

Foreign Training, Course Content, and Political Militarization

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June, 2024

Abstract

How does foreign military training shape civil-military relations in recipient states? Existing works have mostly analyzed aggregate indicators of foreign training, while paying little attention to the content that soldiers are exposed to. Studies also have often fallen prey to “coupism,” thereby ignoring more subtle ways in which soldiers can influence politics. In this paper, we disaggregate foreign military training to assess how different course types influence military involvement in politics. We argue that soldiers exert higher levels of political influence when they receive domestically oriented training. Empirically we leverage the wide-ranging dissemination of counterinsurgency training after the Cuban Revolution. Analyzing original data on 22,000 course attendances at the School of the Americas, we show that counterinsurgency courses increased soldiers’ influence over politics, whereas training in conventional warfare stabilized civilian control. The findings have implications for understanding why and when soldiers capture political institutions and dictate policies.

Word Count

13,474

Keywords

Military aid · Military professionalism · Warfare · Latin America · Revolution

Acknowledgements

We thank Jonathan D. Caverley, Christian Gläsel, Sharan Grewal, Renanah Joyce, Theodore McLauchlin, Charles Butcher, Christoph Dworschak, and the seminar participants at NTNU as well as the editors and reviewers for helpful feedback. This research was supported by an Irish Research Council Laureate Award IRCLA/2022/3762.

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And the new generation of military leaders has shown an increasing awareness that armies cannot only defend their countries—they can help [...] to build them.

—John F. Kennedy

Introduction

On October 24, 2014, Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro appointed active-duty officer Vladimir Padrino López as Minister of Defense. Shortly thereafter, López, a graduate of the US School of the Americas, where he had taken courses in psychological operations and infantry tactics, also assumed leadership of the government's Grand Mission for Sovereignty and Security. In addition to his position as defense minister, López was now responsible for overseeing commercial activities and social programs, including the distribution of food and medicine. According to one commentator, this made López the “second most powerful man in Venezuelan politics” (Martín 2016). Why do professional soldiers get involved in politics? What role does foreign military training play here?

This paper makes two innovations to understand why soldiers engage in politics and how foreign military training shapes their political involvement. First, we disaggregate foreign training. Research has largely used aggregate measures of military education (e.g., Atkinson 2006; Böhmelt, Escribà-Folch and Pilster 2019; Martinez Machain 2021; Ruby and Gibler 2010; Savage and Caverley 2017). However, if external training is changing the skills and attitudes of trainees, these effects should vary according to course content. We compare different course types to better capture the effect of foreign training on soldiers' willingness to involve themselves in politics. Second, we focus on political militarization to

examine a broad spectrum of soldier's political activities ranging from advising government over designing policies to forcibly taking power in a coup.¹ In doing so, we are moving the literature on security assistance in step with new research on civil-military relations, which, in addition to coups, increasingly covers more subtle political activities by soldiers (e.g., Bayer et al. 2023; Brooks 2019; Croissant et al. 2010; Eibl, Hertog and Slater 2021).

We argue that graduates of external training programs become involved in politics when motives meet perceived abilities. More specifically, we expect that foreign training in irregular warfare motivates soldiers to influence policies and politics. Counterinsurgency courses often propagate the integration of security operations with state-building and economic development efforts. Such courses politicize trainees, especially when they are taught by renowned instructors from powerful partner countries, and convince soldiers of foreign support for their political projects. In contrast, we expect that courses on conventional warfare orient soldiers towards complex military operations abroad. Such foreign training fosters beliefs among trainees that military victory requires them to stay clear of domestic politics and that their foreign patron will oppose political adventures.

To test how training content influences soldiers' political behavior requires an empirical set-up with high variation in courses and a low number of confounders. We leverage the wide-ranging dissemination of counterinsurgency training after the Cuban Revolution. In response to Fidel Castro's unexpected victory in 1959, the United States (US) fundamentally reoriented its security assistance. Besides courses on conventional warfare, Washington now also provided training on all matters of irregular warfare. We exploit this

¹Militarization is a complex, multidimensional phenomenon (Bayer et al. 2023). Inspired by recent works (Eibl, Hertog and Slater 2021; Kenwick 2020), we define political militarization as the extent to which soldiers hold prerogatives and decision-making power over policies and influence political processes in a given regime.

change by bringing to bear original, hand-coded data on 22,075 course attendances at the US School of the Americas—one of the key institutions in charge of educating Latin American officers.

In line with our argument, findings show that counterinsurgency courses increased political militarization, while training in conventional warfare reduced it. Additional tests suggest that i) the militarization effect stems from the state-building focus, ii) these ideas spread in the military apparatus through personal exchange at domestic military academies, and iii) the findings are unlikely to be driven by security threats, other types of foreign assistance, or soldier's connections and ambitions. Together our results show that course content affects whether or not militaries push into or stay clear of politics.

Along with extending the literature on security assistance, this paper makes four key contributions. First, a large literature has highlighted the influence of security threats on the quality of civil-military relations (e.g., Bove, Rivera and Ruffa 2020; Desch 1999; Goemans 2008; Piplani and Talmadge 2016; Powell 2012). We introduce foreign military training as one link connecting regional threat environments to soldiers' local involvement in politics. Inspired by classical works (Huntington 1985; Stepan 1986), we offer systematic evidence on how training geared towards countering internal or external enemies influences the military's political role.

Second, recent works have scrutinized political loyalty among military personnel and how this shapes the trust of governments towards their forces (e.g., Grasmeder 2021; Harkness 2016; Lyall 2020). We add to this literature by distinguishing between different types of foreign education, which allows us to identify distinct political profiles of military graduates. Our results demonstrate the diverging propensities of political involvement for counterinsurgent specialists in comparison to experts in conventional wars.

Third, the paper responds to calls to explore the mechanisms through which military education impacts civil-military relations (e.g., Böhmelt, Escribà-Folch and Pilster 2019; Brooks 2019). We demonstrate that training highlighting the social and economic problems of nations motivate soldiers to exert political pressure. Our findings thereby qualify arguments that see foreign training programs as inexpensive instruments for democratic stabilization in recipient countries.

Fourth, the paper highlights the interrelations between geopolitical crises and domestic regimes. Our findings show how providers of security assistance, by responding to their own threat concerns, can have a profound influence on politics in recipient states. Empirically, we link the United States' fear of spreading communism to the rise of new military professionalism in Latin America in the 1950s and 1960s (Stepan 1986). With this, our paper contributes to the broader literature on the international origins of regime characteristics (e.g., Casey 2020; Hyde and Saunders 2020).

Research on political militarization

The relationship between governments and their militaries is shaped by one of the “oldest dilemmas of governing” (McMahon and Slantchev 2015, 297). As guardian of the state the military must possess enough power to defeat enemies, but soldiers may abuse their capacity to force their will on the polity (Feaver 1999). Governments therefore have to carefully balance the protection from threats on the one hand and the risk of militarization and coups on the other (Brooks 2019; Huntington 1985; Svolik 2012).² The “Guardianship

²Many governments pursue strategies to keep their militaries in check. Such coup-proofing includes balancing the military's power through parallel security organizations (De Bruin 2018), co-opting soldiers through patronage (Quinlivan 1999), exploiting officers' career concerns (Scharpf and Gläsel 2020),

Dilemma” is particularly prevalent under imminent security threats (Desch 1999; McMahon and Slantchev 2015; Paine 2022).

Research generally agrees that the nature of the security threat influences soldiers’ willingness to exert political influence differentially. External threats, such as impending invasions by foreign armies, lower the risk of soldiers’ political involvement (Desch 1999). Such threats orient the military towards a common, external foe and soldiers have fewer opportunities to coordinate and execute political interventions during campaigns against other countries (e.g., Kim 2019; Piplani and Talmadge 2016). In contrast, internal threats, such as insurgencies, often provide the military with both the opportunity and the motivation for political interference (e.g., Beliakova 2021; Bove, Rivera and Ruffa 2020; Eibl, Hertog and Slater 2021; Svolik 2012). Confronted with insurgent groups or other subversive threats, soldiers may fear for the well-being of the military and the stability of their country, which motivates their political involvement (Bell and Sudduth 2017). At the same time, soldiers are likely to be supported by influential domestic and international elites, who hope for more rigorous military operations and increased political stability (Gläbel, González and Scharpf 2020; Thyne 2010).

While research largely agrees on the link between security threats and militarization, it remains unclear how exactly soldiers come to believe that their political involvement is necessary and possible. We argue that external military education plays a key role here. Studies suggest that training crucially shapes perceptions and convictions within the military, and this probably extends beyond domestic military education (Böhmelt, Escribà-Folch and Pilster 2019; Stepan 1986). Particularly training by renowned foreign

selectively placing loyal officers (Harkness 2016), setting up punishment detachments (Lyll 2020), and recruiting foreigners (Grasmeder 2021).

instructors from prestigious military organizations are likely to shape soldiers' attitudes towards possible political engagement.

The importance of foreign military training

In many countries, soldiers receive a significant amount of their training through security assistance programs (e.g., Carrozza and Marsh 2022; McLauchlin, Seymour and Boulanger Martel 2022). Thousands of officers and enlisted personnel are educated at foreign academies or participate in training programs from countries such as Canada, China, France, Germany, Russia, and the United Kingdom. In the United States alone, foreign soldiers can study over 4,100 subjects at more than 270 military institutions (AI 2002).

Research on how foreign military training influences civil-military outcomes has often found contradictory or difficult to reconcile results. Some studies suggest that external training strengthens civilian control (Atkinson 2006; Mujkic, Asencio and Byrne 2019; Ruby and Gibler 2010). Others have argued that foreign training may undermine civilian authority (Fitch 1979; Maniruzzaman 1992; Rowe 1974; Savage and Caverley 2017). The lack of convergence in the literature exists in part due to failure to account for differences in training content and the strong focus on extreme outcomes. First, studies commonly base their findings on aggregate measures of foreign training (Atkinson 2006; Ruby and Gibler 2010; Savage and Caverley 2017).³ However, lumping together different course content ignores that courses often teach soldiers distinct strategies and tactics. In the following,

³Notable exceptions are Atkinson (2014), Grewal (2022), and Miles Joyce (2022) who utilize surveys to capture the micro-political effects of US training on foreign military personnel.

we disaggregate training content to scrutinize how courses on irregular and conventional warfare shape trainees' motivation to influence politics.

Second, research on foreign military training has tended to focus on grand political outcomes such as coups (Atkinson 2006; Ruby and Gibler 2010; Savage and Caverley 2017). Such "coupism" may conceal more subtle ways through which soldiers exert political power (Beliakova 2021; Croissant et al. 2010). In fact, military interventions are as "often latent or indirect as they are overt or direct" (Finer 1988, 4), and soldiers may simply refrain from staging coups because their political power is large enough to render illegal takeovers redundant (Desch 1999; Eibl, Hertog and Slater 2021). To uncover more nuanced effects of external training on civil-military relations, we scrutinize soldiers' influence over policies and politics.

Foreign training content and political militarization

The militarization of politics describes situations in which the military assumes greater control over political processes and positions.⁴ This can occur indirectly with soldiers pressuring the civilian leadership to consult with the military over policies. In such situations, soldiers wield political power from behind the scenes, for example, "through a national security council 'advising' the government" (Eibl, Hertog and Slater 2021, 1004). It can also occur directly, such as soldiers taking up posts in the state administration or cabinet outside their traditional purview of defense (Finer 1988, 165-6). In the most

⁴This distinguishes political from material and societal militarization. According to Bayer et al. (2023, 4), material militarization "refers to the allocation of material, economic and social resources to the armed forces" and societal militarization consists of the "expansion of the military's role in societal institutions and the daily lives of ordinary citizens."

extreme case, the chief executive is an active-duty officer who has assumed power through a coup and is “backed up by an institutionalized military decision-making body” (Eibl, Hertog and Slater 2021, 1004). In countries marked by high levels of political militarization, soldiers rather than civilians “dominate political decision-making” (Kenwick 2020, 71) and influence policies unrelated to national security.⁵

Similar to the explanation of coups (Powell 2012), we propose that political militarization occurs when soldiers have the *motive* and also believe in their *ability* to successfully influence political processes, decisions, and policies.⁶ Our argument sheds particular light on soldiers and how different types of foreign military training shape their willingness to become politically involved. In the Supporting Information (SI), we describe why civilian governments and non-military leaders often have strong incentives to politically involve foreign-trained soldiers.⁷

As we explain below, we expect that foreign training in counterinsurgency warfare increases trainees’ motives and perceived abilities to successfully operate in the political

⁵On the other end of the spectrum are regimes where “civilians dominate political decision-making, writ large” and “military involvement in politics, either through direct challenges from the military or more subtly through increased military involvement in decision-making processes,” is absent (Kenwick 2020, 72). High political militarization can thus be conceptually understood as the absence of civilian control over the military.

⁶In studies on coups, motives are also called disposition and ability is often labelled opportunity (Powell 2012). Others may refer to them as push and pull factors (Bove, Rivera and Ruffa 2020).

⁷As we describe in the SI, these political incentives are prevalent across a variety of contexts. Pull factors therefore offer only a weak explanation for the variation in political militarization. This is supported by a test demonstrating that potential pull factors do not influence our main results (Table SI.5.1).

arena, while foreign training in conventional warfare decreases them.⁸ Unlike domestic military training, external counterinsurgency training, particularly when it involves integrating security operations with economic modernization and state-building efforts, convinces soldiers that expanding their political role will benefit domestic stability and be supported by their foreign patron. In contrast, external training in conventional warfare teaches trainees the major demands of combat against foreign armies, where the use of highly specialized skills does not allow for political distractions and will most likely also be rejected by the foreign ally. Before we describe how foreign-sponsored courses alter soldiers' motives and perceived abilities to exert political influence in greater detail, we explain why recipient states draw on foreign military training in the first place.

Why recipient states use foreign military training

Enrolling troops in foreign training programs can be beneficial for recipient states (Scharpf 2020). To understand why, it helps to look at domestic training. Perhaps most obviously, military training increases the skills of soldiers from basic tactics to grand strategy (Böhmelt, Escribà-Folch and Pilster 2019; Toronto 2017). Soldiers learn about which “resources will be employed, how they will be used, and where” (Desch 1999, 17). In addition, military education is also a powerful instrument for transmitting core beliefs about the military and its mission (Böhmelt, Escribà-Folch and Pilster 2019). Similar to other organizations, the professional socialization during education shapes soldiers' value compass on what they deem “correct, effective, and appropriate” (Long 2016, 15). Training

⁸Our argument is inspired by Alfred Stepan's (1986) ground-breaking work on new and old professionalism, which we merge with the unique features of foreign military training focused on internal security and external wars.

impacts how soldiers perceive threats, which strategies and tactics they use, and how they see their role vis-à-vis the government.

External training gives recipients access to knowledge and technologies unavailable at home (Savage and Caverley 2017). To soldiers and governments this is particularly attractive when security threats demand the quick and cost-efficient increase in military capacity (Scharpf 2020). Moreover, recipient states can benefit from the socialization of foreign-trained soldiers (Atkinson 2006, 2014). Many graduates become part of exclusive, tightly knit alumni networks. Governments can use these close personal ties to reinforce their relations with donor states (Martinez Machain 2021; Scharpf 2020).

Finally, foreign training can foster the widespread dissemination of new knowledge. Graduating from foreign academies or renowned programs, soldiers often assume positions that allow them to spread strategic and operational skills at home. As instructors at domestic academies or staff colleges, or as members of the general staff, they can pass on new ideas to peers and subordinates. In addition, foreign-trained officers might share their acquired knowledge in military periodicals, which serve as a forum for cultivating and disseminating military knowledge (Toronto 2017).

Why officers trained in internal warfare push into politics

We argue that soldiers develop the *motive* to become politically involved when they receive training in internal warfare by foreign sponsors. Such external education commonly alters how soldiers perceive the risks of domestic instability (Stepan 1986). In contrast to training on warfare against conventional armies, counterinsurgency and counter-terrorism courses highlight clandestine threats that emerge from within the domestic population. A key lesson of most internal warfare manuals is the utmost importance of detecting and defusing

subversive plots of an enemy that hides among the civilian population (Kitson 1971; Trinquier 1964). Consequently, officers trained in counterintelligence or counter-terrorism often become highly sensitive to domestic forms of opposition (Gläbel, González and Scharpf 2020). In this mindset even protests or strikes can be harbingers of a larger subversion, which must be prevented at all costs.⁹ Soldiers may thus not only deem it necessary to use “unconventional methods” like torture to detect and eliminate enemies (Trinquier 1964), but they may equally see their political involvement as a unavoidable step for guaranteeing resolute countermeasures.

The impact on the outlook of soldiers is particularly strong in cases where foreign advisors from a superpower like the United States or a regional hegemon train partner soldiers in counterinsurgency and counter-terrorism. As representatives of powerful, highly professional, and technologically advanced military organizations, instructors are likely to be admired by their foreign students. This equips advisors with unique authority and standing and might explain why, for example, US instructors heavily rely on persuasion in external education programs (Metz 2022). In such situations, foreign soldiers are likely to be particularly receptive to warnings about impending subversive threats at home and will deeply absorb the recommended strategies and tactics for quelling insurgent groups.

Training in irregular warfare often propagates comprehensive strategies to defeat domestic enemies and protect the state. Soldiers learn that effective counterinsurgency

⁹In cases where sponsors fear large-scale subversion, such as during the Cold War, foreign courses are likely to place less emphasis on establishing civilian control and focus more on effectively containing domestic threats. For example, we know of no evidence that School of the Americas courses in the 1950s and 60s emphasized military subordination and the primacy of civilian control. And even when such norms are taught during training abroad, soldiers are likely to prioritize military rather than civilian interests in high-threat environments (Miles Joyce 2022).

missions remove the insurgents' breeding ground by merging security operations with larger economic and social projects (Kilcullen 2010; Nagl 2002). Since the beginning of the Cold War leading foreign instructors have argued that insurgents need to be separated from their civilian supporters through a combination of psychological operations and state-building efforts (Galula 1964; Kitson 1971). First adopted by the British forces in Malaya and the French army in Indochina and later also propagated by the US military, these measures aim at winning the civilians' hearts and minds through improved governance and better infrastructure (Porch 2013). Soldiers trained in internal warfare with a focus on state-building are thus particularly likely to seek influence over non-military policies as a precondition for operational success.

The heightened sensitivity towards domestic opposition and the call for comprehensive countermeasures often motivate foreign-trained soldiers to re-define their professional role (Stepan 1986). As training in internal warfare commonly identifies development issues and weak governance as the root-cause of domestic instability, soldiers seek more effective policy-making beyond pure security matters. Convinced that corruption and political inaptness will play into the hands of internal enemies, graduates possibly conclude that restoring stability necessitates the military's broader political engagement.¹⁰

The expansion of soldiers' professional role is particularly likely as they are exposed to modernization-based counterinsurgency strategies. Courses in civic action and

¹⁰On the one hand, soldiers may have deep distrust of civilian policymakers and view them as corrupt or dishonest. Foreign-trained experts are therefore likely to increase their political role to monitor and control civilian counterparts to ensure that the government maintains the policies counterinsurgents deem necessary. On the other hand, our argument does not exclude the possibility that soldiers trained abroad view their political involvement as professionally warranted and part of the military's mission. For counterinsurgency experts, politically assisting the government in protecting the state from subversives and terrorists can be a military duty.

nation-building, such as those offered by the US military during the Cold War, can generate a managerial view among military officers in how to approach a looming domestic conflict with subversives (Stepan 1986, 138-41). In Brazil, for example, US-trained soldiers started to see internal security through the lens of economic development. Officers became convinced that “fundamental aspects of Brazilian social and economic organization” required “change if Brazil were to maintain its internal security” (Stepan 1986, 141), which included taking an active role in managing inflation, conducting agrarian and bank reforms, and studying voting, transportation, and education systems. Such a managerial counterinsurgency doctrine is likely to motivate soldiers to work in the state administration and assume cabinet positions to expand their influence beyond narrow national security policies.

The impact of modernization-based counterinsurgency training is particularly strong when soldiers have received no or inconsistent education on the topic at home. For example, after World War II, most foreign soldiers lacked training in irregular warfare, and even those familiar with counterinsurgency content had incomplete and inconsistent training on the subject (MacKay 2023, 71). US counterinsurgency training, on the other hand, offered a deliberately developed, comprehensive educational package on irregular warfare, which emphasized economic development as the central tool of combating insurgents (Porch 2013, 229-30). It seems likely that training abroad had a special effect on the thinking of foreign soldiers.

Besides the motives for greater political engagement, training in internal warfare is likely to increase officers' *ability* to assume influential positions in the state and shape policies. Courses on intelligence and irregular warfare teach soldiers methods to uncover and infiltrate political groups and social networks. Trainees can also use these skills in

their interactions with political actors. As counterintelligence experts, foreign-trained officers might strategically build and exploit personal relationships. Knowing political gatekeepers allows counterinsurgency-trained soldiers to plant information and gain access to the state's decision-making circles. While soldiers might also gain some of these skills through domestic counterinsurgency training, two features make external counterinsurgency training especially relevant.

First, counterinsurgency-trained soldiers might have different understandings of their patron's foreign policy goals. Similar to soldiers contemplating a potential coup, counterinsurgency-trained soldiers are likely to push into the political arena if they believe that their political endeavour will be successful (Singh 2014). The backing by a powerful foreign ally increases the chances of such success (Thyne 2010). In some situations, foreign support might be more perceived than real, but in others foreign powers might actually motivate soldiers to take up a more active role. In 1961, for example, a policy memo of the US government suggested that the the United States should convince Latin American officers "that their most patriotic role, and their true defense role, lies in executing a concept of defense through development, with all this entails" (cited in Child 1980, 148).

Second, externally trained counterinsurgency experts who enjoy support from a foreign ally are less likely to fear internal opposition to their political involvement. The political ambitions of soldiers commonly heighten the risk of rifts and confrontations within the military (Nordlinger 1977). A perception that the foreign sponsor backs their former trainees might appease government representatives and reassure other soldiers within the military.¹¹ In particular, support from a superpower such as the United States might

¹¹Foreign powers may pressure governments to provide political access to foreign-trained soldiers. At international summits, during diplomatic visits, or through contacts to military attachés, they may

convince officers at higher ranks that the political involvement of their foreign-trained peers is either militarily expedient or that resistance is futile. As more critical soldiers are unlikely to openly oppose political adventures, foreign-trained counterinsurgents are likely to become more confident about their push into politics.

Taken together, the content of counterinsurgency training influences soldiers in two important ways. First, such training, particularly when it propagates modernization and state-building as far-reaching antidotes to domestic instability, is likely to change the doctrinal outlook of soldiers and motivate their political involvement. Second, counterinsurgency training is likely to convince soldiers that their foray into politics will be successful because their ties to the foreign patron provide international support and reduce domestic opposition.

Hypothesis 1: Foreign training in counterinsurgency warfare increases military involvement in politics.

Why officers trained in conventional warfare stay outside of politics

In contrast to foreign military training in counterinsurgency warfare, we expect that courses in conventional warfare reduce officers' *motive* to step into the political arena. Unlike operations against insurgents or terrorists, conventional warfare training prepares military personnel for wars with other nations (Stepan 1986). This type of foreign education therefore directs soldiers' attention to external threat environments and the difficulties

recommend that the government utilize the irregular warfare or state-building expertise of their foreign-trained soldiers. For graduates of foreign training programs, such referrals might open doors to enter consultative bodies or advisory councils and generate possibilities to exert influence on the country's policies.

navigating them (Desch 1999; Huntington 1962). In particular, US instructors are likely to draw on works such as that of Samuel Huntington to convey how modern interstate warfare demands a highly specialized military in which being a professional officer absorbs all energies (Huntington 1956, 381).¹² Such recommendations are likely to convince foreign trainees that warfare against other nations and the challenges of prevailing against high-powered armies requires the full attention of military professionals.

Given the authority of foreign instructors, soldiers are likely to internalize why modern militaries should stay clear of politics to secure victory against conventional enemy forces. US military instructors generally emphasize that officers cannot be an “expert in the management of violence for external defense” and equally “skilled in either politics or statecraft” (Huntington 1985, 32). These warnings are probably also transmitted to foreign participants in conventional warfare courses. More than once, students will hear that being an officer is “an exclusive role, incompatible with any other significant social or political roles” (Huntington 1956, 381). Foreign-training in conventional warfare is likely to foster beliefs among foreign soldiers that becoming involved in politics is not only incompatible with the self-image of a professional soldier, but it also risks military disaster. Trainees will learn that, in the worst case, political adventures undermine the war effort and play into the hands of the enemy. In light of these consequences, instructors are likely to convince foreign soldiers that the clear separation between military and political affairs promises the highest chances of victory against conventional adversaries. Among foreign-trained soldiers this should lower their motive for political endeavours.

¹²For US officers, Huntington’s (1985, 32) book *The Soldier and the State* became “the centerpiece of their training” after World War II (Feaver 1996, 158).

Adding to motive to stay clear of politics, soldiers in foreign-sponsored courses on conventional warfare may also become sceptical about whether they possess the *ability* to successfully access the political arena. Foreign military education in conventional warfare conveys highly specialized skills for complex military operations and maneuvers. Besides training in doctrine and grand strategy, courses aim at improving soldiers' tactical proficiency. In the context of US-sponsored training this commonly includes "efficient communications, discipline in weapons handling, [and] the ability to operate in a decentralized command structure" (Savage and Caverley 2017, 545). Conventional warfare courses taught at the School of the Americas, for example, focused on infantry weapons, vehicle maintenance, and radio operations, among others. Such skills are crucial for battlefield maneuvers and might even be helpful for forcibly taking power in a coup (Biddle 2006; Luttwak 1969). Compared to the broad modernization focus of counterinsurgency, however, these skills are more focused, apolitical, and ultimately less suitable for becoming a member of an advisory board or taking on a position in a ministry. As conventional warfare skills, specifically at the tactical level, are of limited value to successful political advancements, conventional training should lower the belief among trainees that they can successfully advance into politics.

The content of conventional training, due to their lack of emphasis on politics, could also generate different beliefs about the response of the foreign ally. Given the complexity of conventional warfare, foreign-trained soldiers must fear that their patron will oppose their political adventures. In contrast to peers trained in internal security and counterinsurgency, soldiers educated in conventional warfare have to expect that the allied country sees in their political engagement a potential threat to the country's defense capabilities. Foreign patrons such as the United States might therefore not only publicly

disapprove political endeavours but, in the worst case, punish soldiers for their political encroachments (Masaki 2016; von Soest and Wahman 2015). This could involve the suspension of training missions and arms deliveries, and even entail economic sanctions. Concerned about the patron's disapproval, soldiers trained in conventional warfare and military professionalism á la Huntington will keep military and political matters separate. This allows soldiers to demonstrate their military professionalism and strengthen military relations with the international partner.

Taken together, the content of conventional warfare training influences soldiers in two important ways. First, by internalizing the challenges of modern warfare, foreign-trained soldiers are likely to develop a strong preference against political adventures. Second, foreign training in conventional warfare is unlikely to provide soldiers with crucial abilities to enter the political arena. In fact, soldiers might expect that the country that trained them will counter their political activities.

Hypothesis 2: Foreign training in conventional warfare decreases military involvement in politics.

Empirical case

To test how training content influences soldiers' political behavior requires an empirical case with large variation in courses and a small number of confounders. We focus on the Cuban Revolution. On the eve of 1959, Fidel Castro and his insurgents overthrew the government of Fulgencio Batista, which caught the United States and most Latin American governments by surprise. Fearing a communist insurgency across the region, Washington started to instruct Latin American soldiers on all aspects of counterinsurgency warfare.

We exploit the change in US security assistance by bringing to bear original, hand-coded course data from the School of the Americas (SOA)—one of the key institutions in charge of educating Latin American militaries during the Cold War. Before the Cuban Revolution the school offered training in conventional warfare. After Castro's victory it was pivotal for the dissemination of counterinsurgency skills, which provides us with the unique opportunity to study whether course attendance in conventional and irregular warfare motivated soldiers to become politically active.

Cuban revolution

Fidel Castro's surprising victory sent shock waves through the Western Hemisphere (Wright 2001, 39). Comprising not more than several hundred fighters, the insurgents overthrew a dictator who enjoyed ample US support. In the months before the revolution, most experts had been convinced that Castro's group posed a marginal threat, if any. In November 1958, a CIA report stated that "Fidel Castro [...] probably cannot overthrow the government in the next few months" (CIA 1958, 1).

Following Castro's takeover, Havana began to export the Communist revolution across the region (Brands 2010, 25-6). Cuba "sent propaganda and money to fidelista groups, and occasionally dispatched arms and even personnel to support guerrilla activities" (Wright 2001, 39-40). In 1962 alone, Havana trained 1,000–1,500 foreign insurgents (Brands 2010, 42). The goal was to weaken Washington's influence which would then allow Communists to fill the opening power vacuums.

Both Havana and Moscow celebrated the possibility of creating new pro-Soviet regimes. As an official stated: "At any time other Latin American countries may follow after Cuba, [...] Venezuela may blow up at any moment. There are mass strikes in Chile.

The same applies to Brazil and Guatemala” (Brands 2010, 41). In Washington these developments caused outright panic.¹³ The US feared that the Cuban revolution would generate Soviet satellites in Americas’ backyard.

Washington’s response

Before the Cuban revolution, Latin American soldiers had not received any training on counterinsurgency. As the Deputy Director of the CIA, Richard Helms, explained in 1966, Latin American governments “were generally poorly prepared for the [insurgent] challenge. [...] ‘[I]nternal warfare’ was a subject only recently thrust upon them at US training schools” (Helms 1966, 13). Until 1959, US foreign training to Latin America had focused exclusively on conventional warfare. “All military aid for Latin America during this period [...] was ostensibly for hemispheric defense” (Loveman 1999, 153).¹⁴

Fearing further communist revolutions, Washington fundamentally refocused its security assistance after Castro’s surprising victory. Shortly after taking office, the Kennedy administration started to develop strategies for countering guerrilla threats. According to Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara, the goal was now to protect countries from “covert intrusion and internal subversion designed to create dissidence and insurrection” (Wright 2001, 62). Washington sought to equip Latin American soldiers with skills for rectifying those conditions that had given rise to the insurgent threat in the first place (Barber and Ronning 1966, 53).

¹³The CIA warned that revolutions were “definite possibilities in twelve of the twenty-three [Latin American] countries” (Brands 2010, 40).

¹⁴US law prohibited the provision of military assistance for internal security (Loveman 1999, 143).

US foreign training started to propagate counterinsurgency through social and economic development. By reducing poverty and delivering economic growth, modernization experts in the US administration argued, recipients could shift the loyalty of the population away from insurgents and to the governments (Barber and Ronning 1966, 53). In this mindset, the military became the only actor capable enough to provide roads, schools, hospitals, and other public services (Wright 2001, 63). A Committee, tasked by the US President to assess military aid, concluded that the “United States should, as a matter of policy, encourage the use of the armed forces of underdeveloped countries as a major ‘transmission belt’ of socioeconomic reform and development” (Draper 1959, 55). Washington now saw Latin American soldiers as the architects of economic progress (Barber and Ronning 1966, 27).

Training at the School of the Americas

The reorientation of US military assistance turned the SOA into the main institution for educating Latin American soldiers in counterinsurgency warfare. According to our data, which we explain below, more than 20,000 soldiers attended the school in the 1950s and 60s.¹⁵ As shown in Figure 1, 80% of the attendees were officers, and most held company grade ranks (Panel a). Students commonly spent one to four months at the school (Panel b). The exception was the “Command and General Staff” course which lasted for almost a year.

From the 1940s to the late 1950s, the curriculum of the school had emphasized hemispheric defense and only offered a few courses on military intelligence. This changed dramatically after the Cuban Revolution. The 1961 course catalogue had a

¹⁵The SOA educated the largest share of officers from Latin America (GAO 2018, 1).

clear counterinsurgency focus. The school now provided training in counter-resistance, anti-insurrection, and jungle operations. Officers learned about “counter-espionage, counter-subversion, the study of Communist objectives” (Weeks 2003, 16).

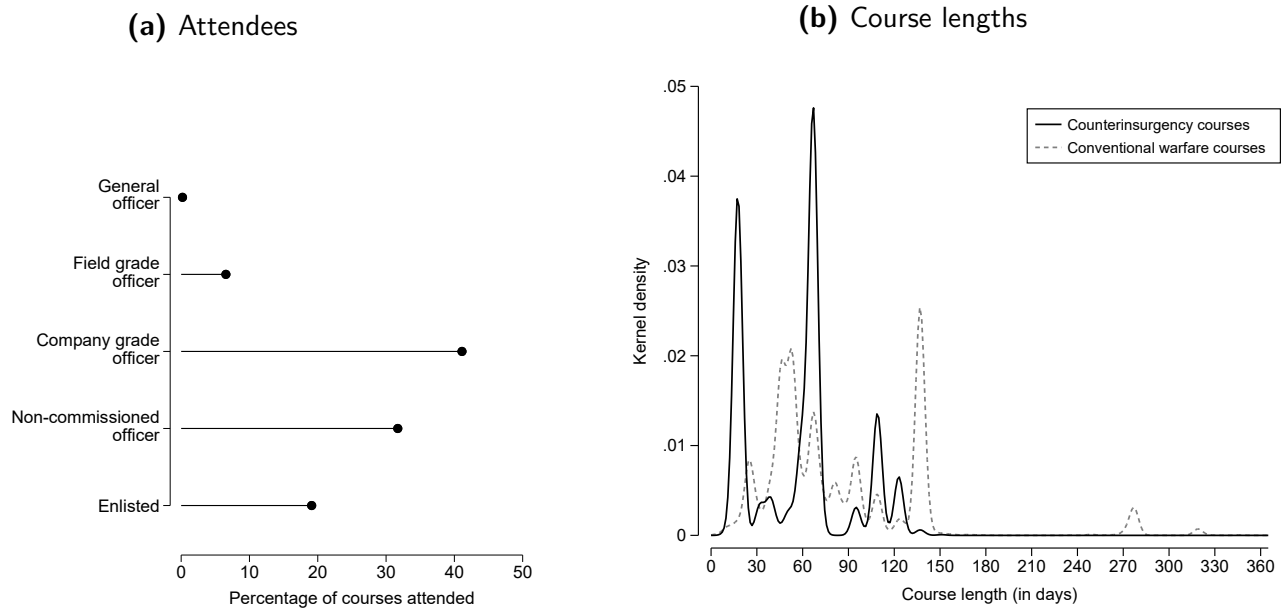
In the mid-1960s courses went even further, promoting the role of the military in economic development. For example, a conference at the school in 1967 outlined the importance of the military for promoting education, agriculture, and medicine, for building airports, roads, homes and schools, for constructing dams and bridges, for responding to natural disasters, and for providing postal service (Weeks 2003, 17). Courses covered “every aspect of counterinsurgency: military, paramilitary, political, sociological, and psychological” including strategies to stimulate “economic growth” (Barber and Ronning 1966, 147).

Despite the clear focus on internal security, the school also maintained courses on conventional warfare covering “the entire spectrum of military arms and services” (Barber and Ronning 1966, 146-7). This makes the SOA a formidable case to assess how foreign training in conventional and counterinsurgency warfare influenced the political ambitions of its graduates.

Data and method

Our time-series cross-sectional dataset covers all independent Latin American countries between 1949 and 1969—ten years before and ten years after the Cuban Revolution. The unit of observation is the country-year. The dependent variable of our analysis is military involvement in politics. It is based on Kenwick (2020), who unifies various indicators of

Figure 1. Training at the School of the Americas.



Note: Total number of courses attended is 22,075. General officers attended 0.2% (n=44).

political militarization in one continuous measure with the help of a latent variable model.¹⁶ We rely on this measure for three reasons. First, it closely matches our argument capturing the military’s political influence, namely, to which degree soldiers shape policies and political decision-making more broadly (Kenwick 2020, 6). The variable also includes the informal influence that militaries can wield over politics, which maps onto our argument. Results replicate with measures of soldiers holding high government posts (Table SI.5.3 and SI.5.4). Second, to our knowledge there exists no data on the presence of soldiers in the wider state administration for the time period covered. Third, the measure reduces the risk that results are driven by data choice. Kenwick’s (2020, 4-5) measure combines data on the military’s political influence from widely used sources such, as for example, Geddes (2004), Horowitz and Stam (2014), Svolik (2012), Weeks (2012), and White (2017). That is, the measure

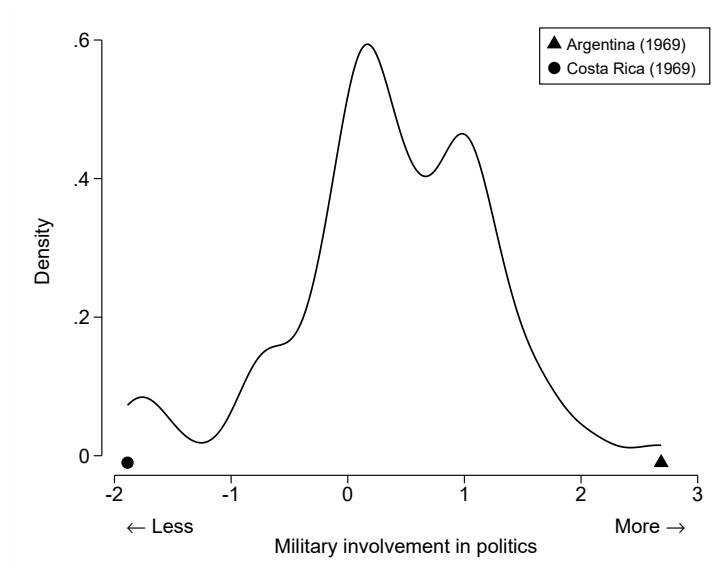
¹⁶We employ the dynamic version of the measure as it is sensitive to “norm emergence and learning” (Kenwick 2020, 71)—key components to foreign military training and its influence on trainees.

captures the military experience of chief decision-makers as well as active duty military personnel represented in state or national security councils.

Higher values of the dependent variable denote more political influence by soldiers. We inverted the original measure to ease interpretation. Counterinsurgency training should therefore be correlated with higher values, whereas training in conventional warfare should be correlated with lower values. Figure 2 shows the distribution of the dependent variable. In the observation period, military influence over politics was the strongest in Argentina under military dictator Juan Carlos Onganía (1966-1969), and it was the lowest in Costa Rica where the armed forces were replaced by a militarized police (1948).

Given the nature of the dependent variable, we estimate linear regressions with robust standard errors. All specifications include country fixed effects to account for time-invariant differences between countries, ensuring that our results are not driven by structural differences in demand for certain training types. Our modeling choice therefore exploits for each country the annual variation in soldiers' political engagement.

Figure 2. Distribution of dependent variable, 1949-1969.



Note: Gaussian kernel density. Data stem from Kenwick (2020).

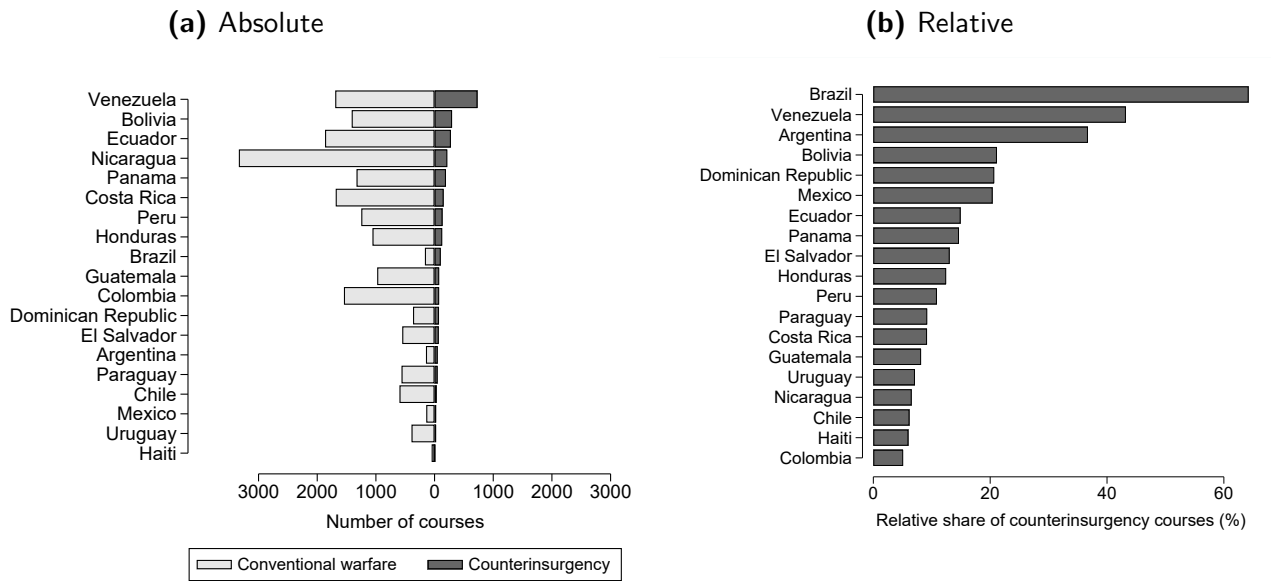
We construct our independent variables using original, hand-coded information on all 22,075 course attendances at the SOA. This information, which was originally obtained through Freedom of Information Act requests from the Pentagon, is taken from the graduate database run by the non-governmental organization SOA Watch (2018). The database provides for each attendance at the school, the title of the course attended, the start date and end date as well as the name, rank, and country of the attendee. We use the country and end date information to aggregate courses to the country-year. In the main analysis, we rely on course counts rather than the number of trainees to better match our theoretical argument. Course counts capture heightened exposure to different contents and increased competence of soldiers who participated in multiple courses. Results replicate when using student numbers (Table SI.5.2).

To construct the key independent variables, we categorized courses as counterinsurgency courses or conventional warfare courses by manually coding all 22,075 course titles. The coding is mutually exclusive and exhaustive, i.e., each course only falls into one of the two categories. We rely on course titles for two reasons. First, more information on the courses is unavailable. Course titles are thus the only way to approximate the topics and ideas that soldiers were exposed to in the class room. Second, we believe that SOA course titles, like course titles of university seminars, reflect the main topics covered.

The independent variable for testing Hypothesis 1 is *Counterinsurgency courses*. It counts the number of courses on counter-resistance, counter-insurrection, irregular warfare, jungle operations, intelligence interrogator, urban counterinsurgency operations, military (counter) intelligence, and civic action that soldiers from each country took in a given year. The independent variable for testing Hypothesis 2 is *Conventional warfare courses*.

It counts the number of courses in, among others, command and general staff, cadet orientation, anti-aircraft artillery, infantry weapons, and combat and construction that soldiers from each country took in a given year. Figure SI.2.1 lists the most common titles of both course types.

Figure 3. Attendances across course types.



Note: Data is based on manual coding of course titles between 1949 and 1969.

Our two independent variables vary across countries and years. Figure 3 depicts attendances in *Counterinsurgency courses* and *Conventional warfare courses* for each country in our dataset. As shown, soldiers attended more conventional warfare than counterinsurgency courses (Panel a). Yet, there is significant variation. Soldiers from Costa Rica, Nicaragua, and Ecuador received the most training in conventional training while it was lowest for military personnel from Argentina, Mexico, and Haiti. Soldiers from Argentina, Brazil, and Venezuela mostly participated in counterinsurgency courses in contrast to those from Chile, Colombia, and Haiti (Panel b). Figure 4 shows that in line with the case description provided above, attendances in counterinsurgency courses

increased after the Cuban revolution, and in some countries more than in others. Soldiers participated in conventional training throughout, with noticeable peaks for some countries in the early 1950s and late 1960s.

To ensure robustness, we create four different measures for each independent variable: the annual sum, the three-year sum, the cumulative sum of attended courses, and the share¹⁷ of both course types. By using multiple independent variables we aim to alleviate concerns that all the effects are instantaneous only. Training effects might be cumulative and manifest over time. This provides us with eight different independent variables.¹⁸ In the main analysis, we lag all independent variables by one year.

Despite the relatively short observation period, we control for various time-variant variables that may confound the hypothesized relationship or drive selection into different training types. First, we control for both international and domestic threats. The binary variables *Guerrilla attack*, *Strike*, *Demonstration*, and *Riot* capture domestic turmoil and subversion threats (Banks 2008). *Militarized interstate dispute* is a binary variable measuring external tensions ranging from display of force to full military conflict (Palmer et al. 2015). We include *GDP growth* to capture economic shocks and *Military expenditure per soldier* to proxy for the quality of military training at home (COW 2010; Gleditsch 2002). Both variables account for soldiers' corporate grievances. Finally, we also include *Years since coup* to control for soldiers' political ambitions and experiences in takeovers (Powell and Thyne 2011). We lag all control variables by one year.

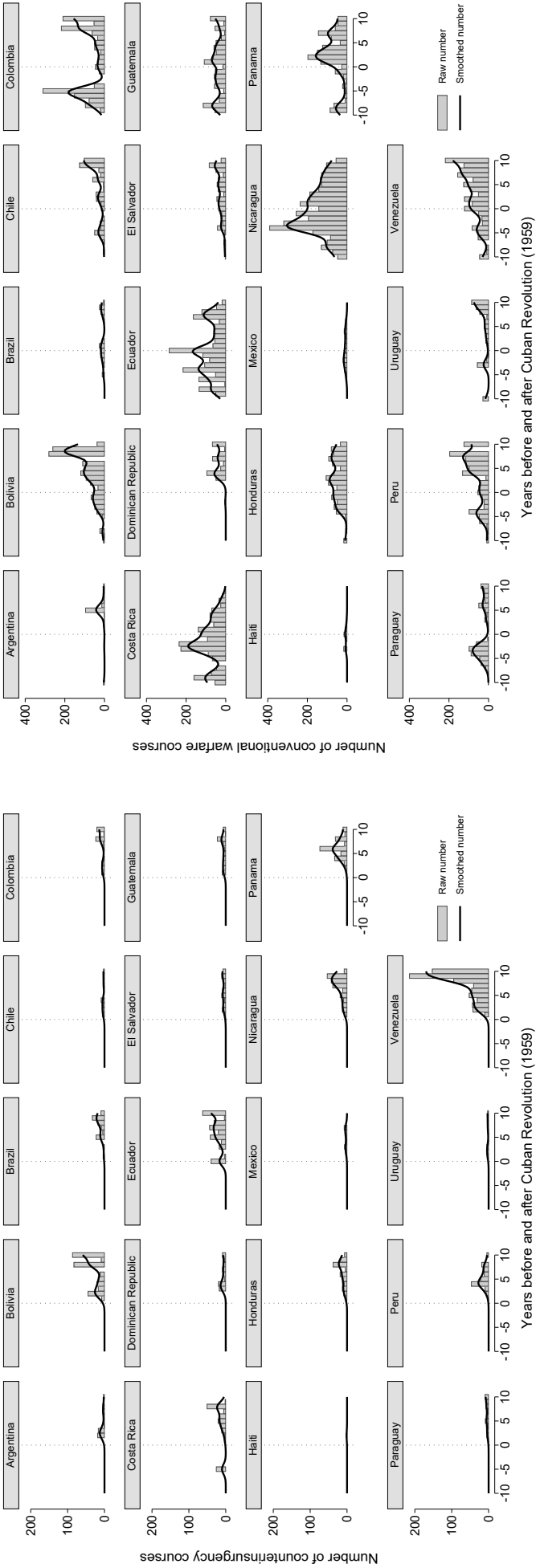
¹⁷We divide all annual topic-specific attendances by total number of annual attendances.

¹⁸We logarithmize the variables to reduce skewness and the influence of large values.

Figure 4. Course attendances across countries and over time.

(a) Counterinsurgency courses

(b) Conventional warfare courses



Note: Graph shows raw (grey bars) and smoothed number (black lines) of attended courses across Latin American countries in the dataset.

Main empirical results

We expect that training in counterinsurgency warfare at the SOA increased soldiers' political involvement whereas training in conventional warfare decreased it. The statistical results in Table 1 support this expectation. In line with Hypothesis 1, all four measures of *Counterinsurgency courses* are positively and significantly correlated with military involvement in politics.¹⁹ In contrast, as suggested by Hypothesis 2, courses in *Conventional warfare* are negatively correlated with soldiers' political involvement. This suggests that training at the SOA, geared towards countering internal threats, increased militarization. Conversely, training in conventional warfare decreased it.

Table 1. Training content and military involvement in politics.

	Annual sum	Three-year sum	Cumulative sum	Course share	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Counterinsurgency courses	0.072* (0.034)	0.070** (0.025)	0.072** (0.026)	0.490* (0.246)	
Conventional warfare courses	-0.067* (0.028)	-0.089** (0.034)	-0.088* (0.044)		-0.467† (0.242)
GDP growth	0.012 (0.008)	0.012 (0.008)	0.011 (0.008)	0.009 (0.009)	0.010 (0.009)
Military expenditure per soldier	0.306*** (0.066)	0.330*** (0.065)	0.324*** (0.064)	0.376*** (0.071)	0.376*** (0.071)
Guerrilla attack	-0.146 (0.092)	-0.147 (0.091)	-0.143 (0.092)	-0.015 (0.095)	-0.012 (0.095)
Strike	0.010 (0.114)	0.013 (0.114)	0.013 (0.110)	-0.018 (0.135)	-0.018 (0.134)
Demonstration	0.183† (0.106)	0.187† (0.105)	0.190† (0.108)	0.251* (0.112)	0.251* (0.112)
Riot	-0.073 (0.079)	-0.070 (0.078)	-0.065 (0.080)	-0.054 (0.084)	-0.053 (0.085)
Militarized interstate dispute	0.038 (0.094)	0.056 (0.097)	0.045 (0.096)	0.059 (0.110)	0.060 (0.110)
Years since coup	-0.045 (0.053)	-0.063 (0.053)	-0.050 (0.053)	-0.052 (0.063)	-0.050 (0.064)
Constant	-2.088*** (0.506)	-2.166*** (0.494)	-2.043*** (0.490)	-3.151*** (0.598)	-2.681*** (0.609)
Country Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
AIC	515.82	511.33	516.15	427.29	427.67
Adjusted R ²	0.50	0.51	0.50	0.54	0.54
Observations	302	302	302	253	253

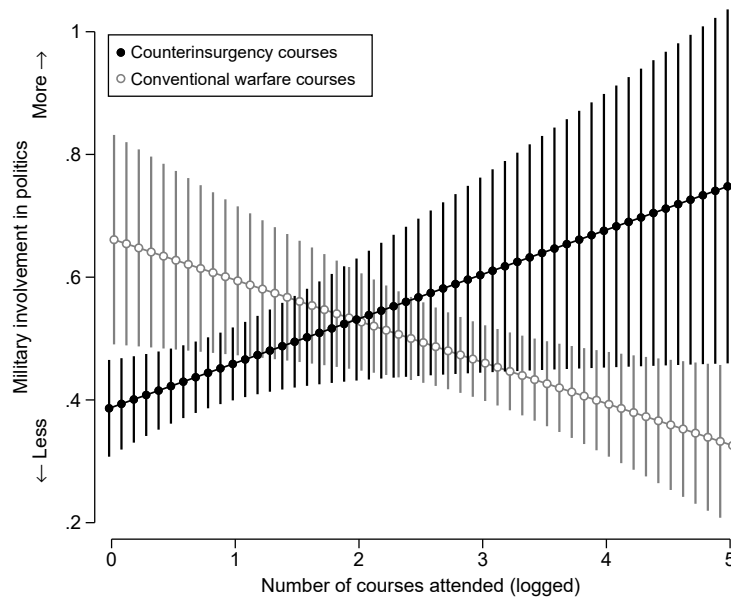
Note: Values are coefficients with robust standard errors in parentheses.

† p<0.1, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

¹⁹We include course shares in different models as both variables are highly co-linear by construction.

Figure 5 visualizes marginal effects. As is visible, a doubling of counterinsurgency training increased the military's subsequent political involvement by 19%. In contrast, the doubling of conventional warfare training lowered its political involvement by more than 10%. Together, the results offer first evidence on how foreign military training shaped civil-military relations. Training in irregular warfare seems to have politicized soldiers, motivating them to push into the political arena, while training in conventional warfare seems to have convinced them to stay clear of politics.²⁰

Figure 5. Marginal effects of course types on militarization.



Note: Calculations based on Model 1, Table 1, using observed values for control variables. Vertical lines give 95% confidence intervals.

²⁰Further tests demonstrate that the results are robust to i) limiting our analysis to the post-revolution period only, ii) extending the analysis window by additional ten years, covering 1949 to 1979, iii) controlling for course lengths, and iv) modeling autocorrelation in the militarization variable. We can also show that v) results hold for higher lags of the course variables and vi) past militarization does not predict current course attendances, which addresses potential concerns about reverse causality. Test results are omitted due to space constraints, but available upon request.

Addressing potential threats to inference

Isolating the effect of foreign military training on soldiers' political involvement is challenging. In our analysis, three potential concerns about a spurious relationship between training types and the soldiers' political influence loom large. First, in some countries the increased fear of a communist revolution after 1959 might have driven selection into training. Second, talented and politically ambitious soldiers might have seen the provision of US counterinsurgency training as a opportunity for a political career. Third, it is possible that the countries received other kinds of US aid that might have helped militaries consolidate power, causing problems with bundled treatments. We undertake three sets of tests to address these concerns.

Security threats, ideology, and selection into training

The first test set assesses whether our results are driven by a heightened fear of communist insurgencies after the Cuban revolution. We undertake five tests in total. Each tests re-runs our main fixed effects analysis while holding constant actual and perceived local security threats. In the first test, we control for domestic and foreign communist threats. We measure the strength of leftist, socialist, and communist groups in each country, and the strength of neighboring regimes with leftist ideologies (Coppedge et al. 2021). Results remain largely unchanged when including these additional variables (Table SI.3.1).

In the second test, we replicate our results while controlling for insurgencies by Cuban-style guerrilla groups. We employ two measures of insurgencies to ensure that our results are not driven by date choice (Kalyvas and Balcells 2010; Lyall and Wilson

2009). Results remain unchanged (Table SI.3.2), and also replicate if we control for the full spectrum of anti-regime threats (Table SI.3.3).

In the third test, we re-run our analysis with a sub-sample of countries without significant risks of communist revolution. The idea is to hold the threat perception at a constant low level by design, while utilizing temporal variation in SOA training. Statistically, this is a strong test since results need to withstand a significant drop in observations. Again, results show that counterinsurgency courses are positively and significantly correlated with the military's involvement in politics (Table SI.3.4). Estimates for training in conventional warfare lose statistical significance.

In the fourth test, we emulate this procedure and limit the sample to right-wing government leaders (Herre 2022). Such leaders were presumably highly worried about a looming communist take-over and therefore particularly sensitive to communist subversion. Results remain again unchanged (Table SI.3.5). Together, the tests indicate that our findings are not driven by the threat perceptions of Latin American governments and the subsequent selection into training types after the Cuban Revolution.

Nepotism, individual ambition, and selection into training

The second test set assesses whether nepotism, meritocracy, or soldiers' ambitions and talents drive selection into training. We undertake two tests. In the first test, we focus on the organizational level and re-run our regression analysis using a measure on how strongly appointments in the military are "based on personal or political connections" or on "skills and merit" (Coppedge et al. 2021). Results for both SOA training variables remain unchanged (Table SI.3.6). This suggests that (self-)selection into training based on personal connections or merit is unlikely to confound the main results.

In the second test, we move to the individual level using unique hand-coded career and training data on army officers in Argentina, one of the countries with the highest proportion of counterinsurgency training. We describe the uniqueness of the officer data and the coding process in the SI. To capture individual ambition and talent, we use class rank, which measures each officer's relative educational performance at the military academy at home before attending courses at the SOA. Results show that there is no difference in class rank between officers who would eventually attend counterinsurgency courses or conventional warfare courses and officers who would not receive training at the SOA (Figure SI.3.1). Individual ambition or talent is unlikely to confound our results.

Foreign training and other forms of aid

In the third test set, we control for three types of US aid that might have helped Latin American militaries accumulate political power. Control variables include economic aid, measured by the annual amount of development and humanitarian assistance to each country, and military aid, measured by the annual amount of assistance to the countries' armed forces. We also control for arms sales, measured by the value of all annual US transfers of major weapons to Latin American countries. Results show that our original findings are robust to the inclusion of all three assistance types (Table SI.3.7). Counterinsurgency training is increasing soldiers' political involvement whereas training in conventional warfare is decreasing it.

Probing the mechanism

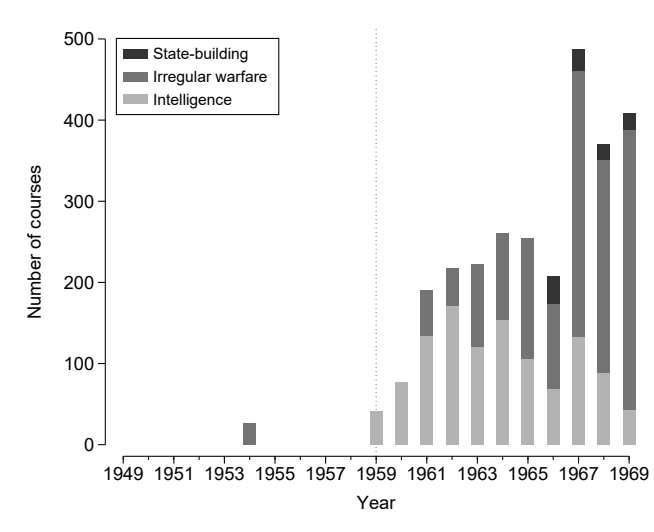
In this section, we further unpack training at the SOA to probe which part of counterinsurgency training undermined the stability of civil-military relations and how this unfolded.

Course content

First, we probe which aspects of counterinsurgency training at the SOA fueled militarization. Different counterinsurgency courses teach soldiers different strategies and tactics, which are likely to affect political outlooks differently. If our argument is correct, we should observe that attendances in counterinsurgency course with a state-building focus should drive the political participation of soldiers. With course manuals being unavailable for the period under study, we use course titles to capture whether counterinsurgency training focused on intelligence operations, irregular warfare, or state-building. The state-building element is captured by courses on civic action. Figure 6 shows the development of the course curriculum based on this disaggregated course data. After the Cuban Revolution, the SOA provided mainly (counter)intelligence courses. In 1961, it then started to offer courses on irregular warfare, and from 1966 courses also highlighted the military's importance for social and economic development.

We re-run the main fixed effects analysis replacing our original counterinsurgency variable with the three thematically disaggregated variables. A concern may be that changes in the curriculum are endogenous. However, the development of the actual training content of the counterinsurgency courses was largely independent of the developments in the Americas. The Special Group on counterinsurgency—Kennedy's top advisory body

Figure 6. Counterinsurgency course content over time.

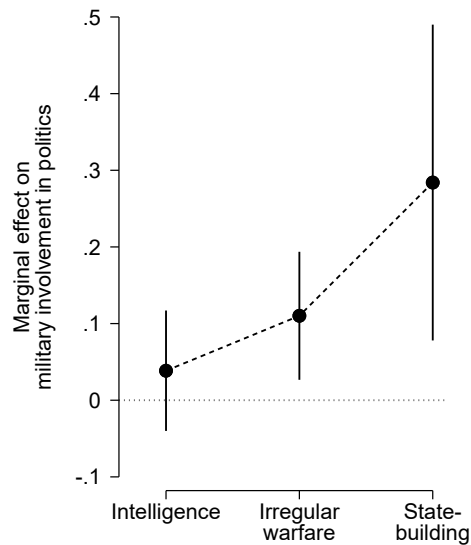


Note: Data stems from hand-coded course titles. See SI.3 for titles contained in each category.

on internal warfare—maintained a strong South East Asia focus throughout. Vietnam received much of Washington’s attention, regularly referred to as the “laboratory” for counterinsurgency assistance (Michaels 2012, 53). Latin America made up only a small part of the US policy makers’ concern when designing the specificities of counterinsurgency aid.

Figure 7 shows the substantive effects of the analysis with the three, thematically disaggregated variables on counterinsurgency courses. In line with our argument, counterinsurgency with a clear state-building focus, which highlighted the military’s role for social and economic modernization, has the largest effect on the political participation of soldiers. The effect for irregular warfare is smaller, yet still positive, while courses in intelligence operations do not exert a discernible statistical influence. The results show that counterinsurgency training did not undermine civil-military relations per se. It was training that propagated an expansion of the military’s role for economic and societal development that harmed political neutrality (Stepan 1986).

Figure 7. Effects of counterinsurgency course content.



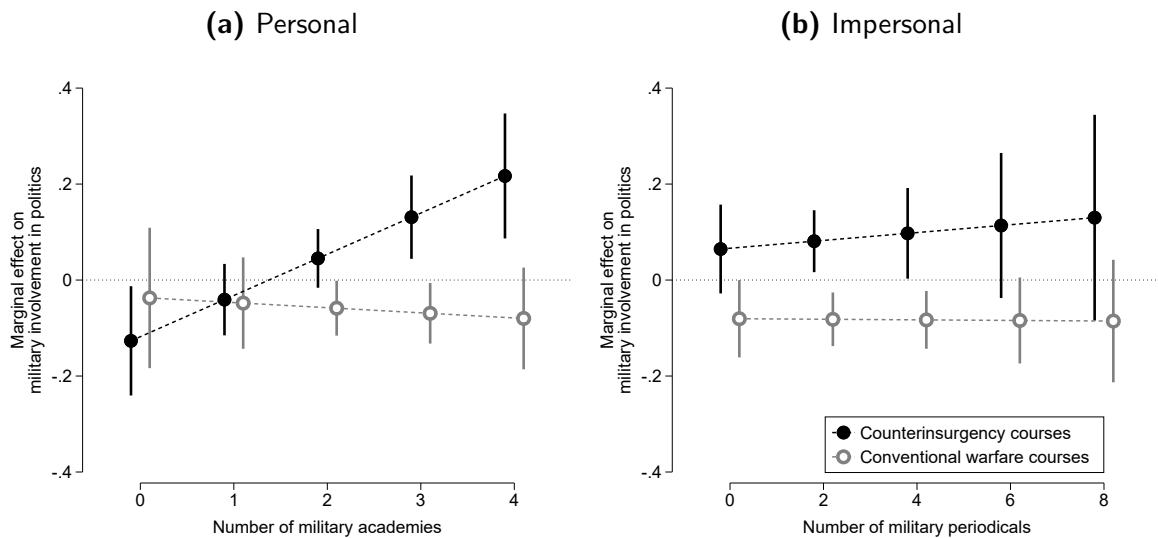
Note: Results based on Models 1-3, Table SI.4.1, using observed values for control variables. Vertical lines give 95% confidence intervals.

Content dissemination

Second, we probe how the ideas and outlook of foreign training were transmitted within the military. Military organizations are large entities and not every soldier was trained at the SOA. To influence military involvement, content thus had to be shared across ranks. We have argued that graduates from foreign academies or renowned programs often become instructors at domestic academies or staff colleges where they can share new ideas with peers and subordinates. This suggests that dissemination of new knowledge and skills works through personal interactions. Alternatively, foreign-trained officers may disseminate their acquired knowledge with publications in military periodicals. Using data from Toronto (2017), we assess the relative importance of these two channels of information dissemination. We interact our two main course variables with the number of domestic military academies and the number of military periodicals, respectively.

Results in Figure 8 show that personal rather than impersonal dissemination is correlated with the effect of foreign military training. Counterinsurgency training increases military involvement in countries with a higher number of domestic military academies (Panel a). In contrast, periodicals do not shape the influence of courses (Panel b). This suggests that the idea of political involvement, nurtured through counterinsurgency training abroad, were more likely to spread through face-to-face education at domestic military institutions. Simply being exposed to such ideas through writings does not seem to have altered the outlook of soldiers, despite the presumably quicker and wider reach of published content. The findings thus indicate the relevance of personal interactions and authority for the dissemination of foreign training content.

Figure 8. Content dissemination.



Note: Results based on Models 6 and 12, Table SI.4.2, using observed values for control variables. Vertical lines give 95% confidence intervals.

Temporal development

Third, we test how the militarization effect of foreign training at the SOA unfolded over time. We have argued that soldiers become exposed to counterinsurgency training

abroad and disseminate their knowledge in the military once they are back home, which subsequently motivates soldiers to become politically involved. This suggests that the effect of external training should build up over time.

We exploit empirically that Castro's conquering of Havana "fell on Latin America like a bombshell" (Porch 2013, 228). Specifically among countries allied to the toppled Cuban dictator Batista, Castro's triumph might have instilled the fear of also falling victim to a Communist uprising. If our argument is correct, allies of the ousted Batista regime, shocked by Castro's takeover, demanded more of the newly available US counterinsurgency courses and thus experienced a steeper political militarization than non-allied countries a few years after 1959. In contrast, if militarization simply resulted from threat perceptions among Batista allies and US training did not play any role, then soldiers' political involvement should have spiked immediately after Castro overthrew Batista.

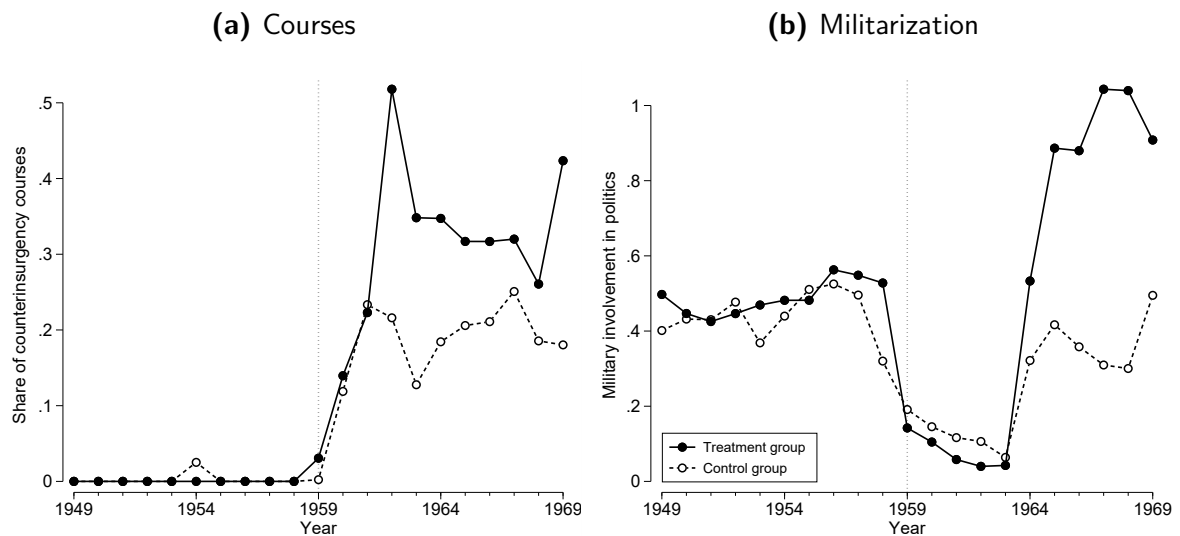
We use a difference-in-differences design to scrutinize temporal dynamics (Angrist and Pischke 2009). We rely on international affiliation scores to distinguish close Batista allies from other states (Bailey, Strezhnev and Voeten 2017). For each country we identify the average affiliation score between 1949 and 1958, i.e. in the pre-treatment window. Latin American countries with average scores equal to or higher than the 75th percentile serve as cases in the treatment group, while the others are part of the control group. The treatment group consists of Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, and Venezuela.

Figure 9 provides first descriptive evidence. Prior to the Cuban Revolution, both country groups followed remarkably similar trends in terms of counterinsurgency training and militarization.²¹ This changed after the Cuban revolution. Soldiers from countries

²¹In the SI, we provide further evidence on parallel trends and that activities by insurgent or leftist groups do not confound the analysis.

in the treatment group received visibly more counterinsurgency training than countries in the control group (Panel a). Four years after Latin American soldiers had first received counterinsurgency training at the SOA, countries allied with the old Batista regime experienced a significantly greater increase in the military's political involvement than other countries (Panel b). This pattern is corroborated by the difference-in-differences analysis (Table SI.4.3). A more detailed description of the modeling strategy can be found in the SI. Militarization increased systematically among Batista allies following the return of US-trained soldiers and the dissemination of counterinsurgency doctrine within their military organizations.

Figure 9. Temporal developments among Batista allies (treatment group) and other countries (control group) over time.

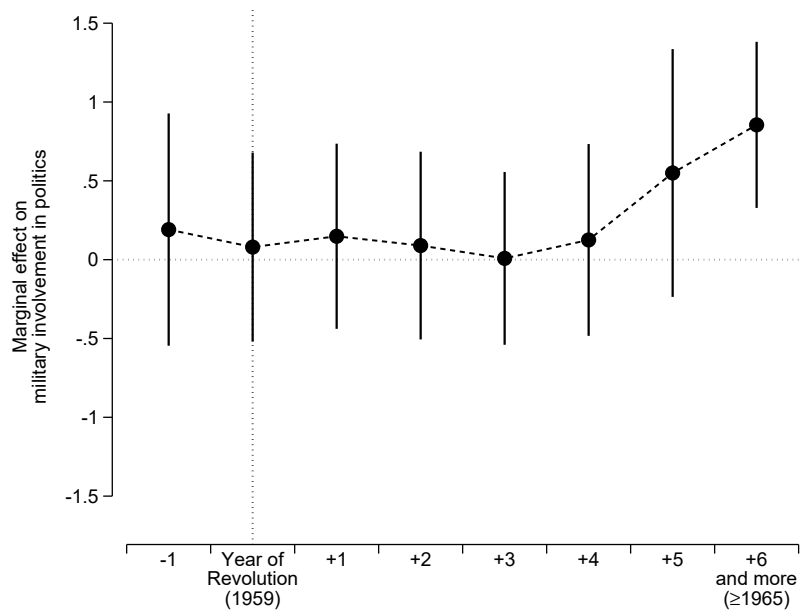


Note: Treatment group consists of Latin American countries with an average Cuban affiliation score (1949-1958) equal or higher to the 75th percentile. Control group contains all other countries in the region.

We next triangulate the temporal effect of counterinsurgency courses on militarization using a saturated difference-in-differences analysis (Angrist and Pischke 2009). To this end, we include different leads and lags of the interaction term between the Cuban Revolution and the countries allied to Batista in the statistical models (Table SI.4.4). In line with our

expectation, Figure 10 shows that SOA training did not significantly alter soldiers' political influence before, during, and right after the Cuban Revolution. Yet, from 1965 onward, when graduates of counterinsurgency training had returned and shared their knowledge, soldiers became politically involved. Together, the results support the evidence presented above. Training in counterinsurgency eroded civil-military relations.

Figure 10. Delayed militarization effect after Cuban Revolution among Batista allies.



Note: Results based on Model 2, Table SI.4.4. Vertical lines give 95% confidence intervals.

The mechanism at work in Panama

Finally, we provide a within-case congruence test to buttress the plausibility of our claims about relationship between foreign-sponsored counterinsurgency training and political militarization (George and Bennett 2005).²² We follow the extreme-on-X case selection approach (Seawright 2016, 75-92) and select the case of Panama to trace the hypothesized

²²We thank Reviewer 1 for suggesting the test and the framing.

causal process.²³ The case has two advantages. First, Panama is among the countries with the highest number of counterinsurgency SOA courses (top quartile), as shown in Figure 3. Second, it trumps other cases due the historical development of its military. Prior to World War II, the military was weakly institutionalized and lacked strong doctrinal, organizational, or ideological influences from abroad (Ropp 1972, 47-50). While our theoretical mechanisms should hold regardless of history, Panama serves as a *tabula rasa* for US military training in the 1960s, which makes it easier for us to observe the effect of external counterinsurgency courses.

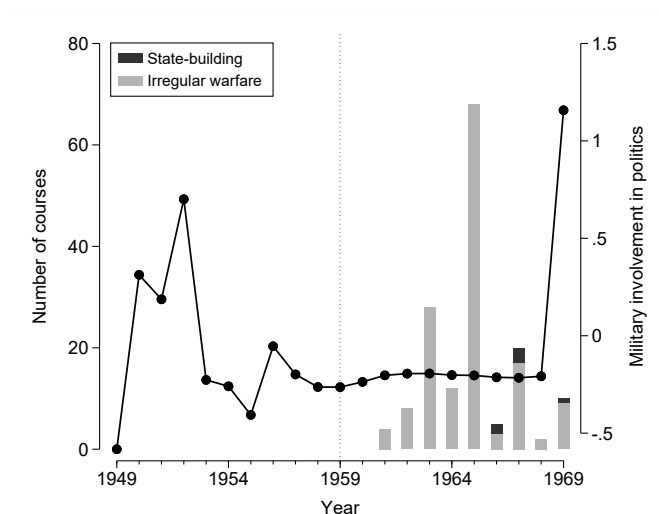
In 1953, the President of Panama and the country's first military strong man, José Remón, converted the Panamanian police force into a military organization—the National Guard.²⁴ At the time, the force was seen as an unprofessional, “political instrument” that, at times, would “correct the mistakes of politicians” (Geyer 1970, 265). The professionalization of the Guard proceeded with large amounts of US support. In the 1950, the United States provided significant amount of training in conventional warfare, which compensated for a lack of domestic training opportunities (see Figure 4).

After the Cuban revolution, Panama experienced a steep increase in US counterinsurgency training. Figure 11 depicts how in the aftermath of Castro's take-over in Cuba, more and more Panamanian soldiers attended the SOA to receive training in irregular warfare. In 1966, soldiers were also trained in topics of state-building and economic development. Within the National Guard, this fostered the perception that country's civilian

²³The idea of the approach is to select a case with high values on the independent variable which should lead, all else equal, to high values on the dependent variable and thus allow us to uncover the proposed mechanism.

²⁴José Antonio Remón had studied at the Military Academy of Mexico and became Chief of the National Police in 1947.

Figure 11. SOA counterinsurgency training and subsequent political militarization in Panama.



Note: Graph shows the number of SOA courses on irregular warfare (grey bars) and state-building (black bars) attended by Panama's soldiers and subsequent militarization in the country (connected line) over time. Spike in military involvement score in 1969 indicates successful coup led by SOA graduates.

elites were not only corrupt but also incapable of solving the country's problems (Geyer 1970, 265-6). Training at the SOA created a new "sense of national mission" (Ropp 1972, 52). The idea that "social and economic reforms" could "ease frustrations and take pressure off the political system [...] was inculcated in military minds through the concept of civic action" (Ropp 1972, 52). In line with our theoretical argument, external training led to changes in the political outlook and perceived capabilities of soldiers.

On October 11, 1968, the National Guard overthrew President Arnulfo Arias. The coup was led by graduates of the School of the Americas, including Boris Martínez, Rubén Darío Paredes, and Omar Torrijos.²⁵ All three officers had attended counterinsurgency courses at the SOA, including counter intelligence operations, counter resistance, and

²⁵Torrijos enjoyed ample support by Manuel Noriega, who had also attended courses in "Jungle Operations" (1965, 1967), "Military Intelligence" (1967), and "Counter Intelligence" (1967) at the SOA. Noriega later serves as military intelligence chief under Torrijos and became Panama's de facto ruler in 1981. He also was a CIA asset.

counter insurrection. While the National Guard had varied motives for the coup, the officers took power to eliminate corruption and the ineffectiveness of the country's ruling elite (Mann 1996; Ropp 1982).²⁶ A memorandum to the US National Security Advisor, Henry Kissinger, described the coup plotters as "young, nationalist, and reform-minded military officers, who do not belong to the narrow circle of politicians and business leaders that have traditionally ruled Panama" (Read 1969, 1). Specifically, the modernization-focused counterinsurgency training at the SOA seems to have changed the soldiers' motive and perceived ability to become politically involved among soldiers.

In line with our argument, statements from contemporary witnesses and protagonists evidence the influence of the US counterinsurgency training. According to Jack Hood Vaughan, the former US Ambassador to Panama, "Civic Action did more to put the military in power than anything else [the US] ever did. It was a concerted effort to get the troops out of the barracks, building roads and public showers, and suddenly the colonel or major in charge—for the first time in their lives, they were applauded by civilians. What an aphrodisiac that is. And we did it all over Latin America" (Koster and Sánchez 1990, 150). Similarly, General Omar Torrijos explained that US foreign training "has born fruit in the creation of a new generation of young men [...] that speak, think, and live the language of development, and who, little by little, are occupying key decision-making positions in Latin American countries" (Ropp 1972, 54). Interestingly and in line with our argument, Torrijos never officially assumed the role of the president of Panama but influenced the country's politics and policies from behind scenes.

²⁶Another coup trigger was the threat to the National Guard's organizational interests. President Arias had been interfering in promotions and the organization of the Guard.

The case of Panama also underpins our quantitative results on the diffusion of foreign training content through domestic military academies. General Torrijos confirmed that the orientation in the military schools changed. “After Cuba, there was a preoccupation with social forces in the courses. We studied the case of Cuba [...] philosophy [...] social justice. We came to the conclusion that there was a direct relationship between social justice and social violence” (Ropp 1972, 54). In fact, the National Guard used its officer school, the José Domingo Espinar Educational Centre, to disseminate US inspired counterinsurgency content. The center’s curriculum started placing great emphasis on social issues and economics (Mann 1996, 127; Ropp 1982, 50).

Finally, the case of Panama exemplifies the impact of US modernization-based counterinsurgency training on policy-making. According to the US State Department, soldiers’ goal was “to undertake reforms in public administration” and “revamp Panama’s fraud-prone [...] machinery” (Read 1969, 1). Once in power, officers initiated several social and economic reforms, including the redistribution of agricultural land to poor farmers. As result, social programs increased by over 700%, targeting areas such as health and education (Harding 2006, 71). In 1972, the military established Provincial Coordinating Committees as part of the constitutional reforms. The committees included military officers and were responsible for submitting annual development plans as part of the government’s larger military planning (Mann 1996, 131; Ropp 1982, 90-2). Overall, the presented evidence shows how foreign training in counterinsurgency motivated Panamanian soldiers to step into the political arena and exert influence over a broad range of policies.

External validity

This study offers evidence that training in unconventional warfare at the School of the Americas fostered the political meddling of Latin American soldiers. Two questions might arise from this. First, how can the focus on Latin America help us understand political militarization in other contexts? While Latin America might represent an “extreme” case as military officers have traditionally become political involved not despite but rather because of their professional identity (Stepan 1986), our findings add to recent findings of how US-instilled professionalism influenced the political outlook of officers in other parts of the world. In Tunisia, US training strengthened partisan views among officers and the motivation to become politically active (Grewal 2022). And in Liberia, US training lowered the respect for human rights and civilian authority when officers saw military cohesion at risk (Miles Joyce 2022). Based on the insights from Latin America, this study can trace such effects back to specific training content.

Second, how do the findings of this study speak to contemporary developments? On the one hand, foreign military training has undergone significant changes since the end of the Cold War. Nowadays, decision-makers and instructors are unlikely to call on foreign armies to play an active role in developing their countries. Rather, foreign-trained soldiers must expect that foreign sponsors such as the United States will oppose their push into politics. Modern Western training in counter-terrorism may thus not inspire political meddling, as it did during the Cold War when the goal was to contain a communist expansion. This suggests that the diverging influences of foreign training types may be specific to the larger geopolitical context. In fact, counterinsurgency training today might have a similar impact on civil-military relations as conventional warfare courses.

On the other hand, US-trained officers have recently carried out coups in several countries in West Africa, including Burkina Faso, Guinea, Mali, and Niger. Observers have linked this extreme form of political militarization to the sharp rise in external counterinsurgency and counter-terrorism training as part of the US Global War on Terror (Turse 2023). Coup plotters, such as Lieutenant Colonel Paul-Henri Damiba who overthrew Burkina Faso's democratically-elected government in 2021, received US-sponsored training in military intelligence, irregular warfare, and civic action. Such programs are instructing foreign soldiers on projects in the areas of "public works, agriculture, transportation, communications, health sanitation, and others contributing to economic and social development [...]" (DSCA 2022). Unsurprisingly, when Damiba was sworn in as Burkina Faso's new ruler in 2022, he promised that in order to "gain the upper hand over the enemy," he would "fight corruption and depoliticise the public administration" (Peyton 2022).

Conclusion

How does foreign training shape civil-military relations in recipient states? We scrutinize the influence of external training content on the willingness of soldiers to become politically involved. We argue that training geared towards countering domestic security threats, such as counterinsurgency warfare, politicizes officers and motivates them to influence policies. We expect this effect to be strongest when training propagates state-building and modernization ideas. Training in conventional warfare, by contrast, should convince officers to stay clear of politics as it reinforces military professionalism and belief that the military's and nation's interests are best served by political neutrality.

Focusing on the Cuban Revolution and the subsequent re-modeling of US security assistance, the empirical findings demonstrate how different course types lead to distinct patterns of political militarization. Participation in counterinsurgency courses at the School of the Americas increased officers' political involvement, whereas attendance in courses on conventional warfare decreased it. Our findings suggest that the militarization effect resulted from the state-building focus of counterinsurgency training, disseminated through face-to-face contacts of returning graduates. To our knowledge, this is the first time quantitative evidence has shown that the content of US foreign military training altered civil-military relations during the Cold War in different ways.

The findings have important implications. First, this study shows that disaggregating course types improves our understanding how foreign military training impacts civil-military relations, including the recent coups in West Africa and the greater Sahel by US-trained soldiers. At the same time, course content on counterinsurgency is likely to vary across donors. Training from China, France, Great Britain, and Russia probably emphasizes different enemy-centric or population-centric strategies, with potentially different implications for soldiers' political views, organizational adjustments, and changes in command-and-control systems (Casey 2020; Nagl 2002; Porch 2013). In addition, the content of a foreign training course can change over time, despite similar-sounding course titles and programs. Future research may want to study the effects of foreign military training types across donor countries and in the post-Cold War context.

Second, the influence of security assistance on military thinking in recipient countries highlights an important trade-off for donor states. To protect states and citizens, foreign training programs aim to transmit politically neutral skills. Our findings indicate that seemingly unproblematic training in hearts-and-minds operations or civic action can have

detrimental effects, if not carefully designed. Content that seems apolitical may have profound political implications for soldiers and might unintentionally empower military organizations at the expense of civilian institutions (Brooks 2020; Grewal 2022). Future research may want to scrutinize how foreign trainees perceive different content.

Third, our findings have implications for research on domestic military training and professionalism. As with studies on foreign training, findings for domestic education on soldiers' political role have been mixed, particularly for states with weak institutions. Our results suggest that a narrow focus on military professionalization is unlikely to explain the variation in political outcomes such as coups. Training content and how officers understand professionalism may be as important (Stepan 1986). As with foreign training, what domestic training conveys is likely to have important consequences for the military's behavior.

Finally, this study has implications for future research on the professional careers of foreign trainees. As in previous studies, the lack of comprehensive individual data on officers in different countries has prevented this study from systematically demonstrating that foreign-trained soldiers attain influential posts in the military, state, or political apparatus. Future work might be able to collect the data necessary to assess which soldiers undergo training at what point in their careers and how this influences subsequent promotions and career advancement.

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Supporting Information (SI)

SI Contents

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SI.1 Pull factors

Most governments have strong incentives to politically involve foreign-trained soldiers. There are three reasons for this:

First, civilian leaders involve foreign-trained soldiers to benefit from their strategic knowledge and managerial skills. Graduates of prestigious military academies and staff colleges abroad usually possess expert knowledge of international defense and security (Brooks 2008; Toronto 2017). Returning home, officers are familiar with foreign weapon systems and arms. Leaders can utilize this expertise to inform threat assessments, intelligence analyses, and defense acquisitions (Martinez Machain 2021). They might employ foreign-trained soldiers as advisors on national security. In addition, leaders may exploit the managerial and technical competences of foreign-trained officers to accomplish important non-military tasks such as, for example, disaster relief by placing them in state councils (Pion-Berlin 2016).

Second, governments pull foreign-trained officers into politics because of their esteemed reputation. In many countries, the military is among the most well-respected institutions (Johnson 2018). Leaders may thus attempt to benefit politically from the prestige of graduates of West Point, Saint-Cyr, or the Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth. To important elites or voters, including foreign-trained officers in committees, councils, or even the cabinet signals political competence (Golby, Peter and Kyle 2018). Especially in times of crisis, government leaders might hope to boost their popularity through the impeccable reputation of military professionals.

Finally, governments may provide foreign-trained soldiers with political influence to prevent out-right coups. Foreign-trained officers can use their key positions in the military hierarchy to recruit conspirators, and they possess advanced command and coordination skills that are helpful for successful takeovers (Atkinson 2014; Savage and Caverley 2017; Singh 2014). At the same time, most coup attempts actually fail, which risks rupturing the entire military organization and leaving the country defenseless (Bell and Sudduth 2017; Geddes 2004; Powell 2012; Singh 2014). Government leaders may therefore make foreign-trained

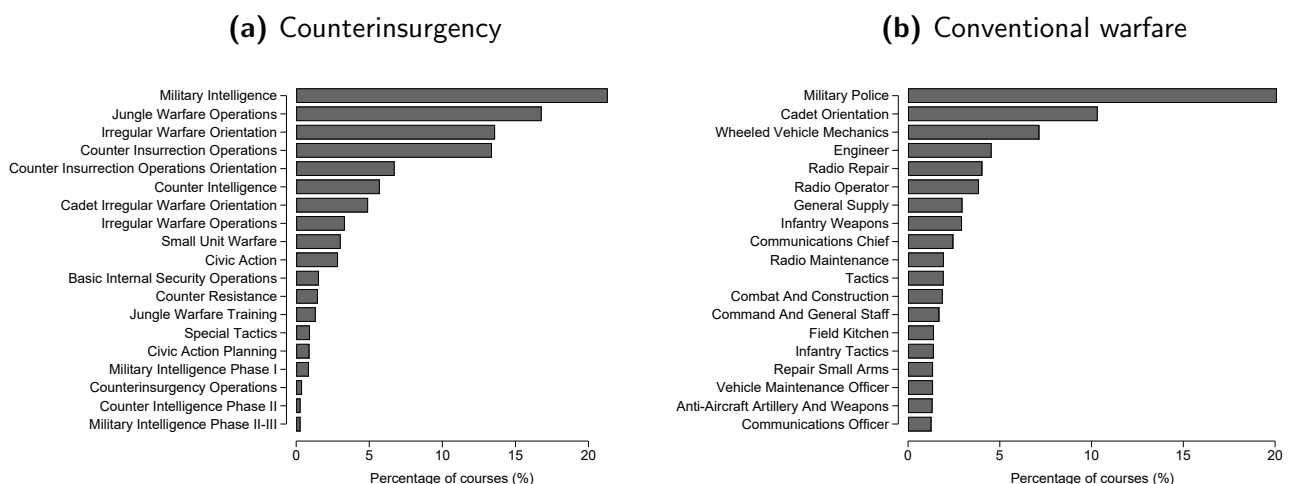
soldiers a tempting offer. Lucrative posts in the state administration can defuse coup risks and benefit the government's political survival.

These pull factors are likely to be at work in many countries. However, to change the level of political militarization, soldiers must have a willingness to enter the political domain. If soldiers lack such motivation, consider themselves unsuited for politics, or fear that their political involvement will undermine the military's well-being, they will turn down the offer to enter the civilian sphere. In the manuscript, we explain how different types of foreign training shapes soldiers' willingness to become politically involved.

SI.2 Descriptive statistics

- 1) Figure SI.2.1 shows the distribution of course topics. Information is based on course titles. For each course type, titles are sorted from the highest relative number of attendances to the lowest.
- 2) Table SI.2.1 offers summary statistics for the variables of the main analysis, the tests assessing potential threats to inference, the analyses that probe the theoretical mechanism, and the robustness checks.
- 3) Table SI.2.2 offers summary statistics for the variables of the difference-in-differences analyses used to assess the delayed temporal effects of SOA training.

Figure SI.2.1. Course topics



Note: Graph shows share of course titles of all attended counterinsurgency courses and the equivalent number of conventional warfare courses.

Table SI.2.1. Summary statistics.

	Type	Obs.	Mean	Std. dev.	Min.	Max.
Military involvement in politics (Kenwick dynamic measure)	Continuous	399	0.39	0.82	-1.89	2.69
Military involvement in politics (Kenwick static measure)	Continuous	399	0.29	0.92	-0.89	2.25
Military involvement in politics (Svolik measure)	Binary	377	0.33	0.47	0.00	1.00
Military involvement in politics (Svolik measure)	Categorical	377	0.47	0.72	0.00	2.00
Counterinsurgency courses (Annual sum) ^{a,b}	Count	399	0.87	1.26	0.00	5.38
Conventional warfare courses (Annual sum) ^{a,b}	Count	399	2.71	1.80	0.00	5.97
Counterinsurgency courses (Three-year sum) ^b	Count	399	1.29	1.66	0.00	5.86
Conventional warfare courses (Three-year sum) ^b	Count	399	3.75	1.91	0.00	6.81
Counterinsurgency courses (Cumulative sum) ^b	Count	399	1.75	1.98	0.00	6.60
Conventional warfare courses (Cumulative sum) ^b	Count	399	4.96	2.01	0.00	8.11
Counterinsurgency courses (Course share) ^a	Continuous	313	0.11	0.18	0.00	1.00
Conventional warfare courses (Course share) ^a	Continuous	313	0.87	0.20	0.00	1.00
Counterinsurgency students (Annual sum) ^{a,b}	Count	399	0.86	1.25	0.00	5.38
Conventional warfare students (Annual sum) ^{a,b}	Count	399	2.65	1.77	0.00	5.74
Counterinsurgency students (Three-year sum) ^b	Count	399	1.28	1.65	0.00	5.80
Conventional warfare students (Three-year sum) ^b	Count	399	3.63	1.94	0.00	6.55
Counterinsurgency students (Cumulative sum) ^b	Count	399	1.74	1.97	0.00	6.57
Conventional warfare students (Cumulative sum) ^b	Count	399	4.81	2.02	0.00	7.89
Counterinsurgency students (Course share) ^a	Continuous	313	0.12	0.19	0.00	1.00
Conventional warfare students (Course share) ^a	Continuous	313	0.89	0.19	0.00	1.00
Intelligence content ^{a,b}	Count	399	0.66	1.03	0.00	3.83
Irregular warfare content ^{a,b}	Count	399	0.49	0.96	0.00	5.30
State-building content ^{a,b}	Count	399	0.10	0.35	0.00	1.95
All courses ^b	Count	399	2.98	1.78	0.00	5.97
Counterinsurgency courses ^b	Count	399	0.98	1.31	0.00	5.38
Conventional warfare courses ^b	Count	399	2.84	1.76	0.00	5.97
Curriculum	Categorical	399	0.62	0.79	0.00	2.00
Academies ^a	Count	399	1.99	1.14	0.00	4.00
Periodicals ^a	Count	399	2.24	2.71	0.00	15.00
Anti-regime activity ^a	Continuous	399	-0.20	1.14	-2.05	3.34
Left anti-regime activity ^a	Continuous	399	0.02	0.62	-0.89	2.23
Left neighbor regimes ^a	Continuous	399	0.11	0.22	-0.25	0.94
Country with low communist threats	Binary	399	0.26	0.44	0.00	1.00
Batista ally	Binary	399	0.26	0.44	0.00	1.00
Rightist head of government ^a	Binary	399	0.66	0.48	0.00	1.00
Leftist head of government ^a	Binary	399	0.26	0.44	0.00	1.00
Insurgency (Lyall & Wilson) ^a	Binary	399	0.07	0.25	0.00	1.00
Insurgency (Kalyvas & Balcells) ^a	Binary	399	0.01	0.10	0.00	1.00
Meritocratic military appointments ^a	Continuous	376	-0.31	1.24	-2.27	2.77
Economic aid ^{a,b}	Continuous	399	3.37	1.76	0.00	7.70
Military aid ^{a,b}	Continuous	399	1.65	1.72	0.00	6.23
Arms sales ^{a,b}	Continuous	361	1.55	1.59	0.00	6.10
Counterinsurgency course length (Average) ^a	Count	399	0.66	1.09	0.00	4.00
Conventional warfare course length (Average) ^a	Count	399	2.21	1.64	0.00	6.00
Counterinsurgency course length (Minimum) ^a	Count	399	0.50	0.93	0.00	4.00
Conventional warfare course length (Minimum) ^a	Count	399	1.25	1.28	0.00	6.00
Counterinsurgency course length (Maximum) ^a	Count	399	0.87	1.40	0.00	5.00
Conventional warfare course length (Maximum) ^a	Count	399	3.72	2.96	0.00	11.00
GDP growth ^a	Continuous	342	4.83	5.33	-16.84	40.05
Military expenditure per soldier ^{a,b}	Continuous	344	7.35	0.93	4.31	10.95
Guerrilla attack ^a	Binary	399	0.21	0.40	0.00	1.00
Strike ^a	Binary	399	0.13	0.33	0.00	1.00
Demonstration ^a	Binary	399	0.17	0.37	0.00	1.00
Riot ^a	Binary	399	0.37	0.48	0.00	1.00
Militarized interstate dispute ^a	Binary	399	0.17	0.37	0.00	1.00
US affinity ^a	Continuous	399	4.05	0.43	3.06	4.88
Party regime ^a	Binary	399	0.24	0.43	0.00	1.00
Military regime ^a	Binary	399	0.13	0.34	0.00	1.00
Personalist regime ^a	Binary	399	0.20	0.40	0.00	1.00
Democratic regime ^a	Binary	399	0.42	0.49	0.00	1.00
Years since coup ^b	Count	380	1.30	0.93	0.00	3.00
Coup history	Count	380	2.25	2.82	0.00	13.00
Post-Cuban revolution period	Binary	399	0.52	0.50	0.00	1.00

Note: ^a Variable lagged by one year. ^b Variable logarithmized.

Table SI.2.2. Summary statistics (difference-in-differences analysis).

	Type	Obs.	Mean	Std. dev.	Min.	Max.
Military involvement in politics (Kenwick dynamic measure)	Continuous	399	0.39	0.82	-1.89	2.69
Post-revolution _t ≥1960	Binary	399	0.48	0.50	0.00	1.00
Post-revolution _t ≥1961	Binary	399	0.43	0.50	0.00	1.00
Post-revolution _t ≥1962	Binary	399	0.38	0.49	0.00	1.00
Post-revolution _t ≥1963	Binary	399	0.33	0.47	0.00	1.00
Post-revolution _t ≥1964	Binary	399	0.29	0.45	0.00	1.00
Post-revolution _t ≥1965	Binary	399	0.24	0.43	0.00	1.00
Revolution _{t-5}	Binary	399	0.05	0.21	0.00	1.00
Revolution _{t-4}	Binary	399	0.05	0.21	0.00	1.00
Revolution _{t-3}	Binary	399	0.05	0.21	0.00	1.00
Revolution _{t-2}	Binary	399	0.05	0.21	0.00	1.00
Revolution _{t-1}	Binary	399	0.05	0.21	0.00	1.00
Revolution _t	Binary	399	0.05	0.21	0.00	1.00
Revolution _{t+1}	Binary	399	0.05	0.21	0.00	1.00
Revolution _{t+2}	Binary	399	0.05	0.21	0.00	1.00
Revolution _{t+3}	Binary	399	0.05	0.21	0.00	1.00
Revolution _{t+4}	Binary	399	0.05	0.21	0.00	1.00
Revolution _{t+5}	Binary	399	0.05	0.21	0.00	1.00
Revolution _{t+6,...,10}	Binary	399	0.24	0.43	0.00	1.00
Batista ally	Binary	399	0.26	0.44	0.00	1.00

SI.3 Addressing potential threats to inference

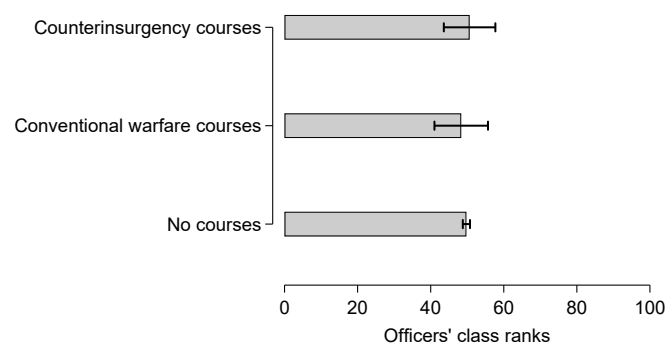
- 1) **Controlling for domestic and foreign communist threats.** This test relies on V-Dem data by Coppedge et al. (2021) to i) construct the variable *Left anti-regime activity* measuring the strength of leftist, socialist, and communist groups in each country in a given year, and ii) the variable *Left neighbor regimes* measuring for each country in a given year the average strength of leftist ideologies among geographic neighbor regimes. Results in Table SI.3.1 show that our results remain substantively unaffected when both variables are included.
- 2) **Controlling for Cuban-style guerrilla groups.** This test includes in the analysis the binary variable *Insurgency* identifying country-years with ongoing insurgent activity by Cuban-style guerrilla groups. Data on insurgencies stem from Kalyvas and Balcells (2010) and Lyall and Wilson (2009). Results in Table SI.3.2 remain unchanged. Coefficient estimates for *Counterinsurgency courses* are positive and statistically significant. Coefficient estimates for *Conventional warfare courses* are negative and statistically significant.
- 3) **Controlling for full spectrum of anti-regime threats.** This test includes the variable *Anti-regime activity* which captures the strength of any kind of anti-system movement in a given year. Data is based on Coppedge et al. (2021). Results, shown in Table SI.3.3, remain again substantively unchanged. Coefficient estimates for *Counterinsurgency courses* are positive and statistically significant. Coefficient estimates for *Conventional warfare courses* are negative and statistically significant.
- 4) **Sub-sample of countries with low communist threat.** This test re-runs the main analysis on a sub-sample of countries without significant risks of communist revolution. The idea is to hold the threat perception at a constant low level by design, and only exploit the temporal variation of SOA training. Statistically, this is a strong test since

results need to withstand a significant drop in observations. The sample is reduced from 19 to 5 countries (Chile, Brazil, Ecuador, Mexico, and Uruguay). It only includes countries where the average strength of leftist movements was smaller than the 25th percentile between 1949 and 1958, i.e. before the Cuban revolution. As shown in Table SI.3.4, *Counterinsurgency courses* are positively and significantly correlated with the military's involvement in politics. *Conventional warfare courses* retains its negative sign across models, but three of the four coefficient estimates fall below conventional levels of statistical significance.

- 5) **Sub-sample of countries with right-wing heads of government.** This test re-runs the main analysis on a sub-sample of countries with right-wing government leaders. The idea is to hold the threat perception at a constant high level by design. Right-wing leaders were presumably highly worried about a looming communist take-over and therefore particularly sensitive to communist subversion. We identify right-wing government leaders using the data by Herre (2022). As shown in Table SI.3.5, *Counterinsurgency courses* are positively and significantly correlated with the military's involvement in politics. Coefficient estimates for *Conventional warfare courses* are negative and statistically significant.
- 6) **Controlling for appointment decisions in the military.** This test includes the variable *Meritocratic military appointments* to examine whether soldiers' personal connections or achievements confound the main results. Well-connected or high-performing soldiers might be selected for or self-select into training abroad. The variable is based on data from Coppedge et al. (2021), capturing how much "appointment decisions include hiring, firing and promotions in the armed forces" are de facto "based on personal or political connections" or "skills and merit." Table SI.3.6 shows that the coefficient estimates for *Meritocratic military appointments* are negatively correlated with military involvement in all models. The coefficient estimates for *Counterinsurgency courses* and *Conventional warfare courses* remain unchanged, suggesting that (self-)selection into training based on personal connections or individual achievements does not confound the original results.
- 7) **Comparing officer talent across course types.** This test checks whether talented and ambitious military personnel selected into or were selected for counterinsurgency training at the SOA. To assess whether this is the case, we draw on the case of Argentina, which is one of the countries with the highest proportion of counterinsurgency training, as shown in Figure 3. In addition, Argentina provides us with unique individual level-level data on officers (Scharpf and Gläbel 2020). By locating each SOA-trained officer in their respective cohort, we can compare whether officers who received counterinsurgency or conventional warfare training differed in their ambition and talent from officers who did not receive SOA training. We compare officers by class rank which measures each officer's relative educational performance at military academy, i.e. the grades in the exams, thereby capturing the ambition and talent they showed during their professional education at home. Class rank ranges from 0 to 100, with smaller values indicating better relative performances, i.e. high-performing officers "who graduated at the top of their class receive a value of 0, whereas underachieving officers who graduated at the bottom of their class receive a value of 100" (Scharpf and Gläbel 2020, 798). The results in Figure SI.3.1 show that there is no difference in class rank between officers who attend counterinsurgency courses or conventional warfare courses compared to officers who do not receive training at the SOA. This suggests that the officers were very similar in terms of ambition and talent. Individual ambition or talent is unlikely to confound our results.

8) **Controlling for other forms of foreign aid.** In this test, we control for three types of US aid that might have helped Latin American militaries accumulate political power. *Economic aid* measures the annual amount of development and humanitarian assistance to each country, and *Military aid* the amount of assistance to the countries' armed forces. Both variables are based on data from US Aid (2022). *Arms sales* is based on SIPRI (2022) data, measuring the value of all annual US transfers of major weapons to Latin American countries. As shown in Table SI.3.7, *Counterinsurgency courses* are positively and significantly correlated with the military's involvement in politics. Coefficient estimates for *Conventional warfare courses* are negative and statistically significant.

Figure SI.3.1. Officer talent and participation in training at the School of the Americas.



Note: The graphic shows the class ranks of Argentine officers with different foreign training at the SOA as well as officers without SOA training. Line elements give 95% confidence intervals. Lower class ranks indicate higher educational attainment at Argentina's officer academy.

Table SI.3.1. Fixed effects regressions with controls for communist threats.

	Annual sum	Three-year sum	Cumulative sum	Course share	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Counterinsurgency courses	0.076* (0.035)	0.075** (0.027)	0.061* (0.027)	0.477† (0.263)	
Conventional warfare courses	−0.059* (0.027)	−0.069* (0.033)	−0.026 (0.046)		−0.453† (0.259)
Left anti-regime activity	−0.015 (0.087)	−0.048 (0.088)	−0.072 (0.090)	−0.025 (0.082)	−0.023 (0.082)
Left neighbor regimes	−0.634** (0.193)	−0.635*** (0.189)	−0.687** (0.228)	−0.134 (0.303)	−0.129 (0.303)
GDP growth	0.012† (0.007)	0.012† (0.007)	0.011† (0.007)	0.008 (0.008)	0.008 (0.008)
Military expenditure per soldier	0.326*** (0.066)	0.350*** (0.064)	0.353*** (0.063)	0.372*** (0.074)	0.370*** (0.074)
Militarized interstate dispute	0.034 (0.096)	0.046 (0.099)	0.026 (0.098)	0.044 (0.111)	0.045 (0.112)
Years since coup	−0.015 (0.055)	−0.030 (0.055)	−0.019 (0.055)	−0.042 (0.065)	−0.041 (0.065)
Constant	−1.984*** (0.480)	−2.081*** (0.465)	−2.133*** (0.461)	−2.978*** (0.573)	−2.519*** (0.585)
Country Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
AIC	509.34	505.46	510.35	430.74	431.13
Adjusted R ²	0.51	0.51	0.51	0.53	0.53
Observations	302	302	302	253	253

Note: Values are coefficients with robust standard errors in parentheses.

† p<0.1, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

Table SI.3.2. Fixed effects regressions with controls for insurgencies.

	Lyall & Wilson measure				Kalyvas & Balcells measure					
	(1) Annual sum	(2) Three-year sum	(3) Cumulative sum	(4) Course share	(5) Course share	(6) Annual sum	(7) Three-year sum	(8) Cumulative sum	(9) Course share	(10) Course share
Counterinsurgency courses	0.079* (0.035)	0.073** (0.026)	0.075** (0.027)	0.515* (0.250)		0.076* (0.034)	0.073** (0.025)	0.075** (0.027)	0.516* (0.250)	
Conventional warfare courses	-0.073** (0.028)	-0.091** (0.034)	-0.091* (0.044)		-0.491* (0.246)	-0.075** (0.027)	-0.095** (0.034)	-0.094* (0.045)		-0.493* (0.246)
Insurgency	-0.336* (0.157)	-0.298† (0.166)	-0.283† (0.160)	-0.239† (0.142)	-0.236† (0.142)	-0.535** (0.188)	-0.538** (0.171)	-0.485** (0.174)	-0.389* (0.175)	-0.385* (0.175)
GDP growth	0.013 (0.008)	0.013 (0.008)	0.011 (0.008)	0.010 (0.009)	0.010 (0.009)	0.013 (0.008)	0.013† (0.008)	0.011 (0.008)	0.010 (0.009)	0.010 (0.009)
Military expenditure per soldier	0.307*** (0.064)	0.333*** (0.063)	0.326*** (0.063)	0.371*** (0.070)	0.371*** (0.070)	0.323*** (0.067)	0.350*** (0.067)	0.342*** (0.066)	0.383*** (0.071)	0.383*** (0.071)
Guerrilla attack	-0.121 (0.093)	-0.124 (0.092)	-0.121 (0.093)	0.003 (0.097)	0.005 (0.097)	-0.121 (0.093)	-0.122 (0.092)	-0.121 (0.092)	-0.003 (0.096)	-0.001 (0.096)
Strike	0.014 (0.114)	0.017 (0.114)	0.016 (0.111)	-0.017 (0.135)	-0.017 (0.135)	0.014 (0.115)	0.017 (0.115)	0.016 (0.111)	-0.017 (0.136)	-0.017 (0.135)
Demonstration	0.175 (0.106)	0.179† (0.105)	0.184† (0.108)	0.241* (0.112)	0.242* (0.112)	0.181† (0.105)	0.184† (0.104)	0.188† (0.108)	0.245* (0.112)	0.246* (0.112)
Riot	-0.096 (0.081)	-0.090 (0.080)	-0.084 (0.082)	-0.071 (0.087)	-0.070 (0.087)	-0.089 (0.080)	-0.086 (0.078)	-0.080 (0.081)	-0.065 (0.085)	-0.063 (0.085)
Militarized interstate dispute	0.034 (0.095)	0.052 (0.097)	0.041 (0.097)	0.052 (0.111)	0.053 (0.112)	0.039 (0.095)	0.058 (0.097)	0.046 (0.097)	0.055 (0.111)	0.056 (0.111)
Years since coup	-0.040 (0.054)	-0.058 (0.053)	-0.046 (0.053)	-0.045 (0.064)	-0.043 (0.064)	-0.036 (0.054)	-0.055 (0.053)	-0.042 (0.054)	-0.041 (0.065)	-0.039 (0.065)
Constant	-2.104*** (0.495)	-2.189*** (0.483)	-2.060*** (0.481)	-3.126*** (0.592)	-2.632*** (0.607)	-2.219*** (0.515)	-2.312*** (0.506)	-2.167*** (0.500)	-3.218*** (0.605)	-2.722*** (0.611)
Country Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
AIC	514.89	510.95	516.05	427.95	428.36	514.50	509.89	515.39	427.93	428.34
Adjusted R²	0.50	0.51	0.50	0.54	0.54	0.50	0.51	0.50	0.54	0.54
Observations	302	302	302	253	253	302	302	302	253	253

Note: Values are coefficients with robust standard errors in parentheses.

† p<0.1, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

Table SI.3.3. Fixed effects regressions with control for any anti-regime threat.

	Annual sum	Three-year sum	Cumulative sum	Course share	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Counterinsurgency courses	0.061 [†] (0.034)	0.063* (0.025)	0.065* (0.026)	0.441 [†] (0.251)	
Conventional warfare courses	-0.064* (0.028)	-0.085* (0.035)	-0.082 [†] (0.044)		-0.419 [†] (0.247)
Anti-regime activity	0.003 (0.050)	-0.003 (0.049)	-0.015 (0.048)	0.015 (0.046)	0.017 (0.046)
GDP growth	0.013 [†] (0.007)	0.012 [†] (0.007)	0.011 (0.007)	0.008 (0.008)	0.008 (0.008)
Military expenditure per soldier	0.304*** (0.064)	0.327*** (0.063)	0.320*** (0.062)	0.361*** (0.070)	0.360*** (0.070)
Militarized interstate dispute	0.030 (0.098)	0.048 (0.100)	0.036 (0.100)	0.046 (0.111)	0.047 (0.111)
Years since coup	-0.042 (0.054)	-0.058 (0.054)	-0.045 (0.054)	-0.048 (0.065)	-0.047 (0.065)
Constant	-2.109*** (0.482)	-2.180*** (0.472)	-2.051*** (0.471)	-2.975*** (0.572)	-2.551*** (0.584)
Country Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
AIC	518.92	514.84	519.36	429.00	429.35
Adjusted R ²	0.49	0.50	0.49	0.53	0.53
Observations	302	302	302	253	253

Note: Values are coefficients with robust standard errors in parentheses.

† p<0.1, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

Table SI.3.4. Results for countries with low threats of communist subversion.

	Annual sum	Three-year sum	Cumulative sum	Course share	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Counterinsurgency courses	0.349*** (0.059)	0.247*** (0.046)	0.217*** (0.048)	1.337*** (0.365)	
Conventional warfare courses	0.011 (0.041)	-0.052 (0.042)	-0.065 (0.051)		-1.292*** (0.361)
GDP growth	-0.013 (0.010)	-0.011 (0.011)	-0.008 (0.011)	-0.011 (0.012)	-0.011 (0.012)
Military expenditure per soldier	0.245* (0.112)	0.226 [†] (0.121)	0.256 [†] (0.130)	0.300 [†] (0.153)	0.310* (0.154)
Guerrilla attack	-0.035 (0.200)	0.080 (0.189)	0.163 (0.167)	-0.146 (0.308)	-0.146 (0.300)
Strike	-0.124 (0.133)	-0.144 (0.139)	-0.152 (0.152)	-0.165 (0.184)	-0.163 (0.183)
Demonstration	0.418** (0.141)	0.418** (0.143)	0.457** (0.153)	0.539** (0.198)	0.541** (0.200)
Riot	-0.174 (0.119)	-0.182 (0.122)	-0.181 (0.126)	-0.117 (0.142)	-0.099 (0.145)
Militarized interstate dispute	0.280* (0.129)	0.260 (0.163)	0.229 (0.179)	0.299 (0.195)	0.311 (0.198)
Years since coup	-0.409*** (0.100)	-0.413** (0.121)	-0.456** (0.135)	-0.376** (0.139)	-0.363* (0.142)
Constant	-0.700 (0.888)	-0.481 (0.985)	-0.563 (1.040)	-1.182 (1.377)	-0.002 (1.386)
Country Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
AIC	116.68	128.48	134.87	128.33	129.81
Adjusted R ²	0.57	0.50	0.47	0.46	0.45
Observations	86	86	86	73	73

Note: Values are coefficients with robust standard errors in parentheses.

† p<0.1, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

Table SI.3.5. Results for sample of right-wing heads of government.

	Annual sum	Three-year sum	Cumulative sum	Course share	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Counterinsurgency courses	0.156** (0.053)	0.143*** (0.039)	0.139*** (0.041)	1.183*** (0.347)	
Conventional warfare courses	-0.095* (0.042)	-0.113** (0.040)	-0.126** (0.044)		-1.142** (0.346)
GDP growth	0.006 (0.011)	0.005 (0.010)	0.006 (0.011)	-0.003 (0.011)	-0.003 (0.011)
Military expenditure per soldier	0.260*** (0.068)	0.272*** (0.070)	0.257*** (0.073)	0.228** (0.078)	0.228** (0.078)
Guerrilla attack	-0.105 (0.138)	-0.135 (0.135)	-0.112 (0.133)	0.040 (0.147)	0.044 (0.148)
Strike	0.032 (0.193)	-0.010 (0.186)	-0.032 (0.186)	0.128 (0.231)	0.125 (0.227)
Demonstration	0.068 (0.153)	0.044 (0.143)	0.077 (0.144)	0.100 (0.157)	0.102 (0.157)
Riot	-0.032 (0.114)	-0.027 (0.111)	-0.013 (0.116)	-0.005 (0.123)	-0.001 (0.124)
Militarized interstate dispute	0.031 (0.165)	0.071 (0.165)	0.050 (0.165)	0.058 (0.193)	0.060 (0.193)
Years since coup	-0.130* (0.063)	-0.159** (0.060)	-0.149* (0.062)	-0.134* (0.066)	-0.127† (0.068)
Constant	-1.129* (0.553)	-1.052† (0.551)	-0.815 (0.563)	-1.147† (0.629)	-0.020 (0.643)
Country Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
AIC	434.56	428.28	431.20	371.24	371.88
Adjusted R ²	0.34	0.36	0.35	0.36	0.36
Observations	205	205	205	176	176

Note: Values are coefficients with robust standard errors in parentheses.

† p<0.1, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

Table SI.3.6. Fixed effects regressions with control for de facto appointment decisions in military.

	Annual sum	Three-year sum	Cumulative sum	Course share	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Counterinsurgency courses	0.103** (0.035)	0.092*** (0.026)	0.099*** (0.028)	0.547* (0.254)	
Conventional warfare courses	-0.061* (0.027)	-0.086** (0.033)	-0.106* (0.046)		-0.521* (0.250)
Meritocratic military appointments	-0.448** (0.143)	-0.462** (0.144)	-0.483** (0.147)	-0.319* (0.143)	-0.315* (0.143)
GDP growth	0.011 (0.008)	0.011 (0.007)	0.010 (0.008)	0.008 (0.008)	0.009 (0.008)
Military expenditure per soldier	0.275*** (0.064)	0.293*** (0.064)	0.287*** (0.062)	0.350*** (0.074)	0.350*** (0.074)
Guerrilla attack	-0.112 (0.092)	-0.102 (0.090)	-0.097 (0.090)	0.038 (0.098)	0.040 (0.098)
Strike	-0.014 (0.122)	-0.009 (0.122)	-0.008 (0.117)	-0.051 (0.151)	-0.051 (0.150)
Demonstration	0.182† (0.103)	0.190† (0.102)	0.198† (0.106)	0.257* (0.110)	0.258* (0.110)
Riot	-0.084 (0.080)	-0.082 (0.079)	-0.076 (0.081)	-0.057 (0.086)	-0.055 (0.087)
Militarized interstate dispute	-0.056 (0.099)	-0.039 (0.102)	-0.047 (0.102)	-0.046 (0.120)	-0.045 (0.121)
Years since coup	-0.027 (0.055)	-0.046 (0.055)	-0.034 (0.055)	-0.033 (0.068)	-0.030 (0.068)
Constant	-2.086*** (0.479)	-2.132*** (0.470)	-1.979*** (0.465)	-3.127*** (0.599)	-2.605*** (0.614)
Country Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
AIC	479.67	474.62	477.66	401.32	401.76
Adjusted R ²	0.53	0.54	0.53	0.56	0.56
Observations	282	282	282	235	235

Note: Values are coefficients with robust standard errors in parentheses.

† p<0.1, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

Table SI.3.7. Controlling for different US aid types.

	Economic aid			Military aid			Arms sales		
	(1) Annual sum	(2) Three-year sum	(3) Cumulative sum	(4) Annual sum	(5) Three-year sum	(6) Cumulative sum	(7) Annual sum	(8) Three-year sum	(9) Cumulative sum
Counterinsurgency courses	0.082* (0.037)	0.081** (0.030)	0.073* (0.031)	0.079† (0.040)	0.078* (0.032)	0.120** (0.040)	0.070* (0.034)	0.077* (0.035)	0.069† (0.039)
Conventional warfare courses	-0.064* (0.029)	-0.081* (0.038)	-0.086† (0.051)	-0.065* (0.029)	-0.083* (0.037)	-0.058 (0.049)	-0.071** (0.027)	-0.066* (0.028)	-0.068* (0.028)
Economic aid	-0.016 (0.024)	-0.020 (0.033)	-0.004 (0.044)	-0.018 (0.027)	-0.022 (0.036)	0.015 (0.046)			
Military aid				0.010 (0.040)	0.006 (0.037)	-0.099* (0.045)			
Arms sales							0.057* (0.028)	-0.037 (0.032)	0.008 (0.048)
GDP growth	0.012 (0.008)	0.012 (0.008)	0.011 (0.008)	0.012 (0.008)	0.012 (0.008)	0.011 (0.008)	0.012 (0.008)	0.012 (0.008)	0.012 (0.008)
Military expenditure per soldier	0.298*** (0.066)	0.315*** (0.070)	0.322*** (0.069)	0.297*** (0.067)	0.315*** (0.071)	0.323*** (0.067)	0.295*** (0.064)	0.318*** (0.068)	0.305*** (0.067)
Guerrilla attack	-0.147 (0.093)	-0.148 (0.091)	-0.144 (0.092)	-0.147 (0.092)	-0.149 (0.092)	-0.145 (0.092)	-0.151 (0.092)	-0.147 (0.092)	-0.146 (0.093)
Strike	0.011 (0.114)	0.013 (0.114)	0.013 (0.111)	0.013 (0.115)	0.014 (0.114)	0.004 (0.115)	0.008 (0.111)	0.011 (0.114)	0.010 (0.114)
Demonstration	0.181† (0.107)	0.185† (0.106)	0.191† (0.108)	0.181† (0.108)	0.185† (0.106)	0.185† (0.104)	0.174† (0.104)	0.183† (0.106)	0.182† (0.106)
Riot	-0.072 (0.079)	-0.067 (0.079)	-0.065 (0.080)	-0.073 (0.080)	-0.067 (0.079)	-0.075 (0.078)	-0.084 (0.079)	-0.068 (0.079)	-0.074 (0.080)
Militarized interstate dispute	0.039 (0.095)	0.057 (0.097)	0.045 (0.097)	0.039 (0.095)	0.057 (0.097)	0.062 (0.097)	0.057 (0.096)	0.020 (0.098)	0.039 (0.095)
Years since coup	-0.048 (0.053)	-0.066 (0.053)	-0.051 (0.053)	-0.048 (0.053)	-0.066 (0.053)	-0.045 (0.053)	-0.046 (0.052)	-0.044 (0.053)	-0.046 (0.055)
Constant	-1.981*** (0.517)	-1.985*** (0.571)	-2.012*** (0.600)	-1.972*** (0.526)	-1.981*** (0.581)	-1.994*** (0.583)	-2.024*** (0.493)	-2.128*** (0.511)	-2.101*** (0.502)
Country Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
AIC	517.45	512.94	518.15	519.37	514.90	513.11	513.13	516.57	517.79
Adjusted R ²	0.50	0.51	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.51	0.51	0.50	0.50
Observations	302	302	302	302	302	302	302	302	302

Note: Values are coefficients with robust standard errors in parentheses.

† p<0.1, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

SI.4 Probing the mechanism

1) **Course content.** This test probes which part of counterinsurgency training at the SOA drove militarization. We replace the original counterinsurgency variables with three thematically disaggregated variables: *Intelligence course*, *Irregular warfare course*, and *State-building course*. The variables are based on hand-coded course titles.

- *Intelligence courses* include courses on: (Counter) (military) intelligence (operations) (orientation) (Phase II-III).
- *Irregular warfare courses* include courses on: Counter resistance, counter insurrection (operations) (orientation), (cadet) irregular warfare (operations) (orientation), (basic) internal security (operations), jungle warfare (operations) (training), special tactics, and small unit warfare.
- *State-building courses* include courses on: Civic action and (military) civic action planning.

As expected based on our theoretical argument, results in Table SI.4.1 show that the coefficient estimates for *Irregular warfare course* and *state-building courses* are positive and statistically significant across all models with the latter being visibly larger than the former. The estimates for *Intelligence* fail to reach conventional levels of statistical significance.

2) **Course dissemination.** This test probes how the ideas and outlook of foreign training were transmitted within Latin American military organizations. Graduates of foreign academies or training programs often become instructors at domestic academies or staff colleges where they can share new ideas with peers and subordinates through personal interactions. Alternatively, foreign-trained officers may disseminate their acquired knowledge through publications in military periodicals. The test assesses the relative importance of these two channels of information dissemination using data from Toronto (2017). We interact the two main course variables with the number of domestic military *Academies* and the number of military *Periodicals*, respectively.

Results in Table SI.4.2 show that the interaction term between *Counterinsurgency courses* and *Academies* is positive and statistically significant. In contrast, neither the interaction term between *Conventional warfare courses* and *Academies* nor the interaction terms between the two course type variables and *Periodicals* reach any conventional level of statistical significance. The effect of counterinsurgency training on military involvement in politics only increases as the number of domestic military academies increases. Periodicals do not moderate the effect of counterinsurgency and conventional warfare courses. Together, this suggests that the ideas and notions of political involvement, acquired through US counterinsurgency training, spread through face-to-face education at domestic military institutions.

3) **Temporal development.** This test set probes how the militarization effect of foreign training at the SOA unfolded over time. We have argued that trainees become exposed to counterinsurgency training abroad and disseminate their knowledge in the military once they are back home, which subsequently motivates soldiers to become politically involved. This suggests that the effect of SOA training should build up over time.

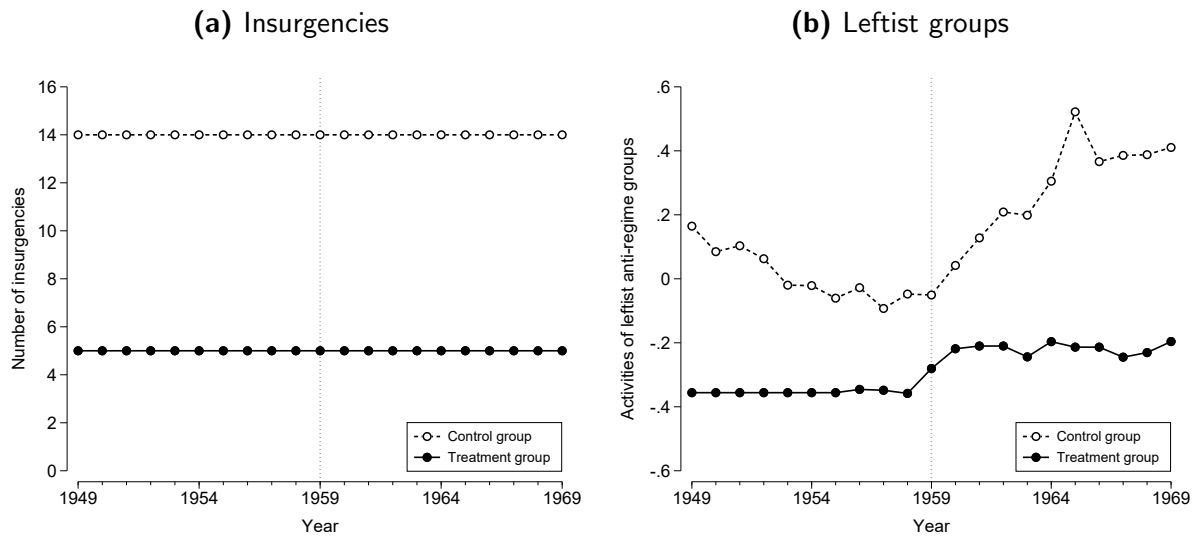
The two tests we undertake rely on difference-in-differences designs. The treatment group consists of Latin American governments that were allied to the Batista regime before

the Revolution. For each country we identify the average affiliation score between 1949 and 1958, i.e. in the pre-treatment window. Countries with average scores equal to or higher than the 75th percentile are cases in the treatment group, while the other countries serve as the control group. In addition to the parallel trends shown in Figure 9 in the manuscript, Figure SI.4.1 shows that treatment and control group are very similar with respect to possible changes in military priorities. The number of insurgencies remained constant before and after the Cuban Revolution. Activities by leftist groups increased in both groups after 1959 but was more pronounced in the control group, making it less likely that our results are simply due to changing political realities among Batista allies.

The first difference-in-differences analysis interacts the group variable, which is 1 for Batista allies (treatment group) and 0 otherwise (control group), with the treatment variable, which is 0 before the Cuban Revolution (pre-treatment period) and 1 after the Revolution (post-treatment period). To be sensitive to the changes of the SOA curriculum and the availability of counterinsurgency courses, we estimate different models with different versions of the treatment variable, i.e. in which year after the Cuban Revolution the treatment variable is coded 1. Results in Table SI.4.3 show that military involvement in politics significantly increased after the Cuban Revolution. The coefficient estimate of *Batista ally* $\times$ *Post-revolution* _{$t \geq 1964$} is particularly robust for the period after 1964—six years after Latin American soldiers had participated in the first counterinsurgency courses at the SOA and four years after the school offered courses on irregular warfare.

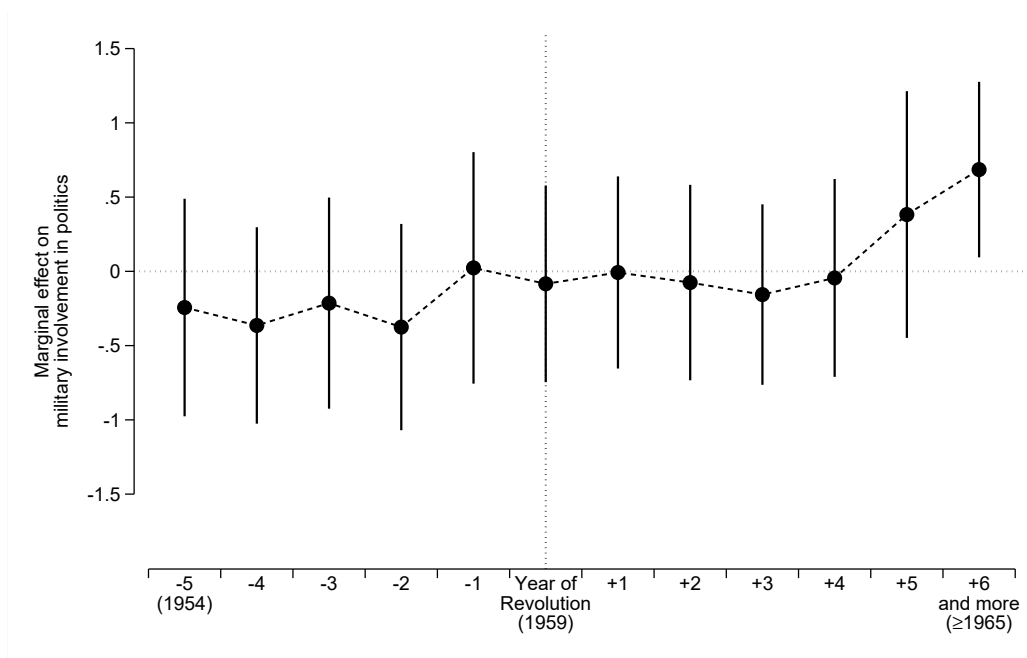
The second difference-in-differences analysis relies on saturated models. The models include several interaction effects between the group variable (1=Batista ally, 0=otherwise) and different treatment variables, which slice up the pre- and post-treatment periods to triangulate anticipatory and lagged effects. The reference category for Models 1 and 2 is the years before 1958 and for Model 3 the years before 1954. Results in Table SI.4.4 show that across the Models only the interaction term between *Batista ally* (treatment group) and *Revolution* _{$t+6, \dots, 10$} is positive and statistically significant. This is supported by Figure SI.4.2, which visualizes the results of Model 3. The statistically insignificant estimates for the years between 1954 and 1959 underscore that political militarization in countries allied to the former Cuban dictator Batista (treatment group) and other countries (control group) followed similar trends. Overall, the results again show a delayed effect of SOA counterinsurgency training on militarization. Soldiers' military involvement on politics increased six years after the SOA had started to teach counterinsurgency topics.

Figure SI.4.1. Checking for broader changes in military priorities.



Note: Graph shows trends in the number of insurgencies and activities of leftist groups among Batista allies (treatment group) and other countries (control group) before and after the Cuban Revolution. Data on insurgencies stem from Lyall and Wilson (2009) and data on leftist groups from Coppedge et al. (2021).

Figure SI.4.2. Delayed militarization effect after Cuban Revolution among Batista allies with parallel trends test.



Note: Results based on Model 3, Table SI.4.4. Vertical lines give 95% confidence intervals. Reference category is the years before 1954.

Table SI.4.1. Counterinsurgency course content and military involvement in politics.

	Annual sum			Three-year sum			Cumulative sum			Course share		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)
Intelligence course	0.039 (0.040)			0.050 [†] (0.029)			0.065* (0.030)			-0.652 (0.446)		
Irregular warfare course		0.110** (0.042)			0.122*** (0.032)			0.133*** (0.030)			0.837 [†] (0.465)	
State-building course			0.284** (0.105)			0.286*** (0.072)			0.278*** (0.063)			3.441* (1.350)
Conventional warfare courses	-0.052 [†] (0.027)	-0.063* (0.027)	-0.062* (0.025)	-0.074* (0.035)	-0.087** (0.031)	-0.084** (0.028)	-0.071 (0.046)	-0.112** (0.038)	-0.069* (0.033)	-0.849* (0.346)	-0.142 (0.291)	-0.379 (0.246)
GDP growth	0.013 [†] (0.008)	0.012 (0.008)	0.014 [†] (0.007)	0.013 [†] (0.008)	0.012 (0.007)	0.016* (0.007)	0.011 (0.008)	0.011 (0.007)	0.013 [†] (0.007)	0.009 (0.008)	0.009 (0.008)	0.010 (0.008)
Military expenditure per soldier	0.302*** (0.065)	0.297*** (0.066)	0.274*** (0.065)	0.327*** (0.066)	0.311*** (0.065)	0.293*** (0.064)	0.324*** (0.064)	0.299*** (0.064)	0.276*** (0.063)	0.374*** (0.071)	0.372*** (0.071)	0.361*** (0.072)
Guerrilla attack	-0.127 (0.092)	-0.142 (0.091)	-0.129 (0.089)	-0.134 (0.091)	-0.157 [†] (0.092)	-0.127 (0.084)	-0.139 (0.091)	-0.165 [†] (0.091)	-0.140 (0.086)	0.006 (0.093)	0.009 (0.094)	-0.010 (0.094)
Strike	0.011 (0.113)	0.024 (0.111)	0.027 (0.107)	0.012 (0.114)	0.036 (0.110)	0.032 (0.101)	0.015 (0.110)	0.021 (0.107)	0.030 (0.101)	0.005 (0.129)	0.011 (0.130)	0.015 (0.130)
Demonstration	0.184 [†] (0.108)	0.177 [†] (0.106)	0.177 (0.108)	0.189 [†] (0.107)	0.169 (0.103)	0.176 [†] (0.104)	0.189 [†] (0.109)	0.166 (0.104)	0.149 (0.104)	0.245* (0.112)	0.256* (0.112)	0.230* (0.114)
Riot	-0.072 (0.080)	-0.063 (0.079)	-0.084 (0.081)	-0.072 (0.079)	-0.046 (0.076)	-0.053 (0.078)	-0.069 (0.081)	-0.044 (0.078)	-0.032 (0.080)	-0.054 (0.086)	-0.053 (0.085)	-0.050 (0.086)
Militarized interstate dispute	0.025 (0.096)	0.024 (0.095)	0.002 (0.091)	0.041 (0.097)	0.054 (0.096)	0.020 (0.091)	0.037 (0.096)	0.043 (0.096)	0.020 (0.092)	0.063 (0.114)	0.051 (0.113)	0.073 (0.107)
Years since coup	-0.038 (0.053)	-0.050 (0.054)	-0.072 (0.053)	-0.048 (0.053)	-0.079 (0.053)	-0.093 [†] (0.048)	-0.044 (0.053)	-0.061 (0.052)	-0.093 [†] (0.049)	-0.050 (0.064)	-0.057 (0.062)	-0.065 (0.064)
Constant	-2.087*** (0.503)	-2.020*** (0.507)	-1.836*** (0.506)	-2.186*** (0.495)	-1.998*** (0.496)	-1.869*** (0.489)	-2.094*** (0.488)	-1.731*** (0.499)	-1.662*** (0.484)	-2.269** (0.690)	-2.950*** (0.610)	-2.637*** (0.608)
Country Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
AIC	521.31	511.85	510.93	518.05	500.17	496.88	519.53	499.87	495.78	425.94	424.69	423.22
Adjusted R ²	0.49	0.51	0.51	0.50	0.53	0.53	0.49	0.53	0.53	0.54	0.55	0.55
Observations	302	302	302	302	302	302	302	302	302	253	253	253

Note: Values are coefficients with robust standard errors in parentheses.

† p<0.1, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

Table SI.4.2. Domestic dissemination channels of foreign training content.

	Military academies						Military periodicals					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)
Counterinsurgency courses X Academies	0.050* (0.022)	0.083** (0.027)			0.054* (0.023)	0.086** (0.027)						
Conventional warfare courses X Academies			0.010 (0.017)	0.014 (0.030)	-0.009 (0.016)	-0.011 (0.029)						
Counterinsurgency courses X Periodicals							0.010 (0.014)	0.008 (0.016)			0.010 (0.015)	0.008 (0.017)
Conventional warfare courses X Periodicals									0.002 (0.009)	0.002 (0.011)	-0.001 (0.009)	-0.001 (0.011)
Counterinsurgency courses	-0.070* (0.032)	-0.120* (0.059)	0.029 (0.030)	0.074* (0.035)	-0.077* (0.032)	-0.127* (0.058)	0.019 (0.034)	0.065 (0.045)	0.039 (0.028)	0.086* (0.034)	0.017 (0.035)	0.065 (0.047)
Conventional warfare courses	-0.038† (0.019)	-0.061* (0.027)	-0.057 (0.035)	-0.097 (0.075)	-0.020 (0.033)	-0.037 (0.074)	-0.055** (0.019)	-0.082** (0.027)	-0.059* (0.026)	-0.088* (0.040)	-0.052* (0.025)	-0.081* (0.041)
Academies	-0.187 (0.139)	-0.158 (0.153)	-0.158 (0.146)	-0.113 (0.161)	-0.173 (0.143)	-0.135 (0.160)						
Periodicals							0.186*** (0.054)	0.206** (0.069)	0.201*** (0.058)	0.217** (0.077)	0.190** (0.060)	0.207* (0.080)
GDP growth		0.015† (0.008)		0.013 (0.008)		0.015† (0.008)		0.012 (0.008)		0.012 (0.008)		0.013 (0.008)
Military expenditure per soldier		0.347*** (0.072)		0.309*** (0.068)		0.347*** (0.071)		0.298*** (0.066)		0.291*** (0.064)		0.298*** (0.066)
Guerrilla attack		-0.135 (0.092)		-0.143 (0.094)		-0.135 (0.092)		-0.097 (0.088)		-0.103 (0.089)		-0.097 (0.088)
Strike		0.038 (0.114)		0.014 (0.114)		0.037 (0.114)		0.067 (0.106)		0.073 (0.106)		0.067 (0.106)
Demonstration		0.177† (0.101)		0.180† (0.106)		0.178† (0.101)		0.169† (0.100)		0.162 (0.101)		0.170† (0.100)
Riot		-0.060 (0.076)		-0.070 (0.080)		-0.063 (0.076)		-0.071 (0.075)		-0.072 (0.075)		-0.071 (0.075)
Militarized interstate dispute		0.028 (0.092)		0.035 (0.094)		0.030 (0.093)		-0.019 (0.090)		-0.021 (0.090)		-0.019 (0.090)
Years since coup		-0.030 (0.051)		-0.049 (0.054)		-0.027 (0.052)		-0.033 (0.052)		-0.038 (0.053)		-0.033 (0.052)
Constant	0.229 (0.217)	-2.241*** (0.533)	0.201 (0.224)	-1.983*** (0.507)	0.209 (0.222)	-2.281*** (0.526)	0.049 (0.168)	-2.058*** (0.507)	0.050 (0.168)	-2.003*** (0.491)	0.047 (0.168)	-2.061*** (0.505)
Country Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
AIC	639.04	507.67	647.13	519.35	640.78	509.49	624.45	500.46	625.82	501.14	626.42	502.45
Adjusted R²	0.59	0.52	0.58	0.50	0.59	0.51	0.60	0.53	0.60	0.53	0.60	0.53
Observations	399	302	399	302	399	302	399	302	399	302	399	302

Note: Values are coefficients with robust standard errors in parentheses.
† p<0.1, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

Table SI.4.3. Difference-in-Differences for military involvement in politics (dynamic measure).

	Without controls						With controls					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)
Batista ally X Post-revolution _{t ≥ 1960}	0.250 (0.195)						0.470** (0.178)					
Batista ally X Post-revolution _{t ≥ 1961}		0.294 (0.200)						0.493** (0.183)				
Batista ally X Post-revolution _{t ≥ 1962}			0.349† (0.207)						0.551** (0.193)			
Batista ally X Post-revolution _{t ≥ 1963}				0.419† (0.217)						0.649** (0.206)		
Batista ally X Post-revolution _{t ≥ 1964}					0.498* (0.230)						0.744*** (0.222)	
Batista ally X Post-revolution _{t ≥ 1965}						0.547* (0.254)						0.750** (0.248)
Post-revolution _{t ≥ 1960,...,1965}	-0.154† (0.093)	-0.118 (0.096)	-0.077 (0.099)	-0.031 (0.104)	0.032 (0.110)	0.042 (0.118)	-0.276** (0.092)	-0.234* (0.094)	-0.207* (0.097)	-0.182† (0.103)	-0.152 (0.110)	-0.136 (0.119)
Batista ally	0.040 (0.124)	0.033 (0.118)	0.026 (0.112)	0.020 (0.107)	0.017 (0.103)	0.029 (0.099)	-0.460*** (0.119)	-0.447*** (0.113)	-0.443*** (0.107)	-0.449*** (0.101)	-0.442*** (0.098)	-0.395*** (0.098)
Constant	0.417*** (0.059)	0.395*** (0.057)	0.373*** (0.056)	0.354*** (0.054)	0.335*** (0.052)	0.334*** (0.051)	-1.202*** (0.316)	-1.260*** (0.315)	-1.307*** (0.315)	-1.361*** (0.313)	-1.393*** (0.310)	-1.366*** (0.315)
Time varying controls	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
AIC	972.82	973.10	972.42	970.39	966.53	965.59	703.75	704.36	703.46	700.97	697.63	698.54
Adjusted R ²	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.02	0.03	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.11	0.12	0.12
Observations	399	399	399	399	399	399	318	318	318	318	318	318

Note: Values are coefficients with robust standard errors in parentheses.
Post-revolution dummies assume value of one for years equal to or greater than the indicated one.
Batista ally variable assumes value of one for all countries with pre-treatment affinity score equal to or larger than 75th percentile.
† p<0.1, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

Table SI.4.4. Probing anticipatory and lagged effects.

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Batista ally X Revolution _{t-5}			-0.244 (0.372)
Batista ally X Revolution _{t-4}			-0.364 (0.336)
Batista ally X Revolution _{t-3}			-0.214 (0.361)
Batista ally X Revolution _{t-2}			-0.375 (0.353)
Batista ally X Revolution _{t-1}	0.177 (0.497)	0.191 (0.374)	0.023 (0.396)
Batista ally X Revolution _t	-0.080 (0.359)	0.080 (0.305)	-0.084 (0.336)
Batista ally X Revolution _{t+1}	-0.072 (0.355)	0.148 (0.298)	-0.008 (0.329)
Batista ally X Revolution _{t+2}	-0.089 (0.346)	0.089 (0.303)	-0.076 (0.334)
Batista ally X Revolution _{t+3}	-0.097 (0.343)	0.008 (0.278)	-0.156 (0.309)
Batista ally X Revolution _{t+4}	-0.052 (0.347)	0.125 (0.309)	-0.044 (0.338)
Batista ally X Revolution _{t+5}	0.180 (0.391)	0.550 (0.399)	0.382 (0.422)
Batista ally X Revolution _{t+6,...,10}	0.544* (0.276)	0.855** (0.268)	0.685* (0.300)
Revolution _{t-5}			0.048 (0.197)
Revolution _{t-4}			0.298† (0.156)
Revolution _{t-3}			0.273† (0.148)
Revolution _{t-2}			0.331* (0.151)
Revolution _{t-1}	-0.133 (0.231)	-0.216 (0.203)	-0.083 (0.223)
Revolution _t	-0.262 (0.221)	-0.268 (0.198)	-0.134 (0.217)
Revolution _{t+1}	-0.308 (0.221)	-0.371† (0.202)	-0.237 (0.224)
Revolution _{t+2}	-0.337 (0.220)	-0.353† (0.197)	-0.213 (0.217)
Revolution _{t+3}	-0.347 (0.219)	-0.363† (0.191)	-0.230 (0.213)
Revolution _{t+4}	-0.390† (0.221)	-0.392† (0.205)	-0.255 (0.224)
Revolution _{t+5}	-0.132 (0.247)	-0.330 (0.238)	-0.194 (0.256)
Revolution _{t+6,...,10}	-0.077 (0.126)	-0.320* (0.126)	-0.185 (0.154)
Batista ally	0.031 (0.139)	-0.492*** (0.133)	-0.331† (0.186)
Constant	0.453*** (0.065)	-1.101*** (0.312)	-1.273*** (0.322)
Time varying controls	No	Yes	Yes
AIC	980.97	714.48	727.15
Adjusted R ²	0.02	0.11	0.09
Observations	399	318	318

Note: Values are coefficients with robust standard errors in parentheses.

† p<0.1, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

SI.5 Additional robustness checks

- 1) **Additional controls on pull factors: US affinity, regime types, coup history.** This check accounts for varying “pull” factors, i.e. how much and how often politicians invite the military into politics. The analysis includes the continuous variable *US affinity*, which measures a country’s political proximity to the US based on UN voting patterns using data from Bailey, Strezhnev and Voeten (2017). It also contains binary regime variables identifying *Party regimes*, *Military regimes*, *Personalist regimes*, and *Democratic regimes* based on data by (Geddes, Wright and Frantz 2014). Foreign-occupied and provisional regimes serve as reference category. We omit US affinity and the regime variables from the main analysis presented in the manuscript as they may introduce post-treatment bias. Third, the analysis includes *Coup history* measuring the number of past coup attempts based on data from Powell and Thyne (2011).

Table SI.5.1 shows that the coefficient estimates of *Counterinsurgency courses* and *Conventional warfare courses* remain substantively unaffected by the inclusion of the additional variables. The estimates of *Military regime* and *Personalist regime* are positive and statistically significant. The other added control variables fail to reach conventional levels of statistical significance. In comparison to soldiers’ motivation to become politically involved (“push” factors), the opportunity to become involved (“pull” factors) seems to be less relevant for the subsequent political militarization. This underlines our argument that training content, through the motivations of soldiers, shapes the military’s influence over politics and policies.

- 2) **Student numbers.** This check tests whether the results hold when using student numbers instead of course attendances. We draw on our original course attendance data to manually identify the number of students that attended counterinsurgency courses and courses in conventional warfare. Results in Table SI.5.2 show that *Counterinsurgency trained students* are positively and significantly correlated with military involvement in politics across all statistical models, whereas *Conventional warfare trained students* are negatively correlated with militarization.
- 3) **Alternate measure of dependent variable.** This test analyzes how course types influence the likelihood of soldiers holding high government posts. Following Eibl, Hertog and Slater (2021), the analysis uses two measures of militarization built of the data by Svolik (2012). The data identifies regimes with civilian rule (value=0), regimes where military involvement in politics is indirect (value=1), i.e. the head of the executive is a civilian but officers intervene in policies unrelated to national security, and regimes where military involvement is direct (value=2), i.e. where the head of the executive is a professional soldier.

We employ two different measures of the dependent variable. The first measure is binary. It is 1 if military involvement in politics is either direct or indirect, and 0 otherwise. The second measure is categorical, ranging from civilian rule, over indirect military involvement, to direct military involvement (values=0,1,2). Results in Table SI.5.3 and Table SI.5.4 show that our main results replicate for both dependent variables. The only exception is the cumulative sum of courses (Model 3 in Table SI.5.4). Overall, *Counterinsurgency courses* increase the likelihood of officers holding high government posts, whereas *Conventional warfare courses* decrease it. The findings support our expectation that SOA counterinsurgency training motivated soldiers to hold high executive positions.

Table SI.5.1. Additional control variables on pull factors.

	US ally			Regime types			Coup history		
	(1) Annual sum	(2) Three-year sum	(3) Cumulative sum	(4) Annual sum	(5) Three-year sum	(6) Cumulative sum	(7) Annual sum	(8) Three-year sum	(9) Cumulative sum
Counterinsurgency courses	0.064 [†] (0.036)	0.070* (0.028)	0.069* (0.029)	0.077** (0.030)	0.069** (0.022)	0.089** (0.023)	0.056 (0.038)	0.052 [†] (0.028)	0.071** (0.026)
Conventional warfare courses	-0.065* (0.028)	-0.089* (0.035)	-0.087 [†] (0.046)	-0.048 [†] (0.026)	-0.054 [†] (0.032)	-0.101* (0.041)	-0.050 [†] (0.026)	-0.055 [†] (0.033)	-0.111** (0.041)
US affinity	-0.055 (0.085)	0.005 (0.090)	-0.017 (0.088)						
Party regime				0.227 (0.278)	0.240 (0.274)	0.246 (0.277)	0.248 (0.279)	0.234 (0.278)	0.238 (0.281)
Military regime				0.682** (0.218)	0.699** (0.216)	0.724** (0.218)	0.664** (0.216)	0.670** (0.215)	0.694** (0.218)
Personalist regime				0.534* (0.218)	0.526* (0.219)	0.546* (0.217)	0.517* (0.213)	0.486* (0.215)	0.511* (0.215)
Democratic regime				-0.286 (0.225)	-0.263 (0.222)	-0.283 (0.224)	-0.281 (0.226)	-0.268 (0.226)	-0.286 (0.229)
GDP growth	0.013 (0.008)	0.012 (0.008)	0.011 (0.008)	0.006 (0.007)	0.006 (0.007)	0.005 (0.007)	0.006 (0.007)	0.006 (0.007)	0.005 (0.007)
Military expenditure per soldier	0.308*** (0.067)	0.330*** (0.065)	0.325*** (0.065)	0.134* (0.055)	0.153** (0.057)	0.144** (0.055)	0.163** (0.057)	0.182** (0.058)	0.173** (0.057)
Guerrilla attack	-0.146 (0.092)	-0.147 (0.091)	-0.143 (0.092)	-0.155 [†] (0.080)	-0.156* (0.078)	-0.153 [†] (0.078)	-0.152 [†] (0.081)	-0.152 [†] (0.079)	-0.147 [†] (0.078)
Strike	0.015 (0.112)	0.013 (0.113)	0.014 (0.110)	0.021 (0.109)	0.021 (0.110)	0.025 (0.106)	0.034 (0.109)	0.033 (0.110)	0.035 (0.107)
Demonstration	0.183 [†] (0.106)	0.187 [†] (0.105)	0.190 [†] (0.108)	0.102 (0.083)	0.104 (0.082)	0.114 (0.084)	0.102 (0.083)	0.105 (0.081)	0.116 (0.084)
Riot	-0.072 (0.079)	-0.070 (0.078)	-0.065 (0.080)	-0.044 (0.063)	-0.042 (0.063)	-0.033 (0.063)	-0.037 (0.063)	-0.037 (0.064)	-0.025 (0.064)
Militarized interstate dispute	0.037 (0.095)	0.056 (0.097)	0.044 (0.096)	-0.027 (0.086)	-0.017 (0.089)	-0.012 (0.088)	-0.031 (0.090)	-0.018 (0.092)	-0.013 (0.092)
Years since coup	-0.052 (0.055)	-0.062 (0.054)	-0.052 (0.054)	-0.081 (0.053)	-0.094 [†] (0.053)	-0.093 [†] (0.053)			
Coup history							0.020 (0.028)	0.016 (0.029)	0.022 (0.028)
Constant	-1.888** (0.599)	-2.183*** (0.598)	-1.982*** (0.575)	-1.348** (0.453)	-1.420** (0.448)	-1.210** (0.444)	-1.727*** (0.504)	-1.784*** (0.499)	-1.562** (0.491)
Country Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
AIC	517.41	513.33	518.12	439.41	436.32	432.00	441.99	440.67	435.91
Adjusted R ²	0.50	0.51	0.50	0.62	0.62	0.63	0.61	0.61	0.62
Observations	302	302	302	302	302	302	302	302	302

Note: Values are coefficients with robust standard errors in parentheses.

Reference category for regime types: Foreign-occupied and provisional regimes.

† p<0.1, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

Table SI.5.2. Student numbers and military involvement in politics (dynamic measure).

	Annual number	Three-year number	Cumulative number	Student share	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Counterinsurgency trained students	0.073* (0.035)	0.072** (0.026)	0.074** (0.027)	0.462* (0.234)	
Conventional warfare trained students	-0.069* (0.028)	-0.090** (0.034)	-0.090* (0.044)		-0.412 (0.256)
GDP growth	0.012 (0.008)	0.012 (0.008)	0.011 (0.008)	0.010 (0.009)	0.010 (0.009)
Military expenditure per soldier	0.307*** (0.066)	0.332*** (0.065)	0.326*** (0.064)	0.375*** (0.071)	0.376*** (0.071)
Guerrilla attack	-0.142 (0.092)	-0.147 (0.091)	-0.143 (0.091)	-0.009 (0.095)	-0.007 (0.095)
Strike	0.009 (0.113)	0.013 (0.113)	0.013 (0.110)	-0.017 (0.135)	-0.021 (0.134)
Demonstration	0.183† (0.106)	0.187† (0.105)	0.191† (0.108)	0.252* (0.112)	0.250* (0.113)
Riot	-0.072 (0.079)	-0.070 (0.078)	-0.066 (0.080)	-0.053 (0.085)	-0.052 (0.085)
Militarized interstate dispute	0.037 (0.095)	0.055 (0.097)	0.044 (0.096)	0.057 (0.109)	0.054 (0.111)
Years since coup	-0.043 (0.053)	-0.061 (0.053)	-0.051 (0.053)	-0.053 (0.063)	-0.043 (0.064)
Constant	-2.098*** (0.504)	-2.185*** (0.494)	-2.054*** (0.490)	-3.142*** (0.595)	-2.741*** (0.608)
Country Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
AIC	516.03	511.56	515.96	427.56	429.53
Adjusted R ²	0.50	0.51	0.50	0.54	0.54
Observations	302	302	302	253	253

Note: Values are coefficients with robust standard errors in parentheses.

† p<0.1, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

Table SI.5.3. Training content and military involvement in politics (Binary Svoldik measure).

	Annual sum	Three-year sum	Cumulative sum	Course share	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Counterinsurgency courses	0.051* (0.023)	0.045** (0.017)	0.042* (0.018)	0.358* (0.148)	
Conventional warfare courses	-0.050* (0.020)	-0.063** (0.024)	-0.055† (0.033)		-0.354* (0.144)
GDP growth	0.015* (0.006)	0.015* (0.006)	0.014* (0.006)	0.013† (0.007)	0.013† (0.007)
Military expenditure per soldier	0.213*** (0.048)	0.229*** (0.048)	0.223*** (0.047)	0.272*** (0.048)	0.272*** (0.048)
Guerrilla attack	-0.112 (0.069)	-0.111 (0.068)	-0.107 (0.069)	0.012 (0.069)	0.013 (0.069)
Strike	0.075 (0.078)	0.079 (0.077)	0.074 (0.076)	0.070 (0.087)	0.069 (0.087)
Demonstration	0.099 (0.070)	0.103 (0.069)	0.102 (0.071)	0.148* (0.073)	0.148* (0.073)
Riot	-0.023 (0.054)	-0.020 (0.053)	-0.017 (0.054)	-0.008 (0.054)	-0.007 (0.054)
Militarized interstate dispute	0.135† (0.076)	0.143† (0.076)	0.134† (0.076)	0.154† (0.085)	0.156† (0.085)
Years since coup	-0.001 (0.040)	-0.012 (0.040)	-0.004 (0.041)	-0.010 (0.047)	-0.009 (0.047)
Constant	-1.173** (0.357)	-1.226*** (0.351)	-1.139** (0.346)	-2.087*** (0.354)	-1.736*** (0.379)
Country Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
AIC	279.75	277.04	283.25	207.76	207.63
Adjusted R ²	0.38	0.38	0.37	0.44	0.44
Observations	284	284	284	236	236

Note: Values are coefficients with robust standard errors in parentheses.

† p<0.1, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

Table SI.5.4. Training content and military involvement in politics (Categorical Svoldik measure).

	Annual sum	Three-year sum	Cumulative sum	Course share	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Counterinsurgency courses	0.090* (0.040)	0.075* (0.030)	0.046 (0.030)	0.612* (0.265)	
Conventional warfare courses	-0.089* (0.035)	-0.074* (0.038)	-0.006 (0.045)		-0.607* (0.258)
GDP growth	0.021* (0.008)	0.020* (0.008)	0.020* (0.008)	0.018* (0.009)	0.018* (0.009)
Military expenditure per soldier	0.368*** (0.083)	0.394*** (0.082)	0.389*** (0.080)	0.478*** (0.082)	0.479*** (0.082)
Guerrilla attack	-0.195† (0.116)	-0.200† (0.115)	-0.205† (0.116)	-0.045 (0.117)	-0.044 (0.117)
Strike	0.076 (0.123)	0.078 (0.120)	0.077 (0.118)	0.046 (0.139)	0.045 (0.138)
Demonstration	0.129 (0.119)	0.129 (0.118)	0.119 (0.121)	0.194 (0.127)	0.195 (0.126)
Riot	-0.059 (0.093)	-0.054 (0.092)	-0.056 (0.094)	-0.050 (0.093)	-0.048 (0.093)
Militarized interstate dispute	0.133 (0.115)	0.134 (0.116)	0.108 (0.114)	0.160 (0.128)	0.164 (0.128)
Years since coup	0.021 (0.062)	0.002 (0.064)	0.009 (0.065)	0.031 (0.075)	0.033 (0.075)
Constant	-2.231*** (0.608)	-2.347*** (0.595)	-2.416*** (0.588)	-3.639*** (0.617)	-3.039*** (0.660)
Country Fixed Effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
AIC	567.13	568.58	573.53	464.90	464.70
Adjusted R ²	0.34	0.33	0.32	0.38	0.38
Observations	284	284	284	236	236

Note: Values are coefficients with robust standard errors in parentheses.

† p<0.1, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

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