Attitude Formation during Peace Processes *

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Pre-analysis plan for two separate field experiments planned to evaluate attitude formation toward peace processes, planned for the period around the 2018 elections in Colombia. This is a first draft so please do not circulate further.

1   MOTIVATION AND RESEARCH QUESTION

When leaders seek to sign agreements, whether domestic or international, they have often spent tremendous time studying and negotiating the specific policies that compose these deals. These interactions, as well as social and institutional constraints, shape their positions. The policies they produce can be complex, making it hard for average citizens to understand, and their implications may be somewhat removed from average citizens, at least initially.

Although citizens' attitudes inform these policies, it is less clear how they are formed. Citizens are sometimes asked to weigh in directly on these agreements, including specific policies, either through referendums or through elections for those leaders who will have the responsibility negotiating the agreement. Examples of both exist in Colombia: voters narrowly rejected a 2016 plebiscite on a peace settlement with the FARC, and then they will vote in 2018 on the leaders who negotiated some revisions and passed a new version later than year.[1] Even when citizens are not asked to weigh in directly on the peace process or those negotiating it, their support still shapes success in implementation (e.g. Nilsson 2012).

In this project, we examine how citizens form their attitudes toward peace settlements to civil conflicts, a particularly important and complex set of agreements.

Our theory's first basic premise is that in low-information and highly-polarized contexts, acquiring information is costly and, thus, citizens will rely on shortcuts, including partisan elite cues and peer cues, to form their opinions about complex provisions included in peace agreements. Moreover, they will likely be susceptible to these shortcuts, when the the peace process has a less direct impact on their lives.

The first set of hypotheses, then, draws on the large body of literature in American political behavior on citizens attitude formation toward various policies (e.g., Broockman and Butler 2017; Lenz 2012; Cohen 2003; Broockman and Kalla 2016), theorizing that peace processes have similar dynamics to other foreign and domestic policies. We are therefore able to test how well attitude formation about peace agreements is politics as usual. There are reasons to believe that attitude formation may differ in these contexts: as conflicts reach stalemates, citizens might hold firm on not incorporating combatants back into society as they feel there should be retribution, and they might prefer the status quo to the uncertainty of new policies under an agreement, which often fail anyway (e.g. Toft 2009). However, Matanock and García-Sánchez (2017) provide tentative non-experimental evidence that public opinion towards the peace agreement between FARC and the Colombian government aligned with elite positions, initially suggesting that some of these dynamics are in effect.

Our theory's second basic premise draws on the unique context of peace agreements to

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[1]Some presidential candidates have claimed that these elections will indeed serve as a second vote on the validity of the peace agreement; see, for instance `http://caracol.com.co/radio/2017/02/13/nacional/1487011743_960284.html`.

civil conflict. Specifically, those closest to the conflict—including those living nearest the violence but also those who have in some way been victimized by the fighting—will have more information about the violence and strong incentives to sort through even complex policies because peace agreements will deeply affect their daily lives. In contrast, citizens less affected by violence and not victimized will have less information to draw on when forming their opinions, and they may also have fewer incentives to invest in acquiring information because they have less at stake. Consequently, citizens farthest from civil conflict therefore should form their attitudes based on cognitive shortcuts.[2]

The second set of hypotheses, then, theorizes that those closest to the conflict will be less susceptible to using shortcuts to form their attitudes and less persuadable in general. Part of the reason these individuals differ is the depth of knowledge that we expect that they hold about the peace agreement. There is some limited evidence of this dynamic around terror attacks in the U.S (Fahmy and Johnson, 2007). Matanock and García-Sánchez (2018) show evidence that those closest to the conflict may indeed hold divergent attitudes from their compatriots during civil conflict, and that they may be especially savvy about expressing those attitudes. So, we argue that individuals closest to civil conflict—victims, for example—will be more motivated to process information about a peace agreement and, hence, be less likely to use information shortcuts when forming their opinions.

We plan to test our theory using two different field experiments (which will be written up as two separate papers but that are presented sequentially in this document) in the context of Colombia's peace process.

Understanding citizen attitude formation during peace processes has several implications. First, this project will be able to evaluate whether attitudes on peace agreements are politics as normal. As such, it contributes to the literature on public opinion that has long studied how citizens form their attitudes, but examining factors that may fundamentally change that process.

Second, as more countries with elections negotiate settlements to civil conflict, citizen involvement in peace processes increases, either by directly by voting in a referendum or by

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[2]The results of the 2016 plebiscite showed a strong positive correlation between vote share in favor of the peace agreement and the incidence of victimization at the municipal level. See for instance here and here; as expected, we also found in preliminary evidence that non-victims were more affected by additional negative information about the FARC in Colombia, for example, while victims were not (Matanock and Garbiras-Díaz, 2018).

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voting on those who negotiated it, or by indirectly resisting or supporting related policies. Understanding what shapes citizens attitudes toward peace agreements becomes highly relevant and may point to places where inclusion is more or less beneficial for the prospects of peace.

The findings of this project also relate to policy. First, understanding how citizens form their attitudes about specific measures matters because they affect the chances of successfully signing and implementing a peace agreement. Second, the evidence gained in this project also has the potential to shape official communication aimed at promoting a peace agreement and ultimately designing better government campaigns to help stabilize peace.

2   The 2016 Colombian Plebiscite

We examine a case in which the role of the voter in the peace process is especially clear. In 2012, the Colombian Government and the *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia* (FARC), the longest-fighting leftist guerrilla group in the country, announced that they had officially started negotiating a peaceful settlement to end the half century civil war. Between 2012 and 2016, these negotiations produced a draft peace agreement consisting of six points, which included rural development, political participation, among others. Citizens were to approve the negotiated settlement, and, while mechanisms such as a National Constitutional Assembly were discussed, President Juan Manuel Santos opted for a plebiscite that the Constitutional Court accepted just before the final deal was reached.

Citizens were, thus, directly included in the peace process through a vote on the overall negotiated settlement that took place in October 2016. Voters rejected it by a small margin of 0.43 percentage points.

Policymakers then went on to negotiate a revised version of the agreement, which incorporated some of the changes sought by the opposition, and, later that year, the agreement was ratified in Congress. Implementation of the provisions included in the peace agreement now require approval in Congress either as constitutional reforms or as regular laws (Matanock and García-Sánchez, 2017).

In 2018, citizens will have the chance to vote on these policymakers during the ongoing implementation. The government coalition, led by President Santos, and its current crop of

candidates has expressed consistent support for the peace accord. Opposition leaders, led by ex-president Álvaro Uribe Vélez, and some sectors of the Conservative party, now also vying for seats, still question the legitimacy of the final settlement and have systematically rejected bills that enable its implementation.[3]

Beyond these votes, citizen attitudes will provide the social context in which the peace process occurs.

Therefore, studying the prospects of the Colombian peace agreement—and agreements in democracies in general—necessitates understanding civilian attitudes. In particular, we want to understand how attitudes are formed—and what particular forces shape them.

3 EXPERIMENT 1: ELITE AND PEER CUES

In our first proposed project, which we plan to run just after the 2018 congressional and presidential elections, we will randomize receipt of mailers about elites' positions and about peer group attitudes, as well as additional information about the particular policy that is part of the peace process. We will measure the effects of these mailers by comparing support for these particular policies, as well as for the overall peace agreement with the FARC, before the mailing, two weeks after the mailing, and three months after the mailing. We will use both attitudinal and behavioral measures of support.

[**Note to the reader:** we currently have two options for the experiment. We can run it prior to the presidential elections or we can wait until afterward. In the first case, we can capitalize on the fact that many citizens are thinking about politics, as well as the fact that the presidential candidates likely to compete in the second round have identified themselves as either supporting the peace agreement or not. Thus, we will be able to test for the effect of providing information about candidates' positions on citizens' attitudes towards the peace agreement in real time. We can also potentially then test whether these attitudes lead to behavioral changes reflected in vote choice. In order to be able to measure vote choice, we would opt for a clustered randomized experiment at the polling station level, at which the Colombian Electoral Office provides electoral results. However, this design raises two concerns. First, when estimating the effects of vote choice at the polling station level, we may be underpowered unless we saturate polling stations enough in order to be able to

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[3]Either by making themselves absent during voting on these bills in Congress or by voting against them.

detect small effects. This connects to our second major concern about ethical considerations of influencing the results of an election that will define the prospects of the implementation of a four year long negotiated peace agreement. One partial solution to this concern is to provide information on both sides, fully informing them on all politicians' views, rather than randomizing those that they receive, and comparing this to no cue.

Alternatively, we can run the experiment after the presidential elections and, instead of providing information about the candidates' stances around the peace agreement, we would provide information about the positions of the most visible political elites on each side. With this design we would not be able to measure vote choice, but we would have alternative behavioral measures—such as willingness to donate to victims groups or to receive more information about the implementation process of the peace agreement. According to the latest report by the Kroc Institute,[4] in charge of monitoring the implementation of the peace agreement, only 45% of the 558 provisions included in the final accord show some type of activity. An important policies on which elites will weigh in after the elections is new plans for the eradication and substitution of coca crops in some of the areas of the country most affected by civil conflict. Some aspects of the process also require legislation that can also be modified face to the next president of Colombia, including transitional justice and political reform. We will be able to see the development of attitudes toward these issues throughout the process. A concern with this design, however, aside from seeking to measure attitudes on aspects of implementation that respondents simply may not care to form attitudes on, is that there is the possibility that, depending on which side wins the elections, the peace process may be stopped or there may be such consensus that we would not see real political decisions on these topics to measure.]

3.1   Theory and Hypotheses

We argue that peace agreements occur in contexts of low information and high polarization, and so we expect that many citizens will use elite and peer cues to form their attitudes toward these policies.

Seminal work on political behavior has shown that given that acquiring information is costly (a phenomenon sometimes referred to as rational ignorance (Downs, 1957)), some individuals rely on cues or heuristics to make decisions or form their opinions (Lupia, 1994; Kuklinski, Quirk et al., 2000). Following this literature, we argue that facing complex

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[4]See https://kroc.nd.edu/assets/258051/final_arti_culo_web_kf.pdf

provisions as part of peace processes, less informed individuals will likely take elite cues as information shortcuts to base their attitudes and public support for these specific provisions. These cues should be clearer in contexts of high elite polarization where elites send clearer messages (e.g., partisan cues) that facilitate individuals opinion formation (Levendusky, 2010). In particular, when the provisions included in peace agreements involve legal and economic trade-offs, less sophisticated voters will take elite cues (*in the form of endorsements*) as informational short-cuts for the expected winners and losers of each proposition.

Existing work in American political behavior has shown that citizens often use elite cues to form their attitudes as expected. For example, in seminal work, Zaller (1992) studies the way in which elites' messages influenced public opinion and presents evidence suggesting that the probability of accepting this type of cues depends on the individual's level of political awareness. More recently, other studies show experimental evidence indicating that individuals often form their opinions on elite cues rather than on information about issues and policies (Lenz, 2012). Moreover, Broockman and Butler (2017) show that elite cues can even reshape individuals' attitudes so that they match those of the leaders or elites they have strong affinity for.

While elite cues have been the focus of much analysis on other agreements, including foreign trade deals, for instance, individuals' may also look to their peers or societal norms (Ahler, 2014; Slothuus, 2016). Recent research suggests that individuals may seek to use cues from their peer groups in order to position themselves. For example, Ahler (2014) suggests that citizens rely on peer group cues either because these help them approximate the true attitudes they would form if they were to exert some effort in getting informed about an unfamiliar issues (Lupia, 1994), or because group cues are associated to membership to social identities, which imply common beliefs and attitudes (Achen and Bartels, 2017). An alternative view of peer effects relates to social norms. Under this view, peer group cues can be seen as information about a social norm, which, in turn, should affect their own attitudes in an effort to conform to what is perceived to be a typical behavior among their local communities. A body of research has studied the effect social norms on variables such as voting (Gerber and Rogers, 2009; Davenport et al., 2010; Nickerson, 2008), tax compliance (Castro and Scartascini, 2015; Del Carpio, 2014), and environmental conservation (Cialdini, 2003). The findings of these studies support the idea that descriptive norms (i.e., those that refer to what is believed to be a typical behavior within a given context) shape individual attitudes and behavior. On a topic with significant uncertainty such as a peace process,

however, we anticipate that the mechanism underpinning any peer effects may be based on cues, although norms may shape those cues.

Cues from peer groups should provide information shortcuts in the absence of incentives or resources to identify information about an issue. We therefore pose that individuals may form attitudes about support for peace agreements based on peer cues. For the purpose of this project, we focus on two types of peer groups that, we argue, should be relevant for an individual's attitude formation. First, individuals living in a same community share a common space of interaction, characterized by the similar needs and opportunities, where they also tend to locate much of their social networks and safety nets. Further, much of the conflict and many of the policies emerging from the peace process are local in nature, affecting some municipalities differently than others. In this sense, individuals should expect their neighbors to hold similar views on the peace process to their own and, therefore, they can use those views as information shortcuts. Second, based on a similar logic to elite cues, individuals can also approximate their attitudes on the peace process based on those held by co-partisan citizens. In particular, in contexts of low institutional legitimacy and where politicians can be tainted scandals, partisan cues coming from peers may be even stronger.

We hypothesize that the dynamics of attitude formation are similar for some citizens during peace processes, compared to citizens evaluating other policies outside of conflict contexts. This is in part based on existing studies (Matanock and García-Sánchez, 2017). However, though, there are reasons to believe that attitude formation, and the effect of elite and peer cues may be different in conflict contexts. For instance, negative emotions are heightened, which may make reconciliation difficult (Bar-Tal, Halperin and De Rivera, 2007). Given years of war, insecurity and enumerable damage, citizens may be less willing to support a peace agreement that in essence forgives combatants and reintegrates them into daily life than elites or peers. Under a stalemate, the status quo may also look more appealing compared to the uncertainty of peace agreements, which are prone to failure (e.g. Toft 2009). In other words, the risks of supporting concessions to rebels who many view as untrustworthy and deserving of retribution, in particular, may be a different type of decision compared to elections in stable environments which voters are simply deciding on a candidate.

We do, however, theorize that those closest to the conflict may be less prone to these shortcuts because their incentives to carefully collect and assess information about these proposals are especially strong (Bullock, 2011). While few studies directly capture

citizen attitudes toward armed actors or policies about civil conflict,[5] arguments about sophisticated alignment strategies during conflict is supported by some indirect measures that those closest to the conflict have strong incentives to best understand its dynamics (Kalyvas, 2006; Berman and Matanock, 2015).

Underpinning these questions are theories of when people will use cognitive short cuts or heuristics to make a decision or use more effort when processing information (Kahneman, 2011). People are generally overloaded by information and are not able to process information fully for each decision. Therefore, people will generally use heuristics when making a decision, but they are more likely to do so when 1) decisions are less personally relevant, 2) are distracted or have to put cognitive effort elsewhere, and 3) the decision is complex. Understanding peace agreements and other types of policies often meet the third criteria, where there are multiple components that affect one another, and it is hard to weigh the pros and cons of each of the attributes. As a consequence, people will likely try to simplify the decision whether or not to support the policy. One way of doing so is to align their decisions with who they have affinity for. However, people will override this general tendency to use heuristics if a decision is personally relevant. Those that will be most affected by a policy will take more time to understand how a policy will affect their lives, and therefore be more influenced by the information within the policy than other cues. In the case of peace agreements, victims, who largely will receive restitution as part of the peace agreement will likely be more motivated to process the information in an agreement than non-victims.

We therefore seek to answer the following set of questions in this paper: first, what is the effect of elite endorsements and peer positions on public support toward specific provisions included in peace agreements, voting outcomes, and how is this effect moderated by voters' affinity with the endorser? And second, what type of voters are more likely influenced by elite and peer cues?

3.2   Main Hypotheses

To generate specific tests, we explore attitudes on particular policies that are part of the peace process but currently under debate in Colombia, including the details of drug policy, transitional justice, and political reform, as noted above, as well as the peace agreement

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[5]Exceptions include Beath, Christia and Enikolopov (2016); Blair, Imai and Lyall (2014); Lyall, Blair and Imai (2013); Matanock and García-Sánchez (2018) on counterinsurgents, and Blair et al. (2013); Fair, Malhotra and Shapiro (2010); Fair et al. (2016) on insurgents, for example.

overall. We assess the effect of elite and peer group cues on these policies, as well as the provision of more information about these policies, on public opinion. With respect to elite cues, we also explore whether their effect is shaped by citizen affinity to the elite who is sending the cue. For peer group cues, drawing on previous findings, we also study how their effects are contingent on individuals' prior beliefs about the average opinions of their peers. We then assess the interactive effects of providing additional information on these cues.

Elite cues: We are interested in exploring how public support for the particular policies included in the peace agreement is contingent on elite cues. We hypothesize that citizens will rely on elite cues in order to form their opinion about provisions that are unknown to them. The final direction of the effect will depend on citizens' affinity to elites. Citizens will likely rely on cues coming from elites they are close to.

Peer group cues: We are interested in exploring the effect of peer group cues on individual's attitudes towards the specific provisions included in the peace agreement. We hypothesize that individuals will use peer group cues as information shortcuts, as well. We expect individuals who learn about the attitudes from their peers to be more likely to approximate their views to theirs. However, following the empirical evidence on the peer effects and social norms, we expect this effect to be contingent on individuals' priors and the extent to which they update after receiving information about the attitudes of their peers. Individuals may have initial priors about what the rates of support for the peace agreement and its component policies are in their communities and among their co-partisans. When they are informed that this average support is higher than what they originally thought, we expect individuals to become more supportive of the peace process. And, in contract, those informed that it is lower should becomes less supportive of the peace process.

Additional Information: We are also interested in assessing the extent to which citizens' elite and peer group cue-taking is a strategy to compensate for their lack of information about a proposal, and to what extent it might operate independently of the amount of information individuals have, as they may still process that information with bias or view it with emotion. We expect that individuals with *more information* about the contents of specific provisions of the peace agreement should be *less* likely to use elite and peer group cues to form their opinions than individuals who lack such information.[6]

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[6]Note that, with this design, we may underestimate the effect of providing citizens with additional information if they are already knowledgeable and do not update based on the information we provide them (Druckman and Leeper, 2012).

3.3 Subgroup Analysis

We also expect the following variables to be moderators of the two aforementioned effects:

Closeness to civil conflict : Following our previous discussion about how proximity to conflict is related to individuals incentives to engage in deliberative information processing, we expect individuals who experienced civil conflict more closely to seek more information about the costs and benefits of a peace agreement and be less likely to use heuristics to determine support for it. Thus, the effect of both elite and peer group cues should be attenuated for individuals who were closer to civil conflict. Here, we define closeness to conflict in two ways that will be tested separately.

- **Intensity of civil conflict:** First, we classify municipalities as a function of the intensity of civil conflict prior to signing the peace agreement as follows: no civil conflict, low intensity civil conflict, high intensity civil conflict. [**Note to the reader:** We also have data on the longer trajectory of conflict and on control by armed groups measured by the trajectory of violence and then stability over time Matanock and García-Sánchez (2018), and so we could consider incorporating these variables into our measures of intensity.]

- **Direct victimization:** Second, we measure direct victimization at the individual level asking subjects for direct experience related to civil conflict (e.g., kidnapping, displacement, among others). [**Note to the reader:** Other surveys also ask about victimization of immediate family members, and so we could consider incorporating these variables into our victimization measures, as well.]

Political Knowledge (standard and related to the peace agreement) : The literature on public opinion suggests that more informed individuals should be less likely to rely on cues (Gilens and Murakawa, 2002). Consequently, we expect the effect of elite and peer group cues to be smaller among individuals with more political knowledge. We define a second measure of political awareness that is strictly related to the knowledge about the final peace agreement signed between the government and the FARC. We argue that individuals better informed about the peace agreement should be less influenced by cues. More broadly, we anticipate that these should be mediated by the closeness to conflict: those closer to the conflict, if our theory is correct, should be more informed than the other respondents.

3.4 Research Design

We will test the hypotheses just outlined using an field experiment, where we exogenously vary the information individuals receive about a specific provision included in the peace agreement.[7] Information will vary in terms of the type of cue (i.e., whether coming from an elite, a co-partisan or a neighbor) and the amount of additional information individuals' receive about the specifics of the policy proposal (see footnote above about how we will choose this/these).

We will embed our treatments in a mailer that will be left for individuals at the end of a face-to-face baseline survey. The baseline and endline surveys will capture pre- and post-treatment measures of our outcomes of interest, as well as other variables what will be used to explore heterogeneous treatment effects. Mailers will contain different information about i) elites' endorsement of the specific policy provision(s) related to the peace process and to the peace agreement overall; ii) average support toward the specific policy provision(s) and vote share in the plebiscite in the individual's neighborhood; iii) average support for the same among co-partisans; or iv) no cue. These conditions will be interacted with information about the costs and benefits of the specific policy provision(s). The manipulation of each dimension is described in the following sections.

3.4.1 Testing for Elite and Peer Cues

Elite Cues: Previous studies on civil conflict have used endorsement experiments to assess public support to rebel groups, using it to work around problems of *social desirability bias.* Yet, we argue that in the context of low information and high elite polarization, elites' endorsements may convey significant pieces of information, which voters use in order to form their opinion about complex provisions included in peace agreements. In this sense,

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[7][**Note to the reader:** We have not yet decided on the particular policy (or policies) on which we will experiment because we want to choose something that satisfies the following three characteristics: 1) based on the latest results of the 2017 Colombia LAPOP survey, citizens do not know well and do not understand its specific purpose and implications; 2) elites have taken positions supporting and rejecting the provision; 3) there is room for politicians to modify the policy.

If we were to run the experiment now, prior to the elections, we would lean toward a policy related to the special Tribunal created to manage Transitional Justice, called "Justicia Especial para la Paz" (JEP). The latest survey evidence also shows that individuals are not well informed about the policies, and, nevertheless, it has been a divisive issue among elites. Moreover, while the creation of JEP was recently approved in Congress, policy around it remains in flux: for instance, the opposition recently added some disqualifications for juries seeking to take part in JEP, including having participated in movements against human rights violations). It therefore meets our criteria. The current standing of the policy would need to be checked, however, just prior to the experiment, depending on when we field the experiment (see note above).]

endorsements by elites are used to signal information about whether or not those who have affinity to the endorser should support the proposal.

The 2016 plebiscite in Colombia aligned along a main political divide, one that runs between the incumbent president Santos and the ex-president Álvaro Uribe Vélez Matanock and García-Sánchez (2017). Capitalizing on this division, and assuming we run the experiment after the election (see note above), we will randomly provide information about both politicians' positions with respect to certain policy provision(s) related to the peace process, and the peace agreement overall, generating two possible treatment levels: i) no elite cue, ii) Santos' and Uribe's positions about the policy provision(s) that we choose (see footnote above for selection criteria and a possible choice) related to the peace process, as well as their positions on the peace agreement overall.

Peer Cues: We also pose that individuals' social context matters when forming their opinions in such low information environments. Therefore, in addition to the effects of elite cues, we test for the effect of peer cues. In order to manipulate this dimension we randomly provide some individuals with information about either (1) survey evidence about the particular policy provision related to the peace process (again, see footnote above) and the percentage of people in the polling station closest to where they lived who voted "yes" in the plebiscite, or (2) the average support for these provision(s) and the peace agreement overall among their co-partisans.

3.4.2 Testing for the effect of additional information

Finally, we also explore whether having more information about the peace agreement and specific policies can attenuate individuals' cue-taking. For this purpose, we introduce a second treatment arm where we randomly provide individuals with additional information that explains the costs and benefits of the policy provision(s) that we choose (again, see footnote above).

3.4.3 Factorial Design

In addition to exploring the pure effect of each one of the aforementioned dimensions, we combine both treatment arms into a 4×2 factorial design, which allows us to test for the interacting effects of these two treatments.

We will randomly assign individuals to one of our eight experimental conditions (see Table 1).

Table 1: 4x2 Factorial Design

Treatment	Levels
Cues	1. No cue 2. Elite cue 3. Co-partisan cue 4. Neighbor cue
Information	1. No information 2. Information about provision

3.5 Recruitment, Baseline and Endline Survey

We will embed the experimental questions on a face-to-face survey in Colombia. The survey will representative at the national level, as well as the regional level. Since one of our main hypotheses about heterogeneous effects relates to closeness to conflict, we will oversample, however, to include an equal number of municipalities that score in the three different conflict intensity indicators (none, low, and high). We will use this variable to block on for our treatment assignment. This survey will serve as our baseline survey to collect pre-treatment measures of our main outcomes of interest as well as on our moderators.Given that this is a panel, enumerators will collect respondents' contact information, as well as their consent to be recontacted. At the end of this survey, enumerators will be instructed to leave respondents one of the possible mailers.[8].

We will run two follow-up face-to-face surveys: the first one two weeks after the intervention and the second one three months after it. This will allow us to estimate the effects. We would ideally like to do a third survey six months later to test lingering effects, but we do not currently anticipate having funding for that. The final sample will be determined after running power calculations and taking into account attrition between waves.

3.6 Operationalization

3.6.1 Affinity with Elites

Based on our hypotheses, when testing for the effect of elite or co-partisan cues, we need to account for the interaction between the level of affinity of the respondent with the elites and parties, and the availability of either cue.

Given this, we will block on the individuals' pre-treatment affinity with Uribe and Santos. For this purpose, we create four block defined as follows:

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[8]Mailing would be very expensive, but we hope to have enumerators leave them in mailboxes or in some other way that disassociates them from the mailers.

- Low affinity with Santos, high affinity with Uribe

- Low affinity with Santos, low affinity with Uribe

- High affinity with Santos, high affinity with Uribe (not likely)

- High affinity with Santos, low affinity with Uribe

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We will use the following question to classify individuals in one of the above four blocks:

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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 some characters in the country and I would like
you to tell me on that scale what is your concept of each one of them.
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3.7 Subgroups of Interest

The specific questions that we will use to operationalize these variables are to be defined (but see notes to the reader on the concepts above).

- **Closeness to conflict:** We will measure our two different definitions of closeness to civil conflict separately—proximity to the violence and victimization—and will run each as its own analysis. However, we expect a high correlation between these two measures, in which case we may opt for a scale rather than having them as two separate variables.

  - Proximity to the violence: We will classify municipalities as a function of their degree of affectation by civil conflict as well as their duration. This database comes from the *Centro de Recursos para el análisis de Conflictos*(CERAC) who has constructed a database using data on conflict in Colombia from 2000 to 2012.[9]
  - Victimization: we include a battery of questions that asks whether the respondent (or the respondent's family) has been a victim of civil conflict; we also ask about which armed actor perpetrated the crime. This allows us to differentiate between different perpetrators and, specifically, to ask about victimization by FARC.

- **Level of political knowledge** measured by standard questions and a short set of questions specifically related to the civil conflict and the peace agreement signed between the FARC and government.

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[9]See `http://www.cerac.org.co/es/l%C3%ADneas-de-investigaci%C3%B3n/analisis-conflicto/tipologia-por-municipios-del-conflicto-armado.html`.

3.8 Primary Outcomes of Interest

Our main hypotheses are related to public support for specific policy proposal(s) included in the Colombian peace agreement. For this purpose, we will focus on two sets of outcome variables. First, we will measure support for the overall peace agreement and for the particular policies using a 1 to 7 scale (where 1 means "No support at all" and 7 "A lot of support"). We will also proxy support for the peace agreement with vote intention to candidates who support the peace agreement versus those who do not for the coming presidential election. Second, we will ask for behavioral measures that will allow us to capture the extent to which perceptions lead to behavior. *Some of the behavioral measures that we have considered include willingness to: 1) donate to a victim fund, 2) to sign up to receive additional information about implementation of the peace process, 3) receive information to attend a rally for the peace agreement. These would vary from most to least effort intensive. We would appreciate some more thoughts on this.*

4   Experiment 2: Persuasion through perspective-taking

[*This is a less-developed project, but we might have the opportunity to run it sooner than Experiment 1, and so we would really appreciate any comments on the theory or the design.*]

Our second experiment investigates whether canvassing can ease the process of peace-building in post-conflict contexts. We examine whether citizen perspective-taking can change support for the peace process. We are interested in whether messaging delivered by victims who support the peace process despite the cost the conflict has imposed on them, compared to non-victims delivering similar messages, changes support for the peace agreement. We will use a canvassing campaign to shape attitudes in Colombia, examining how readily citizens support the provisions that compose the peace agreement signed by the FARC and the Colombian government, in order to answer two related questions. First, as in the previous study, how do citizens form their opinions about complex peace agreements in the context of low information and high polarization environments? Second, given that one of the main criticisms to the pedagogy used by the government to inform citizens about the contents of the peace agreement has emphasized the top-down flow of information, does this bottom-up approach work to build support for peace? In this study, then, we examine whether a pedagogy related to perspective-taking could lead to broader support for a peace process.

4.1 Theory and hypotheses

Our main research question derives from the observation that results of the 2016 plebiscite in Colombia revealed that victims were more likely to support the peace agreement than non-victims. More specifically, there was a positive and strong correlation between vote share in favor of the peace agreement and the prevalence of victimization at the municipal level (see `http://laramaciudadana.com/paz1.html`). In contrast, the vote share against the peace agreement was higher, on average, in more urban areas that were less affected by the conflict. How do citizens form their opinions in the latter contexts? Could perspective-taking serve as a means to produce empathy from non-victims with victims of civil war?

We have argued that in conflict settings victims and non-victims may process information differently. In general, while people may feel the FARC should be punished, those who are not as affected by the conflict do not want to trade the status quo for an uncertain future since it may be less clear for them what they should expect to gain from it. Those who do have a lot to gain (i.e, victims, and potentially others directly affected by the conflict), however, are willing to change the status quo even if the future in uncertain (Kahneman, Knetsch and Thaler, N.d.).

Drawing on previous findings, we argue that if a respondent takes the perspective of someone affected by conflict, they may be more willing to take a risk and support the peace agreement. Given the segregation in Colombian society, and particularly that the conflict was concentrated in certain geographic areas, those less-affected by the conflict have little contact with those that were affected. Victims are largely from rural areas, from places further from the capital, and they are also poorer, compared to non-victims who are more likely to live in urban areas and be from a higher socio-economic class. Perspective-taking and empathy have been shown to reduce bias and support cooperation (Stephan and Finlay, 1999; Galinsky, 2002).

A large body of literature in political behavior has provided evidence on the persuasive effects of door-to-door canvassing on variables such as turnout on the election day and, more recently, on vote choice (Green and Gerber, 2015; Pons, 2017). Outside the electoral context, (Broockman and Kalla, 2016) have shown that a ten-minute conversation can reduce antitransgender prejudice. In particular, the authors present evidence on the positive effects of a perspective-taking approach when reducing ingrained prejudices against transgender communities. Drawing on the aforementioned evidence, we hypothesize that individuals less affected by civil conflict will be persuaded to support the peace agreement after holding a 5 minute perspective-taking conversation. Furthermore, this effect should be stronger when

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the conversation is led by a victim of civil conflict.

4.2 Research design

We will conduct a field experiment in which we randomize both canvassing and the identity of canvassers, and then we will evaluate their effect on a battery of questions that aim at measuring attitudes toward the Colombias peace accord and behavioral outcomes on support for rehabilitation of former combatants. Canvassers can be either victims of the civil conflict or non-victims (see notes above for how we define victims). This design implies that we would have two treatment conditions and an additional control group that receives a visit from the canvassers but with no conversations about the peace agreement, the placebo, yielding a total of three experimental conditions. We will randomly assign households to one of the three experimental conditions and measure outcomes at the individual level.[10] *We have not decided yet if we will run this experiment before or after the presidential elections. However, we are inclined to do it before since the issue will be more salient to individuals during the campaign period than afterward.*

Following the motivating question of how citizens more removed from civil conflict form their opinions about the peace agreement and the provisions included on it, we seek to run this experiment in an urban context. Civil war in Colombia has mainly been fought in the countryside and, with few exceptions, large cities have remained less involved. Hence, we will conduct our experiment in the top three cities in terms of the population of voting age: Bogotá (with $5,684,089$ registered voters), Cali (with $1,668,804$ registered voters), and Medellín (with $1,537,213$ registered voters). While these are some of the most urban cities in the country, they have too, to some extent, been involved in civil conflict. Thus, within these cities we will be able to exploit heterogeneity in terms of prior victimization.

4.3 Outcomes of interest

In order to assess attitude change, we will collect baseline data on citizens' pre-treatment attitudes on provisions in the peace process that are part of the settlement between FARC and the Colombian government, as well as their attitudes toward ex-combatants. The baseline survey will be face-to-face and, in order to minimize possible biases, it will be unrelated to any canvassing activities. We will follow-up with a post-treatment face-to-face

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[10]Alternatively, we can opt for a clustered randomize experiment at the polling station level, that, while more demanding in terms of power, allows us to directly measure electoral outcomes (rather than self-reported measures). Bogotá has 642 polling stations, Medellín 171, and Cali 184.

survey to the same individuals asking for the same questions.

A second set of outcomes will be measured in-site (i.e., right after the canvassing). We will include behavioral outcomes in which respondents can contribute part of the payment for their time to funds for rehabilitation for former combatants and other peace-building projects that will test for subjects' reciprocity and cooperation norms when interacting with ex-combatants.

Finally, if we opt for the pre-election design, we will also include a set of electoral outcomes that will measure citizens vote choice in the 2018 presidential election—where those set to become candidates have already stated their positions on the current peace agreement.

5   POWER ANALYSIS AND ESTIMATION

<<To be added once we have decided when precisely to run these experiments (and as we seek funding for the second one).>>

6   IMPLICATIONS

- Citizens opinions not only matter for the approval process but also for the implementation phase, where legitimacy may help ensure lasting peace. Citizen attitudes may also be able to change a peace process (e.g., voting for a president who promises to repeal it).

- Our contribution also speaks directly to the role of cues in the context of peace processes and the prospects for peace as more democracies are ending civil conflict (since they are more likely to involve citizens in the approval process).

- By assessing public support for specific proposals related to the implementation of the already approved peace process, we also directly speak to the stability of the peace process in Colombia. This matters especially if we take into account that next year there will be presidential elections, and that those considering candidacy have already started building alliances around their positions on the implementation of the peace agreements. For instance, leaders from a coalition that supported the NO vote in the plebiscite have already announced a coalition for the 2018 presidential election

and have stated that, if elected, the candidate will redesign the terms of the current peace accord.[11] As such, with their vote next year, citizens will still play a key role in determining the prospects of the peace agreement.

- We also seek to provide evidence on whether closeness to conflict makes citizens better informed about the trade-offs involved in a peace agreement and, thus, less susceptible to elite cues. While we are not able to directly test for the effect of victimization on support for the provisions included in the peace agreement, we are able to explore heterogeneous treatment effects by political knowledge and closeness to conflict (proxied by victimization), and study whether these two are moderators to the effect of elite and peer cues.

- Ultimately, this project seeks to shed light on the conditions under which voters are more willing to make concessions to ex-combatants. In particular, we argue, this will depend on the degree of elite and social polarization and position vis--vis a peace agreement. In the presence of strong polarization, this may make citizens support to the peace process to follow elites divide. This is indeed what we saw in the referendum that took place in Colombia in October 2016. We also, however, anticipate that these effects may be moderated by factors such as knowledge and proximity to the conflict.

- Methodologically, we also contribute to the literature on endorsement experiments in the context of civil conflict by deepening our understanding of the mechanisms by which endorsements have an effect on public support. On the one hand, we test whether the information conveyed by a proposal is neutral to the endorser or not. On the other hand, we test whether endorsements carry over important information that citizens take in order to inform their opinions and level of support to peace agreements; and whether elite cue-taking could be overridden by providing more information about the proposal.

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[11]See `http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/politica/uribe-y-pastrana-presentaran-candidato-unico-para-`

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