

THE (UNINTENDED?) EFFECTS OF US MILITARY TRAINING DURING THE COLD WAR IN LATIN-AMERICA

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ABSTRACT. Different country own features and experiences have been associated with the emergence of democracy and democratic values. This paper goes beyond this framework and explore how changes in democracy is explained by foreign interventions and policies. I study the *School of Americas*, a US military training program of Latin-American armed forces during the Cold War. I find that this program had a negative effect on democracy levels. The increase of repression after sending high-rank officials explains this results. I exploit the geographical distributions of commanders in Colombia to test locally my results and show that places commanded of SOA trainees experienced an increase of illegal contra-insurgency activities. However, after the program change of focus, countries with more trainees (and therefore repression) experienced positive effects on democracy support.

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