

TRUST AND PEACE: IN ZONES AFFECTED BY THE ARMED CONFLICT IN COLOMBIA

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Abstract

This study explores how the implementation of Colombia's Peace Agreement has shaped citizens' trust between residents and institutions across conflict-affected territories. Drawing on panel data from over 12,000 individuals surveyed in the MAPS dataset (2019–2021), combined with information from the ART database on development projects, the analysis examines both perceived and actual implementation of peace-related actions through Fixed Effects (FE) and Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) models. Ultimately, the results reveal a paradox between expectation and observable outcomes, while perceived implementation shows a relationship with trust, the numbers of projects could not translate into improved trust perceptions. This suggests that trust is shaped less by the quantity of state actions than by how citizens interpret and experience them.

Relevance to Development Studies

Trust in post-conflict contexts is essential for development studies because it addresses the central challenge of transforming fragility and instability into functional and legitimate structures. Without trust, any investment in infrastructure or political reforms risks being undermined by non-cooperation, apathy, or renewed violence. How can a society achieve sustainable peace if trust is absent?

Keywords

Institutional Trust; Interpersonal Trust; Peace implementation; Peacebuilding; Fixed Effects, PDET

Chapter 1 Introduction

How can Colombia build a sustainable and lasting peace after more than five decades of civil war? While the armed conflict has left deep social scars, particularly in rural and peripheral regions (Grupo de Memoria Histórica, 2013; Lemus, 2014), the signing of the 2016 Peace Agreement between the Colombian State and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) marked a milestone for stabilization. This transition from armed conflict to a stable and lasting peace remains as a complex and pressing challenge for the country (Echavarría, et al., 2025). While the academic literature has extensively explored the causes of conflicts and the processes of their termination (Grupo de Memoria Histórica, 2013; Pereira-Sotelo, et al., 2025; Ríos & Hidalgo, 2022; Lampreia, 2025), understanding the factors that sustain peace agreements is an evolving field of research (Bigombe, et al., 2000). In a post-conflict scenario, where institutions have often been eroded by years of violence and delegitimization, rebuilding citizen trust in the state institutions and between each other is an imperative but yet an unexplored topic in research on peacebuilding. The erosion of trust weakens social and institutional cohesion leading to lower civic engagement, weakened governance, and greater vulnerability to renewed violence (Justino & Samarin, 2025).

The implementation of the Final Agreement between the Colombian government and FARC is based on the concept of territorial peace, prioritizing the municipalities most impacted by the conflict, characterized by high poverty rates, presence of illicit economic activities and institutional fragility. In line with the principle of territorial peace, the government implemented a plan titled the Development Programmes with a Territorial Focus (*Programas de Desarrollo con Enfoque Territorial – PDET*) prioritizing 170 municipalities grouped into 16 subregions most impacted by the armed conflict (Renovación del Territorio, 2025). This research aims to examine the mechanisms for building sustainable peace in PDET-Territories, based on the hypothesis that the peace implementation plays a significant role in trust. The PDET's program provides an opportunity to explore the interaction between trust and peace and is the key research focus of this paper. Specifically, to what extent has the implementation of the peace agreement influenced perceived trust amongst residents and institutions in the post-conflict territories prioritized by Colombia's Development Programs with a Territorial Focus (PDET)?

To do so, this research examines whether the manner in which the Colombian Peace Agreement is implemented influences people's perceptions of trust. This research paper has the following sections: First, it provides a brief review of the Colombian peace process. Then, it explores the

relation between trust and peacebuilding. After that, it describes the Mapping Attitudes, Perceptions and Support (MAPS) survey panel data. The survey was conducted in 72 municipalities across 16 PDET subregions, focusing on perceptions of the Peace Agreement's implementation in 2019 and 2021. The MAPS survey is particularly relevant in the field of peacebuilding for two main reasons: first, it provides a representative sample for each PDET region, making it the most detailed survey of conflict-affected communities (Weintraub, et al., 2023); and second, its design allows for tracking changes in attitudes and perceptions over time. The survey is complemented with data on projects implemented under the framework of the peace agreement, obtained from the Agency of Territorial Renovation (Agencia de Renovación del Territorio - ART), the institution responsible for the intervention in the territories that are part of the Territorial Development Programs, in order to determine whether the implementation of the projects is associated with an increase in the perception of interpersonal and institutional trust. Finally, the conclusion.

Chapter 2 Background

2.1 Colombian Peace Process

The Colombian peace process constitutes one of the most significant efforts at conflict resolution in contemporary Latin America. For more than fifty years, Colombia handled an internal armed conflict with the country's largest rebel group, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC). This had devastating consequences, including, estimated deaths of 450,000 people and internally displaced over 8 million, the world's second largest population of internally displaced persons (Comisión de la verdad, 2022). After starting nine peace negotiations over the last three decades and attempting multiple demobilization efforts with illegal armed groups (Lopez, 2016) the government began the 2012 peace talks that concluded in the 2016 Final Agreement. The negotiations were marked by political polarization which weakened consensus around the accord, nearly resulting in its rejection via referendum in October 2016. Following the setback, the terms of the agreement were re-negotiated and after a brief "feed-back" period, a revised agreement was signed in November 2016. These difficulties open the question over who supports the peace agreement particularly in contexts marked by historical exclusion and violence (Liendo & Braithwaite, 2018, p. 623).

Nevertheless, the 2016 accord was ambitious in both design and scope. It sought not only to silence the guns but to transform the structural conditions that had fueled the conflict for decades. The six central "pillars" of the accord illustrate a multidimensional understanding of peace-building: 1. Towards a new Colombian countryside: Integral Rural Reform; 2. Political Participation: Democratic opening to build peace; 3. End of the Conflict; 4. Solutions to the illicit drug problem; 5. Agreement on the victims of the conflict: Integral System of Truth, Justice, Reparation and No Repetition, and 6. Implementation and Verification (Colombia Peace Agreement, 2016). Collectively, these elements emphasize that peace in Colombia was conceived as a holistic project, extending beyond ceasefire and hostilities to social justice, institutional reform, and reconciliation.

Each pillar of the peace agreement had a specific goal and implementation mechanism, the first one, the integral rural reform, intent to transform the legal and institutional framework of land ownership to improve the life conditions of those living there and promote equitable rural development. As part of the integral rural reform implementation 170 conflict-affected municipalities, grouped in 16 sub-regions, were prioritized as PDET territories (see figure 1). The PDET cover a massive area: at 411,029 square kilometers they represent 36% of Colombian territory (Weintraub,

et al., 2023). The criteria to prioritize PDET included: level of poverty, conflict related consequences, institutional fragility, and the presence of illicit crops. The prioritized areas showed a multidimensional poverty rate of 72.8%, well above the national average of 49.0%, based on the 2005 Census. In addition, 67.0% of the municipalities register a high or very high incidence of armed conflict, according to the DNP's conflict incidence index, and these territories include 94.2% of coca cultivation, as reported by the 2016 SIMCI Census (Decree 893, 2017).

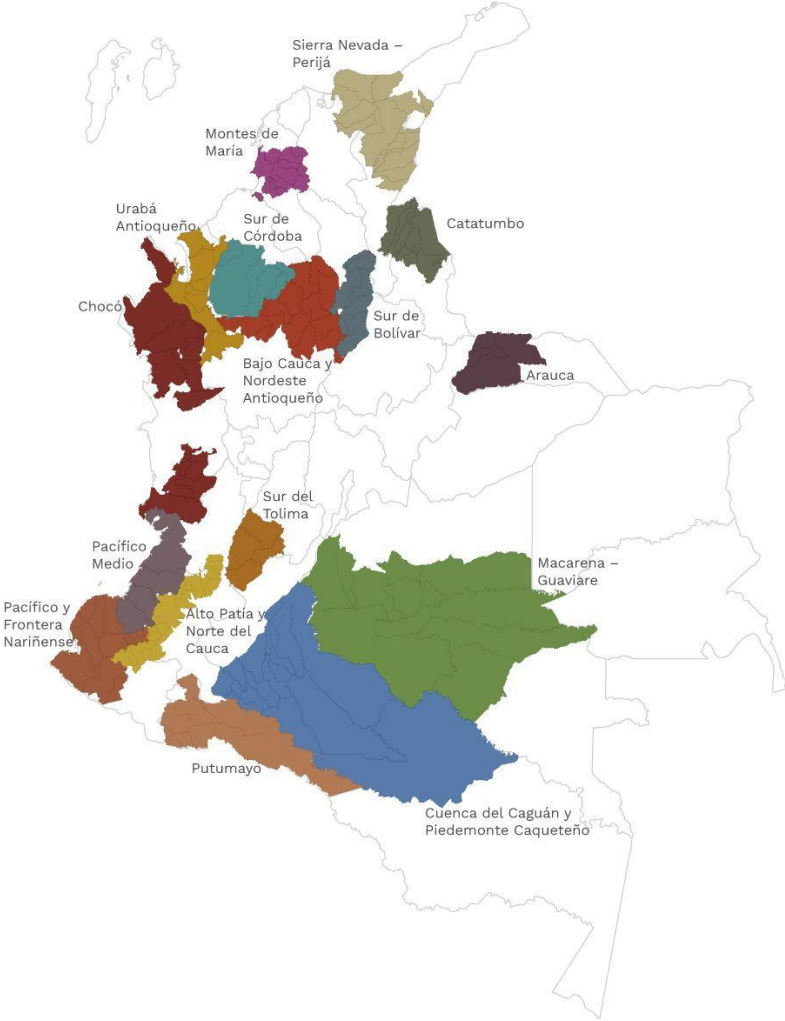


Ilustración 1. PDET Zones.

Source: Agencia de Renovación del Territorio, 2025

PDET regions are different in terms of geography and conflict dynamics. These variations condition the forms of violence experienced, the degree of institutional presence, and the degree of availability of economic opportunities, all of which affect the ways in which communities relate to the state and the peace process. For instance, in Chocó, the conflict has been shaped by disputes over illicit economic activities and the exploitation of natural resources in a context of limited state

capacity and ethnic diversity. By contrast, in Montes de María, the dynamics were marked by intense paramilitary violence, forced displacement, and land dispossession, with struggles over land restitution and rural development (Grupo de Memoria Histórica, 2013). Understanding such territorial heterogeneities is crucial for analysing patterns of trust and reconciliation.

The government institution responsible for implementing the PDET is the Territorial Renewal Agency (ART). To accomplish this, the ART developed the Action Plans for Regional Transformation (Planes de Acción para la Transformación Regional, or PATR) a program created in collaboration with local communities, who participated in defining peacebuilding activities in their territories (Decree 2366, 2015). Based on more than 32,000 initiatives generated through the community participation the Hojas de Ruta (or roadmaps), were developed. These roadmaps, in turn, have led to the creation of 9,957 projects with a total value of approximately USD 6.1 billion (Rettberg & Dupont, 2025, p. 3). This participatory approach signalled an effort by the government to listen to local voices and address their specific needs, making the implementation of the peace agreement an important dimension to assess of trust. This participatory approach suggested an institutional effort to incorporate local voices and address their needs, align with the idea that letting citizens participate in the peace process can stimulate legitimacy and satisfaction.

The implementation process has displayed its results. According to official data, the incidence of multidimensional poverty in 2021 stood at 28.7%, representing a reduction of 6 percentage points compared to 2018 (37.7%). Total gross education coverage in the PDET stood at 101.5% in 2021, an increase of 5.6 percentage points compared to coverage in 2018. Finally, between 2019 and 2021, there was a reduction in the homicide rate, from 49.7 in 2019 to 48.8 in 2021 (Agencia de Renovación del Territorio, 2022, p. 9). Despite these achievements, the implementation of the peace agreement has been fraught with challenges. Limited state capacity and uneven investment in rural areas have further slowed the transformation envisioned in 2016 (Echavarría, et al., 2025). These difficulties illustrate the complexity of translating negotiated agreements into lived realities.

Nevertheless, the Colombian peace process remains a landmark in national history and global peacebuilding. It demonstrates that is possible to end prolonged conflict through negotiation while addressing structural inequalities, securing victims' rights, and promoting long-term institutional reform. Its future will depend on the capacity of the national government and Colombian society to sustain the commitments undertaken. In this sense, the peace process is not merely a concluded event but an ongoing effort toward building a more inclusive and stable Colombia.

Chapter 3 Framework

This chapter is divided into four subsections. It begins with a broader discussion of the literature linking trust and peace, different approaches to peacebuilding are examined, from nonviolent action and community reconciliation to transitional justice strategies, and how these can build or undermine trust. After that, a brief literature review on institutional trust and interpersonal trust and why the perception of citizens is relevant for peacebuilding. Finally, Section 3.4 examines literature on how implementation could be associated with trust and also introduces specific components of the Colombian Peace agreement implementation.

3.1 Trust and Peace

Trust emerges as a fundamental pillar in the complex process of building and consolidating peace, especially in societies seeking to heal from violent conflict. Trust is defined as “the confident expectation that another person or group will act competently and with good intentions, without causing harm, even in situations of vulnerability” (Govier & Verwoerd, 2000, p. 185). Trust is not a resource that can be imposed or acquired directly; it is forged through interactions, perceptions, and experiences of shared risk (Offe, 1999, p. 5). It is a vital element for political governance, economic performance, and the reconstruction of the social fabric (Offe, 1999, p. 7). This section analyzes various approaches that seek to cultivate trust, which is, as it is argued, indispensable for sustainable peace. Through an examination of cases in post-conflict contexts such as Guatemala, Nepal, Northern Ireland, and Sierra Leone, this section explores the complexities and challenges of rebuilding state legitimacy, facilitating reconciliation, and achieving peace that means more than the absence of violence; it means the presence of optimal conditions for human development and social interaction (Fiedler & Mross, 2023, p. 306).

In a cross-sectional field study in Colombia, trust in ex-combatants, the national government and local actors was found to raise citizens' willingness to support reconciliation and to back post-war initiatives, suggesting that high interpersonal and institutional trust can strengthen peacebuilding outcomes (Casas-casas, et al., 2020). Yet the same literature review notes that most peace-building studies treat trust as a dependent outcome of conflict rather than as an independent factor shaping durable peace, leaving a clear analytical gap. A broader critique highlights that scholars have largely ignored interpersonal trust in post-conflict settings, even though it is identified as the “*sine qua non of national reconciliation*” and as a repair mechanism for ruptured relations (Mcfee, 2019). Together, these findings underscore that while trust positively influences attitudes toward

peace and reconciliation, the field still lacks systematic, process-oriented research on how to cultivate and institutionalize trust to sustain peace agreements.

Transitional justice mechanisms and truth commissions have proven to be relevant tools for trust. Fiedler & Mross (2023) quantitatively explore how dealing with a history of violent conflict through transitional justice can help rebuild social trust in post-conflict societies. Their research covers 24 cases in 19 post-conflict countries during the period 1990-2010. They found that transitional justice must go beyond a narrow focus on victims or perpetrators in order to build trust. Similarly, truth and reconciliation commissions can strengthen trust when victims are allowed to tell their stories and when political leaders demonstrate willingness to engage, yet their success depends on citizen and political leaders to buy-in (Niyitunga, 2024, p. 1). Contrarily, recent surveys in South Sudan reveal growing skepticism toward the transitional process, underscoring that without sustained trust-building through inclusive governance, transparent justice mechanisms, and community-level engagement, reconciliation initiatives risk losing legitimacy (Deng, et al., 2024, p. 3). These insights are particularly relevant for the Colombian case, where transitional justice and truth and reconciliation commissions are currently being implemented.

Comparative evidence from other post-conflict settings illustrates the complex relationship between peace processes and political trust. Dyrstad, Bakke, and Binningsbø (2021) through a comparative design between countries that ended their civil wars via peace agreements, Guatemala, Nepal, and Northern Ireland, found that popular approval of peace agreements had a positive and significant association with political trust in postwar societies. Building on this point, De Juan and Pierskalla (2016) conducted an analysis of georeferenced survey data and the number of casualties from the civil war at the village level in Nepal and concluded that exposure to violence has an effect on reducing trust in the national government. Together, these studies highlight how both the perceived legitimacy of peace processes and the effect of active violence shape citizens' trust in post-conflict society, providing a useful framework for understanding the Colombian case.

3.2 The relevance of Institutional Trust

Post-conflict period is often characterized by uncertainty and volatility. During this time, trust in promises of political and economic reforms are difficult to sustain and even harder to hold accountable. Residents of conflict-affected territories find themselves in a complex position: they often have high expectations for positive changes in their communities, such as the non-return of

violence and the improvement of living conditions, yet they also worry about being left behind or facing a resurgence of conflict. Under these circumstances, citizens' interactions and behavior are closely linked to their perceptions of political institutions. In sum, individual behavior in uncertainty situations is strongly shaped by how people perceive the intentions and credibility of political actors (De Juan & Pierskalla, 2016).

Political trust is important in a transition context. People trust in the state reflects their assessment of whether state institutions and actors are genuinely committed to fulfilling their promises and acting in the public's best interest (Levi, et al., 2009). Political trust is considered an essential component of political support because it influences how people evaluate government performance and how much they believe institutions and officials will act fairly and effectively (Hetherington & Husser, 2012, p. 312). Without trust, no political system can be sustained for long because trust acts as the invisible link that enables citizen participation, and institutional stability. Thus, following the general definition of trust, in the words of Miller and Listhaug (1990, p. 358), political trust is the "judgment that the system and the political incumbents are responsive and will do what is right even in the absence of constant scrutiny".

Political trust serves as a political resource because it is linked with legitimization and government performance. According to De Juan & Pierskalla (2016) in contexts of high trust, people are more willing to accept policies because they trust that the government will act in the common good. In other words, the more people believe that the government is capable and willing to fulfill its promises, the more likely they are to voluntarily obey its rules and regulations. Therefore, political trust acts as a "blank check" for the government, which is determined by citizens' judgment of whether the government has the right to govern and performs according to the needs of the population. It is the expectation of satisfactory performance that confers legitimacy and, therefore, fosters trust.

In short, political trust reflects the performance of the government and is an indispensable resource for the stability and effectiveness of the political system. Its absence can lead to apathy or violence, particularly in fragile or transitional societies (Offe, 1999; De Juan & Pierskalla, 2016). Understanding its dynamics and effects is essential to strengthening democratic legitimacy and promoting sustainable social cooperation, especially in rebuilding political and institutional fabrics.

3.3 Reconciliation and trust

The relationship between trust and reconciliation is a central and complex issue in studies of post-conflict societies (Hamber & Wilson, 2002; Daly & Sarkin, 2011). Trust is considered an essential component of reconciliation. Govier and Verwoerd propose a conception of national reconciliation that is based on rebuilding trust between parties that have been alienated by conflict (2000, p. 195). They understand reconciliation as a process of following a rupture that undermines trust. From this perspective, reconciliation requires more than the cessation of hostilities; it involves the gradual restoration of social bonds.

Trust is increasingly recognized as a core driver of reconciliation. Studies of Colombia's conflict show that higher trust in ex-combatants and government predicts more positive attitudes toward future reconciliation and greater willingness to support peace activities (Casas-casas, et al., 2020). Similar findings appear in Rwanda, where rebuilding confidence among citizens is described as essential for establishing "positive peace" after violent conflict (Alwan & Bassma Khalil, 2023).

According to Clark (2012, p. 243) there are different degrees of trust that correspond to different types of reconciliation. The most basic is minimal trust, which is based on the predictability of daily routine and a pragmatism that simply recognizes the need to live together. This trust is sufficient for functional reconciliation, which is limited to nonviolent coexistence and basic cooperation (Clark, 2012, p. 248). It enables society to coexist without violence but does not cultivate strong social ties. While this represents a significant step forward in the process of recovery from the conflict, such reconciliation remains fragile and is often seen as inadequate for achieving sustainable peace. When trust goes beyond mere coexistence, it allows individuals and groups to collaborate on common tasks, communicate effectively, and fulfill commitments (Clark, 2012, p. 249). This level is essential for cooperative reconciliation, which focuses on rebuilding the capacity to work together effectively. Within the framework of national reconciliation, it represents the most realistic and pragmatic approach, aiming at coexistence and collaboration without presuming full cohesion or close bonds of friendship.

According to Clark, the highest level of trust, necessary for intimacy and friendship, is required for regenerative reconciliation (2012, p. 249). This involves emotional closeness, sincere apologies, and forgiveness. However, this type of reconciliation is considered unrealistic for large-scale post-conflict societies, as intimate relationships cannot be replicated among large groups of people.

In sum, rebuilding trust is a slow and difficult process, obstructed by conflicting narratives. Trust acts as the "glue" that determines the strength of reconciliation. While minimal trust can

keep a society functioning peacefully at a superficial level, deeper trust is essential for cooperation and for transcending mere coexistence toward more meaningful and sustainable reconciliation.

3.4 How can implementation of the peace agreement contribute to trust?

The implementation of a peace agreement is a decisive phase in the consolidation of social reconstruction processes, as it allows relationships historically marked by conflict to be transformed into one based on reconciliation and bring the government back to the communities that were affected by the conflict. Implementation of Colombia's 2016 peace accord can strengthen public trust in two ways. First by delivering concrete policies: rural-reform, land formalization and security-guarantee mechanisms. And second, by promoting citizens participation in the projects and activities involving the peace agreement. Conversely, when participation is limited or superficial, it weakens trust. Promises of citizen involvement that are not met generate narratives of exclusion and fuel frustration, undermining the perceived legitimacy of the peace process (Bachmann, 2024, p. 8).

Trust after conflict can also emerge through more everyday interactions between citizens and the state. Wong (2016, p. 778) uses micro-level data from Sierra Leone to clarify the causal mechanisms underlying the construction of political trust in post-conflict societies. The central argument of the study is that, while the improved provision of public services is often regarded as a key factor in fostering trust in developed countries, in post-conflict contexts this effect occurs only when service delivery reflects the actual needs of the population. In other words, citizens are more likely to trust governments that demonstrate a genuine willingness to listen to and respond to their demands. In this sense, trust dynamics within communities can be shaped by the implementation of peacebuilding initiatives, especially if the community is given an active role in the design of the implementation projects.

Each dimension of implementation holds the potential to affect interpersonal and institutional trust differently, depending on the degree of participation, visibility, and local impact of the interventions. First, disarmament can turn the weapon from a symbol of threat into a tangible sign of peace, which directly support trust in former combatants and the state. When ex-FARC fighters hand over or destroy their weapons, the act publicly demonstrates that they have abandoned violent means and are willing to be governed by civil law. The Colombian experience underscores that disarmament is both a practical and deeply symbolic process (Palik, 2024). This visible rupture of the "weapon-identity" relationship signals to civilians that former guerrillas can be reliable partners, strengthening rational expectations of compliance with agreements. Also, Successful disarmament

is a prerequisite for the subsequent socioeconomic programs (Palik & Marsh, 2024). Strengthening this point, according to Giovanni (2020, p. 14) when former combats are seen receiving support and integrating into civilian life, community members interpret this as proof that the peace process works, which in turn raises generalized trust in both ex-combatants and institutions. In consequence, removing arms fires from the public sphere could decrease the fear of a new attack and foster the idea that ex-combats will act in society best intentions a precondition for rebuilding interpersonal trust.

Social leaders play a significant role as being the bridge between people needs and institutional framework in Colombia. Therefore, improving the capacity, legitimacy and inclusiveness of local social leaders could be theoretically associated with a raise interpersonal and institutional trust. Strengthening mechanisms that allow leaders to voice the opinions of marginalized groups can mitigate the distrust that arises from perceived exclusion. Murshed & Regnault (2023, p. 3) links it to the erosion of democratic legitimacy when inequality is high. In addition, visible commitment by respected leaders to inclusive norms, such as publicly endorsing peace agreements or equitable service delivery, creates affective trust, because people see that “people like us” are upholding the same values they expect from others.

When considering the implementation of peace-related projects, health and education are among the most frequently mentioned areas. Improving health and education services in conflict-affected zones can rebuild trust by addressing both the material and symbolic dimensions of citizens’ relationship with the state and local actors. When clinics, schools and vaccination programs reach populations that previously lacked basic services, residents experience a concrete benefit that signals the government’s capacity and willingness to protect them. McCandless (2012, p. 2) argue that equitable service provision “addresses grievances that underlie or trigger violent conflict” in this sense, service provision can create tangible improvements for people, helping to consolidate peace and prevent a return to violence by reduce feelings of injustice or exclusion. Post-war surveys in Colombia revealed that former rebel-controlled areas suffered “high expectations and mistrust of government provisions” because health quality did not improve despite peace agreements (Caspersen, 2024).

Another key area of peace implementation involves infrastructure development and the construction of rural roads. Improving rural roads and infrastructure creates visible proof that institutions can deliver public goods, which strengthens trust; the belief that the state will keep its promises. In Albania, rehabilitated roads cut travel times by a third and were celebrated in community

ceremonies, giving residents a tangible sign that the government is responsive to their needs (World Bank Group, 2024). Similarly, according to Fuseini (2024) The Community-Based Rural Development Program in Ghana found that new infrastructure empowered beneficiaries and raised expectations of continued state support, turning material gains into relational trust. Together, these mechanisms demonstrate how physical aspects are symbols of governance, thereby deepening trust between residents and institutions.

As mentioned earlier, special mechanisms for peace have become increasingly common in the implementation of peace agreements (Fiedler & Mross, 2023; Niyitunga, 2024). Providing truth, justice and reparations helps rebuild trust by giving victims and the broader community visible evidence that harms are acknowledged, accountability is pursued, and redress is offered. When truth commissions let survivors tell their stories publicly, they create an “authoritative record of what happened” that reduces rumors and denial, fostering confidence that the past is not being hidden (Niyitunga, 2024). Justice signals that perpetrator will not act with impunity, which strengthens belief that the rule of law is upheld. Reparations, especially financial compensation, not only recognize victims’ suffering but also enable them to rebuild livelihoods, showing that the state is willing to invest in their wellbeing; studies link this recognition to higher civic trust and social cohesion (Fiedler & Mross, 2023). Together, these measures demonstrate that institutions are responsive to citizens’ needs, mitigate feelings of marginalization, and create a shared narrative of accountability that can prevent relapse into conflict. Thus, truth-telling, justice and reparations collectively restore dignity, promote relational repair and generate the trust necessary for sustainable peacebuilding.

Finally, ensuring the successful reincorporation of former FARC-EP members can strengthen trust. Similar to the ceasefire process, the visible commitment of ex-combatants to reintegrate into civilian life reinforces the perception that they are acting in good intentions without causing harm. Conversely, if reintegration efforts are ineffective, the persistent stigma surrounding former combatants may obstruct their social, political, and economic inclusion (Weintraub, et al., 2023, p. 11), thereby deepening their marginalization and undermining broader peacebuilding efforts.

In conclusion, trust acts as a kind of social glue that allows people and institutions to function smoothly and effectively. However, building trust is neither automatic nor without challenges: it requires consistency between promises and results, transparency in public management, and effective coordination between top-down and bottom-up efforts. Only by combining these elements

can the implementation of the peace agreement be consolidated as a sustainable process of trust-building and lasting coexistence.

Chapter 4 Data and Methodology

This study adopts a quantitative research approach to evaluate the impact of the implementation of the peace agreement on the perception of trust in a post-conflict context. By using nationally representative data, MAPS panel data from 2019 and 2021 and fixed effects, the research aims to identify whether peace implementation data is correlated with the perception of trust amongst residents and institutions. The research uses secondary data, summarized in Table 1, which lists the two main datasets used: Monitoring Attitudes, Perceptions and Support Survey (MAPS) and Dataset of Agency of Territorial Renovation (Agencia de Renovación del Territorio - ART). To control for potential confounder, additional data were merged from DANE (National Administrative Department of Statistics) and a police database which contains the municipal-level population figures and number of homicides per municipality respectively.

The key econometric challenge is the potential endogeneity between the implementation of the projects envisaged in the peace plan and trust. That is, existing levels of trust may have a bearing in implementation and implementation may have an influence on trust. Recognizing this, simultaneity, the analysis will incorporate strategies to mitigate these biases, including various controls. These techniques will allow for a more robust interpretation, while at the same time, recognizing the inherent limitations of observational studies in post-conflict contexts.

Table 1. Databases used in this study

Database	Institutions	Target
Mapping Attitudes, Perceptions, and Support	UNPD & PRIO	Residents from the PDET zones
Following the peace agreement implementation	ART	Projects per sector under the peace agreement framework.

Source: Own elaboration.

4.1 Data

The Mapping Attitudes, Perceptions, and Support (MAPS) survey is a collaborative project between the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO), and Andes University. Its main objective is to examine the attitudes and perceptions of populations in conflict-affected regions of Colombia regarding the peace process and its implementation (Weintraub, et al., 2023). The survey focuses on the 16 PDET regions prioritized for the implementation of the peace agreement. The two rounds were conducted in 2019 and 2021. In

the second round, over 66% of respondents from the first round were successfully recontacted (Weintraub, et al., 2023). When recontact was not possible, replacement respondents were selected within the same blocks and municipalities from stages 1 and 2 of the sample designs, ensuring that they shared similar sociodemographic characteristics (Weintraub, et al., 2023). The analysis conducted in this paper focuses exclusively on the recontacted population. The first wave included 12,052 respondents, and the second wave surveyed 11,777 respondents, of which 7,716 individuals were interviewed in both waves.

One of the main advantages of the survey is that it is representative of each of the 16 PDETs. This provides rare and valuable data on perceptions within these territories, offering a unique and detailed perspective on communities affected by war and enabling analysis at the subnational level. Furthermore, its panel structure allows for tracking changes in individual perceptions over time, thereby deepening the understanding of the foundations of peacebuilding (Weintraub, et al., 2023, p. 2).

However, the survey also presents certain limitations. The period between the two waves was relatively short for capturing gradual attitudinal changes, and the first wave was conducted nearly three years after the signing of the Peace Agreement, which obstruct the establishment of an earlier baseline. In addition, the dispersed rural population was not included in the sample.

To measure the perception of trust the study relies on responses from MAPS survey regarding trust in institutions and between residents. The study created three *trust indices* from conceptually related dimension based on the question “Please tell me how much you trust in: your neighbors, the president, the senate and the lower house of Congress, the governor, the mayor, judges, the national police, the armed forces, village action boards, the governor, the personero, and social leaders”.

Table 2. Trust Indices Classification

Interpersonal trust	Municipal Index	Nacional Index	Armed Forces Index
– Neighbors in your community	– The mayor – Community action group – Social leaders	– The president – The senate and the lower house of congress – The governor	– Police forces – Armed forces

Source: Own elaboration.

Responses were initially recorded on a four-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (“nothing”) to 4 (“very much”). To measure institutional trust, three composite indices were created using survey items described in table 2, each corresponding to a different level of government or institutional domain. Municipal-level trust was obtained by aggregating trust in Community action group, Mayors, and Governors; National-level trust was constructed by summing respondents’ trust in the President, the Senate and House of Representatives and trust in the armed forces was generated by summing trust in the National Police and the Armed Forces¹. Finally, each composite score was recoded into four ordered categories ranging from 1 (“nothing”) to 4 (“very much”). These transformations allowed for the construction of three comparable ordinal indices of institutional trust across different levels of government. Non-responses and “Don’t know” answers are uncommon across trust-related questions, so they were omitted from the study. Finally, after calculating the Cronbach's alpha with an average value of 0,73 the study ensure that the internal consistency of the scales is acceptable (Cronbach , 1951).

To complement the analysis of perceived implementation, this study incorporates a second dataset containing official records on the implementation and progress of projects carried out under the framework of the peace agreement. The Colombian government established the Territorial Renewal Agency (ART) to coordinate the actions of national and territorial entities in rural areas affected by the armed conflict and prioritized by the national government (Decree 2366, 2015). One of the agency’s main functions is to oversee the implementation of territorial intervention plans and projects.

This study draws on a dataset provided by the ART and updated by agency officials. The dataset contains information on projects financed through the Colombia en Paz Fund, International Cooperation, the OCAD Paz Fund, and the Obras por Impuestos program since 2016. The unit of analysis in this dataset is peacebuilding projects. It initially contained 9,957 projects. From which I removed projects that did not report the amount spent (101), those implemented in non-PDET territories (267), and those without specified implementation locations (520). I then filtered the projects by date, selecting those from 2016 to 2018 to match the first wave and those from 2019 to 2021 to match the second wave, resulting in a total of 4,700 projects.

¹ The resulting sum ranged from 3 to 12 in the Nacional and Municipal trust, because they have 3 institutions ($3*4=12$) and ranged from 2 to 8 in the armed forces trust because they have 2 institutions ($2*4=8$)

The ART dataset was organized with the projects as the unit of analysis. Each project had the year of implementation, the list of municipalities impacted and it also specified the economic sectors affected by each project. One project could impact more than one municipality and reported to impact between one and three sectors. As the biggest projects were the ones that impacted more than one municipality, it was decided to keep them, as well as the sectors that the project impacted. To merge this dataset with MAPS, the number of projects per municipality and year was aggregated, resulting in a total of 816 observations. Finally, the 17 original economic sectors were consolidated into eight coherent categories for analytical purposes (see annex A).

4.2 Descriptive Statistics

Dependent Variable

a. Interpersonal Trust

Between the first and second waves of the survey, there was a negligible increase in the perception of interpersonal trust. In response to the question, “Please tell me how much you trust neighbors in your community”, the proportion of respondents who answered that they can trust their neighbors increased 0,13 points from 2,584% in the first wave to 2,715% in the second². Regarding the individual control variables Table 3. shows a decrease in the proportion of people reporting an improvement in their perception of security .106 to .06. Likewise, although there has been an increase of 5 percentage points in the proportion of victims of the conflict (from 66.7% to 71.7%), the percentage of people who received reparations has decreased considerably (from 21.5% to 13.1%), which could be associated with a loss of trust in institutions. In addition, political participation also fell sharply (from 12,3% to 0.47%), which may reflect a lack of interest or disenchantment with the political system.

² The survey also includes a question on how much respondents trust their family, which has a mean value of 3.689, higher than the other variables. However, this question was only included in the second wave, making it impossible to draw comparisons over time.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics of interpersonal trust

Variables	Wave 1. 2019					Wave 2. 2021				
	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max	Obs
Dependent Variable										
Interpersonal Trust index	2.586	.969	1	4	11,019	2.715	.878	1	4	11749
Individual control variables										
Receive Reparation	.215	.411	0	1	4958	.131	.337	0	1	6746
Victims of conflict	.667	.471	0	1	4932	.717	.451	0	1	6716
Improve security perception	.106	.308	0	1	11913	.06	.237	0	1	11644
Woman	.565	.496	0	1	12052	.613	.487	0	1	11777
Age 18-24	.148	.355	0	1	12052	.103	.304	0	1	11777
Age 25-35	.197	.398	0	1	12052	.186	.389	0	1	11777
Education	.248	.432	0	1	12052	.256	.436	0	1	11777
Unemployed	.456	.498	0	1	11942	.393	.489	0	1	11693
Political Engagement	.124	.329	0	1	11990	.047	.212	0	1	11718

Source: Own elaboration using MAPS survey database

Table 4. present the descriptive of both waves, limited to the people that were recontacted. Comparing the full MAPS sample with the subsample of individuals who were recontacted in both waves confirms that the recontacted sample is representative of the entire survey. Average levels of interpersonal trust are almost identical across samples in both 2019 and 2021, and the direction and magnitude of change over time remain the same. Similarly, the distribution of individual sociodemographic characteristics such as gender, education and employment, indicate only minimal differences. The recontacted sample contains a slightly higher proportion of conflict victims and fewer young respondents. Overall, these results indicate that the recontacted individuals are representative of the broader survey population, ensuring that subsequent panel estimations are not biased by sample composition.

Table 4. Interpersonal Trust only recontacted

Variables	Wave 1. 2019					Wave 2. 2021				
	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max	Obs
Dependent Variable										
Interpersonal Trust index	2.629	.972	1	4	7319	2.763	.868	1	4	7704
Individual control variables										
Receive Reparation	.218	.413	0	1	3247	.137	.344	0	1	4610
Victims of conflict	.692	.462	0	1	3230	.727	.445	0	1	4583
Improve security perception	.106	.305	0	1	7634	.059	.238	0	1	7626
Woman	.587	.492	0	1	7716	.589	.492	0	1	7716
Age 18-24	.12	.325	0	1	7716	.084	.277	0	1	7716
Age 25-35	.181	.385	0	1	7716	.176	.381	0	1	7716
Education	.243	.429	0	1	7716	.25	.433	0	1	7716
Unemployed	.428	.495	0	1	7647	.397	.489	0	1	7653
Political Engagement	.14	.347	0	1	7679	.047	.211	0	1	7681

Source: Own elaboration using MAPS survey database

b. Institutional Trust

Table 5. present differences in levels of trust toward various institutions. National-level political institutions maintain low trust specially the senate and the house of representative, while trust in governors shows a small increase; possibly reflecting regional policy effects or local leadership during peace implementation. The trend regarding municipal-level trust is mixed, but generally positive. This is due to rising confidence in local authorities and community leaders. This could indicate growing legitimacy of municipal governance during peace implementation. In contrast, lowest levels of trust are observed towards armed groups such as the reintegrated ex-combatants of the FARC-EP, as well as towards the FARC political party, reflecting a deep social rejection of these actors linked to the armed conflict. For the trust in transitional justice mechanism, these institutions, reported in 2021, appear with a moderate and relatively balanced trust. Their average scores around 2.1 suggest citizens neither distrust nor fully support them yet, a neutral but potentially encouraging baseline for transitional justice bodies. These differences reflect a marked gap between the trust placed in close or traditional actors and the skepticism toward state institutions and post-conflict actors.

Table 5. Institutional Trust

Variable. How much do you trust	Wave 1. 2019					Wave 2. 2021				
	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max	Obs
Nacional Trust index	1.660	.836	1	4	9,245	1.711	.824	1	4	11027
The President	1.967	.933	1	4	11666	1.961	.903	1	4	11570
The Senate and the House of Representative	1.695	.784	1	4	11333	1.638	.736	1	4	11364
Governor	1.921	.938	1	4	9782	1.984	.91	1	4	11363
Trust Armed Forces index	2.211	.928	1	4	11810	2.192	.824	1	4	11599
Colombian National Police	2.193	.981	1	4	11892	2.182	.926	1	4	11647
Armed Forces	2.499	1.039	1	4	11860	2.407	.942	1	4	11631
Municipal Trust index	2.214	.902	1	4	8,941	2.346	.884	1	4	10823
Junta de Acción Comunal	2.27	1.053	1	4	11253	2.194	.954	1	4	11175
Social Leaders	2.132	.963	1	4	9636	2.259	.898	1	4	11479
The mayor	1.795	.938	1	4	11709	1.984	.91	1	4	11520
Reincorporate members of the FARC-EP	1.248	.58	1	4	11633	1.149	.446	1	4	11459
FARC political party	1.19	.513	1	4	11562	1.171	.466	1	4	11378
Mechanism to trust										
JEP	.	.	.	.	0	2.125	.909	1	4	10140
CEV	.	.	.	.	0	2.106	.889	1	4	9899
UBPD	.	.	.	.	0	2.13	.901	1	4	10014

Source: Own elaboration using MAPS survey database

Table 6. present the descriptive of the recontacted population for the institutional indices. The comparison with the full MAPS dataset reveals a very high level of consistency in institutional trust measures. The mean values and standard deviations are nearly identical in both waves. The recontacted respondents exhibit slightly higher average trust, by less than 0.05 points, in certain institutions, such as the President, the Governor, and the Armed Forces, but these differences are minor and fall well within sampling variation. Both samples display the same overall pattern: modest increases in national and local trust and persistently low trust in FARC. These results confirm that the recontacted sample accurately represents the broader survey, validating that there is internal consistency.

Table 6. Institutional trust only recontacted

Variable. How much do you trust	Wave 1. 2019					Wave 2. 2021				
	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max	Obs
Nacional Trust index	1.677	.849	1	4	6,348	1.746	.833	1	4	7,277
The President	1.964	.931	1	4	7466	2.006	.901	1	4	7605
The Senate and the House of Representative	1.694	.786		4	7234	1.668	.744		4	7471
Governor	1.922	.939	1	4	6735	2.031	.875	1	4	7485
Trust Armed Forces index	2.222	.935	1	4	7,563	2.230	.881	1	4	7,614
Colombian National Police	2.21	.989	1	4	7619	2.224	.922	1	4	7644
Armed Forces	2.499	1.042	1	4	7595	2.44	.931	1	4	7633
Municipal Trust index	2.228	.904	1	4	6,197	2.352	.860	1	4	7,160
Junta de Acción Comunal	2.252	1.064	1	4	7244	2.199	.953	1	4	7358
Social Leaders	2.146	.967	1	4	6618	2.245	.897	1	4	7557
The mayor	1.778	.947	1	4	7520	2.007	.913	1	4	7578
Reincorporate members of the FARC-EP	1.225	.554	1	4	7468	1.176	.471			7,491
FARC political party	1.169	.489	1	4	7430	1.176	.471	1	4	7,491
Mechanism to trust										
JEP	.	.	.	.	0	2.128	.909	1	4	6763
CEV	.	.	.	.	0	2.107	.886	1	4	6639
UBPD	.	.	.	.	0	2.129	.897	1	4	6699

Source: Own elaboration using MAPS survey database

Independent Variable

To examine how the implementation of the peace agreement has influenced perceived trust, this paper uses two complementary, but different, measures of implementation. The first is a proxy for perceived implementation from the MAPS survey question: *“How do you think the peace agreement with the FARC is being implemented in your community, in terms of its different components?”* The second captures implementation by number of projects executed under the peace agreement implementation plan, based on data from the ART dataset described earlier. In other words, the MAPS survey captures the level of agreement or disagreement with certain dimensions of the peace agreement implementation and ART dataset contain the number of projects from the co-created

roadmaps that were executed from 2016 to 2019 on PDET regions. This subsection presents the descriptive analysis of both datasets related to the implementation of the peace agreement.

a) Perceived Implementation of Peace Agreement

Table 7. presents citizens' perceptions of the implementation of six aspects of the peace agreement in Colombia. In general, there is a negligible decrease in the averages of all indicators between the two waves, suggesting a less favorable perception of the implementation of the agreement in 2021. For example, the item “Disarmament of FARC Members” went from an average of 2.270 in 2019 to 2.168 in 2021, and “Providing truth, justice, and reparation to victims” dropped from 2.375 to 2.268. Although the differences are not drastic, the general trend indicates a slight deterioration in public perception of the progress of the peace process in multiple dimensions, which could reflect mistrust or dissatisfaction with the pace and effectiveness of its implementation.

Table 7. Descriptive Statistics of perception of the peace agreement implementation

Implementation in terms of	Wave 1. 2019					Wave 2. 2021				
	Mean	Std. dev.	Min	Max	Obs	Mean	Std. dev.	Min	Max	Obs
Disarmament of FARC Members	2,270	0,744	1	4	7998	2,168	0,696	1	4	8111
Improving security for social leaders	2,283	0,725	1	4	9535	2,182	0,699	1	4	9050
Improving health and education services	2,220	0,774	1	4	10326	2,203	0,710	1	4	9440
Improving rural roads	2,316	0,758	1	4	10506	2,240	0,732	1	4	9643
Providing truth, justice and reparation to victims	2,375	0,736	1	4	9708	2,268	0,709	1	4	9126
Ensuring reincorporation of FARC members	2,305	0,680	1	4	6712	2,215	0,650	1	4	8010

Source: Own elaboration using MAPS survey database

The comparison between the full MAPS dataset and the recontacted residents indicates that perceptions of peace agreement implementation are highly consistent across both samples. As is visible in table 8. in all thematic areas: disarmament, security for social leaders, social services, infrastructure, victims’ rights, and reintegration, the means and standard deviations are nearly identical. Both groups reported a slight decline in perceived implementation intensity between 2019 and 2021. In most cases, the difference was less than 0.02 points. These results confirm that the panel respondents’ perceptions closely mirror those of the broader population, validating the use

of the recontacted subsample for longitudinal analysis of perceived implementation and its effects on trust.

Table 8. Descriptive Statistics of perception of the peace agreement implementation recontacted

Implementation in terms of	Wave 1. 2019					Wave 2. 2021				
	Mean	Std. dev.	Min	Max	Obs	Mean	Std. dev.	Min	Max	Obs
Disarmament of FARC Members	2.258	.741	1	4	4904	2.185	.694	1	4	5400
Improving security for social leaders	2.301	.716	1	4	6045	2.191	.699	1	4	6013
Improving health and education services	2.232	.777	1	4	6547	2.207	.717	1	4	6251
Improving rural roads	2.332	.761	1	4	6676	2.252	.737	1	4	6374
Providing truth, justice and reparation to victims	2.394	.735	1	4	6172	2.287	.715	1	4	6040
Ensuring reincorporation of FARC members	2.292	.674	1	4	4552	2.217	.646	1	4	5293

Source: Own elaboration using MAPS survey database

b) Implementation by number of projects

The ART dataset contains the sum of project by the 170 PDET municipalities from 2016 to 2019, as well as the economy sector, with a total of 816 observations³. Larger municipalities will naturally have more projects, so values depend on population size. Table 9. presents the descriptive statistics of the variables of the intensity of peace agreement implementation by sector, expressed as the number of projects implemented per 100,000 inhabitants at the municipal level. The results reveal a high degree of heterogeneity across sectors and territories.

The sectors with the highest average levels of implementation are infrastructure and transportation, both of which also exhibit the largest dispersion, with standard deviations above 14 and maximum values surpass 180 projects. Infrastructure showed a significant jump from 6.95 to 18.05, making it one of the fastest-growing sectors, reflecting an effort to improve physical and social infrastructure. In hand with that, transportation Increased from 7.88 to 10.70, which points to

³ The implementation of the peace agreement has been a gradual process. 2016 only had 42 projects in 25 municipalities while 2021 had 2,158 in 170 municipalities.

continued investment in road and mobility infrastructure. This indicates a strong territorial concentration of investments, likely reflecting the prioritization of connectivity and infrastructure development as central strategies of state presence in post-conflict areas.

Moderate levels of implementation are observed in sectors such as agriculture and social inclusion and reconciliation. Suggesting that productive and social projects were distributed more broadly but with considerable variability between municipalities. Conversely, commerce (2.13) and health (1.37) show the lowest average intensity, implying limited territorial coverage in these domains.

Overall, the high standard deviations across nearly all sectors indicate significant inequality in the territorial distribution of projects. While some municipalities received substantial investments, others experienced minimal or no implementation. These differences in implementation intensity provide the empirical foundation for analyzing how the presence of peacebuilding efforts affects institutional and interpersonal trust.

Table 9. Number of projects by 100.000 habitants

Implementation in terms of	Wave 1. 2019					Wave 2. 2021				
	Mean	Std. dev.	Min	Max	Obs	Mean	Std. dev.	Min	Max	Obs
Agriculture	6.172	8.709	0	53.972	306	9.864	12.456	0	105.955	510
Commerce	.783	2.661	0	26.961	306	2.932	6.334	0	59.488	510
Social Inclusion and Reconciliation	2.713	5.794	0	37.543	306	11.447	11.243	0	65.998	510
Transportation	7.879	14.917	0	125.437	306	10.701	19.065	0	188.088	510
Health	1.896	4.73	0	33.636	306	5.319	8.256	0	53.49	510
Education	1.007	4.398	0	49.819	306	1.59	4.515	0	35.465	510
Infrastructure	6.948	14.397	0	112.094	306	18.046	21.029	0	147.555	510
Other	6.545	9.625	0	62.952	306	9.302	11.406	0	74.303	510

Source: Own elaboration using ART database

Controls

This study employs three categories of control variables: individual-level, municipal-level, and conflict-related variables. Individual-level controls include the demographics variables: age, sex and education level. At the municipal level, the model controls for the total population of each municipality to account for potential variation in project impact per capita, in other words, that a municipality had more projects just because it has a larger population.

The conflict-related controls capture both attitudinal and experiential dimensions. To account for the political polarization around the peace agreement, the model includes a dummy variable for whether the respondent voted “yes” or “no” in the 2016 peace referendum. Empirical work shows that “no” voters may display greater skepticism toward peace-related initiatives (Branton, et al., 2019). Additional controls measure direct exposure to the peace process, including whether the respondent received reparations or self-identifies as a victim of the conflict, both variables are coded as 1 if the respondent received reparation or was a conflict victim and 0 otherwise. Finally, the number of homicides by municipality as it is an indicator of violence level insecurity, in this case, resident of places that live in insecure zones tend to trust less between each other and to institutions also, violence could mitigate the implementation of the peace projects.

Table 10. summarize the list of dependent, independent and control variables.

Table 10. Classification of variables

Dependent Variables	Independent Variable perception	Independent Variable projects	Control variables
– Interpersonal trust	– Disarmament of FARC Members	– Agriculture	– Woman
– Nacional Trust index	– Improving security for social leaders	– Commerce	– Age
– Municipal Trust index	– Improving health and education services	– Social Inclusion and Reconciliation	– Education
– Trust in Armed Forces index	– Improving rural roads	– Transportation	– Vote share yes in 2019 referendum
	– Providing truth, justice and reparation to victims Ensuring reincorporation of FARC members	– Education	– Received reparation from the State
		– Health	– Improve security
		– Infrastructure	– Same security
			– Homicides

Source: Own elaboration.

Part of the process of developing this research was supported by the use of Artificial Intelligence tools. AI was mainly used as analytical assistant to help me choose and check the accuracy of my statistical models and ensure that the correct codes and commands in Stata were applied. However, all the data processing, interpretation, and final analytical decisions were made by me. The use of AI was, therefore, a support tool rather than a substitute for my own reasoning in the research process.

4.3 Empirical Strategy

To identify the effect of implementation of the peace accord on trust two methodologies are used: Panel Fixed Effects Model and Ordinary Least Squares. The Fixed-effects model was estimated in order to examine the relationship between the perceived implementation of the Peace Agreement and the trust indices. The dependent variable corresponds to the trust indices constructed from the questions in the MAPS survey, and the main independent variable is the perceptions of the implementation of the Peace Agreement⁴. In this case, perceptions of implementation are interpreted as proxy for perceived exposure, treated as a continuous index that captures the degree of agreement with six implementation dimensions of the peace accord.

Second, given that the variables of the implemented projects per 100.000 habitants vary only at the municipal level, while the outcome variable, the trust indices, is measured at the individual level, the model was estimated using Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) with standard errors clustered at the municipality level. This model allows for the possibility that observations within the same municipality are similar to each other. By clustering the standard errors at the municipal level, the analysis corrects for this correlation and differences in variance across municipalities. This approach provides more reliable results because the independent variables, the projects, do not vary within municipalities. Without this adjustment, the standard errors would likely be too small, making some results appear more significant than they really are. Therefore, the decision to use OLS with clustered standard errors⁵ ensures that the estimation reflects the true level of uncertainty around the coefficients and yields more reliable and conservative results for assessing the relationship between project implementation and trust.

However, The MAPS survey was not specifically designed to capture perceptions of ART projects but rather to assess a broader understanding of peace agreement implementation. Although it includes questions related to implementation, the categorization of components differs from that used by ART. Therefore, the analysis does not constitute a direct comparison between

⁴ Measure through the questions: How do you think the peace agreement with the FARC is being implemented in your community in terms of each of the following components? Promoting the disarmament of ex FARC-EP members, improving security for social leaders, improving health and education services in conflict-affected areas, Building and improving rural roads, providing truth, justice, and reparations to victims.

⁵ The Stata code was: `reg, cluster(p2_cod)`.

perceived and actual implementation, but rather examines general perceptions of implementation alongside projects executed under the broader framework of the peace agreement's roadmap.

Panel Fixed Effects Model

The fixed effect model is commonly used to analyze longitudinal data (Allison, 1994). This model controls for omitted time-invariant variables which may be correlated with the time-varying covariates, as it controls for differences across individuals that remain constant over time (Bollen & Brand, 2010). In this case, the panel fixed effects model estimates how changes in the perception of the implementation of the Peace Agreement are associated with changes in institutional and interpersonal trust while controlling for differences across individuals. Thus, the panel fixed effects model estimates how changes at the individual level in the perception of the implementation of the Peace Agreement are associated with changes in institutional and interpersonal trust while controlling for differences across individuals.

The Hausman test was performed to determine the most appropriate model between fixed and random effects. The result was significant, indicating that the unobserved individual effects are correlated with the explanatory variables. Therefore, the fixed effects model is the most appropriate for analyzing variations using the stipulated dependent variables.

To verify whether the dependent variables, the trust indices, could be treated as continuous, the results of an ordinal logistic model and a linear regression model were compared. The signs, magnitudes, and significance levels were consistent in both models, indicating that the relationship between the explanatory variables and trust is approximately linear. At the same time, Spearman's rank correlation between the observed confidence variable and its values predicted by the linear model was estimated, with a result of 0.194. Although the association is statistically significant, its magnitude is moderate, suggesting that the ordinal variable partially has a linear structure. Considering the size of the survey, the consistency in signs and significance levels between the ordinal model and the linear model, it is assumed that the confidence scale can be treated as quasi-continuous. Consequently, the use of linear models with fixed effects to analyze changes in the trust indexes between waves is justified, given that the ordinal model does not provide important differences in interpretation.

This model is testing whether higher levels of perceived implementation of Peace Agreement, measured in a linker scale, are positively associated with higher levels of interpersonal and institutional trust in conflict-affected municipalities.

$$Trust_{imt} = \beta_1 PerceivedImplementation_{imt} + X_{it} + \mu_i + \epsilon_{it} \quad (1)$$

Equation 1 summarizes the estimation of the effect of perceived implementation of the peace agreement on trust. Where $Trust_{imt}$ measures the level of trust⁶ reported by individual (i) in a certain municipality (m) and in certain year (t); β_1 Represents the average change in trust associated with a unit increase in implementation. $PerceivedImplementation_{imt}$ Refers to the perceived implementation of the peace agreement using: disarmament of FARC, improving security for social leaders, improving health and education services in conflict affected areas, building and improving rural roads and ensuring reincorporation of ex-FARC, reported; X_{it} , are individual control variables; μ_i denotes individual fixed effects, capturing time-invariant unobserved heterogeneity and ϵ_{it} refers to the error term.

Ordinary Least Squares

The analysis employed an Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) model with standard errors clustered at the municipal level to estimate the relationship between the trust indices and the number of projects implemented under the framework of the peace agreement. This specification was chosen because the treatment variable varies across municipalities but not from waves.

$$Trust_{it} = \beta_1 ProjectsImplemented_{it} + X_{it} + \epsilon_{it} \quad (2)$$

In equation (2) $ProjectsImplemented_{it}$ Captures the actual level of implementation of the Peace Agreement in the municipality where individual i lives in period t. It is measured as the number of projects implemented per 100,000 inhabitants, disaggregated by sector (agriculture, commerce, education, etc.). β_1 Represents the average change in trust associated with a unit increase in implementation. X_{it} , are the control variables, both models used the same controls to ensure comparability of results. Its purpose is to isolate the pure effect of implementation.

This model is testing whether higher levels of actual implementation of Peace Agreement projects, measured as the number of projects implemented per 100,000 inhabitants in each sector, are positively associated with higher levels of interpersonal and institutional trust in conflict-affected municipalities.

Limitations

The first limitation that the study faces rely on self-reported variables, which may not accurately reflect the actual dynamics of peace agreement implementation in the territories where respondents live. As Clark (2012, p. 247) portrayed, trust is not only about rational choice but also a

⁶ National trust, Municipal trust and trust in the Armed Forces.

critical emotional dimension, potentially introducing measurement bias. In addition, the conflict dynamics of the territory are still latent, respondents could answer untrustful due to fear.

Second, from an econometric perspective, with only 2019 and 2021 observations the panel is extremely short, so the Fixed Effects estimator can remove only a limited amount of unobserved heterogeneity and the “within” variation is small, which reduces statistical power and can produce unstable coefficients. Building into that, the method assumes that unobserved individual effects are constant over time; if attitudes toward the peace process evolve in ways not captured by the two waves, the Fixed Effects estimator will be mis-specified and coefficients will be biased.

Finally, Trust is important when we talk about peacebuilding, however, it is important to acknowledge that the peace agreement’s implementation and its associated projects were not explicitly designed to increase public trust. Since fostering trust was not a stated objective of the implementation process, any observed association between implementation and trust should be interpreted as an indirect effect rather than a direct policy outcome.

Chapter 5 Results

This chapter is structured as follows. First, it presents the fixed-effects model estimates that summarize the relationship between the perceived implementation of the 2016 Peace Agreement and trust perceptions at both the interpersonal and institutional levels. It then introduces a second model with Ordinal Least Square model examining the relationship between the number of projects by 100,000 habitants and trust. For both analyses, separate regressions were estimated with and without control variables.

Panel Fixed Effects

Table 7 presents the first model of fixed effect which evaluates the relationship between perceived implementation through seven items of the Peace Agreement and the trust indices.

Interpersonal Trust

The fixed-effects regression indicates that a one-unit increase in the perception of satisfaction with the peace agreement's implementation is associated with a 0.111-point increase in interpersonal trust, holding other factors constant. Although the absolute value may appear modest, given that trust is measured on a 1–4 Likert scale, this represents a meaningful effect, suggesting that individuals who perceive the peace agreement as better implemented also report notably higher interpersonal trust. The table also indicates that a one-unit increase in perceived success of disarmament is associated with a 0.04-point increase in interpersonal trust, with and without controls. Overall, higher satisfaction with the peace agreement's implementation and progress in disarmament processes are associated with an increase in the perception of interpersonal trust.

Moving on to the control variables, improvements in security also have a strong positive association, reinforcing the idea that social trust is built through perceived peace dividends. Conversely, gender differences persist, as women report systematically lower levels of interpersonal trust. The negative effect of being female could reflect differential experiences of violence or exclusion, and the positive effect of age suggests that interpersonal trust accumulates over time and community relationships.

Municipal Trust

As before, the data indicates that one-unit increase in satisfaction with the implementation process would increase trust in municipal institutions by 0.103 points as well as one unit increase in perceived FARC disarmament would increase municipal trust in 0.04 points.

When control variables are added to the model, some variables that were previously insignificant, such as “Building and improving rural roads” and “Improving security for social leaders” in relation to municipal trust, become statistically significant. This shift suggests that the inclusion of controls helps to account for underlying factors that were obscuring the relationship between the independent variables and the municipal trust index in the initial, uncontrolled models. Therefore, higher perceived progress in the disarmament of FARC members and the construction and improvement of rural roads are positively associated with higher levels of municipal trust in 0.042 and 0.147 points respectively. These findings suggest that when citizens perceive concrete and visible improvements particularly related to peace implementation and local infrastructure, they are more likely to trust their local governments. By contrast, perceptions of progress in truth, justice, and reparation showed a positive and significant association in the model without the controls but when adding the controls, it loses its significance, suggesting that these mechanisms may take longer to translate into trust at the local level.

By contrast, perceptions that the security situation for social leaders has not improved are associated with -0.114 lower level of trust in municipal institutions, reflecting the erosion of institutional legitimacy when citizens feel that local authorities fail to protect vulnerable groups.

As for the controls, an increase in the level of education and having voted yes on the peace agreement referendum tend to increase municipal trust by 0.204 and 0.194, likely due to their stronger links with public programs and civic participation. Furthermore, the perception that security has improved or remained stable also report an increase in trust in municipal institutions by 0.225 and 0.197 points, underscoring the centrality of safety perceptions in rebuilding confidence in local governance.

Nacional Trust

Moving on to the Nacional Trust Index, individuals who report greater satisfaction with the overall implementation process are associated with 0.230-point increase trust in national institutions such as the presidency, the senate and the lower house of congress and the governor. Likewise, a unit of increase in the disarmament of FARC members component also demonstrate a 0.059 points higher levels of national trust. These findings suggest that when individuals observe tangible signs of peace consolidation at the national level, they are more likely to express confidence in state institutions.

Furthermore, perceived improvements in health and education services are positively and significantly associated with 0.142 points increase in trust in national institutions, highlighting those visible social investments contribute to the perception of an effective and credible state.

Other dimensions of implementation, such as perceptions of truth and reparation mechanisms, reincorporation of former FARC members, security for social leaders, and rural infrastructure development, do not show statistically significant effects, although the positive direction of some coefficients suggests that progress in these areas could strengthen institutional trust over time.

As for the controls, older individuals and those with higher education tend to be associated with 0.039 and 0.167-points higher trust in national institutions, possibly because they have more interaction with national programs or perceive greater benefits from state-led policies.

For the Nacional index model, the results indicate that higher individual perceptions of peace agreement implementation, particularly greater satisfaction with implementation, progress in disarmament, and improvements in health and education services, are associated with higher levels of trust in national institutions. These findings suggest that national-level confidence among citizens is closely tied to the perceived capacity of the state to deliver visible and effective peace-related outcomes across the country.

Armed Forces

As for the Armed Forces Index, a unit increase in greater satisfaction with the overall implementation process display an increase in armed forces trust by 0,077 points. Similarly, perceiving greater progress in the disarmament of former FARC members and in the improvement of health and education services positively and significantly related to trust in the military by 0.129 and 0.038. These findings suggest that citizens' confidence in the Armed Forces increases when they perceive visible progress in key components of the peace process, especially those connected to demobilization and social investment.

By contrast, other dimensions of implementation, such as truth and reparation mechanisms, reincorporation of former FARC members, or improvement of rural roads, show no statistically significant effect on trust in the Armed Forces. This indicates that perceptions of these areas may be less directly linked to the institutional role or image of the military in post-conflict settings.

At the individual level, the perceived improvements in local security or believe that security has remained stable report higher trust in the Armed Forces by 0.375 and 0.165. This reinforces

the idea that feeling safer or perceiving stable security conditions strongly increases trust, underscoring the central role of security perceptions in shaping the public's confidence in military institutions during the post-conflict transition.

An overall view

The sign, size and significance coefficients are similar in both iterations, with and without controls- where satisfaction with implementation continues to have a positive and robust effect, this is relevant because when citizens feel that the peace accord is being implemented effectively, they see the state honoring its promises, which reinforces the belief that public institutions are reliable and responsive, the core of social trust. In other words, where implementation meets expectations, citizens interpret the peace process as a tangible improvement in daily life, strengthening confidence that the government will uphold future agreements. Thus, satisfaction with implementation functions as a barometer of institutional performance.

In contrast, variables related to the reintegration of ex-combatants and the provision of truth, justice, and reparations to victims have less consistent or even negative effects. This suggests that while the instrumental components of the agreement, infrastructure, services and security, strengthen trust, the political and abstract components such as the reintegration, justice and reparation, still generate skepticism or polarization among the population.

This result reinforces the idea that citizens differentiate between tangible benefits of the peace process: infrastructure, security, services and more abstract political aspects of the agreement such as the reintegration, political participation, justice for ex-combatants. The model, therefore, suggests that strengthening trust does not depend solely on the technical implementation of the agreement, but also on the perceived improvement in security conditions, which could act as a mechanism for legitimizing the peace process.

As for the controls, it is observed that perceptions of improved security have a high and significant effect on both interpersonal and institutional trust, this suggests that perceived stability and security are an essential component of the link between implementation and trust. This is supported by empirical evidence on postwar societies which suggests that after armed conflict, people are likely to place great emphasis on personal and physical security, and these assessments shape their trust in the postwar state and regime (Dyrstad, et al., 2021). For instance, following Dyrstad, in Sierra Leone, a sense of neighborhood safety was found to be a predictor of political trust (2021).

As for the sociodemographic controls, the negative and significant sex coefficient indicates that women tend to report lower levels of interpersonal and institutional trust. This finding is consistent with empirical research on the relationship between exposure to conflict and institutional distrust among women (Buehren, et al., 2022). Age has a positive effect, suggesting that trust increases with age.

In conclusion, table 11 suggests that perceptions of effective implementation of the Peace Agreement, especially in the social and security components, strengthen citizen trust in different levels of the state. However, trust in the armed forces seems to respond more to perceptions of security than to the political dimensions of the peace process, reflecting the persistence of a gap between support for the agreement and trust in defense institutions. Finally, the legitimacy of the peace process is more easily built through visible results and tangible improvements in living conditions, while the political components of the agreement still face social resistance that limits their ability to strengthen trust.

Table 11. Relationship between perceived implementation with interpersonal and institutional trust with and without controls FE

	(1) Interpersonal	(2) Municipal	(3) Nacional	(4) Armed Forces	(5) Interpersonal	(6) Municipal	(7) Nacional	(8) Armed Forces
Satisfaction with the implementation of 2016 peace agreement with FARC	0.107*** (5.94)	0.128*** (7.14)	0.191*** (10.94)	0.0994*** (5.53)	0.111*** (3.42)	0.103** (3.15)	0.230*** (7.00)	0.0771* (2.25)
Promoting the disarmament of ex FARC-EP members	0.0403*** (4.82)	0.0338*** (4.01)	0.0457*** (5.50)	0.0364*** (4.37)	0.0541*** (3.90)	0.0421** (2.98)	0.0587*** (4.04)	0.0506*** (3.48)
Improving security for social leaders.	0.0372 (1.42)	0.0152 (0.58)	0.0247 (0.97)	-0.0141 (-0.54)	-0.0571 (-1.19)	-0.114* (-2.32)	-0.0611 (-1.26)	0.0188 (0.37)
Improving health and education services in conflict-affected areas	0.0462 (1.49)	0.0403 (1.30)	0.0647* (2.13)	0.0370 (1.19)	0.0209 (0.35)	0.00661 (0.11)	0.142* (2.36)	0.129* (2.07)
Building and improving rural roads.	-0.00289 (-0.10)	0.0588 (1.94)	0.0198 (0.68)	0.0295 (0.98)	0.0829 (1.52)	0.147** (2.61)	0.0450 (0.81)	0.0687 (1.19)
Providing truth, justice, and reparations to victims.	-0.00257 (-0.09)	0.0771** (2.66)	0.0294 (1.05)	0.0380 (1.32)	0.0313 (0.61)	0.101 (1.94)	0.0698 (1.36)	0.0173 (0.32)
Ensuring the reincorporation of ex-FARC-EP members.	-0.0126 (-0.48)	-0.0556* (-2.13)	-0.00955 (-0.38)	0.0543* (2.09)	-0.000694 (-0.01)	-0.0613 (-1.15)	-0.0650 (-1.23)	-0.00953 (-0.17)
Woman					-0.169*** (-3.68)	-0.0760 (-1.63)	0.00236 (0.05)	0.0167 (0.34)
Age					0.0981*** (5.60)	-0.00289 (-0.16)	0.0392* (2.21)	0.0169 (0.92)
Technician					0.0899 (1.42)	0.204** (3.18)	0.167** (2.60)	0.117 (1.76)
Vote share yes in 2019 referendum					-0.0586 (-0.87)	0.194** (2.82)	0.0661 (0.97)	0.0234 (0.33)
Received reparation from the State					0.0706 (1.13)	0.0361 (0.57)	0.0341 (0.53)	0.133* (2.02)
Improve security perception					0.215* (2.27)	0.225* (2.34)	0.0395 (0.41)	0.375*** (3.75)
Security is the same					0.132* (2.43)	0.197*** (3.54)	0.0760 (1.38)	0.165** (2.86)
_cons	2.455*** (41.87)	1.838*** (30.96)	1.160*** (20.26)	1.366*** (7.78)	2.303*** (13.85)	1.879*** (11.07)	0.778*** (4.60)	1.366*** (7.78)
N	4616	4454	4503	4592	4604	4443	4492	4580

t statistics in parentheses. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table 12. present the second model using OLS clustered at the municipal level which evaluates the relationship between the number of projects implemented by 100.000 habitants by municipality and year with and without controls. The unit of analysis of the MAPS dataset was individual level and the unit of analysis of the ART dataset was municipality-wave. The project implementation variable does not vary within municipalities, as they are constant for all individuals living in the same municipality in the given wave. In consequence, in the “no controls” model the total number of observations of both waves.

Interpersonal trust

Column (1) and (5) represent the interpersonal trust. The model explains approximately 4.5%⁷ of the variance in trust and is statistically significant as a whole. Results indicate that the implementation of commerce and infrastructure projects is negatively associated with interpersonal trust, while other sectors show no significant relationship. Perceived improvements in local security are positively and robustly associated with higher trust levels. Among individual controls, women report lower trust, and older or technically educated individuals report higher trust. Overall, the model shows weak and statistically limited scope.

Municipal trust

Among the implementation sectors, only health-related projects show a positive and statistically significant association with municipal trust, while infrastructure projects display a weak negative effect. At the individual level, being female is associated with lower levels of trust, whereas having technical education and engaging in political participation are both positively and strongly associated with municipal trust. Furthermore, perceptions of improved or stable security are positively related to trust, highlighting the crucial role of local stability in reinforcing institutional legitimacy within conflict-affected areas.

Nacional Trust

For national-level institutional trust with clustered standard errors at the municipal level the model explains only about the 2.1%. However, given the complexity of trust as a variable, shaped by personal experiences and relations and local contexts, that result is not unexpected.

Most implementation sectors show no significant relationship with trust in national institutions, except for infrastructure, which has a weak negative association. Age and perceptions of

⁷ R^2 is equal to 0.045

improved or stable security remain strong positive predictors, highlighting those feelings of safety are crucial for confidence in national authorities. Overall, the results suggest that national trust is less responsive to local implementation efforts than municipal or interpersonal trust, emphasizing the spatial and institutional distance between citizens and the central state in conflict-affected areas.

Armed Forces

Table 12 presents the OLS regression results for trust in the Armed Forces with standard errors clustered at the municipal level. A one-unit increase in the transportation rate projects per 100,000 inhabitants is associated with a change of 0.006 points in the trust index. However, given the small magnitude of the coefficient, the impact remains minimal

Social inclusion projects show a negative relationship. A one-unit increase in social inclusion and reconciliation projects lead to decrease of -0.009 points in the armed forces trust index. Individual perceptions of security remain stable strongly predict higher trust levels, confirming the centrality of security outcomes for military legitimacy in post-conflict regions. The total number of implemented projects is negatively associated with trust, suggesting that volume of intervention may not correspond to citizens' confidence in security institutions.

Finally, to the question: do municipalities where more projects were implemented show higher levels of citizen trust? Table 12. Answer that there is no significant relationship between implementation projects and trust. Contrary to the previous results in table 11 The State's actual presence, measured in terms of projects implemented, does not necessarily translate into noticeable changes in public trust. Trust seems to depend more on subjective perceptions of implementation or on local social and contextual factors than on the actual amount of investment or execution. Greater intensity in the implementation of peace process projects is not associated with changes in interpersonal trust, at least during the period 2019–2021.

Across all eight models very few coefficients are statistically significant and even when they do the coefficient is extremely small in magnitude, this means that even with an outstanding project implementation strategy is highly improbable that it would impact citizen's trust. Also, the sign of the coefficient is inconsistent between models.

Table 12. Relationship between number of projects implemented with interpersonal and institutional trust with and without controls OLS

Rate of implemented projects per 100,000 inhabitants	(1) Interpersonal	(2) Municipal	(3) Nacional	(4) Armed Forces	(5) Interpersonal	(6) Municipal	(7) Nacional	(8) Armed Forces
Agriculture	-0.0000451 (-0.00)	0.00140 (0.30)	0.00653 (1.43)	0.00538 (0.71)	0.00302 (0.65)	-0.000817 (-0.12)	0.00438 (0.71)	0.0124 (1.65)
Commerce	-0.00478 (-1.44)	0.00255 (0.54)	0.00266 (0.71)	-0.00425 (-1.08)	-0.0120* (-2.35)	0.00122 (0.22)	0.000741 (0.14)	-0.00605 (-1.01)
Social Inclusion and Reconciliation	0.00271 (1.05)	0.000655 (0.24)	-0.00504* (-2.12)	-0.00792* (-2.42)	-0.00319 (-1.24)	0.00184 (0.48)	-0.00313 (-1.18)	-0.00971* (-2.03)
Transportation	0.000184 (0.11)	0.000136 (0.06)	0.00185 (1.25)	0.000850 (0.37)	0.00247 (1.25)	0.000903 (0.31)	0.00387 (1.61)	0.00606* (1.99)
Education	-0.000543 (-0.24)	-0.00276 (-0.67)	0.00140 (0.46)	-0.00263 (-0.61)	-0.00172 (-0.44)	-0.00129 (-0.27)	0.00131 (0.41)	0.000419 (0.09)
Health	0.00169 (0.31)	0.00248 (0.43)	0.000302 (0.06)	-0.000190 (-0.03)	-0.00205 (-0.31)	0.0164* (2.25)	0.00870 (1.27)	-0.00526 (-0.94)
Infrastructure	-0.00128 (-1.03)	-0.000181 (-0.12)	-0.000527 (-0.49)	-0.0000474 (-0.00)	-0.00268* (-2.16)	-0.00295 (-1.76)	-0.00236 (-1.82)	-0.00243 (-1.56)
Others	-0.00109 (-0.34)	0.000414 (0.09)	-0.00671* (-2.03)	-0.00270 (-0.36)	-0.0000443 (-0.01)	0.00670 (1.12)	-0.00346 (-0.64)	-0.00814 (-1.22)
Woman					-0.136*** (-3.83)	-0.101** (-2.81)	-0.00615 (-0.22)	0.0317 (1.20)
Age					0.0850*** (7.80)	-0.00261 (-0.21)	0.0435** (3.25)	0.0346* (2.32)
Technician					0.00783 (0.19)	0.00555 (0.14)	0.0348 (0.76)	0.00570 (0.13)
Vote share yes in 2019 referendum					0.0992* (2.25)	0.190*** (3.80)	0.0806 (1.57)	0.116** (2.68)
Received reparation from the State					-0.0261 (-0.57)	0.221*** (4.16)	0.0164 (0.38)	-0.0365 (-0.94)
Improve security					-0.00244 (-0.05)	0.0317 (0.61)	0.0467 (0.99)	0.0191 (0.45)
Same security					0.197** (3.01)	0.231** (2.93)	0.289*** (3.87)	0.444*** (6.70)
Homicides					0.109* (2.49)	0.131*** (3.66)	0.147*** (3.93)	0.193*** (5.21)
_cons	2.710*** (55.74)	2.276*** (64.53)	1.733*** (45.66)	2.266*** (47.15)	2.726*** (27.15)	2.175*** (17.25)	1.445*** (16.78)	2.000*** (18.75)
N	15023	13357	13625	15177	3614	3278	3323	3693

t statistics in parentheses. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Robustness

In order to assess the stability of the results in the panel fixed effects model, various robustness tests were performed. First, the same model was estimated using an ordered logistic model, given the ordinal nature of the dependent variables. The results, presented in Annex C, are consistent in both sign and statistical significance. Components related to disarmament and rural development show positive associations, while the reintegration of ex-combatants and transitional justice continue to be the least influential or even ambiguous elements. Similarly, to ensure a staggered process, Annex B. present the results of the fixed effect regression with the independent variables and only the sociodemographic controls. The coefficients of the implementation variables remain positive and statistically significant, confirming that the relationship between perceptions of the agreement and trust is not due to sociodemographic differences.

Both model, Panel Fixed Effects and Ordinal Logistic Model, confirm the robustness and internal consistency of the results, indicating that perceptions of visible implementation, in security, services, and infrastructure, are the most stable determinants of interpersonal and institutional perceptions of trust. confirming the robustness of the positive effect of the perception of security on institutional trust. Second, models restricted to subsamples of victims of the conflict were estimated, and no substantial variations in the main coefficients were found. Taken together, these exercises confirm that the results do not depend on a particular model specification.

Chapter 6 Discussion

The intention of this research paper was to investigate the relationship between implementation of the peace agreement and trust in Colombia. To this end, two hypotheses were tested, first that satisfaction with the implementation of the peace agreement would be associated with an increase in perceived trust, and second, that an increase in the number of projects per 100,000 inhabitants would also be associated with an increase in perceived trust. The results were intriguing. On one hand, the perceived implementation of the peace accord produced a modest gain in trust indices, especially with *satisfaction with the implementation of the accord* and the *promotion of the disarmament of ex-FARC members*. However, an increase in the number of projects implemented in a given municipality was not statistically associated with an increase in interpersonal or institutional trust indices. Therefore, the data show an inconsistency between expectation and observable outcomes.

The paradox between perceived implementation and actual number of projects

Perceived implementation captures how citizens feel that a peace is being carried out, not the objective count of projects or budget. Survey evidence from Guatemala, Nepal, and Northern Ireland shows that political trust rises when people approve of the agreement and believe that its terms are being fulfilled (Dyrstad, et al., 2021). This perception is significant because trust serves as a psychological shortcut: if the state appears to keep its promises, residents assume it is competent and fair, even when its actual performance is modest.

Table 11. evidence that a unit increase to the question: *in general terms, how satisfied are you with the way that the peace agreement signed by the Government and the FARC-EP in 2016 is being carried out?* is positively associated with an increase in trust at the interpersonal, national, municipal and armed forced level in all the models tested. Even if the coefficient is modest, it shows consistent results that an increase in the satisfaction with the implementation of the accord would lead to an increase trust. In contrast, table 12 reveals no interaction, no relationship between the number of projects implemented and the treated variable. Even where coefficients reach statistical significance, their magnitude is minimal, suggesting that the effect of actual implementation on trust is marginal at best.

The PDET program and its roadmaps were ambitious initiatives from the state. The program intended to encourage the population's participation in designing projects from which they would benefit. While the initiative was well-intentioned, it fell short in practice (Bachmann, 2024). In essence, the state was unable to meet citizens' expectations. Rather than fostering peacebuilding, it

drew attention to its poor institutional capacity due to the lack of practical strategies to promote genuine inclusion (Bachmann, 2024). In other words, PDET programs did not anticipate the obstacles and resistance of doing a bottom-up policy and disappointed PDET residents ultimately disappointing the very communities they were designed to empower.

In addition, measures of the implementation had revealed few completed projects or even deteriorating service quality, for instance, the 2016 peace accord failed to raise the perceived quality of health care in former rebel-controlled municipalities, and in some FARC, reintegration camps demand and satisfaction fell (Caspersen, 2024). That component, reveal some inconsistencies as being positive and significant when asking about perception of implemented “health” but when looking at the number of projects it significant only at the municipal level. This could mean that the projects are being implemented locally, yet the perception of health as a whole impacted the national trust. When citizens compare these thin outputs with their expectations, the actual implementation can show a neutral or negative statistical association with trust.

International evidence show that society tend to show lower levels of trust after experiencing violence and Colombia is no exception. Residents from PDET exhibit small amount of trust and a negative trend in institutional trust between the first and the second wave. However, this pattern is not rare, research consistently shows that interpersonal trust tends to fall after a civil war, at least in the medium-term, because prolonged violence erodes expectations that others will act honestly or honor agreements. Rohles and Fiedler (2021) did a literature review on the relationship between violence and trust, here are three cases: following the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, the World Values Survey recorded a sharp dip in “generalized trust”, falling from 48 percent in 1999 to 31 percent in 2005, before slowly recovering in later waves as reconciliation mechanisms took hold. In the early 2000s, the European Social Survey showed that only 23 percent of respondents in Bosnia-Herzegovina war-affected areas trusted people from other ethnic groups, compared with 45 percent in non-conflict regions of the same country. In Sierra-Leona Post-war household surveys (2002-2008) revealed a persistent gap: trust in neighbors was 12 percentage points lower in former rebel districts than in stable districts, even after demobilization programmers. In conclusion, after a prolonged civil war, expecting high levels of trust, even following the implementation of related programs, may be too ambitious in the short term.

This paradox indicates a mismatch between expectations and observable outcomes. Visible, symbolic actions shape the perception that the agreement is alive, generating a positive trust link. Meanwhile, the limited scale or lack of quality of concrete projects provides little statistical power

to produce a positive coefficient in the OLS model, and may even generate disappointment if promised benefits fail to materialize. The net result is a correlation between perceived implementation and trust, but a weak or negative relationship when measuring the sheer number of completed interventions.

While doing a direct comparison between table 11 and table 12 is challenging, because MAPS questionnaire was not design in the ART logic, the two datasets are complementary. the ART dimensions organize state action around territorial development priorities, the MAPS dimensions capture how communities perceive the effectiveness of that action in implementing the Agreement. Together, they offer a complementary view, allowing for the comparison of three comparable components that appear in both models.

(1) Improving health and education

In table 11, the model based on perceived implementation, the component “Improving health and education services in conflict-affected areas” shows a positive and statistically significant association with national trust (column 3) and, to a limited extent with trust in the Armed Forces (column 8). However, once control variables are introduced, the coefficients remain positive but lose statistical strength.

In contrast, the actual implementation model shows that the health sector is marginally associated with municipal trust, maintaining significance after controls are added. Education-related projects, display mixed and non-significant relationships, with some negative signs for interpersonal and municipal trust indices. These results are not unexpected, given the limited level of health and education implementation (see table 9). These results suggest that tangible investments in the health sector may have a clearer and more measurable impact on institutional trust than perceived improvements in education.

(2) Building roads, transport, and infrastructure

A one-unit increase in perceived implementation of “building and improving rural roads” shows significant relationship with municipal trust by .147 points after controlling for other variables (table 11). In contrast, in the actual implementation model, transportation projects show only a very small positive association with trust in the Armed Forces (0.006), a coefficient that is statistically weak and substantively negligible. Surprisingly, infrastructure projects are negatively associated with interpersonal trust. This finding is noteworthy, given that infrastructure and transportation represent the two largest implementation sectors with approximately 18 and 10 projects by

100.000 habitants, respectively. Thus, a greater number of projects not necessarily reflect an increase in institutional trust, even in sectors that are highly visible and easily linked to peace in Colombia, as transport, connectivity through roads and infrastructure.

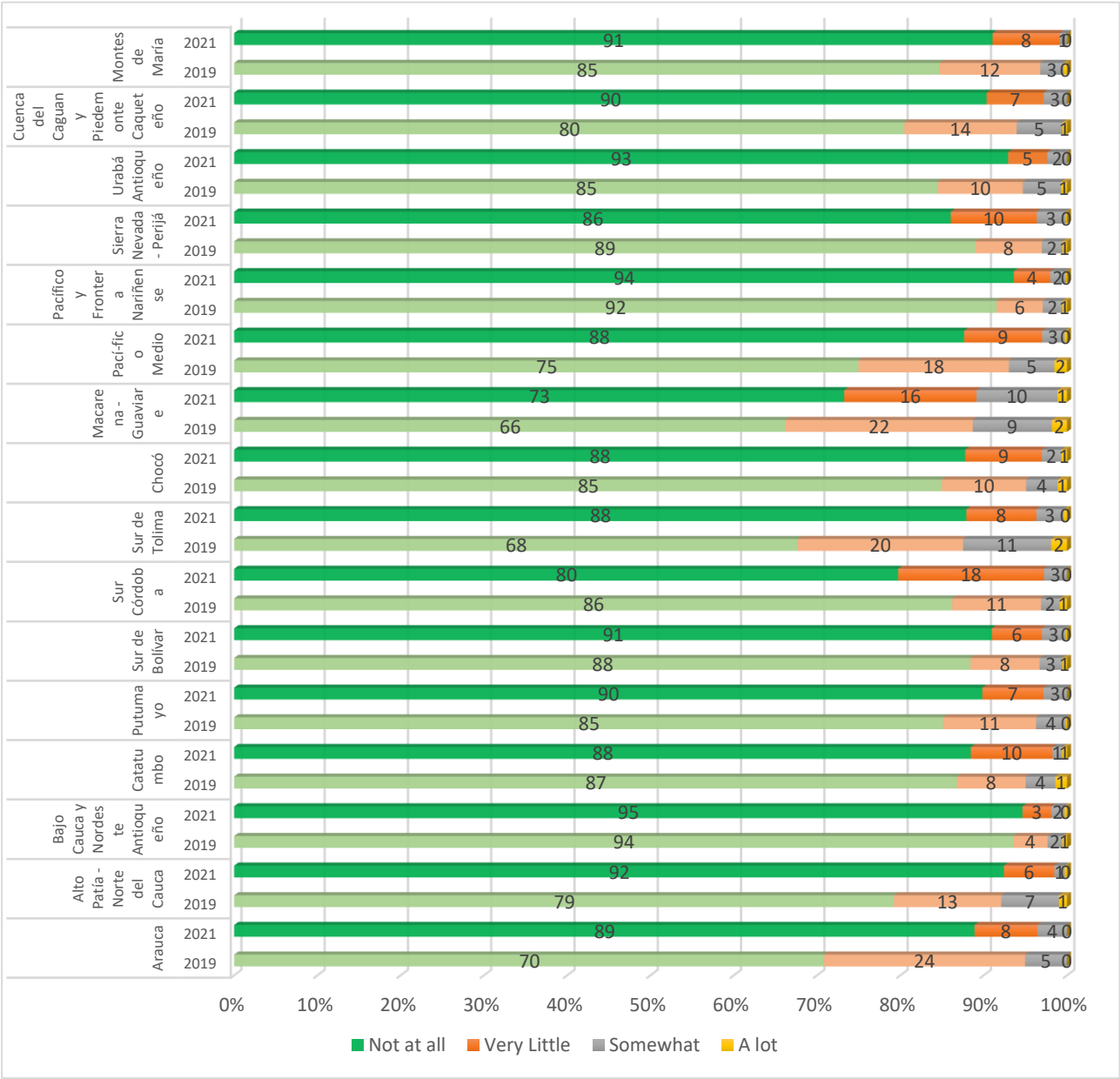
(3) Providing truth, ensuring reincorporation, and social inclusion

Under perceived implementation, components such as “providing truth, justice, and reparations to victims” and “ensuring the reincorporation of ex-FARC-EP members” present weak or inconsistent effects on trust indices. Only truth-related actions show some positive association with municipal trust (column 2), while reincorporation is negatively correlated with municipal trust and only slightly positive for the Armed Forces.

In the model using the real number of projects, the social inclusion and reconciliation sector reveals negative relationship with trust, what could be interpreted as one extra project in social inclusion and reconciliation sector decrease national and armed forces trust by 0.005 and 0.007 points. These findings reinforce the notion that symbolic or socially sensitive dimensions of the peace process remain the least effective in rebuilding public trust, both at the perception and implementation levels.

Between 2019 and 2021, there was a general decline in trust toward reintegrated FARC members in the majority of PDET zones. While in 2019 some territories recorded relatively high levels of trust, such as southern Tolima and Macarena-Guaviare, by 2021 these figures had fallen dramatically, reaching an 88% and 73% respectively of people how said that they *do not trust at all* ex-members of FARC. Even in areas where trust was already low, such as Bajo Cauca and Nordeste Antioqueño or Montes de María, the trend was also downward. This sustained decline may be related to factors such as deteriorating security conditions, the perception of non-compliance with the Peace Agreement, or the persistent stigmatization of ex-combatants (Giovanni, et al., 2020). Overall, the data reflects a decline in social acceptance of the reintegration process, posing significant challenges for the consolidation of peace in the territories most affected by the armed conflict.

Figure 1. Trust in FARC by PDET



In summary, while perceived and actual implementation both show that material components of the peace agreement (health, rural development, infrastructure) are more strongly associated with trust than symbolic or reconciliation-oriented components, the magnitude and consistency of effects are greater in the actual implementation model. This suggests that visible, tangible state actions—especially in service provision and transport—are more effective in fostering institutional trust in post-conflict territories.

Chapter 7 Conclusion

This research explored the relationship between the implementation of peace-related interventions and citizens' trust between each other and with institutions at the municipal, national, and security levels in the most conflict-affected regions of Colombia. Using individual-level data from the MAPS survey and information from the ART project database, the analysis sought to understand whether the perceived implementation of the Peace Agreement and the actual number of projects implemented in PDET municipalities are associated with variations in interpersonal and institutional trust. The findings suggest that while perceptions of implementation have some positive and statistically significant associations with trust the actual numbers of projects per 100.000 inhabitants do not show the same result. they were not correlated with an increment with the level of trust showing a paradox between what is perceived and what is implemented. indicating that re-building trust is a slow and multidimensional process.

The fixed-effects models reveal that higher satisfaction with the implementation of the agreement, as well as with specific dimensions like disarmament and rural development, are linked to greater trust in municipal and national institutions. Yet, the re-integration of the ex-combats and the truth and justice mechanism show negative effect on trust. This indicates that the more tangible or visible components of the peace process, dimensions that are more commonly and visibly associated with peace are more effective in fostering trust, whereas more abstract or politically sensitive areas such as reintegration, justice, and reparation continue to face skepticism and polarization.

Meanwhile, the OLS results show weak and inconsistent relationships between the number of implemented projects and levels of institutional and interpersonal trust. This does not necessarily mean that the number of programs is irrelevant, but rather that the way the PDET was implemented fell short of people's expectations. As a result, instead of strengthening the bond between communities and the state, the implementation often highlighted existing weaknesses in state capacity and local governance.

Ultimately, these results highlight a central challenge for Colombia's post-conflict transition: peace cannot be sustained solely through projects or investment. Lasting trust depends on meaningful participation, consistent state presence, and the perception that the peace agreement is not just being implemented, but lived and felt in people's daily realities.

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Annex

Annex A. Economic Sectors

SECTOR	CATEGORY
1. AGRICULTURA Y DESARROLLO RURAL	AGRICULTURE
2. AMBIENTE Y DESARROLLO SOSTENIBLE	
3. CIENCIA, TECNOLOGÍA E INNOVACIÓN	
4. COMERCIO, INDUSTRIA Y TURISMO	COMERCE
5. TRABAJO	
6. INCLUSIÓN SOCIAL Y RECONCILIACIÓN	SOCIAL INCLUSION AND RECONCILIATION
7. JUSTICIA Y DEL DERECHO	
8. TRANSPORTE	TRANSPORTATION
9. EDUCACIÓN	EDUCATION
10. SALUD Y PROTECCIÓN SOCIAL	HEALTH
11. VIVIENDA, CIUDAD Y TERRITORIO	INFRASTRUCTURE
12. GOBIERNO TERRITORIAL	
13. PLANEACIÓN	OTHERS
14. CULTURA	
15. DEPORTE Y RECREACIÓN	
16. MINAS Y ENERGÍA	
17. INTERIOR	

Annex B. Fixed effects with controls

Relationship between perceived implementation with interpersonal and institutional trust with demographic controls

	(1) p19_q	(2) Municipal	(3) Nacional	(4) Armed Forces
Satisfaction with the implementation of 2016 peace agreement with FARC	0.102*** (5.73)	0.129*** (7.21)	0.189*** (10.79)	0.0988*** (5.49)
Promoting the disarmament of ex FARC-EP members	0.0385*** (4.64)	0.0310*** (3.67)	0.0444*** (5.34)	0.0340*** (4.08)
Improving security for social leaders.	0.0434 (1.68)	0.0193 (0.74)	0.0277 (1.09)	-0.00875 (-0.34)
Improving health and education services in conflict-affected areas	0.0370 (1.21)	0.0422 (1.36)	0.0627* (2.06)	0.0334 (1.08)
Building and improving rural roads.	-0.00370 (-0.12)	0.0534 (1.77)	0.0181 (0.62)	0.0280 (0.93)
Providing truth, justice, and reparations to victims.	0.00643 (0.22)	0.0843** (2.92)	0.0336 (1.20)	0.0432 (1.50)
Ensuring the reincorporation of ex-FARC-EP members.	-0.0124 (-0.48)	-0.0579* (-2.23)	-0.0114 (-0.45)	0.0519* (2.01)
Woman	-0.126*** (-4.98)	-0.102*** (-4.00)	-0.0527* (-2.12)	-0.0394 (-1.54)
Age	0.0781*** (8.67)	0.00650 (0.72)	0.0408*** (4.64)	0.0434*** (4.79)
secondary	0.0229 (0.71)	-0.0241 (-0.75)	-0.00505 (-0.16)	0.0290 (0.89)
Technician	0.103** (2.88)	0.183*** (5.09)	0.0879* (2.52)	0.158*** (4.41)
War Crime Report	0.0148 (0.53)	0.0107 (0.39)	-0.00434 (-0.16)	-0.00637 (-0.23)
_cons	2.330*** (27.18)	1.926*** (22.23)	1.083*** (12.87)	1.613*** (18.70)
<i>N</i>	4604	4443	4492	4580

t statistics in parentheses

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

Annex C. Robustness check using Ordinal Logistic Model.

	(1) Interpersonal	(2) Municipal	(3) Nacional	(4) Armed Forces
Satisfaction with the implementation of 2016 peace agreement with FARC	0.365*** (5.33)	0.277*** (4.03)	0.587*** (8.24)	0.309*** (4.53)
Promoting the disarmament of ex FARC-EP members	0.0886** (3.15)	0.0759** (2.62)	0.137*** (4.00)	0.0560* (2.02)
Improving security for social leaders.	-0.170 (-1.58)	-0.297** (-2.68)	-0.121 (-1.09)	0.00544 (0.05)
Improving health and education services in conflict-affected areas	-0.0461 (-0.36)	-0.0151 (-0.11)	0.244 (1.83)	0.247 (1.91)
Building and improving rural roads.	0.305* (2.53)	0.448*** (3.59)	0.162 (1.30)	0.161 (1.34)
Providing truth, justice, and reparations to victims.	0.0240 (0.21)	0.114 (0.98)	0.0944 (0.80)	-0.109 (-0.97)
Ensuring the reincorporation of ex-FARC-EP members.	-0.0209 (-0.18)	-0.0755 (-0.64)	-0.132 (-1.10)	0.0291 (0.25)
Woman	-0.331** (-3.21)	-0.180 (-1.73)	-0.0418 (-0.40)	0.00985 (0.10)
Age	0.234*** (5.93)	-0.00181 (-0.05)	0.106** (2.60)	0.0426 (1.09)
secondary	0.255 (1.94)	0.0279 (0.21)	0.227 (1.68)	-0.0781 (-0.60)
technician	0.260 (1.86)	0.449** (3.13)	0.464** (3.24)	0.252 (1.81)
p22	-0.178 (-1.19)	0.553*** (3.56)	0.132 (0.87)	-0.0395 (-0.27)
p57r	0.232 (1.65)	0.165 (1.18)	0.0444 (0.30)	0.275* (2.00)
Security Improve	0.505* (2.52)	0.434* (2.14)	0.135 (0.64)	0.797*** (3.92)
Security Same	0.321** (2.72)	0.422*** (3.48)	0.265* (2.18)	0.468*** (3.97)
Population	0.00000189 (1.08)	- 0.00000753*** (-4.11)	- 0.00000117 (-0.65)	0.00000740*** (4.25)
Homicides	-0.00524 (-1.78)	0.00867** (2.83)	-0.00289 (-0.94)	-0.0129*** (-4.40)
/				
cut1	-1.231** (-3.22)	-0.609 (-1.60)	2.016*** (5.15)	0.664 (1.79)
cut2	0.552 (1.47)	1.247** (3.27)	3.660*** (9.14)	2.344*** (6.25)
cut3	2.612*** (6.84)	3.600*** (9.14)	5.588*** (13.17)	4.420*** (11.33)
N	4604	4443	4492	4580

t statistics in parentheses

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