

UC Berkeley

CEGA Working Papers

Title

Elite Political Cues and Attitude Formation in Post-Conflict Contexts

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/5ss54329>

Authors

Garbiras-Díaz, Natalia
García-Sánchez, Miguel
Matanock, Aila

Publication Date

2020-09-10

DOI

10.26085/C3G010

Series Name: WPS
Paper No.: 133
Issue Date: 10 Sep 2020

Elite Political Cues and Attitude Formation in Post-Conflict Contexts

Natalia Garbiras-Díaz, Miguel García-Sánchez, and Aila Matanock



CEGA

Center for Effective Global Action

Working Paper Series

Center for Effective Global Action
University of California



This paper is posted at the eScholarship Repository, University of California. http://escholarship.org/uc/cega_wps Copyright © 2020 by the author(s).

The CEGA Working Paper Series showcases ongoing and completed research by faculty affiliates of the Center. CEGA Working Papers employ rigorous evaluation techniques to measure the impact of large-scale social and economic development programs, and are intended to encourage discussion and feedback from the global development community.

Recommended Citation:

Garbiras-Díaz, Natalia, García-Sánchez, Miguel, Matanock, Aila (2020): Elite Political Cues and Attitude Formation in Post-Conflict Contexts. CEGA Working Paper Series No. WPS-133. Center for Effective Global Action. University of California, Berkeley. Text. <https://doi.org/10.26085/C3G010>

Title: Elite Political Cues and Attitude Formation in Post-Conflict Contexts
Author: Natalia Garbiras-Díaz, Miguel García-Sánchez, and Aila Matanock
Date: July 24, 2020

ABSTRACT

Citizens are often asked to evaluate peace agreements seeking to end civil conflicts, by voting on referendums or the negotiating leaders or, even when not voting, deciding whether to cooperate with the implementation of policies like combatant reintegration. In this paper, we assess how citizens form attitudes towards the provisions in peace agreements. These contexts tend to have high polarization, and citizens are asked to weigh in on complex policies, so we theorize that citizens will use cues from political elites with whom they have affinity, and, without these cues, information will have less effect. We assess our theory using survey experiments in Colombia. We find citizens rely on political elites' cues to form their opinion on a peace agreement's provisions, with the direction depending on the citizen's affinity with the political elites. Additional information about these policies has little effect. The paper suggests that even these high stakes decisions can be seen as political decisions as usual.

Keywords: peace agreements; attitudes; elite cues; FARC; Colombia

JEL Classifications: D74, D91, F51, O54

Contact information for author(s)

1. Natalia Garbiras-Díaz, PhD candidate at UC Berkeley, nataliagarbirasdiaz@berkeley.edu
2. Miguel García-Sánchez, PhD, Associate Professor at Universidad de los Andes, m.garcia268@uniandes.edu.co.
3. Aila Matanock, PhD, Associate Professor at UC Berkeley, matanock@berkeley.edu.

Author Acknowledgements: This project was approved by UC Berkeley's Institutional Review Board protocol #2017-02-9601. A pre-analysis plan for the survey experiment was registered in EGAP #20171104AB. We thank Alexander de Juan, Gabe Lenz, Katerina Linos, Alison Post, Julia Raven, Jake Shapiro, Laura Stoker, and participants at APSA 2018, EGAP 22, and PSE's Conflict Workshop for excellent comments and suggestions. All errors or omissions are our own.

Citation Information

Garbiras-Díaz, N, M García-Sánchez, and A Matanock (2020). *Using Political Cues for Attitude Formation in Post-Conflict Contexts* (ESOC Working Paper No. 19). Empirical Studies of Conflict Project. Retrieved [date], from <http://esoc.princeton.edu/wp19>.

1 INTRODUCTION

Since World War II, intrastate wars and other civil conflicts have produced many more deaths than interstate wars (Fearon and Laitin 2003; Pettersson, Högladh, and Öberg 2019) and affected more than half of all countries (e.g. Blattman and Miguel 2010). Most civil conflicts now end with negotiated settlements rather than victory by one side (e.g. Toft 2009), but many settlements fail, often within the implementation period of the agreement (Collier et al. 2003; Jarland et al. 2020). The terms of the settlement matter significantly to its success—for example, power sharing provisions (Hartzell and Hoddie 2007) and political participation provisions for ex-combatants (Matanock 2017) may increase the stability of settlements seeking to end civil conflicts—but their implementation also matters substantially (Nilsson 2012).

Public opinion is a crucial component of settlement success and post-conflict stability. Citizens' attitudes matter because they are involved in peace processes, particularly implementation, in all cases. Sometimes they are asked to weigh in directly on these agreements, including their terms, through referendums or elections of those who negotiated the agreement. For example, Colombian voters narrowly rejected a 2016 plebiscite on a peace agreement with the *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia* (FARC), and then voted on the leaders who negotiated and passed a revised version in the Congress later that year (Carlin, McCoy, and Subotic 2019).¹ But, even when citizens are not asked to vote directly on agreements, their support still shapes implementation, as they decide whether to cooperate with the terms (e.g. OHCHR 2009). Existing work has found that settlements that lack civilian support, or indeed where it falters during implementation, are likely to fail (Nilsson 2012).

But, how do citizens form attitudes about peace processes? In this paper, we posit that cit-

¹Some presidential candidates claimed elections served as a second vote on the peace agreement; see, for instance http://caracol.com.co/radio/2017/02/13/nacional/1487011743_960284.html.

izens' support for provisions that are part of complex policy changes in these highly-polarized contexts is shaped by elite cues. Our theory's basic premise is that acquiring information on complex policies is costly, and citizens will rely on heuristics such as political elite's cues, especially in highly-polarized contexts (Sniderman, Brody, and Tetlock 1993; Kahneman 2011). Post-conflict scenarios are just such contexts: they are highly-polarized settings, and the peace agreements are complex policies. We hypothesize that support for specific terms or policy provisions emerging from peace processes will be contingent on particular elites' endorsements. Politicians often provide statements about provisions emerging from peace processes, at times even centering campaigns or platforms on supporting or opposing specific related policies, and so these cues are a common occurrence. Additionally, we explore whether providing citizens with more information about specific components of the peace agreement will make them less reliant on elite cues, but we hypothesize that additional information will not have the same effect on public opinion as it is not anchored to elites on which citizens have already formed beliefs.

Others hypothesize that peace processes are unique settings with very different dynamics from other political processes, but, in contrast, our theory argues that public opinion is politics as normal even in the extraordinary circumstances of post-conflict contexts. Scholars hypothesizing about public opinion on civil conflict and peace processes often use a model wherein conflict changes everything from the role of emotion to decision-making dynamics (e.g. Kalyvas 2006; Wood 2003). Consider two prevalent models: first, citizens are at times seen as war-weary and therefore support any valid peace process, collectively observing and rewarding all compliance with implementation by combatant parties. Through elections, voters can observe whether politicians are respecting the rules and sanction them if not by throwing them out of office.² In this view, citizens are likely to support peace processes and their terms, and, subsequently, they provide the mechanism for "self-enforcing" agreements. Second, citizens at times are seen as opposing any compromise in

²See models developed by Przeworski (2005) and Fearon (2011), as well as, to some extent, in the civil war context Wantchekon (2004).

politically divided contexts, amplifying elite divisions and spoiling peace processes.³ In this view, citizens are unlikely to support peace processes and their terms, and, subsequently, they provide a mechanism for undermining agreements. While we find some evidence that citizens are generally supportive of peace in our case—perhaps due to war weariness, the first view, above—we believe that politics as usual such as elite cues can explain public opinion even in these extraordinary contexts. Our contrasting view explains significant variation in support for different terms, as implementation occurs, something these other models generally cannot explain (see Appendix G).

We test our theory using a survey experiment during the implementation of Colombia’s peace process between the government and the FARC. Working with a partnering organization implementing a survey in a sample representative of Colombia’s conflict areas, we examine views of citizens closest to the conflict, those who would perhaps be most likely to see the peace process as different from another political process. We test for the effect of elite cues and other information on voters’ preferences toward provisions of the settlement, dependent on their political affinity with elites.⁴

The data show that citizens’ attitudes toward specific provisions that emerge from the 2016 peace agreement are shaped by cues from political elites, and the direction of this effect is contingent on individual affinity with political elites. These effects are present when cues come from public figures representing highly polarized stances on the peace agreement. Moreover, we find that providing additional information on the content of the provisions does not attenuate the effect

³In “divided societies,” groups with deeply divergent views are unlikely to reach a consensus on the limits to which governments should be held as described by Weingast (1997) and Mansfield and Snyder (1995, 2002), and this is likely in post-conflict states that often have weak and polarized civil society unable to neutrally monitor and incentivize compliance as noted in Wantchekon (2004).

⁴This strategy follows previous studies in the literature on American political behavior and public opinion; see Bullock (2011) for a review, and also see Zaller (1992) and Arceneaux and Kolodny (2009).

of elite cues or otherwise shape attitudes.

Understanding citizen attitude formation during peace processes has several implications. First, this work contributes to a growing body of experimental literature on public opinion about peace processes, which often focuses on the negotiation not the implementation period, although both are crucial to understand (Assouline and Trager 2017, 2015; Fabbe, Hazlett, and Sinmazdemir 2019; Kao and Redlich Revkin 2018; Matanock and Garbiras-Díaz 2018; Tellez 2019; Haas and Khadka 2020; Masullo and Morisi 2019). In examining citizen support, this project experimentally tests whether attitudes in these highly-politicized contexts when complex policies are being enacted are politics as usual. A large body of literature in American and comparative political behavior has shown that citizens often adopt elites' positions, even on controversial policies about which they express strong opinions (e.g., Brader et al. 2020; Broockman and Butler 2017; Matanock and García-Sánchez 2017; Lenz 2012; Cohen 2003). But, as also noted above, most of the models on citizens in post-conflict contexts reflect other decision-making processes, and there is reason to believe that citizens may form attitudes differently: for example, as fighting slows, the status quo looks more appealing than an uncertain peace process prone to failure, leading broad rejection of these policies (see Walter 1997). This paper therefore contributes to the literature on public opinion and civil conflict by asking whether citizens evaluate these situations differently from other instances of policy change.

Second, as more countries are affected by civil conflict and seek to end it, settlements are more likely, and they increasingly feature citizens with a direct vote in settlement referendums and, later, on the leaders negotiating them. For example, twenty one countries with ongoing civil conflict hold regular elections, and some even are democracies such as India and the Philippines.⁵ Understanding what influences citizens' attitudes toward peace agreements also speaks to a growing literature on inclusion in peace processes—and how public opinion may move during the implementation

⁵The active civil conflicts count is from the UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset (v. 19.1); democracy levels are from the 2018 Polity IV scores.

period in particular (e.g. Nilsson 2012). This paper shows that citizens seem to split along partisan lines and ratify elite deals or divisions, thus an elite deal remains the crucial component of a stable agreement, even when citizens weigh in.

Finally, this paper has potential implications for agreements more broadly. When leaders sign agreements, whether domestic or international, they have negotiated specific provisions through interactions with other stakeholders within the contextual constraints. These provisions can affect settlement stability directly. However, such provisions form part of a larger overall network of compromise between parties and tend to have complex implications for policy. This paper suggests that messaging and how politicians communicate these tradeoffs, and complexities, can substantially influence the prospects of any agreement.

2 HOW DO CITIZENS FORM THEIR ATTITUDES ABOUT PROVISIONS INCLUDED IN PEACE AGREEMENTS?

Peace processes are composed of compromises between various actors, and, as described above, citizens influence these provisions by voting on them directly, and, during implementation, voting on the leaders who negotiated them and deciding whether to cooperate with policy changes.⁶ But how do citizens form attitudes about the provisions? In this section, we present our theory of citizen attitude formation in post-conflict settings, deriving a set of hypotheses to test using an experimental design.

Much of our theory suggests that peace processes match some dynamics identified in other political processes, drawing on arguments made and tested in the U.S. context (e.g., Broockman

⁶We make a distinction between peace agreements overall and the provisions that emerge from them, where the latter are the policy changes that operationalize the transition from war to peace on the dimensions agreed by the signatories, and these provisions are what are put into policy often piecemeal.

and Butler 2017; Lenz 2012; Cohen 2003), but it sits in contrast to other theory that suggests that different dynamics may be at play in post-conflict contexts. First, citizens' attitudes may simply be more fixed. For instance, negative emotions can be heightened, as noted above, which may make reconciliation difficult and citizens less receptive to even elite cues (Bar-Tal 2009). Any party allegiances or other normal political dynamics may be ignored in stalemate settlements as some see the status quo as better than failure-prone agreements (e.g. Walter 1997). Or, alternatively, these normal political dynamics may be ignored if citizens are war-weary and desperate for any agreement (Zartman 1995). Second, given mixed messages about the expected costs and benefits of peace agreements, citizens may have strong incentives to sort through information on its merit, rather than relying on cognitive shortcuts, which we describe below. Supporting provisions in settlements therefore may be a different type of decision as voters are not just deciding on policies or candidates but fundamentally reshaping their state. While initial work on trends in preferences in Colombia suggests that citizens' attitudes reflect prominent political leaders (Matanock and García-Sánchez 2017; Liendo and Braithwaite 2018), the formation of political attitudes is new in these post-conflict contexts, where we develop and test a theory of normal politics.

2.1 Elite Cues:

First, we draw on existing studies in political behavior showing that acquiring information is costly, that most citizens are uninformed even on important issues, and then that they often rely on cues or other heuristics to form their opinions and make decisions (Tversky and Kahneman 1974; Kuklinski and Quirk 2000). Underpinning these ideas are theories about when people will use cognitive shortcuts versus when they will invest more effort in processing information (Sniderman, Brody, and Tetlock 1993; Kahneman 2011). Citizens are likely to use cognitive shortcuts when they are distracted, when they must put cognitive effort elsewhere, and when the decisions are complex (Lupia 1994). A growing body of research indicates that citizens often face heavy cognitive loads (e.g. Mullainathan and Shafir 2013; Fayol, Lardy, and Lemaire 1994).

An important cognitive shortcut that can facilitate attitude formation is cues from *polarized political elites*. Elites provide cues that can either lead citizens to transfer their affect about the elite to the policy or to update their information about the policy (Bullock 2011; Cohen 2003).⁷ Polarized political elites (henceforth, political elites), in particular, supply clear cues because their split positions provide salience on the issue and increase information in an existing cognitive context (Levendusky 2010, p. 114). In our theory, polarization provides for the information environment in which political elites' cleavages manifest and become starker, and, thus, where we expect their cues to be clearer and more informative for citizens to form their attitudes. Therefore, citizens can use cues from political elites in particular in forming their attitudes.

We contend that the conditions during peace processes are ripe for the use of cognitive shortcuts, both due to the complexity of the issues and heavy cognitive loads. Even as fighting winds down,⁸ citizens often centrally focus on survival as they face adverse economic conditions (Voors et al. 2012). Moreover, the pros and cons of the policies emerging from peace agreements are confusing or simply unknown to average citizens as the agreements are complex and based on compromise between opposing parties. Thus, citizens will likely rely on cognitive shortcuts to simplify decisions.

We posit that post-conflict settings tend to be characterized by political fragmentation and ideological debate around the issue of war settlement and peace. Political elites who have staked out strong positions during or after the conflict send clear signals through campaigns, public statements, or official endorsements.⁹ Moreover, these political elites are deeply polarized as they often emerge from fighting factions (e.g., ethnic polarization, see Montalvo and Reynal-Querol 2005) or emerge within these factions in the post-conflict context to raise new issues such as whether to take

⁷We explore which of these mechanisms likely produces our findings below.

⁸Peace agreements often occur under stalemates (e.g., Zartman 1995).

⁹Such cues, for instance, were common prior to the 2016 plebiscite held on the peace agreement in Colombia.

dovish or hawkish approaches to negotiations (e.g. Feldmann 2019). We therefore define political elites in these contexts as politicians who take a polarized stance on the peace agreement.

Political elite cues (Hypothesis 1): We hypothesize that citizens will rely on these elites' cues in the form of endorsements in order to form their opinion about provisions in settlements.

2.2 Affinity:

We argue that the influence of elite cues depends on partisan feelings about particular political elites. We expect that in the polarized context of civil conflict, many will hold strong positions on these elites, which shape citizens' reactions to their cues.

We expect individual affinity with a political elite, stemming from shared beliefs and values, ideological proximity, expectations of common interests, or less "rational" reasons such as the elite's charisma or style,¹⁰ to activate and direct the effect of cues on attitudes. Elite cues on the costs and benefits of peace agreement provisions in economic, legal, and even emotional terms are therefore not just clear to citizens due to high elite polarization, but they are also viewed as either positive or negative, perhaps especially acutely when individual predispositions are deeply held (Levendusky 2010; Druckman, Peterson, and Slothuus 2013).

Affinity (H2): We hypothesize that when a citizen has *affinity* for a political elite, she will *increase* her support for those proposals endorsed by such political figure. Conversely, endorsements by elites to whom a citizen has an *aversion* will *decrease* the citizen's support for the endorsed proposal.

¹⁰See Ortiz-Ayala and García-Sánchez 2014; Beck and Jennings 1991; we do not assess how affinity develops but assume it exists.

2.3 Additional Information:

We are also interested in the extent to which additional information shapes the process of attitude formation. If cue-taking compensates for knowledge, increasing factual information could offer an alternative mechanism for individuals to assess policy.¹¹ However, following the literature on cue-taking, we anticipate that citizens prefer the clearer signals of political elite cues more than additional information of any kind in these contexts because these cues more easily convey either affect or the policy's pros and cons, producing a less costly and effort-intensive path (Cohen 2003; Druckman, Peterson, and Slothuus 2013).

Additional Information (H3): We hypothesize that individuals with more information about a proposal will rely less on political elite cues to form their opinions.¹² This would be an interactive effect between political elite cues and affinity and additional information (see Table 1). We do not anticipate additional information will have the same strong effect as political elite cues, however.

Overall, we expect the following in terms of attitudes toward policies emerging from the peace process:¹³

¹¹Indeed, in Colombia, some argued an information campaign could have changed attitudes and, potentially, the 2016 plebiscite's outcome (e.g. González Posso 2016, Lindarte 2016 and Wills 2016).

¹²Like similar experiments, we may underestimate the effect of providing citizens with additional information if they are already knowledgeable (Druckman and Leeper 2012), but we discuss how little information respondents likely have on the specific provisions below.

¹³We have registered these hypotheses in our pre-analysis plan.

Table 1: *Expected Effects of Endorsement by i) Affinity with Elite; and ii) Additional Information about the Proposal*

Political elites

Affinity with Endorser/Addt'l Information	<i>No information</i>	<i>Information</i>
<i>Affinity</i>	✓ (↑↑)	X (or ↑)
<i>Aversion</i>	✓ (↓↓)	X (or ↓)

Note: Where ↑↑ represents strong *increase* in support; ↑ some *increase* in support; ↓↓ strong *decrease* in support; and ↓ some *decrease* in support. A ✓ represents that we expect to observe an effect and an X that we do not expect to observe an effect.

2.4 How do elite cues work?

So far, we have theorized that cues, in the form of political elite endorsements, serve as cognitive shortcuts in highly polarized contexts for citizens to form attitudes about settlement provisions. However, we are also interested in disentangling two possible mechanisms through which these cues influence attitude formation.

First, political elite cues can transfer the attitudes that citizens have about a politician to a policy under an affect mechanism. In other words, feelings, likes and dislikes, can shift from political relevant figures to provisions using judgemental shortcuts (Sniderman, Brody, and Tetlock 1993). Under this logic, citizens decide whether they support the provision based on the sentiment provoked by political elites, rather than additional information about the provision’s outcomes or some other dimension of the policy (Lodge and Taber 2005; Valentino, Hutchings, and White 2002). Transferring affect can be especially efficient, easier than weighing information (Slovic et al. 2007, p. 1336), in highly polarized contexts as citizens tend to hold strong emotional ties to political elites and can then form an attitude toward a provision without weighing information on its pros and cons.

Second, political elite cues can allow citizens to update their beliefs on the beneficiaries of provisions (for example, themselves, the government, ex-combatants, or other actors). Under this logic, citizens can make an efficient decision with the help of a heuristic—e.g., an elite endorsement (Lupia 1994; Mondak 1993; Kuklinski and Quirk 2000)—without becoming fully informed. The mechanism is the conveyance of information through the cue, however, rather than affect.

These two competing mechanisms are observationally equivalent on some dimensions—i.e. both use political elite cues as a cognitive shortcut—but differ on others. We posit that if citizens use elites cues to update their beliefs about the beneficiaries of the provision under consideration, they are likely receiving information, rather than transferring affect. Again, though, in both cases, political elite cues should have an effect on support.

3 THE CONTEXT OF THE COLOMBIAN PEACE AGREEMENT

Colombia offers a unique opportunity to test our theory during the implementation of a debated peace agreement in a post-conflict context. The role of voters is clear in this case. In 2016, citizens voted on and narrowly rejected the final agreement negotiated to end a conflict of over fifty years between the FARC and the government. A revised settlement was ratified in Congress later that year after incorporating a set of the changes suggested by the opposition. The peace agreement and its provisions have been slowly implemented since. Citizens continue to factor into the process by, for example, voting on the legislators making decisions about implementation and otherwise participating in policy changes that are being passed piecemeal. Each provision requires approval in Congress either as constitutional reforms or regular laws.

Despite their role, citizens still have little information about the agreements' provisions due to its complex nature. The initial accord was nearly 300 pages long and filled with technical language about the provisions. Parts of the peace agreement were then enacted into law while others were effectively opposed and altered. Understanding the pros and cons of particular provisions, and the

peace agreement overall, demands considerable cognitive effort. Citizens, not surprisingly, then, have a low level of knowledge on the peace agreement and its provisions. For instance, in our survey only 14.4% of citizens could correctly identify the cap on prison sentences for those judged on conflict-related crimes in a special court, despite this being a contentious issue. Both the cues and the other information we provide in our experimental questions therefore tends to be new to individuals who know little about specific provisions included in the peace agreement.¹⁴

Elites remain polarized around the provisions included in the peace agreement during implementation. The coalition led by the president who negotiated the peace agreement, Juan Manuel Santos, has expressed consistent support for the peace accord. The coalition led by his predecessor, Álvaro Uribe, still questions the legitimacy of the final settlement and has systematically sought to hinder implementation. Recent work has shown that existing polarization amongst Santos and Uribe is correlated with citizens' tolerance of the FARC (Mun et al. 2019). Santos and Uribe have thus been clear representatives of two polarized stances on this issue: those who support the peace process, versus those who oppose it, respectively.¹⁵ Observational evidence suggested that when Uribe increased his criticisms against the peace process, his followers took more radical stances on issues such as a negotiated peace and forgiveness and reconciliation with former combatants (Gaviria, Ávila, and García-Sánchez 2019).

Existing work has largely focused on the negotiation stage, not the crucial implementation stage, but even those studies have not yet experimentally examined the role of elite cues. On the plebiscite, journalists suggested that Uribe's charisma and opposition to signing the settlement, as

¹⁴Questions about knowledge like the special court have been used in other survey experiments as manipulation checks on the novelty of information provided to subjects (see for instance Ahler 2014); however, unfortunately, due to the question order, we could not directly assess the extent to which our vignettes provided respondents with new or specifically surprising information.

¹⁵Political elites are so deeply divided that they even disagree on whether to call the violence an armed conflict or not; see La Silla Vacía (2019).

well as misinformation during the “NO” campaign, shaped public opinion and the narrow negative vote in 2016.¹⁶ Observational studies draw similar conclusions about the role of prominent political figures in shaping public opinion.¹⁷ Our paper contributes to this work by systematically testing these forces using experimental evidence on the role of political elite cues played, but we focus on the implementation phase, during which public opinion again took center stage, potentially shaped by similar forces.

The essential role of citizens in shaping the stability of the peace agreement is again coming to the forefront during the implementation process. The results of the 2018 elections reconfigured the views of the peace process among those in charge. Opponents gained the upper hand, and, as the provisions from the peace agreement were set to be implemented piecemeal, the implementation slowed. For instance, to date, many of the provisions that had to be approved in Congress have been either voted against or not even been included in the agenda (Kroc Institute 2019).¹⁸

4 RESEARCH DESIGN

We test our hypotheses with an endorsement experiment, where we randomize (1) political elite cues and, thus, whether subjects receive an endorsement from an elite with whom they have affinity; and, (2) additional information about two different provisions that emerged from the peace agreement and that were in the implementation phase during our study of this post-conflict con-

¹⁶See some examples of journalistic accounts [here](#) and [here](#).

¹⁷E.g. Liendo and Braithwaite (2018), Matanock and García-Sánchez (2017), Masullo and Morisi (2019), and Hazlett and Parente (2020).

¹⁸This has also translated to increasing vulnerability of ex-combatants who are part of the reincorporation program: in 2020, more than 24 ex-combatants have been killed and many more internally displaced due to threats by other armed actors; the government has not guaranteed their safety, and, even more concerning, military members have allegedly been involved in some of those executions; see [here](#).

text.¹⁹

4.1 The sample

We embedded the experimental questions in a 2017 survey of a special sample representative of areas of civil conflict in Colombia. The sample selected adults living in the territories where the government is running development plans, known as PDETs, as part of the peace agreement with the FARC.²⁰ While the sample selection was shaped by donor interest in these areas, the peace process' implementation is especially high stakes in these territories, making it a hard test for our theory. Based on the discussion in Section 2, the incentives to become informed about the peace agreement, including its specific provisions, should increase as citizens perceive direct effects on their lives. These citizens are more likely to be eligible for programs introduced by peace agreements potentially increasing their support for new rural development, increased political representation, etc., but they may also have been affected by conflict potentially shaping their views about programs such as reconciliation. However, due to the direct effect on these citizens' lives in either case, they should be most willing to assess and form attitudes on these provisions, potentially by obtaining and sorting through information rather than relying on political elite cues. We therefore are not suggesting there is consensus on whether these citizens should be more or less favorable toward the peace process, and its implementation,²¹ just that residents in these areas

¹⁹We cannot directly manipulate individual affinity with the endorser, but, as we discuss later, we block on this variable for the treatment assignment.

²⁰The sampling frame was the 170 PDET municipalities where the Agency for the Renewal of the Territory will work on projects defined in the settlement; see [Decree 893 from May 28, 2017](#).

²¹Some of the literature has found that exposure to violence is associated with more dovish positions (Weintraub, Vargas, and Flores 2015), but other literature has found these associations not to be robust (Hazlett and Parente 2020). Still other work has found conflict-affected citizens do not necessarily favor the continuation of war and, instead, are more interested in truth and reparation which may occur through a peace process (Rettberg, Kiza, and Forer 2008).

are likely to most carefully consider the provisions. Our survey sample therefore is a difficult population in which to detect effects of elites cues. We also show the comparison of this sample to a nationally-representative one.²² The final sample consisted of 1,391 respondents. Fieldwork took place between October and December of 2017.

4.2 The proposals under study

We detail the proposals in the vignettes of our experiment, but, first, we overview existing variation in public support for provisions that emerge from the settlement between the Colombian government and the FARC, which are the policies being debated and potentially implemented during this broader post-conflict period.

4.2.1 *Variation in support for provisions included in the peace agreement*

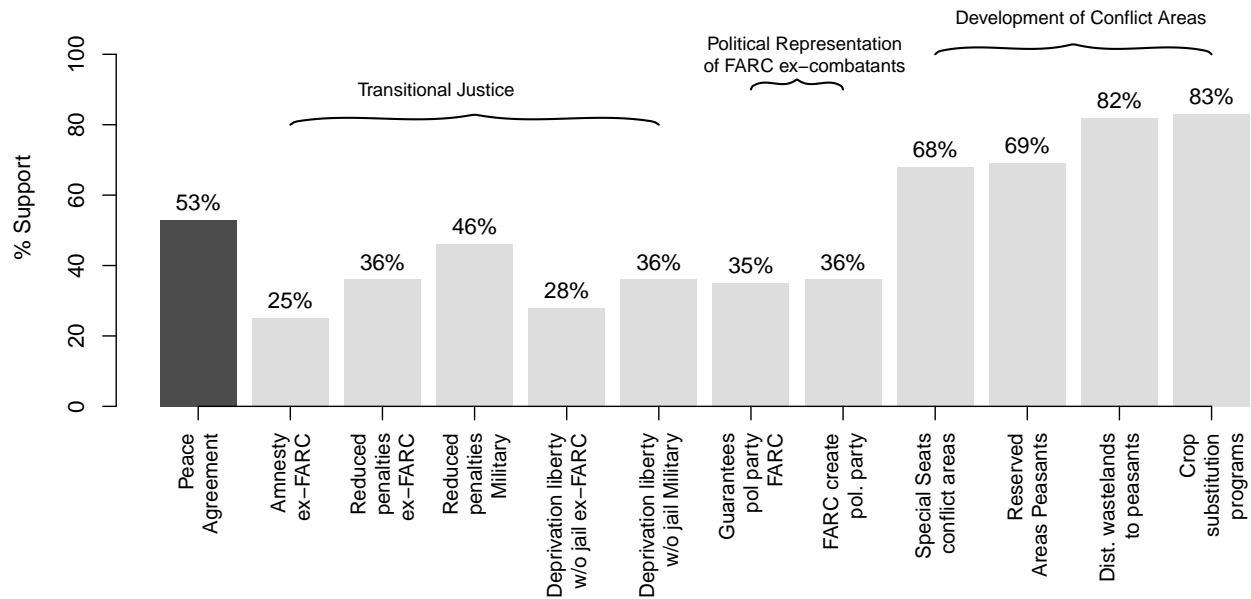
Attitudes vary considerably across provisions that emerge from the peace agreement. During the implementation phase, from 2017, a year after the settlement was signed, Colombians who support the overall agreement decreased slightly compared to the negotiation phase (2015): 65% to 53%,²³ while support for provisions regarding transitional justice and the political representation of FARC remains lower than that of the overall agreement. The only provisions for which support is higher than the overall agreement are on rural development (see Figure 1).

The variation in individual attitudes towards specific provisions of the peace agreement reinforces the questions of how citizens form their opinions about the often complex policies that emerge from and are implemented after the settlement and what sources of information they use.

²²Table A1 in Appendix A compares a 2016 nationally-representative survey and this 2017 special sample survey of the 170 prioritized municipalities. Note that, as expected, respondents in our survey live in municipalities more exposed to violence across different measures.

²³Notice, however, that the wording of the question also changed from asking about the peace process to the settlement.

Figure 1: Percentage of individuals who support the peace agreement and its specific provisions



Note: Respondents are coded as supporting the provision if their level of support ranges between 5 to 7, on a 1 to 7 scale, where 1 = “Not at all” and 7= “A lot”, to the following questions: *colpropaz1b*, *colpact1*, *colpact17a*, *colpact17b*, *colpact18a*, *colpact18b*, *colpact11*, *colpact8*, *colpact9*, *colpact10* and *colpact19*. See the Appendix for the exact wording of the questions.

4.2.2 The proposals included in the vignettes

We presented each respondent with two provisions from the settlement that were in the implementation process, either in legalization process or just becoming law, and that were not known in detail to the respondents²⁴ Former president Santos, who negotiated the original peace agreement, supported one provision; his predecessor, Uribe, supported the other (which revised what had been in the original agreement). These two provisions thus provide within-subject variation in terms of

²⁴We confirmed this in our pilot, where most respondents claimed to be unfamiliar with the provisions. Respondents may be more likely to turn to elite cues with these unfamiliar policies. But we want to assess this dynamic given that even in these cases, it may not be politics as usual in these post-conflict contexts. Future studies might evaluate the effects on more familiar policies especially in light of our findings.

the affinity with the two political elites.

1. *Jurisdicción Especial para la Paz*: This provision was set to establish the Special Tribunal for Transitional Justice (called JEP, for its Spanish acronym) to investigate, prosecute and punish crimes committed in the civil conflict. JEP's judges would determine whether crime perpetrators can receive amnesty or a reduced sentence, in part depending on their confessions. The JEP's creation was a central provision in the peace agreement, with support among negotiators, including Santos, but it was also contentious. The tribunal started operating in March 2018, after our survey, but has faced a series of political hurdles, many of them initiated by *Centro Democrático*, Uribe's party.
2. *Circunscripciones Especiales de Paz*: This provision was set to create a special district in Congress, composed of sixteen seats, reserved for the areas of the country most affected by civil conflict. This district would provide more political representation to regions where the state has been absent. The peace agreement stated that only indigenous communities, social movements, and groups of citizens would be able to register candidates to compete for these special seats, but Uribe, along with other opposition leaders, proposed instead that any party could compete for these seats. The revised proposal failed to receive the needed majority in a congressional vote in November 2017, just after our survey.

4.3 Randomization of treatments

We study the extent to which individuals rely on elite cues to form opinions about complex provisions, presenting survey respondents with vignettes about elites' positions on two different provisions included in the peace agreement. Each participant thus received a description of two proposals, with randomized assignment for each to:

1. An endorsement by one of the following:
 - No elite cue (control).

- Santos or Uribe (political elites), depending on the proposal. As discussed, we selected two political actors who have clear positions on issues in the peace process, representing much of the polarization in Colombia (Matanock and García-Sánchez 2017).
2. An introductory paragraph with additional information about the provision (treatment) or not (control).

Table 2: *Matrix of treatments for both proposals*

Information treat Santos						
Santos Elite Cue Treat	No Info		Info		Total	
	No.	Cell %	No.	Cell %	No.	Cell %
No cue	233	25.2	245	26.5	478	51.7
Santos	217	23.5	230	24.9	447	48.3
Total	450	48.6	475	51.4	925	100.0

Information treat Uribe						
Uribe Elite Cue Treat	No Info		Info		Total	
	No.	Cell %	No.	Cell %	No.	Cell %
No cue	227	25.0	212	23.3	439	48.3
Uribe	224	24.6	246	27.1	470	51.7
Total	451	49.6	458	50.4	909	100.0

For each proposal, we have a 2×2 factorial design. We cross-randomized between proposals, such that the description received for the second proposal was independent of what was received for the first one. We also randomized the order in which proposals were presented. Table 2 summarizes the distribution of our sample of subjects across all experimental conditions.²⁵

²⁵The difference between the sample sizes described in the previous section and here corresponds to one additional treatment group that we included in the experimental design for purposes of robustness checks. Specifically, we randomly presented to a third experimental group an en-

4.4 Measuring individuals' affinity with elites

We operationalize individuals' affinity with elites using the following question:

On this card there is a staircase with steps numbered from one to seven, in which 1 is the lowest step and means VERY UNFAVORABLE and 7 is the highest step and means VERY FAVORABLE. If your opinion is between very unfavorable and very favorable choose an intermediate score. I am going to mention the name of various public figures and I would like you to tell me on that scale what is your concept of each one of them.

Based on answers to this question, we classified an individual as having affinity with the elite if she responded 5, 6, or 7, and aversion otherwise.²⁶ Given our focus on the affinity between the respondent and the randomly-assigned endorser, we blocked on the individuals' pre-treatment affinity with the political elites in our randomization. For this purpose, we created four blocks defined by respondents' joint affinity with Santos and Uribe. Based on our sample, 42.42% of citizens in conflict-affected areas have affinity with Santos, and 34.22% have affinity with Uribe (see Table A2 in the Appendix, which also describes the distribution of the four blocks in our sample). We randomly assigned respondents to each of the four experimental conditions within each block.

dorsement of the provision in each vignette from a neutral elite. The sample size of this treatment group is 466 and 482 for the Santos and Uribe vignettes, respectively. See Appendix E.

²⁶This implies that individuals who refuse to answer this question or who answer "Don't know" are also classified as having an aversion to the elite. However, our results hold when excluding this group from the analyses.

4.5 Operationalization of our outcome of interest

Our main hypotheses are related to public support for the specific proposals that are part of the Colombian peace agreement. We measure support for each one of the proposals using a 1 to 7 scale (where 1 means “No support at all” and 7 “A lot of support”).

5 ANALYSIS

5.1 Testing political elite cues

We randomize whether an elite cue is present and whether the individual receives an endorsement of an elite with whom she has affinity. Thus, we can test the first set of hypotheses by simply comparing individuals’ level of support for each provision across type of endorser and interacting these treatment indicators with the degree of affinity between the individual and the elite who endorses the proposal (either Uribe or Santos, depending on the provision under consideration).

Here affinity with the political elites is measured with a dichotomous variable. Hence, we can estimate the effect of interest with an OLS regression, with robust standard errors, as follows:

$$y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 PE_i + \beta_3 APE_i + \beta_4 PE_i \times APE_i + \varepsilon_i, \quad (1)$$

where y_i corresponds to support for the provision under consideration (either JEP or Special seats); PE_i is the treatment indicator corresponding to a political elite endorsement (either Santos or Uribe); and APE_i to our pre-treatment measure of affinity to either political elite.²⁷

²⁷For the ease of interpretation, this specification does not account for blocking in the estimation of our standard errors. Yet, pooling the variance across blocks is conservative in that it does not take full advantage of the precision gains from our blocked randomized design. Assignment probabilities are constant across blocks in our design and thus a comparison of treated and control

5.2 Testing additional information

To examine the hypothesis that individuals with more information about the proposals should be less likely to rely on elite cues, we randomize receipt of additional information about the proposals. Therefore, we test for the presence of an interaction effect between respondent affinity with the endorser and receipt of additional information about the proposal using a difference-in-differences estimator.

6 RESULTS

First, we explore the effect of elite cues on respondents' overall support for these two policies, and then show how these effects are conditioned on individual affinity to different elites. Second, we show that providing information about the provisions has neither a pure effect nor an attenuating effect on elite cues. For these first two analyses, we compare the control group against the one receiving the political elite's endorsement, unless otherwise stated. In our last tests, we turn to the mechanism through which political elites influence citizen support for the proposals and robustness checks on how this process works.

6.1 Elite cues and respondent affinity with political elites (H1 and H2)

We first test for the role of political elite cues.²⁸ We expect the direction of the effect to depend on individual affinity with political leaders. In our sample, both Uribe and Santos have a polarizing effect, including a large group of respondents who express a strong aversion to these politicians

units produces an unbiased estimator.

²⁸We are comparing treated and control groups, as our research design does not allow us to assess if individuals change their original position, something tested in “*policy adoption*” experiments in American political behavior (Lenz 2012; Broockman and Butler 2017).

(20% and 28%, respectively).²⁹

Tables 3a and 3b show the results of the estimation for the effect of Santos’ and Uribe’s cues, respectively, on individual support for the two proposals described in Section 4.2. The first column of each table depicts the results for the estimation of the average treatment effect of elite endorsements. In Table 3a, we see that Santos’ cue does not have a statistically significant effect on support for the creation of the JEP in the sample overall. We see that, in contrast, Uribe’s cue has a positive and statistically significant effect on support for the Special Seats including existing parties.

Table 3: *The effect of elite cues on average support for specific policies from the peace agreement*

(a) Support for JEP			(b) Support for parties in Congress also competing for Special Seats		
	(1) Pure	(2) Affinity		(1) Pure	(2) Affinity
Santos cue	-0.0600 (0.125)	-0.271 ⁺ (0.164)	Uribe cue	0.307* (0.131)	-0.0381 (0.162)
Affinity w/Santos		1.210*** (0.159)	Affinity w/Uribe		0.165 (0.196)
Santos × Affinity		0.425 ⁺ (0.226)	Uribe × Affinity		0.951*** (0.268)
Constant	4.817*** (0.0859)	4.316*** (0.115)	Constant	3.580*** (0.0946)	3.522*** (0.119)
Observations	891	891	Observations	860	860

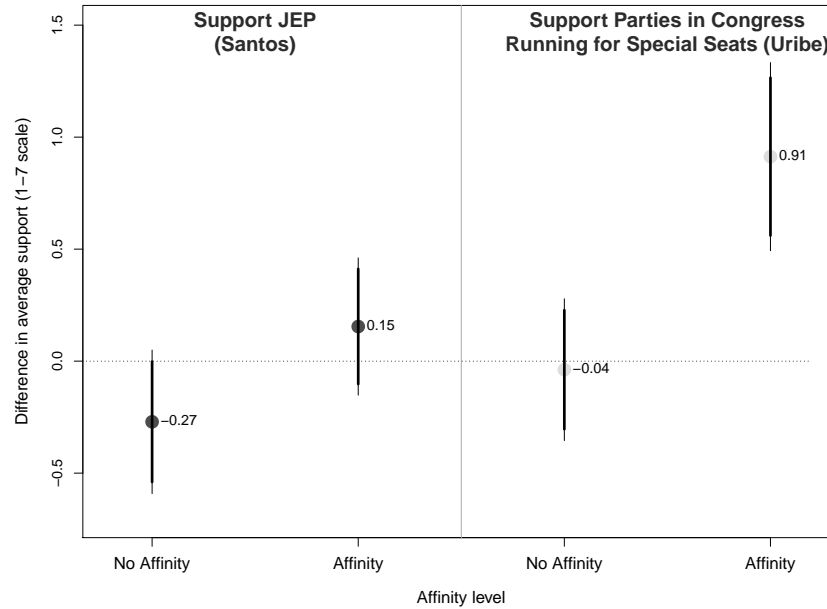
Note: Robust standard errors in parentheses
⁺ $p < 0.1$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

We find even stronger, and more nuanced, evidence for the role of political elite cues once we factor in individual affinity with elites. Figure 2 shows that the direction and magnitude of the

²⁹The full distribution of the answers to the favorability question is depicted in Figure A1 in Appendix B, which, in addition, helps rule out the presence of floor or ceiling effects on support for these elites.

effect of political elite cues is contingent on individual affinity with these elites. These findings are consistent with our expectations.

Figure 2: *The effect of political elite cues conditioned on affinity with the endorser*



Note: This figure plots point estimates of the average treatment effect of the elite cue on support for the proposal, by level of affinity with the corresponding elite. Thick and thin lines correspond to 90% and 95% confidence intervals, respectively. In both vignettes, the estimated difference of the effects for individuals with and without affinity is statistically significant. See Table 3 for formal tests.

First, looking at the second column in Table 3a, we see diverging effects of Santos’ cue conditional on individual affinity: individuals with affinity for Santos show a marginal increase in support for the provision (0.425 and p -value < 0.1, resulting in a 0.15 increase, although this effect is not statistically significant), and a significant decrease among individuals’ without affinity for Santos (by 0.27 points). These divergent effects may explain the lack of an effect for Santos’ cue (see column 1).³⁰

Similarly, in Table 3b, the effect of Uribe’s cue depends individual affinity: for those with affinity to Uribe, his cue has a positive effect (0.951, p -value < 0.001), which is statistically significant. In fact, its magnitude is substantial, increasing support for the policy by almost one point on a

³⁰Affinity with Santos is also strongly and positively correlated with support for this provision.

1-7 scale. The effect among those with an aversion to Uribe is negative, as expected, but it is not statistically significant.³¹

We also explore how sensitive these results are to alternative measures of affinity with elites. We create three groups based on answers to the question used to classify affinity as follows (and the values included in each category are in parenthesis): aversion (1-3), affinity (5-7), and neutral (4) with respect to the political elite.³² Table A11 in the Appendix I presents these results. When those who responded 4s are considered neutral, the negative effect of Santos' cue among those who dislike him is still negative, although it loses some statistical significance (p -value = 0.109), and the positive effect of Uribe's cue among those who like him remains. We replicate this robustness check, this time classifying neutrals as responding DK/NA to the question. Table A12 in the same Appendix presents the results of the estimation of equation (1). In this case, the effect remains on Uribe's cue. Further exploring the effects, we also see that the results for Santos and Uribe from Table 3 hold, but, interestingly, the effect of Uribe's cue now is negative and statistically significant among the neutral group. However, we take these results with caution as the sample size is only 23 individuals, and so we may be capturing outlying realizations of the data.

6.2 Does providing information matter? (H3)

We now experimentally examine whether additional information about the provisions mitigates citizens' cue-taking. We test for the effect of providing information about the contents of the

³¹The data from our sample show that 16.4% have affinity for both Santos and Uribe (see Table A2 in the Appendix). However, the predictions of our theory imply that elites cues, moderated by affinity, should affect citizens' opinions to the extent that they are polarized along the elite divisions. Thus, as a robustness check, we check that our results are not driven by this special group. Table A10 in the Appendix replicates the estimations of Table 3 but excluding this group, and shows that the findings still hold.

³²We exclude DK/NA's.

provisions. Prior to receiving the elite endorsement, we randomly assigned respondents to receive information that described the purpose of the proposal in more detail.

Figure 3 presents average support by elite endorsement and information treatment. The direction of the estimated treatment effects is as expected the hypotheses presented in Table 1 expect. Nevertheless, the difference-in-differences estimator is not statistically significant. So, the evidence does not support the idea that citizens who receive additional information are less likely to rely on cues to form their opinions. Furthermore, the pure effect of information is not statistically significant; thus, citizens seem to be relying more on political elite cues than on information on the specifics of the provision when forming their attitudes.

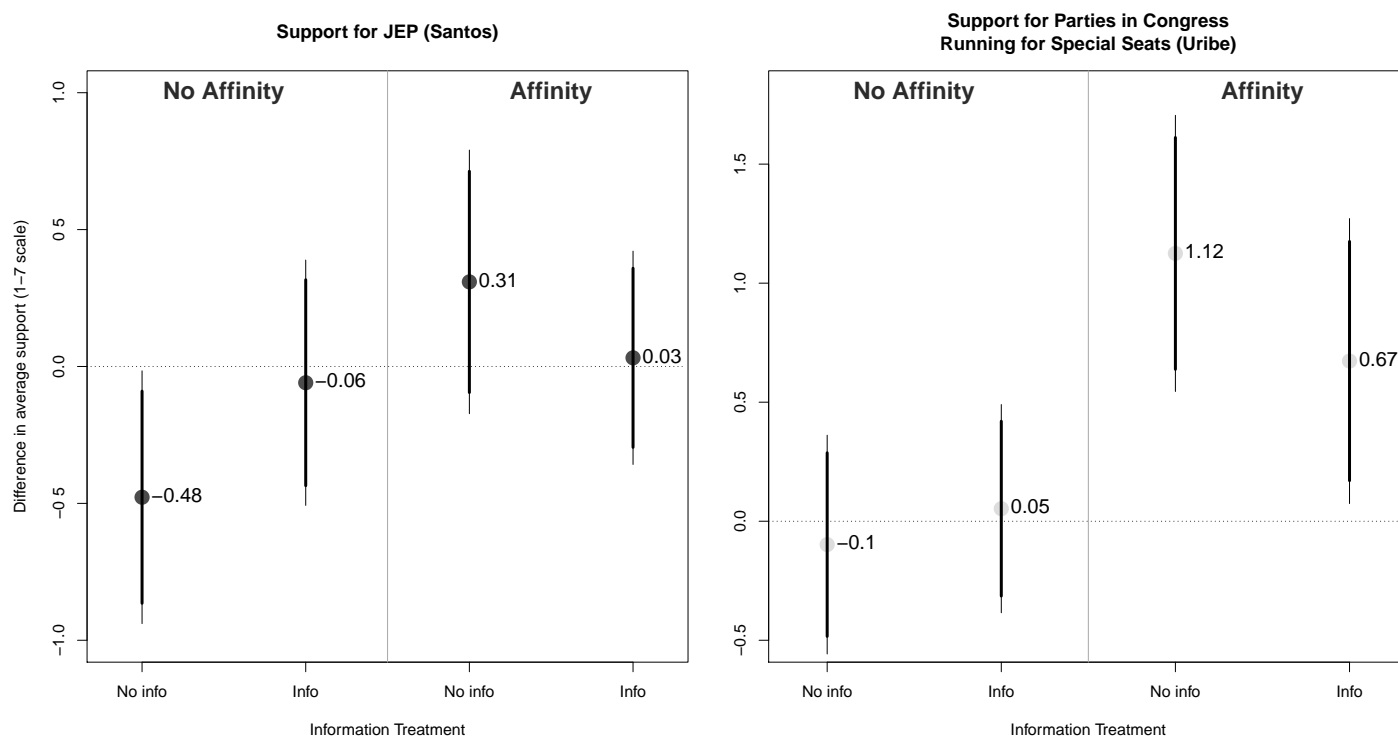
Table A3 in the Appendix presents the results of estimating the joint effect of cues and information. These findings suggest that even when provided with additional information, citizens still rely on political elites' cues to form opinions on provisions.

An alternative explanation would suggest that partisan motivated citizens were resisting the information we provided. Yet, we do not believe that these null findings are driven by partisan respondents selectively resisting this information. First, the sequencing of our treatments ensured that citizens would first encounter the information before any political endorsement that could influence their acceptance of the information. Additionally, the lack of statistical significance of the information treatment among the elite cue control group further validates this point. We also made sure to provide information in a very objective way, such that no political actor was mentioned that could activate predispositions.

6.3 How do elite cues work?

Following the discussion presented in Section 2.4, we further explore whether political elite cues are conveying additional information to citizens or, instead, if they are activating affect toward Santos or Uribe. If the conveyance mechanism, cues should work as information shortcuts

Figure 3: *The joint effects of elite cues and information about the provisions under consideration*



Note: See notes in Figure 2. The difference-in-differences estimator is not statistically significant in any of the vignettes.

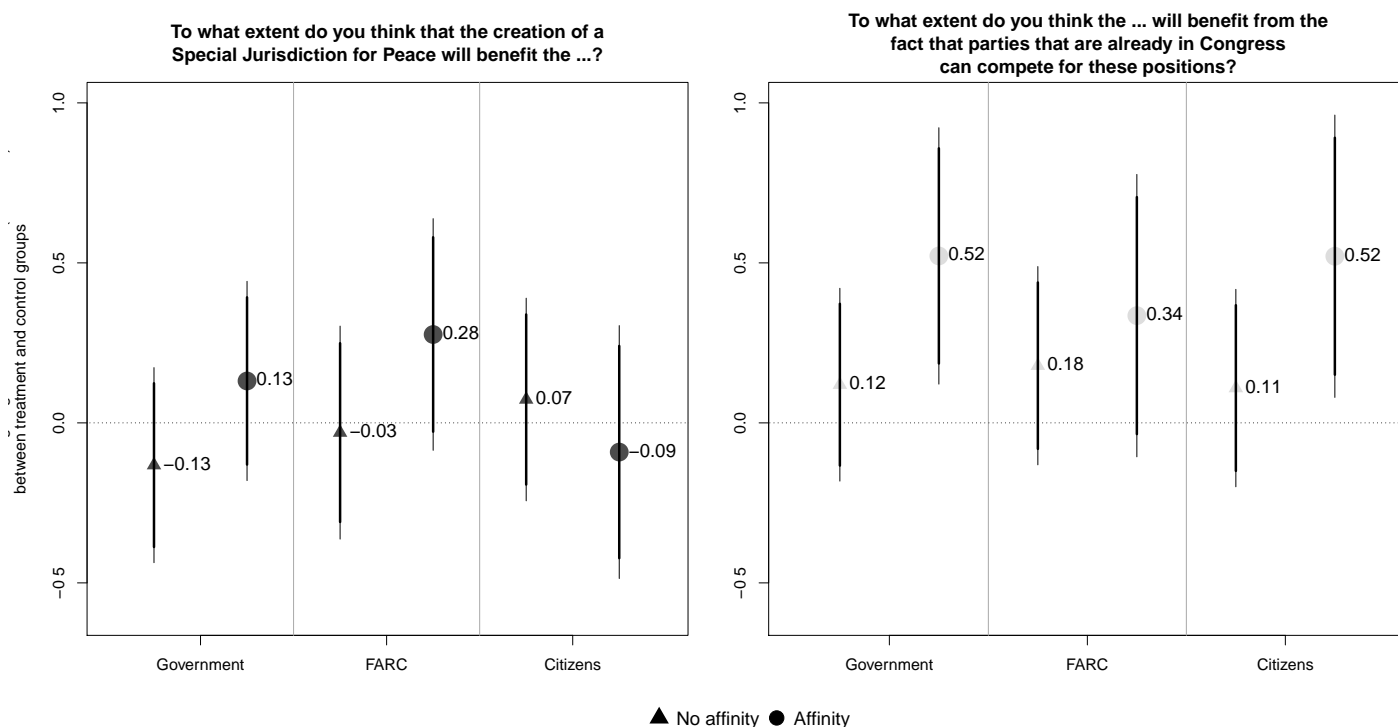
for citizens, changing citizens’ expectations about the provisions’ likely beneficiaries, for example.³³ If the affect mechanism, cues should activate respondents’ predispositions, which are then

³³An alternative interpretation would suggest that citizens are learning Santos’ and Uribe’s stances on these issues and then adopting their positions. Observationally, this explanation would be equivalent to the affect mechanism. While it is hard to completely dismiss this possibility, the data from our survey indicate that people knew Santos’ and Uribe’s position on the peace issue. When asked “*Tell me how much do you think the following public figures contributed to reach an agreement between the FARC and the Colombian government*”, 25.8% stated that Uribe had done so, whereas 66.1% claimed that Santos had done so. Furthermore, citizens have updated Santos’ stance with respect to a negotiated end of civil war: according to LAPOP data, in 2010 when he ran on a *Uribista* platform, only 28% placed him on the negotiated peace side. In 2014, when he ran on a pro peace platform, 42% placed him on that side.

transferred to the provisions.

We begin to test the mechanism through questions on the expected beneficiaries of the provisions: i) the government; ii) the FARC; and iii) citizens like them.³⁴ Figure 4 presents the results of the estimation of equation (1).

Figure 4: *The effect of elite cues on who citizens believe the provision will benefit.*



Note: Formal tests are in Appendix F.

Based on this figure, we observe that receiving the elite endorsement in general does not modify citizens' expectations about the presumed beneficiaries of the provision. There are two exceptions when Uribe's cue seems to convey information: among those who like him, receiving his cue made respondents more likely to perceive that the proposal will benefit the government ($\hat{\beta} = 0.522$, p -value= 0.011) and citizens like them ($\hat{\beta} = 0.52$, p -value= 0.021).

³⁴We asked citizens about the extent to which they believed each provision would benefit each one of these actors, in addition to whether they supported the provision. The exact wording of the questions included in the survey instrument is available in the Appendix.

The evidence from Uribe’s cue lends support for the information shortcut mechanism, as individuals seem to be learning information from his endorsement, thereby changing their beliefs about the provisions’ potential beneficiaries. Additionally, the finding that Uribe’s cue is only informative among those who like him is consistent with models of cheap talk where communication is only informative if the distance between the sender (elite) and receiver’s (citizens) ideal points is not too large (Crawford and Sobel 1982).³⁵

However, the fact that we are not finding an equivalent result for Santos’ cue limits our conclusions—especially, since the data in Figure A1 in the Appendix show that both Santos and Uribe are highly polarizing elites.³⁶ In the same vein, we also find no statistically significant difference in the effect on support between those citizens who like or dislike the elites, for both Santos’ and Uribe’s cues. Finally, if cues compensate for lack of information, then more-informed individuals should be less prone to relying on these endorsements, but we do not find this in our data (see Tables A8 and A9 in Appendix H). Specifically, we find that individuals presumably better informed (i.e., respondents with high levels of education or living in urban areas) do not respond differently to the cues than less informed individuals (i.e., rural or with a lower level of education). Thus, we cannot rule out the plausibility of the second interpretation.

Given these mixed findings, we are more cautious with the interpretation of the mechanism through which elite cues influence attitude formation. Nevertheless, both these results and the

³⁵In that sense, for those who do not like Uribe, his ideal point is known to be far from theirs, and thus receiving his cue is not informative.

³⁶An alternative possibility is that even if citizens do not change their beliefs about the expected beneficiaries of the policy, cues from elites with whom they have affinity make them more likely to accept the information we provided. Unfortunately, our research design does not allow us to test for this possibility for two reasons: i) we did not include post-treatment questions measuring citizens’ knowledge about the policy; and ii) we showed respondents the ‘additional information’ vignette before the elite endorsement.

null results of providing information discussed in Section 6.2 take a step forward. We believe both indicate the importance of additional exploration on the mechanism of attitude formation, especially the role of information in cue taking.

6.4 Santos versus Uribe: explaining the divergence in our results

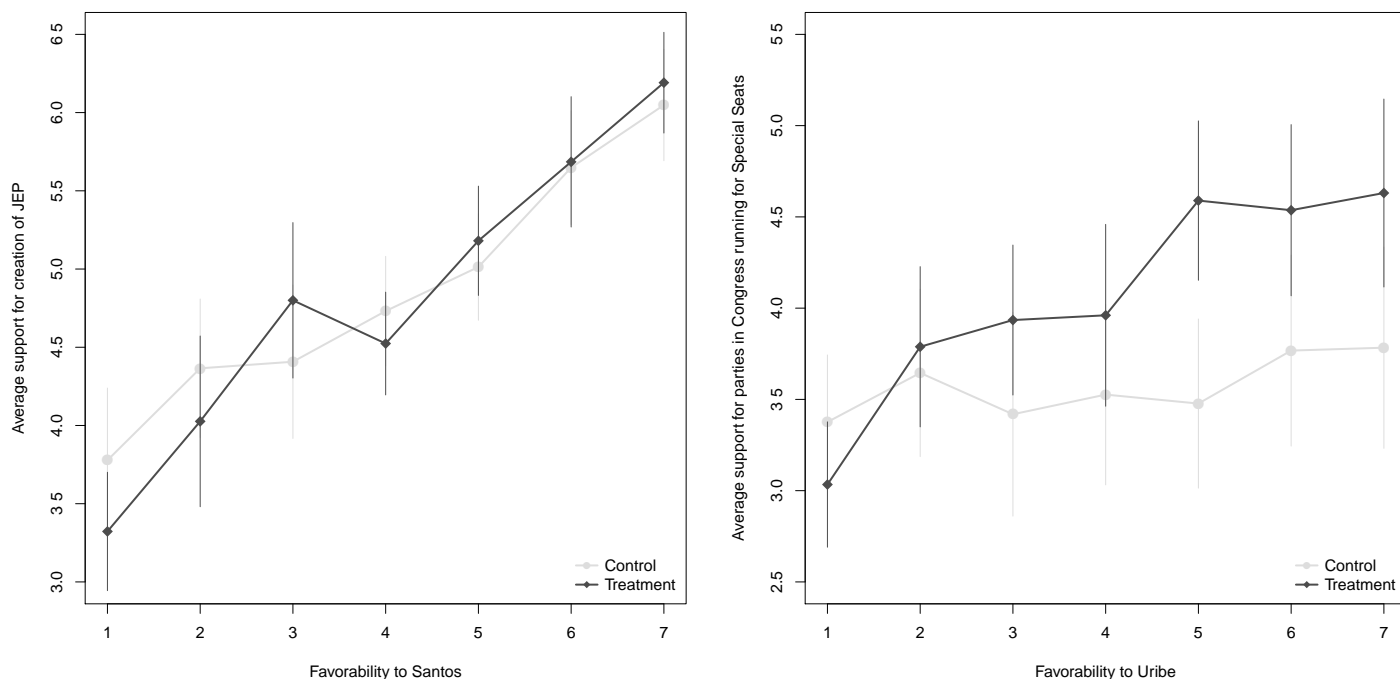
A final note on the results: we find that Santos' cue moves the attitudes from his out-group—i.e., it reduces support among those who dislike him—whereas Uribe's cue moves the attitudes from his in-group—i.e., it increases support among those who like him (Haas and Khadka 2020). Moreover, the results for Uribe's cue were more robust and stronger.

We briefly discuss two potential interpretations of these differential effects. First, with the announcement of a peace process with the FARC, Santos became the representative of an ideologically diverse group of citizens who opposed Uribe's hawkish approach to the ongoing conflict with FARC. Affinity with Santos when our survey was fielded conflates support for the peace agreement and affinity with him. During the four years of negotiations with the FARC in Havana, public opinion and, more importantly, electoral support gravitated around the two poles representing the divergent main stances on the issue of peace (Botero, García-Sánchez, and Wills-Otero 2018). But, what developed in support of the peace process was a coalition from the left to the center of the ideological spectrum, claiming affinity with Santos because they match on this particular issue, while in opposition was much more clustered group on the right, claiming with Uribe on this but also other issues (Rivera, Plata-Caviedes, and Rodríguez-Raga 2019). Uribe supporters can therefore much more readily use his views to form opinions, knowing they stand near him on many issues, compared to Santos supporters who may support just the peace process in general.

Two distinct pieces of evidence corroborate this interpretation of the weaker Santos cue effects. First, focusing on the control, we show that average support for the JEP increases alongside Santos' favorability rating, whereas support for the special seats revision is independent of Uribe's favorability rating (see Figure 5). Support for the JEP is highly correlated with support for the peace

agreement overall, so this evidence suggests the expected correlation between the peace process and affinity with Santos.

Figure 5: *Distribution support for different policies by level of elites’ favorability rating and treatment status*



Note: The graph plots average support for each proposal for each one of the possible values of the favorability scale, and 95% confidence intervals for the point estimates.

Second, we rerun the analyses from Table 3 including a battery of covariates that may be correlated with elite affinity (see Table A13 in the Appendix).³⁷ While the effects of Uribe’s cue conditional on affinity hold, Santos’ cue’s negative effect among those who dislike him is no longer statistically significant. Rather than being a polarizing elite, then, Santos was just the main public figure bringing together a group of citizens in favor of the agreement.

A second interpretation of the results suggests that Santos’ endorsement was less surprising than Uribe’s on the topics in question (Nicholson 2011). Santos was the president who began negotiations with the FARC and ultimately signed the peace agreement, so he was likely to be in

³⁷We separately include indicators of urban, levels of education, and age, or a pre-treatment measure of support for the overall agreement, which interacted with affinity with the elite.

support of the provisions. In contrast, we believe that Uribe’s endorsement of a peace agreement policy—even if conditional on changing what had been originally signed in Havana—was more unexpected, making this cue more persuasive. In addition, the creation of the JEP was present in the news and general public discussion, so any information on the sixteen special seats and restrictions may have had more impact.

6.5 Polarized political elites (and other types of elites)

Considering elites in general, we also posit that when analyzing attitude formation toward a peace process, perceived knowledge is not enough for an elite to be persuasive. Citizens need to be able to form expectations about the position an elite would take on a given issue to then be able to assess the extent to which that position would be congruent with theirs. In this vein, we have shown that citizens rely on cues from *polarized political elites* to form their opinions about specific provisions in peace agreements. However, it could be the case that this effect is mainly driven by citizens reacting to elites in general. Our results in a robustness check suggest otherwise. First, we do not find *neutral* elites, defined as those who take a moderate stance on the peace process, to have a persuasive effect on citizen support. Specifically, we test for the effect of professors’ endorsements, our proxy for a neutral elite, on citizen support for the provisions.³⁸ Table A4 in the Appendix presents the formal tests of the estimation of the model in equation (1) using the neutral elite instead of political elites. Overall, we find little evidence that a neutral elite’s endorsement shapes support; citizens do less cue-taking from professors.

Second, we also estimate equation (1) with the group receiving professors’ cue as the control

³⁸Notably, the data from our sample validates the use of professors as a neutral elite in Colombia: while more than 60% of the respondents report high favorability towards them (i.e., responses between 5 and 7), only 5% declare a very unfavorable rating. This finding matches our pilot, which also indicated this group was the least polarizing in Colombia, among those who might take a position on these provisions.

to control for having an endorser at all in our experiment (i.e., an elite). Appendix E provides the results of this estimation. The sign and statistical significance of the effect of Uribe’s cue conditional on affinity holds. However, the effect for Santos’ cue loses statistical significance, although its sign remains consistent with the previous findings. This suggests the effects of political elites’ cues hold even after netting out their elite status. Altogether, the evidence indicates that citizens take cues from *polarizing* political elites, and not from any type of elite, on these provisions.

7 CONCLUSIONS

In the paper, we analyze attitude formation toward complex policies that compose peace agreements to end civil war, examining specifically the case of Colombia. Using experiments, we find that cues from political elites have strong effects on individuals’ support for specific provisions that emerge from peace settlements, and that these effects are conditioned on individual affinity with elites. These findings are consistent with our expectations that peace processes as politics as usual. We also find that providing information about the policies has neither a pure effect nor an attenuating effect on political elite cues.

Our work contributes to a growing body of experimental literature on public opinion about peace processes, but it crucially focuses on the implementation rather than the negotiation period, and it suggests that attitude formation even in post-conflict contexts are politics as usual. Most of the models on citizens, as noted above, often assume citizens form attitudes about peace process differently from other political processes—perhaps because of the high stakes of conflict (see Walter 1997)—but we show that there are similarities.

Our findings also matter because citizen attitudes about peace agreements and their provisions matter for what gets signed and implemented. A growing number of countries with civil conflict hold elections, either direct referendums on peace agreements or at least on the officials negotiating them. Citizen support also matters when public support and legitimacy influences which policies

are successfully carried out.

In Colombia, in particular, the paper speaks to the stability of the peace process as the 2018 presidential elections changed the party in power from one that supported the peace process to one that opposed it. During the campaign period, leaders from a NO vote coalition planned to redesign the terms of the current peace accord.³⁹ As such, citizens played a key role with their vote in determining the prospects of the peace agreement.

Our findings have general theoretical implications as well. First, having a divided elite may be detrimental to a peace process, even if the standing government produces a signed peace agreement. As we show, citizens strongly react to cues from elites, so their input is not likely to counterweight elite polarization. Even when these policies are likely to benefit citizens—for example, when it provides a region more representation in congress, as in our study—they may still reject them. We also show that providing information does not attenuate individuals' use of elite cues when forming their attitudes. This paper, by showing that citizens split along partisan lines as implementation takes place, suggests that, even when citizens weigh in, a broad elite deal remains the crucial component of a stable agreement.

³⁹See <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/politica/uribe-y-pastrana-presentaran-candidato-unico-para-las-elecciones-de-2018-a>

REFERENCES

- Ahler, Douglas J. 2014. "Self-fulfilling misperceptions of public polarization". *The Journal of Politics* 76 (3): 607–620.
- Arceneaux, Kevin, and Robin Kolodny. 2009. "Educating the Least Informed: Group Endorsements in a Grassroots Campaign". *American Journal of Political Science* 53 (4): 755–770. ISSN: 1540-5907. doi:10.1111/j.1540-5907.2009.00399.x. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-5907.2009.00399.x>.
- Assouline, Philippe, and Robert F Trager. 2017. *Concessions for concessions sake: Injustice, indignation and the construction of intractable conflict in Israel–Palestine*.
- . 2015. "Topology of a Gordian Knot: Honor and Endorsement in the Construction of Intractable Conflict in Palestine". *UCLA: Los Angeles*.
- Bar-Tal, Daniel. 2009. "Reconciliation as a foundation of culture of peace". In *Handbook on building cultures of peace*, 363–377. Springer.
- Beck, Paul Allen, and M. Kent Jennings. 1991. "Family Traditions, Political Periods, and the Development of Partisan Orientations". *The Journal of Politics* 53 (3): 742–763. doi:10.2307/2131578. eprint: <https://doi.org/10.2307/2131578>. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2131578>.
- Blattman, Christopher, and Edward Miguel. 2010. "Civil war". *Journal of Economic literature* 48 (1): 3–57.
- Botero, Felipe, Miguel García-Sánchez, and Laura Wills-Otero. 2018. *Polarización y posconflicto: Las elecciones nacionales y locales en Colombia, 2014-2017*. 1st ed. Universidad de los Andes, Colombia. ISBN: 9789587746778. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7440/j.ctv5npjbb>.
- Brader, Ted, et al. 2020. "'Where You Lead, I Will Follow': Partisan Cueing on High-Saliency Issues in a Turbulent Multiparty System". *Political Psychology*.

- Broockman, David E, and Daniel M Butler. 2017. "The Causal Effects of Elite Position-Taking on Voter Attitudes: Field Experiments with Elite Communication". *American Journal of Political Science* 61 (1): 208–221.
- Bullock, John G. 2011. "Elite influence on public opinion in an informed electorate". *American Political Science Review* 105 (3): 496–515.
- Carlin, Ryan E., Jennifer L. McCoy, and Jelena Subotic. 2019. "Leading the Public to Peace: Trust in Elites, the Legitimacy of Negotiated Peace, and Support for Transitional Justice". In *As War Ends: What Colombia Can Tell Us About the Sustainability of Peace and Transitional Justice*, ed. by James Meernik, Jacqueline H. R. DeMeritt, and Mauricio Editors Uribe-López, 282–303. Cambridge University Press. doi:[10.1017/9781108614856.013](https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108614856.013).
- Cohen, Geoffrey L. 2003. "Party over policy: The dominating impact of group influence on political beliefs." *Journal of personality and social psychology* 85 (5): 808.
- Collier, Paul, et al. 2003. "Breaking the Conflict Trap: Civil War and Development Policy". *Washington, DC: The World Bank*.
- Crawford, Vincent P, and Joel Sobel. 1982. "Strategic information transmission". *Econometrica: Journal of the Econometric Society*: 1431–1451.
- Druckman, James N, and Thomas J Leeper. 2012. "Learning more from political communication experiments: Pretreatment and its effects". *American Journal of Political Science* 56 (4): 875–896.
- Druckman, James N, Erik Peterson, and Rune Slothuus. 2013. "How elite partisan polarization affects public opinion formation". *American Political Science Review* 107 (1): 57–79.
- Fabbe, Kristin, Chad Hazlett, and Tolga Sinmazdemir. 2019. "A persuasive peace: Syrian refugees' attitudes towards compromise and civil war termination". *Journal of Peace Research* 56 (1): 103–117.

- Fayol, Michel, Pierre Largy, and Patrick Lemaire. 1994. "Cognitive overload and orthographic errors: When cognitive overload enhances subject–verb agreement errors. A study in French written language". *The Quarterly Journal of Experimental Psychology* 47 (2): 437–464.
- Fearon, James D. 2011. "Governance and civil war onset".
- Fearon, James D, and David D Laitin. 2003. "Ethnicity, insurgency, and civil war". *American political science review*: 75–90.
- Feldmann, Andreas E. 2019. "Colombia's Polarizing Peace Efforts". In *Democracies Divided: The Global Challenge of Political Polarization*, ed. by Brookings Institution Press. Washington, D.C.
- Gaviria, Adriana, Carlos A. Ávila, and Miguel García-Sánchez. 2019. *Barómetro de las Américas Colombia 2018. Paz, posconflicto y reconciliación*. Observatorio de la Democracia, Uniandes, USAID.
- González Posso, Camilo. 2016. *Los problemas del SI en el plebiscito*. Indepaz. <http://www.indepaz.org.co/los-problemas-del-plebiscito/>.
- Haas, Nicholas, and Prabin Khadka. 2020. "If They Endorse It, I Can't Trust It: How Out-Group Leader Endorsements Undercut Public Support for Civil War Peace Settlements". *American Journal of Political Science*.
- Hartzell, Caroline A, and Matthew Hoddie. 2007. *Crafting peace: Power-sharing institutions and the negotiated settlement of civil wars*. Penn State Press.
- Hazlett, Chad, and Francesca Parente. 2020. "Who supports peace with the FARC? A sensitivity-based approach under imperfect identification". *Working paper*.
- Jarland, Julie, et al. 2020. "How Should We Understand Patterns of Recurring Conflict?" *Conflict Trends* (Oslo: PRIO).
- Kahneman, Daniel. 2011. *Thinking, fast and slow*. Vol. 1. Farrar, Straus / Giroux New York.
- Kalyvas, Stathis N. 2006. *The logic of violence in civil war*. Cambridge University Press.

- Kao, Kristen, and Mara Redlich Revkin. 2018. “To Punish or to Pardon?: Reintegrating Rebel Collaborators After Conflict in Iraq”. *Reintegrating Rebel Collaborators After Conflict in Iraq (November 1, 2018). The Program on Governance and Local Development Working Paper Series at the University of Gothenburg*, no. 17.
- Kroc Institute. 2019. *Estado efectivo de implementación del Acuerdo de Paz de Colombia 2 años de implementación*. Tech. rep. Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies. https://kroc.nd.edu/assets/321729/190523_informe_3_final_final.pdf.
- Kuklinski, James H, and Paul J Quirk. 2000. “Reconsidering the rational public: Cognition, heuristics, and mass opinion”. In *Elements of reason: Cognition, choice, and the bounds of rationality*, 153–82. Cambridge University Press Cambridge.
- La Silla Vacía. 2019. *Duque no ama la paz negociada porque no le permite sacar adelante la narrativa de victoria*. <https://lasillavacia.com/silla-academica/trabajo-colectivo/duque-no-ama-paz-negociada-porque-no-le-permite-sacar-adelante>.
- Lenz, Gabriel S. 2012. “Follow the leader”. *How Voters Respond to Politicians’ Policies and Performance*.
- Levendusky, Matthew S. 2010. “Clearer cues, more consistent voters: A benefit of elite polarization”. *Political Behavior* 32 (1): 111–131.
- Liendo, Nicolás, and Jessica Maves Braithwaite. 2018. “Determinants of Colombian attitudes toward the peace process”. *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 35 (6): 622–636.
- Lindarte, Eduardo. 2016. *La derrota en el plebiscito: ¿Cuáles fueron los errores del gobierno?* Razón Pública. <https://razonpublica.com/index.php/conflicto-drogas-y-paz-temas-30/9769-la-derrota-en-el-plebiscito-cu%C3%5C%Alles-fueron-los-errores-del-gobierno.html>.

- Lodge, Milton, and Charles S Taber. 2005. "The automaticity of affect for political leaders, groups, and issues: An experimental test of the hot cognition hypothesis". *Political Psychology* 26 (3): 455–482.
- Lupia, Arthur. 1994. "Shortcuts versus encyclopedias: Information and voting behavior in California insurance reform elections". *American Political Science Review*: 63–76.
- Mansfield, Edward D, and Jack Snyder. 2002. "Democratic transitions, institutional strength, and war". *International Organization* 56 (2): 297–337.
- . 1995. "Democratization and the Danger of War". *International security* 20 (1): 5–38.
- Masullo, J, and D Morisi. 2019. "Risks and opportunities of direct democracy: the effect of information in Colombia's peace referendum". *Politics and Governance* 7 (2): 242–267.
- Matanock, Aila M. 2017. *Electing Peace: From Civil Conflict to Political Participation*. Cambridge University Press.
- Matanock, Aila M, and Natalia Garbiras-Díaz. 2018. "Considering Concessions: A Survey Experiment on the Colombian Peace Process". *Conflict Processes and Peace Science* 35 (5).
- Matanock, Aila M, and Miguel García-Sánchez. 2017. "The Colombian Paradox: Peace Processes, Elite Divisions & Popular Plebiscites". *Daedalus*.
- Mondak, Jeffery J. 1993. "Public opinion and heuristic processing of source cues". *Political behavior* 15 (2): 167–192.
- Montalvo, José G, and Marta Reynal-Querol. 2005. "Ethnic polarization, potential conflict, and civil wars". *American economic review* 95 (3): 796–816.
- Mullainathan, Sendhil, and Eldar Shafir. 2013. *Scarcity: Why having too little means so much*. Macmillan.
- Mun, Kwansik, et al. 2019. "Political tolerance of demobilizing armed actors: The case of FARC in Colombia". *Media, War & Conflict*: 1750635219874734.

- Nicholson, Stephen P. 2011. "Dominating cues and the limits of elite influence". *The Journal of Politics* 73 (4): 1165–1177.
- Nilsson, Desirée. 2012. "Anchoring the peace: Civil society actors in peace accords and durable peace". *International Interactions* 38 (2): 243–266.
- OHCHR. 2009. *Rule-of-law tools for post-conflict states: National consultations on transitional justice*. Tech. rep. Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.
- Ortiz-Ayala, Alejandra, and Miguel García-Sánchez. 2014. "Porque te quiero te apoyo: Estilo de gobierno y aprobación presidencial en América Latina". *Revista de Ciencia Política (Santiago)* 34 (2): 373–398.
- Pettersson, Therése, Stina Högladh, and Magnus Öberg. 2019. "Organized violence, 1989–2018 and peace agreements". *Journal of Peace Research* 56 (4): 589–603.
- Przeworski, Adam. 2005. "Democracy as an Equilibrium". *Public Choice* 123 (3-4): 253–273.
- Rettberg, Angelika, Ernesto Kiza, and Andreas Forer. 2008. *Reparación en Colombia? Qué quieren las víctimas?* Agencia de Cooperación Técnica Alemana, GTZ.
- Rivera, Alejandra, Juan Camilo Plata-Caviedes, and Juan Carlos Rodríguez-Raga. 2019. *Barómetro de las Américas Colombia 2018. Democracia e instituciones*. Observatorio de la Democracia, Uniandes, USAID.
- Slovic, Paul, et al. 2007. "The affect heuristic". *European journal of operational research* 177 (3): 1333–1352.
- Sniderman, Paul M, Richard A Brody, and Phillip E Tetlock. 1993. *Reasoning and choice: Explorations in political psychology*. Cambridge University Press.
- Tellez, Juan Fernando. 2019. "Peace agreement design and public support for peace: Evidence from Colombia". *Journal of Peace Research* 56 (6): 827–844.
- Toft, Monica Duffy. 2009. *Securing the peace: the durable settlement of civil wars*. Princeton University Press.

- Tversky, Amos, and Daniel Kahneman. 1974. "Judgment under uncertainty: Heuristics and biases". *science* 185 (4157): 1124–1131.
- Valentino, Nicholas A, Vincent L Hutchings, and Ismail K White. 2002. "Cues that matter: How political ads prime racial attitudes during campaigns". *American Political Science Review* 96 (1): 75–90.
- Voors, Maarten J, et al. 2012. "Violent conflict and behavior: a field experiment in Burundi". *American Economic Review* 102 (2): 941–64.
- Walter, Barbara F. 1997. "The critical barrier to civil war settlement". *International organization* 51 (3): 335–364.
- Wantchekon, Leonard. 2004. "The paradox of " warlord" democracy: A theoretical investigation". *American political science review*: 17–33.
- Weingast, Barry R. 1997. "The political foundations of democracy and the rule of the law". *American political science review* 91 (2): 245–263.
- Weintraub, Michael, Juan F Vargas, and Thomas E Flores. 2015. "Vote choice and legacies of violence: evidence from the 2014 Colombian presidential elections". *Research & Politics* 2 (2): 2053168015573348.
- Wills, María Emma. 2016. "La fallida comunicación de la paz". *Revista Arcadia*. <https://www.revistaarcadia.com/opinion/articulo/debate-polemica-plebiscito-paz-conflicto-cultura-colombia-maria-emma-wills/52424>.
- Wood, Elisabeth Jean. 2003. *Insurgent collective action and civil war in El Salvador*. Cambridge University Press.
- Zaller, John. 1992. *The nature and origins of mass opinion*. Cambridge university press.
- Zartman, I William. 1995. *Elusive peace: negotiating an end to civil wars*. Brookings Institution Press.

Online Appendix for: Using Political Cues for Attitude Formation in Post-Conflict Contexts

CONTENTS

A	Comparison samples LAPOP 2016 and 2017 surveys	A2
B	Distribution affinity with Santos and Uribe in our sample	A4
C	The joint effects of information and elite cues on citizen support	A5
D	Neutral elites: the effect of professors' cue	A6
E	The effect of political elite cues, net out of the “expert effect”	A7
F	How do elite cues work?	A8
G	Evolution public opinion towards Colombia's peace agreement and its provisions	A9
H	CATEs by education and urban/rural	A10
I	Robustness checks for the effect of elite cues on support for provisions	A13
J	Relationship between support proposals and overall for the agreement	A17
K	Proximity to civil conflict and elite cue taking	A17
L	Survey Instrument	A24

A COMPARISON SAMPLES LAPOP 2016 AND 2017 SURVEYS

Table A1: Comparison of violence measures across samples: 2016 (national) and 2017 (conflict zones) LAPOP surveys

Variable	2016 survey				2017 survey			
	N	mean	sd	min max	N	mean	sd	min max
Survey measures (ind. level)								
Victim	1,563	0.38	0.49	0 1	1,391	0.68	0.47	0 1
FARC victim	1,563	0.11	0.31	0 1	1,391	0.33	0.47	0 1
Municipal measures								
Total registered victims	1,563	4,292	5,529	0 14,417	1,391	910	2,222	18 9,876
Registered victims/population (%)	1,563	0.4	0.4	0 2.4	1,391	1	0.8	0.1 2.9
FARC control	1,563	0.1	0.3	0 1	1,391	0.3	0.5	0 1
Paramilitary control	1,563	0.6	0.5	0 1	1,391	0.3	0.5	0 1
State control	1,563	0.7	0.5	0 1	1,391	0.3	0.5	0 1
Threat of victimization (attacks)	1,563	0.5	0.2	0.2 1	1,391	0.9	0.1	0.7 1

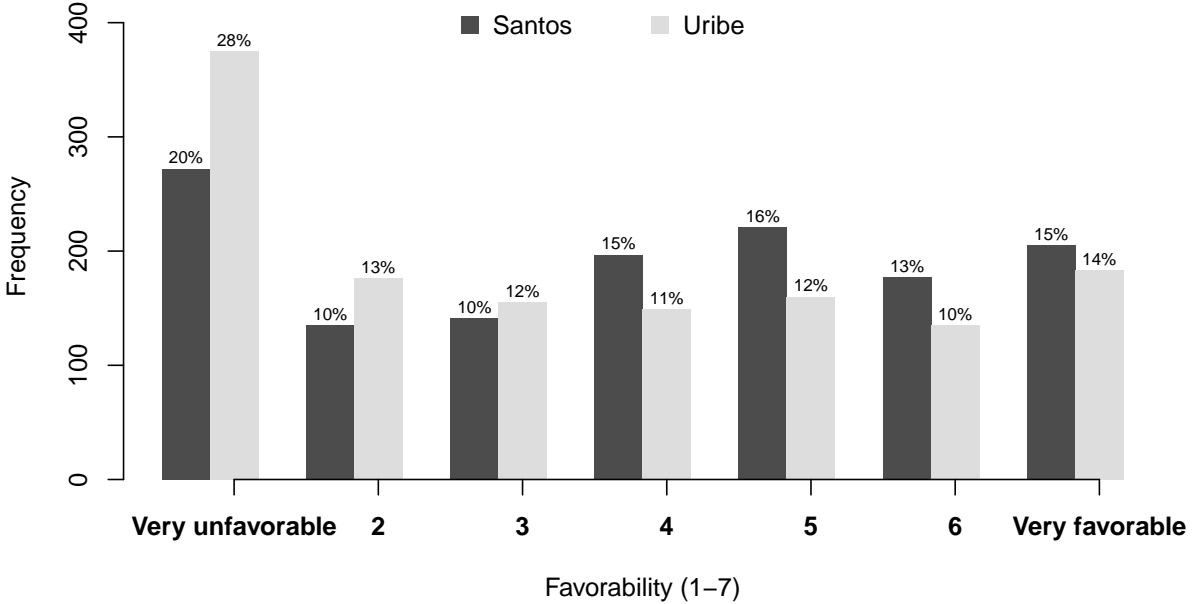
Source: Data on survey measures come from authors' calculations using data from the *Observatorio de la Democracia* (available [here](#)) The data on the number of threat of victimization and registered victims comes from the Colombia's Office of Comprehensive Care and Reparation for Victims (*Unidad para la Atención y Reparación Integral a las Víctimas*) Data from the population comes from Colombia's National Statistics Office (DAANE) Data from territorial control by different actors comes from estimates from Miguel García-Sánchez, described in Matanock and García-Sánchez (2018)

B DISTRIBUTION AFFINITY WITH SANTOS AND URIBE IN OUR SAMPLE

Table A2: *Blocks by affinity level with the two political elites*

Block	Frequency (Percent)
Affinity with Santos & Affinity with Uribe	228 (16.39)
Affinity with Santos & Aversion to Uribe	362 (26.02)
Aversion to Santos & Affinity with Uribe	248 (17.83)
Aversion to Santos & Aversion to Uribe	486 (34.94)
DK / DA	67 (4.817)
Total	1391

Figure A1: *Average affinity with political elites (percentage in each category on top of bar)*



Note: This figure plots the distribution of survey responses to the question of individuals' favorability rating of different elites, as described in Section 4.4 in the paper. We use the 1-7 favorability scale as a measure of individuals' affinity with elites.

C THE JOINT EFFECTS OF INFORMATION AND ELITE CUES ON CITIZEN SUPPORT

Table A3: *The effect of the elite cues and information*

	(1)		(1)
	JEP		Special Seats
Santos	-0.477* (0.236)	Uribe	-0.0981 (0.235)
Affinity w/Santos	0.944*** (0.239)	Affinity w/Uribe	0.222 (0.287)
Santos × Affinity	0.787* (0.340)	Uribe × Affinity	1.223** (0.377)
Info	-0.285 (0.229)	Info	-0.280 (0.237)
Santos × Info	0.418 (0.328)	Uribe × Info	0.151 (0.324)
Affinity × Info	0.514 (0.323)	Affinity × Info	-0.0886 (0.393)
Santos × Affinity × Info	-0.696 (0.456)	Uribe × Affinity × Info	-0.603 (0.534)
Constant	4.451*** (0.158)	Constant	3.653*** (0.167)
Observations	891	Observations	860

Note: Robust standard errors in parentheses
⁺ $p < 0.1$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

D NEUTRAL ELITES: THE EFFECT OF PROFESSORS' CUE

Table A4: *The effect of university professors—as a neutral elite—on support for the provisions*

(a) *Support for JEP*

	(1) Pure	(2) Affinity
Professors cue	0.0122 (0.121)	0.116 (0.208)
Affinity w/professors		0.882*** (0.182)
Professors cue × Affinity		-0.237 (0.261)
Constant	4.817*** (0.0859)	4.283*** (0.144)
Observations	904	806

(b) *Support for parties in Congress also competing for Special Seats*

	(1) Pure	(2) Affinity
Professors cue	0.446*** (0.126)	0.136 (0.200)
Affinity w/professors		0.309 (0.198)
Professors cue × Affinity		0.548* (0.261)
Constant	3.580*** (0.0946)	3.371*** (0.148)
Observations	868	790

Note: Robust standard errors in parentheses
⁺ $p < 0.1$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

E THE EFFECT OF POLITICAL ELITE CUES, NET OUT OF THE “EXPERT EFFECT”

Table A5: *The effect of a political elite cue compared to a neutral elite cue (professors)*

(a) *Support for JEP*

	(1) Pure	(2) Affinity
Santos	-0.0723 (0.124)	-0.205 (0.164)
High Affinity		1.308*** (0.157)
Santos × High Affinity		0.327 (0.224)
Constant	4.829*** (0.0854)	4.250*** (0.116)
Observations	877	877

(b) *Support for parties in Congress also competing for Special Seats*

	(1) Pure	(2) Affinity
Uribe	-0.139 (0.123)	-0.429** (0.151)
High Affinity		0.337* (0.171)
Uribe × High Affinity		0.779** (0.250)
Constant	4.027*** (0.0831)	3.913*** (0.104)
Observations	894	894

Note: Robust standard errors in parentheses
⁺ $p < 0.1$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

F HOW DO ELITE CUES WORK?

Table A6: *Santos vignette*

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	Support	Government	FARC	Citizens
Santos cue	-0.271 ⁺ (0.164)	-0.132 (0.156)	-0.0304 (0.170)	0.0730 (0.162)
Affinity w/Santos	1.210*** (0.159)	0.947*** (0.154)	0.401* (0.177)	1.633*** (0.183)
Santos × Affinity	0.425 ⁺ (0.226)	0.263 (0.222)	0.307 (0.251)	-0.164 (0.258)
Constant	4.316*** (0.115)	4.171*** (0.108)	4.162*** (0.116)	2.969*** (0.112)
Observations	891	864	832	864

Robust standard errors in parentheses

⁺ $p < 0.1$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table A7: *Uribe vignette*

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	Support	Government	FARC	Citizens
Uribe cue	-0.0381 (0.162)	0.119 (0.154)	0.179 (0.158)	0.109 (0.158)
Affinity w/Uribe	0.165 (0.196)	0.134 (0.189)	0.0940 (0.195)	-0.0349 (0.195)
Uribe × Affinity	0.951*** (0.268)	0.402 (0.256)	0.156 (0.275)	0.412 (0.275)
Constant	3.522*** (0.119)	4.122*** (0.109)	3.729*** (0.114)	3.229*** (0.113)
Observations	860	839	821	846

Robust standard errors in parentheses

⁺ $p < 0.1$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

G EVOLUTION PUBLIC OPINION TOWARDS COLOMBIA'S PEACE AGREEMENT AND ITS PROVISIONS

Figure A2: *Overtime support for the peace agreement*

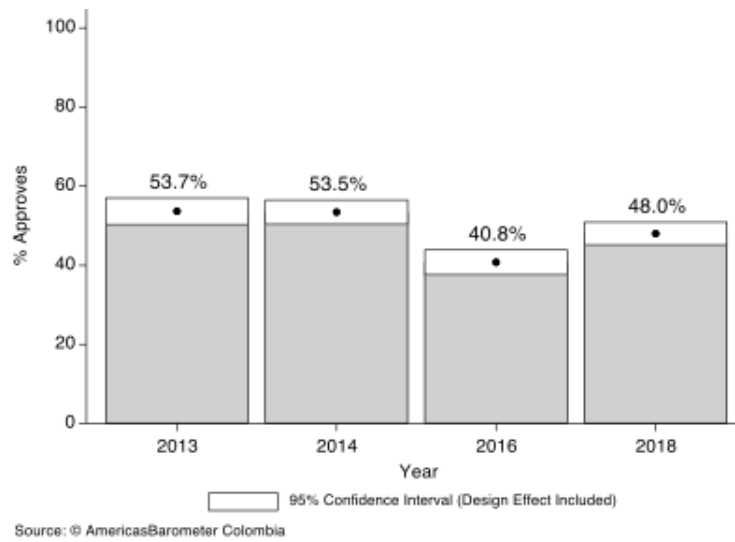
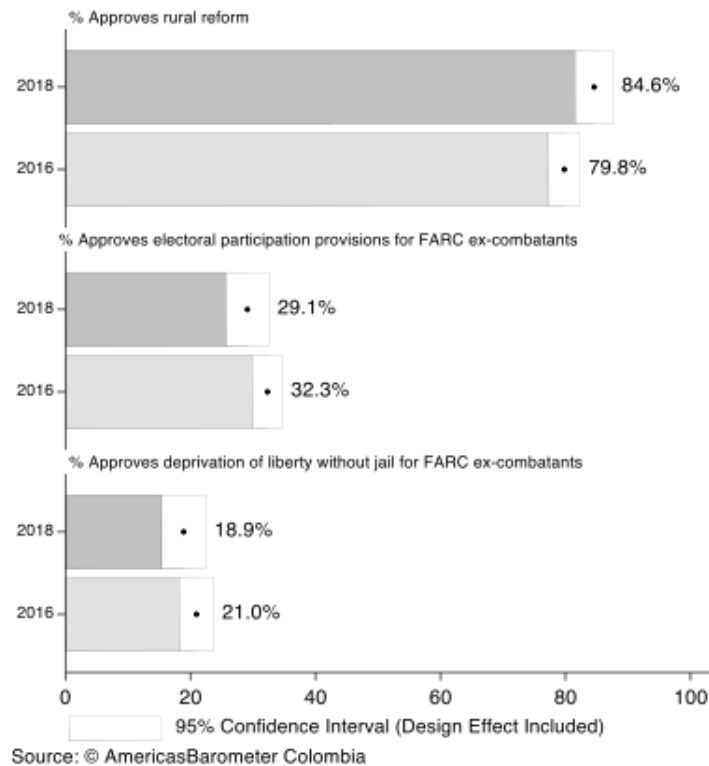


Figure A3: *Overtime support for provisions included in the peace agreement*



H CATES BY EDUCATION AND URBAN/RURAL

Table A8: *CATEs by education and urban/rural – Santos’ vignette*

	(1)	(2)
	Urban/rural	Education
Santos	-0.295 (0.293)	-0.120 (0.280)
Affinity	1.534*** (0.304)	1.188*** (0.260)
Santos × Affinity	0.349 (0.431)	0.449 (0.383)
Rural=1	0.179 (0.257)	
Santos × Rural	0.0406 (0.353)	
Affinity × Rural	-0.431 (0.357)	
Santos × Affinity × Rural	0.0914 (0.507)	
High Education=1		0.0877 (0.238)
Santos × High Education		-0.257 (0.345)
Affinity × High Education		0.0388 (0.330)
Santos × Affinity × High Education		-0.0574 (0.473)
Constant	4.187*** (0.218)	4.269*** (0.188)
Observations	891	886

Standard errors in parentheses

+ $p < 0.1$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table A9: *CATEs by education and urban/rural – Uribe’s vignette*

	(1)	(2)
	Urban/rural	Education
Uribe	0.0284 (0.335)	-0.0166 (0.268)
Affinity	0.225 (0.393)	-0.173 (0.316)
Uribe × Affinity	1.578** (0.501)	0.786+ (0.444)
Rural = 1	0.406 (0.290)	
Uribe × Rural	-0.0893 (0.382)	
Affinity × Rural	-0.0385 (0.454)	
Uribe × Affinity × Rural	-0.909 (0.593)	
High Education=1		-0.455+ (0.247)
Uribe × High Education		-0.0342 (0.335)
Affinity × High Education		0.535 (0.403)
Uribe × Affinity × High Education		0.319 (0.555)
Constant	3.210*** (0.257)	3.792*** (0.200)
Observations	860	855

Standard errors in parentheses

+ $p < 0.1$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

I ROBUSTNESS CHECKS FOR THE EFFECT OF ELITE CUES ON SUPPORT FOR PROVISIONS

Table A10: *The effect of elite cues on average support for specific policies from the peace agreement with neutrals as those who answered 4 (DK/NAs are coded as missing values). The column names reflect the received elite cue.*

	(1)	(2)
	Santos	Uribe
Elite cue	-0.271 ⁺ (0.164)	-0.0381 (0.162)
Affinity	1.176 ^{***} (0.181)	-0.221 (0.234)
Uribe × Affinity	0.360 (0.267)	1.003 ^{**} (0.327)
Constant	4.316 ^{***} (0.115)	3.522 ^{***} (0.119)
Observations	744	715

Standard errors in parentheses

⁺ $p < 0.1$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table A11: *The effect of elite cues on average support for specific policies from the peace agreement with neutrals as those who answered 4 (DK/NAs are coded as missing values). The column names reflect the received elite cue.*

	(1)	(2)
	Santos	Uribe
Elite cue	-0.208 (0.248)	0.434 (0.357)
No Affinity w/elite	-0.608** (0.232)	-0.0669 (0.283)
Affinity w/elite	0.795*** (0.214)	0.161 (0.295)
Elite cue × No Affinity	-0.120 (0.321)	-0.488 (0.401)
Elite cue × Affinity	0.357 (0.293)	0.471 (0.417)
Constant	4.731*** (0.183)	3.526*** (0.250)
Observations	869	837

Standard errors in parentheses

+ $p < 0.1$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table A12: *The effect of elite cues on average support for specific policies from the peace agreement with neutrals as those who answered DK/NA. The column names reflect the received elite cue.*

	(1)	(2)
	Santos	Uribe
Elite cue	-0.436 (0.965)	-2.054* (0.845)
No Affinity w/elite	-0.486 (0.591)	-1.431* (0.726)
Affinity w/elite	0.757 (0.590)	-1.213+ (0.733)
Elite cue × No Affinity	0.148 (0.980)	2.096* (0.860)
Elite cue × Affinity	0.585 (0.978)	2.959*** (0.871)
Constant	4.769*** (0.579)	4.900*** (0.716)
Observations	891	860

Standard errors in parentheses

+ $p < 0.1$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table A13: *The effect of elite cues on average support for specific policies from the peace agreement including controls for covariates correlated with affinity with endorser*

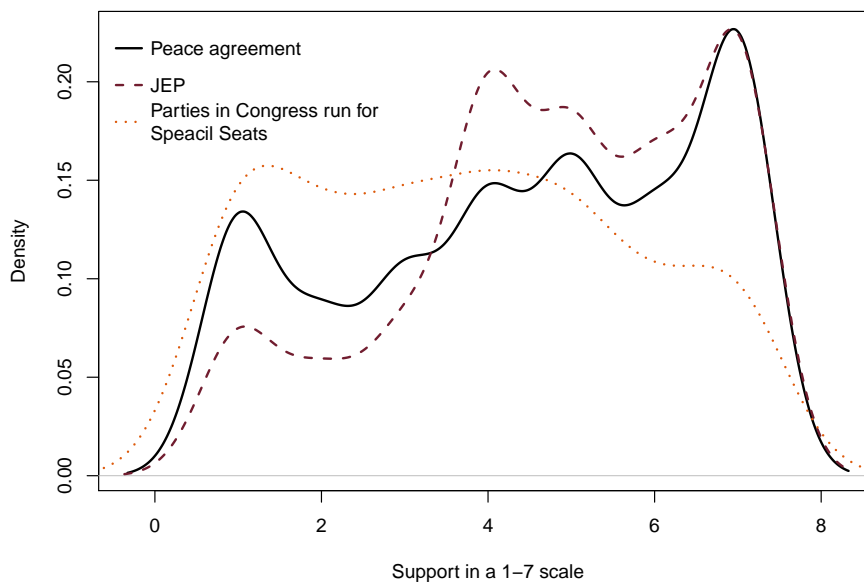
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	JEP	JEP	Special Seats	Special Seats
Santos cue	-0.235 (0.165)	-0.170 (0.149)		
Affinity w/Santos	1.943** (0.692)	1.338*** (0.375)		
Santos × Affinity	0.391+ (0.228)	0.310 (0.210)		
Uribe cue			-0.0555 (0.162)	-0.0249 (0.162)
Affinity w/Uribe			-1.582* (0.772)	-0.0957 (0.331)
Uribe × Affinity			1.065*** (0.266)	0.869** (0.263)
Constant	3.738*** (0.490)	2.790*** (0.188)	4.270*** (0.483)	2.839*** (0.234)
Controls	urban, edu- cation, age	support PA	urban, edu- cation, age	support PA
Observations	883	874	850	845

Standard errors in parentheses

+ $p < 0.1$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

J RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SUPPORT PROPOSALS AND OVERALL FOR THE AGREEMENT

Figure A4: *Distribution of support for the peace agreement and the proposals used in the vignettes*



Note: In the case of support for the proposals in our experiment, we only use answers from subjects assigned to no information and the generic endorsement (i.e., “Some people”) condition, to net out the effects of our treatments.

K PROXIMITY TO CIVIL CONFLICT AND ELITE CUE TAKING

We also explore whether closeness to civil conflict, measured both by victimization (individuals’ direct experience) and municipal presence of armed actors (individuals’ context) change their interpretation of cues, potentially because they differently seek or interpret available information. In particular, we expect that their closeness to the conflict may produce two different possible effects. On the one hand, it may reduce the effect of elite cues because these individuals possess more information from different sources about the policies. On the other hand, it may increase the effect of elite cues because these individuals have more incentive to pay attention to any and all available information given the likely effect of these policies on their daily lives.

Tables [A14](#) through [A18](#) present the results of estimating the average causal effects of elite endorsements conditional on proximity to conflict.¹ We find mixed evidence for the effect of cues conditional on proximity to conflict. First, when analyzing the effect of cues among respondents who have been victims of any armed group versus those who have not, we find that the negative effect reported in Table 4 is mainly driven by victims; that is, overall, the effect of receiving San-

¹Table A1 in Appendix A summarize and describe the sources for these variables.

tos' cue is negative among victims whereas it is positive among non-victims (although the latter is not statistically significant). We do not find any heterogeneous treatment effects for Uribe's cue. Second, having been directly victimized by FARC does not shape the effect of neither elite cue, nor does living in a municipality controlled by FARC between 2009 and 2012. Third, living in a municipality with more registered victims does not moderate the effect of elite cues, which may indicate that having a larger number of peer victims does not attenuate an individuals' propensity to form their attitudes from elite cues. Finally, we find evidence indicating that living in municipalities with a larger threat of attacks by armed groups attenuates the effect of elite cues discussed above: it attenuates the negative effect of Santos' cue among those with no affinity with him and it also attenuates the positive effect of Uribe's cue among those with affinity with him.

While the findings reported here suggest the existence of heterogeneity in the uptake of elite cues by proximity to civil conflict, insufficient statistical power—variation at the municipal comes from only 35 clusters—limits the extent to which we can draw strong conclusions from this evidence. However, there are reasons to believe that individuals' context with respect to levels of violence moderate how they read and take cues coming in the form of elite endorsements.²

²In the Fall 2019, we implemented another survey experiment that directly measures this.

Table A14: Direct victimization

	(1) JEP		(1) Special Seats
Santos	0.113 (0.268)	Uribe	0.161 (0.275)
Affinity w/Santos	1.180*** (0.247)	Affinity w/Uribe	0.400 (0.358)
Santos \times Affinity	0.0637 (0.373)	Uribe \times Affinity	0.446 (0.480)
Victim	0.308 (0.226)	Victim	0.293 (0.248)
Santos \times Victim	-0.582 ⁺ (0.340)	Uribe \times Victim	-0.309 (0.340)
Affinity \times Victim	0.0188 (0.322)	Affinity \times Victim	-0.360 (0.429)
Santos \times Affinity \times Victim	0.545 (0.470)	Uribe \times Affinity \times Victim	0.733 (0.579)
Constant	4.126*** (0.164)	Constant	3.333*** (0.200)
Observations	891	Observations	860

Note: Robust standard errors in parentheses
⁺ $p < 0.1$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table A15: Direct victimization by FARC

	(1) JEP		(1) Special Seats
Santos	-0.187 (0.199)	Uribe	0.130 (0.199)
Affinity w/Santos	1.179*** (0.194)	Affinity w/Uribe	0.114 (0.238)
Santos × Affinity	0.331 (0.283)	Uribe × Affinity	0.932** (0.330)
FARC Victim	0.379 (0.251)	FARC Victim	0.461+ (0.251)
Santos × FARC Victim	-0.266 (0.347)	Uribe × FARC Victim	-0.508 (0.341)
Affinity × FARC Victim	0.0681 (0.338)	Affinity × FARC Victim	0.112 (0.415)
Santos × Affinity × FARC Victim	0.216 (0.469)	Uribe × Affinity × FARC Victim	0.0704 (0.563)
Constant	4.199*** (0.136)	Constant	3.370*** (0.145)
Observations	891	Observations	860

Note: Robust standard errors in parentheses
⁺ $p < 0.1$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table A16: Municipality's percentage of victims (%)

	(1) JEP		(1) Special Seats
Santos	0.0642 (0.249)	Uribe	-0.252 (0.295)
Affinity w/Santos	1.230*** (0.257)	Affinity w/Uribe	-0.136 (0.276)
Santos × Affinity	0.273 (0.338)	Uribe × Affinity	0.937+ (0.499)
Registered victims	0.268* (0.117)	Registered victims	-0.0980 (0.122)
Santos × Registered victims	-0.359 (0.236)	Uribe × Registered victims	0.208 (0.187)
Affinity × Registered victims	-0.0762 (0.161)	Affinity × Registered victims	0.277 (0.168)
Santos × Affinity × Registered victims	0.211 (0.268)	Uribe × Affinity × Registered victims	0.0435 (0.353)
Constant	4.066*** (0.181)	Constant	3.629*** (0.204)
Observations	891	Observations	860

Note: Robust standard errors in parentheses. Standard errors are clustered at the municipal level.

+ $p < 0.1$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table A17: FARC control

	(1) JEP		(1) Special Seats
Santos	-0.285 (0.236)	Uribe	0.0992 (0.210)
Affinity w/Santos	1.187*** (0.193)	Affinity w/Uribe	0.237 (0.195)
Santos × Affinity	0.313 (0.257)	Uribe × Affinity	1.008** (0.369)
FARC control	-0.409 ⁺ (0.231)	FARC control	0.371 (0.251)
Santos × FARC control	-0.000531 (0.345)	Uribe × FARC control	-0.464 (0.365)
Affinity × FARC control	-0.309 (0.330)	Affinity × FARC control	-0.249 (0.386)
Santos × Affinity × FARC control	0.681 (0.463)	Uribe × Affinity × FARC control	-0.100 (0.612)
Constant	4.476*** (0.155)	Constant	3.414*** (0.135)
Observations	891	Observations	860

Note: Robust standard errors in parentheses. Standard errors are clustered at the municipal level.

⁺ $p < 0.1$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table A18: Threat of victimization (0-1 scale)

	(1) JEP		(1) Special Seats
Santos	-3.780* (1.587)	Uribe	-2.785 (2.175)
Affinity w/Santos	1.863 (1.213)	Affinity w/Uribe	-1.616 (1.511)
Santos × Affinity	1.768 (1.674)	Uribe × Affinity	8.175*** (1.786)
Threat Index	-1.111 (0.959)	Threat Index	0.152 (1.751)
Santos × Threat Index	3.722* (1.726)	Uribe × Threat Index	2.913 (2.320)
Affinity × Threat Index	-0.676 (1.393)	Affinity × Threat Index	1.912 (1.641)
Santos × Affinity × Threat Index	-1.438 (1.906)	Uribe × Affinity × Threat Index	-7.692*** (2.076)
Constant	5.360*** (0.821)	Constant	3.378 ⁺ (1.682)
Observations	891	Observations	860

Note: Robust standard errors in parentheses. Standard errors are clustered at the municipal level.

⁺ $p < 0.1$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

L SURVEY INSTRUMENT

Next page. Full version of the survey instrument available upon request.

ENDORSEMENT QUESTIONNAIRE 1 – CONTROL INFORMATION

During the peace accords reached in Havana, the Special Jurisdiction for Peace was established in order to investigate, prosecute, and sanction human rights violations and breaches of international humanitarian law, committed in the context of armed conflict in Colombia, in municipalities like yours.

Some people have supported the creation of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace.

[GIVE CARD “B” TO THE RESPONDENT]

Using this card, I would like you to tell me...

[Write down 1-7, (888888) Doesn't know, (988888) No response, (999999) Not applicable]

COLEND1S11. To what extent do you support the creation of a Special Jurisdiction for Peace?

COLEND1S12. To what extent do you think that the creation of a Special Jurisdiction for Peace will benefit the current government?

COLEND1S13. To what extent do you think that the creation of a Special Jurisdiction for Peace will benefit the FARC?

COLEND1S14. To what extent do you think that the creation of a Special Jurisdiction for Peace will benefit people like you?

[COLLECT CARD “B”]

ENDORSEMENT QUESTIONNAIRE 1 – CONTROL NO INFORMATION

Some people have supported the creation of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace.

[GIVE CARD “B” TO THE RESPONDENT]

Using this card, I would like you to tell me...

[Write down 1-7, (888888) Doesn't know, (988888) No response, (999999) Not applicable]

COLEND1S11. To what extent do you support the creation of a Special Jurisdiction for Peace?

COLEND1S12. To what extent do you think that the creation of a Special Jurisdiction for Peace will benefit the current government?

COLEND1S13. To what extent do you think that the creation of a Special Jurisdiction for Peace will benefit the FARC?

COLEND1S14. To what extent do you think that the creation of a Special Jurisdiction for Peace will benefit people like you?

[COLLECT CARD “B”]

ENDORSEMENT QUESTIONNAIRE 1 – NEUTRAL INFORMATION

During the peace accords reached in Havana, the Special Jurisdiction for Peace was established in order to investigate, prosecute, and sanction human rights violations and breaches of international humanitarian law, committed in the context of armed conflict in Colombia, in municipalities like yours.

Some Colombian university professors have supported the creation of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace.

[GIVE CARD “B” TO THE RESPONDENT]

Using this card, I would like you to tell me...

[Write down 1-7, (888888) Doesn’t know, (988888) No response, (999999) Not applicable]

COLEND1SI1. To what extent do you support the creation of a Special Jurisdiction for Peace?

COLEND1SI2. To what extent do you think that the creation of a Special Jurisdiction for Peace will benefit the current government?

COLEND1SI3. To what extent do you think that the creation of a Special Jurisdiction for Peace will benefit the FARC?

COLEND1SI4. To what extent do you think that the creation of a Special Jurisdiction for Peace will benefit people like you?

[COLLECT CARD “B”]

ENDORSEMENT QUESTIONNAIRE 1 – NEUTRAL NO INFORMATION

Some Colombian university professors have supported the creation of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace.

[GIVE CARD “B” TO THE RESPONDENT]

Using this card, I would like you to tell me...

[Write down 1-7, (888888) Doesn’t know, (988888) No response, (999999) Not applicable]

COLEND1SI1. To what extent do you support the creation of a Special Jurisdiction for Peace?

COLEND1SI2. To what extent do you think that the creation of a Special Jurisdiction for Peace will benefit the current government?

COLEND1SI3. To what extent do you think that the creation of a Special Jurisdiction for Peace will benefit the FARC?

COLEND1SI4. To what extent do you think that the creation of a Special Jurisdiction for Peace will benefit people like you?

[COLLECT CARD “B”]

ENDORSEMENT QUESTIONNAIRE 1 – SANTOS INFORMATION

During the peace accords reached in Havana, the Special Jurisdiction for Peace was established in order to investigate, prosecute, and sanction human rights violations and breaches of international humanitarian law, committed in the context of armed conflict in Colombia, in municipalities like yours.

President Santos has supported the creation of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace.

[GIVE CARD “B” TO THE RESPONDENT]

Using this card, I would like you to tell me...

[Write down 1-7, (888888) Doesn’t know, (988888) No response, (999999) Not applicable]

COLEND1SI1. To what extent do you support the creation of a Special Jurisdiction for Peace?	
COLEND1SI2. To what extent do you think that the creation of a Special Jurisdiction for Peace will benefit the current government?	
COLEND1SI3. To what extent do you think that the creation of a Special Jurisdiction for Peace will benefit the FARC?	
COLEND1SI4. To what extent do you think that the creation of a Special Jurisdiction for Peace will benefit people like you?	

[COLLECT CARD “B”]

ENDORSEMENT QUESTIONNAIRE 1 – SANTOS NO INFORMATION

President Santos has supported the creation of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace.

[GIVE CARD “B” TO THE RESPONDENT]

Using this card, I would like you to tell me...

[Write down 1-7, (888888) Doesn’t know, (988888) No response, (999999) Not applicable]

COLEND1SI1. To what extent do you support the creation of a Special Jurisdiction for Peace?	
COLEND1SI2. To what extent do you think that the creation of a Special Jurisdiction for Peace will benefit the current government?	
COLEND1SI3. To what extent do you think that the creation of a Special Jurisdiction for Peace will benefit the FARC?	
COLEND1SI4. To what extent do you think that the creation of a Special Jurisdiction for Peace will benefit people like you?	

[COLLECT CARD “B”]

ENDORSEMENT QUESTIONNAIRE 2 – CONTROL INFORMATION

During the peace accords reached in Havana, 16 seats were created in Congress for which only social movements, indigenous guards, and significant groups of citizens may compete, in order to give more political representation to municipalities like yours.

However, some people have supported that that the political parties that are already in Congress can also compete for the seats that are reserved for the regions of the country that are most affected by the conflict.

[GIVE CARD “B” TO THE RESPONDENT]

Using this card, I would like you to tell me...

[Write down 1-7, (888888) Doesn’t know, (988888) No response, (999999) Not applicable]

COLEND2UI1. To what extent do you support that parties represented in Congress can compete for these positions?	
COLEND2UI2. To what extent do you think the government will benefit from the fact that parties that are already in Congress can compete for these positions?	
COLEND2UI3. To what extent do you think that the FARC will benefit from the fact that parties that are already in Congress can compete for these positions?	
COLEND2UI4. To what extent do you think people like you will benefit with the fact that parties that are already in Congress can compete for these positions?	

[COLLECT CARD “B”]

ENDORSEMENT QUESTIONNAIRE 2 – CONTROL NO INFORMATION

Some people have supported that that the political parties that are already in Congress can also compete for the seats that are reserved for the regions of the country that are most affected by the conflict.

[GIVE CARD “B” TO THE RESPONDENT]

Using this card, I would like you to tell me...

[Write down 1-7, (888888) Doesn’t know, (988888) No response, (999999) Not applicable]

COLEND2UI1. To what extent do you support that parties represented in Congress can compete for these positions?	
COLEND2UI2. To what extent do you think the government will benefit from the fact that parties that are already in Congress can compete for these positions?	
COLEND2UI3. To what extent do you think that the FARC will benefit from the fact that parties that are already in Congress can compete for these positions?	
COLEND2UI4. To what extent do you think people like you will benefit with the fact that parties that are already in Congress can compete for these positions?	

[COLLECT CARD “B”]

ENDORSEMENT QUESTIONNAIRE 2 – NEUTRAL INFORMATION

During the peace accords reached in Havana, 16 seats were created in Congress for which only social movements, indigenous guards, and significant groups of citizens may compete, in order to give more political representation to municipalities like yours.

However, some Colombian university professors have supported that the political parties that are already in Congress can also compete for the seats that are reserved for the regions of the country that are most affected by the conflict.

[GIVE CARD “B” TO THE RESPONDENT]

Using this card, I would like you to tell me...

[Write down 1-7, (888888) Doesn’t know, (988888) No response, (999999) Not applicable]

COLEND2UI1. To what extent do you support that parties represented in Congress can compete for these positions?	
COLEND2UI2. To what extent do you think the government will benefit from the fact that parties that are already in Congress can compete for these positions?	
COLEND2UI3. To what extent do you think that the FARC will benefit from the fact that parties that are already in Congress can compete for these positions?	
COLEND2UI4. To what extent do you think people like you will benefit with the fact that parties that are already in Congress can compete for these positions?	

[COLLECT CARD “B”]

ENDORSEMENT QUESTIONNAIRE 2 – NEUTRAL NO INFORMATION

Some Colombian university professors have supported that the political parties that are already in Congress can also compete for the seats that are reserved for the regions of the country that are most affected by the conflict.

[GIVE CARD “B” TO THE RESPONDENT]

Using this card, I would like you to tell me...

[Write down 1-7, (888888) Doesn’t know, (988888) No response, (999999) Not applicable]

COLEND2UI1. To what extent do you support that parties represented in Congress can compete for these positions?	
COLEND2UI2. To what extent do you think the government will benefit from the fact that parties that are already in Congress can compete for these positions?	
COLEND2UI3. To what extent do you think that the FARC will benefit from the fact that parties that are already in Congress can compete for these positions?	
COLEND2UI4. To what extent do you think people like you will benefit with the fact that parties that are already in Congress can compete for these positions?	

[COLLECT CARD “B”]

QUESTIONNAIRE ENDORSEMENT 2 – URIBE INFORMATION

During the peace accords reached in Havana, 16 seats were created in Congress for which only social movements, indigenous guards, and significant groups of citizens may compete, in order to give more political representation to municipalities like yours.

However, former president Álvaro Uribe Velez has supported that the political parties that are already in Congress can also compete for the seats that are reserved for the regions of the country that are most affected by the conflict.

[GIVE CARD “B” TO THE RESPONDENT]

Using this card I would like you to tell me...

[Write down 1-7, (888888) Doesn’t know, (988888) No response, (999999) Not applicable]

COLEND2UI1. To what extent do you support that parties represented in Congress can compete for these positions?	
COLEND2UI2. To what extent do you think the government will benefit from the fact that parties that are already in Congress can compete for these positions?	
COLEND2UI3. To what extent do you think that the FARC will benefit from the fact that parties that are already in Congress can compete for these positions?	
COLEND2UI4. To what extent do you think people like you will benefit with the fact that parties that are already in Congress can compete for these positions?	

[COLLECT CARD “B”]

QUESTIONNAIRE ENDORSEMENT 2 – URIBE NO INFORMATION

Former president Álvaro Uribe Velez has supported that the political parties that are already in Congress can also compete for the seats that are reserved for the regions of the country that are most affected by the conflict.

[GIVE CARD “B” TO THE RESPONDENT]

Using this card I would like you to tell me...

[Write down 1-7, (888888) Doesn’t know, (988888) No response, (999999) Not applicable]

COLEND2UI1. To what extent do you support that parties represented in Congress can compete for these positions?	
COLEND2UI2. To what extent do you think the government will benefit from the fact that parties that are already in Congress can compete for these positions?	
COLEND2UI3. To what extent do you think that the FARC will benefit from the fact that parties that are already in Congress can compete for these positions?	
COLEND2UI4. To what extent do you think people like you will benefit with the fact that parties that are already in Congress can compete for these positions?	

[COLLECT CARD “B”]