Reunited? Post-conflict Attitudes toward former FARC

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Conflicts in the World

In 2023, **468 million children** lived in conflict zones (Østby et al., 2023).

Conflicts exhibit a strong tendency toward **recurrence**: more than 1/2 of post-WW2 conflicts re-emerged after an initial resolution (PRIO, 2017).

⇒ **What are the factors of long-term peace?**

1. **Inclusive political institutions** (Gurses & Mason, 2008; Hartzell & Hoddie, 2003);
2. **Economic** (Collier et al., 2008; Walter, 2004) or **Social development** (McKeown & Taylor, 2017);
3. **International support** (Fortna, 2008);
4. **State capacity** (North et al., 2013);
5. **Transitional justice** (Hamber & Wilson, 2010; Loyle & Appel, 2017).

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This Study

A way to achieve this long-term peace is by the **social inclusion of former combatants** (Hartzell & Hoddie, 2003; Kaplan & Nussio, 2015; McMullin, 2013).

We want to **examine individual and territorial factors affecting attitudes toward the reintegration of former FARC** in Colombia after the 2016 peace agreement.

Survey data collected in 2018 among 4,500 Colombians, one year after the implementation of **ETCRs** (reintegration centers), in **intermediate territories** (urban core: 15,000 to 400,000 inhabitants).

Context

2016: Plebiscite on the Peace Agreement between FARC and Government after +60yrs of conflict

- 50.21% of "no", but a revised version adopted
- cornerstone of Colombia's peacebuilding efforts
- still in 2018: only 40% of respondents think the reintegration of the FARC into the civil and political life is a good thing (our data)
- 2019: 13,000 former FARC members (including 7,000 ex-combatants) demobilized since the 2016 peace agreement (United Nations, 2019).

2017: 26 **ETCRs** (Territorial Spaces for Training and Reintegration)

- designed to host and support the **reintegration** of former FARC
- aim to contribute to the surrounding communities → **social cohesion**

Research Questions

$\Rightarrow$ **Research Questions:**

1. What are the determinants of positive attitudes toward former FARC?
   - $\rightarrow$ OLS
   - $\rightarrow$ Compare results to the literature
2. How the proximity to ETCRs affect attitudes toward former FARC?
   - $\rightarrow$ Propensity Score Matching
   - $\rightarrow$ Intergroup Contact Theory (ICT) to explain the change in attitudes

Data

Survey:

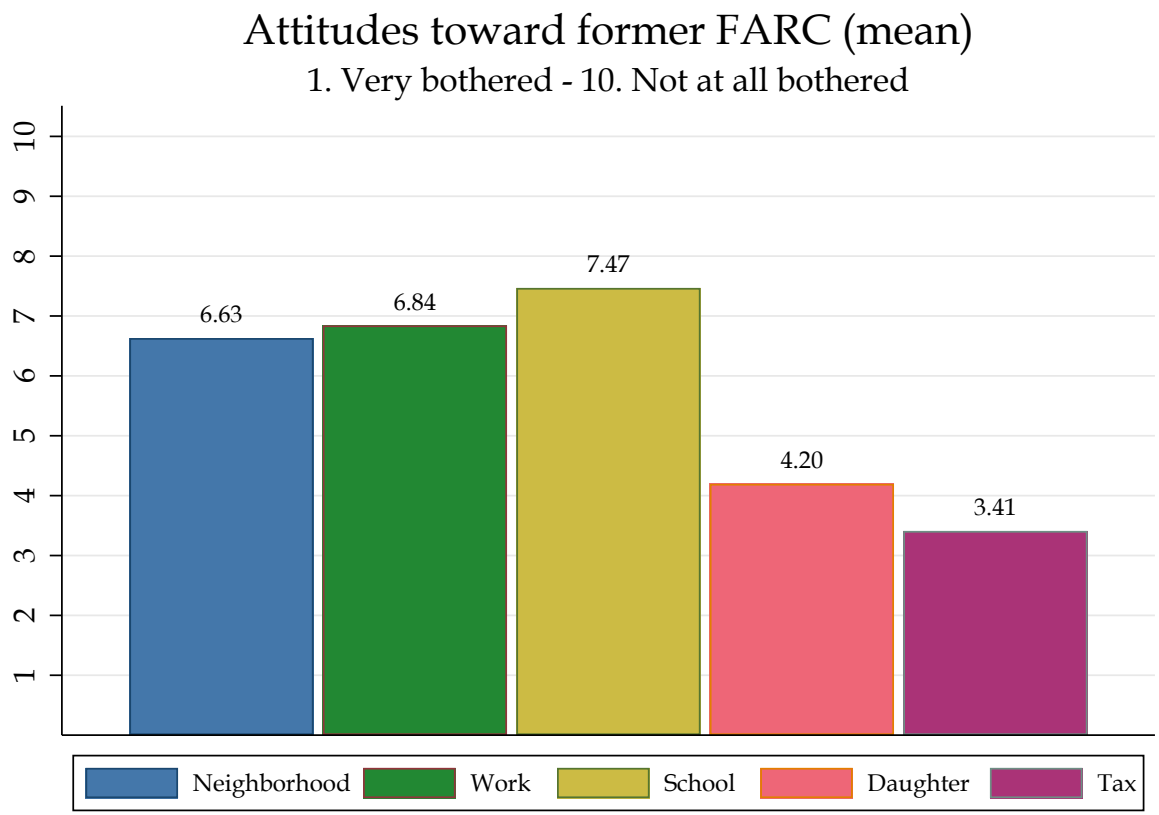
- Conducted in **2018**, two years after the peace agreement, by the *Centro Latinoamericano para el Desarrollo Rural* (RIMISP) in Chile, Mexico and Colombia
- Aim: understand the **dynamics of intermediate territories**. In Colombia, additional focus on the peace process.
  - → **Areas more exposed to the conflict** (Fergusson et al., 2018)
  - → **Georeferenced** data (precise lat. and long.)

Variables:

- Outcome: **(Positive) Attitudes toward former FARC**
- Treatment: **Proximity to ETCR** ($< 50km$)
- Several individual and territorial covariates to account for selection bias.

Outcome Variables: positive attitudes toward former FARC

Tell me how much each of the following situations would bother you?



Great variability depending on the scenario: from 3.41 to 7.50

More Details

ETCRs (*Territorial Training and Reintegration Spaces*)

Reintegration initiatives, such as Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) programs, are often evaluated through their economic outcomes; yet the social dimension is crucial for long-term effectiveness (Leff, 2008; Sharif, 2018)

⇒ In Colombia, this was materialized with the creation of 26 ETCRs after 2016

- Intended to facilitate the transition of former FARC members into civilian life
- By 2017, the UN helped disarm 7,000 FARC-EP, who then went into these centers (in 2019, still 3,000 lived in ETCRs)
- ETCRs aimed to **contribute to the surrounding communities**

Non-random location of the ETCRs:

- Located in remote and rural areas: weaker state presence and less economic opportunities (Tuirán Sarmiento and Trejos Rosero, 2017).
- Biases: location w/ higher support, reverse causality (migration)

⇒ Propensity Score Matching to limit these biases

Map ETCRs

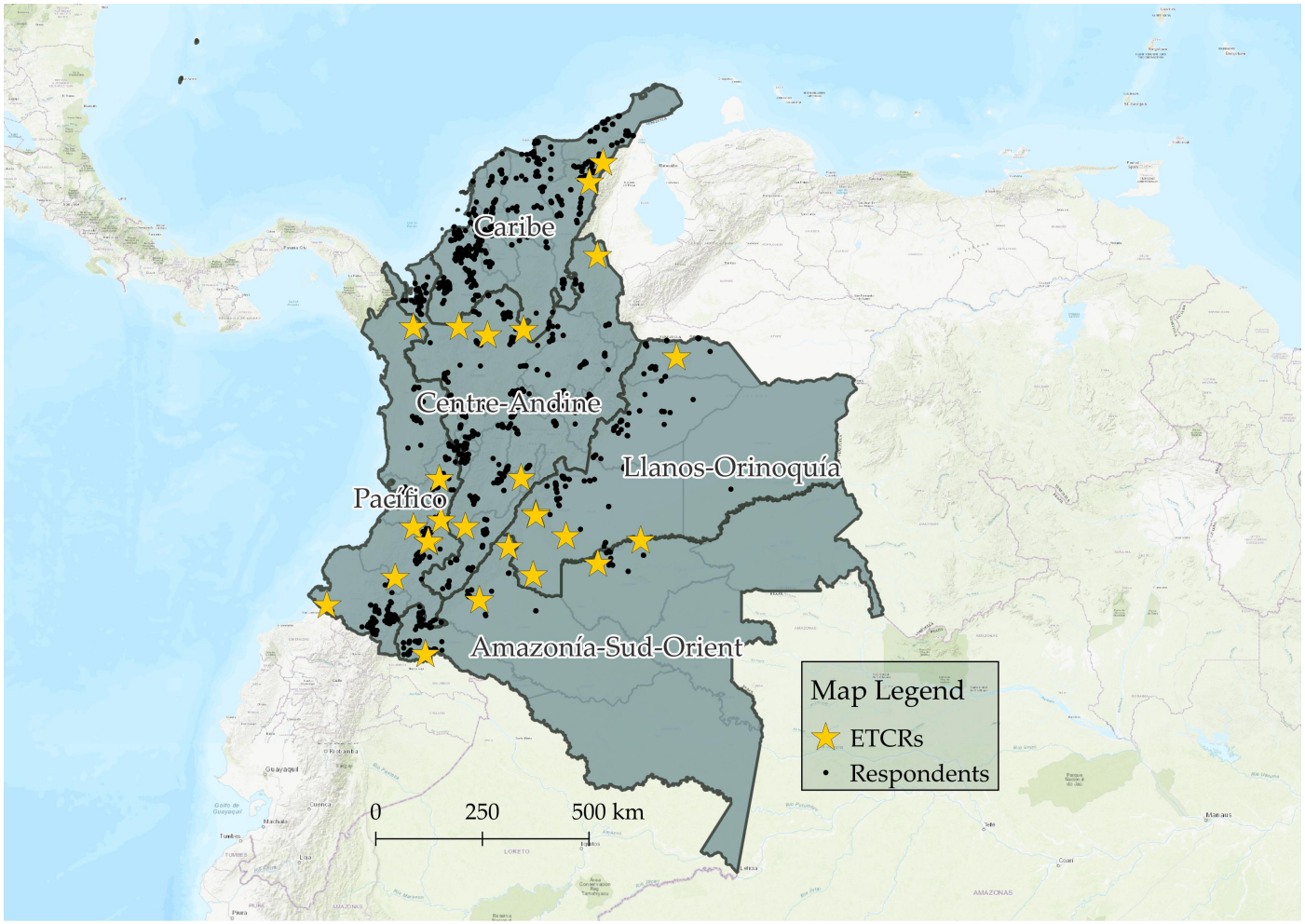


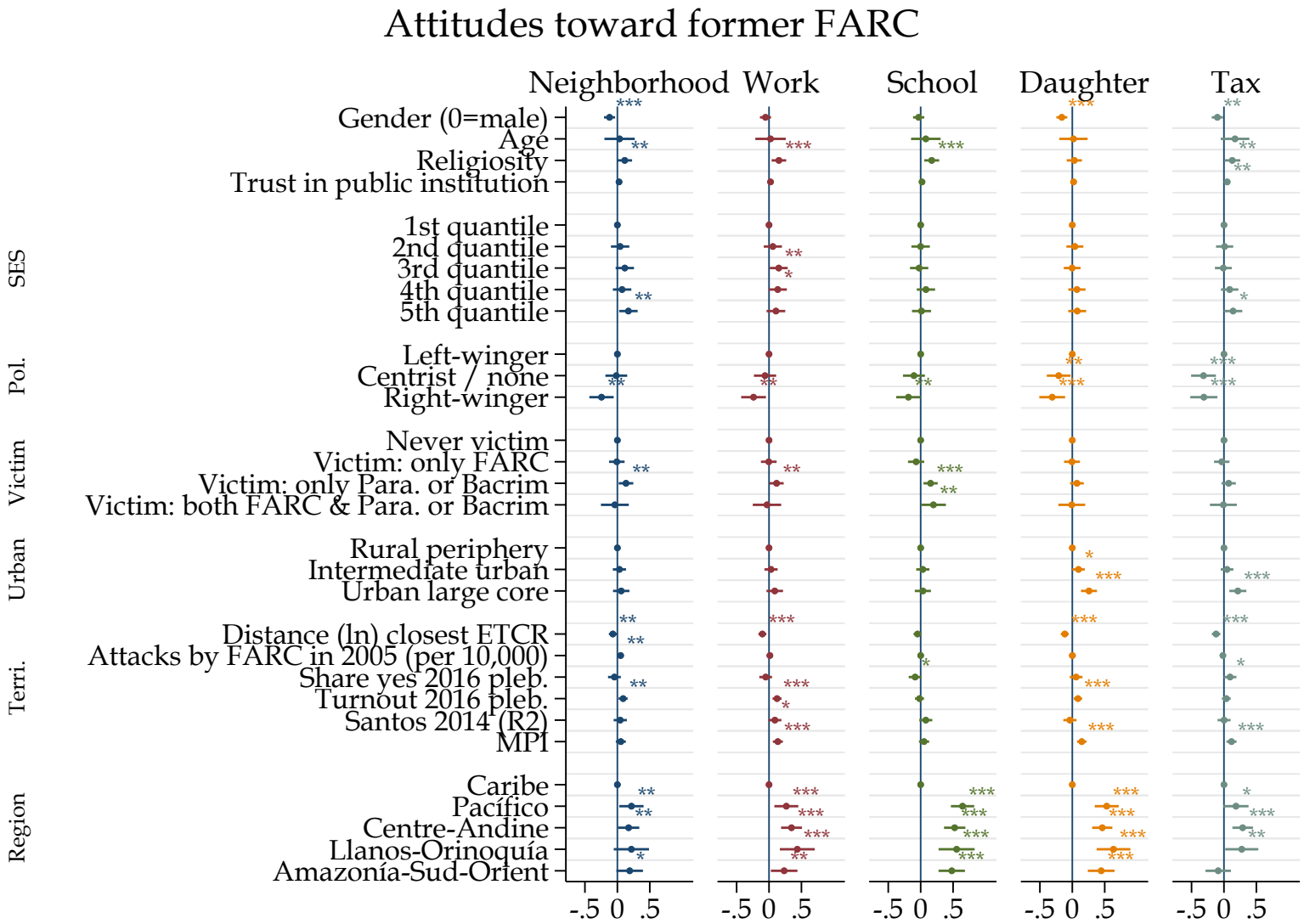
Figure 1: ETCRs in Colombia

Research questions – Preview of results

1. OLS: Who are the one having a positive attitudes toward the former FARC members? Overall:
   - → **Demographic characteristics** (male, religious, left-leaning) is associated with more positive attitudes toward former FARC.
   - → Victimization by FARC-EP → does not play a clear role, while **victimization by paramilitaries** plays a positive role.
   - → **Urban** respondents have **more positive attitudes**
   - → **Region** of residence → those living in the **Caribbean** region have a more negative attitudes

2. PSM: Proxmity to ETCRs - adoption of a less naïve econometric approach
   - → Living closer ($< 50km$) to an ETCR is associated with more positive attitudes toward former FARC. Relative effect size: 8% to 30%
   - → Robust to various sensitivity analysis

OLS - Determinants of Positive Attitudes toward former FARC



Propensity Score Matching (PSM)

To account for the non-random allocation of the ETCRs, we use PSM:

- it **reduces selection bias** by mimicking a randomized experiment;
- it estimates a causal effect by **pairing control and treated units with similar characteristics** (Imbens & Rubin, 2015)

Conditional independence assumption: necessity to observe all factors influencing both treatment (ETCRs' location) and the outcome (attitudes):

- **Individual characteristics**: Gender, Age, SES, Religiosity, Trust, Past victimization (FARC, Para., both, none), Political Leaning;
- **Individual perceptions**: Share of FARC in extreme poverty, victim of violence, recruited by force; Satisfaction with standard of living, perspectives, security and neighbourhood;
- **Territorial characteristics**: Attacks against civil pop. by FARC in 2005 (pc), Terrorist acts in 2005 (pc), Disappearances in 2005 (pc), Homicides in 2005 (pc), Internally displaced persons in 2005 (pc), % Vote "Yes" in 2016 plebiscite, % Turnout in 2016 plebiscite, % Vote Santos in 2014 (R2), MPI, Live in the Caribbean region, urban index.

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Proximity to ETCRs: baseline estimates

Table 1: Propensity score matching - Effect of proximity of ETCR on positive attitudes towards former FARC (1 to 10)
Baseline Analysis - Closest ETCR within 50 kilometers with a Epanechnikov Kernel matching

Dependent variable	Neighborhood	Work	School	Daughter	Tax
Baseline					
Average Treatment effect on the Treated (ATT)	**0.84*** **	**0.92*** **	**0.63** **	**0.66***	**1.00*** **
	(0.31)	**(0.31)**	**(0.29)**	**(0.34)**	**(0.34)**
Observations	3,031	3,031	3,031	3,031	3,031
Mean Control Group	6.59	6.81	7.44	4.16	3.36
Relative Effect Size	12.75%	13.51%	8.47%	15.87%	29.76%

Note: This table presents the propensity score matching (PSM) estimates of the effect of proximity to the closest ETCR (50km) on attitudes toward former FARC. The estimates are obtained using the psmatch2 command in Stata, employing a Epanechnikov Kernel matching approach with a bandwidth of 0.2 of the logit-transformed propensity score. Standard errors are displayed in parenthesis. The covariates included in the analysis are the full set of individual characteristics, individual perceptions and territorial characteristics. Significance levels: *** $p<0.01$, ** $p<0.05$, * $p<0.1$

Sensitivity

Table 2: Propensity Score Matching - Comparative Table of the Sensitivity Analysis

Dependent variable	Neighborhood	Work	School	Daughter	Tax
Alternative Matching					
1-1 Matching	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓
1-5 Matching	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Radius Matching	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Alternative Distance					
30km	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
40km	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓
60km	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓
70km	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Alternative Treatment					
Random Binary	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Distance to hospital $>$ 45mn	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓
Distance to doctor $>$ 45mn	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Note: This table presents the results of the sensitivity analysis of the propensity score matching (PSM). The estimates are obtained using the `psmatch2` command in Stata, employing an Epanechnikov Kernel matching approach with a bandwidth of 0.2 of the logit-transformed propensity score.

Conclusion

Demographic characteristics (male, left-leaning, religious) is associated with more positive attitudes toward former FARC.

More **nuanced results on territory**: we find that living in a more urban setting also plays a positive role, while the literature mostly emphasized the cities as being more critical of former FARC (Álvarez Vanegas & Garzón Vergara, 2016; Basset, 2018).

Using PSM estimates, we estimate a **less biased effect of proximity to ETCRs** and find a strong positive association.

Though we cannot assess long-term impacts, the evidence suggests the **implementation of ETCRs improved attitudes toward former FARC members**.

Presentation Overview

Thank you!

Context & Methodology:

- Attitudes toward former FARC in Colombia after the 2016 plebiscite
- Survey: 4,500 Colombians living in intermediate territories (5,000 – 400,000 inh.)
- OLS to look at the determinants of positive attitudes toward former FARC
- Propensity Score Matching to investigate the role of ETCRs on those attitudes

Results:

- Male, left-leaning, religious $\rightarrow$ positive attitudes
- Living in more urban areas and outside the Caribbean region $\rightarrow$ positive attitudes
- Proximity to ETCR $\rightarrow$ positive attitudes (from a 10% to a 25% sizeable effect)

Concluding Remarks:

- Past victimization from the FARC-EP (paramilitaries) $\rightarrow \varnothing$ effect on (improve) attitudes
- ETCRs seem to matter – at least in the short-run (1 year). These types of initiatives should be evaluated more systematically

What factors are explaining long-term peace?

- **Inclusive Political Institutions**: all members of a society are included in governance (Hartzell & Hoddie, 2003), stable democratic institutions (Gurses & Mason, 2008)
- **Higher Quality of Life**: through development (Collier et al., 2008), economic opportunities (Walter, 2004) or education and civic engagement (McKeown & Taylor, 2017)
- **International Support**: notably Peacekeeping (Fortna, 2008)
- **State Capacity**: Rule of law and strong judicial system (North et al., 2013)
- **Transitional Justice**: Peace agreement and Truth Commissions (Hamber & Wilson, 2010; Loyle & Appel, 2017), Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) programs (Stedman et al., 2002)

Colombian Context

Long history with conflict in Colombia:

- *La Violencia* (1946-1958, +200,000 fatalities) followed by the expansion of armed groups (**1964: emergence of FARC-EP**). Violence and drug trafficking, mostly in rural area.
- 2016 Plebiscite: A nationwide vote on a **peace agreement with FARC-EP narrowly failed** (50.2% "No", with only 37.4% of turnout). A revised peace deal was later approved by Congress.

The 2016 Peace Agreement:

- **Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration** (DDR) program $\rightarrow$ structured initiative to help former FARC transition to civil life.
- Ceasefire, rural development, transition of FARC into political party and transitional justice system.
- Aim at preventing recurrence of civil war, developing the rural areas and foster reconciliation.

Table 3: Descriptive statistics: individual characteristics

Variables	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Gender (0=male)	0.69	0.46	0.00	1.00
Age	49.52	16.39	3.00	97.00
Socioeconomic Status				
1st quantile	0.20	0.40	0.00	1.00
2nd quantile	0.20	0.40	0.00	1.00
3rd quantile	0.20	0.40	0.00	1.00
4th quantile	0.20	0.40	0.00	1.00
5th quantile	0.20	0.40	0.00	1.00
Religiosity	0.14	0.34	0.00	1.00
Trust in public institution	3.60	1.78	1.00	10.00
Victim Status				
Never victim	0.62	0.48	0.00	1.00
Victim: only FARC	0.17	0.38	0.00	1.00
Victim: only Para. or Bacrim	0.17	0.37	0.00	1.00
Victim: both FARC & Para. or Bacrim	0.04	0.20	0.00	1.00
Political leaning				
Left-winger	0.06	0.24	0.00	1.00
Centrist / none	0.76	0.43	0.00	1.00
Right-winger	0.18	0.38	0.00	1.00
Perception: % FARC in extreme poverty	3.10	1.03	1.00	4.00
Perception: % FARC victim of violence	2.89	1.02	1.00	4.00
Perception: % FARC recruited by force	3.01	0.99	1.00	4.00
Satisfaction w/: standards of living	6.14	2.77	0.00	10.00
Satisfaction w/: future	6.60	2.63	0.00	10.00
Satisfaction w/: security	5.21	2.71	0.00	10.00
Satisfaction w/: neighborhood	6.69	2.63	0.00	10.00

Table 4: Territorial Covariates included in the analysis

Variables	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Attacks by FARC in 2005 (per 10,000)	0.13	0.35	0.00	2.53
Terrorist acts in 2005 (per 10,000)	0.32	0.74	0.00	4.43
Disappearances in 2005 (per 10,000)	2.71	4.20	0.00	34.91
Homicides in 2005 (per 10,000)	12.85	12.87	0.00	69.89
Internally displaced in 2005 (per 10,000)	0.01	0.01	0.00	0.08
2016 Plebiscite: % yes	52.25	13.81	23.31	95.84
2016 Plebiscite: turnout	33.97	8.79	5.83	54.43
2014 Elections: % vote for Santos (R2)	53.23	18.28	11.66	90.43
Distance to closest ETCR (meters)	245,711.5	146,174.5	3,660.02	769,569.60
Lives at less than 50km from ETCR	0.08	0.27	0.00	1.00
Multidimensional Poverty Index	35.79	15.55	10.40	86.70
Aggregated Regions				
Caribe	0.37	0.48	0.00	1.00
Pacífico	0.13	0.34	0.00	1.00
Centre-Andine	0.34	0.47	0.00	1.00
Llanos-Orinoquía	0.08	0.27	0.00	1.00
Amazonía-Sud-Orient	0.07	0.25	0.00	1.00
Type of Territory				
Rural periphery	0.31	0.46	0.00	1.00
Intermediate urban	0.38	0.49	0.00	1.00
Urban large core	0.31	0.46	0.00	1.00

Propensity Score Matching – Brief Explanation

Propensity Score: For each individual i, we estimate the probability of receiving the treatment given observed covariates (X_i), using a logistic regression:

$$\hat{p}_i = \Pr(D_i = 1 \mid X_i) = \frac{e^{X_i'\beta}}{1 + e^{X_i'\beta}} \tag{1}$$

Logit Transformation: Following Ho et al. (2007), there is no *a priori* reason to prefer the raw or logit-transformed propensity score. In our case, matching on the logit reduces standardized bias across covariates, thus:

$$\text{logit}(\hat{p}_i) = \log\left(\frac{\hat{p}_i}{1 - \hat{p}_i}\right) \tag{2}$$

Average Treatment effect on the Treated (ATT) *via* PSM

Nearest-Neighbor Matching: Each treated unit $i \in \{D_i = 1\}$ is matched with the control unit $j \in \{D_j = 0\}$ whose (logit) propensity score is closest:

$$\text{Match}(i) = \arg\min_j |\text{logit}(\hat{p}_i) - \text{logit}(\hat{p}_j)| \tag{3}$$

ATT Estimator: The ATT is the average difference in outcomes between treated units and their matched controls:

$$\widehat{\text{ATT}} = \frac{1}{N_1^*} \sum_{i \in \mathcal{T}^*} \left(Y_i - Y_{j(i)} \right) \tag{4}$$

Where:

- N_1^*: Number of treated units successfully matched
- $\mathcal{T}^*$: Subset of treated units with valid matches
- $j(i)$: Control unit matched to treated unit i

Definition - Attitudes toward former FARC, from Rettberg (2014)

Back

Respondents were asked to rate their level of discomfort across five hypothetical scenarios, ranging from 1. ("it bothers me a lot") to 10. ("it does not bother me at all"):

- `Neighbourhood` "*A reintegrated ex-guerrilla fighter comes to live on the block where I live*"
- `Work` "*The place where I work hires a group of demobilized combatants*"
- `School` "*My children's school receives children of demobilized combatants for the same grade as my son*"
- `Daughter` "*My daughter becomes the girlfriend of a demobilized guerrilla fighter*"
- `Tax` "*I have to pay a tax to help demobilized guerrilla fighters*"

Descriptive statistics - Attitudes toward former FARC

Back

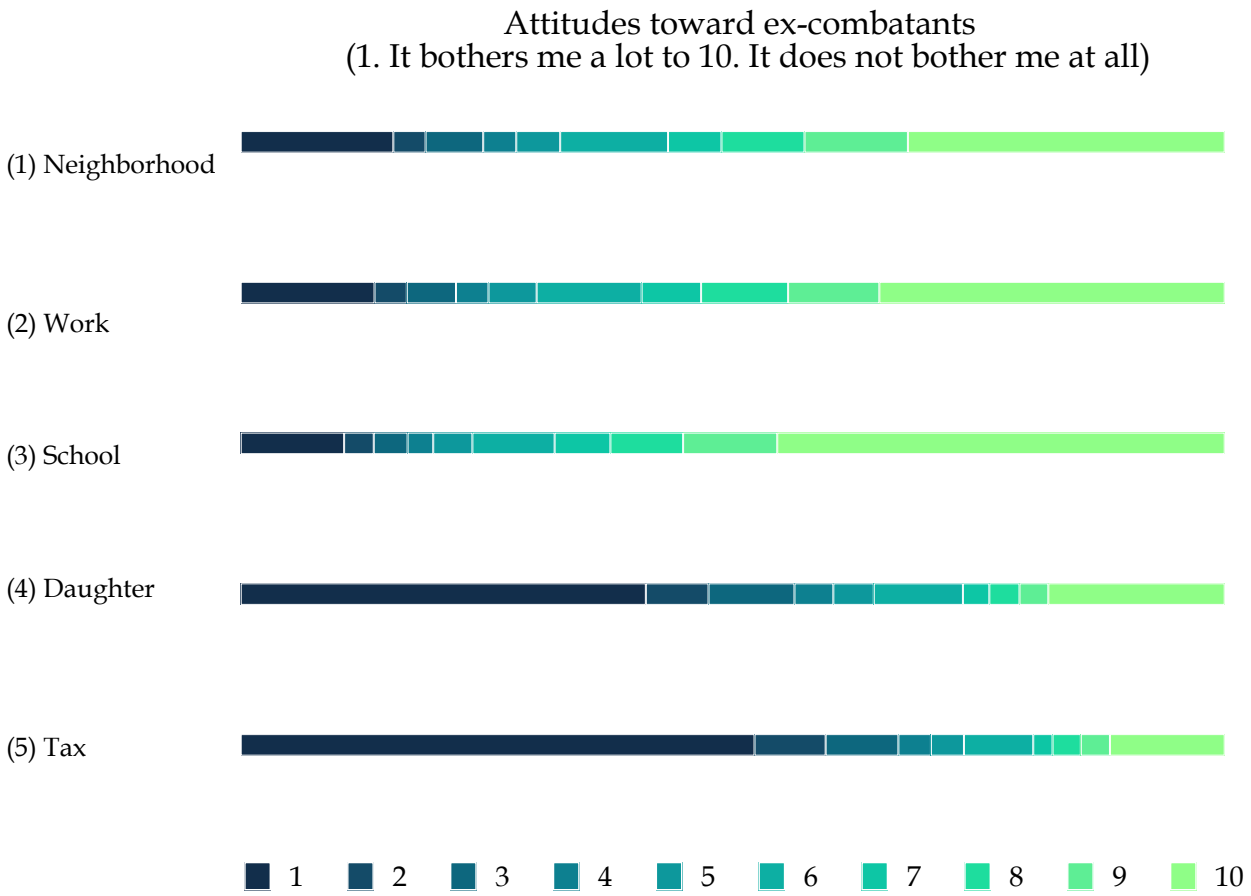

Figure A1: Detail on the attitudes toward former FARC

More detail about covariates

Urban index:

1. **Rural Periphery**: Core center between 15,000-60,000 inhabitants & population of the urban zone or *localidad* lower than 2,500 inhabitants
2. **Intermediate Urban**: Core center between 15,000-60,000 inhabitants & population of the urban zone or *localidad* above 2,500 inhabitants + Core center between 60,000-120,000 inhabitants
3. **Urban Large Core**: Core center above 120,000 inhabitants & population of the urban zone or *localidad* above 5,000 inhabitants

Standardized Bias across Covariates

Back

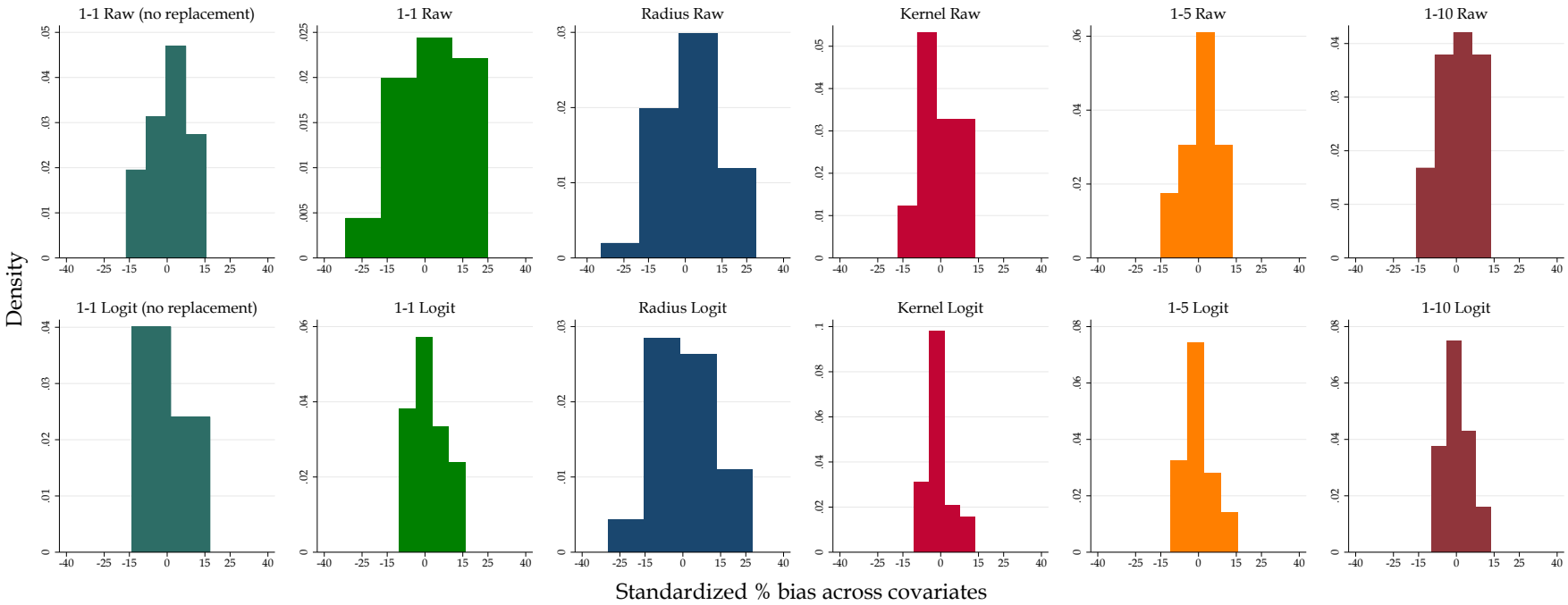

Figure A2: Standardized Bias across Covariates in the 5 different specifications

Sensitivity: Type of Matching

Back

Propensity score matching - Effect of proximity of ETCR on positive attitudes toward former FARC (1 to 10). Alternative Types of Matching

Dependent variable	Neighborhood	Work	School	Daughter	Tax
Panel A: 1-1 Matching					
ATT	**1.22*** **	**1.30*** **	**0.80** **	0.64	**1.07*** **
	(0.39)	**(0.37)**	**(0.36)**	(0.39)	**(0.37)**
Observations	316	316	316	316	316
Mean control group	6.59	6.81	7.44	4.16	3.36
Panel B: 1-5 Matching					
ATT	**0.99*** **	**1.01*** **	**0.73** **	**0.78** **	**0.97*** **
	(0.33)	**(0.32)**	**(0.31)**	**(0.35)**	**(0.34)**
Observations	573	573	573	573	573
Mean control group	6.59	6.81	7.44	4.16	3.36
Panel C: Radius Matching					
ATT	**0.87*** **	**0.86*** **	**0.68** **	**0.72** **	**1.09*** **
	(0.30)	**(0.30)**	**(0.28)**	**(0.32)**	**(0.33)**
Observations	3,041	3,041	3,041	3,041	3,041
Mean control group	6.59	6.81	7.44	4.16	3.36

Note: ATT: Average Treatment effect on Treated. This table presents the propensity score matching (PSM) estimates of the effect of proximity to the closest ETCR (50km) on attitudes toward former FARC. The estimates are obtained using the psmatch2 command in Stata, employing a Nearest-Neighbor (1 neighbor, without replacement and logit transformed, Panel A), Nearest-Neighbor (5 neighbors and logit transformed, Panel B) and a Radius (caliper = 0.2 and logit transformed) matching approach. Standard errors are displayed in parenthesis.

Sensitivity: Distance to ETCRs

Back

Propensity score matching - Effect of proximity of ETCR on positive attitudes toward former FARC (1 to 10)
Variation of Distance to Treatment

Dependent variable	Neighborhood	Work	School	Daughter	Tax
Panel A: 30km					
ATT	**1.23****	**1.26*****	**1.02****	**1.14****	**1.15****
	(0.48)	**(0.47)**	**(0.41)**	**(0.55)**	**(0.53)**
Observations	3,025	3,025	3,025	3,025	3,025
Mean control group	6.60	6.82	7.44	4.17	3.39
Panel B: 40km					
ATT	**0.74****	**0.78****	0.57	0.50	**0.98****
	(0.37)	**(0.37)**	(0.35)	(0.40)	**(0.39)**
Observations	3,026	3,026	3,026	3,026	3,026
Mean control group	6.60	6.82	7.44	4.17	3.37
Panel C: 60km					
ATT	**0.83*****	**0.75****	0.35	**1.02*****	**1.10*****
	(0.30)	**(0.30)**	(0.28)	**(0.32)**	**(0.32)**
Observations	3,044	3,044	3,044	3,044	3,044
Mean control group	6.59	6.81	7.44	4.15	3.36
Panel D: 70km					
ATT	**0.84*****	**0.67****	**0.51***	**0.59***	**0.83*****
	(0.31)	**(0.31)**	**(0.29)**	**(0.33)**	**(0.31)**
Observations	3,041	3,041	3,041	3,041	3,041
Mean control group	6.58	6.81	7.44	4.16	3.36

Note: ATT: Average Treatment effect on Treated. This table presents the propensity score matching (PSM) estimates of the effect of proximity to the closest ETCR (30-40-60-70km) on attitudes toward ex-combatants. The estimates are obtained using the psmatch2 command in Stata, Epanechnikov Kernel matching approach with a bandwidth of 0.02 on the logit-transformed propensity score. Matching is performed without replacement to ensure comparability between treated and control units. Standard errors are displayed in parenthesis.

Sensitivity: Alternative Placebo Treament

Back

Propensity score matching - Effect of three placebo treatment on positive attitudes toward former FARC (1 to 10). Alternative Treatment

Dependent variable	Neighborhood	Work	School	Daughter	Tax
Panel A: Random Binary					
ATT	0.04	0.03	0.01	0.01	0.03
	(0.12)	(0.12)	(0.12)	(0.13)	(0.12)
Observations	3,041	3,041	3,041	3,041	3,041
Mean control group	6.59	6.81	7.44	4.16	3.36
Panel B: > 45mn from hospital					
ATT	-0.30	-0.16	**-0.36***	0.25	0.03
	(0.20)	(0.19)	**(0.18)**	(0.20)	(0.18)
Observations	3,043	3,043	3,043	3,043	3,043
Mean control group	6.59	6.81	7.44	4.16	3.36
Panel C: > 45mn from doctor					
ATT	-0.26	-0.20	-0.18	0.25	0.23
	(0.20)	(0.19)	(0.19)	(0.21)	(0.19)
Observations	3,044	3,044	3,044	3,044	3,044
Mean control group	6.59	6.81	7.44	4.16	3.36

Note: ATT: Average Treatment effect on Treated. This table presents the propensity score matching (PSM) estimates of the effect of three alternative placebo treatment on attitudes toward former FARC. The estimates are obtained using the psmatch2 command in Stata, employing a Epanechnikov Kernel matching approach with a bandwidth of 0.02 on the logit-transformed propensity score. Standard errors are displayed in parenthesis.

Significance levels: *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Sensitivity: Placebo

Back

Propensity score matching - Effect of proximity of ETCR on outcomes supposedly non affected (Placebo analysis)

Dependent variable	Random Variable	Listen to radio	Voted in last election	Lived with parents at age 14	Highest parental education	Years of schooling (2005, municipio)	Share in low-weight births (2005, municipio)	Altitude (meters)	Distance to nearest market (meters)
ATT	-0.02	0.01	0.00	-0.01	0.01	0.10	**0.11***	41.07	2.56
	(0.03)	(0.05)	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.12)	(0.09)	**(0.06)**	(60.21)	(7.94)
Observations	3,031	3,031	3,031	3,031	1,619	3,031	2,626	3,031	3,031
Mean control group	0.50	0.42	0.79	0.85	0.75	7.98	0.36	683.64	152.82

Note: ATT refers to the Average Treatment effect on the Treated. This table presents propensity score matching (PSM) estimates of the effect of proximity to the closest ETCR (within 50km) on a set of placebo outcomes — both individual-level and geographic. Estimates are obtained using the psmatch2 command in Stata, employing a Epanechnikov Kernel matching approach with a bandwidth of 0.02 on the logit-transformed propensity score. Standard errors are shown in parentheses. The placebo outcomes used as dependent variables are described below:

Random variable: Uniformly distributed variable generated independently of any observed data.

Listen to radio: Indicator variable equal to 1 if the respondent reports regularly listening to the radio, 0 otherwise.

Voted in last election: Equals 1 if the respondent reported voting in the most recent national election, 0 otherwise.

Lived with father at age 14: Equals 1 if the respondent lived with their parents at age 14, 0 otherwise.

Highest parental education: Ordinal variable capturing the highest education level attained by either parent, from 0 (no formal education) to 5 (university or higher).

Years of schooling (2005, municipio): Average number of years of formal education in the respondent's municipality in 2005.

Share of low-weight births (2005, municipio): Proportion of newborns with low birth weight in the municipality in 2005.

Altitude (meters): Average elevation of the municipality above sea level.

Distance to nearest market (meters): Distance from the respondent to the closest formal market.

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1