colombia, so much so that anti-corruption was a focus of Colombia's 2018 presidential election (Grattan 2018; Revelo and Sottilotta 2020, 9). In 2016, perceived corruption led voters to stay home, contributing to the referendum's failure (Revelo and Sottilotta 2020, 2-3). With greater trust in Colombia's elections, support for the referendum would have been more likely, as corroborated by the coefficient and significance of the trust in elections variable.

Trust for the FARC

The FARC trust variable is based on survey question COLB60: "To what extent do you have confidence in the FARC?" (Latin American Public Opinion Project 2016). As determined by the coefficient, support for the peace agreement increases by 0.730 with each unit increase in trust in the FARC. The p-value of zero indicates that these results are significant.

Of all the trust variables examined in the model, the FARC are by far the least trusted. A mere 6.25 per cent of Colombians trusted the FARC, whereas 87.9 per cent decidedly did not. The trust in the FARC variable again stands out with respect to neutral respondents. Only 5.86 per cent of respondents to question COLB60 reported neutrality, compared to an average of 17.14 per cent of neutral respondents to the other trust variables (Table 2).

The FARC began as a group "dedicated to fighting for Colombia's rural poor people" (Gentry and Spencer 2010, 454), and the land reform advocated for by the FARC was a popular policy in 2016 (Tellez 2019a, 836). Still, the FARC has been consistently distrusted (García-Sánchez and Carlin 2020, 242) as the murders, sexual violence, forced displacement, kidnappings, drug trade involvement, and other human rights violations associated with the group undermined its political beliefs (Esparza et al. 2020, 1246; Gutiérrez and Thomson 2020, 34).

Belief that the FARC Will Demobilize

To measure belief in FARC demobilization, respondents were asked question COLPROPAZ2B: "How likely do you think that after the signing of the peace agreement between the government and the FARC, this guerrilla group will demobilize definitively?". Like trust in the FARC, belief in FARC demobilization is statistically significant. The survey results for FARC demobilization are less dramatic than those relating to trust in the FARC: 32.44 per cent believed demobilization was likely, and 67.56 per cent did not (Table 2).

The factors affecting trust in the FARC also affect belief in FARC demobilization because belief in demobilization is a function of trust. One factor that likely impacts belief in demobilization more directly is the failure of previous attempts to make peace with the FARC. For example, the effort to reach peace with the FARC in 1998 was unsuccessful after the FARC continued its aggression even as the peace negotiations began (Tellez 2019a, 832). Ultimately, those who trust the FARC and believe they will disarm are more likely to support the agreement.

Conclusion

Many promises made in the peace agreement have not come into fruition. The government has failed to bring infrastructure, schools, and electricity to rural areas, and coca production and drug trafficking continue (Casey 2019; Revelo and Sottilotta 2020, 1). This difficultly in implementing peace has led to public skepticism of the agreement (Revelo and Sottilotta 2020, 1) and continued distrust of the government (Revelo and Sottilotta 2020, 13).

The FARC is also the target of continued distrust. As of 2019, 3,000 ex-combatants had again taken up arms (Casey 2019), arguably justifying the low trust in the FARC and the prediction that the FARC would not definitively demobilize in 2016. Violence has also persisted despite the official end to the conflict. By 2019, over 500 community organizers and activists had been killed, and 210,000 people had been displaced (Casey 2019). The Human Rights Watch (2021) reported that FARC dissidents have continued to commit acts of violence while some FARC ex-combatants have been assassinated (Esparza et al. 2020, 1242).

Future research on this topic should include more rural analysis, as the LAPOP survey that this research is based on has a small rural sample size. A greater focus on Colombia's rural population is necessary because experience with violence greatly changes a person's conflict experience, and those who witnessed much of the violence during the conflict and who now need the most support are primarily from rural areas.

The peace agreement has not been entirely successful, but there has been some progress: approximately 23 per cent of the agreement's 578 provisions had been fully implemented by 2019 (Casey 2019). Establishing peace takes time (Revelo and Sottilotta 2020, 2), but for some, the success of the agreement is the difference between security and vulnerability, life and death. For these reasons, the government must continue working to implement the agreement while fostering trust with the people.

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