

CHAPTER 9

POLITICS AND RECONCILIATION: A CRITICAL JUNCTURE FOR STATE BUILDING

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→ Singing is Donny Leal's passion. For him, a true rapper, returning to Gramalote shows that the spirit of the Gramaloteros did not die in the tragedy, and tells as much in his songs.

→ In this chapter, we examine two different broad dimensions of relevant “political” behavior of Colombian households. First, we discuss the extent and type of citizen political engagement. This first part of the analysis updates Fergusson and Riaño (2014), whose main focus when exploring the 2013 round of the survey is the limited degree of political interest, participation, and knowledge of Colombian households, in a context of prevailing clientelism. Taking advantage of the panel structure of the survey (the Politics Module that this chapter draws from was first introduced in 2013, making this round the first follow-up), we explore both the persistence and change of some key patterns over the three-year period between rounds. The second part of the chapter turns to a different question, included only since the 2016 round of the survey: the perspectives and attitudes of Colombian households around the peace process between the government and the country's largest guerrilla group, the Fuerzas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC). The emphasis here is on households' expectations about the implications of this significant political event for their future, as well as on attitudes towards former combatants).

We document a persistent lack of interest in politics and prevailing clientelism among surveyed households, with personalistic politics dominating partisan affinity. However, these overall patterns and averages mask some interesting variation across time and between households. One interesting and perhaps surprising feature is that engagement in clientelistic vote buying is quite variable in time, with households apparently getting into and out of this type of exchanges. Also interestingly, we fail to find a relevant correlation between increases in household wealth and the abandonment of clientelism. This contradicts the simplest and more optimistic theories of modernization according to which economic development alone may bring an improvement in the political arena, with increased accountability and weakened clientelism. Instead, the patterns we uncover suggest a correlation between changes in the weakness of the state (as proxied with tax evasion) and changes in clientelism.

This is consistent with the idea that building a more capable state goes hand in hand with improving political accountability. It also provides one motivation for our examination of the attitudes surrounding the peace process. Indeed, reintegrating an illegal armed group can be viewed as an effort in state-building. This is not simply because it entails recovering the state's monopoly of violence, but also because the peace process itself envisions a set of transformations that are supposed to build a more capable state.



→ Gladys Amparo Palacios Campo and her daughters in Barrancabermeja.

When looking at these attitudes, we find a rare combination of indifference and polarization. That is, there is a large share of people who feel the peace process implies no substantial changes for their lives, while those that do expect changes do not agree on the direction: nearly as many expect changes for the better as those who expect a negative turn. These patterns are very prevalent and hold for many subgroups in the population. One noteworthy finding is that older people and those who live in areas in which non-state armed groups were present are relatively less indifferent, yet they are not simply more pessimistic or optimistic. This implies, for instance, that exposure to violence might affect attitudes towards the peace process differently depending on other contextual factors.

The results shows a persistent lack of interest in politics and prevailing clientelism among surveyed households, with personalistic politics dominating partisan affinity. However, these overall patterns and averages mask some interesting variation across time and between households.

This scenario of indifference and disagreement poses an important challenge for the implementation of the peace process. When looking at attitudes towards reintegrated rebels, a cause for optimism is that most respondents report no discomfort with having former rebels as neighbors or employees. Nevertheless, when it comes to two core issues in the peace deal, namely political participation and financing benefits for rebels in the reintegration process, there is greater resistance in the population. Indeed, respondents are more likely to express discomfort with political participation of former FARC members and with having to pay taxes to finance reintegration.

9.1. POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT AND CLIENTELISM

Before proceeding with the analysis, we present the basic characteristics of our sample in Table 1. As noted, this chapter draws from the Politics Module. This module was administered, since 2013, to one member of the household (the household head or his or her partner, which was randomly assigned if both were available). In the 2016 follow-up, an effort was made to survey again the 2013 respondent and, in new households, respondents were again randomly selected from the household head or partner. The table shows, in particular, the number of respondents by year, gender and region. The total number of interviews conducted in 2013 (8,778) fell by 5.3% (468 subjects) in 2016. Urban females are the largest group in both years. Much of our



→ Statue of Laureano Gómez which had been in the central square in Gramalote for 66 years until nature demolished the town. It has now been moved to Nuevo Gramalote.

analysis focuses on changes in behavior between rounds which forces us to focus on individuals answering both rounds. There are 7,346 individuals, 60% of whom are women and 52.4% who live in urban areas satisfying this criteria. When presenting descriptions of the 2013 and 2016 cross sections, we also limit our analysis in this section to this sample to make sure that it does not reflect mere sample recomposition across years. The nature of the questions sometimes implies limiting the sample further. When this is the case, we indicate it below.

9.1.1. POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT

Fergusson and Riaño (2014) reported, based on the 2013 round of the ELCA, the following key empirical regularities. First, citizens are generally uninterested in politics. In particular, (reported) political participation in elections is low, citizens often do not properly remember the names of their political representatives, and they declare rarely engaging in conversations about politics (specifically, persuading others to vote for preferred candidates). Second, politics is largely “personalistic”, with few

TABLE 9.1.
POLITICS MODULE SAMPLE TOTAL RESPONDENTS

| Year | Gender | Region | | |
|---------------|--------|--------|-------|-------|
| | | Men | Rural | Total |
| 2013 | Women | 1,621 | 1,959 | 3,580 |
| | Total | 2,951 | 2,247 | 5,198 |
| | Men | 4,572 | 4,206 | 8,778 |
| 2016 | Women | 1,517 | 1,793 | 3,310 |
| | Total | 2,926 | 2,074 | 5,000 |
| | Men | 4,443 | 3,867 | 8,310 |
| 2013 and 2016 | Women | 1,288 | 1,616 | 2,904 |
| | Total | 2,560 | 1,882 | 4,442 |
| | Total | 3,848 | 3,498 | 7,346 |

Source: ELCA 2013 and 2016. Authors' own calculations

Notes: Respondents by region, gender and year. In 2013 one member of the household responds (household head or his/her partner, randomly assigned if both were available). In 2016, the same respondent is reached if possible and, in new households, respondents are again randomly selected from the household head or partner.

citizens reporting sympathy towards candidates and candidate name recall dominating party recall in elections. Third, political ideological identification is also weak, with few citizens willing to position themselves on a left to right scale. Finally, these general features hide some important heterogeneity, with women and urban citizens being particularly politically apathetic.

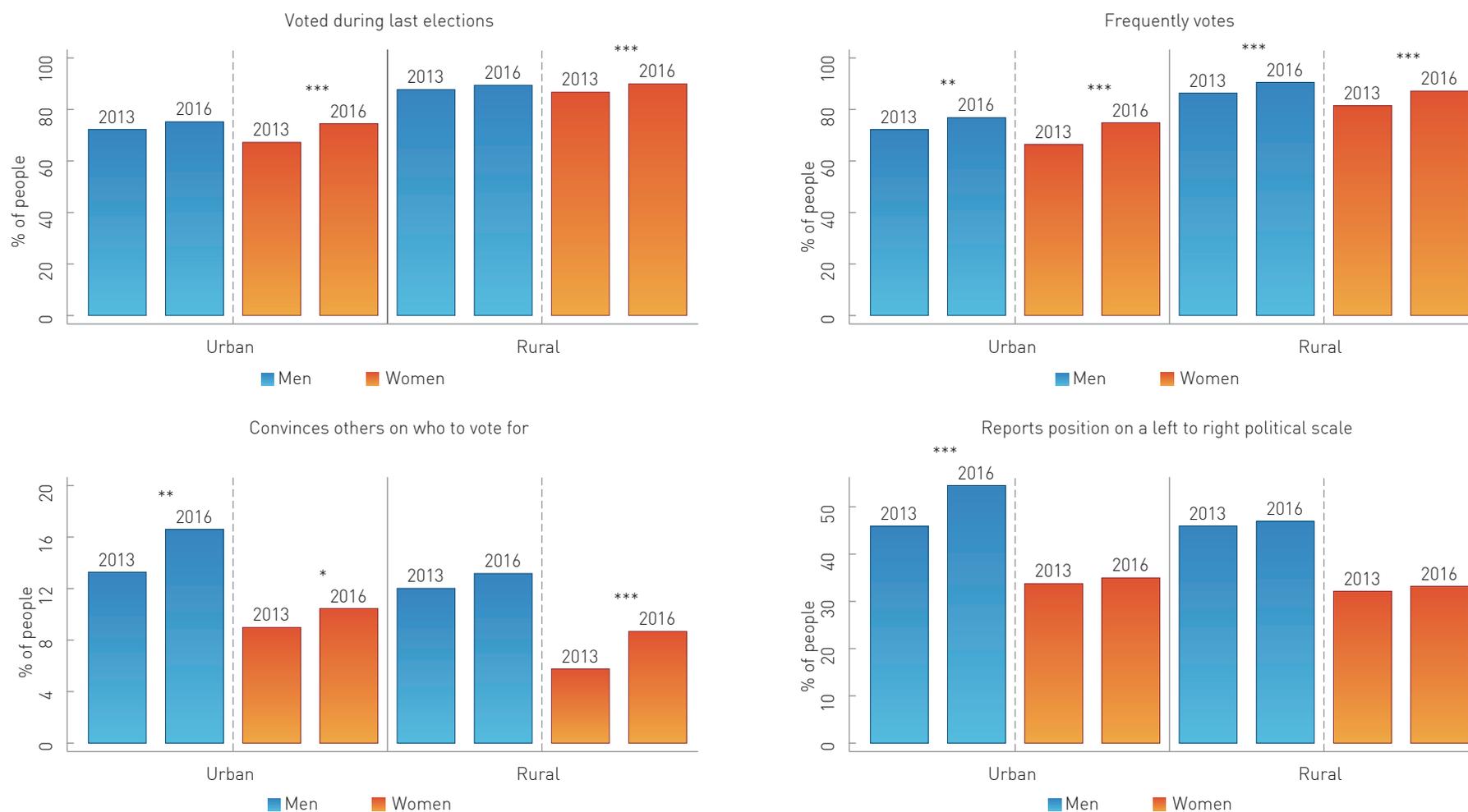
We now review the evolution of these patterns. Then, we discuss some possible interpretations and implications of the findings. We must start with an important caveat. Some of the questions formulated in 2013 (e.g., "do you recall who you voted for in the latest local elections?") refer to the 2011 elections, while the 2016 elections have a comparably closer reference point for voters with local

elections held in 2015. Leaving aside additional differences in the political context, this may influence some of the responses which implies some caution when comparing the two rounds.

Figure 1 takes a first look at patterns of political participation. In particular, it depicts the share of people (by gender and area) who report voting in the last elections, who claim to vote frequently, and who claim to convince others on who to vote for. The figure focuses on the time variation, showing averages by gender and year and noting whether or not there are any statistically significant differences across time (by group). Men, both in urban and rural areas, seem to increase their reported participation in elections, although the size of this increase is quite modest and not statistically significant. On the other hand, women show slightly larger and significant increases in their rate of participation in local elections. When looking at whether respondents "frequently vote" in elections, we expected very minor changes between rounds, since this question tackles a longer-run habit that should not change so dramatically within a few years. However, we again find increases that are significant for all groups.

As noted in Fergusson and Riaño (2014) one issue about these two questions is that, when compared to actual turnout rates in Colombia, they appear unrealistically high, suggesting that citizens overestimate their degree of political participation. The third measure of political participation requires a

GRAPH 9.1.
INTEREST IN POLITICS BY REGION AND GENDER 2013 VERSUS 2016



Source: EELCA 2013 and 2016. Authors' own calculations

Notes: * is significant at 10%, ** 5%, and *** 1% level. Significance levels for the difference between years (by group). Variables described in each panel are: share of people answering "yes" when asked "Did you vote in the last local elections?" (top left); share of people answering "always" or "most of the times" when asked "How often do you vote?" (top right); share of people answering "frequently" when asked "How often do you try to convince others to vote for a certain party or candidate when upcoming elections?" (bottom left); share of people answering willing to position their political views on a left to right scale (bottom right).

more decisive extent of participation, namely persuading others to vote for a particular candidate. It may thus be a better indicator of actual political engagement. When exploring this question in the lower panel of Figure 1, we observe a clearer lower interest of women and rural areas, and again find increases in political interest in between rounds for all groups except rural men. Also, the increase in interest is more pronounced for rural women, which started off in 2013 at a very low level. While insufficient to close the gap in political interest, at least these findings seem to point to some narrowing between genders in rural areas.

Finally, the last panel (lower right) in Figure 1 examines whether individuals are willing to locate their political views on a left to right scale. The willingness to do this among women is stable between rounds and around 30% in both urban and rural areas. Men are more willing to position themselves in this left to right scale, with about 45% doing it in both areas in 2013, and with urban men increasing their average to around 55% in 2016. In short, consistent with the lack of active political interest, there is a relative unwillingness to position personal views on the left to right axis. Figure 2 then asks the question, among those reporting a political leaning, whether they lean left or right and the evolution over time. In particular, we code this variable as follows: left= -2, center-left= -1, center= 0, center-right= 1, right= 2. We next plot the averages by region, gender and years as with the other figures. Two features stand out: household lean right on average since 2013, and this has been relatively



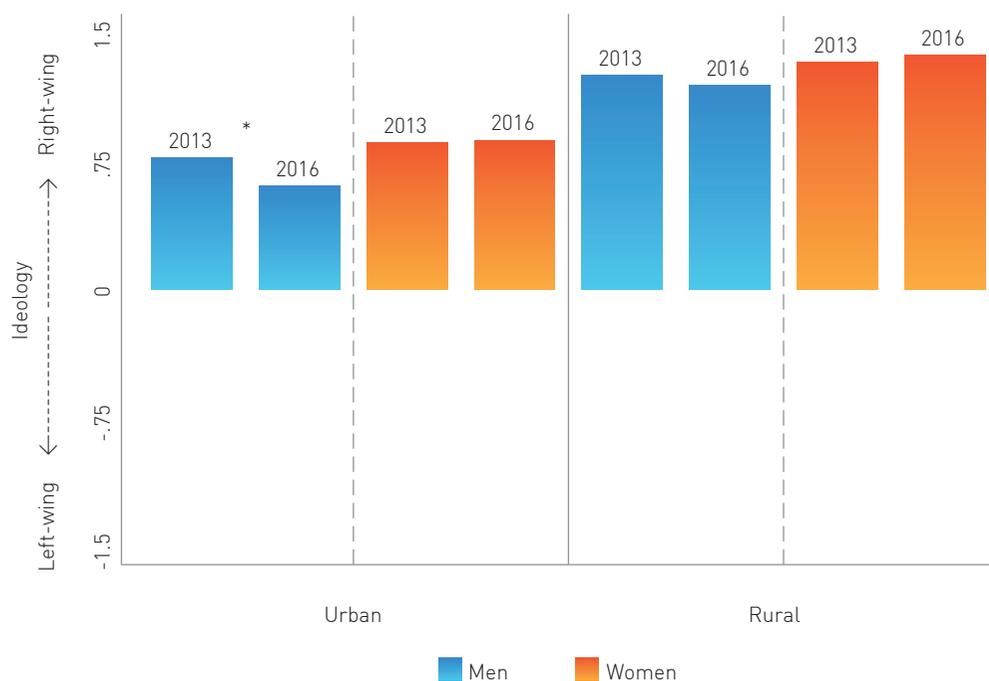
→ Inés María Álvarez's daughters and granddaughters have helped her for more than seven years to overcome the death of her only son. "I have not danced since, and I don't like speaking loudly; I hardly ever laugh" says Inés María.

stable during the 2013-2016 period (except for a very modest move left in urban men).

We now examine reported partisan affinity in Figure 3. The Figure explores both whether respondents claim to often vote for the same party, and whether they sympathize with any particular party. Again the overwhelming picture is one of very limited party identification. A majority of citizens, regardless of their gender and location, do not regularly vote for

the same party. In urban areas less than 30% of respondents do it, and in rural areas, though larger, it is still barely 50% at best. In sympathy towards a political party, we again observe very low levels (nearing 20% on average) with especially low levels for women. Yet interestingly, and unlike voting for the same party, this variable increases in between rounds, especially in rural areas and for urban men. That voting for the same party falls, but sympathy towards parties increases reflects that

GRAPH 9.2.
POLITICAL STANCE BY REGION AND GENDER 2013 VERSUS 2016



Source: ELCA 2013 and 2016. Authors' own calculations

Notes: * is significant at 10%, ** 5%, and *** 1% level. Significance levels for the difference between years (by group). Averages by region, gender and years of reported political leaning in a left to right scale, with left= -2, center-left= -1, center= 0, center-right= 1, right= 2.

new and minority political parties have captured the sympathy of some voters, replacing older and more consolidated ones.¹

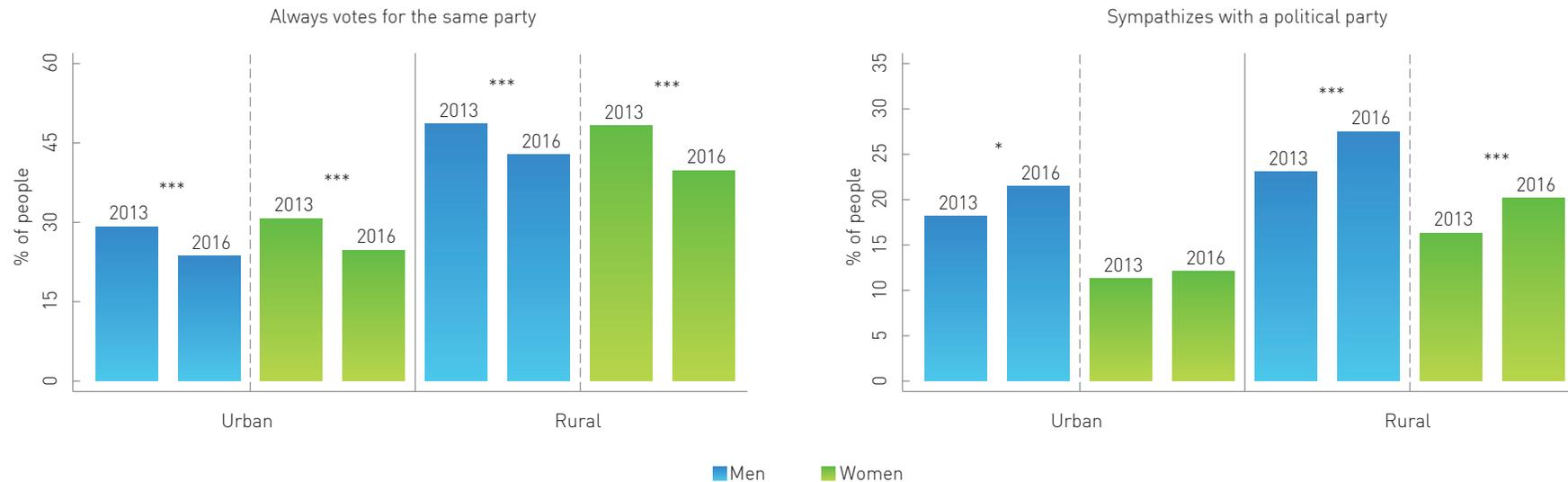
Finally, we present the main variables for interest in politics and political views in Figure 4 by year, region and wealth terciles. Some of the patterns already highlighted on the level and evolution of these variables by area and year are again apparent here, holding more or less across the board for richer and poorer households. The most salient difference when focusing on wealth appears to be a stronger party loyalty among the rural poor, though not coupled with more activism as measured with convincing others. On this aspect, it is the urban poor who, especially in 2016, stand out as being more active.

9.1.2. CLIENTELISM

Despite some relevant changes, the previous section reveals that interest in politics in Colombia remains weak, as does party identification. Fergusson and Riaño (2014) note that these features reflect the highly clientelistic nature of political exchange in Colombia². We focus on the exchange of one's vote for particularistic benefits, a common definition of "electoral clientelism". Clientelism

1. Specifically, the parties that show some increased alignment are the Centro Democrático, Partido Conservador, and to a lesser extent Partido Verde, with Partido de la U, and Polo Democrático Alternativo losing some ground. These conclusions must be taken with some caution however, since they are based on the very few people who report sympathy with a party and then mention it explicitly, which creates few observations per party in a context of many parties.
2. In their analysis of the 2013 round, these authors examine clientelism using a question in which an hypothetical price is offered in exchange for the vote is randomly varied among respondents to get a "supply curve" for vote selling. Given a change in this question between rounds and since this design is not ideal for a panel analysis (in that prices randomly allocated often vary for a given individual between rounds), we focus here on a separate question (included in both rounds) that also investigates the prevalence of vote buying.

GRAPH 9.3.
SYMPATHY TOWARDS POLITICAL PARTIES BY REGION AND GENDER 2013 VERSUS 2016



Source: ELCA 2013 and 2016. Authors' own calculations

Notes: * is significant at 10%, ** 5%, and *** 1% level. Significance levels for the difference between years (by group). Variable on left panel is share of people answering "always" or "most of the times" when asked "Could you assert that you -- vote for the same party in elections?". Variable in right panel is share of people answering "yes" when asked "Right now, do you sympathize with a political party?".

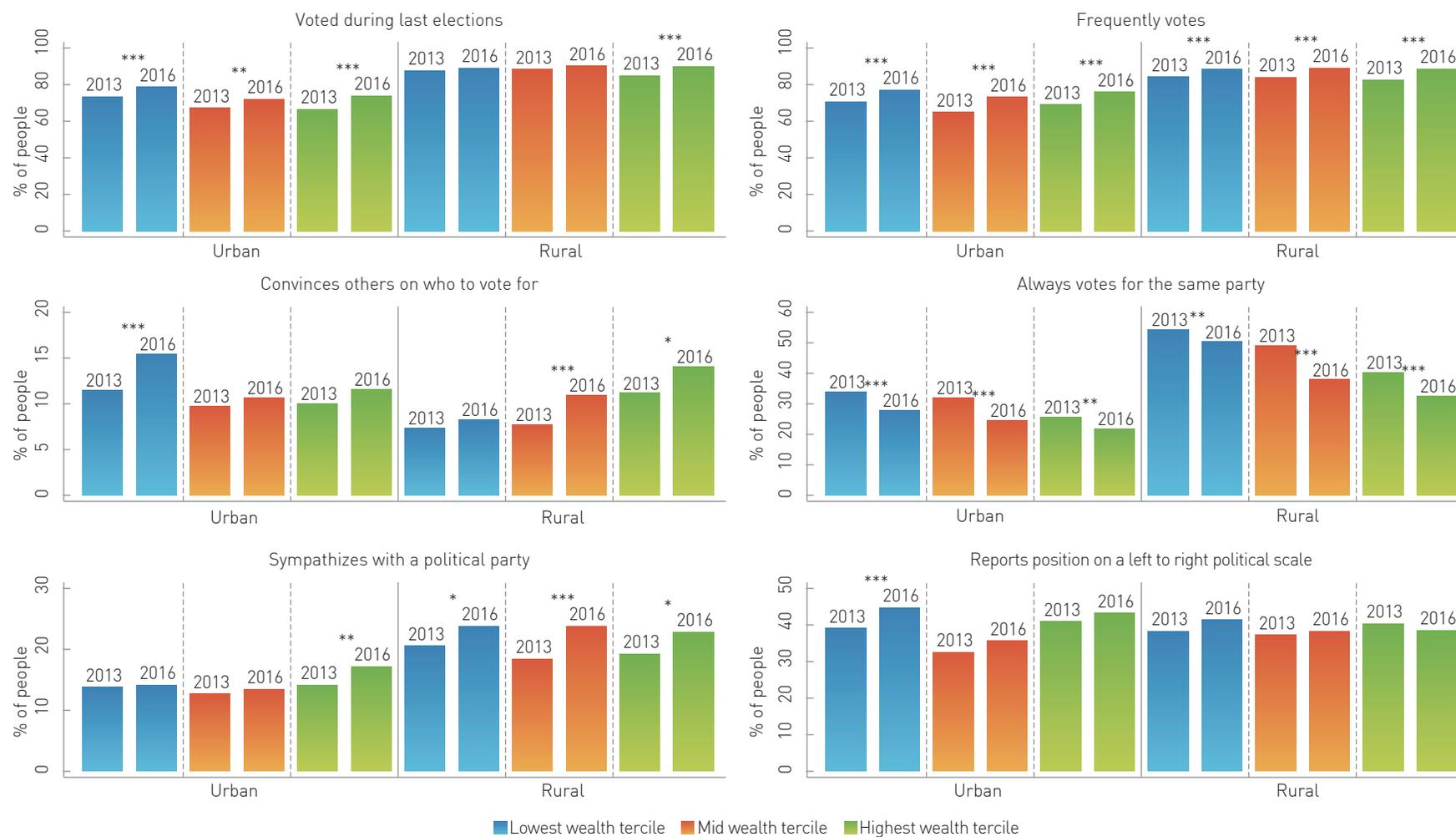
more generally may refer to the exchange of political support for particular favors (and thus may occur, for instance, in the exchange between the executive and lawmakers, or between politicians and contractors). The electoral manifestation is

particularly relevant not only because it captures a key aspect of citizens' relationship with the state and politicians, but also because it may capture one link of a fuller system of exchanges operating with this logic and is comparatively easier to measure.

The preponderance of the literature emphasizes that clientelism is prejudicial for democracy, as it undermines more programmatic links between citizens and politicians. Politicians focus on providing particularistic benefits for powerful minorities

GRAPH 9.4.

POLITICAL INTEREST AND VIEWS BY REGION, GENDER, AND WEALTH TERCILE 2013 VERSUS 2016



Source: ELCA 2013 and 2016. Authors' own calculations

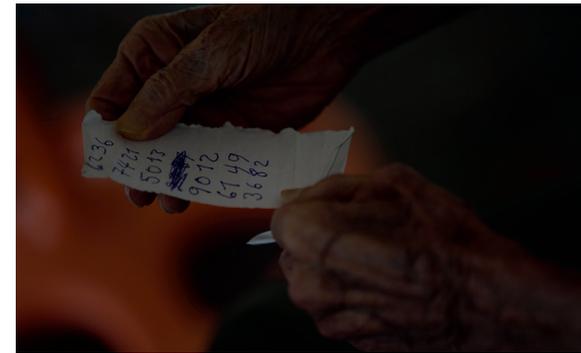
Notes: * is significant at 10%, ** 5%, and *** 1% level. Significance levels for the difference between years (by group). Variable in described in each panel are: share of people answering "yes" when asked "Did you vote in the last local elections?" (top left); share of people answering "always" or "most of the times" when asked "How often do you vote?" (top right); share of people answering "frequently" when asked "How often do you try to convince others to vote for a certain party or candidate when upcoming elections?" (mid left); share of people answering "always" or "most of the times" when asked "Could you assert that you -- vote for the same party in elections?" (mid right); share of people answering "yes" when asked "Right now, do you sympathize with a political party?" (bottom left); share of people willing to position their political views on a left to right scale (bottom right).

rather than public goods for the general welfare (Bates, 1981; Kitschelt, 2000; Stokes, 2005, 2007). These non-programmatic exchanges are moreover characterized by private and often hidden (as opposed to public and binding) rules of redistribution, and are thus antithetical to notions of just distribution (Stokes, Dunning, Nazareno, & Brusco, 2013). As Stokes (2005) puts it, this is also a “perverse accountability” system: it is not citizens who punish politicians when they fail to fulfill their promises and programs in office, but politicians who may punish citizens for not supporting them in the polls, undermining voter autonomy and the role of elections as instruments of representation. Also, since immediate material benefits may be especially pressing for vulnerable voters, it also endangers equality of political rights (Stokes et al., 2013).

Vote buying, as a manifestation of clientelistic relationships and as an illegal activity, may therefore carry stigma in the population. This poses a significant challenge when measuring its prevalence in surveys. However, the 2013 round of the ELCA included “list experiments”, a statistical method designed to evaluate the extent to which respondents might answer dishonestly out of concerns to reveal a “socially undesirable” behavior. Using these methods, Fergusson, Molina, and Riaño (2017) show that in 2013 respondents were just as willing to admit to this behavior when asked directly as opposed to when using a list experiment that protects them from revealing their behavior. Substantially, this suggests that clientelism is so

prevalent and accepted in the Colombian context that there is little stigma associated with the behavior. A key practical implication of these findings for this chapter’s analysis, is that they support using a direct question on vote buying to examine clientelism. We therefore rely on respondents’ answers to the following question, asked to a (random) sample of households in 2013 and to all respondents in 2016: “Could you tell me if, when deciding who to vote for, you have taken into account the benefits, gifts, or jobs that a candidate offered in exchange for your vote?”

We begin by showing some broad patterns of incidence by regions, gender, and wealth. Figure 5 shows that clientelism is similarly prevalent on urban and rural areas on average, and among men and women. However, this masks some significant underlying variation in subregions. Specifically, though clientelism is pervasive everywhere, the Atlantic and Pacific urban subregions stand as those with higher levels of clientelism. The rural areas of the Atlantic region also show a high incidence of clientelism, nearly tripling the mean, while the Cundinamarca and Boyacá subregions appear to have particularly low levels. One obvious underlying potential explanation is the level of development. Several scholars emphasize that vote buying is more likely to occur if the reward is more valuable to the voter, so exchanges are more likely for poorer voters. Since clientelism is detrimental for public good provision this may further stall economic development. Clientelism thus consolidates a vicious



→ José Miguel Petro keeps his lucky numbers in his pocket so he can play the lottery every day. Without fail, at midday he runs to his room in his house to see the result in Cereté (Córdoba).

cycle: it predates on (and reproduces) poverty. The findings of the lower panel are consistent with this conjecture, as there is a significantly smaller incidence of clientelism in the middle and highest wealth terciles of the distribution relative to the lowest tercile.

To explore the changes across time, Table 2 describes the basic patterns of responses for each year. In the upper panel, we see that 911 out of 4128 respondents, approximately 18%, report exchanging particularistic benefits for their vote. The overall share in 2016 is substantially smaller, at 13% (998 out of 7606). This suggests a surprisingly large variation in the prevalence of clientelistic vote buying. Panel B in Table 2 exploits the panel and looks at the changes of behavior of the same individual. Again, there is substantial variation. Specifically, out of 534 respondents selling their vote in 2016,

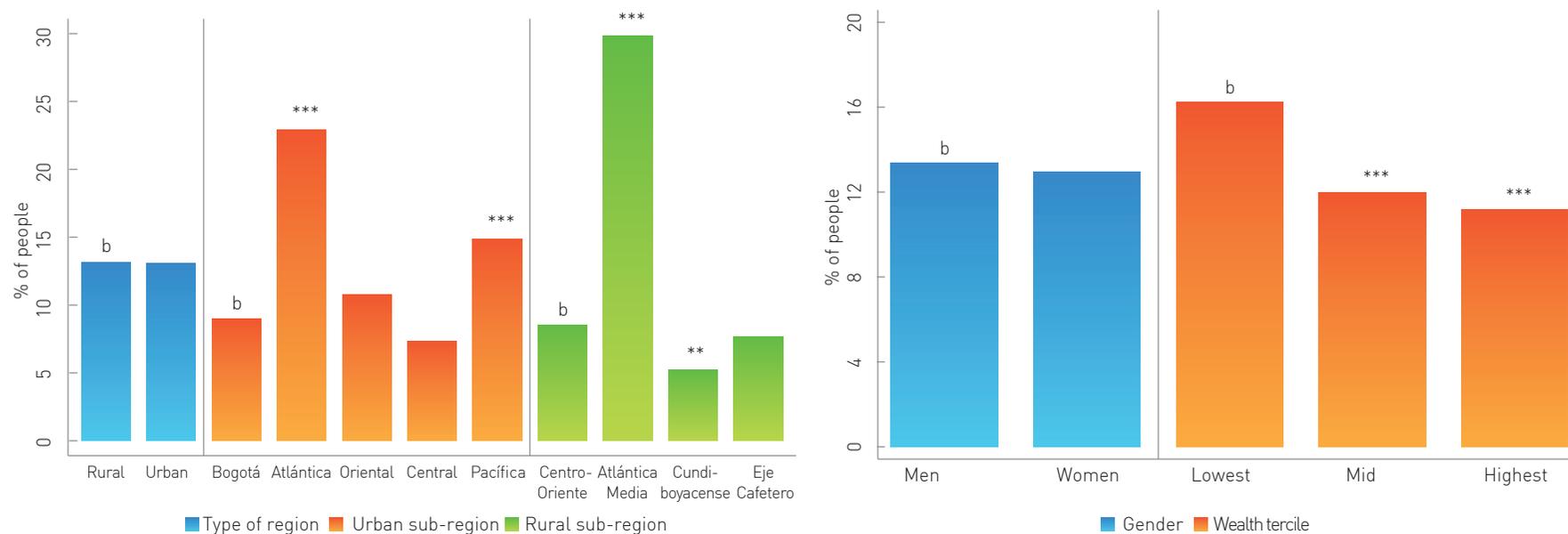
344 or 64% are “new” clientelistic voters, in the sense that they had reported not selling in 2013. The remaining 190 are persistent vote sellers. This suggests meaningful entry into clientelism, and there is also significant exit: of 722 voters reporting

selling their vote in 2013, 532 [74%] claimed not doing so in 2016.

These findings are surprising for some theories of clientelism which emphasize the importance

of long-term relationships that establish trust between politicians (or their brokers) and voters. In such context of sustained “relational clientelism”, with exchanges that often go beyond those made only in the voting booth, one would expect

GRAPH 9.5.
CLIENTELISM BY REGION, SUB-REGION, GENDER AND WEALTH TERCILES 2016



Source: ELCA 2013 and 2016. Authors' own calculations

Notes: * is significant at 10%, ** 5%, and *** 1% level. Significance levels for the difference between categories in each group, relative to the baseline category (marked with a “b”). Clientelism is a dummy variable that equals 1 if respondent answers “yes” when asked “Please tell me if, in order to decide who to vote for, you have taken into account personal benefits, presents or job positions a candidate might have offered you or one of your relatives in exchange for your vote”. The rural region is only representative of four Colombian micro-regions: Atlántica Media, Cundi-Boyacense, Eje Cafetero and Centro-Oriental.

significant persistence in vote buying behavior. This type of clientelism, however, is particularly likely to arise when a politician or party has the monopoly of the networks of exchange, which might not be typical in Colombia. Indeed, scholars have emphasized the presence of “dueling party machines” with many parties engaging in clientelism and competition for clients, leading them to participate in a form of “market” clientelism (Gutiérrez & Dávila, 1998; Dávila 1999; García, 2002; Gutiérrez 2007). In this context, clientelism may be more volatile. Also, it worth noting that particularly in such scenario observed vote buying might change not just because citizen behavior changes, but crucially because politician behavior changes. For instance,

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TABLE 9.2.
CLIENTELISM 2013 VERSUS 2016

| Have you accepted personal favors in exchange for your vote? | | | |
|--|-----|-------|-------|
| | Yes | No | Total |
| Panel A. Answers by year | | | |
| 2013 | 911 | 4,128 | 5,039 |
| 2016 | 998 | 6,608 | 7,606 |
| Panel B. Answers in 2016 conditional on answers in 2013 | | | |
| “Yes” in 2013 | 190 | 532 | 722 |
| “No” in 2013 | 344 | 2,873 | 3,217 |

Source: ELCA 2013 and 2016. Authors' own calculations

Notes: Table shows the answers given by respondents when asked “Please tell me if, in order to decide who to vote for, you have taken into account personal benefits, presents or job positions a candidate might have offered you or one of your relatives in exchange for your vote”. Panel B only shows the answers for those people who were also asked in 2013. Hence, the lower number of observations.

in some theories a more competitive election may induce more (and more indiscriminate) vote buying (Corstange, 2010).

Despite these observations, the changes in clientelism remain puzzling. We end by exploring a possibility put forward in Fergusson, Molina, and Robinson (2017), who argue that there are a number of mutually reinforcing feedback loops between clientelism and state weakness. In their view, clientelism erodes the quality of democracy, and sets in place a structure of incentives for politicians and citizens that is detrimental to state capacity building. Similarly, state weakness creates the right environment

for clientelism to flourish. While this implies that clientelism is hard to change, as part of a mutually reinforcing equilibrium with state weakness, it also suggests that whenever the state is strengthened clientelism should fade (and vice versa). They propose relying on tax evasion as a measure of state weakness. Indeed, this is a good indicator of the state's enforcement ability and its capacity to mobilize resources. Moreover, it is also influenced by general trust in the state and compliance with the implicit ‘social contract’ in society: citizens pay taxes, the state works for citizens and delivers public goods. For this reason they view it as related to the state's consensual strength (Acemoglu, 2005),



→ Karina and Camila Ramírez Tapias are sisters and there are only two years difference between them. They live in their grandmother Inés María Álvarez's house with their mother Yomaira Tapias, their little sister Isabela, and their mother's husband, Eduard Álvarez.

the relevant notion when focusing on the multiple feedback loops between this phenomena.

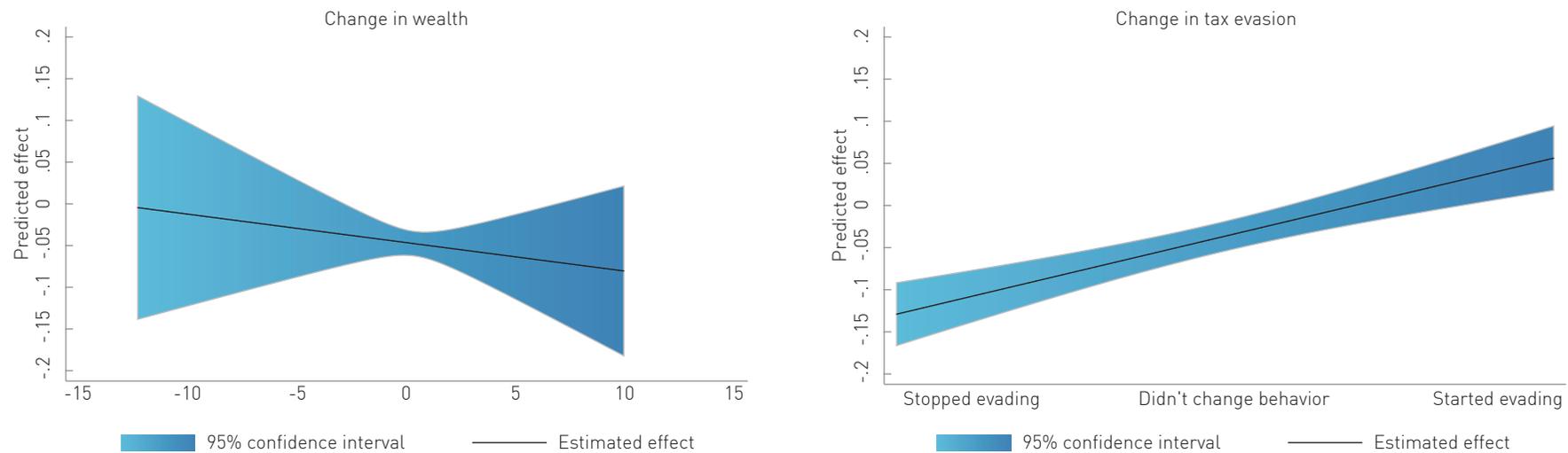
Fergusson, Molina, and Robinson (2017) propose seven mechanisms or "sins" creating a vicious cycle. First, the effective provision of public goods, a key feature of capable states, erodes the electoral advantage of clientelistic parties which is delivering targeted, particularistic goods. Second, with prevalent clientelism citizens' relationship with the state

is via informal relationships with brokers that displace potential formal relationships with the state to demand rights and services, weakening its capacity. Third, also by personalizing links with politicians, clientelism also contributes to society's fragmentation, weakening collective action to make the state responsive. Fourth, clientelistic exchanges justify both parties in defaulting on their part of the "social contract": the politician does not respond to citizens and citizens do not pay taxes. Fifth, vote

buying undermines the ideal role of elections, since rather than voting and controlling the winner (demanding him to fulfill his promises while in office, and not voting for him in the future if necessary) voters give their vote, get their money or direct benefit, and the deal is over. Sixth, in the context of clientelism politicians or specific interest groups participating in the clientelistic relationship capture the state. Finally, clientelism is also detrimental to capacity in that it is a form of social control by elites where it is unnecessary (unlike populism) to have a large state to appease masses.

With this discussion in mind, Figure 6 explores the extent to which two key social developments correlate with the change in clientelistic behavior. First, the left panel explores if increases in wealth help reduce the incidence of clientelism, by correlating the change in reported vote selling between rounds with the change in household wealth. The figure shows the linear prediction with corresponding confidence intervals. While the relationship is indeed negative, it is very weak (the slope is in fact not statistically significant). That is, at least from this figure, it does not appear that increases in wealth alone can drive households away from clientelism, a pattern that contradicts basic theories of modernization (Lipset, 1959). The right panel shows instead the linear relationship (with confidence intervals) between the change in predicted clientelism and the change in reported tax evasion. The relationship, though far from indicating a causal relationship, is consistent with the idea that the consolidation of a stronger and more legitimate

GRAPH 9.6.
CHANGE IN CLIENTELISM



Source: ELCA 2013 and 2016. Authors' own calculations

Notes: Both panels show the change in clientelism in the vertical axis. This change equals -1 if the respondent stopped relying on clientelistic favors to shape his/her voting decision between rounds, 1 he/she started doing so, and 0 otherwise (persistently relying or not relying on personal favors and gifts for vote choice). The left panel plots this change against the change in wealth, measured as the increase in an standardized asset index between rounds. The right panel plots it against the change in tax evasion (not paying the VAT).

state can help reduce clientelism. This last finding leads naturally to our discussion in the next section, where we move to consider the perspectives of the population around the peace deal of the Colombian government with the FARC. After all, one way to view this political episode is as an effort to consolidate a more capable and legitimate state.

9.2. PEACE MAKING

9.2.1. CONTEXT

Colombia is at a historical juncture. After more than 50 years of armed struggle, the FARC, the most powerful guerrilla group in the country, recently

signed a peace agreement with the Colombian Government led by President Juan Manuel Santos. Although a first version of the agreement was rejected in a national plebiscite in October 2016, a modified version was agreed by the FARC and the Government and ratified by Congress soon after. As a result, by February 2017, 7,000 FARC combatants demobilized into 26 transitory zones across

the country. To date, they have already handed out all of their weapons to a monitoring and verification mechanism run by the United Nations. At the same time, the Colombian Congress is defining the legal framework to implement the commitments in the agreement, which focus on rural development, political participation, end of conflict, illegal drugs, and justice for victims. Among others, the government has committed to an ambitious investment program in rural areas, to allow the political participation of a new political party growing out of the FARC, to recognize victims and promote reconciliation, and to implement a special transitional justice system with reduced sentences for FARC members, government actors, and third parties that committed crimes in the context of the internal conflict, so long as they contribute with truth and victim reparation.

However, the political landscape is highly divided and political and social opposition to the peace process is strong. Different political parties have stated their dissent and conveyed their intention to build their electoral platforms for the upcoming presidential elections on the modification of some of the main dimensions of the peace agreement. The current environment of polarization, in addition, extends beyond the political arena, and even beyond direct victims and perpetrators. The national plebiscite, for instance, was defeated by a narrow margin –with 50.2 percent of the votes– and in an environment in which 62 percent of the 35 million registered voters failed to cast a vote.

More generally, there are mixed views among the Colombian population about the agreement, the potential benefits that it will bring to society, and their willingness to engage in the actions that contribute to rebel reintegration and the peace process implementation.

The current environment of polarization and lack of social cohesion, while not unforeseen, is unfortunate. It is not out of the ordinary since prolonged internal conflicts often lead to feelings of anger, fear and revenge, even among communities and citizens who were not directly involved in the conflict (Petersen & Zukerman Daly, 2010). Yet, citizens' attitudes towards ex-combatants are one of the main determinants of the success of any reintegration or peace process (Kaplan & Nussio, 2015). In particular, such negative feelings and perceptions can contribute to greater social polarization and hinder the sustainability of the peace process. To promote social cohesion, it is therefore crucial to account for how society as a whole perceives the ending of conflict, the reintegration of former combatants, and the challenges that arise during peace-building efforts.

In this section, we document the perspectives of Colombian households regarding the overall benefits of the peace process and their attitudes towards future potential interactions with reintegrated combatants. We focus on two sets of questions that were included in the 2016 round that illustrate whether subjects perceive that the peace process will bring positive changes to their lives and

whether they are comfortable with different interactions with former combatants.

9.2.2. WILL THE PEACE PROCESS BRING POSITIVE CHANGES?

First, we explore whether Colombian households perceive that their lives will improve, deteriorate, or remain the same as a result of the peace process. We take these responses as crude measures of the optimism, pessimism, or indifference regarding the peace process.

The top left panel in Figure 7 illustrates the percentage of Colombian households who report that their life will worsen, remain the same, or improve as a result of the peace process. The data portrays a scenario that lies in line with the perceived environment of polarization and lack of social cohesion. On the one hand, the data highlights a prevalent perception of indifference, characterized by a significant proportion of respondents (41%) who believe that that the peace process will not bring any changes, either positive or negative, into their lives. On the other hand, there is also a critical mass of Colombians on each end of the spectrum, who are either optimistic or pessimistic regarding the peace process. In particular, 26 percent believe that the peace process will bring about negative effects, while 24 percent believes that it will lead to positive changes.³

.....→

3. The remaining 9 percent does not know how their lives will change.

Despite the historical juncture in which the oldest and strongest guerrilla group in the country will lay off its weapons, the figures above are not surprising. As we discussed above, a plausible explanation for this phenomenon is that the long-lasting nature of the Colombian internal conflict has effectively led to negative feelings of anger, fear, revenge, and mistrust and also to profound divisions among the society. Such feelings can thus lead to the animosity and indifference of a considerable percentage of the population who believes that the peace process will not bring any positive changes or that it will even result in negative effects. In addition, the observed polarization in which a similar number of Colombians are optimistic and pessimistic regarding the peace process suggests that the costs of the internal conflict have been asymmetrically borne across society. Citizens may therefore also understand that the benefits and costs of the peace process will not be distributed uniformly. For instance, it is likely that rural households, who have been more heavily affected by the internal conflict, will better perceive the benefits and risks of the FARC reintegration and of the policies included in the agreement, especially those on rural development and illegal drugs. Urban households, on the other hand, may be indifferent or even pessimistic regarding the peace process as they have been rather isolated from the dynamics of the civil conflict, especially in the last decade.

In the analysis that follows we document the patterns in respondents' perceptions regarding the

overall benefits of the peace process across a range of demographic, socioeconomic, and political characteristics. The results suggest that the picture of an indifferent and polarized society persists no matter how we stratify the data and which sub-groups of the populations we focus on. With a few exceptions, we still find that between 40-50 percent of the population seems indifferent regarding the outcomes of the peace process, while a similar proportion of respondents (between 20-30%) are either optimistic or pessimistic.

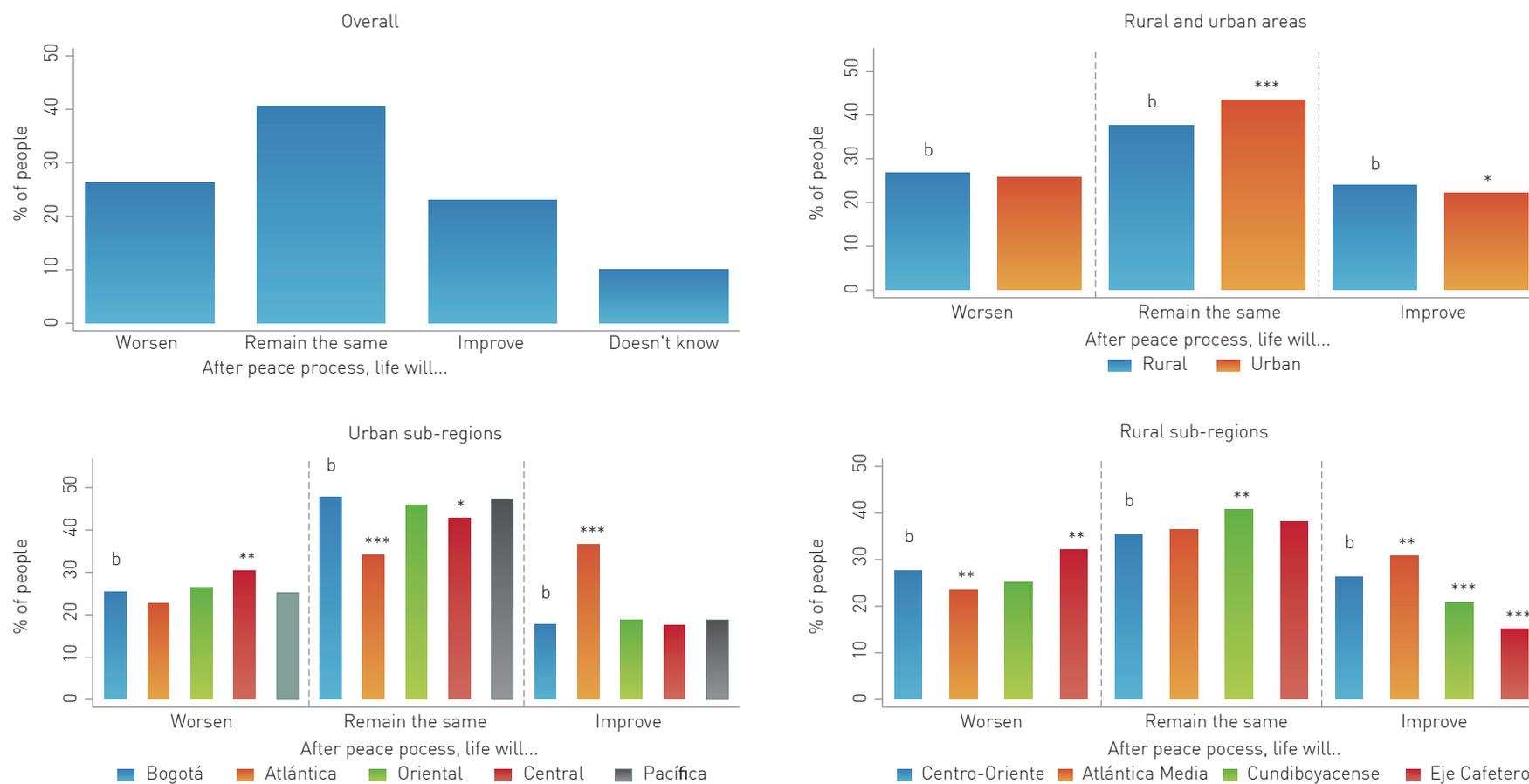
In the next three panels of Figure 7, we first explore how citizens' perceptions differ according to the area (urban or rural) and region of residence. The overall patterns persist across urban and rural areas and across different regions, with a few exceptions. For instance, in the top right panel we can observe that urban households are more indifferent (43 vs 37 percent) and less optimistic (9 vs percent 12) than rural households. Considering that the internal conflict historically has been more vicious and prevalent in rural areas, and that



→ María Alicia Torres and her husband Octavio Ballesteros say that, luckily, their town Susa (Cundinamarca) has always been peaceful. Thanks to this, they have never been close to the armed conflict. They only have to take on nature that occasionally kills all their crops when it floods.

GRAPH 9.7.

LIFE PERSPECTIVES AND PEACE: WILL YOUR LIFE IMPROVE, REMAIN THE SAME, OR WORSEN AFTER THE PEACE PROCESS?



Source: ELCA 2013 and 2016. Authors' own calculations

Notes: * is significant at 10%, ** 5%, and *** 1% level. Significance levels for the difference between groups, relative to the baseline group (marked with a "b"). Responses to the question "Do you think that, as a result of the peace agreement signed with the FARC, your life might...". Possible answer choices are: "improve", "remain the same", "worsen", and "I don't know" (excluded from the figure).

several of the components of the peace agreement will focus on rural areas, it may be surprising that rural households are only marginally more optimistic regarding their life perspectives in a post-conflict scenario.

When we look across the different urban and rural regions (bottom two panels) we identify three interesting patterns. First, in urban areas the same trends emerge across all regions, except in the Atlantic region where a higher proportion of respondents express some sense of optimism (37%) rather than indifferent (35%) and pessimistic outlooks (22%). In other urban regions, the proportion of subjects who express optimistic attitudes falls below 20 percent, while the proportion of those who seem indifferent regarding the peace process increases to almost half of the population. Second, in rural regions the extent of indifferent perceptions falls to some extent. This is mirrored by an increase in the rate of pessimistic responses, as it is the case of the Eje Cafetero where more than 30 percent of the respondents expect negative changes, or by an increase in the rate of optimistic responses in the Atlantic and Central-Western regions. In these two regions, 31 and 26 percent of respondents expected positive changes as a result of the peace process. The patterns of responses across these two rural regions are interesting to the extent that they are the two rural regions of the ELCA where the FARC had a stronger presence. Overall, the patterns hint towards underlying heterogeneity that perhaps emerges as a function of

the differential historical trajectories and impacts of the internal conflict across regions.

Figure 8 illustrates citizens' perspectives by demographic, economic, social and political characteristics. The top-left panel shows that, on average, men are 5 percentage points more likely than women to report optimistic life perspectives. Women, instead, report being more uncertain (the omitted bar in the Figure). In turn, the top-right panel indicates that young adults (between 18 and 34 years of age) are much more indifferent than older respondents (those of ages 34-60 and 60 and older). In fact, one out of every two young adults believes that they will not experience any significant changes as a result of the peace process. Older adults, on the other hand, while less indifferent also appear relatively more divided and polarized.

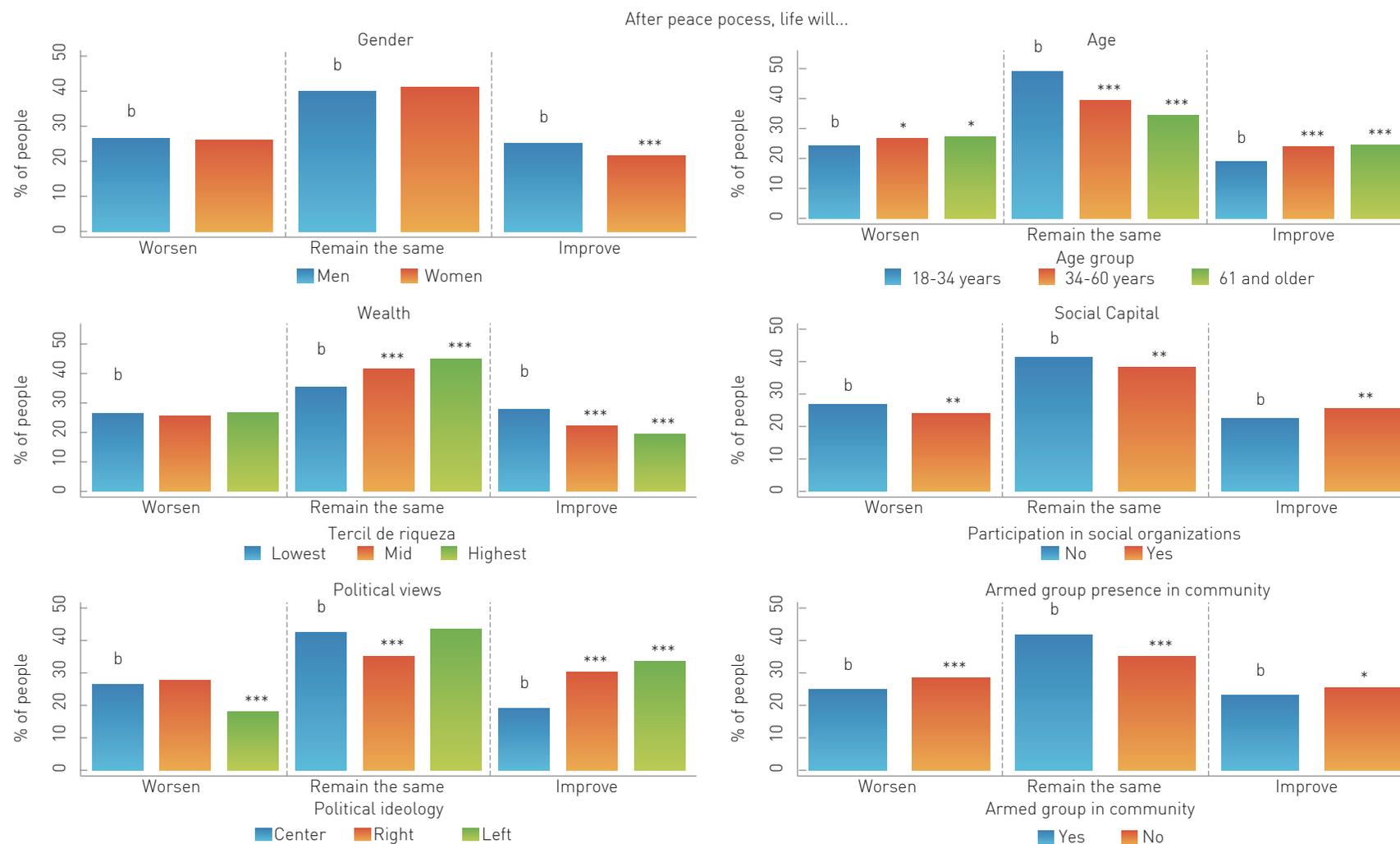
To analyze whether citizens' perspectives vary according to their levels of wealth, we stratify the overall sample across household-level wealth terciles (mid-left panel). The rate of indifferent responses increases across income levels, while the rate of optimistic responses is inversely correlated with household wealth. In particular, 28 percent of the respondents at the bottom wealth tercile expect that their lives will improve, whereas only 22 and 19 percent of subjects in the top two terciles have such optimistic perspectives. These differences are all statistically significant and possibly reflect that wealthier households have been less affected by the internal conflict, especially so during the last

decade, and also that they have been better able to adapt to the circumstances that characterize a protracted internal conflict.

In the mid-right panel we analyze how perceptions regarding the peace process vary according to household's social capital. For this purpose, we compare households who participate in social or community organizations with those who do not. Perceptions do not differ to a great extent between the two groups. While the former seem less indifferent and pessimistic, and slightly more optimistic (27 vs 22 %), these differences are small in magnitude (although statistically significant). What's more, among respondents with ties in social organizations, we observe similar rates of optimism and pessimism (27 and 24%, respectively) and still a considerable proportion (38%) who remain indifferent. These last results might seem surprising to the extent that social leaders and organizations have been frequently victimized in Colombia. Multiple recounts demonstrate that armed groups often target leaders and members of social organizations in order to hinder collective action and strengthen their control over communities and populations throughout the country, especially in contested territories (Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica, 2013). At a first glance, we could have therefore expected that respondents who participate in social organizations would be more optimistic and less polarized. Yet, social leaders and activist are still being targeted and victimized across the country (a prominent problem in recent months), and especially in

GRAPH 9.8.

LIFE PERSPECTIVES AND PEACE, BY SOCIOECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS: WILL YOUR LIFE IMPROVE, REMAIN THE SAME, OR WORSEN AFTER THE PEACE PROCESS?



Source: ELCA 2013 and 2016. Authors' own calculations

Notes: * is significant at 10%, ** 5%, and *** 1% level. Significance levels for the difference between groups, relative to the baseline group (marked with a "b"). Responses to the question "Do you think that, as a result of the peace agreement signed with the FARC, your life might...". Possible answer choices are: "improve", "remain the same", "worsen", and "I don't know" (excluded from the figure). Wealth terciles are calculated using a standardized index, with a principal component analysis on household assets. Participation in social organizations is self-reported participation in at least one organization (respondents are shown a list of organization and can also list any other). Political views are based on self-reported political leaning in a left to right scale, with left or center-left classified as "Left", center classified as "Center", right or center-right classified as "Right". Finally, armed groups are deemed present if, in any round of the survey, community leaders reported presence of any armed groups in the community.

regions where the FARC had a strong presence and where different illegal armed groups are clashing for the control of these territories. Therefore, the levels of pessimism and indifference among socially-driven respondents might indicate that leadership and participation in social organizations still increases the likelihood of being victimized, and that while the FARC might have laid of their weapons, other armed groups remain active.

Finally, we look at perceptions by political views and community-level exposure to violence. In the bottom-left panel, we observe that respondents at the left of the political spectrum are more likely to perceive positive changes than those at the center of the political spectrum (33 vs 19%). These differences are mirrored by a higher frequency of pessimistic perceptions among the latter (18 vs 26%). On the other hand, and perhaps surprisingly, we also observe that the frequency of optimistic perceptions is also higher for subjects at the right of the political spectrum than for those at the center. While these two groups do not differ in the proportions of pessimistic perceptions, those who position themselves to the right of the political spectrum seem less indifferent and more optimistic about the post-conflict scenario. This result is quite surprising given that right-wing parties have been publicly opposed to different dimensions of the peace agreement.⁴

The bottom-right panel illustrates the differences in the perceptions of optimism as a function of the

presence of illegal armed actors in the respondents' communities. In this case, we observe that respondents who reside in communities in which an illegal armed group was present at some point during the last 14 years are less indifferent and more polarized than those in communities without such presence. For instance, there is a higher proportion of optimistic (26 vs 23%) and pessimistic respondents (28 vs 24%) where armed groups are present relative to where they are not. These patterns suggest that the close experience of the civil conflict does not affect life perceptions in a unique direction. Of course, in the future it will be key to identify which factors are associated with these positive and negative outlooks, including the type, severity, and temporal proximity of the experiences with violence, their legal recognition as victims, or the extent to which subjects could have adapted themselves to environments in which illegal armed groups controlled and established de-facto institutions.⁵ Taken together, in this section we have observed the current environment of combined polarization and indifference surrounding the peace process. On the one hand, more than 40 percent of the subjects interviewed by the ELCA perceive that their lives will not change as a result of the peace agreement and seem indifferent regarding the possibility that the peace process will bring about relevant changes in the following years. On the other hand, among the rest around as many perceive that their lives will take a negative turn in the next few years as those that express that their lives will improve. While we were able to observe some differences across areas, regions, and socioeconomic

characteristics, these were in general minor, and the overall picture of an indifferent and otherwise polarized society persists between different groups of the population.

As we discussed above, documenting the perspectives of the Colombian population on the expected outcomes of the peace process and understanding the factors that lead to such levels of indifference and polarization is an important first step at this particular juncture. A better understanding of these dynamics will allow us to inform strategies and policies that aim to build social cohesion and support for the peace process. While our analysis cannot parse out the different factors underlying the current perceptions, it suggests plausible explanations. Some of these factors include the negative feelings of anger, fear, revenge, and mistrust, which are underlying legacies of prolonged internal conflicts, and the asymmetric experiences of violence and conflict across the Colombian society. In addition, it is also true that Colombians have been forced to adjust and learn to live in an environment of prolonged violence and conflict. Hence, at the same time that some citizens hold strong and opposing views on their future as a result of the peace process, for many other Colombians the reintegration of the FARC might not seem as important or life-changing as an outside spectator could imagine. Finally, it is also important to mention that the FARC's reintegration, while historical and important, only solves a piece of the puzzle, with other significant socioeconomic and political challenges remaining ahead.

4. Bear in mind, however, that this conclusion must be interpreted with caution given the very low rate at which respondents position themselves on the left to right political axis.

5. Perhaps surprisingly, we did not find any interesting patterns according to household and community victimization.

9.2.3. ATTITUDES TOWARDS FORMER COMBATANTS

We now explore whether Colombian households are willing to accept basic features of the reintegration process. We document whether respondents would feel annoyed if a former combatant were to reside in their same neighborhood, ask them for a job, or participate in politics, or if the respondent has to pay taxes to fund the reintegration process. We take these responses as a measure of citizens' attitudes regarding the reconciliation process. We first document the general attitudes for the entire sample of ELCA respondents and then explore whether such attitudes vary across the same set of regional, demographic, socioeconomic, and political characteristics as in the previous subsection.

Before we proceed with the analysis, we recognize that eliciting attitudes towards former combatants may also carry significant stigma. This implies a similar challenge to the one discussed in the section on clientelism, since respondents might be worried to reveal that they feel either comfortable or uncomfortable with future interactions with former combatants. For this reason, the 2016 round of the ELCA included a different "list experiment" to evaluate the extent to which respondents might answer dishonestly. Yet, as with the case of vote buying, we find that respondents were just as willing to admit to this uneasiness as when they were directly asked. In this particular case, this could be another indication of the current environment of



→ Nubia Calderón and her daughters Mayerli Consuelo and Paola Andrea Saba Calderón. They live in Simijaca (Cundinamarca) with their father Segundo Saba and their grandmother Abigail Solano who suffers from Parkinson's Disease.

polarization and lack of social cohesion, in which strong opinions against (or in favor) of the peace and reintegration process are prevalent and not stigmatized. Hence, throughout the analysis we will focus on the direct question on attitudes towards ex-combatants.

We begin by describing the general attitudes and rates of acceptance towards each of the future

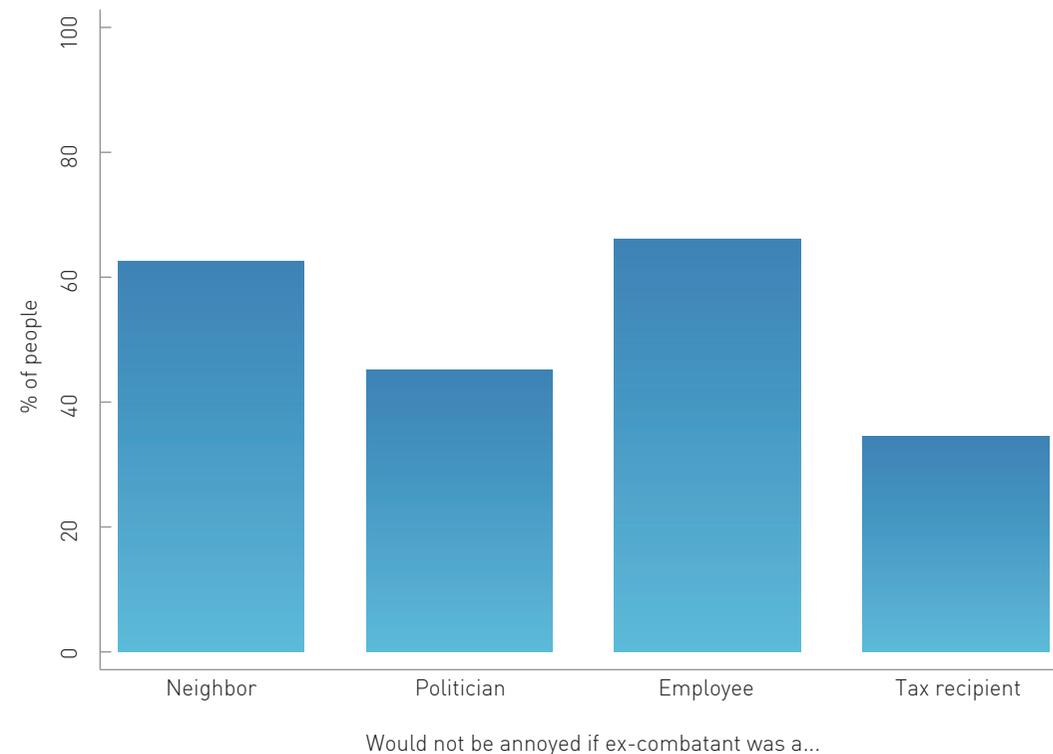
interactions with FARC ex-combatants. Figure 9 depicts the proportion of respondents who report that they would not be annoyed by the different reconciliation scenarios. This Figure highlights two distinct and interesting features. First, that a majority of Colombians are willing to engage in daily interactions with FARC ex-combatants. For instance, 62 and 66 percent of the respondents report that would not be annoyed if a former

combatant moves into their neighborhood or if she asks them for a job. Of course, this also means that nearly 4 out of every 10 Colombians would be annoyed by such interactions. Yet, this general willingness to engage in a daily basis with former FARC combatants constitutes an important building block for the success and sustainability of the reconciliation process. Second, this positive trend is reversed when we inquired for the attitudes regarding the possible participation of FARC ex-combatants in politics and the introduction of new taxes to finance the peace process. 56 percent of the respondents indicated that they would feel annoyed if former FARC members were allowed to participate in politics, while 64 percent of them would feel annoyed if they were asked to pay taxes to fund transfers and special programs for the re-integrated FARC combatants.

Now we explore whether these attitudes vary according to respondent's observable characteristics. In general, and similar to what we observed in the previous section, we do not find major differences across different groups of the population. Overall, we observe a generalized willingness for daily interactions with former FARC combatants coupled with a reluctance to allow them to participate in politics and to pay for newly established taxes.

Figure 10 illustrates the proportion of respondents across different subgroups of the population who report that they would not be annoyed if an ex-combatant resides in their same neighborhood or

GRAPH 9.9.
AGREEMENT WITH RECONCILIATION STATEMENTS

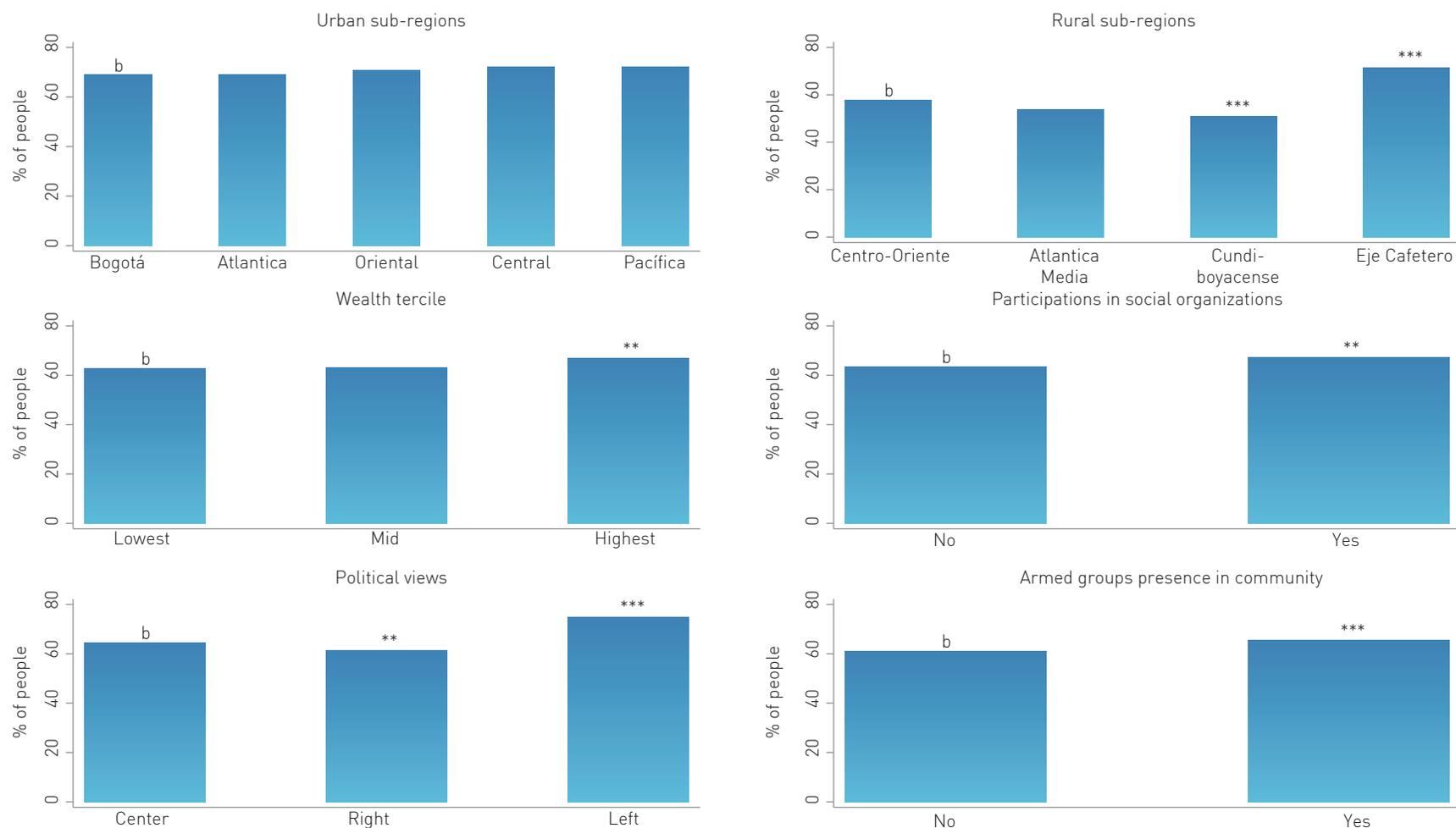


Source: ELCA 2013 and 2016. Authors' own calculations

Notes: The figure shows the percentage of people who report not being annoyed by each of following scenarios: 1) Having an ex-combatant from the guerrilla as neighbor, 2) That guerrilla ex-combatants participate in politics, 3) Having to hire a guerrilla ex-combatant as an employee, and 4) Having to pay a tax to support ex-combatants. Possible answers are "I would be annoyed", "I would not be annoyed" and "I prefer not to answer".

GRAPH 9.10.

AGREEMENT WITH RECONCILIATION, BY SOCIO ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS **WOULD NOT BE ANNOYED**
WITH EXCOMBATANT AS NEIGHBOR OR EMPLOYEE



Source: ELCA 2013 and 2016. Authors' own calculations

Notes: * is significant at 10%, ** 5%, and *** 1% level. Significance levels for the difference between groups, relative to the baseline group (marked with a "b"). The figure shows the percentage of people who report not being annoyed by having an ex-combatant from the guerrilla as neighbor nor by having to hire a guerrilla ex-combatant as an employee. Wealth terciles are calculated using a standardized index, with a principal component analysis on household assets. Participation in social organizations is self-reported participation in at least one organization (respondents are shown a list of organization and can also list any other). Political views are based on self-reported political leaning in a left to right scale, with left or center-left classified as "Left", center classified as "Center", right or center-right classified as "Right". Finally, armed groups are deemed present if, in any round of the survey, community leaders reported presence of any armed groups in the community.

asks them for a job. We combine the responses on these two dimensions since, in general, they portray the similar patterns overall and across different groups of the population.

Across the different stratifications of the data, the general pattern indicates that between 60 to 70 percent of Colombians are not annoyed. Within each subgroup of the population, we highlight the following differential patterns. First, rural households are less willing than urban households to accept having an ex-combatant as their neighbor or employee, except in the Eje Cafetero region. Second, men and young adults report being less annoyed at the possibility of these daily interactions than women and older adults. Third, and perhaps surprisingly we do not observe any differences across wealth levels. Finally, subjects who participate in social organizations, who lean towards the left in the political spectrum, or who reside in communities in which an armed groups was present in the past 14 years all are more accepting and willing to interact with ex-combatants.

In Figure 11 we now look at the attitudes regarding ex-combatants participation in politics. Understanding citizens' attitudes in this dimension is important to the extent that it was one of the main dimensions of the peace agreement, envisioned as a way to broaden political access and opportunities, to break the link between politics and violence, and to strengthen democracy. Nevertheless, and as we discussed before, attitudes towards FARC's



→ Segundo Saba and his wife in their living room. They confirm that the armed conflict has never reached their region. Their finances have been affected since sawmilling, which is what Segundo works in, has been regulated.

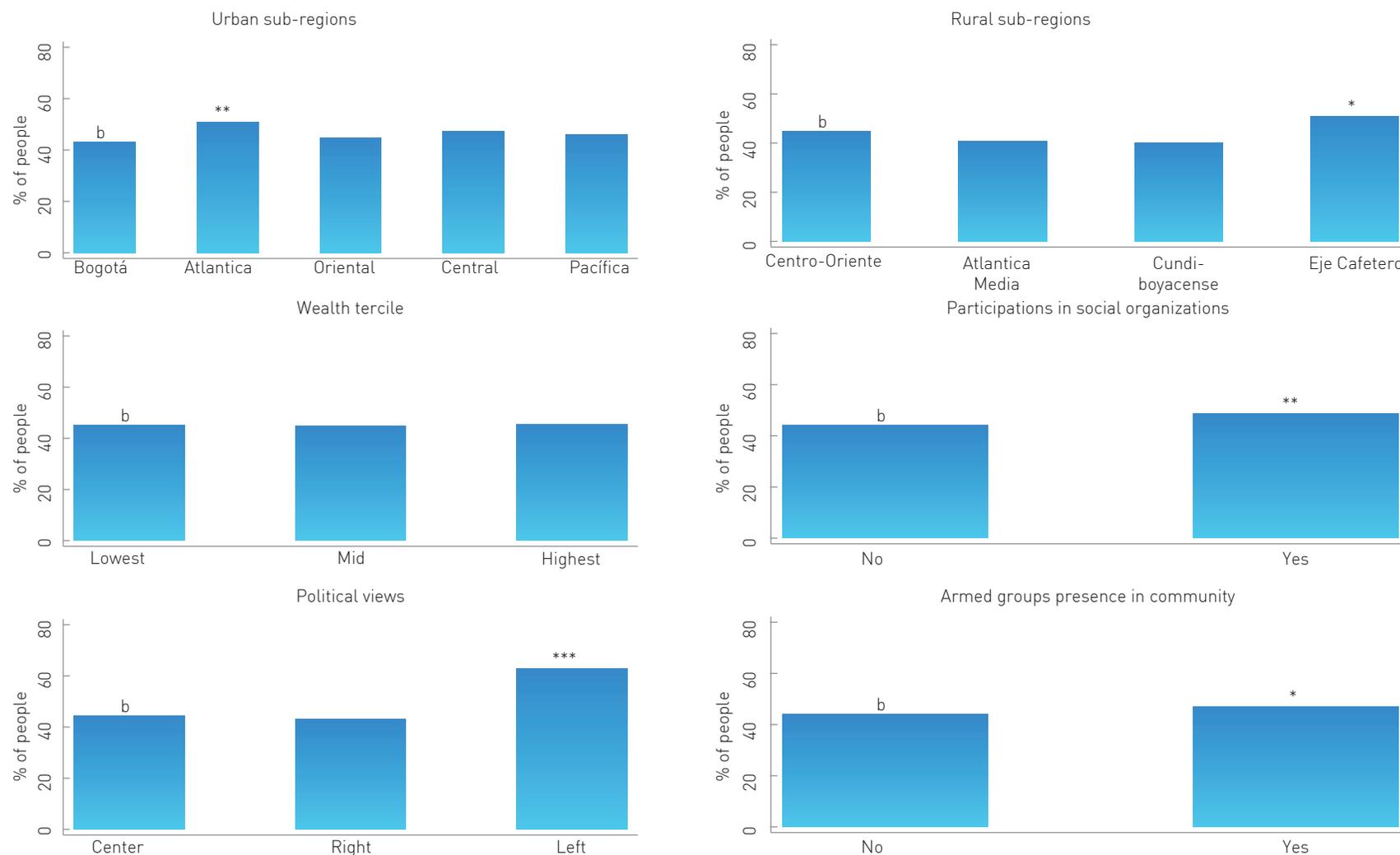
political participation are in general negative and only 40 percent of respondents express that they would not be annoyed if a FARC ex-combatant participates in politics.

Moreover, there are even fewer differences across the different subgroups of the populations than for the other dimensions outlined above. Some exceptions include respondents in the Atlantic urban region and in the Eje Cafetero rural region who are more open to the idea of the political participation of FARC ex-combatants than in other regions (16

and 14 percent difference), women who are more opposed than men (16 percent difference), and subjects who enroll in social organizations who are less likely to be annoyed than those who do not participate (11 percent difference). The most notable exception emerges between subjects with different political views, where 60 percent of those who lean towards the left would not be annoyed by the FARC's political participation. This implies an 18 percentage point difference (40 percent) relative to those at the center and right of the political spectrum.

GRAPH 9.11.

AGREEMENT WITH RECONCILIATION, BY SOCIO ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS **WOULD NOT BE ANNOYED**
WITH EXCOMBATANT PARTICIPATING IN POLITICS



Source: ELCA 2013 and 2016. Authors' own calculations

Notes: * is significant at 10%, ** 5%, and *** 1% level. Significance levels for the difference between groups, relative to the baseline group (marked with a "b"). The figure shows the percentage of people who report not being annoyed by former guerrilla members participating in politics. Wealth terciles are calculated using a standardized index, with a principal component analysis on household assets. Participation in social organizations is self-reported participation in at least one organization (respondents are shown a list of organization and can also list any other). Political views are based on self-reported political leaning in a left to right scale, with left or center-left classified as "Left", center classified as "Center", right or center-right classified as "Right". Finally, armed groups are deemed present if, in any round of the survey, community leaders reported presence of any armed groups in the community.



→ This flat-bottomed boat allows hundreds of residents of Montería (Córdoba) to cross the Sinú River. Each trip costs 500 pesos.

Finally, Figure 12 illustrates respondents' general willingness to pay taxes to support ex-combatants and fund the reintegration process. Again, the general picture is of higher levels of reluctance and uneasiness among Colombians and of few differences across groups.

First, we do not observe differences between urban and rural areas, though there are some differences

within regions. Consistent with some of the results discussed above, respondents in the Atlantic urban and rural regions are more willing to pay such taxes than in other regions (differences of 16 and 34 percent relative to the base category, respectively), whereas subjects in the Eje Cafetero and Cundi-Boyacence rural regions are significantly more reluctant (differences of 36 and 16 percent, respectively). In addition, subjects at the top two wealth

terciles are between 5 to 8 percentage points more likely to be annoyed by having to pay such taxes than those at the bottom income tercile; these differences account for a change of 12 to 20 percent, respectively. This result is hardly surprising to the extent that the burden of any new taxes will undoubtedly fall on wealthier households. When we stratify the data according to whether the respondents participated in any social organization, we find that those who do participate are 15 percent more willing to pay them. Overall, this result is consistent with the more positive perspectives and attitudes of citizens who participate in social organizations that we have documented throughout this chapter.⁶

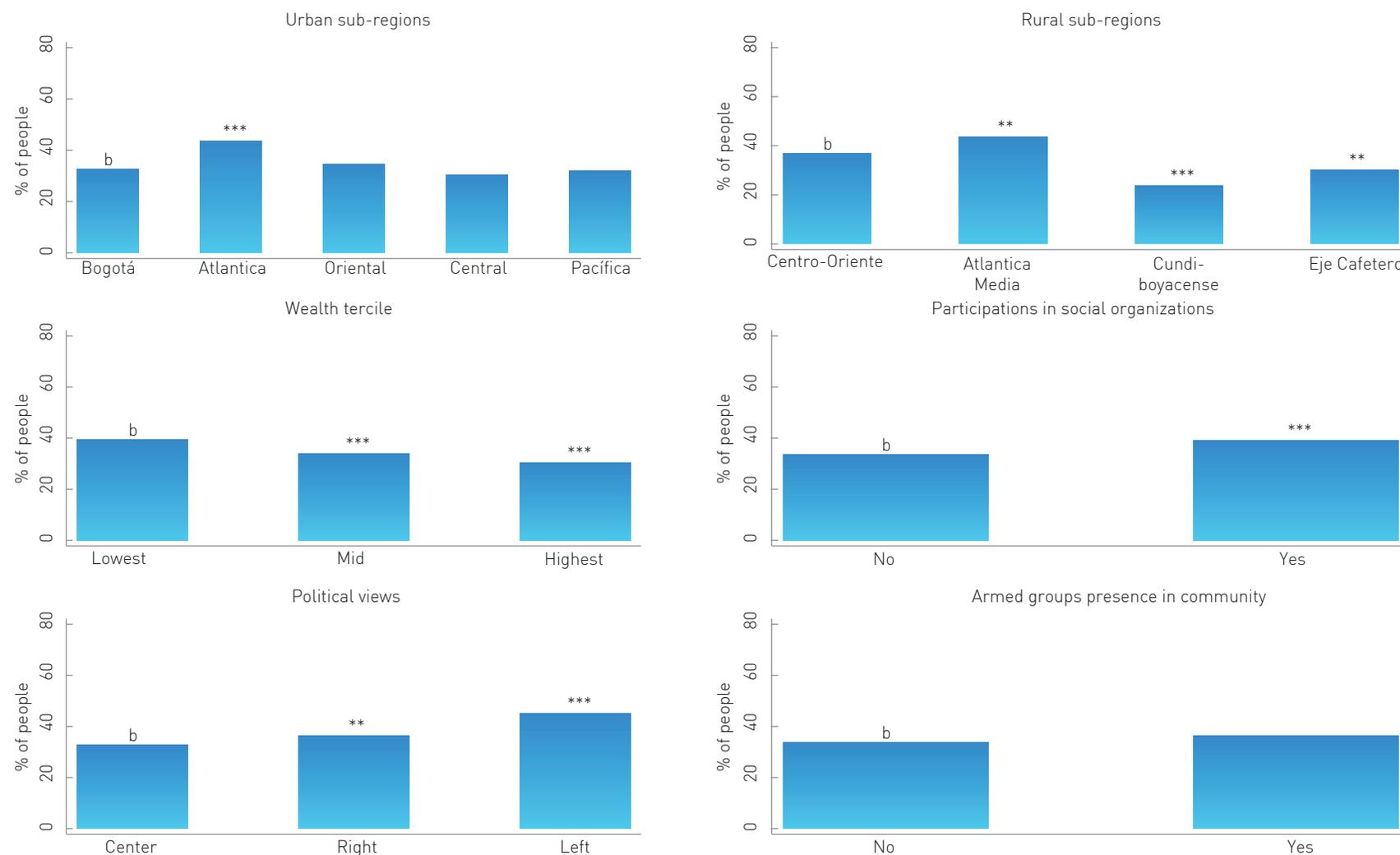
9.3. FINAL REMARKS

This chapter has highlighted some significant challenges ahead for Colombian society and political leaders. As the country embarks on a difficult new stage of implementing a major peace process, interest in politics and the quality of democracy remain weak. Moreover, economic development alone does not appear to be sufficient to improve the quality of political practices. Instead, building a more capable and legitimate state is perhaps the most important task at hand in future years. While the FARC's disarmament and reintegration is already a monumental and historical step at recovering the state's monopoly of violence, and is thus a first stepping stone in this direction, there are significant obstacles. The peace process itself

6. Finally, among the few reporting their left to right political leaning, the data again indicates that respondents who lean to the left are significantly less annoyed by paying taxes to support ex-combatants than respondents at the center of the political spectrum. In particular, the latter are 12 percentage points less likely to be annoyed, a figure that accounts to a sizable 40 percent difference. Surprisingly, respondents at the right end of the political spectrum are also more open to paying such taxes than those at the center, with a 10 percent difference. As noted throughout, we interpret these results with caution given the small sample size.

GRAPH 9.12.

AGREEMENT WITH RECONCILIATION, BY SOCIO ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS **WOULD NOT BE ANNOYED**
BY PAYING TAXES TO SUPPORT EXCOMBATANT



Source: ELCA 2013 and 2016. Authors' own calculations

Notes: * is significant at 10%, ** 5%, and *** 1% level. Significance levels for the difference between groups, relative to the baseline group (marked with a "b"). The figure shows the percentage of people who report not being annoyed by former guerrilla members participating in politics. Wealth terciles are calculated using a standardized index, with a principal component analysis on household assets. Participation in social organizations is self-reported participation in at least one organization (respondents are shown a list of organization and can also list any other). Political views are based on self-reported political leaning in a left to right scale, with left or center-left classified as "Left", center classified as "Center", right or center-right classified as "Right". Finally, armed groups are deemed present if, in any round of the survey, community leaders reported presence of any armed groups in the community.

envisions a set of transformations that are supposed to build a state that is more present in areas that have been traditionally neglected, and where citizens are better able to mobilize and hold their leaders accountable. But as we have documented, the peace process is perceived with a combination of indifference and polarization in the population. Many individuals feel that the peace process has no substantial effect on their lives. The rest, are polarized between those expecting positive and negative changes. Both issues are problematic when trying to push for costly and controversial policies to implement the agreements. Moreover, arguably the two core issues in the peace deal (political participation and financing benefits for rebels in the reintegration process) are the ones met with greater resistance in the population.

Our data also underscores some reasons for optimism. In particular, while still reluctant to accept political participation of former rebels and to pay for reintegration, Colombians seem less opposed at interacting with ex-combatants in daily encounters as neighbors and workers. Second, those individuals that are most engaged in social and community organizations, and who presumably will be called to play a leading role in the upcoming processes, are particularly open to interacting with reintegrated rebels. This is important since the social fabric is also crucial for the reintegration process, beyond state policies. In this context, however, it is crucial that community leaders are safe. The experience of recent months with sustained threats against and killings of local leaders is therefore a major cause for concern.

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