# Controlling Civilians?
# Examining Support for the Military in Colombia

September 2013

Aila M. Matanock
(matanock@berkeley.edu)

Miguel García-Sánchez
(m.garcia268@uniandes.edu.co)

This material is based upon work supported by the Air Force Office of Scientific Research (AFOSR) under Award No. FA9550-09-1-0314. Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of AFOSR. We are indebted to David Laitin and Jake Shapiro for helping get this project off the ground. The logistics could not have happened without Cristina Querubin and Kristen Seith. We are also grateful to Adam Berinsky, Graeme Blair, Mike Callen, Adam Glynn, Kosuke Imai, Jay Lyall, Neil Malhotra, Paul Sniderman, and Mike Tomz for comments and suggestions. Any errors or omissions, however, are ours alone.

**Abstract.** This paper assesses support for the military through experimental methods compared to direct methods in a survey in Colombia. We theorize that individuals in general may feel pressure from the state to report high rates of support for the military, but that their preferences—which they may reveal with less intrusive questions, like the list experiment—may actually be lower, especially in regions where their survival depends on an illegal organization or an illegal product. Our results suggest that such preference falsification is present in estimating support for the military. It is lower when measured experimentally that directly. The difference is present in state-controlled and peaceful municipalities, but it is largest in guerrilla-controlled municipalities, as well as those with coca cultivation. These results suggest that situations like revolutions in which public support collapses suddenly may actually be predictable by better measuring "private" support through more sophisticated experimental questions on surveys.

**Word Count**. 8,482

How much social support do militaries engaged in counterinsurgency operations have? Emerging doctrine and existing literature suggest that social support is crucial for regimes, and, operationally, for militaries that back them, to successfully combat insurgency. Most studies measure support for the military directly, however, and focus on changes in these measures based on short-term tactics in the midst of conflicts, such as killing civilians or providing social services that have immediate benefits for the population. Recent revolutions, the Arab Spring in the Middle East and the Color Revolutions in the former Soviet Union, suggest that large shifts in these expressed preferences can come by surprise and disrupt even stable states (Kuran 1991, 1995, 1997, 2011, Lohmann 1994). In many of these cases, the regimes in question had conducted polls and elections before these events that indicated that the militaries on which they relied to maintain power, as well as their regimes more broadly, had substantial support. For example, in Egypt prior to the revolution, 57 percent of the population reported "a great deal" or "quite a lot" of confidence in the armed forces, and *not a single* individual reported "none at all" ("World Values Survey 1981-2008 Official Aggregate" 2009). While it may be the case that preferences for these regimes suddenly shifted, it is more likely in many cases that the *revelation* of preferences shifted as social pressures subsided (Kuran 1991, 1995, Lohmann 1994, and, for example, on Egypt, see Blaydes 2010). We do not mean to imply that all regimes and associated militaries facing insurgencies are overrated in direct measures, or that overrating will collapse in a dramatic display, but these cases raise questions about how to measure support and whether different measures will result in different estimates of support.

In this paper, we measure support for the military in Colombia—the state's armed apparatus active in the counterinsurgency—and, specifically, conduct an experiment to examine different measures of such support: randomizing assignment of direct versus experimental

questions in an anonymous survey. Colombia has had a long civil conflict, beginning in 1964, in which the military fought what initially was a leftist insurgency. We argue that preference falsification should produce higher estimates of support for the military through direct methods, compared to experimental methods, which are more indirect and thus less revealed. We expect that the difference will be especially stark in regions of guerrilla control and coca production where reporting support for the military—publicly but perhaps not privately—may be necessarily to avoid attack although many rely on these illegal sources of organization.

To measure support directly and experimentally, and thus to compare the two methods, we conducted 1,900 face-to-face interviews in May 2010 that constitute a nationally representative sample of Colombia and an oversample of conflicted regions. We employed direct and experimental measures of support for the military: individuals were randomized to receive a direct question about support for the military or an experimental question that employs a list experiment (also known as an item count technique). List experiments have been used in other contexts to reduce the pressure to falsify preferences due to fear of coercion or social sanctioning. We frame support in terms of allowing the military *increased* initiative in security, which is an active and demanding assessment of support, but also one that fits with the strategy at the time, so a negative response would indicate non-endorsement of the military and also, potentially, the regime. The framing is the same for both the direct and experimental questions.

We examine differences in support between the direct and experimental measures in this paper, through their randomized assignment, and we find significant and predictable differences. Lower levels of support are reported for the military in the experimental compared to direct measures across contexts, and the effect is largest in municipalities with guerrilla control and coca production. The finding supports the theory that preference falsification manifests itself

most in regions where survival depends on illegal groups or markets, which would risk disruption if attacked, so revealing private preferences about the military would by dangerous. In regions that already host military operations, the difference is less, which supports the theory that these private preferences shift once illegal organization has already been disrupted and new order is being imposed. Overall, these findings indicate that states that appear to have strong support for their militaries when measured directly may find that it weakens when measured indirectly.

This paper proceeds as follows. The first section explores the literature on support for the military. The second section describes why the Colombian case is appropriate to assess social support for an armed actor. The third section generates a theory of this support based on the existing literature. The fourth section discusses the survey design before turning to analysis of the data. The final sections discuss and draw conclusions from comparisons of direct and experimental measures.

## Social Support for the Military

In addition to the literature that theorizes about sudden shifts in preference revelation leading to revolutions in the extreme (Kuran 1991, 1995, Lohmann 1994), a substantial literature examines support for the military and, more broadly, the regime in the context of civil conflict. Our work builds on this literature, although it focuses on measuring support and, specifically, potential preference falsification between measures.

Much of the research emphasizes territorial control and success—both of which are believed to increase support. This literature is based on the idea of individuals shifting their support depending on which side they expect to win, which is slightly different from some of the counterinsurgency theory that suggests that support only shifts depending on which side they

prefer to win. Control is crucial in irregular conflict because each side requires collaboration from the population in such a fight (Kalyvas and Balcells 2010); with collaboration, provided when individuals view it as able to ensure their survival, the armed actor is able to use violence selectively as a deterrent (Kalyvas 2006, 89-104, 16-24). Control thus encompasses and depends on collaboration (Kalyvas 2006, 118-24).

Groups with an implicit coercive threat can produce social support among the population, at least in the most direct measures of such support (others report this in Colombia, as well, such as Hudson 1990). Switches in support are reported in voting rates when control changes (García-Sánchez 2009). When either side is in control of a territory, it may also be able to bolster its own support through the provision of social services (Iannaccone 1992, Olson 1993, Zahar 1999, Berman 2000, Berman and Laitin 2008). It is difficult to measure social service provision across areas of control, but recent fieldwork in Colombia and Mexico suggest that armed actors engage in selective social service provision to gain support (Diaz-Cayeros, et al. 2011; Restrepo et. al. 2012; Wills 2011).

The contexts without stable control—those with contestation—reported support may shift. Changing expectations about likely success may cause these shifts; expectations about the future may have a particularly strong impact support. A study in Pakistan suggests that the armed actor that has control over a region, but also the actor that is expected to win there, will have more social support (Blair, et al. 2013). In the broader war literature, a probability of future success is also associated with increased support for state force (Gelpi, et al. 2005/06). If the one side will likely win, it will have more support, especially as the two sides clash. Other studies of counterinsurgency bolster this claim: they demonstrate support for the military once it is operational (Stoll 1993). Individuals in unstable contexts, then, may back the militarily strongest

actor to avoid future fighting and receive services from it once stability returns (Wantchekon 1999, Ellman and Wantchekon 2000, World Bank 2011). In the context of Colombia in 2010, the military was gaining an advantage, and so its support may be high as soon as it actively contests an area.

In addition to control and contestation, and expectations about the future, collateral damage and casualties could affect support—potentially lowering it for the side responsible and raising it for the other side. The casualties argument is advanced in work on interstate war, although how casualties affect support remains under debate (Mueller 1971, Gartner and Segura 1998, Gelpi, et al. 2005/06). The collateral damage argument emerges from the intrastate war research, and, although some show that certain civilian casualties reduce insurgency violence, most argue that the side conducting the campaigns loses support (Hafez and Hatfield 2006, Lyall 2009, Benmelech, et al. 2010, Condra, et al. 2010, Condra and Shapiro 2012). In many cases, it is difficult to distinguish between collateral versus intentional damage, and those on the ground may not be able to do so. Outside of control, economic resource endowments or foreign sponsorship may also affect the use of violence and broader abuse of civilians (Weinstein 2007, 9-10, 12, 47-49, Lidow 2012, 9-11, 96, 122). These actions, intentional or not, may shift levels of support, but their effect, especially on potential preference falsification is not clear.

There are, of course, many other factors that may affect support for the military and the state more broadly. These include the legitimacy of tactics and goals (based on Zald 1992, 332, Wiktorowicz 2004, 10, Neumann 2005, Brooks and Valentino)—which may be influenced by the individuals' preferences about militancy more broadly (Feaver and Gelpi 2004), or their ideology and participation as or victimization by combatants (Haddad and Khashan 2002, Fair and Shepard 2006, Blair, et al. 2013)—and individual characteristics, including gender, age, and

socio-economic status (Haddad and Khashan 2002, Fair and Shepard 2006, Bueno de Mesquita 2005, 2007, Krueger 2007, Shapiro and Fair 2009/2010). We focus primarily on contextual hypotheses because we believe that preference falsification is most likely to be influenced by those characteristics.

## The Colombian Military

Colombia has struggled with political violence extensively throughout its existence, but the current civil conflict dates back to 1964. Through the early 1980s, the armed actors were left-wing guerrillas, especially the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), and then right-wing paramilitaries joined the conflict. The Colombian Army, alongside the Colombian National Police, has led the counterinsurgency (Borrero 2006). The military has become significantly stronger during the counterinsurgency, especially with U.S. funding under Plan Colombia since 2000. The military transformed from a weak, unprofessional organization focused on regular warfare, to a powerful, professional institution devoted to fighting insurgency. The military has, at times, teamed up with the paramilitaries against the guerrillas (Dube and Naidu 2010), but, at other times, it has conducted operations against them due to their involvement in drug trafficking.[1] During much of the counterinsurgency campaign, the military has refrained from political involvement, and, in return, it has been given substantial autonomy, which has led to grave human rights abuses. Despite this, public criticism of the military has remained low, while direct measures of support for the military have remained high.

[1] In an interview to the French newspaper *Libération*, Pablo Escobar, head of the Medellín cartel said "that the war between the government and the narcos picked up steam" in the 1980s (Dudley 2004).

### *Policy of Autonomy*

Unlike armed forces in other Latin American countries, the Colombian military has been relatively absent from politics (Blair 1993). The only exception was in 1953 when, at the request of civilian elites, General Gustavo Rojas took power to pacify a violent confrontation between the Liberal and Conservative parties; he was forced out of office by the same elites once he advocated political independence (Hartlyn 1988). In 1957, the government established a political pact between the parties, the National Front, which provided the Colombian military autonomy in managing security issues, in exchange for not intervening in politics (Leal 2010).

Beginning in the 1990s, civilian elites gradually gained some more control over the armed forces. Previously, most of the governments simply allowed the military free rein in counterinsurgency (Leal 2010). Colombian presidents commonly used the state of siege to put on hold constitutional guarantees, which provided a *carte blanche* to the military in the counterinsurgency (Palacios 1995). The intensification of violence in the 1990s suggested that security policy needed revision, and civilian elites sought to lead the policy change. After decades of inertia, the Pastrana administration sought U.S. assistance, which also required transformation of the Colombian military and leadership by civilian elites. Through Plan Colombia, the military gained substantial resources and also training (Kline 2009). The Pastrana administration's changes in counterinsurgency were overshadowed by a failed peace process with the FARC, however (Leal 2010). In 2002, the Uribe administration launched the "Democratic Security" plan using these resources. It was the first civilian-led effort at counterinsurgency, but it was made possible by Uribe's connections with the armed forces that actually secured substantial freedom for the military; this new policy of partial autonomy,

endorsed by both the civilian and military elites, has succeeded in establishing better security (Kline 2009).

### *Human Rights Abuses*

Despite its successes, the military has abused human rights throughout its counterinsurgency campaign. Much of this abuse was tied to paramilitaries: members of the military, along with local elites, cattle ranchers, agro-industrial entrepreneurs, and drug lords, promoted paramilitaries (Gutiérrez and Barón 2006). The relationship between the military and paramilitaries continued, despite massive human rights violations: for instance, as early as 1983, the military facilitated paramilitary massacres (Dudley 2004, 126), and, as late as 2008, these charges continued. Members of the armed forces members have been charged in recent years of supporting and having ties to paramilitaries (Kline 2009, Abierta 2012).

Even beyond its ties to paramilitaries, the military has a history of abuse. For instance, during the late 1970s the army, following the National Security Doctrine, developed a persecution campaign against leftist activists (Dudley 2004, 52). The human rights violations did not stop with civilian oversight, perhaps due to the close connections between Uribe and the military. The most recent abuse took place just before our survey: in February 2010, with mounting pressure from the president to produce results, in a scandal that came to be known as *Falsos Positivos*, army units executed civilians who were presented as guerrilla combatants.

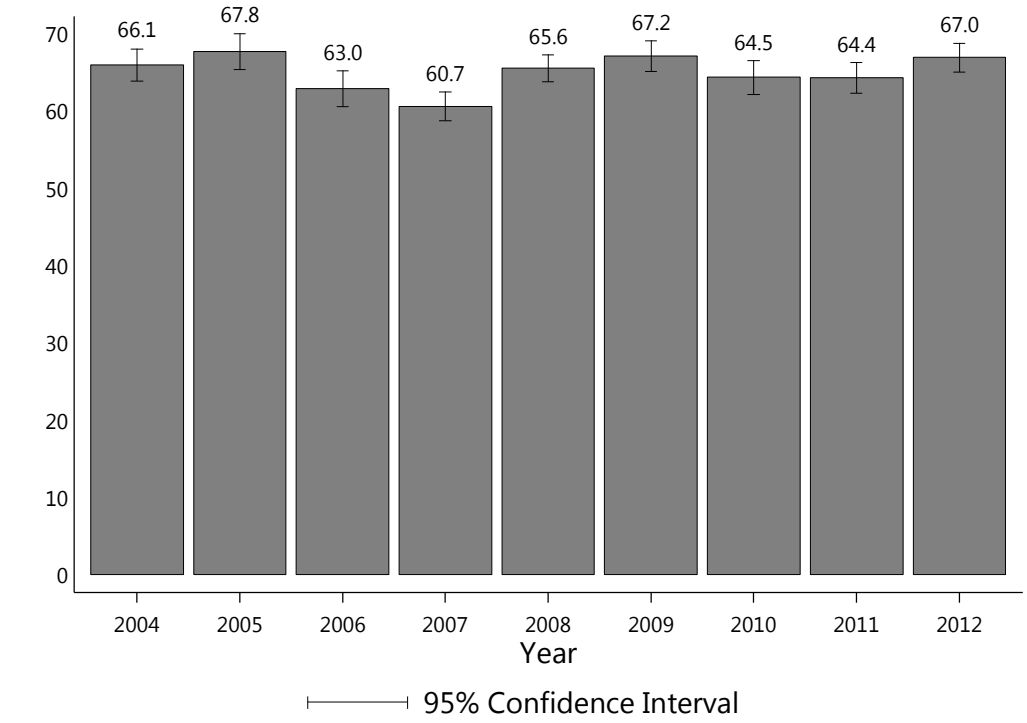
### *Support for the Military*

Despite of the Colombian Army's record of human rights abuses, the military receives considerable support in surveys using direct questions. Most of the measures of support ask

about “trust” in the military, which results in steady support; our measure is a slightly higher hurdle for both direct and indirect measures—allowing the military more autonomy to conduct a counterinsurgency—but, as we will show in the data section, our direct measure indicates almost as much support as these direct measures. The 2010 Americas Barometer-LAPOP report found that the Colombian Armed Forces were the third most trusted institution, after only the Catholic Church and the president (Rodríguez-Raga and Seligson 2010). LAPOP data also indicate that, during the last decade, this trust is sustained at above 60 percent (Figure 1). From a comparative perspective, the Colombian Armed Forces also rank well: in the 2012 Americas barometer-LAPOP survey, in terms of statistical significance, they were surpassed only by trust in the U.S. and Canadian militaries.

Security in Colombia has improved significantly over the past decades, so it is plausible that the majority supports the military steadily, despite human rights violations, but these reported rates of support, may be influenced by preference falsification. The media—especially widely-watched television news, which has a pro-government slant—mostly covers stories about spectacular operations and increasing safety, while stories like about abuse are less covered (Gutiérrez 2006, García-Sánchez and Wills 2011). There is certainly considerable publication of a positive message about the military, and, plausibly, pressure to report support for it. Additionally, as we will discuss, some Colombians rely on illegal forms of organization and production, and so announcing their preferences, if they counter the mainstream, may even be dangerous.

**Figure 1: Trust in the Colombian Armed Forces**




Source: © Americas Barometer by LAPOP

## Theory

The existing literature on support during counterinsurgency, as well as recent surprise revolutions, suggest that preferences may not be stable—perhaps, we posit, even at a given moment across measures. When collecting data about individual preferences, studies tend to use anonymous surveys (for example, see Blumenthal 1972, Blumenthal, et al. 1975, Fair and Shepard 2006, Shikaki 2006, Kull 2007). Respondents may hide their preferences in a survey, however, even if ostensibly anonymous, due to either expected coercion or less severe social sanctioning (Neumann 2005, Kalyvas 2006, Krueger 2007).

Preference falsification may bias survey results in both directions in terms of support: individuals may underreport or overreport their support for armed actors, depending, perhaps, on

the circumstances. Measuring support in different ways may overcome falsification in either direction. In contexts where actions can be verified, experimental measures tend to better predict behavior (for example, see Kuran 1995). Again, the basis for this theory is in the idea of individuals as survivalists: their support—especially their expressed support—is shaped by which side they expect to win; they also act on preferences about which side they prefer to win, perhaps because that side's preferences better match their own, but only when doing so is not dangerous. It should not be dangerous when their responses are truly anonymous (or when they are acting as a collective). We do not manipulate preferences about the government or the militant group; instead, in this study, we manipulate the level of anonymity to test differences in expressed support.

To measure support for the military experimentally, we use a method designed to overcome social desirability in the U.S.: the list experiment. Individuals may systematically change their behavior if they believe they are being monitored in surveys, due to social desirability and coercion, as discussed (for a review, see Demaio 1984); this effect is well-documented, for example, in measuring attitudes on racism (Sigall and Page 1971, Crosby, et al. 1980, Tetlock and Manstead 1985). The list experiment involves more fundamentally guaranteeing anonymity through an unobtrusive measure. The list experiment entails giving half the population a list of items that does not include an item of interest, giving the other half the same list with the item, and then asking how many items on the list each individual supports. The difference in means between the two groups represents the level of support in the sample (for example, see Fry 2008). If designed correctly, however, no individual reveals his or her support—the experiment merely identifies support within the sample or sub-sample. List experiments reveal much higher reported engagement in socially condemned behaviors,

including racism and illegal drug use, but similar levels in other behaviors, compared to direct questions (for a thorough literature review, see Holbrook and Krosnick 2009). To some extent, our application of the list experiment is exotic: it is normally applied to increase the population estimate of a marginal of an undesirable statement, while, in our case, it is applied to decrease the population estimate. Recent work has begun to expand the use of list experiments to contexts of civil conflict (for example, see Diaz-Cayeros, et al. 2011). Methodological advances have also innovated the design and analysis of list experiments (Corstange 2006, Holbrook and Krosnick 2009, Glynn 2010, Blair and Imai 2011, Imai 2011). The specific questions used are presented below.

As discussed, the military appears to have substantial support in Colombia; however, preference falsification may affect the reported rates in these direct measures. The positive representation of the military in the mass media may inform individuals that the majority of Colombians support this institution, and, therefore, when answering a survey question, critics of the military may change their responses to comply with what is perceived as the dominant view. Similarly, some individuals may express support because they fear that otherwise their response may be interpreted as supporting the guerrillas—organizations rejected by the majority of Colombians. Previous research demonstrates that when individuals are persistently exposed to a majoritarian or dominant view, they tend to "accept" or to silence their disagreement with that position (Nemeth 1986, Gimpel and Lay 2005). With the unobtrusive measures, these pressures should be lessened. Thus, our main hypothesis states that: *under insurgency, direct measures of support for the military should be higher than indirect measures.*

We also expect that the difference between measures of support for the military should be even larger if a guerrilla group controls the territory. In these cases, the more serious concern for

those supporting or being sustained by an illegal group or activity may be fear of inviting retribution if they diverge from the dominant view. Respondents were told that the survey was for use by universities and government agencies in the U.S., which has been allied with the Colombian government through Plan Colombia, so these concerns may be especially salient. As discussed, territorial control implies and depends on popular collaboration, and, in order to sustain it, dominant armed actors tend to supplant the state as they provide public goods, social services or engage in conflict resolution. Some of these activities may boost support. While respondents may then have less reason to support counterinsurgents and more reason to support insurgents in these regions, revealing those preference may invite punishment or disruption of the illegal structures on which they rely, especially in 2010 as the government was expanding its operations into guerrilla-controlled regions. In this survey, doubts about anonymity, and thus plausibility of punishment, may plague the direct questions, especially given the strong ties between counterinsurgents and the U.S. government (which is known to be sponsoring the survey). The experimental measure offers additional anonymity. If true, the rates of support for the military should be even lower in these regions *in the experimental measure*, but should remain constant in the direct measures—to protect respondents from retribution. A sub-hypothesis, then, is that: *the negative difference between the direct and indirect measures should be even larger if an insurgent group controls the territory*.

The fear of retribution also likely applies to areas with coca cultivation. Beyond being illegal to cultivate coca in Colombia, guerrillas have become closely tied to the drug trade: these armed actors play an important part in creating the economic and security conditions for this economy to flourish (Tickner, et al. 2011). In regions where illegal crops are important, individuals will distrust the state institutions as others are "*replacing* the state; they are *defending*

the peasants from the state; and they are defending the peasant *from themselves*" (Gutiérrez 2008, 230). Again, however, individuals may be concerned about punishment for expressing lower levels of support for military, unless they are protected by anonymity. Consequently, as with guerrilla-controlled regions, this sub-hypothesis states that: *the negative difference between the direct and indirect measures should be even larger in territories with coca production.*

Once the military moves into a region with guerrilla activity or coca production, however, it has already disrupted the illegal organization, and its dominance in this conflict makes it the likely winner, as discussed. In these areas of contested control, then, distinguished by military operations as both sides use violence to compete for control (Kalyvas 2006, 118-24), individuals should choose sides as they have indications about which side is likely to win and to provide services (Wantchekon 1999, Ellman and Wantchekon 2000, World Bank 2011). In these cases of contested control, given the dynamics of this conflict, then, support should increase for the military; the shift should only be observable in the unobtrusive measure since, according to the last two hypotheses, the lower levels of support under guerrilla control and coca production are only observable in the unobtrusive measures. Consequently, the last sub-hypothesis states that: *the negative difference between the direct and indirect measures should be smaller in territories in which the military conducts operations, which may also be measured as those that have conflict-related homicides*.

## Data

In order to test these hypotheses, we employed a survey experiment in Colombia. This approach is similar to that of other recent studies of popular support for armed actors, especially a survey on Pakistan using endorsement experiments and a barrage of other questions about armed actors

there (Shapiro and Fair 2009/2010, Blair, et al. 2013), as well as a survey on Afghanistan also using experimental questions (Blair, et al. 2012, Lyall, et al. 2012). Specifically, we ran an experiment in which we randomized whether individuals received a direct or list experiment measure to assessing support for the military. We collected the municipal-level independent variables from a variety of sources described below.

The sample for the survey of 1,900 adult men and women was selected from the civilian, non-institutionalized population; the majority of the interviews were selected to construct a nationally representative sample of 1,300 individuals. For the final 600 surveys, we oversampled conflict regions identified by prior violence. Forty-five municipalities in the six regions were chosen. All interviews were conducted during May 2010, just before the presidential election.[2]

For the list experiments, we divided the population into several subsets to answer different experimental and direct questions in order to not bias the results through priming. Although the whole survey had 1,900 respondents, the questions of interest for the dependent variables were asked to randomized subsets of the population: the experimental question was asked of 1423 individuals with 474 receiving the treatment and 949 receiving the control; this also randomized the assignment of the direct and experimental questions, as the direct question was asked of 474 of the respondents in the control group.[3]

***Variables***

This paper uses two different measures of popular support for the military in Colombia. The analysis focuses on the difference between direct and indirect—experimental—questions about support for the military. The direct question asked: "Some people believe that the Colombian

[2] The Supporting Information has details on the sampling frame and sampling design.
[3] We had just one point of randomization, although we did then vary the order of experimental questions in the survey, but it seems not to have had an effect on our questions.

military forces should have more freedom to defend the nation in the way they see fit. Do you think that the Colombian military forces should have more freedom to defend the nation in the way they see fit?"[4] The initial response was a binary yes/no, which matches most closely to the indirect question.

Unlike other survey questions that capture institutional support by asking respondents the extent to which they trust or support the military, we framed the question as allowing the military more autonomy to conduct a counterinsurgency. This framing represents a more concrete question for a country with an internal conflict. In these contexts, militaries tend to have positions on how to conduct counterinsurgency, as they are in the midst of such a campaign. These positions are often public, and they may differ from civilian plans. For instance, in the Colombian case there has been a long debate regarding the level of autonomy for the military in the counterinsurgency. Those close to the military have criticized mechanisms designed to limit its role countering the insurgency, which is contrary to organizations, often outside of the government, that demand more civilian design and oversight (Borrero 2006). Thus, our measure captures active support for the military, as it is expressed in an existing debate regarding the institution. In other measures that ask about "support," it is hard to know what specifically respondents are thinking when they answer since it could be anything from feeling sympathy with members of the military to wishing the military would carry out a coup. [5] While the framing may elicit lower responses overall (although our direct measure is similar to others), we are

[4] The question, of course, was asked in Spanish: "Algunas personas creen que las fuerzas militares colombianas deberían tener mayor libertad para defender la nación de la manera en que ellas lo consideren adecuado. ¿Usted apoya que las fuerzas militares colombianas tengan mayor libertad para defender la nación de la manera en que ellas lo consideren adecuado?"

5 Although our measure attempts to be more precise than traditional trust measures, we decided to avoid a mention to militant groups in the question. Given their increasing involvement in the drug trade, referencing them directly may contaminate our measure of support. We preferred an abstract reference about defending the nation, which includes counterinsurgency but also other issues such as sovereign defense.

interested in the difference between measures of support, not the absolute level, which may shift in either case.

The indirect question, a list experiment, should, as discussed, be less influenced by social desirability or coercion. The phrasing of the experimental treatment item was the same as the direct question so as to be comparable. The list experiment asked:

> I am going to present to you a list of four things [three, for the control group] that some people support and others do not. Please listen to these things and tell me HOW MANY you support. Do not tell me WHICH of these things you support, only how many of them you support.
>
> The South American nations creating a central bank.
> The assessment of a special tax to finance the expansion of the parks and green spaces in your neighborhood.
> The conservative ideology gaining more influence in the Colombian society.
> The military forces having more freedom to defend the nation in the way they see fit [excluded for the control group].[6]

The response is the number of items that the respondent supported—between zero and three for the control group, and four for the treatment group—not the particular items. We examined the existing surveys on public opinion regarding policy in Colombia in order to generate the control items on the list. We sought items that were the topic of active debate in public forums and somewhat congruent with our experimental item, and then we selected the final set of items based on negative correlation between them.

The analysis, as mentioned, is based on contextual variables. The data consist of indicators of armed actors territorial control, variables capturing military actions perpetrated by armed actors, and a measure of coca cultivation for the 45 municipalities included in the survey.

[6] The items were rotated when read. The Spanish version of the items is:
> "Las naciones suramericanas deberían crear el Banco de Sur América.
> A través de un impuesto especial se debería financiar la ampliación de parques y zonas verdes en su barrio.
> La ideología política conservadora debería ganar más influencia en la sociedad colombiana.
> Las fuerzas militares colombianas deberían tener mayor libertad para defender la nación de la manera en que ellas lo consideren adecuado."

More information on how we constructed these variables is available in the Supporting Information. Table 1a displays summary statistics for the dependent and independent variables of interest.

**Table 1a: Summary Statistics**

| | Mean | Standard Deviation | Observations |
|---|---|---|---|
| Support for the Military – Direct Measure* | 0.55 | 0.33 | 474 |
| Support for the Military – Experimental Measure – Treatment | 1.62 | 1.00 | 474 |
| Support for the Military – Experimental Measure – Control | 1.28 | 0.79 | 949 |
| *(Difference in Support for the Military – Experimental Measure* | *0.34)* | | |
| Independent Variables | | | |
| State Control | 0.55 | 0.50 | 1423 |
| Guerrilla Control | 0.10 | 0.30 | 1423 |
| Paramilitary Control | 0.35 | 0.48 | 1423 |
| Military Operations | 0.28 | 0.45 | 1423 |
| Coca Cultivation | 0.23 | 0.42 | 1423 |

*Note: this estimate differs slightly from the results presented in the tables below because in those we weight for gender based on the imbalance, as discussed. Again, even without such a correction, the gender indicator is not statistically significant in a simple regression on the direct question, so it should have limited bias.

In order to be sure that the treatment and control groups for the experiment are balanced, we include balance table based on characteristics also collected in the survey. The variables include age (five age cohorts), education (10 point scale), gender (1 if female, 0 if male), wealth (measured by ownership of nine items ranging from indoor running water to a television), right-wing party affiliation (1 if identified as a supporter of Uribe's governing party, 0 otherwise), how many close victims of violence that the respondent knew well (count), whether the respondent had been displaced by violence (1 if displaced, 0 otherwise), and whether the respondent lived in a rural or urban area. All non-binary variables were transformed into a 0 to 100 scale. Only gender predicts placement in the treatment group at the 0.05 level. This is statistically possible, of course, even with random assignment. We re-weight the data to correct for this imbalance.

Even without such a correction, the gender indicator is not statistically significant in a simple regression on the direct question, so it should have limited bias. Table 1b displays balance across all of these variables.

**Table 1b: Balance of the Explanatory and Control Variables – Experimental Measure**

| | Control Mean | Treatment Mean | p-value |
|---|---|---|---|
| Age | 43.34 | 41.77 | 0.40 |
| Education | 38.34 | 37.38 | 0.44 |
| Gender | 0.48 | 0.54 | 0.04 |
| Income | 42.18 | 40.66 | 0.17 |
| Wealth | 60.48 | 59.85 | 0.59 |
| Right-Wing Party Affiliation (Uribe) | 0.45 | 0.45 | 0.90 |
| How Many Close Victims of Violence | 16.84 | 15.58 | 0.34 |
| Displaced by Violence | 0.05 | 0.06 | 0.16 |
| | | | |
| State Control | 0.55 | 0.55 | 0.98 |
| Guerrilla Control | 0.10 | 0.09 | 0.38 |
| Paramilitary Control | 0.36 | 0.36 | 0.60 |
| Military Operations | 0.29 | 0.28 | 0.69 |
| Coca Cultivation | 0.24 | 0.22 | 0.38 |

***Methods***

The primary method of analysis that we employ are simple comparisons of means. In order to analyze the list experiment, we compare the mean of the control list (with three items) to the mean of the treatment list (four items), and then report the difference as the support for the experimental item—this is the proportion of respondents that support the military in sample or subsample (Kuklinski, et al. 1997). This is comparable to the mean of the binary direct question. We thus contrast the comparison of means for the list experiment (which provides an aggregate mean for the sample) with the mean for the direct experiment. We do so across several different

subsamples, like control by different actors, which allow us to assess our hypotheses. It is plausible that we could reduce our confidence intervals with more sophisticated methods, and we do report the results from other tests in the next section, but these comparisons of means are the most difficult tests for the data.

It is important to be sure that the list experiment data meets several standards because the results depend on comparison of treatment and control groups. The balance based on the randomization is shown above, and the same randomization also applies to the direct versus experimental measures: members of the control group received the direct question. Aside from randomization across the treatment and control, the data must also meet the assumption of no design effect, which ours do.[7] If we have reason to believe that the very addition of the control alters support for the controls, then we cannot expect that comparing the means, or any analysis based on this concept, is valid (Blair and Imai 2011, for cases of failure in Colombia, see Matanock 2011).

## Results

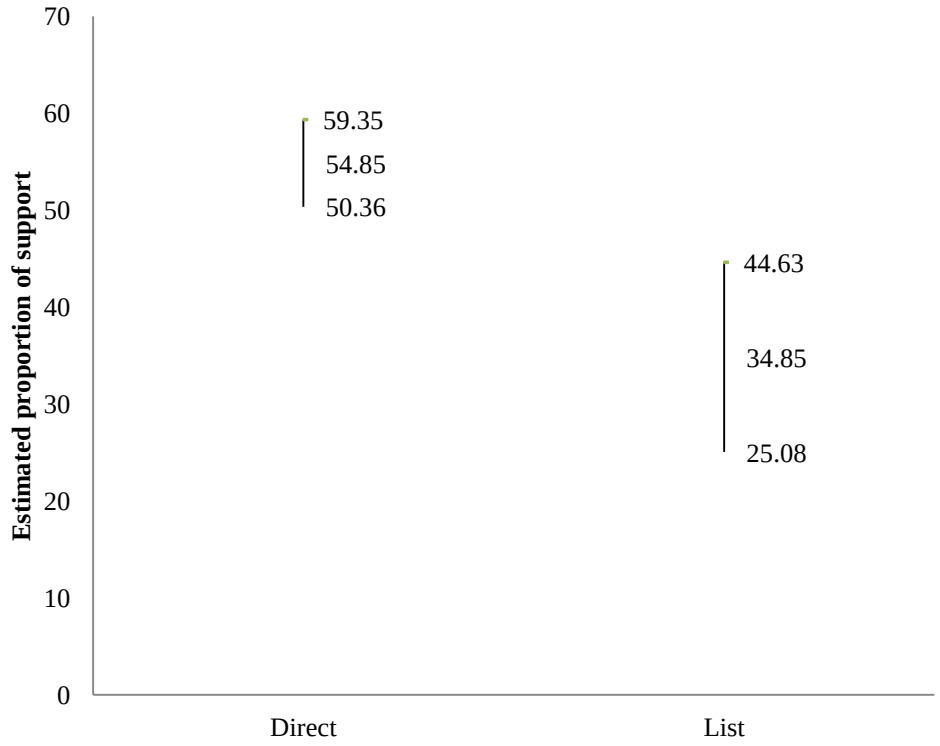
In this section, we first compare the direct versus the experimental estimates, and then we do so in several different contexts: (1) municipalities under territorial control of each armed actor; (2) municipalities with coca cultivation versus those without; and, (3) municipalities in which armed actors executed military operations versus those in which they did not. The following figures show comparisons of the means and their confidence intervals.

[7] We used a statistical test that assesses whether an individual's response to the non-sensitive items changes depending upon the respondent's treatment status (which would be a design effect), which yields a Bonferroni-corrected p-value of 1 (Blair and Imai 2011). We thus fail to reject the null hypotheses of no design effect, so there is no evidence that a design effect is a problem in these data.

The interpretation of these results is straightforward. If confidence intervals do not overlap, there is a statistically significant difference in the proportion of support for the military obtained from the direct question compared to the proportion obtained from the experimental question. Significant differences between the estimates of support suggest that respondents have reason to reveal different levels of support depending on how the question is asked.

Results from the direct measure indicate that the majority supports the military (which matches other surveys), but it is much lower when measured experimentally (Figure 2). Support for the military is 54.8 percent when measured using the direct question. Considering the February 2010 scandal involving civilian executions committed by army personnel, as well as its longer record of human rights violations, this result is surprisingly high. Support for the military is 34.8 percent when measured using the list experiment. The difference is statistically significant, as can be seen by the non-overlapping confidence intervals on these means. Even this basic comparison suggests that social desirability or fear of sanctioning has a large impact on popular support for the military, as discussed. The list experiment reveals an estimate of support for the military that is much lower than traditionally has been assumed, as past estimates are all based on direct survey questions, which offer less anonymity than this experimental question.

**Figure 2: Estimated Proportion of Support for the Military – Direct versus Experimental Measures**




One possible critique may be that the list experiments will reveal a reduction of support not only for the military but for all institutions because respondents will forget items when faced with the list, just report supporting fewer items when offered an additional item, or otherwise report lower support with the list. Due to the experimental nature of the question, respondents may find it confusing and not express their attitudes accurately. To counter this critique, we compare the proportions of support, using a direct question and a list experiment question, for *Partido de Integración Nacional* (PIN). This party has links to paramilitaries, as well as corruption and organized crime more generally. The experimental question reveals a *higher* proportion of support for the PIN compared to the direct question (32.9 and 23.5, respectively), although the difference is not statistically significant. For the PIN, unlike the military, using the

experimental approach instead of the direct approach does not reveal potential preference falsification.

To test our first sub-hypothesis that the difference between the measures should be even larger if a guerrilla group controls the territory, Figure 3 compares the direct and the experimental questions across different armed actor territorial control. The variables identifying territorial control draw on data on political violence closest to our survey, 2002-2009.[8] The first direct-experimental question comparison is of respondents in state-controlled municipalities. The results are very similar to those described in the previous paragraph: using the direct question, support for the military is significantly higher (55.6 percent) compared to using the experimental question (35.4 percent). The second comparison is of respondents in paramilitary-controlled municipalities. In this case, the confidence intervals overlap, so there is no statistically significant difference in the levels of support reported by the direct and the experimental questions. Neither confidence interval is very wide, so the number of respondents in these conditions does not seem to be driving the result. Instead, those living under paramilitary seem to report similar levels of support in both the direct and the experimental questions; the level of support reported in the experimental question is high relative to other results. The last comparison is of respondents in guerrilla-controlled municipalities. As expected, not only is there a statistically significant difference between the two proportions, but that it is larger than the average difference (Figure 2), as well as than the difference observed in municipalities controlled by the state. The level of support reported for the military is 40 to 50 percent lower in the experimental measure compared to the direct question, depending on the specification.

[8] We also generated these variables using data instead from 1997 to 2003, which is shown in a similar figure in the Supporting Information.

**Figure 3: Estimated Proportion of Support for the Military across Territorial Control by Different Armed Actors – Direct versus Experimental Measures**

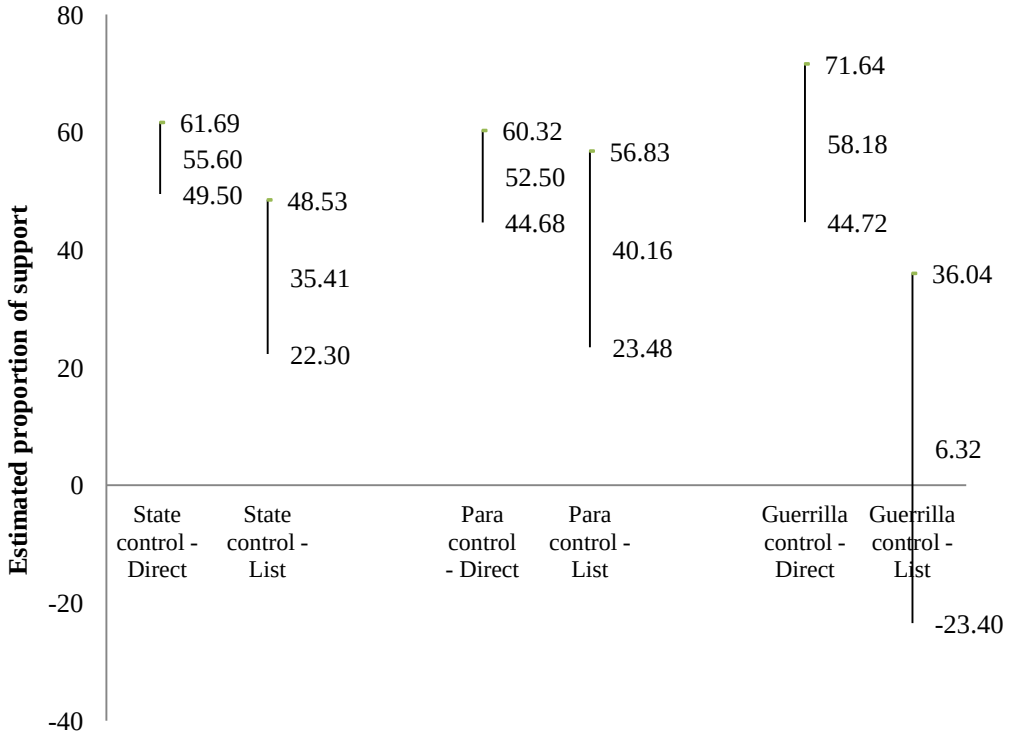
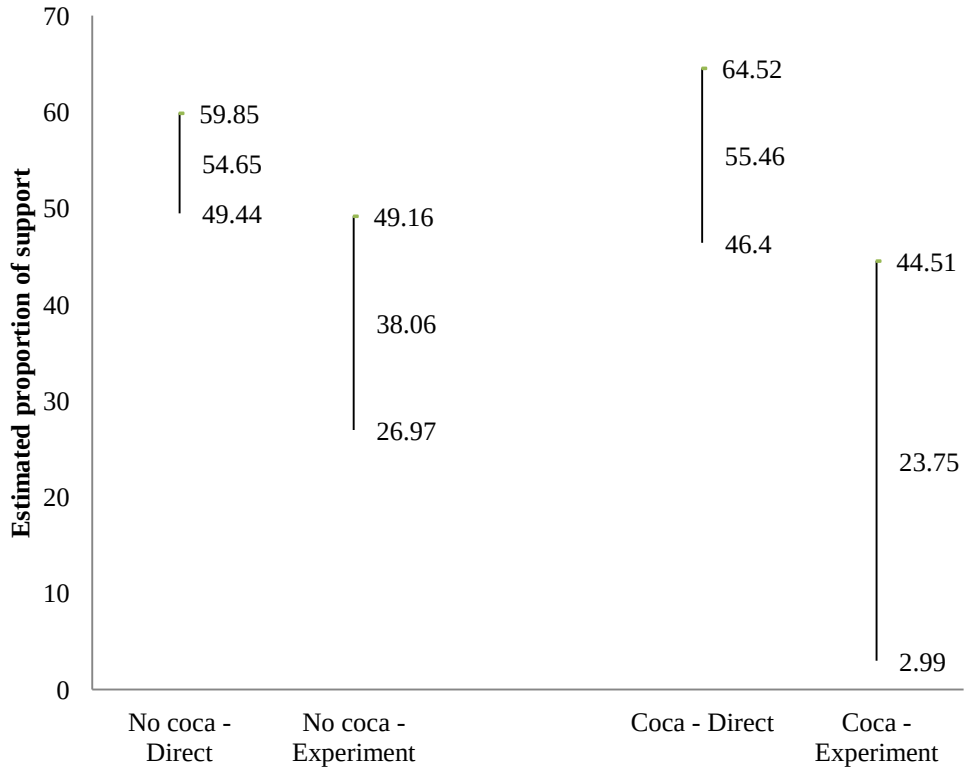



Figure 4 compares municipalities with and without coca cultivation to test the last sub-hypothesis: the difference between the measures should be even larger in territories with coca cultivation. In the municipalities without coca cultivation, there is a significant difference in the proportion of support for the military between the direct and experimental questions. Like in other contexts, the direct measure shows more support for the military than does the experimental measure in municipalities without coca cultivation (54.5 and 37.1, respectively), but, as expected, the difference is even larger in municipalities with coca cultivation (54.8 and 19.9 percent, respectively).

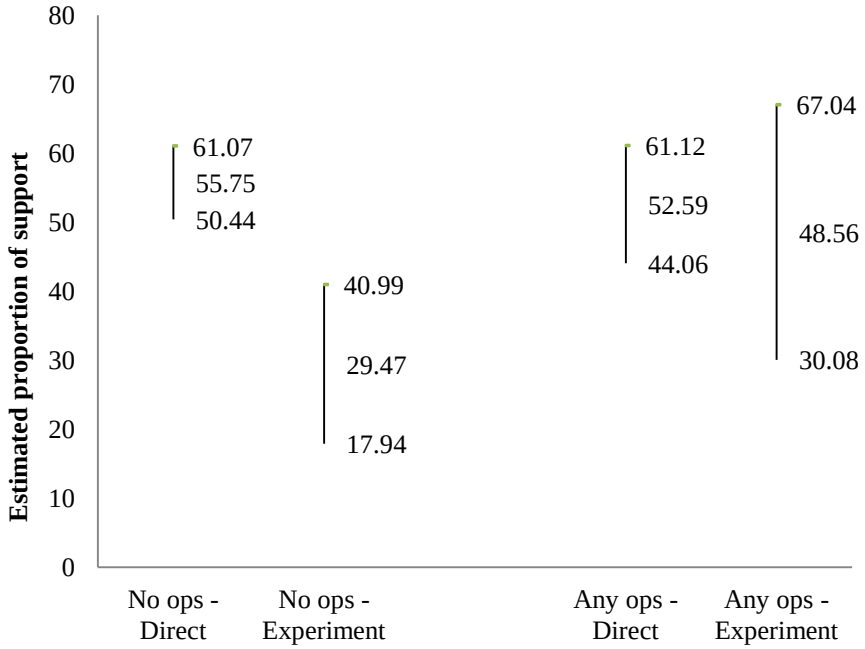
**Figure 4: Estimated Proportion of Support for the Military across Levels of Coca Cultivation – Direct versus Experimental Measures**




To test our last sub-hypotheses, that the difference between the measures should be even larger in municipalities with military operations, we examine municipalities with these events. Figure 5 shows that in municipalities *without* military operations, there is a significant difference in the proportion of support between the direct and the experimental approaches. Using the direct measure, the level of reported support for the military is significantly higher than it is using the experimental measure. The difference in support, and the level of support, is similar to those in state-controlled municipalities. On the other hand, in municipalities with military operations, direct and experimental measures indicate, as expected, similar levels of support for the military (Figure 7).[9]

[9] We also compared our measures in municipalities with and without conflict-related homicides. Results were almost identical to those obtained in areas with military operations. Military operations and homicides are correlated

**Figure 5: Estimated Proportion of Support for the Military across Military Operations - Direct versus Experimental Measures**




In addition to these mean comparisons, we also ran regression models controlling for individual-level variables with support for the military, measured in the two different ways, as the dependent variables. We ran similar specifications for both the direct and experimental questions; and, for each, we estimated models using the whole sample and the contextual subsamples. We expect persistent differences across contexts between predicted probabilities (estimates) for the models based on the direct and the experimental measures, even though differences across contexts within the models may not exist. Using this strategy, we also identify individual-level variables associated with support for the military. Table 2a shows results from the logistic regression models with support for the military measured using the direct measure. Table 2b presents results from regression models with support for the military captured by the experimental measure.

at 0.57, so these measures are likely capturing similar concepts. Results for municipalities with and without conflict-related homicides are available upon request to the authors.

## Table 2a: Logit Models on Support for the Military – Direct Measure

| D.V.:Support for the Military | Model 1 | Model 2 | Model 3 | Model 4 | Model 5 | Model 6 | Model 7 | Model 8 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | All observations | State control | Paramilitary control | Guerrilla control | No operations | Operations | No coca | Coca |
| Age | 0.001 | 0.002 | -0.001 | -0.013 | -0.001 | 0.004 | 0.001 | -0.000 |
| | (0.004) | (0.005) | (0.006) | (0.009) | (0.003) | (0.009) | (0.005) | (0.006) |
| Education | -0.019** | -0.013* | -0.037** | -0.013 | -0.018** | -0.022** | -0.024** | -0.000 |
| | (0.005) | (0.006) | (0.012) | (0.015) | (0.007) | (0.007) | (0.006) | (0.012) |
| Gender (Female) | -0.125 | -0.139 | 0.232 | -0.887 | -0.003 | -0.419** | -0.031 | -0.409 |
| | (0.177) | (0.241) | (0.227) | (0.554) | (0.246) | (0.044) | (0.214) | (0.310) |
| Wealth | 0.001 | -0.001 | 0.001 | 0.025 | -0.001 | 0.008 | 0.002 | -0.005 |
| | (0.005) | (0.008) | (0.008) | (0.016) | (0.007) | (0.006) | (0.007) | (0.010) |
| Urban-rural | 0.099 | 0.449* | -0.114 | -1.356* | 0.224 | -0.518 | 0.310 | -0.473 |
| | (0.192) | (0.205) | (0.429) | (0.601) | (0.229) | (0.373) | (0.229) | (0.399) |
| Right-Wing Party Affiliation (Uribe) | 0.661** | 0.752* | 0.703+ | 0.875 | 0.607* | 0.801 | 0.975** | 0.188 |
| | (0.236) | (0.374) | (0.408) | (0.584) | (0.254) | (0.624) | (0.285) | (0.260) |
| Displaced by Violence | 1.053 | 1.777 | 0.613 | | 1.589 | 0.598 | 1.141 | |
| | (0.773) | (1.112) | (1.296) | | (1.099) | (1.321) | (0.726) | |
| How Many Close Victims of Violence | -0.001 | -0.010** | 0.007 | 0.013 | -0.004 | 0.005 | -0.007 | 0.011 |
| | (0.004) | (0.004) | (0.009) | (0.012) | (0.006) | (0.006) | (0.004) | (0.007) |
| Constant | 0.608 | 0.355 | 1.090+ | 0.941* | 0.612 | 0.813 | 0.548 | 0.707 |
| | (0.387) | (0.615) | (0.652) | (0.392) | (0.435) | (0.726) | (0.532) | (0.635) |
| N | 444 | 240 | 151 | 54 | 316 | 128 | 333 | 113 |

Note: Method of estimation regression analysis. DV is support for the military reported through the direct measure. Numbers in parentheses are robust standard errors, clustered by municipality (45 clusters). Number of observations varies due to control missingness and because certain variables perfectly predict success/failure. * $p<0.10$, ** $p<0.05$, *** $p<0.01$

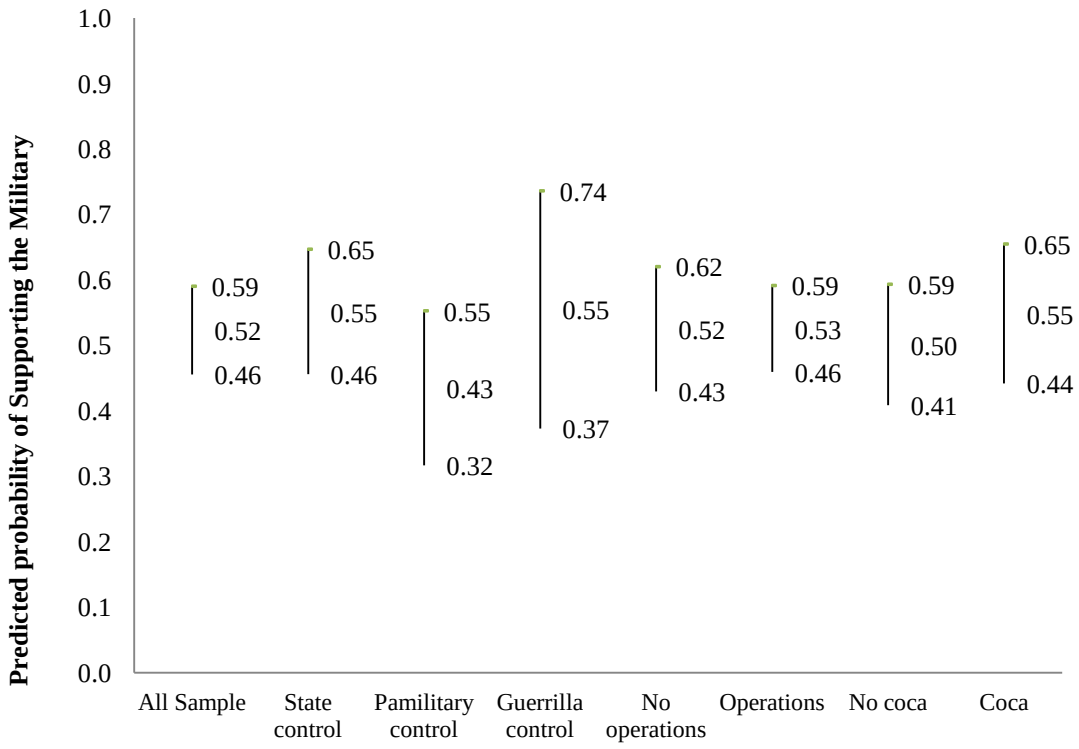
## Table 2b: Regression Models on Support for the Military – Experimental Measure (List)

| D.V.:Support for the Military (listmil) | Model 1 | Model 2 | Model 3 | Model 4 | Model 5 | Model 6 | Model 7 | Model 8 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | All observations | State control | Paramilitary control | Guerrilla control | No operations | Operations | No coca | Coca |
| | | | | | | | | |
| Age | -0.000 | -0.000 | -0.000 | 0.000 | -0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 | -0.003 |
| | (0.001) | (0.001) | (0.002) | (0.002) | (0.001) | (0.001) | (0.001) | (0.002) |
| Education | 0.001 | 0.001 | 0.001 | 0.002 | 0.001 | 0.001 | 0.000 | 0.004 |
| | (0.002) | (0.003) | (0.003) | (0.004) | (0.002) | (0.004) | (0.002) | (0.003) |
| Gender (Female) | -0.093* | -0.078 | -0.069 | -0.290+ | -0.109* | -0.059 | -0.098+ | -0.106 |
| | (0.044) | (0.068) | (0.072) | (0.100) | (0.053) | (0.080) | (0.051) | (0.080) |
| Wealth | 0.000 | 0.001 | 0.003 | -0.009+ | 0.001 | 0.000 | 0.001 | -0.002 |
| | (0.002) | (0.003) | (0.003) | (0.003) | (0.002) | (0.005) | (0.002) | (0.004) |
| Urban-rural | -0.111+ | -0.130 | -0.071 | -0.143+ | -0.056 | -0.302* | -0.113 | -0.136 |
| | (0.058) | (0.096) | (0.077) | (0.057) | (0.071) | (0.099) | (0.078) | (0.077) |
| Right Wing party Affiliation (Uribe) | 0.072 | 0.045 | 0.129 | 0.119 | 0.082 | 0.028 | 0.097+ | -0.007 |
| | (0.055) | (0.065) | (0.111) | (0.149) | (0.073) | (0.061) | (0.056) | (0.162) |
| How Many Close Victims of Violence | -0.001 | -0.001 | 0.000 | 0.001 | -0.001 | 0.001 | -0.002 | 0.003 |
| | (0.001) | (0.001) | (0.003) | (0.002) | (0.001) | (0.002) | (0.001) | (0.002) |
| Displaced by Violece | -0.022 | 0.129 | -0.203 | -0.224 | -0.126 | 0.282 | 0.027 | -0.185* |
| | (0.118) | (0.174) | (0.140) | (0.179) | (0.106) | (0.295) | (0.145) | (0.076) |
| Treatment | 0.320** | 0.317** | 0.361** | 0.112 | 0.272** | 0.459** | 0.361** | 0.184* |
| | (0.052) | (0.080) | (0.079) | (0.107) | (0.058) | (0.079) | (0.061) | (0.079) |
| Constant | 1.342** | 1.381** | 1.162** | 1.710* | 1.312** | 1.414** | 1.323** | 1.491** |
| | (0.091) | (0.113) | (0.154) | (0.298) | (0.118) | (0.151) | (0.100) | (0.242) |
| | | | | | | | | |
| *N* | 1,334 | 729 | 470 | 135 | 954 | 380 | 1,019 | 315 |
| R-squared | 0.037 | 0.037 | 0.052 | 0.099 | 0.031 | 0.078 | 0.048 | 0.047 |

Note: Method of estimation regression analysis. DV is support for the military reported through the indirect measure. Numbers in parentheses are robust standard errors, clustered by municipality (45 clusters). Number of observations varies due to control missingness. * $p<0.10$, ** $p<0.05$, *** $p<0.01$

Figures 6 and 7 indicate that the levels of support for the military predicted by each set of models, across contexts, are very similar to those described by the comparisons of means. In Figure 6, predicted probabilities of support, obtained from the models with the direct measure as the dependent variable, range from 0.43 to 0.55.[10] The confidence intervals overlap indicating that these probabilities are statistically indistinguishable from each other. In Figure 7, the predicted levels of support obtained from the models with the experimental measure as the dependent variable range from 0.11 to 0.46. Again, within the models with the same type of measure, the differences are not statistically significant.

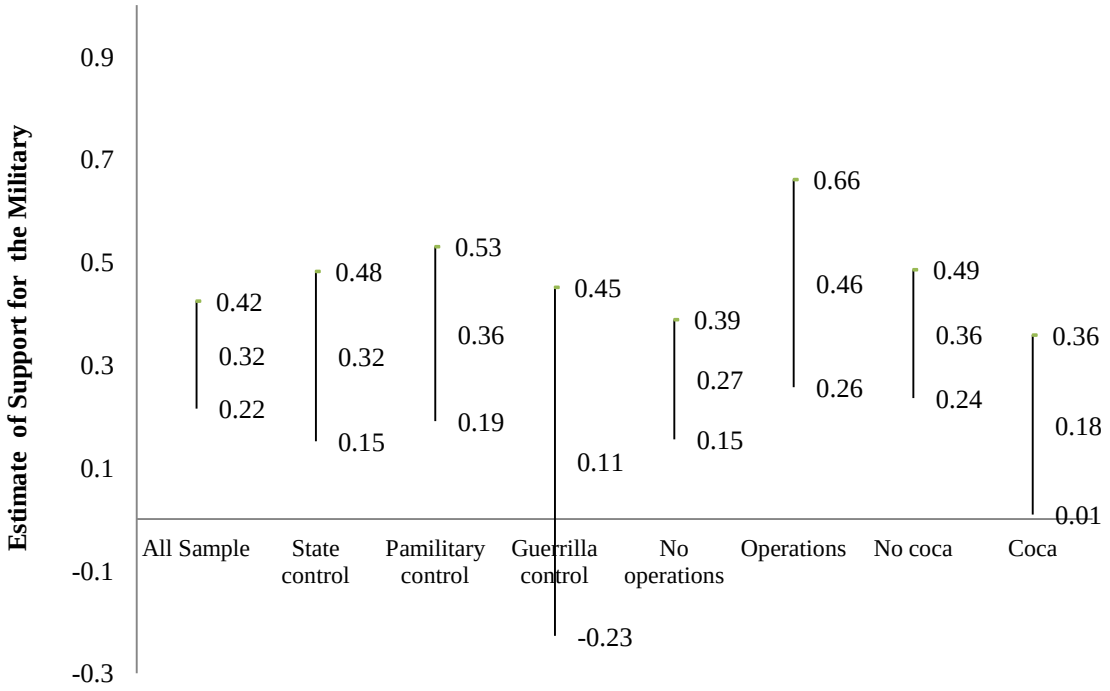
**Figure 6: Predicted Probabilities of Support for the Military across Different Contexts – Direct Measure**




Note: Based on Table 2a.

[10] These probabilities were estimated holding continuous variables at their means and binary variables at their modes.

**Figure 7: Predicted Probabilities of Support for the Military across Different Contexts – Experimental Measure**




Note: Based on Table 2b.

A comparison of Figures 6 and 7, however, indicate persistent differences across the models that are similar to the results from the comparisons of means, including across contexts. When measured with the indirect measure, the level of support for the military is significantly lower than with the direct measure for the entire sample, municipalities without military operations, and municipalities with coca cultivation.[11]

[11] There were four scenarios in which results from the regression models differ from the comparison of means: in state controlled municipalities, in guerrilla-controlled municipalities, and in municipalities without coca cultivation. The means comparisons indicate statistically significant differences, while the regression models do not. These subsamples are small, so we are not surprised that the effect is no longer statistically significant. Additionally, a similar pattern occurred when the models were estimated including interactions between each predictor and a binary indicator of treatment for the experimental data. The confidence intervals are, again, wider than in Figure 11 because of the smaller sample size (see Supporting Information).

**Table 2c: Interaction Coefficients when Treatment is Equal to 1 – Experimental Measure (List)**

| | Model 1 | Model 2 | Model 3 | Model 4 | Model 5 | Model 6 | Model 9 | Model 10 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | All observations | State control | Paramilitary control | Guerrilla control | No operations | Operations | No coca | Coca |
| | | | | | | | | |
| Age | 0.000 | -0.002 | 0.004 | 0.002 | -0.001 | 0.006 | 0.001 | -0.004 |
| | (0.002) | (0.002) | (0.004) | (0.001) | (0.002) | (0.006) | (0.002) | (0.004) |
| Education | 0.001 | -0.002 | 0.004 | -0.010 | 0.001 | 0.003 | -0.002 | 0.010* |
| | (0.003) | (0.005) | (0.005) | (0.011) | (0.003) | (0.010) | (0.004) | (0.004) |
| Gender (Female) | -0.321*** | -0.401** | -0.273 | 0.249 | -0.365*** | -0.214 | -0.361** | -0.295 |
| | (0.091) | (0.123) | (0.161) | (0.227) | (0.092) | (0.247) | (0.104) | (0.188) |
| Wealth | 0.002 | 0.005 | 0.002 | 0.000 | 0.003 | -0.002 | 0.004 | -0.003 |
| | (0.002) | (0.003) | (0.004) | (0.008) | (0.002) | (0.005) | (0.003) | (0.004) |
| Urban-rural | -0.263* | -0.251 | -0.190 | -1.278* | -0.185 | -0.434* | -0.336* | -0.303 |
| | (0.114) | (0.164) | (0.189) | (0.318) | (0.130) | (0.144) | (0.125) | (0.193) |
| Right Wing party Affiliation (Uribe) | 0.194 | 0.146 | 0.291 | 0.183 | 0.239† | -0.092 | 0.226* | 0.131 |
| | (0.105) | (0.123) | (0.209) | (0.242) | (0.131) | (0.131) | (0.108) | (0.275) |
| How Many Close Victims of Violence | -0.001 | -0.002 | 0.002 | -0.002 | 0.000 | -0.001 | -0.001 | 0.002 |
| | (0.001) | (0.002) | (0.002) | (0.005) | (0.002) | (0.002) | (0.002) | (0.002) |
| Displaced by Violece | 0.020 | 0.086 | -0.136 | 0.397 | -0.178 | 1.806† | 0.037 | 0.085 |
| | (0.188) | (0.322) | (0.193) | (0.286) | (0.154) | (0.715) | (0.254) | (0.229) |

Note: Based on a model in which all predictors were interacted with a binary indicator of treatment. The model including all interactions is displayed in the Supporting Information section. Coefficients capture the marginal effect of each variable when treatment is equal to 1. Numbers in parentheses are robust standard errors, clustered by municipality (45 clusters). Number of observations varies due to control missingness. * $p<0.10$, ** $p<0.05$, *** $p<0.01$

The regression models also identify predictors of support for the military. With the direct measure (Table 2a), education and party affiliation have statistically significant effects, negative and positive, respectively, in most specifications. Other individual factors, gender and knowing a victim of violence, had negative effects, as well, but only in some specifications. With the indirect measure, and based on models in which all predictors were interacted with a binary indicator of treatment, the marginal effects obtained from combining each coefficient and the interaction coefficient, indicate that gender and party affiliation (for some specifications) have statistically significant same-direction effects (Table 2c). Unlike those based on the direct measure, however, education does not appear to be correlated with the dependent variable, while urbanity has a consistent negative effect. These results indicate that not only does the level of reported support differ between these the types of measures, but its predictors do, as well.

## Discussion and Conclusions

Comparisons of support for the military measured directly as opposed to experimentally reveal several results. Most fundamentally, we find a persistent difference in the two measures of support for the military. The difference is larger in some contexts than in others, but the direct estimate is always higher than the experimental estimate, and it is usually statistically significantly so; this is not true when measuring support in Colombia for other organizations.

We suggest that the mechanism underlying the difference between measures is preference falsification: direct survey questions indicate high levels of support for the Colombian Armed Forces, but individuals may feel pressure to report these rates. The government, alongside the media, has publicized the military's successes and developed

campaigns to buoy its reputation. At the same time, however, the armed forces were involved in several recent scandals related to human rights violations, including the *Falsos Positivos*, where civilians were kidnapped and executed as fake combatants. It is hard to imagine that civilians are immune to these reports with respect to their support for the military, despite consistent results in existing surveys (Figure 1). Our results suggest, instead, that civilians may receive social pressure to report support for the military, even if they are more ambivalent, perhaps due to these human rights violations (and ensuing scandals). Our results thus reveal possible preference falsification, then, since the list experiment, which is the less intrusive methodology, reports significantly lower support for the military. Our experimental estimates indicate that this proportion of support may be lower across almost all contexts. Thus, our work contributes to an explanation for why the Colombian Armed Forces receive such strong support in surveys, but complicates the meaning of these measures.

Our findings go beyond the conclusion that different measures produce different estimates of support, and that the experimental estimate is lower than the direct estimate: this difference, which we suggest is attributable to preference falsification, is contingent on context. In state-controlled and peaceful municipalities (which are, of course, correlated), this difference is present. The difference is even larger, however, in guerrilla-controlled and coca-cultivating municipalities: support for the military is much lower when estimated with the experimental approach than it is when estimated with the direct approach in these regions. These results are consistent with the theories in the existing literature that territorial control helps armed actors boost their own support and reduce that of their rivals. Survival for the individuals living in these territories may be linked to the guerrillas, and so they may support the military less. Similarly, individuals in areas where the local economy

depends on cultivating an illegal product, coca, also may support the military less, since it threatens with their means of survival by seeking to eradicate their crops. Individuals in these contexts may fear compromising their own survival by directly revealing their lower levels of support for the military, but the list experiment offers a more anonymous mechanism to express the preferences that they may otherwise falsify. In these contexts, preferences and falsification of those preferences extend beyond an objection to the military's abuses: as local social orders are built around an illegal organization or an illegal product, individuals may lack support for the military, but directly revealing that could threaten their survival. The large differences in the estimates in these contexts offer support for this aspect of the theory.

Finally, we found that in certain contexts support for the military may not be affected by preference falsification. In municipalities with military operations, the level of support is not much different when estimated by the direct and experimental approaches. Consistent with theories of control and survival, these individuals may simply support the strongest armed actor operating in the area—in these cases, the Colombian military. Other existing literature suggests that violence reduces support for the military; however, our results do not support this expectation. It is possible that individuals do not hold the military responsible for the violence caused by confrontations with other armed actors. These findings fit the explanation that, facing conflict, individuals may choose to support the armed actor they expect to win, which, in this case, is likely the military since Plan Colombia.

These results as a whole suggest that situations like revolutions in which public support collapses suddenly may actually be predictable by private support—which can be

measured through more sophisticated experimental questions on surveys, rather than traditional direct questions.

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## Supporting Information

### *Sampling*

This section presents a description of both the sampling frame and sampling design of the survey conducted in Colombia.

*Sampling frame*: In department capitals, the sampling frame consisted of 2005 census mapping for municipal planning stratified at the block level; in other municipalities, the sampling frame consisted of 2001 census mapping.

*Sampling design*: We used a stratified probability clustering, with selection probabilities proportional to size (PPS). The municipalities that compose the clusters were stratified by the region to which they belong and the size of the population. The final stages of selection in both sub-samples were by a systematic jump from a random start for household, and then probabilistic selection from a list of those 18 and older in the household using a table designed by the survey firm.

The firm that conducted the face-to-face surveys was the Bogota-based *Centro Nacional de Consultoría* (CNC). We trained the firm's staff before the interviews were conducted.

### *Contextual Independent Variables*

This section presents a brief description of the three contextual variables used in the analysis of support for the military.

*Armed actors' territorial control*: These indicators capture whether a municipality is under state, paramilitary, or guerrilla control. These variables were measured using a municipal count of violent actions committed by guerrillas and paramilitaries between 2002 and 2009, as well as an earlier period—1997-2003—as a robustness check.[12] The figure of using these

[12] These counts were created using a monthly report on violent events published by CINEP (2002, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009). Our oversample was created based on the 1997-2003 data.

data, across armed actor territorial control, is included below. Using these counts, clusters of municipalities following different trajectories of violence perpetrated by guerrillas and paramilitaries were identified using semi-parametric group-based modeling (Nagin 2005a).[13] Finally, by crossing paramilitary and guerrilla trajectories, we created three indicators capturing which armed actor controlled a municipality (García-Sánchez 2009).[14]

*Military actions perpetrated by armed actors*: Military operations are a count of violent events committed by the military against an armed group—guerrilla or paramilitary in 2009. This variable includes attacks against members of the other armed group, such as ambushes, combat incidents, massacres, as well as attacks on public or private property. For this paper, we use dichotomous versions of this variable representing the presence of military operations.[15]

*Hectares of Coca*: The coca cultivation indicator is coded as the presence or absence of cultivation in the municipality based on the hectares of coca located there in 2009.[16]

### *Estimated Proportion of Support for the Military across different Contexts of Armed Actors Control, 1997-2003*

The following figure compares the direct and the experimental questions across different contexts of armed actor territorial control. This figure is similar to Figure 3, presented in the paper. However, unlike Figure 3, in which the variables identifying territorial control

[13] This technique is based on the idea that, when working with longitudinal data, subgroups may share distinctive trajectories (Nagin 2005). Longitudinal data on violent events do not follow a common pattern across all municipalities in Colombia, but subgroups do: in several municipalities, the incidence of events is almost zero, others have many events, and still others experience an increase or decrease in events. Nagin developed a statistical approach to identify common patterns, which we follow in Colombia to identify municipalities sharing violent event trajectories.

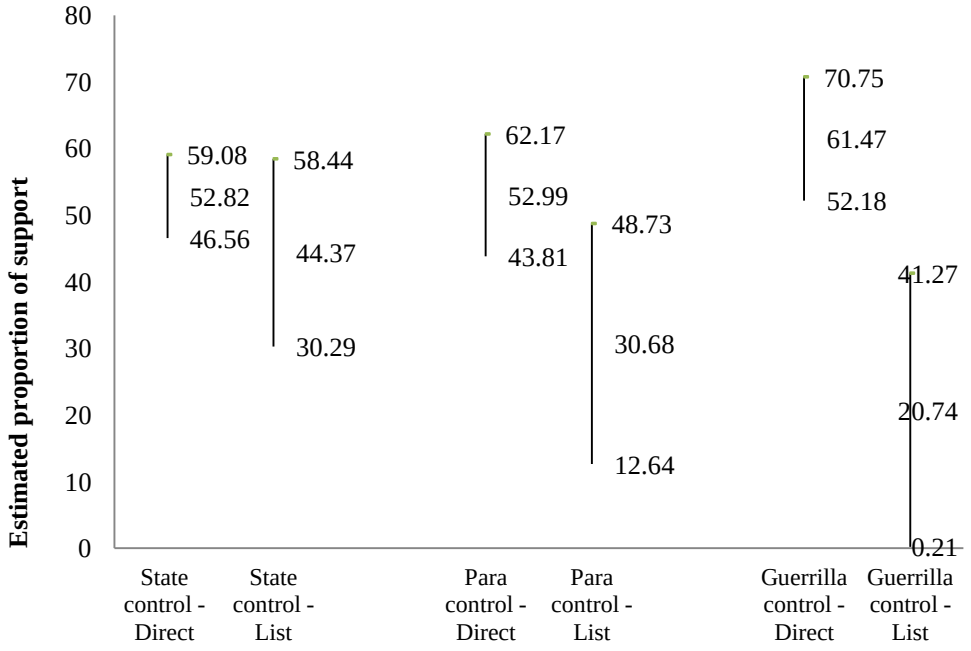
[14] Municipalities not under guerrilla or paramilitary control were considered under state control. A controlled municipality is one in which an armed actor's violence trajectory clearly dominated those of the other armed actors for the entire period of analysis (2002-2009). Comparing trajectories of violence, we established those municipalities in which one armed actor overpowered the others. For a detailed description of the operationalization procedure, please contact the authors.

[15] This variable was also constructed using the monthly report on violent events published by CINEP (2009). Using cut points for high and low military operations have the same effects.

[16] Data on coca cultivation are from Proyecto Simci II (2009, 2010).

were generated using data from 2002 to 2009, here the data to capture the variables identifying territorial covered the period from 1997 to 2003.

**Estimated Proportion of Support for the Military across Territorial Control by Different Armed Actors – Direct versus Experimental Measures**




***Models with Interactions between Each Independent Variable and Treatment***

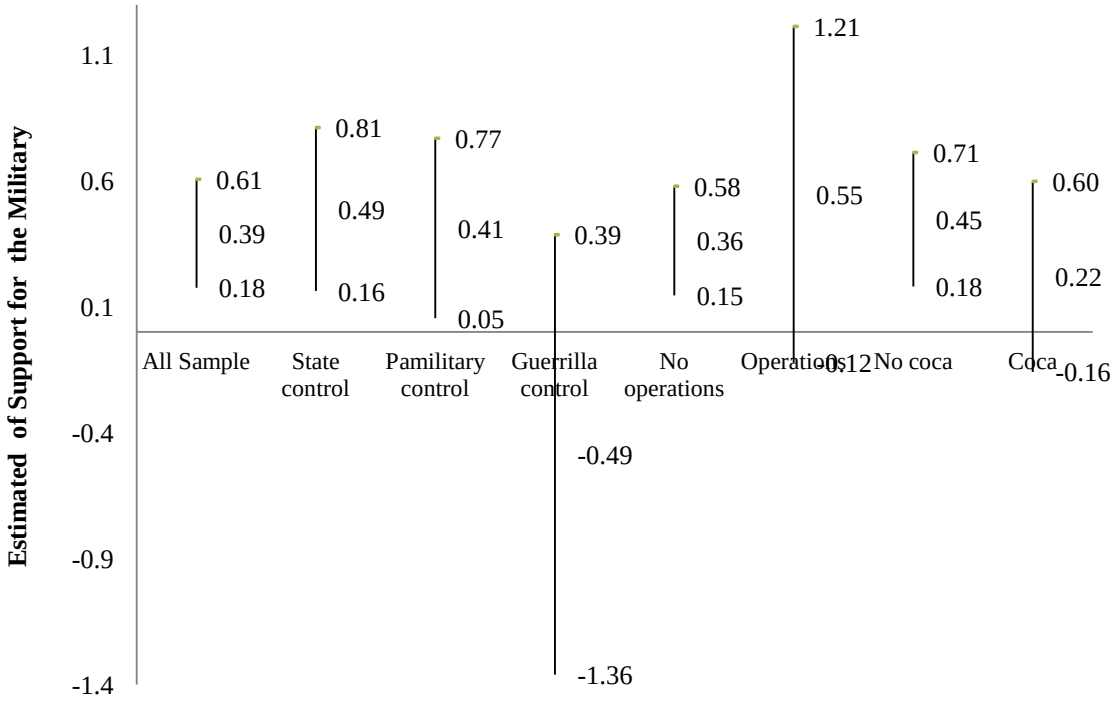
In this section we present: a) Results from a series of regression models in which all predictors were interacted with a binary indicator of the experimental treatment. And, b) a figure displaying the predicted levels of support for the military, captured by the experimental measure, based on each model with interactions, across several violent contexts.

## Regression Models on Support for the Military – Experimental Measure (List) with Interactions

| D.V.:Support for the Military (listmil) | Model 1 | Model 2 | Model 3 | Model 4 | Model 5 | Model 6 | Model 7 | Model 8 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | All observations | State control | Paramilitary control | Guerrilla control | No operations | Operations | No coca | Coca |
| | | | | | | | | |
| Age | -0.000 | 0.001 | -0.002+ | -0.001 | 0.000 | -0.002+ | 0.000 | -0.002 |
| | (0.001) | (0.001) | (0.001) | (0.002) | (0.001) | (0.001) | (0.001) | (0.002) |
| Education | 0.001 | 0.002 | -0.001 | 0.003 | 0.002 | -0.001 | 0.001 | -0.000 |
| | (0.002) | (0.002) | (0.003) | (0.003) | (0.002) | (0.002) | (0.002) | (0.004) |
| Gender (Female) | 0.025 | 0.083 | 0.034 | -0.282* | 0.028 | 0.027 | 0.034 | 0.014 |
| | (0.051) | (0.077) | (0.073) | (0.059) | (0.071) | (0.043) | (0.052) | (0.134) |
| Wealth | -0.000 | -0.002 | 0.003 | -0.008* | -0.000 | 0.001 | -0.000 | -0.002 |
| | (0.002) | (0.003) | (0.004) | (0.002) | (0.002) | (0.005) | (0.003) | (0.004) |
| Urban-rural | -0.024 | -0.064 | -0.014 | -0.036 | 0.015 | -0.168 | -0.007 | -0.051 |
| | (0.078) | (0.120) | (0.112) | (0.168) | (0.086) | (0.161) | (0.101) | (0.105) |
| Right Wing party Affiliation (Uribe) | 0.011 | -0.007 | 0.041 | 0.143 | 0.004 | 0.047 | 0.035 | -0.059 |
| | (0.051) | (0.068) | (0.092) | (0.088) | (0.067) | (0.068) | (0.055) | (0.114) |
| How Many Close Victims of Violence | -0.000 | -0.000 | -0.000 | 0.001 | -0.001 | 0.003 | -0.002 | 0.005 |
| | (0.001) | (0.002) | (0.004) | (0.002) | (0.002) | (0.002) | (0.002) | (0.003) |
| Displaced by Violece | -0.037 | 0.148 | -0.194 | -0.515+ | -0.030 | -0.032 | 0.048 | -0.375 |
| | (0.115) | (0.130) | (0.204) | (0.208) | (0.154) | (0.200) | (0.124) | (0.237) |
| Treatment | 0.441+ | 0.556 | 0.155 | 0.680 | 0.458+ | 0.570 | 0.564 | 0.256 |
| | (0.251) | (0.347) | (0.372) | (0.466) | (0.228) | (0.802) | (0.335) | (0.229) |
| Age x Treatment | 0.001 | -0.002 | 0.006 | 0.003 | -0.002 | 0.008 | 0.001 | -0.001 |
| | (0.002) | (0.002) | (0.004) | (0.003) | (0.002) | (0.006) | (0.003) | (0.004) |
| Education x Treatment | 0.001 | -0.003 | 0.005 | -0.013 | -0.001 | 0.004 | -0.003 | 0.010* |
| | (0.003) | (0.004) | (0.004) | (0.012) | (0.003) | (0.009) | (0.003) | (0.005) |
| Gender x Treatment | -0.346** | -0.484** | -0.307 | 0.531 | -0.394** | -0.241 | -0.395** | -0.309 |
| | (0.108) | (0.134) | (0.182) | (0.244) | (0.122) | (0.237) | (0.114) | (0.277) |
| Wealth X Treatment | 0.002 | 0.006+ | -0.001 | 0.008 | 0.003 | -0.003 | 0.004 | -0.001 |
| | (0.002) | (0.003) | (0.004) | (0.006) | (0.003) | (0.004) | (0.003) | (0.004) |
| Urban-rural x Treatment | -0.239 | -0.186 | -0.176 | -1.242+ | -0.201 | -0.267 | -0.329+ | -0.253 |
| | (0.148) | (0.202) | (0.250) | (0.463) | (0.156) | (0.231) | (0.166) | (0.243) |
| Right Wing party ID (Uribe) x Treatment | 0.183+ | 0.153 | 0.249 | 0.039 | 0.234+ | -0.139 | 0.191+ | 0.190 |
| | (0.101) | (0.126) | (0.181) | (0.190) | (0.117) | (0.168) | (0.108) | (0.219) |
| How Many Close Victims of Viol. x Treatment | -0.001 | -0.002 | 0.002 | -0.002 | 0.001 | -0.004+ | 0.001 | -0.003 |
| | (0.002) | (0.002) | (0.004) | (0.006) | (0.002) | (0.002) | (0.002) | (0.002) |
| Displaced by Violece x Treatment | 0.057 | -0.062 | 0.059 | 0.912 | -0.148 | 1.838* | -0.011 | 0.460 |
| | (0.191) | (0.313) | (0.289) | (0.474) | (0.222) | (0.586) | (0.241) | (0.447) |
| Constant | 1.309** | 1.323** | 1.235** | 1.582* | 1.263** | 1.334** | 1.276** | 1.459** |
| | (0.112) | (0.167) | (0.160) | (0.324) | (0.141) | (0.176) | (0.148) | (0.232) |
| | | | | | | | | |
| *N* | 1,334 | 729 | 470 | 135 | 954 | 380 | 1,019 | 315 |
| R-squared | 0.051 | 0.060 | 0.073 | 0.159 | 0.050 | 0.129 | 0.067 | 0.073 |

Note: Method of estimation regression analysis. DV is support for the military reported through the indirect measure. Numbers in parentheses are robust standard errors, clustered by municipality (45 clusters). Number of observations varies due to control missingness. * $p<0.10$, ** $p<0.05$, *** $p<0.01$

**Predicted Probabilities of Support for the Military across Different Contexts – Experimental Measure (Models with Interactions)**




Note: Based on Table 2c.