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

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Abstract. This paper examines the School of the Americas (SOA), a key program in U.S. foreign policy used to influence Latin America by training Latin American armed forces during the Cold War. We leverage variation among SOA graduates to identify the causal effects of U.S. military training and measure its influence in the region. Our findings show that the SOA program reduced democratic quality and increased government repression. Additionally, we analyze the effects in Argentina and Colombia by exploiting military promotion rules and the distribution of military areas. Zones commanded by SOA graduates experienced higher rates of civilian disappearances during Argentina's military dictatorship and increased civilian victimization during the Colombian civil conflict. These increases occurred without a corresponding rise in military counterinsurgency operations. However, in the long term, we find that SOA promoted democratic values post-Cold War, with cohorts exposed to SOA training showing a rise in support for democracy. This study shows the consequences of foreign military policies on recipient countries, highlighting both the short-term adverse effects on conflict and long-term positive effects on democracy.

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Keywords: Democracy, Military training, Armed conflict, Civilian victimization

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1. Introduction

The U.S. foreign agenda in Latin America has been a topic of profound significance and contention in academic and policy circles for over a century. The United States has historically perceived Latin America as its strategic sphere of influence and has employed different tactics to influence the region according to its national interests. Common tactics used to achieve its political agendas beyond its administrative borders have included conditional aid programs that link assistance to desired performance outcomes, economic sanctions, supporting or instigating coups d'état, covert operations, and outright military intrusions (see Kinzer, 2006; Toke et al., 2019). However, few works have analyzed and causally estimated the effects of U.S. interventions in the region. We provide rigorous evidence about the impact of U.S. foreign policy using the School of the Americas (SOA) case, showing that this policy had lasting impacts on democracy and victimization against civilians in the region.

Due to their nature, identifying the effects of such foreign policies is difficult. Altough understanding the range of strategies available to states in influencing foreign actions is crucial because it enables nations to anticipate and counteract potential threats while also identifying opportunities for collaboration, there is no causal analysis of the intervention policies in the region. We fill this gap in the literature by focusing on the impact of U.S. military training programs on Latin American armed forces, which played a role in escalating repression and diminishing civil society activities during the Cold War (U.S. Congress, 1997). As case studies, we examine the effects of SOA in Argentina and Colombia to explore the specific impacts of this training in the region. By investigating these forms of intervention, this research provides valuable insights into the complex dynamics of external involvement in domestic affairs and its impact on democracy and repression.

The SOA was a military institution created in 1946 by the U.S. to train Latin American armed forces under the same environment and rules as the U.S. Army. Initially, the SOA aimed to align countries in the hemisphere with U.S. interests, but its goal shifted to an anti-communist containment program (U.S. Congress, 1997). Using information about attendees from 18 Latin American countries, we estimate the impact of this policy, establishing a connection between graduate officers and the deterioration of democracy. Utilizing the Polity-IV index, we find that an increase of 100 officers trained over the last five years correlates with a decrease of approximately 0.2 points in the democracy index.

Contrary to common belief, we show that the process of democratic deterioration is not immediate (Ruby and Gibler, 2010). Graduates of the SOA do not return to their countries to immediately promote dictatorships and coups. Instead, the process is subtle and continuous. Increased numbers of SOA graduates are associated with reduced democratic expressions, such as strikes, violent riots, and anti-government demonstrations. More graduates are linked to increased repression that, in the long run, translates into worse democracy but not necessarily a transition from democracy to dictatorship. These significant transformative transitions are associated with the fundamental structure of each society (Acemoglu and Robinson, 2005), and military training impacts the degree and occurrence of violence.

Countries might unintentionally influence other states' outcomes due to spillover effects of their own internal policies (Dube et al., 2013). However, some also seek to influence other actors in the international system according to their national interests. To achieve this, countries can employ diverse strategies, including direct or indirect engagement, with the former approach being the most widely discussed in existing literature (Reagan, 2002). Nonetheless, the analysis of subtler and indirect forms of intervention requires further discussion. This research investigates one of these less direct forms of involvement. Moreover, we address this gap in the literature by scrutinizing the broader repercussions of such interventions, extending the analysis beyond their initial objectives. Specifically, we study the effects of external military training and its relationship with repression.

We analyze the SOA graduates and their outcomes for Argentina, one of the countries with the least SOA graduates, and Colombia, a country with the highest number of militaries trained in the school. While, in general, our analysis revealed that these commanders had no distinct advantage in confronting communist guerrilla groups or initiating military actions, they positively affected civilian victimization. In Argentina, having an SOA graduate as a military zone commander significantly raised the likelihood of reporting forced disappearances by 33 percentage points. Similarly, in Colombia, the presence of an SOA commander in a brigade consistently correlated with an increase in forced disappearance rates. This is evidence of the complex domestic structure that foreign forces can perturb when intervening in domestic affairs and going beyond the original scope of the intervention.

Lastly, our study reveals a positive long-term impact. We examine how the attitudes of cohorts with more exposure to SOA graduates change regarding their support for democracy. Previous research has highlighted the connection between solid democracies and internal support, emphasizing the importance of shared values, improved

governance, adaptation, and citizen engagement (see Nannicini et al., 2013; Glaeser et al., 2007; Persson and Tabellini, 2009, and others). Our findings indicate that, on average and in line with previous literature (Bautista et al., 2019), cohorts influenced more by the SOA and, therefore, have experienced more repression tend to have less trust in their military forces but hold more favorable opinions of democracy. This research enhances our understanding of the intricate relationship between international interventions, victimization, and democracy. It offers valuable insights into the development of democracy support across various Latin American countries.

2. Background

2.1. ***The School of the Americas (SOA).*** The School of the Americas (SOA) emerged as a military institution, established by the United States post-World War II. Its primary mission was to provide military training to Latin-American armed forces, aligning them with U.S. military practices and principles. Commencing its operations in 1946, shortly after World War II's conclusion, the SOA initially operated from the Panama Canal Zone. Countries from the Latin American region sent their military personnel to this facility for training conducted under the guidance of U.S. military personnel. Initially, the United States aimed to fill the void left by European nations in the post-war period, with the objective of creating a mechanism to foster alignment with U.S. interests among countries in the hemisphere. However, over time, the program's focus shifted towards anti-communist efforts, responding to the growing influence of the Soviet Union and the Cuban Revolution (Weeks, 2003).

The United States regarded these programs as crucial in countering internal forces that could potentially align with international communism and the Soviet Union. Under the Kennedy administration, SOA transformed, aligning itself with the "national security doctrine." This doctrine shifted the focus from external threats to democracy to the internal challenges faced by countries in the Americas. Conventional strategies employed in global warfare proved ineffective in addressing these internal threats. Consequently, the United States began supplying Latin American nations with advanced intelligence tools and tactics specifically tailored for anti-guerrilla warfare (Blakeley, 2006).

Numerous human rights organizations have raised concerns about the School instructing military personnel in activities that violate international law (Weeks, 2003). According to these organizations, SOA students were taught various tactics, including those associated with "dirty wars." For instance, research by McCoy (2005), which examined data from six countries, found that officials who had received training at SOA

were more likely to engage in human rights violations. Furthermore, several prominent and high-ranking military officers associated with human rights abuses, involvement in military juntas, and instigating coups d'état were graduates of SOA. The skills that militaries might have acquired at SOA encompassed a range of activities, such as torture, interrogation, infiltration, psychological warfare, kidnappings, and the enforced disappearance of political opponents. From the perspective of these commanders, they believed that their own citizens posed potential threats to national security (SOAW, 2023).

Despite concerns about human rights violations, the School continued its operations (Nepstad, 2000). In 1984, it was forced to leave Panama and relocated to Fort Benning, Georgia. Following the gradual decline of the Soviet Union and the conclusion of the Cold War, the School shifted its focus to anti-narcotics operations. While the strategy evolved, concerns about its practices persisted (SOAW, 2023). In 2001, the institution changed its name to the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation (WHINSEC) and continued to receive trainees from various Western Hemisphere countries (Mateo, 2005).

Our research shows that the training provided to armed forces during the Cold War era is linked to increased repression and a decline in the quality of democracy. However, we also demonstrate that, after the transition to democracy, this strategy led to greater support for democracy but diminished backing for armed forces.

2.2. ***The Argentinian military dictatorship.*** From 1976 to 1983, Argentina was ruled by a military dictatorship, often called the "Proceso de Reorganización Nacional" or simply "El Proceso." The dictatorship began on March 24, 1976, when the military junta, led by General Jorge Rafael Videla, overthrew the government of Isabel Perón, initiating a period characterized by widespread human rights abuses, censorship, and state terrorism. The primary objective of the dictatorship was to eradicate left-wing guerrilla movements and any form of political dissent or opposition perceived as threats to the stability of the state. Under this covert war, suspected dissidents were arbitrarily detained, tortured, and often killed (Finchelstein, 2014). Conservative estimates suggest that around 13,000 people disappeared, while human rights organizations put the number closer to 30,000 (Wright, 2006).

Internationally, the regime was initially supported by several Western powers due to its anti-communist stance during the Cold War era. However, as reports of gross human rights violations emerged, international sentiment shifted, culminating in widespread condemnation. The dictatorship's economic policies, characterized by liberalization

and heavy foreign borrowing, led to a surge in external debt, the repercussions of which Argentina grappled with for decades (Verbitsky and Bohoslavsky, 2016).

The end of the military regime came in 1983, following its ill-fated invasion of the Falkland Islands (Islas Malvinas) in 1982, which resulted in a swift defeat by British forces. The war's outcome, combined with escalating economic problems and societal demand for justice, led to the fall of the dictatorship and the restoration of democracy in December 1983 (Helmke, 2002).

2.3. ***The Colombian conflict.*** In the early 1940s, the two main political parties were part of an internal civil war that led to many civil casualties. The conflict ended with an agreement between the two main parts, where the two political parties rotated power, alternating the presidential terms (Arjona, 2016a). Since this moment, the country has been under a democratic framework with regular elections but with high levels of violence and conflict underneath (Velez, 2008).

The current conflict started in 1964 with the creation of several left-wing guerrilla movements. These groups claimed to represent the force beyond the bipartisan system excluded in previous power arrangements. These groups hoisted the representation of poor rural peasants, and their primary goal was to overthrow the government (Molano, 2000). To complement the conflict under the lens of the Cold War, the Colombian government saw the left-wing guerrillas as threats to state stability (Ortiz, 2002). Several decrees allowed the creation of militias to fight these movements. Military trained and armed civilians to fight the communist groups and the "internal enemy". These groups evolved and became paramilitary groups (Arjona, 2016b, 2015).

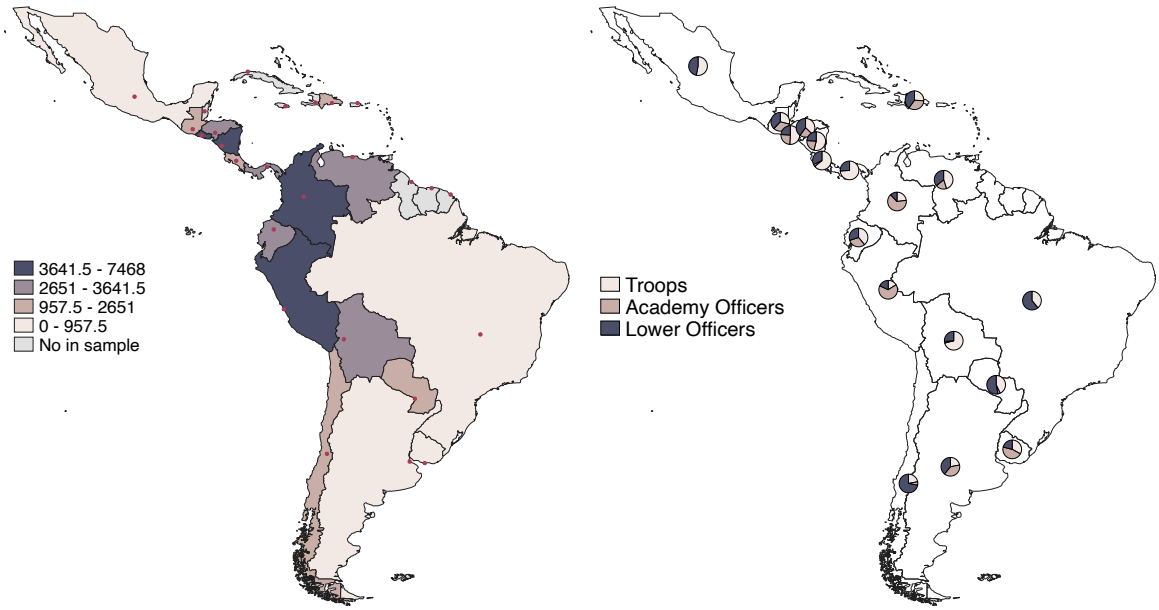
The conflict escalated after the mid-1980s when left-wing guerrilla and right-wing paramilitary groups got involved in illegal drug trafficking. Paramilitary groups colluded under the umbrella of a unified organization. One of the primary strategies of this group included perpetrating massacres (Grajales, 2013). Under its counterinsurgency goals, these groups targeted civilians to decimate the "local support" to guerrilla movements (Aranguren, 2001). This strategy consolidated paramilitary groups as a third party in the conflict. In 2003, the paramilitary carried out a partial ceasefire and negotiation, leading to demobilization. Nonetheless, according to Human Rights Watch (2010), the paramilitary cease of activities was symbolic, and many splinter groups maintained actual dominance over local territories under neo-paramilitary groups.

Paramilitary activities is linked to military, active support from officers at the high-rank levels inside the army (Human Rights Watch, 2000). We argue that *SOA* military training of brigade commanders explains the emergence of these groups in Colombia.

The ability to perform large scale operations with the SOA graduates' blessing then transforms into greater civilian victimization. The goal then is to assess the increase of repression and victimization to the democratic behavior of this population.

3. Data and Descriptive Statistics

Figure 1. Geographical distribution SOA graduates



A. Total Graduates **B.** Share

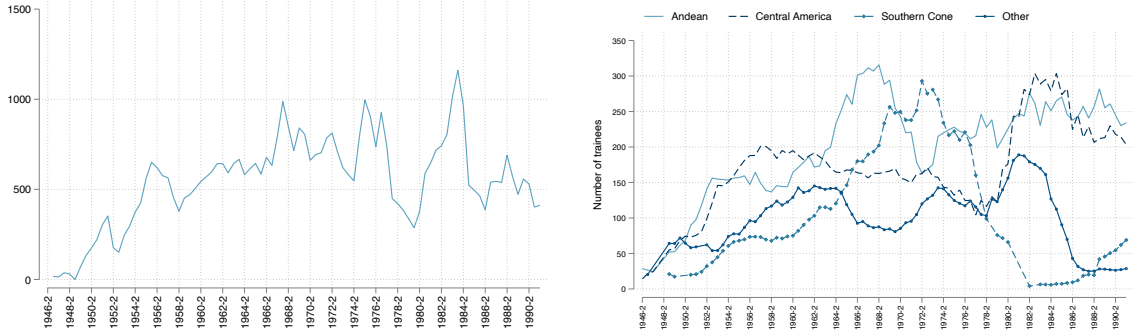
Notes: Panel A in this figure shows the number of SOA graduates from 1946 to 1991. In Panel B, the distribution of SOA graduates is further detailed by their military ranks at the time of attendance. Troop categories include soldiers, enlisted personnel, and non-commissioned officers, while the student rank encompasses cadets and trainees in the process of becoming officers. The lower officer ranks category includes junior and chief officers, excluding generals.

3.1. ***SOA* Graduates:** To assess the impact of the SOA program on various outcomes, we initially identified the program's graduates. We obtain data on military personnel who attended the School of the Americas (SOA) from the organization known as School of the Americas Watch. The SOA Watch aims to document human rights violations committed by SOA graduates across the Americas. Their dataset comprises information about individuals who attended the school, sourced from official reports from the United States government. This dataset started in 1946 when SOA opened its doors to train militaries from Latin America. The data includes the graduate's name, country of origin, military rank or position at the time of attendance, the program they participated in, and the training dates. We know the year when each trainee graduated and

departed from the School. In those rare cases where information regarding the exact month of graduation is missing, we assumed that it occurred within the first half of the year.

Our analysis covers the Cold War era of the School, from 1949 to 1991. Throughout this period, most countries in the Americas dispatched personnel to the SOA. Our sample consists of independent countries as of 1949, except Cuba and Haiti.[1] In Figure 1, Panel A illustrates the geographical dispersion of attendees from all 18 countries within our sample during the entire study. Although all countries sent trainees, considerable variation exists in the total number of personnel trained. Colombia, Peru, and El Salvador emerged as the most enthusiastic participants, dispatching over three thousand individuals each. Panel B of Figure 1 displays the distribution of the types of personnel sent by each country. While countries like Chile and Brazil predominantly sent a significant proportion of lower-ranking officers, others such as Mexico and Bolivia primarily dispatched enlisted personnel. We use this variation to asses how these graduates impacted democracy varies, depending on their power once they return to their home countries. If there is an effect, we anticipate it will be more pronounced among those higher up in the military hierarchy.

FIGURE 2. SOA graduates time evolution



A. Total Graduates **B.** By zone

Notes: This figure shows the count of SOA graduates from 1946 to 1991, presented in half-year intervals. Panel A presents the aggregate number of graduates, irrespective of their military rank. Panel B further dissects this data by region of the attendees. Appendix figure A.2 shows the time series data for each country.

[1]The 18 Latin American countries are Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Hondura, Guatemala, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, Paraguay, Republica Dominicana, Uruguay, and Venezuela.

Between 1946 and 1991, the school consistently received an average number of students. Though there was some variance in attendance after its consolidation around 1956, the number of students per semester ranged from 500 to 1000 (see figure 2, Panel A). However, the origins of the students varied significantly (see figure 2, Panel B). For instance, during the mid-70s, most students came from the southern cone, but this region stopped sending students after 1980. Central American countries initially had fewer students attending but later became the primary source of students, along with Andean countries. This temporal variation allows one to estimate the effect of receiving SOA graduates.

The Pentagon released training manuals from the SOA in 1996 after public pressure about the lessons imparted by the SOA (Priest, 1996; U.S. Congress, 1997). These revelations confirmed accusations by SOA Watch, numerous human rights groups, and Latin Americans regarding the misuse of US funds for propagating torture and oppression (U.S. Congress, 1997). The SOA wrote the manuals from CIA documents and Army guides from the 1950s and 1960s (Haugaard, 2007). The SOA disseminated the manuals in Latin American countries between 1987 and 1991. Former Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney evaluated the training of Colombian soldiers by SOA in 1991, highlighted the illicit content in five of the seven manuals, and advised their retrieval (Blanton and Kornbluh, 2006).

We applied textual sentiment analysis to the SOA's manuals to discern the underlying emotions or attitudes associated with specific terms within the text. We use the NRC Emotion Lexicon, a comprehensive resource designed explicitly for sentiment analysis and emotion detection within textual data (Jockers, 2017). Developed by the National Research Council Canada (NRC), this lexicon categorizes words with their associated emotions—anger, fear, anticipation, trust, surprise, sadness, joy, and disgust—and sentiments, which are broadly categorized as negative or positive (Mohammad and Turney, 2013). Each word in the lexicon is mapped to these emotions and sentiments, indicating its emotional tone and general sentiment.[2]

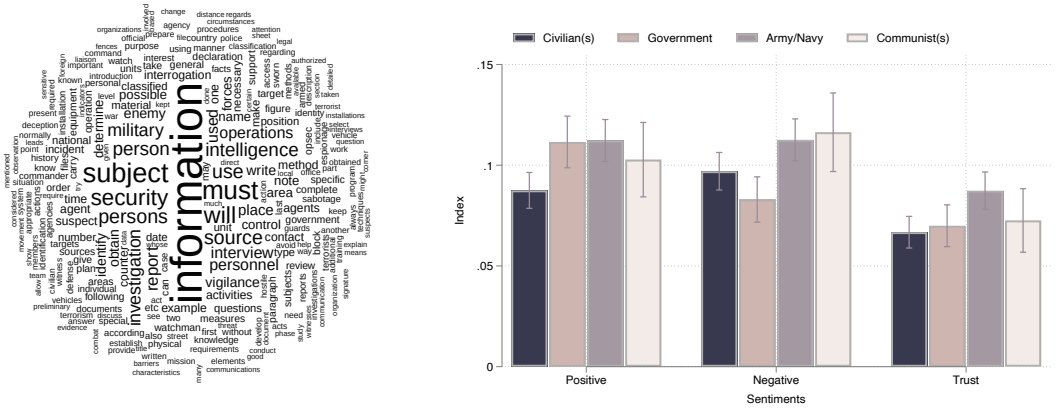
We focused on the sentiments related to six pivotal words: civilian, civilians, government, Army, Navy, and communists. This process entailed scanning vast textual

[2]In practical applications, one scans for words present in the lexicon to determine the sentiment or emotion of a piece of text using the NRC lexicon and notes their associated emotions and sentiments. After scanning the entire text, an aggregate score for each emotion and sentiment is derived, representing the emotional and sentiment composition of the text. Popular programming libraries, especially in Python, offer functionalities to easily "get NRC sentiment" from texts, facilitating its use in diverse sentiment analysis tasks (Jockers, 2017).

datasets to identify occurrences of these words and then gauging the surrounding content's sentiment—be it positive, negative, or neutral—. The intention was to unearth the general emotional tone linked with each term and understand how the words are perceived in SOA's manuals. We constructed a specialized index that measured the correlation between the identified sentiments and each of the six words. This index offered a picture of the strength of association between a word and its prevailing sentiment. Then, we computed a weighted average, considering both the frequency of these words and their sentiment strength within the manual. This approach allowed us to comprehend how these terms may elicit sentiments differing from their broader general usage when presented in the backdrop of the SOA manual.

Our findings show that the term "army" was frequently associated with words evoking a sense of trust. However, "army" was also linked to several negative connotations, suggesting a complex perception of the military's role. Meanwhile, the terms "civilian" and "civilians" displayed the least association with positive sentiments, indicating a potentially diminished or problematic view of the civilian populace within the context of the manuals (Figure 3, Panel B).

FIGURE 3. Text analysis "Counter Inteligence" manual



A. Word cloud **B.** Sentiment analysis

Notes: This figure shows the text analysis of the counter-intelligence manual text provided by SOAW (2023). Panel A shows the word cloud with the words that appeared the most in the document. Panel B shows the sentiment index for terms associated with four social groups: civilians, the government, the army/navy, and communists. Appendix figure A.1 provides the same analysis for the "sources management" manual.

While definitive evidence on whether the SOA explicitly taught tactics of torture or killing remains elusive in the manual, a meticulous text analysis provides intriguing insights into the content's undertones. The text analysis strongly suggests that the SOA's materials fostered an environment of distrust towards civilians. Instead of portraying civilians as neutral or allies, the narrative seemingly skewed towards representing them as potential adversaries or threats. This inclination to frame civilians in a negative light can have profound implications, subtly molding perceptions and attitudes toward non-military populations.

3.2. **Democracy:** Our primary focus is on measurements of democracy as the key outcome variable. In this study, we utilize the well-established Polity IV index, a widely recognized measure that evaluates a country's institutional framework (Boese, 2019).[3] This index comprises various components designed to capture aspects of executive recruitment, constraints on the chief executive, and political participation. We opted for the Polity IV index for several reasons. First, it enables us to construct a comprehensive panel dataset from 1946 to 1991, encompassing the democratic trajectories of all 18 countries in our sample. Second, we encounter fewer concerns related to codification and factionalism categorization (Boese, 2019). In our sample, there are no instances of institutional interruption due to foreign intervention, and only five years report cases of disruption, which likely do not result from a complete collapse of central political authority. Third, the Polity IV index not only distinguishes between democratic and authoritarian regimes but also captures varying degrees of variation within each regime. This nuanced approach enhances our ability to analyze the subtleties of democratic shifts over time.

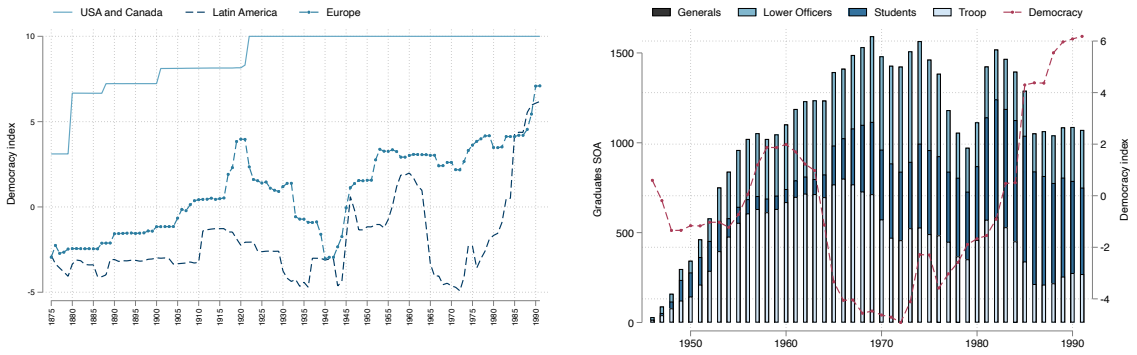
Figure 4, panel A, presents a comprehensive view of the evolution of democracy in Latin American countries compared to other regions. It becomes evident that Latin American nations have not consistently adhered to democratic principles. While they have broadly followed global trends when compared to Europe, the levels of democracy in Latin America have always lagged.

Our primary objective is to establish a link between democracy and SOA graduates. In Figure 4, panel B, we investigate this relationship at the regional level. The region underwent a phase of declining democracy after 1960, which coincided with a substantial increase in SOA graduates, particularly those holding lower-ranked positions. However, this trend began to reverse after 1980, marked by a resurgence of regional

[3]While various indicators can measure the quality of democracy, each has its advantages and limitations (Vaccaro, 2021).

democracy level. In the following steps, we thoroughly examine this connection by analyzing individual country trajectories and variations in subsequent sections of this paper.

FIGURE 4. Democracy evolution



A. Democracy index **B.** SOA graduates

Notes: This figure presents the Polity IV index. In Panel A, the chart displays the evolution of the index from 1875 to 1991 in three different regions: Canada and the US, Europe, and Latin America. The European region includes Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and Turkey. Latin American region includes the 18 countries in our sample. We created each series by calculating a weighted average of the democracy index for individual countries, with weights based on population data from Banks and Kenneth (2023). Panel B compares the evolution of democracy in Latin America during the Cold War with the levels of SOA graduates by rank.

3.3. **Study cases for Colombia and Argentina:** The rich data from the School of the Americas (SOA) provides unique identification through the names of SOA graduates, allowing us to connect the military names who attend SOA and the location after finishing the training in SOA in Argentina and Colombia. With the connection between databases, we can investigate the impact of military training on civilian victimization. Specifically, our focus is on understanding the disparities between regions commanded by military units under the leadership of SOA graduates and those under the command of other officers during periods marked by elevated levels of civilian victimization.

Appendix Figures A.4 and A.5 illustrate the SOA graduate influence dispersion during our time frames. These figures highlight significant geographical variations in the distribution of SOA graduates. In the Argentinian context, where the number of SOA graduates was relatively low, some regions did not experience the leadership of an SOA graduate, accounting for approximately one-third of the localities in the country.

In the Colombian scenario, one of the countries that sent most students to SOA, every municipality, at some point, fell under the jurisdiction of an SOA graduate.

Our primary focus centers on civilian victimization, mainly enforced disappearances, defined as the illicit abduction or detainment of civilians, followed by their subsequent killing and the clandestine disposal of their bodies. We opted for disappearances because this outcome highlights intentional acts against civilians and does not solely show unintentional consequences from legitimate activities conducted by public forces against illegal groups. Argentina and Colombia have historical instances where their armed forces have employed this strategy. Consequently, these countries have devoted considerable efforts to compile information related to the universe of victims of this crime.

3.3.1. *Argentina data:* Our analysis focuses on the period of the military dictatorship from 1976 to 1983. Beginning in 1975, the government implemented a hierarchical structure of military zones, subzones, and areas across the country. This restructuring aimed to enhance the effectiveness of the government's efforts against communist guerrilla movements by assigning commanders jurisdiction over specific localities. We do not have access to official records of these commanders. However, we relied on data compiled by the "Nunca más" webpage, which documented the areas under the jurisdiction of these military units, the list of commanders operating in these regions, and the timeframes of their service.[4] Using this information, we reconstructed a quarterly panel that identifies the regions where there was influence of SOA graduates, from the third quarter of 1975 to the fourth quarter of 1982.

The government of Argentina maintains the *Registro Unificado de Víctimas de Terrorismo de Estado*, which collects and continuously updates information about victims of illegal repression carried out by government forces between 1966 and 1983.[5] This dataset includes victims of both disappearance and murder. It contains details about the victims, such as their names, birth years, nationalities, and national identification numbers. Importantly, it also provides crucial information about the place and date of abduction or murder. We utilized this information to construct quarterly rates at the local level in Argentina, which we then cross-referenced with the presence of SOA

[4]Nunca Más, "Zonificación Militar", July 17, 2023, http://www.desaparecidos.org/nuncamas/web/zonas/zonas.htm.

[5]The official source for this information is the Secretary of Human Rights. Ministerio de Justicia y Derechos Humanos, "RUVTE ", July 17, 2023, https://datos.gob.ar/ko_KR/dataset/justicia-registro-unificado-victimas-terrorismo-estado--ruvte-.

graduate commanders in the respective areas. Within our period of interest, the government accounts for 8,308 victims, of which we could identify the precise location of the crime in 7,162 cases (Appendix Figure A.6 panel A).

3.3.2. *Colombia data:* Our analysis focused on the period of the civil conflict after 1991. During this time, the smaller unit with defined jurisdiction was the brigade, and the government increased the number of active units in the country to address the challenges of the conflict. Specifically, active brigades rose from 14 in 1991 to 26 in 2010. While official records of army commanders were unavailable, we relied on data collected by Acemoglu et al. (2018) for our analysis. This data identified brigade commanders using *El Tiempo*, Colombia's main national newspaper, and the army's expired websites that mentioned the creation of new military units. With these sources, we constructed a semesterly panel that identified regions influenced by SOA graduates, similar to the approach used in the case of Argentina.[6]

In the case of Colombia, the government maintains the *Registro Nacional de Desaparecidos*, an information system established to compile reports from victims of disappearances dating as far back as 1921. This inter-institutional system gathers information regarding reported disappearances that includes various details about the victims, including their gender, place of residence, age, education, marital status, and, significantly, the date and location of the disappearance. It's important to note that the system compiles information about all cases, regardless of whether the individuals reappeared alive. For our analysis, we exclusively focus on cases where the person remains missing or where there is information about their death. Our research identified 79,042 victims, of which 2,951 were reported as deceased (Appendix Figure A.6 panel B). Unfortunately, the database does not provide information regarding the perpetrator of the crime, preventing us from distinguishing victims of guerrilla groups from those of armed forces or paramilitary groups.

4. Effect of SOA on democracy

We employ a dynamic panel estimation to evaluate the influence of SOA graduates on democracy. Our methodology uses temporal and geographical variations in the military personnel sent by the countries included in our sample. The following equation

[6]Rank promotions and brigade appointments in Colombia typically occur during December and June. Consequently, much of our information identifies changes during these specific periods, allowing us to discern shifts on a semi-annual basis. This differs from our approach in Argentina, where we were able to gather quarterly data.

describes the dynamic of democracy trajectories.

$$DI_{ct} = \alpha_c + \alpha_t + \beta_1 \times \text{Stock SOA}_{ct-5} + \sum_{j=1}^{J} \beta_j^* \times \text{DI}_{ct-j} + \varepsilon_{ct} \tag{4.1}$$

where DI_{ct} represents the Polity IV democracy index for country c in year t, while Stock SOA_{ct-5} represents the stock of SOA graduates for the five years preceding t. We introduce α_c as a set of country-fixed effects to account for time-invariant country-specific characteristics and δ_t as a set of year-fixed effects. To capture the dynamic nature of democracy, our model incorporates J lags of the democracy index. The fundamental assumption underlying our modeling approach to estimate an unbiased effect β_1 is that the stock of SOA graduates and past levels of democracy are orthogonal to contemporary or future shocks to democracy. The assumption implies that by incorporating an adequate number of J lags of the democracy index into our model, we can eliminate serial correlation in the residuals and control for the influence of past democracy trends on decisions related to training personnel at the school. This assumption also implies that countries opting to send personnel for training had exhibited comparable democratic trends in the preceding years.

Table 1 presents the coefficient estimate β_1 derived from Equation 4.1. It illustrates the impact of a 100-student increase in SOA graduates over five years on democracy levels. This table provides the overall and heterogeneous effects contingent upon the graduates' rank. The odd columns exhibit the effect while controlling for the preceding democracy levels. The even columns present the effect when accounting for the complete set of democracy levels spanning the preceding five years.

We found a negative correlation between SOA graduates and democracy. The coefficients suggest that 100 officers sent for training in the preceding five years led to an approximate reduction of 0.2 points in the democracy index. We only observe statistical significance when examining the influence of officers of lower ranks (i.e., excluding generals). The coefficients related to SOA-trained enlisted personnel and soldiers do not display a statistically significant impact on democracy.[7] We think the inherent power dynamics characterizing each military category explain these results. Enlisted personnel and soldiers generally lack decision-making authority in military actions. Upon their return to their home countries, academy officers are typically in the early stages of their careers and do not hold commanding positions. In contrast,

[7]We conducted inference with clustering at the country level. However, given our sample's restricted number of countries, there is a potential bias in standard error estimation. We also employed standard error estimation through bootstrapped samples, utilizing 1000 resamples to address this limitation.

officers possess authority over operations within their respective areas of responsibility, often commanding multiple subordinates. This observation suggests that officers can influence the country's overall performance.

TABLE 1. Dynamic Panel: Effect of SOA Graduates on Democracy

	Total		Troop		Academy Officers		Lower Rank Officers	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Dependent Variable: Democracy Index ($\mu = 0.2, \sigma = 6.5$)								
Stock SOA Trainees$_{t-5}$	-0.036	-0.030	-0.006	-0.008	-0.056^{*}	-0.045	-0.179^{**}	-0.151^{**}
	(0.025)	(0.023)	(0.035)	(0.035)	(0.031)	(0.027)	(0.063)	(0.068)
	[0.029]	[0.027]	[0.047]	[0.045]	[0.062]	[0.055]	[0.084]††	[0.088]†
Democracy								
Democracy Index$_{t-1}$	0.844^{***}	0.908^{***}	0.843^{***}	0.910^{***}	0.844^{***}	0.909^{***}	0.843^{***}	0.906^{***}
	(0.024)	(0.040)	(0.024)	(0.040)	(0.024)	(0.040)	(0.023)	(0.039)
	[0.023]‡	[0.039]‡	[0.023]‡	[0.040]‡	[0.023]‡	[0.039]‡	[0.022]‡	[0.039]‡
Democracy Index$_{t-2}$	–	-0.049	–	-0.049	–	-0.048	–	-0.049
	–	(0.037)	–	(0.037)	–	(0.037)	–	(0.037)
	–	[0.039]	–	[0.039]	–	[0.039]	–	[0.039]
Democracy Index$_{t-3}$	–	-0.033	–	-0.034	–	-0.033	–	-0.033
	–	(0.058)	–	(0.058)	–	(0.058)	–	(0.058)
	–	[0.055]	–	[0.055]	–	[0.055]	–	[0.055]
Democracy Index$_{t-4}$	–	0.039	–	0.039	–	0.039	–	0.040
	–	(0.048)	–	(0.048)	–	(0.048)	–	(0.048)
	–	[0.049]	–	[0.049]	–	[0.049]	–	[0.049]
Democracy Index$_{t-5}$	–	-0.047^{**}	–	-0.049^{**}	–	-0.048^{**}	–	-0.044^{*}
	–	(0.021)	–	(0.021)	–	(0.021)	–	(0.023)
	–	[0.024]†	–	[0.024]††	–	[0.024]††	–	[0.025]†
Constant Stock Effect 5 Years After	-0.131	-0.116	-0.023	-0.031	-0.204^{*}	-0.173	-0.656^{***}	-0.580^{**}
	(0.092)	(0.090)	(0.129)	(0.134)	(0.118)	(0.105)	(0.230)	(0.257)
	[0.105]	[0.102]	[0.172]	[0.175]	[0.228]	[0.212]	[0.309]††	[0.336]†
N Country	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18
N	738	738	738	738	738	738	738	738
Period FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Country FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Notes: This table presents estimates of the effect of SOA trainees on democracy Polity IV index. Sample from 1951 - 1991. Stock SOA Trainees$_{t-5}$ is the stock of SOA graduates for the previous five years. Errors in parentheses are robust against heteroskedasticity and serial correlation at the country level. * is significant at the 10% level, ** is significant at the 5% level, *** is significant at the 1% level. Errors in squared bracket are bootstrapped using 1000 resamples. † is significant at the 10% level, †† is significant at the 5% level, ‡ is significant at the 1% level.

Democracy exhibits high persistence, as evidenced by the robust and statistically significant relationship. We observed that coefficients for lagged democracy levels explained the current levels of democracy. Our estimation indicates a persistence factor of approximately 0.84 units when controlling for a single lag. This level of persistence aligns with the nature of the democratic measure, which relies on the formal institutional framework and is inherently resistant to rapid year-to-year changes. Considering

these influential dynamics, we estimate the middle-term impact of SOA graduates five years after training (as shown in the lower section of Table 1). We estimate that a 100-graduate increase after these five years reduced approximately 0.58 units in democracy levels. Finally, we estimated the impact of SOA graduates on democracy using a binary measure of democracy (see Appendix Table B.1). Despite observing negative estimated coefficients, indicating a potential adverse association between SOA graduates and democracy, these estimates lack statistical significance. These findings implies that the presence of SOA graduates may not significantly transform a country's democratic landscape. Instead, their influence appears to be associated with marginal changes that do not promptly result in a shift toward a dictatorship.

4.1. ***Robustness:*** We conduct robustness checks to evaluate the potential influence of other characteristics correlating with democracy and the quantity of SOA graduates. In Appendix Table B.2, we examine how the estimations behave when we incorporate controls for various trends based on the initial characteristics of each country. We introduced interactions between the initial GDP in 1946, the population in 1950, and the military size in 1950, along with five-year fixed effectss[8]. The results are similar to our baseline coefficients, reinforcing the robustness of our results.

We considered an alternative explanation suggesting that our dependent variable might capture not democracy but the existence of political violence and civil war and, consequently, the presence of SOA-trained personnel. To address this concern, we adjusted the democracy index by excluding categories related to political competition using the transformation proposed by Vreeland (2008). Even with this modified index, our conclusions remained consistent. Appendix table B.3 illustrates that the negative effect of SOA trainees persisted even after purging the index of political competition and conflict. This analysis emphasizes that our results do not arise from a mismeasurement of democracy but rather indicate an effect of SOA training on the deterioration of democracy.

We want to ensure our findings do not show a general connection between the United States and Latin American countries that has nothing to do with SOA trainees affecting democracy. It could be that the US tends to help out countries with less democracy. To check this, we ran the same analysis using data on how much economic and military aid the US gives these countries. The results are in Appendix table B.4, and they didn't show any significant effects. These coefficients suggest that our study captures

[8]The equation presented in this table is: $DI_{ct} = \alpha_c + \alpha_t + \beta_1 \times \text{Stock SOA}_{ct} + \sum_{j=1}^{J} \beta_j^* \times \text{DI}_{ct-j} + \sum_{k=1950}^{K} \zeta_k \times \text{X}_{c0} + \varepsilon_{ct}$, where X_{c0} is the country pre-SOA measure and ζ_k is the five-years differential fixed effects.

the unique impact of SOA graduates, not just the broader effects of the relationship between the US and democracy.

Moreover, the United States' willingness to provide training may be linked to each country's alignment with its international interests. The program's primary objective might be influencing smaller countries' positions on specific issues. To test this hypothesis, we examine the variation in alignment with the United States and the Soviet Union following the return of SOA graduates to their respective countries. Using United Nations General Assembly voting data (Voeten, 2012), we measure what extent of alignment is correlated with the presence of the military training program, employing our main specification but with the share of instances each country voted in the same direction (positively or negatively) as the dependent variable.

Our findings, presented in Appendix Table B.5 (alignment with the United States) and Appendix Table B.6 (alignment with the Soviet Union), indicate that neither alignment changed significantly due to the program. These results suggest, first, that the programs are not altering the country's international behavior and, second, that the observed change in democracy levels is not attributable to the country's alignment or lack thereof with major powers during the Cold War. Instead, it is associated with an internal dynamic within the country.

Lastly, we demonstrate the stability of our findings irrespective of the number of democracy lags considered. Even when we account for the democratic trajectory over ten years, our results remain essentially unchanged. Appendix Table B.7 provides the details of this analysis, affirming the robustness of our results regardless of the chosen length of the democratic trajectory.

4.2. ***Mechanism:*** To explore the underlying dynamics of the connection between military training and democracy, we investigate the impact of SOA graduates on various attributes related to the operational aspects of democracy, which serve as indicators of civil society expressions. Specifically, we use multiple variables across distinct categories, including social movements, media, political institutions, and communist-related activities. To rigorously evaluate these effects, we employ the following model:

$$M_{ct} = \alpha_c + \alpha_t + \beta_1 \times \text{Stock SOA}_{ct} + \sum_{j=1}^{J} \beta_j^{*} \times \text{DI}_{ct-j} + \sum_{j=1}^{J} \beta_j^{+} \times \text{M}_{ct-j} + \varepsilon_{ct} \tag{4.2}$$

where M_{ct} represents the potential mechanism variable. This model closely resembles our primary specification, incorporating controls for democracy and mediator trajectories. This approach addresses not only the influence of democracy on the decision

to send personnel to SOA training but also the potential impact of these mediators on this decision.

Table 2 shows the coefficient results obtained from equation 4.2. Our measurements of the mechanisms come from Banks and Kenneth (2023), and they encompass various categories of democratic expressions. In Columns 1, 2, and 3 of table 2, we examine the effect of SOA graduates on social movements. Generally, a larger number of graduates correlates with reduced strikes, violent riots, and anti-government demonstrations. Specifically, after five years of having 100 SOA graduates, our results indicate an approximate 10 percent decrease in the average frequency of these manifestations.

Column 4 shows the effect on the likelihood of a country experiencing a ban on political parties. A presence of 100 SOA graduates corresponds to a one percentage point increase in the probability of a party ban. Additionally, Column 5 demonstrates that this training also leads to a reduction in newspaper circulation per capita. Specifically, having 100 trainees after five years results in a decrease of 35 newspapers per capita per 10,000 inhabitants.

TABLE 2. Mechanism: Effect of SOA graduates on social manifestations

	Strikes	Violent Riots	Anti-governemnt Demostrations	Parties Banned	Newspaper Circulation	Guerilla Warfare
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Stock SOA Trainees$_{t-5}$	-0.021^{**}	-0.017	-0.014	0.010^{***}	-5.586^{***}	-0.007
	(0.008)	(0.010)	(0.011)	(0.003)	(1.496)	(0.010)
	$[0.011]^{\dagger}$	[0.013]	[0.017]	$[0.004]^{\dagger\dagger}$	$[2.312]^{\dagger\dagger}$	[0.014]
Constant Stock Effect 5 Years After	-0.025^{**}	-0.024^{*}	-0.017	0.030^{***}	-35.164^{***}	-0.013
	(0.010)	(0.014)	(0.013)	(0.010)	(10.277)	(0.017)
	$[0.014]^{\dagger}$	[0.019]	[0.021]	$[0.015]^{\dagger\dagger}$	$[15.678]^{\dagger\dagger}$	[0.024]
Mean Dep. Var.	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.1	803.3	0.3
Std. dev. Dep. Var.	0.4	0.5	0.4	0.2	596.4	0.4
N Country	18	18	18	18	18	18
N	738	738	738	738	738	738
Period FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Country FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Notes: This table presents estimates of the effect of SOA trainees on intermediate variables. Sample from 1951 - 1991. Stock SOA Trainees$_{t-5}$ is the stock of SOA graduates for the previous five years. Errors in parentheses are robust against heteroskedasticity and serial correlation at the municipality level. * is significant at the 10% level, ** is significant at the 5% level, *** is significant at the 1% level. Errors in squared bracket are bootstrapped using 1000 resamples. † is significant at the 10% level, †† is significant at the 5% level, ‡ is significant at the 1% level.

We do not claim that these mechanisms represent the sole impacts of SOA graduates, but collectively, this evidence supports the conclusion that SOA graduates may have

facilitated government repression. While this repression may not be strong enough to eliminate democracy fully, it does imply a decline in the overall health of democracy. Finally, Column 6 illustrates that there were no observable changes in communist activities within the countries, as measured by the number of guerrilla warfare incidents. Hence, we argue that the SOA program failed to achieve its intended objective: curb communist revolutionary movements. Instead, it appears to have undermined the overall quality of democracy.

5. Effect of SOA on civilian victimization

We assess the conduct of SOA graduates within their respective military units, establishing connections between the historical records of the military zones they served in. To conduct this analysis, we employ internal data from Argentina and Colombia, evaluating the effects during both the Cold War and post-Cold War periods. Specifically, we gauge the influence on civilian victimization with the following model:

$$Y_{mzpt} = \gamma_m + \gamma_{pt} + \beta_1^* \times \text{SOA}_{zt} + \Phi' W_{mt} + \sum_{k \in X_m} \phi^{'}(k \times \gamma_m) + \epsilon_{mzpt} \tag{5.1}$$

Where, Y_{mzpt} represents the outcome in a specific locality[9] m within the military zone z and region[10] p at time t.[11] The variable of interest SOA_{zt}, is a binary variable that assumes a value of one if the zone was under the command of an SOA graduate during the specified time period. The term γ_m comprises a set of fixed effects that account for municipality-specific, unchanging characteristics. Additionally, γ_{pt} constitutes a set of state-time fixed effects that help control for shared shocks affecting localities in the same region. We also incorporate a collection of municipality-specific, time-varying characteristics denoted as W_{mt} to control for changes in the locality's military-related attributes over time.[12] We introduce varying trends based on the initial characteristics

[9]In the case of Argentina, the municipalities used in our analysis are based on the current administrative divisions. To match the data from prior administrative divisions, we created a crosswalk based on the Rodriguez (2022)'s work, which traces the evolution of various administrative divisions.

[10]We employed geographic entities that go beyond the basic political and administrative divisions. Specifically, for Argentina, we considered the military division areas, and for Colombia, we utilized the natural regions

[11]The data structure differs between the two countries. We can distinguish quarterly changes in Argentina, while in Colombia, our data allows for semesterly distinctions.

[12]These variables vary by country. In the case of Argentina, it only contains a dummy variable indicating whether there was a change in the military zone command. In Colombia, these variables include dummy variables indicating changes in brigade jurisdiction and changes in brigade commanders, as well as measurements for the distance to the nearest mobile brigade, the distance between the brigade quarters and Bogotá and dummies of the military division in charge of the area. As previously mentioned, Colombia experienced a continuous transformation in its military structure during this period. Notably, there was an expansion in the number of brigades and the establishment of mobile

of the locality, represented by the set X_m.[13] Finally, ϵ_{mzpt} are standard errors that we corrected for spatial and first-order temporal autocorrelation following Conley (1999, 2016).[14]

The primary coefficient of interest β_1^* quantifies the impact of an individual being an SOA graduate on the outcome variable Y. However, this estimation may not accurately capture the genuine influence of SOA trainees. The placement of SOA graduates in various regions of a country is not a random process, and our coefficient could inadvertently encapsulate latent characteristics of these localities linked to both the presence of SOA commanders and our outcomes. This will potentially bias our results. For instance, if SOA trainees possessed specific attributes that made them more influential within the military hierarchy, they might have been assigned to regions with lower conflict levels. This could lead to a reduction in civilian victimization incidents, causing us to underestimate the actual impact.

To address this challenge, we employ an instrumental variable approach. Our goal is to isolate the specific impact of SOA by utilizing a measure that correlates with our outcome within the locality solely because of its connection to the presence of SOA commanders. We estimate the following equation to asses the predicted probability of having an SOA commander:

(5.2)
$$\text{SOA}_{mzpt} = \gamma_m^0 + \gamma_{pt}^0 + \beta_1^{0*} \times \text{Pred. Stock}_{tm} + \Phi^{0\prime} W_{mt} + \sum_{k \in X_m} \phi^{0\prime}(k \times \gamma_m) + \eta_{mzpt}$$

Where, Pred. Stock_{tm} represents the expected number of SOA graduates that can command the military unit in the zone,[15] if they have followed the pattern of other

brigades. These mobile brigades were flexible and the government designed them for specific limited actions, concentrating their activities within a select group of municipalities.

[13]These variables were assessed prior to our specified period of interest. In Argentina, this data originates from the 1970 census (Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Censos, 1970), including measures such as the logarithm of the population in 1970, the department's area, the proportion of rural inhabitants, the percentage of females in the population, and the percentage of foreign residents. It also includes the rates of victimization from 1975 and the distance to historical military units. . In the case of Colombia, these are municipality-level characteristics, compiled by the *Centro de Estudios sobre Desarrollo Económico (CEDE)* at Universidad de los Andes, and they were measured at the beginning of the 1990s. The set of variables includes the logarithm of the population in the 1990s, the municipality's area, the share of the rural population, average elevation, distance to the closest major city, distance to the o Bogotá, year of creation, enforced disappearance rate before 1990 and all categories of military operations between 1975 and 1990.

[14]We employ this correction because our treatment is the military zone, which inherently consists of localities that, by definition, exhibit correlation that we need to account for. This method allows us to correlate amongst different municipalities based on their distance.

[15]In Argentina, the military zone commander was required to have attained the rank of major or higher, whereas in Colombia, law mandated brigade commanders to hold the rank of general.

Latin American countries. We calculate the projected number of officers who attained the requisite rank in all the countries to command military units by employing the minimum tenure laws associated with each military rank. We assume that each SOA graduate pursued an ideal military career, serving only the mandatory minimum time in each rank during their active duty periods. We justify this approach by considering that the decision to send these individuals to the school was made years before they achieved their respective ranks, making it exogenous to other country-specific circumstances. Next, we calculate the averages of these stocks, taking into account the distance from the centroid of each municipality to the capital city of the other 17 countries. We argue that this method offers an estimate linked to the military requirements of the region, which is associated with the likelihood of deploying an SOA graduate in that area. Importantly, this estimate is not correlated with civilian victimization in those areas.

5.1. **Argentina.** Table 3 panel A provides an estimation of the impact of an SOA commander on victimization in Argentina, utilizing equations **??** and 5.2. In columns 1 and 2 the dependent variable is a dummy equal to one if there was a forced disappearance in the municipality. It shows that using an OLS estimation greatly under-identify the SOA commander's effect. When using the IV estimation, we found that having an SOA commander increases in 19 percentage points the probability of reporting a disappeared person in the Partido/department. In columns 2 and 3, the dependent variable is the number of natural logarithms of the total number of disappeared in the municipality. In this case, we found that having a SOA commander increases in 54% the enforcement dispparenace.[16]

In Table 3, Panel B, we observe the total number of civilian deaths attributed to government forces. Notably, this variable exclusively accounts for cases where information is available regarding the death of detainees, confirmed through reports or the discovery of bodies. However, accessing such information in Argentina proves challenging, as documented evidence suggests that perpetrators often attempt to hide evidence of their crimes. In this context, we identify a similar pattern. A SOA commander is associated with a 19-percentage-point increase in the probability of civilian deaths and a 56% rise in civilian unlawful deaths. This analysis shows that SOA commanders positively impact the incidence of civilian casualties within their jurisdiction, and there is no discernible difference in their ability to conceal these crimes

[16]The percentage increase of 54% can be expressed as $\exp(0.433) - 1$. This is equivalent to a 35% reduction in the number of enforced disappearances when comparing municipalities with SOA graduates as commanders to those without SOA graduates in command.

Importantly, our instrumental variable estimation does not suffer from weak instrument issues, as evidenced by the excluded instrument F statistic, which exceeds the conventional threshold of 10. Furthermore, our conclusions remain unchanged even when we compute standard errors by clustering at the municipality level. We opt for this approach to account for potential spatial autocorrelation since the assignment of the "treatment" occurs at higher levels than municipalities, and there may be correlations among these departments/partidos. Finally, all estimations indicate that OLS underestimates the effect, implying that SOA commanders were assigned to areas that were less susceptible to victimization in Argentina.

TABLE 3. SOA commander effect on the forced disappearance

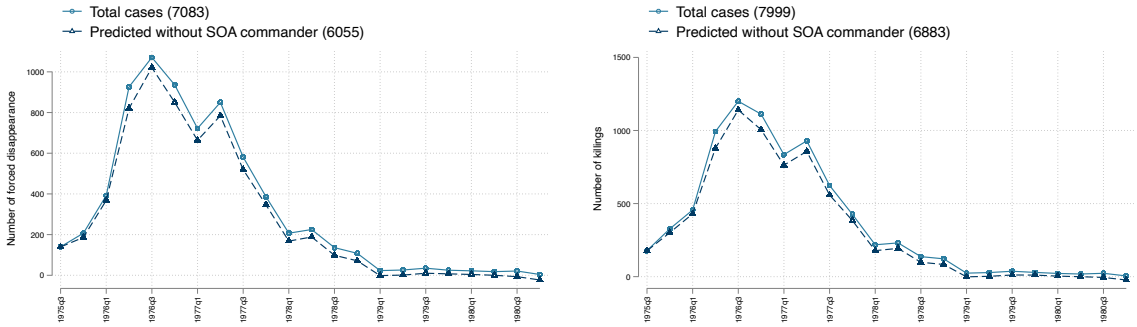
	Dependent variable:							
	Panel A: Forced disappearance				Panel B: Civilian deaths			
	F.D. > 0		log (F.D.+1)		C.D. > 0		log (C.D.+1)	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
SOA commander	0.007	0.189***	−0.002	0.433***	0.005	0.189***	−0.003	0.448***
	(0.008)	(0.063)	(0.012)	(0.127)	(0.008)	(0.064)	(0.013)	(0.133)
	[0.010]	[0.092]	[0.021]	[0.187]	[0.010]	[0.094]	[0.022]	[0.195]
Estimation	OLS	IV	OLS	IV	OLS	IV	OLS	IV
Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mun. controls x time effects	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Year-zone FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
N	15330	15330	15330	15330	15330	15330	15330	15330
Department/partido	511	511	511	511	511	511	511	511
Exc. Instruments F-stat.	–	22.87	–	22.87	–	22.87	–	22.87

Notes: This table presents estimates of the effect of SOA commanders on forced disappearance and civilian deaths. SOA commander is a dummy equal to one if the military zone that had jurisdiction over the department/partido is under command of SOA graduate. The odd-numbered columns present ordinary least squares (OLS) estimations, while the even-numbered columns display instrumental variables (IV) estimations. The prediction for each department/partido is based on the average count of SOA-trained officials from the other 17 countries, with weights assigned according to the distance between the centroid of the department/partido and the capital city of those other countries. Time variant controls include dummies for a change in any of the military zone's commanders. Time dummies are interacted with the following set of time-invariant predetermined department/partido controls: logarithm of the population in 1970, department's area, the share of the rural population, the share of the female population, the share of the foreign population, distance to the closest major city, distance to Buenos Aires, and enforced disappearance rate before 1975. Sample from 1975:q3 - 1982:q4. Errors in squared brackets are robust against heteroskedasticity and serial correlation at the department/partido level. Errors in parentheses control for spatial and first-order time correlation following Conley (2016, 1999). We allow spatial correlation to extend up to 186 km from each department/partido's centroid to ensure that each department/partido has at least one neighbor. * is significant at the 10% level, ** is significant at the 5% level, *** is significant at the 1% level.

To assess the impact of SOA graduates, we calculated the total number of disappearance and death cases that would have occurred if none of the commanders were SOA trainees. Using the estimates from Table 3, specifically Columns 4 and 8, we

determined the percentage reduction in each department/partido during the periods when SOA commanders were in charge. In Figure 5, we aggregate these estimates for the entire country and present a quarterly evaluation. Through this analysis, we estimate a 14.5% reduction in forced disappearances (from a total of 7,083 to 6,055) and a 16.2% reduction in deaths (from a total of 7,999 to 6,883). The graph illustrates a significant surge in civilian victimization after the second quarter of 1976. It is noteworthy that only after 1978 did the levels begin to decrease, ultimately leading to the near disappearance of the phenomenon. Notably, during those periods marked by high levels of victimization, the presence of SOA trainees is shown to have had a pronounced exacerbating effect. This behavior suggests that while the decision of officers to engage in such activities may not be solely explained by the presence of SOA trainees in Argentina, their involvement did contribute to the escalation of the phenomenon during the dictatorship period.

FIGURE 5. Civilian victimization evolution in Argentina



A. Forced disappearance **B.** Civilian deaths

Notes: This figure illustrates the quarterly evolution of civilian victimization in Argentina. In Panel A, the evolution of forced disappearances is depicted, while Panel B illustrates civilian deaths. Solid lines represent the observed number of cases, while dashed lines depict the predicted values when SOA graduates are removed, utilizing estimates from Figure 3, Columns 4 and 8.

5.1.1. *Lost of population.* We assess whether SOA commanders had an impact on population growth. It is plausible that heightened violence against civilians by military commanders incentivized migration among specific segments of the population. We employ the following difference-in-differences model to estimate these potential effects using data from three general census waves (1947, 1970, and 1980).

$$
\begin{aligned}
Y_{mt} =& \gamma_m + \gamma_t + \beta_1^{\dagger} \times \text{SOA}_m^{1975-79} \times \text{Year } 1980_t + \beta_2^{\dagger} \times \text{SOA}_m^{1980-82} \times \text{Year } 1980_t \\
&+ \sum_{k \in X_m} \phi'(k \times \gamma_m) + \epsilon_{mt}
\end{aligned} \tag{5.3}
$$

Here, Y_{mt} represents the population growth in department/partido m at time t. $\text{SOA}_m^{1975-79}$ is a dummy equal to one if there were in any quarter a SOA trainee commander between 1975 and 1979, while $\text{SOA}_m^{1980-82}$ is a dummy equal to one if there were in any quarter a SOA trainee commander between 1980 and 1982. The coefficient of interest $\beta_1^{\dagger}$ is measuring the differential change in growth rates between 1970 and 1980. Additionally, coefficient $\beta_2^{\dagger}$ serves as a placebo estimate, revealing whether there was a differential growth rate between places assigned to SOA commanders and those that were not even before the commanders were assigned. This coefficient is crucial for assessing the assumption of a parallel trend between groups with SOA commanders and those without, allowing us to interpret the estimates as causal effects of the SOA program in Argentina. Finally, as in the previous models, we include varying trends based on the initial characteristics of the locality, represented by the set X_m and ϵ_{mt} are standard errors that we corrected for spatial and first-order temporal autocorrelation following Conley (1999, 2016).

Table 4 presents the estimates of Equation 5.3. In Panel A, it is evident that SOA commanders before 1980 adversely affected male population growth rates in 1980. Columns 1 and 3 reveal an average reduction in population growth by 1.5 percentage points in locations that were under the command of an SOA graduate at any point between 1975 and 1980. Additionally, when examining the influence of SOA commanders after 1980, there is no significant correlation with male population growth. These results reinforce the interpretability of our initial estimation as causal, affirming that our assumptions of no prior relation between the allocation of SOA commanders across military units and differential population growth trends.

Panel B indicates that SOA commanders did not impact the growth of the female population. The estimates are not statistically significant, suggesting that migration driven by violence against civilians in those areas primarily affected men. Furthermore, in Panel C, this conclusion is reinforced as we demonstrate that the SOA hurt the male share of the population. In 1980, there was a decrease of 1.3 percentage points in places where an SOA trainee commanded. Additionally, we find no significant correlation between the assignment of SOA commanders (either between 1975 and 1979 or 1980 and 1982) and gender ratios in 1947. Taken together, these results indicate that SOA

graduates increased civilian victimization, prompting the migration of men and leaving a lasting impact on Argentina's development.

TABLE 4. SOA commander effect on the population growth

	Dependent variable:								
	Panel A: Growth male 1970-1980			Panel B: Growth female 1970-1980			Panel C: Male share 1947, 1970, 1980		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
SOA 1975-79 x 1947							−0.005		−0.003
							(0.026)		(0.029)
							[0.022]		[0.023]
SOA 1980-82 x 1947								−0.026	−0.025
								(0.026)	(0.030)
								[0.023]	[0.026]
SOA 1975-79 x 1980	−0.015*		−0.016*	−0.012		−0.013	−0.013**		−0.013**
	(0.009)		(0.009)	(0.008)		(0.009)	(0.006)		(0.006)
	[0.007]		[0.007]	[0.006]		[0.006]	[0.008]		[0.009]
SOA 1980-82 x 1980		−0.001	0.002		0.006	0.008		−0.007	−0.005
		(0.006)	(0.006)		(0.008)	(0.008)		(0.009)	(0.008)
		[0.007]	[0.007]		[0.007]	[0.007]		[0.012]	[0.012]
Mun. controls x time effects	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mun. FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
N	1022	1022	1022	1022	1022	1022	1533	1533	1533
Department/partido	511	511	511	511	511	511	511	511	511

Notes: This table presents estimates of the effect of SOA commanders on forced disappearance population growth. SOA 1975-79 is one if at any time time the locality was under the command of an SOA graduate between 1975 and 1979. SOA 1980-82 is one if at any time the locality was under the command of a SOA graduate between in 1980 and 1982. Time dummies are interacted with the following set of time-invariant predetermined department/partido controls: logarithm of the population in 1970, department's area, the share of the rural population, the share of the female population, the share of the foreign population, distance to the closest major city, distance to Buenos Aires, and enforced disappearance rate before 1975. Data from 1947, 1970 and 1980. Errors in squared brackets are robust against heteroskedasticity and serial correlation at the department/partido level. Errors in parentheses control for spatial and first-order time correlation following Conley (2016, 1999). We allow spatial correlation to extend up to 186 km from each department/partido's centroid to ensure that each department/partido has at least one neighbor. * is significant at the 10% level, ** is significant at the 5% level, *** is significant at the 1% level.

5.1.2. *Colombia.* As part of a robustness check, we assess the impact of SOA graduates in a distinct context, namely the Colombian conflict. Appendix Table B.9 presents the impact of an SOA commander in Colombia using the same definitions as in the Argentinian cases. In this case, although the coefficients on the probability of having a forced disappearance, we observe similar patterns to those in Argentina. First, using OLS we underestimate the effect of an SOA commander, and second, having an SOA commander in a brigade elevates the cases of forced disappearances within their jurisdiction in around 35%. It is important to note that this is a smaller impact than that observed in Argentina. We argue that this reduction is possible due to the time between the training and achieving ranks. Argentina dispatched most of its military personnel during

the initial years of their military careers, from 1966 to 1974, just before the onset of the dictatorship. Conversely, Colombia primarily sent personnel as academy students between 1975 and 1980s. They ascended to the rank of general during our analysis period of interest. This analysis demonstrates that the adverse impact associated with SOA graduates was not unique to Argentina during the dictatorship; rather, it was also evident in another country that extensively utilized the School's services

In the Colombian context, we can also examine whether SOA graduates impacted military operations, specifically whether they demonstrated superior performance in the field compared to those whom SOA did not train. To assess this, we utilize conflict data compiled by (Restrepo et al., 2004) and subsequently updated by the Universidad del Rosario. This dataset records conflicts-related events, drawing on information provided by the NGO *Centro de Investigación y Educación Popular (CINEP)* of the Company of Jesus in Colombia. It documents various conflict-related incidents, such as clashes and attacks involving different factions in the conflict, and it includes details on the identities of the perpetrators and participating groups and the number of victims involved in these incidents.

Appendix Table B.10 displays our findings after we matched information on military operations from 1991 to 2010. It outlines the impact on clashes between armed groups and attacks instigated by these groups. First, it indicates that SOA commanders do not have a distinct advantage over other officers decades after the SOA training. No discernible evidence exists that these commanders engaged in more confrontations with communist guerrilla groups (as shown in column 1) or demonstrated a greater propensity for initiating military actions (as indicated in column 6). Secondly, the table also reveals that these commanders did not form alliances with other illegal groups to combat guerrillas or facilitate their operations, as there is no evidence of increased paramilitary activities (as demonstrated in columns 2, 3, and 6). Our results do not capture any differential behavior on the part of guerrilla groups. Column 4 illustrates that there is no observable effect on the number of attacks initiated by guerrillas. This particular result instills confidence that our findings are not influenced by unobserved factors related to the distribution of SOA commanders across territories, but rather are reflective of the impact of their training.

It is crucial to note that in the case of Colombia, the reported number of forced disappearance cases by authorities does not differentiate the responsible group. To test the hypothesis that disappearances are linked to military presence or their illicit allies, we examine other types of victimizations that exhibit similar patterns. Appendix Table B.11 presents the impact of having these commanders on civilian casualties

during military operations of any group. We don't find any significant effect showing that the increase in enforced disappearances is due to the side effects of conflict with the illegal groups. In summary, our analysis provides evidence that the presence of SOA graduates is associated with an increase in enforced disappearances in the areas under their command.

These findings are consistent with the results presented in section 4, which indicated that SOA graduates did not significantly impact guerrilla activities. In essence, that, when evaluated based on its initial objectives, the program proved ineffective in reducing communist activities in the region but indeed meant a deterioration in civilian life and democracy. Our analysis revealed that SOA graduates contributed to higher levels of victimization in Colombia following the conclusion of the Cold War. This effect persisted even when Colombian military personnel received their training as academy students and continued after they attained general positions.

6. Effect of SOA on democracy perception

We enhance our analysis by examining the enduring effects of the SOA on democracy perceptions across the continent following the Cold War's conclusion. We evaluate if the exposure to these SOA graduates and their actions has left a lasting imprint on opinions. Specifically, using the Latinobarometer surveys conducted between 2000 and 2020, we asses how cohorts exposed to SOA graduates hold differing views on democracy compared to those unaffected by fluctuations in the stock of graduates. To formalize this, we estimate the following model:

$$\begin{aligned} Y_{icpmtb} =& \delta_m + \delta_{tc} + \delta_b + \beta_1 \times \text{SOA Trainees}_{tcb} \times \omega_m + \Psi' X_i \\ &+ \sum_{k \in \text{age}, \text{age}^2} \psi^{'}(k \times \delta_c) + \varepsilon_{icpmtb} \end{aligned} \tag{6.1}$$

δ_m, which represents fixed effects that account for time-invariant characteristics affecting all individuals living in the same locality, and δ_{tc}, which signifies fixed effects controlling for shocks impacting all individuals residing in the same country during the same year. We also incorporate δ_b, for fixed effects containing characteristics affecting all individual cohorts in the region. The variable of interest comes from the interaction between two key components. The first component is the anticipated average number of active SOA officers graduates that the individual's country had per semester from the time she turned 16 until the year of the survey, denoted as SOA Trainees$_{tcb}$. The second component involves the proportion of the army deployed near the individual's

residence locality, determined by considering the two nearest historical bases within a radius of 100 kilometers, denoted as ω_m. We also control with a set of individual characteristics X_i and allow for a differential effect of age by country on the outcome.

TABLE 5. Long term effect of SOA graduates on democracy perceptions

	Democracy			Trust		Favorable opinion
	Satisfaction	Preference	Best gover.	Armed Forces	Public Forces	United States
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Panel A: Effect SOA graduates exposure						
Current SOA Trainees$_{tcb}$/100 x ω_m	0.018	0.024**	0.029**	−0.050***	−0.051***	0.014
	(0.013)	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.019)	(0.015)	(0.010)
Obs.	374623	374623	339628	336613	374623	374623
Cohorts	99	99	98	99	99	99
Country-years	346	346	346	326	346	346
Localities	3837	3837	3740	3682	3837	3837
Panel B: Placebo SOA graduates exposure						
Previous SOA Trainees$_{tcb}$/100 x ω_m	−0.005	0.018	0.005	−0.018	−0.012	0.009
	(0.010)	(0.015)	(0.011)	(0.013)	(0.012)	(0.008)
Obs.	374623	374623	339628	336613	374623	374623
Cohorts	99	99	98	99	99	99
Country-years	346	346	346	326	346	346
Localities	3837	3837	3740	3682	3837	3837
Indiv. characterics tis	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Locality FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Year-State FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Cohort FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
μ	0.346	0.555	0.722	0.451	0.537	0.675
σ	0.476	0.497	0.448	0.498	0.499	0.468

Notes: This table presents estimates of the effect of exposure to SOA trainees on attitudes toward democracy and trust in institutions. Panel A shows the effect of exposure to trainees after the individual turns 16. Panel B shows the placebo effect of exposure to trainees before the individual's birth. *Current SOA Trainees*$_{cb}$ is the expected average number of SOA graduates of the country that were active each half year after the cohort turns 16 years old. *Previous SOA Trainees*$_{tcb}$ is the expected average number of SOA graduates active each half year from 1946 to ten years before the cohort birth. ω_m is the expected share of armed forces influencing locality if it follows the distribution before the Cold War. The dependent variable in column 1 is a dummy if the individual is very satisfied or satisfied with the working of the democracy in her country. The dependent variable in column 2 is a dummy variable if the individual answered that democracy is preferable to any other kind of government. The dependent variable in column 3 is a dummy variable if the individual agrees with the statement that democracy may have problems, but it is the best system of government. The dependent variable in column 4 is a dummy variable if the individual has a lot or some trust in the armed forces. The dependent variable in column 5 is a dummy variable if the individual has a lot or some trust in the public forces (either the armed forces or police). The dependent variable in column 5 is a dummy variable if the individual has a very good or good opinion about the United States. Individual controls include age, age squared, religion dummies, education level dummies, parents' education dummies, employment situation dummies, subjective income levels, duration of the survey and month of the survey fixed effects. Sample from 2000 - 2020 with gaps. Errors in parentheses are robust against heteroskedasticity and serial correlation at the state and cohort levels. * is significant at the 10% level, ** is significant at the 5% level, *** is significant at the 1% level.

The rationale behind this estimation leverages two distinct sources of variation. First, it uses the fluctuations in the number of officers resulting from countries sending personnel during various years and stages of their careers. Within each country, we compare cohorts with high exposure to those with low exposure, contingent upon the presence of active officers trained at the SOA. Second, it takes into account geographic disparities inside the same country. We compare individuals residing near a historical military force with those who remain unaffected because they dwell in localities far from military influence.

We calculate the expected number of active officers under the assumption of a seamless military career, wherein they spend the minimum required time at each rank and ultimately attain the rank of general. We rely on the information contained in regulations specifying the minimum durations at each rank and assume a 12-year service period as generals (please refer to table B.8 for sources and details of the structure for each country). Appendix Figure A.7 illustrates the trends in these projected officer stocks, revealing significant variations across countries. We have great variability in not only the years each country had a peak of expected active SOA officer graduates but also in the size of this peak.

Furthermore, we estimated the distribution of military personnel before the Cold War using data from intelligence reports issued by the United States (U.S. Military, 1943).[17] These reports provided information on the locations of military bases and estimated troop numbers. In cases where this data was incomplete, such as Chile, Brazil, Honduras, and Nicaragua, we employed alternative sources (U.S. Military, 1943; Isaguirre, 2003; López Maltez, 2014; Estado Mayor General del Ejército Chile, 1983; Arquivo histórico do exército, 2020). We calcualted the individuals' locations based on information provided by the Latinobarometer and determined the closest bases with reference to the centroid of this locality.[18] In total, we identified 510 localities where military presence was documented before 1945. Appendix Figure shows the distribution of military personnel, highlighting the significant variation in army distribution within the countries. This variation will be important in estimating the impact on perceptions of democracy due to the proximity to military bases.

[17]Appendix Figure A.3 shows the maps provided by the intelligence reports and recovers information about the location of military bases in 1942.

[18]In the majority of cases, this information was readily accessible. We categorized the localities to align with each country's smallest existing administrative division. This was achievable in most instances, except in Peru, where the division does not correspond to localities but rather provinces. In Uruguay, the division is structured around municipalities established in 2010. Additionally, there were specific years in Chile and Colombia when the survey exclusively offered data for the first level of territorial division. In such instances, we designated the locality as the capital city.

We investigate the impact of SOA graduates on perceptions of democracy. In Table 5, Panel A, Columns 1, 2, and 3, we present estimates based on different measures of democratic values. Firstly, our findings reveal a notable effect on the preference for democracy instead of alternative forms of governance. Specifically, an average exposure of one hundred SOA graduates during an individual's lifetime increases the probability of expressing a preference for democracy by 2.4 percentage points. It also raises the likelihood of agreeing that, despite its imperfections, democracy remains the best government system by 2.9 percentage points. However, we do not detect any significant shift in the probability of being satisfied with the state of democracy in their country. In other words, an increased likelihood of experiencing some form of repression does not significantly alter an individual's evaluation of democracy, although it does boost their support for the democratic system. Results that are consistent with those for Chile in Bautista et al. (2019).

In contrast, we examine how the influence of SOA graduates affects trust in the armed forces and police.[19] Columns four and five in the table indicate that, overall, the presence of 100 SOA graduates is associated with a roughly five percentage point reduction in trust in the public forces. This implies that proximity to state security institutions linked to greater repression tends to erode confidence in these institutions within the region.

Lastly, we examine whether these SOA graduates influence public opinion about the United States. Initially, we expected that the attendance of these officers at the SOA would have no bearing on U.S. perceptions among civilians, as it's unlikely that the civilian population would directly link these officers to the United States once they return to their home countries. Column 6 of the table presents our findings, which confirm this expectation. We do not observe a significant relationship between the presence of SOA graduates and civilian opinions about the United States. This reinforces our earlier conclusion since it seems that we are not capturing any additional effects in our estimation.

[19]Panama and Costa Rica do not maintain active armed forces in the traditional sense; rather, they rely on police and other security institutions to safeguard their borders and maintain internal security. While these institutions may have been organized within a military framework and sent personnel to the SOA, they were not officially considered armies. Consequently, the survey in these countries does not inquire about citizens' perceptions of these specific institutions. Instead, we combine the questions related to trust in the armed forces and the police to construct a composite index measuring confidence in the collective security entities known as the "public forces". We categorized as having confidence in the public forces respondents who indicated trust in either the army or the police.

While our analysis is primarily based on the pre-1945 military base locations, which are unrelated to political and military concerns during the Cold War, we might inadvertently capture sorting effects among citizens in various territories. For example, it's possible that older individuals with pro-democratic views tend to choose to reside in areas closer to military bases compared to younger people. In such a scenario, this correlation could affect our estimations, and they wouldn't necessarily provide evidence of a relationship between SOA graduates and democratic values. To address this concern, we construct a placebo indicator representing the expected average number of SOA graduates from 1949 to ten years before the respondents' birth. If sorting effects among localities drove our results, we would expect these variables to have a significant impact, as they capture the past history of the residential area but don't directly affect the individual. However, Panel B of our analysis shows this is not the case. We do not observe any significant effects in any of our variables, providing confidence that our conclusions are not the result of population sorting decisions.

We assess the robustness of our findings by examining the impact of excluding different groups of respondents. Appendix figures A.9, A.10, and A.11 illustrate how our results respond when we exclude individual countries, wave years, and cohort groups, respectively. In most cases, our conclusions regarding the reduced trust in public forces and increased support for democracy as the preferred form of government remain robust. This reinforces our confidence that our results are not merely reflecting noise but rather the outcomes of a meaningful impact. Lastly, we explore how our results respond to variations in individual characteristics across countries. While this analysis is very restrictive, it reaffirms the robustness of our findings. Our key conclusions remain unchanged.

7. Conclusion

Foreign interventions play a pivotal role in shaping local policies and developmental trajectories. Countries don't exist in isolation; instead, external actors influence them. These interventions are often nuanced and indirect, with influential international players wielding the ability to impact other nations' policies, sometimes extending beyond their initial objectives. In this study, we examine the impact of the School of the Americas (SOA) during the Cold War, an institution initially intended to train Latin American armies according to U.S. standards but with consequences far beyond its initial aim of containing communism in the region.

Our research reveals that SOA graduates had a detrimental effect on the quality of democracy. Specifically, military officials trained by the SOA holding positions of power

were associated with a decline in the democracy index and an increase in repression levels. Through case studies in Argentina and Colombia, focusing on areas commanded by SOA trainees, we demonstrate that these commanders led to greater victimization of civilians. Targeting civilians as potential threats not only increased the likelihood of them becoming targets of military actions but also undermined the program's original goals. Our findings suggest that the SOA's activities had no significant impact on reducing guerrilla activities or countering communism.

These results underscore the complexity of international interventions. Without comprehensive designs that consider the multifaceted nature of various factors, interventions can yield unintended consequences, extending beyond their original objectives.

However, amidst these adverse effects, we also identify a positive long-term impact: victimization during this period ultimately contributed to the promotion of pro-democratic values. We demonstrate that increased support for democracy is an unintentional outcome of the repression strategies employed by military forces during the Cold War—a somewhat unexpected positive effect of U.S. military intervention. Cohorts exposed to SOA activities tend to favor democracy over other forms of government. Nonetheless, these results paint a challenging picture for the region. If democratic governments fail to significantly enhance citizens' quality of life, especially among newer generations untouched by severe repression, overall support for democracy may disappear. The ongoing task for democratic governments is to transcend the shadow of past repression and deliver tangible improvements that consolidate democratic systems.

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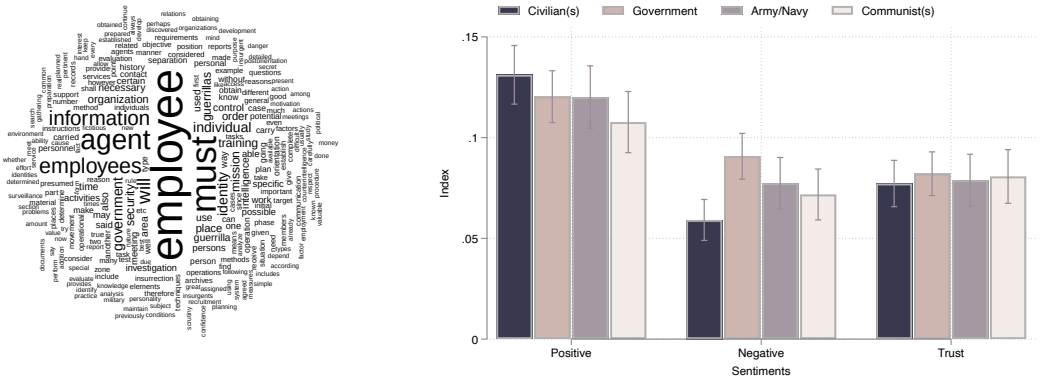
ONLINE APPENDIX

Appendix A. Figures

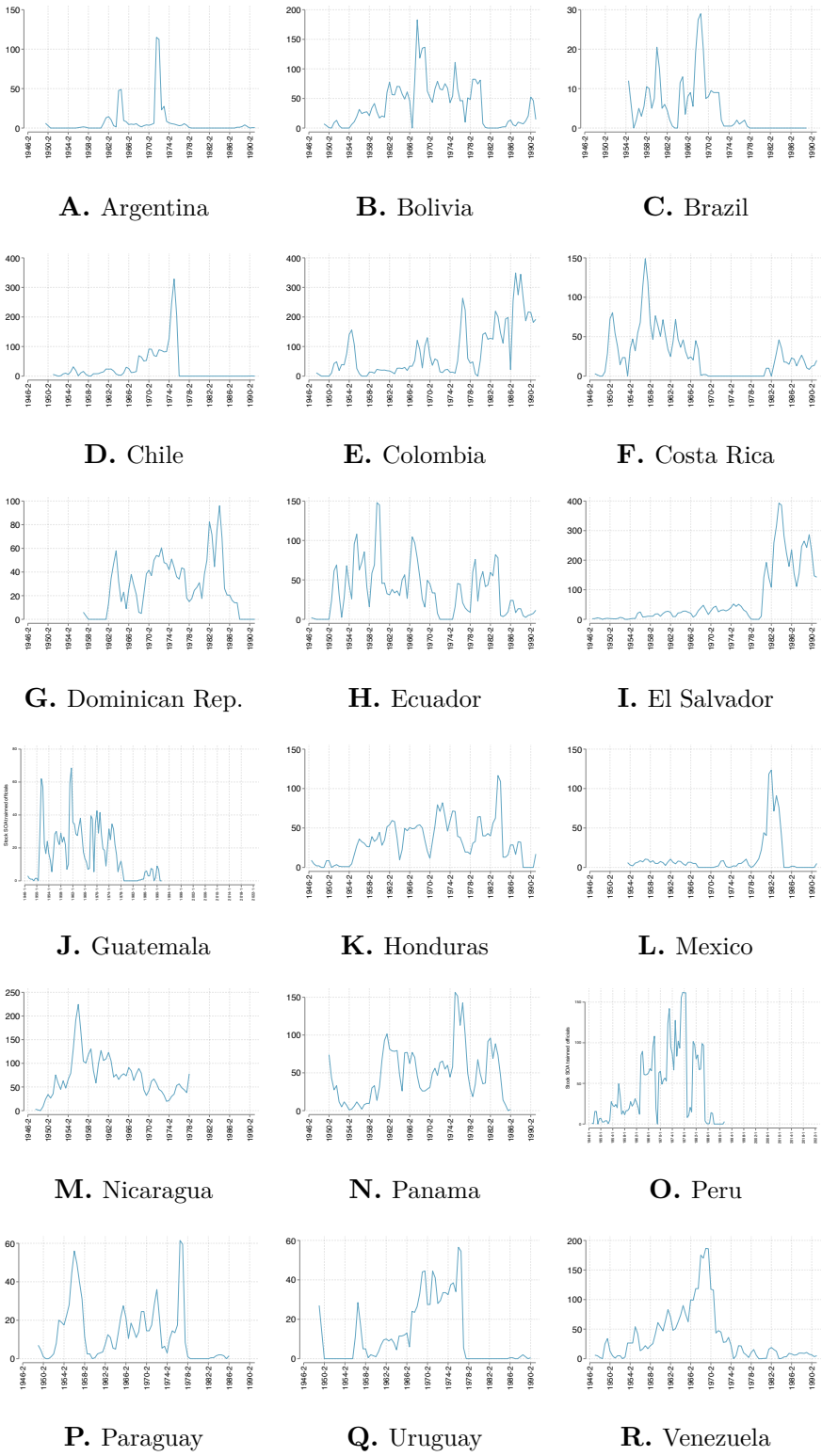
Figure A.1. Text analysis "Source management" manual



A. Word cloud **B.** Sentiment analysis

Notes: This figure shows the text analysis of the manual sources management text provided by XXXX. Panel A shows the word cloud with the words that appeared the most in the document. Panel B shows the sentiment index for terms associated with four social groups: civilians, the government, the army/navy, and communists.

FIGURE A.2. SOA graduates



A. Argentina **B.** Bolivia **C.** Brazil

D. Chile **E.** Colombia **F.** Costa Rica

G. Dominican Rep. **H.** Ecuador **I.** El Salvador

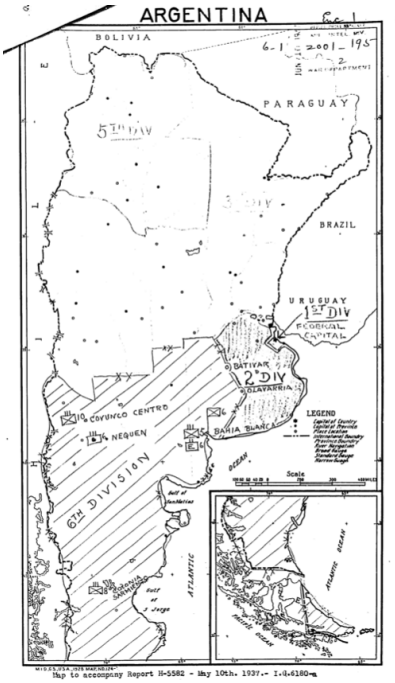
J. Guatemala **K.** Honduras **L.** Mexico

M. Nicaragua **N.** Panama **O.** Peru

P. Paraguay **Q.** Uruguay **R.** Venezuela

Notes: The figure shows the graduate SOA by halfyear between 1946 and 1991. We show two period moving average

FIGURE A.3. **US military intelligence reports maps**

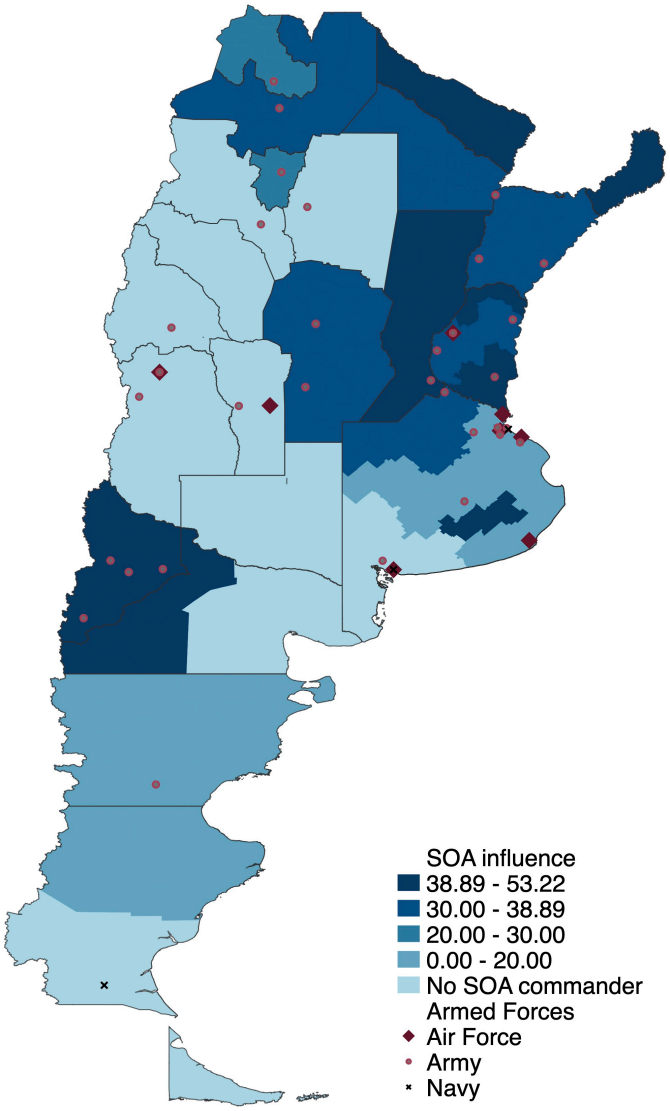


A. Argentina

B. Colombia

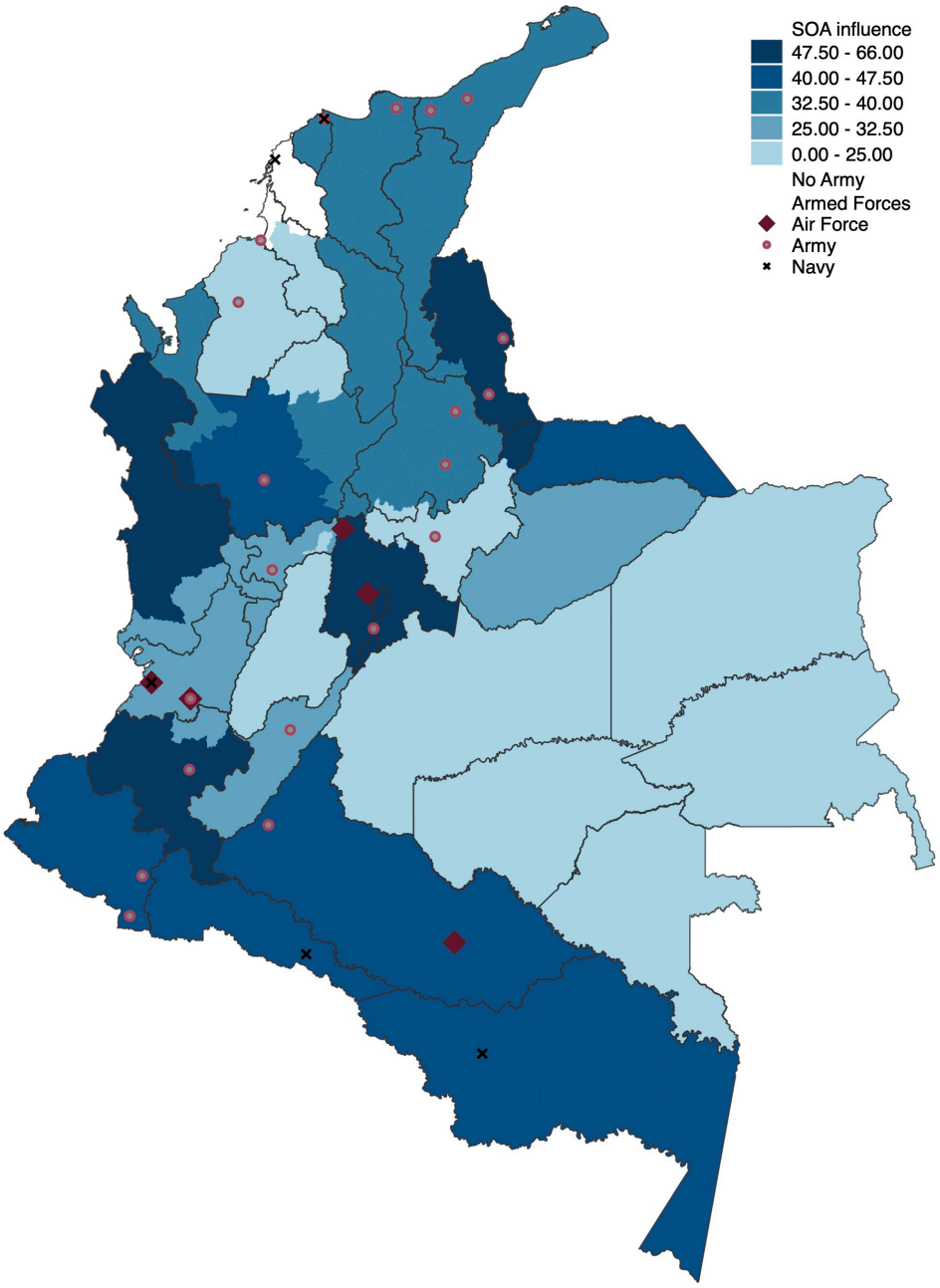
Notes: The figure shows examples of the maps published by the US military intelligence. Thet portray the estimated location of the military units as well as the composition and characteristics of these units. They also show the jurisdiction of big military divisions.

FIGURE A.4. Argentina SOA graduates influence and military bases



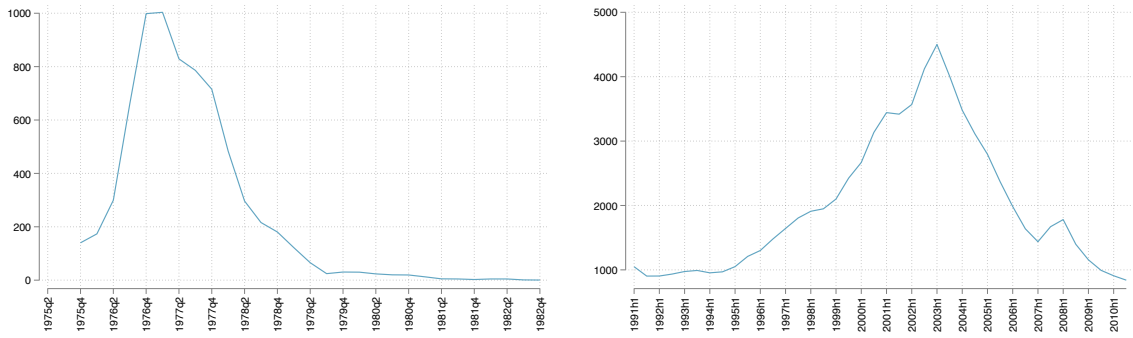
Notes: This graph shows the share of quarters between 1975q3 and 1982q4 that each department/partido was under the command of an SOA graduate. Dots represent the distribution of armed forces in 1942. Diamond represents the presence of an air force base, the circle represents the presence of an army base, and the cross represents the presence of a navy base. Divisions show the first subnational political-administrative division equivalent to the US States: Provinces.

FIGURE A.5. Colombia SOA graduates influence and military bases



Notes: This graph shows the share of quarters between 1991:1 and 2010:2 that each municipality was under the command of an SOA graduate. Dots represent the distribution of armed forces in 1942. Diamond represents the presence of an air force base, the circle represents the presence of an army base, and the cross represents the presence of a navy base. Divisions show the first subnational political-administrative division equivalent to the US States: Departments.

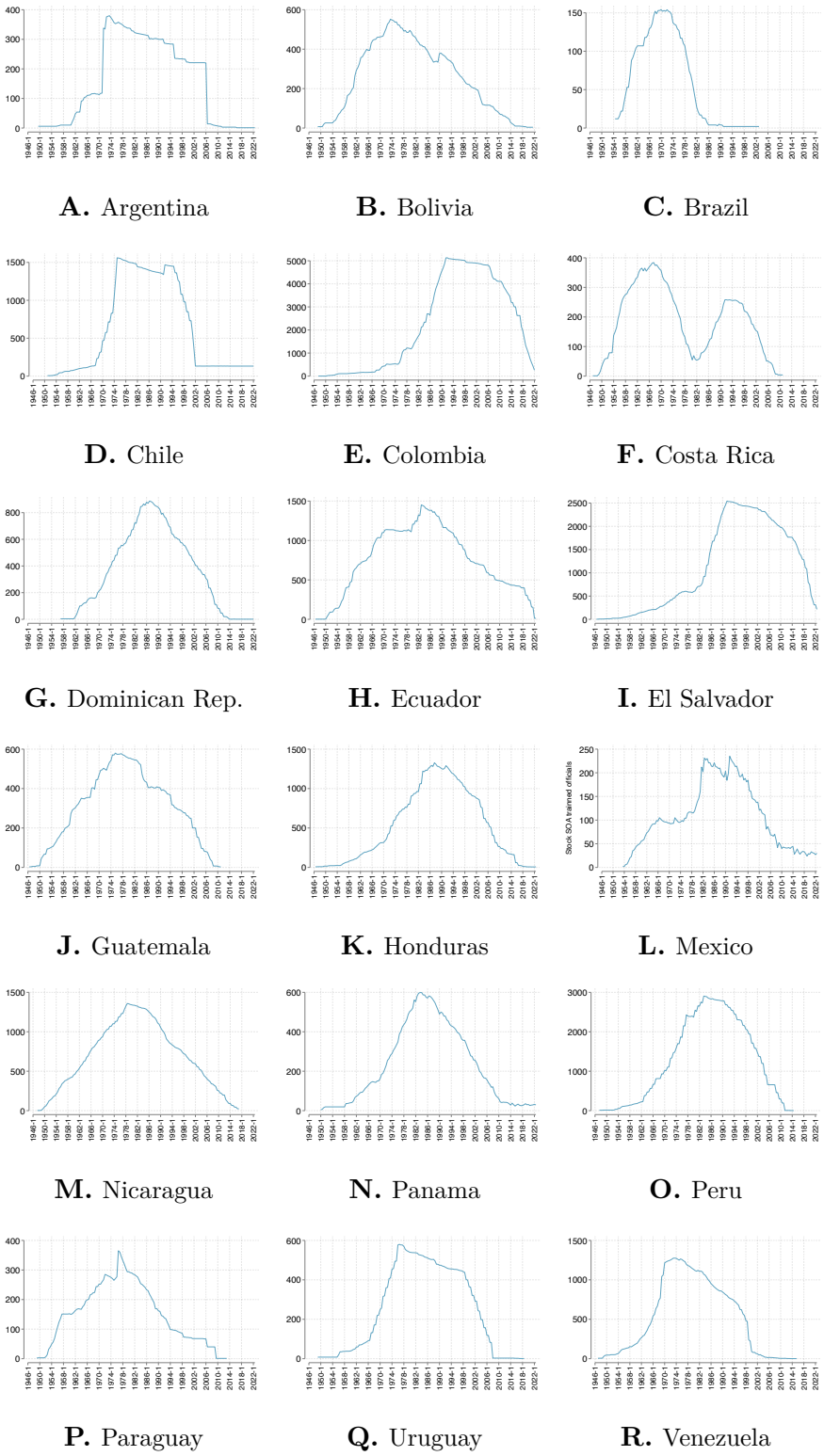
FIGURE A.6. Forced disappearance victims



A. Argentina **B.** Colombia

Notes: This figure illustrates the cumulative count of disappearance victims based on official records. Panel A displays the quarterly victim counts in Argentina from 1975q3 to 1982q4. Panel B shows the semi-annual victim counts in Colombia from 1991:1 to 2010:2.

FIGURE A.7. Predicted active officers SOA trainees



A. Argentina **B.** Bolivia **C.** Brazil

D. Chile **E.** Colombia **F.** Costa Rica

G. Dominican Rep. **H.** Ecuador **I.** El Salvador

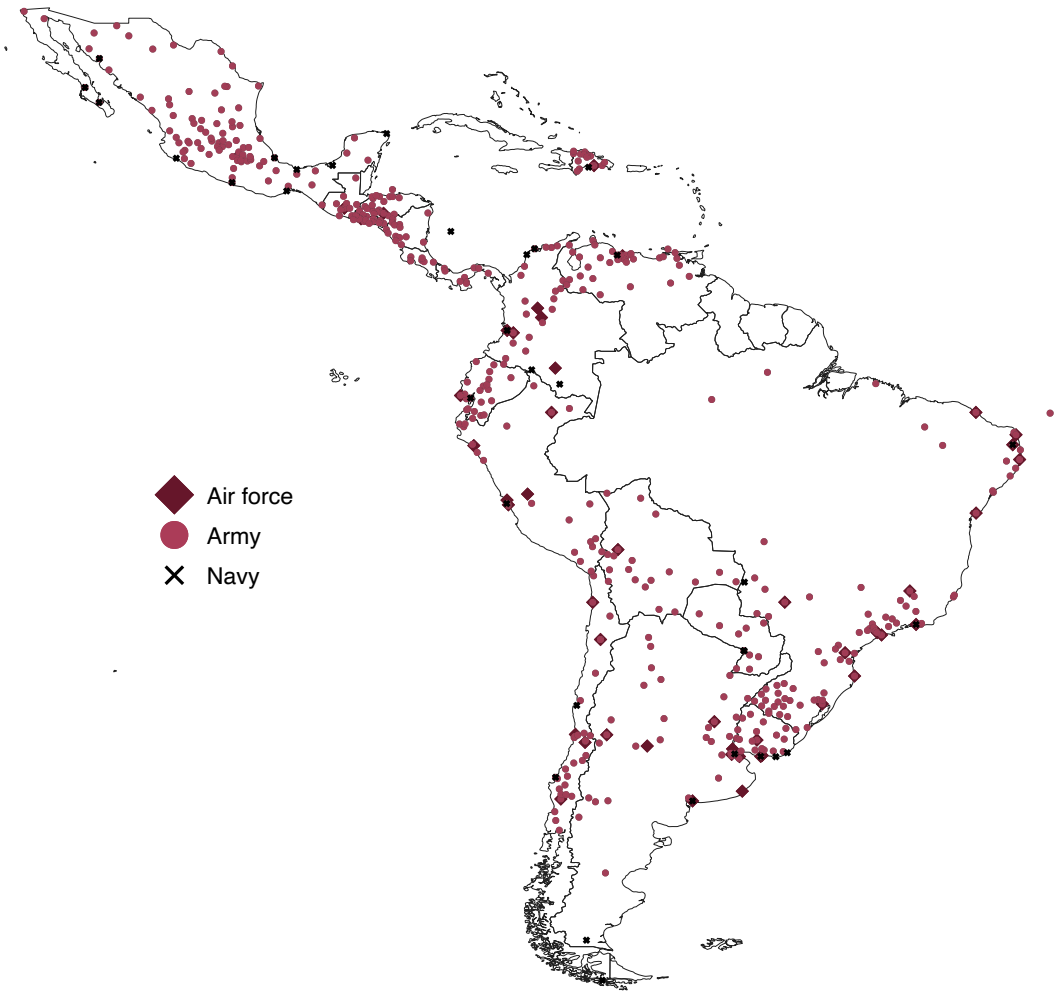
J. Guatemala **K.** Honduras **L.** Mexico

M. Nicaragua **N.** Panama **O.** Peru

P. Paraguay **Q.** Uruguay **R.** Venezuela

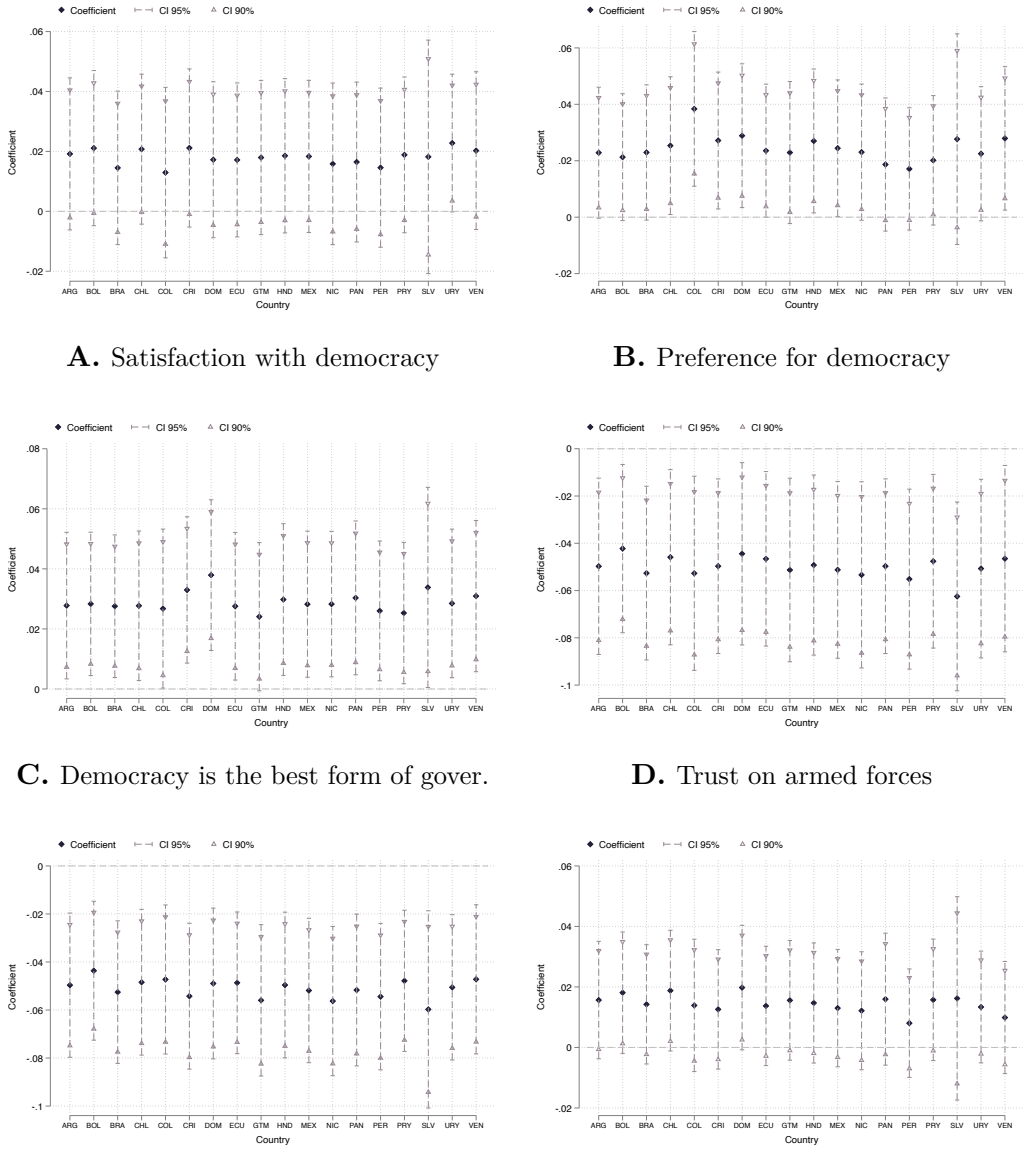
Notes: The figure shows the predicted active officers trained in the SOA during the Cold War (1946-1991). Period from 1946:1 to 2020:2.

FIGURE A.8. Armed forces distribution before 1945 in Latin America



Notes: This graph shows the distribution of armed forces before 1942 according to U.S. Military (1943); Isaguirre (2003); López Maltez (2014); Estado Mayor General del Ejército Chile (1983); Arquivo histórico do exército (2020). The Diamond represents the presence of an air force base, the circle represents the presence of an army base, and the cross represents the presence of a navy base.

FIGURE A.9. Effect of SOA graduates on democracy perceptions
Sensitivity to the exclusion of individual countries



A. Satisfaction with democracy

B. Preference for democracy

C. Democracy is the best form of gover.

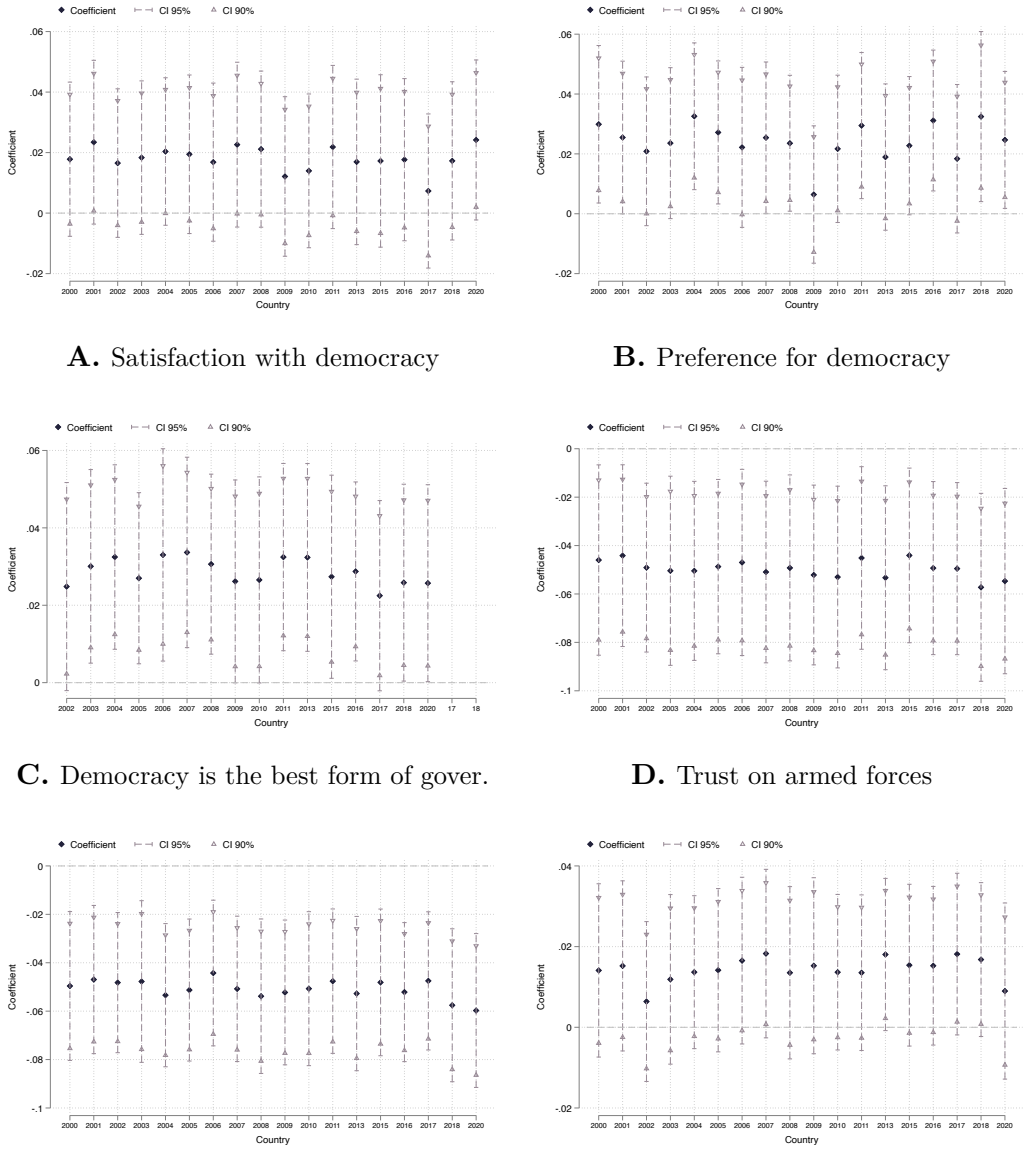
D. Trust on armed forces

E. Trust on public forces

F. Favourable opinion about U.S.

Notes: This figure demonstrates the impact of individually excluding one of the 18 countries on the results presented in Table 5, Panel A, highlighting the sensitivity of the findings to each country's exclusion. Panel A shows the effects on how satisfied a person is with the working of the democracy in her country. Panel B shows the effects on the probability that the individual answered that democracy is preferable to any other kind of government. Panel C shows the effects on the probability that the individual agrees with the statement that democracy may have problems, but it is the best system of government. Panel D shows the effects on the probability that the individual has a lot or some trust in the armed forces. Panel E shows the effects on the probability that the individual has a lot or some trust in the public forces (either the armed forces or police). Panel F shows the effects on the probability that the individual has a very good or good opinion about the United States. The results included the controls as the original table.

FIGURE A.10. Effect of SOA graduates on democracy perceptions
Sensitivity to the exclusion of individual survey waves



A. Satisfaction with democracy

B. Preference for democracy

C. Democracy is the best form of gover.

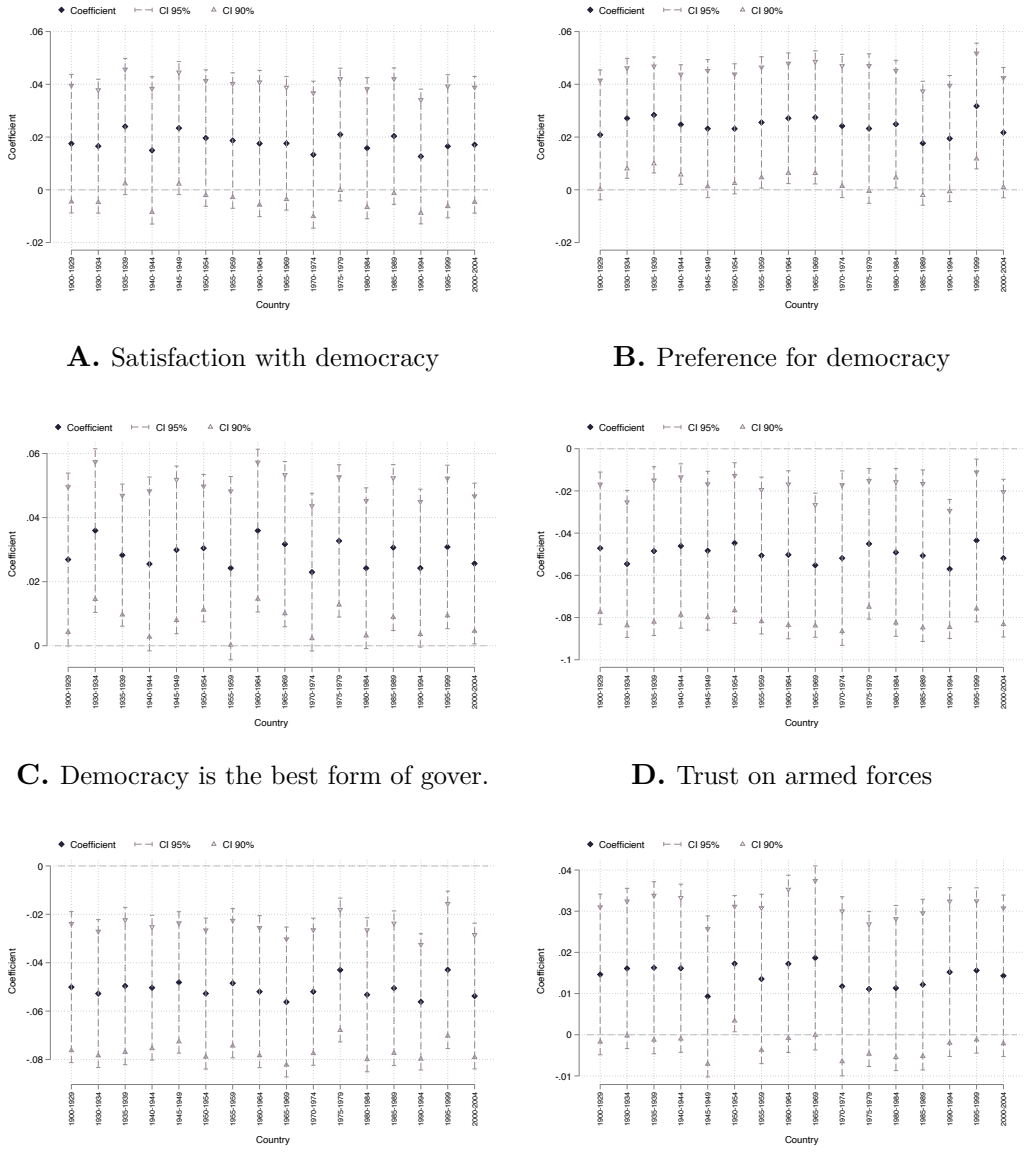
D. Trust on armed forces

E. Trust on public forces

F. Favourable opinion about US

Notes: This figure demonstrates the impact of individually excluding one of the 18 survey waves on the results presented in Table 5, Panel A, highlighting the sensitivity of the findings to each weave's exclusion. Panel A shows the effects on how satisfied a person is with the working of the democracy in her country. Panel B shows the effects on the probability that the individual answered that democracy is preferable to any other kind of government. Panel C shows the effects on the probability that the individual agrees with the statement that democracy may have problems, but it is the best system of government. Panel D shows the effects on the probability that the individual has a lot or some trust in the armed forces. Panel E shows the effects on the probability that the individual has a lot or some trust in the public forces (either the armed forces or police). Panel F shows the effects on the probability that the individual has a very good or good opinion about the United States. The results included the controls as the original table.

FIGURE A.11. Effect of SOA graduates on democracy perceptions
Sensitivity to the exclusion of individual cohort groups



A. Satisfaction with democracy

B. Preference for democracy

C. Democracy is the best form of gover.

D. Trust on armed forces

E. Trust on public forces

F. Favourable opinion about US

Notes: This figure demonstrates the impact of individually excluding one of 16 cohort groups on the results presented in Table 5, Panel A, highlighting the sensitivity of the findings to each cohort's exclusion. Panel A shows the effects on how satisfied a person is with the working of the democracy in her country. Panel B shows the effects on the probability that the individual answered that democracy is preferable to any other kind of government. Panel C shows the effects on the probability that the individual agrees with the statement that democracy may have problems, but it is the best system of government. Panel D shows the effects on the probability that the individual has a lot or some trust in the armed forces. Panel E shows the effects on the probability that the individual has a lot or some trust in the public forces (either the armed forces or police). Panel F shows the effects on the probability that the individual has a very good or good opinion about the United States. The results included the controls as the original table.

Appendix B. Tables

Table B.1. Dynamic Panel: Effect of SOA Graduates on Democracy (Dichotomous)

	Total		Troop		Academy Officers		Lower Rank Officers	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Dependent Variable: Democracy ($\mu = 0.4, \sigma = 0.5$)								
Stock SOA Trainees$_{t-5}$	−0.001	−0.001	0.003	0.002	−0.002	−0.001	−0.009	−0.007
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.004)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.006)	(0.006)
	[0.006]	[0.006]	[0.011]†	[0.011]†	[0.018]	[0.018]	[0.017]	[0.017]
Democracy (Dichotomous)								
Democracy$_{t-1}$	0.833***	0.826***	0.831***	0.825***	0.833***	0.826***	0.834***	0.825***
	(0.023)	(0.042)	(0.023)	(0.042)	(0.023)	(0.042)	(0.023)	(0.042)
	[0.003]‡	[0.005]‡	[0.003]‡	[0.005]‡	[0.004]‡	[0.006]‡	[0.004]‡	[0.005]‡
Democracy$_{t-2}$	–	0.021	–	0.021	–	0.021	–	0.022
	–	(0.035)	–	(0.035)	–	(0.035)	–	(0.035)
	–	[0.003]	–	[0.003]	–	[0.003]	–	[0.003]
Democracy$_{t-3}$	–	0.015	–	0.014	–	0.015	–	0.015
	–	(0.062)	–	(0.062)	–	(0.062)	–	(0.062)
	–	[0.005]	–	[0.005]	–	[0.005]	–	[0.005]
Democracy$_{t-4}$	–	0.007	–	0.007	–	0.007	–	0.007
	–	(0.033)	–	(0.033)	–	(0.033)	–	(0.033)
	–	[0.003]†	–	[0.003]†	–	[0.003]†	–	[0.003]†
Democracy$_{t-5}$	–	−0.060***	–	−0.060***	–	−0.060***	–	−0.057**
	–	(0.020)	–	(0.020)	–	(0.020)	–	(0.020)
	–	[0.005]	–	[0.005]	–	[0.005]	–	[0.005]
Constant Stock Effect 5 Years After	−0.003	−0.002	0.009	0.006	−0.008	−0.004	−0.032	−0.026
	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.011)	(0.013)	(0.011)	(0.011)	(0.022)	(0.022)
	[0.006]	[0.006]	[0.012]†	[0.012]†	[0.019]	[0.019]	[0.018]	[0.018]
N Country	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18
N	730	716	730	716	730	716	730	716
Period FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Country FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Notes: This table presents estimates of the effect of SOA trainees on democracy dichotomous indicator. Sample from 1951 - 1991. Stock SOA Trainees$_{t-5}$ is the stock of SOA graduates for the previous five years. Errors in parentheses are robust against heteroskedasticity and serial correlation at the country level. * is significant at the 10% level, ** is significant at the 5% level, *** is significant at the 1% level. Errors in squared bracket are bootstrapped using 1000 resamples. † is significant at the 10% level, †† is significant at the 5% level, ‡ is significant at the 1% level.

TABLE B.2. Dynamic Panel: Effect of SOA Graduates on Democracy with Additional Controls

	No Control		GDP 1946		Pop 1950		Military Size 1950	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Dependent Variable: Democracy Index ($\mu = 0.2, \sigma = 6.5$)								
Stock SOA Trainees$_{t-5}$	-0.179^{**}	-0.151^{**}	-0.135^{**}	-0.114^{*}	-0.192^{***}	-0.171^{**}	-0.187^{**}	-0.168^{**}
	(0.063)	(0.068)	(0.058)	(0.065)	(0.065)	(0.070)	(0.068)	(0.073)
	[0.084]††	[0.088]†	[0.072]†	[0.077]	[0.091]††	[0.095]†	[0.093]††	[0.098]†
Democracy								
Democracy Index$_{t-1}$	0.843^{***}	0.906^{***}	0.835^{***}	0.895^{***}	0.835^{***}	0.892^{***}	0.831^{***}	0.887^{***}
	(0.023)	(0.039)	(0.022)	(0.042)	(0.025)	(0.038)	(0.025)	(0.040)
	[0.022]‡	[0.039]‡	[0.022]†	[0.042]‡	[0.025]‡	[0.040]‡	[0.025]‡	[0.042]‡
Democracy Index$_{t-2}$	–	−0.049	–	−0.046	–	−0.048	–	−0.047
	–	(0.037)	–	(0.040)	–	(0.037)	–	(0.038)
	–	[0.039]	–	[0.043]	–	[0.042]	–	[0.045]
Democracy Index$_{t-3}$	–	−0.033	–	−0.034	–	−0.032	–	−0.034
	–	(0.058)	–	(0.057)	–	(0.059)	–	(0.059)
	–	[0.055]	–	[0.054]	–	[0.056]	–	[0.055]
Democracy Index$_{t-4}$	–	0.040	–	0.041	–	0.041	–	0.043
	–	(0.048)	–	(0.052)	–	(0.050)	–	(0.052)
	–	[0.049]	–	[0.052]	–	[0.052]	–	[0.057]
Democracy Index$_{t-5}$	–	-0.044^{*}	–	−0.044	–	−0.037	–	−0.036
	–	(0.023)	–	(0.026)	–	(0.025)	–	(0.027)
	–	[0.025]†	–	[0.029]	–	[0.029]	–	[0.033]
Constant Stock Effect 5 Years After	-0.656^{***}	-0.580^{**}	-0.485^{**}	-0.430^{*}	-0.692^{***}	-0.639^{**}	-0.669^{***}	-0.620^{**}
	(0.230)	(0.257)	(0.214)	(0.247)	(0.234)	(0.258)	(0.242)	(0.266)
	[0.309]††	[0.336]†	[0.262]†	[0.293]	[0.328]††	[0.353]†	[0.336]††	[0.360]†
N Country	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18
N	738	738	738	738	738	738	738	738
Period FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Country FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Notes: This table presents estimates of the effect of SOA trainees on democracy Polity IV index. Sample from 1951 - 1991. Stock SOA Trainees$_{t-5}$ is the stock of SOA graduates for the previous five years. Errors in parentheses are robust against heteroskedasticity and serial correlation at the country level. * is significant at the 10% level, ** is significant at the 5% level, *** is significant at the 1% level. Errors in squared bracket are bootstrapped using 1000 resamples. † is significant at the 10% level, †† is significant at the 5% level, ‡ is significant at the 1% level.

TABLE B.3. Dynamic Panel: Effect of SOA Graduates on democracy index (corrected by political competition and conflict)

	Total		Troop		Academy Officers		Lower Rank Officers	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Dependent Variable: Democracy Index ($\mu = 0.2, \sigma = 6.5$)								
Stock SOA Trainees$_{t-5}$	−0.037	−0.030	−0.007	−0.008	−0.056*	−0.044*	−0.188***	−0.155**
	(0.024)	(0.022)	(0.034)	(0.033)	(0.031)	(0.025)	(0.057)	(0.063)
	[0.028]	[0.026]	[0.046]	[0.043]	[0.061]	[0.052]	[0.075]††	[0.081]†
Democracy								
Democracy Index$_{t-1}$	0.856***	0.953***	0.855***	0.955***	0.856***	0.954***	0.855***	0.951***
	(0.021)	(0.031)	(0.021)	(0.031)	(0.021)	(0.031)	(0.021)	(0.031)
	[0.020]‡	[0.030]‡	[0.020]‡	[0.030]‡	[0.020]‡	[0.030]‡	[0.020]‡	[0.030]‡
Democracy Index$_{t-2}$	–	−0.067***	–	−0.068***	–	−0.067***	–	−0.068***
	–	(0.021)	–	(0.021)	–	(0.021)	–	(0.022)
	–	[0.022]‡	–	[0.022]‡	–	[0.022]‡	–	[0.023]‡
Democracy Index$_{t-3}$	–	−0.082	–	−0.083	–	−0.082	–	−0.082
	–	(0.052)	–	(0.052)	–	(0.052)	–	(0.052)
	–	[0.049]†	–	[0.048]†	–	[0.049]†	–	[0.049]†
Democracy Index$_{t-4}$	–	0.078	–	0.078	–	0.077	–	0.078*
	–	(0.045)	–	(0.045)	–	(0.045)	–	(0.045)
	–	[0.047]†	–	[0.047]	–	[0.047]†	–	[0.047]†
Democracy Index$_{t-5}$	–	−0.052**	–	−0.054**	–	−0.052**	–	−0.048*
	–	(0.023)	–	(0.023)	–	(0.023)	–	(0.024)
	–	[0.025]††	–	[0.025]††	–	[0.025]††	–	[0.026]†
Constant Stock Effect 5 Years After	−0.138	−0.121	−0.025	−0.032	−0.211*	−0.179*	−0.703***	−0.620**
	(0.091)	(0.089)	(0.128)	(0.133)	(0.116)	(0.099)	(0.212)	(0.245)
	[0.104]	[0.102]	[0.173]	[0.173]	[0.229]	[0.210]	[0.280]††	[0.315]††
N Country	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18
N	738	738	738	738	738	738	738	738
Period FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Country FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Notes: This table presents estimates of the effect of SOA trainees on democracy Polity IV index corrected index by political competition and conflict Vreeland (2008). Sample from 1951 - 1991. Stock SOA Trainees$_{t-5}$ is the stock of SOA graduates for the previous five years. Errors in parentheses are robust against heteroskedasticity and serial correlation at the country level. * is significant at the 10% level, ** is significant at the 5% level, *** is significant at the 1% level. Errors in squared bracket are bootstrapped using 1000 resamples. † is significant at the 10% level, †† is significant at the 5% level, ‡ is significant at the 1% level.

TABLE B.4. Dynamic Panel: Placebo effect of US aid on democracy

	Economic Aid		Military Aid	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Dependent Variable: Democracy Index ($\mu = 0.2, \sigma = 6.5$)				
Value Aid$_{t-5}$ (Millions USD)	−0.020	−0.017	−0.097	−0.066
	(0.012)	(0.013)	(0.083)	(0.082)
	[0.019]	[0.019]	[0.107]	[0.105]
Democracy				
Democracy Index$_{t-1}$	0.841***	0.906***	0.846***	0.909***
	(0.023)	(0.038)	(0.024)	(0.039)
	[0.023]‡	[0.039]‡	[0.023]‡	[0.039]‡
Democracy Index$_{t-2}$	–	−0.049	–	−0.048
	–	(0.037)	–	(0.036)
	–	[0.039]	–	[0.039]
Democracy Index$_{t-3}$	–	−0.034	–	−0.033
	–	(0.058)	–	(0.057)
	–	[0.054]	–	[0.054]
Democracy Index$_{t-4}$	–	0.039	–	0.039
	–	(0.048)	–	(0.048)
	–	[0.049]	–	[0.049]
Democracy Index$_{t-5}$	–	−0.044*	–	−0.047**
	–	(0.023)	–	(0.022)
	–	[0.026]†	–	[0.024]†
Constant Stock Effect 5 Years After	−0.072	−0.064	−0.358	−0.254
	(0.044)	(0.050)	(0.307)	(0.316)
	[0.067]	[0.073]	[0.393]	[0.407]
N Country	18	18	18	18
N	738	738	738	738
Period FE	✓	✓	✓	✓
Country FE	✓	✓	✓	✓

Notes: This table presents estimates of the effect of US aid on democracy Polity IV index. Sample from 1951 - 1991. Value Aid$_{t-5}$ is the value of US aid during the previous five years in constant US dollars. Errors in parentheses are robust against heteroskedasticity and serial correlation at the country level. * is significant at the 10% level, ** is significant at the 5% level, *** is significant at the 1% level. Errors in squared bracket are bootstrapped using 1000 resamples. † is significant at the 10% level, †† is significant at the 5% level, ‡ is significant at the 1% level.

TABLE B.5. Dynamic Panel: Placebo effect of SOA Graduates on Alignment with US

	Total		Troop		Academy Officers		Lower Rank Officers	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Dependent Variable: Alingment with US ($\mu = 0.5, \sigma = 0.3$)								
Stock SOA Trainees$_{t-5}$	−0.000	−0.000	0.001	0.001	−0.001	−0.001	−0.001	−0.001
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.002)
	[0.001]	[0.001]	[0.001]	[0.001]	[0.002]	[0.002]	[0.003]	[0.003]
Alingment								
Alingment$_{t-1}$	0.249***	0.249***	0.249***	0.249***	0.249***	0.249***	0.249***	0.249***
	(0.065)	(0.065)	(0.066)	(0.066)	(0.065)	(0.065)	(0.065)	(0.065)
	[0.062]‡	[0.062]‡	[0.062]‡	[0.062]‡	[0.062]‡	[0.062]‡	[0.062]‡	[0.062]‡
Democracy Index$_{t-2}$	–	0.101*	–	0.101*	–	0.101*	–	0.101*
	–	(0.055)	–	(0.054)	–	(0.055)	–	(0.054)
	–	[0.053]†	–	[0.052]†	–	[0.053]†	–	[0.052]†
Democracy Index$_{t-3}$	–	−0.017	–	−0.017	–	−0.017	–	−0.017
	–	(0.050)	–	(0.050)	–	(0.050)	–	(0.050)
	–	[0.048]	–	[0.048]	–	[0.048]	–	[0.048]
Democracy Index$_{t-4}$	–	0.019	–	0.019	–	0.019	–	0.019
	–	(0.043)	–	(0.042)	–	(0.043)	–	(0.043)
	–	[0.041]	–	[0.041]	–	[0.041]	–	[0.041]
Democracy Index$_{t-5}$	–	0.007	–	0.007	–	0.007	–	0.007
	–	(0.046)	–	(0.046)	–	(0.046)	–	(0.046)
	–	[0.046]	–	[0.046]	–	[0.046]	–	[0.046]
Constant Stock Effect 5 Years After	−0.000	−0.000	0.001	0.002	−0.002	−0.002	−0.001	−0.001
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.003)	(0.003)
	[0.001]	[0.001]	[0.002]	[0.002]	[0.002]	[0.002]	[0.004]	[0.004]
N Country	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18
N	738	738	738	738	738	738	738	738
Period FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Country FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Notes: This table presents estimates of the effect of SOA trainees on alignment with the US at the UN General Assembly, measured as the share of the total votes in which the country had the same position than the US. Sample from 1951 - 1991. Stock SOA Trainees$_{t-5}$ is the stock of SOA graduates for the previous five years. Errors in parentheses are robust against heteroskedasticity and serial correlation at the country level. * is significant at the 10% level, ** is significant at the 5% level, *** is significant at the 1% level.Errors in squared bracket are bootstrapped using 1000 resamples. † is significant at the 10% level, †† is significant at the 5% level, ‡ is significant at the 1% level.

TABLE B.6. Dynamic Panel: Placebo effect of SOA Graduates on Alignment with Soviet Union

	Total		Troop		Academy Officers		Lower Rank Officers	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Dependent Variable: Alingment with Soviet Union ($\mu = 0.5, \sigma = 0.2$)								
Stock SOA Trainees$_{t-5}$	−0.001	−0.001	−0.003	−0.003	0.001	0.001	−0.002	−0.002
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)
	[0.002]	[0.001]	[0.002]	[0.002]	[0.004]	[0.003]	[0.004]	[0.004]
Alingment								
Alingment$_{t-1}$	0.406***	0.406***	0.403***	0.403***	0.405***	0.405***	0.405***	0.405***
	(0.053)	(0.053)	(0.052)	(0.052)	(0.052)	(0.052)	(0.052)	(0.052)
	[0.059]‡	[0.053]‡	[0.058]‡	[0.052]‡	[0.057]‡	[0.052]‡	[0.059]‡	[0.053]‡
Alingment$_{t-2}$	–	0.152***	–	0.149***	–	0.152***	–	0.151***
	–	(0.032)	–	(0.033)	–	(0.032)	–	(0.031)
	–	[0.034]‡	–	[0.035]‡	–	[0.034]‡	–	[0.034]‡
Alingment$_{t-3}$	–	0.040	–	0.040	–	0.038	–	0.040
	–	(0.055)	–	(0.055)	–	(0.056)	–	(0.055)
	–	[0.056]	–	[0.056]	–	[0.056]	–	[0.056]
Alingment$_{t-4}$	–	0.060	–	0.060	–	0.058	–	0.060
	–	(0.048)	–	(0.048)	–	(0.048)	–	(0.049)
	–	[0.049]	–	[0.049]	–	[0.049]	–	[0.049]
Alingment$_{t-5}$	–	−0.046	–	−0.047	–	−0.049	–	−0.044
	–	(0.032)	–	(0.033)	–	(0.032)	–	(0.033)
	–	[0.032]	–	[0.033]	–	[0.032]	–	[0.034]
Constant Stock Effect 5 Years After	−0.001	−0.001	−0.005	−0.006	0.002	0.003	−0.004	−0.005
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.004)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.004)	(0.005)
	[0.003]	[0.003]	[0.005]	[0.005]	[0.007]	[0.007]	[0.008]	[0.008]
N Country	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18
N	738	738	738	738	738	738	738	738
Period FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Country FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Notes: This table presents estimates of the effect of SOA trainees on alignment with the Soviet Union at the UN General Assembly, measured as the share of the total votes in which the country had the same position than the Soviet Union. Sample from 1951 - 1991. Stock SOA Trainees$_{t-5}$ is the stock of SOA graduates for the previous five years. Errors in parentheses are robust against heteroskedasticity and serial correlation at the country level. * is significant at the 10% level, ** is significant at the 5% level, *** is significant at the 1% level.Errors in squared bracket are bootstrapped using 1000 resamples. † is significant at the 10% level, †† is significant at the 5% level, ‡ is significant at the 1% level.

TABLE B.7. Dynamic Panel: Effect of SOA Graduates on Democracy
10 years lags

	Total		Troop		Academy Officers		Lower Rank Officers	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Dependent Variable: Democracy ($\mu = -0.1, \sigma = 6.4$)								
Stock SOA Trainees$_{t-5}$	−0.036	−0.028	−0.006	−0.006	−0.056*	−0.041	−0.179**	−0.143**
	(0.025)	(0.023)	(0.035)	(0.036)	(0.031)	(0.026)	(0.063)	(0.067)
	[0.029]	[0.027]	[0.047]	[0.047]	[0.062]	[0.052]	[0.084]††	[0.089]
Democracy (Dichotomous)								
Democracy$_{t-1}$	0.844***	0.913***	0.843***	0.914***	0.844***	0.913***	0.843***	0.911***
	(0.024)	(0.040)	(0.024)	(0.040)	(0.024)	(0.040)	(0.023)	(0.039)
	[0.023]‡	[0.039]‡	[0.023]‡	[0.040]‡	[0.023]‡	[0.039]‡	[0.022]‡	[0.039]‡
Democracy$_{t-2}$	–	−0.059	–	−0.059	–	−0.058	–	−0.059
	–	(0.037)	–	(0.037)	–	(0.037)	–	(0.037)
	–	[0.040]	–	[0.040]	–	[0.040]	–	[0.040]
Democracy$_{t-3}$	–	−0.025	–	−0.026	–	−0.025	–	−0.025
	–	(0.055)	–	(0.055)	–	(0.055)	–	(0.055)
	–	[0.052]	–	[0.052]	–	[0.053]	–	[0.052]
Democracy$_{t-4}$	–	0.032	–	0.031	–	0.031	–	0.032
	–	(0.041)	–	(0.041)	–	(0.041)	–	(0.041)
	–	[0.043]	–	[0.043]	–	[0.043]	–	[0.043]
Democracy$_{t-5}$	–	−0.048	–	−0.048	–	−0.048	–	−0.047
	–	(0.037)	–	(0.037)	–	(0.037)	–	(0.037)
	–	[0.038]	–	[0.038]	–	[0.038]	–	[0.038]
Democracy$_{t-6}$	–	0.063	–	0.063	–	0.063	–	0.064
	–	(0.048)	–	(0.048)	–	(0.048)	–	(0.048)
	–	[0.045]	–	[0.046]	–	[0.045]	–	[0.045]
Democracy$_{t-7}$	–	−0.110	–	−0.111	–	−0.110	–	−0.108
	–	(0.068)	–	(0.068)	–	(0.068)	–	(0.068)
	–	[0.065]†	–	[0.066]†	–	[0.065]†	–	[0.065]†
Democracy$_{t-8}$	–	0.086	–	0.087	–	0.087	–	0.088
	–	(0.100)	–	(0.100)	–	(0.100)	–	(0.100)
	–	[0.091]	–	[0.091]	–	[0.091]	–	[0.091]
Democracy$_{t-9}$	–	−0.052	–	−0.052	–	−0.052	–	−0.051
	–	(0.059)	–	(0.059)	–	(0.059)	–	(0.059)
	–	[0.058]	–	[0.058]	–	[0.058]	–	[0.058]
Democracy$_{t-10}$	–	0.008	–	0.005	–	0.007	–	0.006
	–	(0.050)	–	(0.048)	–	(0.050)	–	(0.049)
	–	[0.051]	–	[0.049]	–	[0.050]	–	[0.049]
Constant Stock Effect 10 Years After	−0.187	−0.146	−0.033	−0.032	−0.291*	−0.217	−0.934***	−0.747**
	(0.133)	(0.121)	(0.183)	(0.186)	(0.173)	(0.139)	(0.333)	(0.356)
	[0.151]	[0.140]	[0.246]	[0.244]	[0.330]	[0.275]	[0.445]	[0.469]
N Country	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18
N	738	738	738	738	738	738	738	738
Period FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Country FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Notes: This table presents estimates of the effect of SOA trainees on democracy dichotomous indicator. Sample from 1951 - 1991. Stock SOA Trainees$_{t-5}$ is the stock of SOA graduates for the previous five years. Errors in parentheses are robust against heteroskedasticity and serial correlation at the country level. * is significant at the 10% level, ** is significant at the 5% level, *** is significant at the 1% level. Errors in squared bracket are bootstrapped using 1000 resamples. † is significant at the 10% level, †† is significant at the 5% level, ‡ is significant at the 1% level.

TABLE B.8. Rank structure by country and minimum times per rank

Country / Source	Rank and years							Total Years
Argentina	Subteniente	Teniente	Teniente 1ere	Capitan	Mayor	Teniente Coronel	Coronel	
U.S. Military (1943)	3	4	5	6	4	5	3	30
Colombia		Subteniente	Teniente	Capitan	Mayor	Teniente Coronel	Coronel	
U.S. Military (1943)		5	5	4	4	4	4	26
Chile		Subteniente	Teniente	Capitan	Mayor	Teniente Coronel	Coronel	
U.S. Military (1943) Ley 5949 1936		4	5	6	4	4	3	26
Brasil		Segundo Tenente	Primero Tenente	Capitao	Mayor	Teniente Coronel	Coronel	
Decreto 71848 1973		2	3	4	3	3	3	18
Mexico	Subteniente	Teniente	Capitan Segundo	Capitan Primero	Mayor	Teniente Coronel	Coronel	
Ley de Ascensos y Prom 1926	3	3	3	3	4	4	4	24
Peru		Subteniente	Teniente	Capitan	Mayor	Teniente Coronel	Coronel	
U.S. Military (1943) Ley 11242		3	3	5	4	5	3	23
Ecuador		Subteniente	Teniente	Capitan	Mayor	Teniente Coronel	Coronel	
U.S. Military (1943) Ley 1991		4	5	7	7	7	7	37
Paraguay	Subteniente	Teniente	Teniente Primero	Capita	Mayor	Teniente Coronel	Coronel	
Ley 1115 97	3	4	4	5	5	4	3	28
Panama		Subteniente	Teniente	Capitan	Mayor	Teniente Coronel	Coronel	
Manual de Ascensos 2007		4	5	5	4	4	4	26
Costa Rica		Subteniente	Teniente	Capitan	Mayor	Teniente Coronel	Coronel	
Decreto ejecutivo 3 1941		3	3	3	3	3	3	18
Nicaragua		Teniente	Teniente Primero	Capitan	Mayor	Teniente Coronel	Coronel	
U.S. Military (1943)		4	4	7	7	6	6	34
Guatemala	Subteniente	Teniente	Capitan Segundo	Capitan Primero	Mayor	Teniente Coronel	Coronel	
Ley constitutiva ejercito 1990	5	5	3	3	4	4	5	29
El Salvador		Subteniente	Teniente	Capitan	Mayor	Teniente Coronel	Coronel	
Ley de carrera militar 1995		4	5	6	5	5	5	30
Honduras		Subteniente	Teniente	Capitan	Mayor	Teniente Coronel	Coronel	
Decreto 98 1984		4	5	6	5	6	5	31
Republica Domincana		Segundo Teniente	Primer Teniente	Capitan	Mayor	Teniente Coronel	Coronel	
Ley 8783 de 1978		3	3	4	3	3	4	20
Venezuela		Teniente	Primer Teniente	Capitan	Mayor	Teniente Coronel	Coronel	
Ley organica 1995		3	5	5	4	4	4	25
Uruguay	Alferez	Teniente Segundo	Teniente Primero	Capitan	Mayor	Teniente Coronel	Coronel	
Ley 10273 1943	3	2	3	4	4	4	5	25
Bolivia		Subtemiente	Teniente	Capitan	Mayor	Teniente Coronel	Coronel	
U.S. Military (1943)		4	4	5	5	5	4	27

Notes: This table provides an overview of the rank structure in each of the 18 countries included in our sample, arranged from lower ranks on the left to positions just before the rank of generals on the right. It also indicates the primary sources of information used and the cumulative years individuals are expected to spend in these lower-ranking positions.

TABLE B.9. SOA commander effect on the forced disappearance: Colombia

	Dependent variable: Forced disappearance			
	F.D. > 0		log (F.D.+1)	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
SOA commander	0.007	0.029	0.004	0.271**
	(0.007)	(0.054)	(0.012)	(0.133)
	[0.006]	[0.066]	[0.008]	[0.134]
Estimation	OLS	IV	OLS	IV
Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mun. controls x time effects	✓	✓	✓	✓
Year-region FE	✓	✓	✓	✓
N	42854	42854	42854	42854
Municipality	1094	1094	1094	1094
Exc. Instruments F-stat.	–	183.85	–	183.85

Notes: This table presents estimates of the effect of SOA commanders on forced disappearance. SOA commander is a dummy equal to one if the brigade that had jurisdiction over the municipality is under command by an SOA graduate. Odd columns display the results of the ordinary least squares (OLS) estimation, while even columns present the instrumental variables (IV) estimation. The instrumental variable is the estimated SOA-trained generals active following other nations' patterns. The prediction for each municipality is based on the average count of SOA-trained officials from the other 17 countries, with weights assigned according to the distance between the centroid of the municipality and the capital city of those other countries. Time variant controls include distance to the nearest mobile brigade, distance of the brigade in charge to Bogotá, and dummies for a change in the brigade's commander, change of the brigade in charge of the municipality, and fixed effects of military division. Time dummies are interacted with the following set of time-invariant predetermined municipal controls: logarithm of the population in the 1990s, municipality's area, the share of the rural population, average elevation, distance to the closest major city, distance to the o Bogotá, year of creation, enforced disappearance rate before 1990, the distance to the three nearest historical military bases, the per capita frequency of military actions between 1975 and 1990. These actions include clashes between government forces and guerrillas, clashes between guerrillas and paramilitary groups, clashes between government forces and paramilitaries, as well as incidents involving guerrilla attacks, government attacks, and paramilitary attacks, the number of casualties within government forces, guerrilla groups, paramilitary organizations, and civilians during actions of each one of these groups attacks. Errors in squared brackets are robust against heteroskedasticity and serial correlation at the municipality level. Sample from 1991:1 - 2010:2. Errors in parentheses control for spatial and first-order time correlation following Conley (2016, 1999). We allow spatial correlation to extend up to 279 km from each municipality's centroid to ensure that each municipality has at least one neighbor. * is significant at the 10% level, ** is significant at the 5% level, *** is significant at the 1% level.

TABLE B.10. SOA commander effect on the military performance

	Dependent variable:					
	Clashes			Attacks		
	Gov.-Gue.	Gov.-Par.	Gue.-Par.	Gue.	Par.	Gov.
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
SOA commander	−0.050	0.005	−0.008	−0.110	−0.017	−0.054**
	(0.060)	(0.005)	(0.016)	(0.078)	(0.036)	(0.025)
	[0.070]	[0.008]	[0.021]	[0.063]	[0.034]	[0.031]
Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mun. controls x time effects	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Year-Region FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
N	42854	42854	42854	42854	42854	42854
Municipalities	1094	1094	1094	1094	1094	1094
Exc. Instruments F-stat.	183.85	183.85	183.85	183.85	183.85	183.85

Notes: This table presents estimates of the effect of SOA commanders on military activities. SOA commander is a dummy equal to one if the brigade that had jurisdiction over the municipality is under command by an SOA graduate. The coefficients show an instrumental variables estimation. The instrumental variable is the estimated proportion of generals graduates in the stock following other nations' patterns. The prediction for each municipality relies on the mean count of SOA-trained generals from the other 17 countries, with weights assigned based on the distance between the municipality's centroid and the capital city of the other countries. The dependent variable in column 1 is the rate of confrontations between the government forces and the guerilla groups. The dependent variable in column 2 is the rate of confrontations between the government forces and the paramilitary groups. The dependent variable in column 3 is the rate of confrontations between the guerrilla groups and the paramilitary groups. Time variant controls include distance to the nearest mobile brigade, distance of the brigade in charge to Bogotá, and dummies for a change in the brigade's commander, change of the brigade in charge of the municipality and fixed effects of division. Time dummies are interacted with the following set of time-invariant predetermined municipal controls: logarithm of the population in the 1990s, municipality's area, the share of the rural population, average elevation, distance to the closest major city, distance to the o Bogotá, year of creation, enforced disappearance rate before 1990, the distance to the three nearest historical military bases, the per capita frequency of military actions between 1975 and 1990. These actions include clashes between government forces and guerrillas, clashes between guerrillas and paramilitary groups, clashes between government forces and paramilitaries, as well as incidents involving guerrilla attacks, government attacks, and paramilitary attacks, the number of casualties within government forces, guerrilla groups, paramilitary organizations, and civilians during actions of each one of these groups attacks. Sample from 1991:1 - 2010:2. Errors in squared brackets are robust against heteroskedasticity and serial correlation at the municipality level. Errors in parentheses control for spatial and first-order time correlation following Conley (2016, 1999). We allow spatial correlation to extend up to 279 km from each municipality's centroid to ensure that each municipality has at least one neighbor. * is significant at the 10% level, ** is significant at the 5% level, *** is significant at the 1% level.

TABLE B.11. SOA commander effect on the civilian deaths

	Dependent variable: Deaths Civilians			
	Death > 0		log (Death +1)	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
SOA commander	0.003	−0.066	0.002	−0.064
	(0.005)	(0.055)	(0.009)	(0.089)
	[0.004]	[0.047]	[0.006]	[0.083]
Estimation	OLS	IV	OLS	IV
Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mun. controls x time effects	✓	✓	✓	✓
Year-region FE	✓	✓	✓	✓
N	42854	42854	42854	42854
Municipality	1094	1094	1094	1094
Exc. Instruments F-stat.	–	183.85	–	183.85

Notes: This table presents estimates of the effect of SOA commanders on civilians deaths. SOA commander is a dummy equal to one if the brigade that had jurisdiction over the municipality is under command by an SOA graduate. Odd columns display the results of the ordinary least squares (OLS) estimation, while even columns present the instrumental variables (IV) estimation. The instrumental variable is the estimated SOA-trained mayors and colonels active following other nations' patterns. The prediction for each municipality is based on the average count of SOA-trained officials from the other 17 countries, with weights assigned according to the distance between the centroid of the municipality and the capital city of those other countries. In columns 1 and 2, the dependent variable is a binary variable that takes the value of 1 if there were any civilian death in the partido. In columns 3 and 4, the dependent variable is the natural logarithm of the total deaths plus one. Time variant controls include distance to the nearest mobile brigade, distance of the brigade in charge to Bogotá, and dummies for a change in the brigade's commander, change of the brigade in charge of the municipality, and fixed effects of military division. Time dummies are interacted with the following set of time-invariant predetermined municipal controls: logarithm of the population in the 1990s, municipality's area, the share of the rural population, average elevation, distance to the closest major city, distance to the o Bogotá, year of creation, enforced disappearance rate before 1990, the distance to the three nearest historical military bases, the per capita frequency of military actions between 1975 and 1990. These actions include clashes between government forces and guerrillas, clashes between guerrillas and paramilitary groups, clashes between government forces and paramilitaries, as well as incidents involving guerrilla attacks, government attacks, and paramilitary attacks, the number of casualties within government forces, guerrilla groups, paramilitary organizations, and civilians during actions of each one of these groups attacks. Errors in squared brackets are robust against heteroskedasticity and serial correlation at the municipality level. Sample from 1991:1 - 2010:2. Errors in parentheses control for spatial and first-order time correlation following Conley (2016, 1999). We allow spatial correlation to extend up to 279 km from each municipality's centroid to ensure that each municipality has at least one neighbor. * is significant at the 10% level, ** is significant at the 5% level, *** is significant at the 1% level.

TABLE B.12. Long term effect of SOA graduates on democracy perceptions

	Democracy			Trust		Favorable opinion
	Satisfaction	Preference	Best gover.	Armed Forces	Public Forces	United States
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(7)
Panel A: Effect SOA graduates exposure						
Current SOA Trainees$_{tcb}$/100 x ω_m	0.019	0.021*	0.029**	−0.050**	−0.053***	0.016*
	(0.013)	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.019)	(0.016)	(0.010)
Obs.	374623	374623	339628	336613	374623	374623
Cohorts	99	99	98	99	99	99
Country-years	346	346	346	326	346	346
Localities	3837	3837	3740	3682	3837	3837
Panel B: Placebo SOA graduates exposure						
Previous SOA Trainees$_{tcb}$/100 x ω_m	−0.004	0.010	0.002	−0.018	−0.012	0.010
	(0.010)	(0.013)	(0.010)	(0.014)	(0.013)	(0.008)
Obs.	374623	374623	339628	336613	374623	374623
Cohorts	99	99	98	99	99	99
Country-years	346	346	346	326	346	346
Localities	3837	3837	3740	3682	3837	3837
Indiv. characterics x Country FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Locality FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Year-State FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Cohort FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
μ	0.346	0.555	0.722	0.451	0.537	0.675
σ	0.476	0.497	0.448	0.498	0.499	0.468

Notes: This table presents estimates of the effect of exposure to SOA trainees on attitudes toward democracy and trust in institutions. Panel A shows the effect of exposure to trainees after the individual turns 16. Panel B shows the placebo effect of exposure to trainees before the individual's birth. *Current SOA Trainees*$_{tcb}$ is the expected average number of SOA graduates of the country that were active each half year after the cohort turns 16 years old. *Previous SOA Trainees*$_{tcb}$ is the expected average number of SOA graduates active each half year from 1946 to ten years before the cohort birth. ω_m is the expected share of armed forces influencing locality if it follows the distribution before the Cold War. The dependent variable in column 1 is a dummy if the individual is very satisfied or satisfied with the working of the democracy in her country. The dependent variable in column 2 is a dummy variable if the individual answered that democracy is preferable to any other kind of government. The dependent variable in column 3 is a dummy variable if the individual agrees with the statement that democracy may have problems, but it is the best system of government. The dependent variable in column 4 is a dummy variable if the individual has a lot or some trust in the armed forces. The dependent variable in column 5 is a dummy variable if the individual has a lot or some trust in the public forces (either the armed forces or police). The dependent variable in column 5 is a dummy variable if the individual has a very good or good opinion about the United States. Individual controls include age, age squared, religion dummies, education level dummies, parents' education dummies, employment situation dummies, subjective income levels, duration of the survey and month of the survey fixed effects. Sample from 2000 - 2020 with gaps. Errors in parentheses are robust against heteroskedasticity and serial correlation at the state and cohort levels. * is significant at the 10% level, ** is significant at the 5% level, *** is significant at the 1% level.