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Does Soft Power Matter? A Comparative Analysis of Student Exchange Programs 1980–2006

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Democratic governance depends not only on the building of democratic institutions but also on citizens' knowledge about how these institutions should function in their everyday lives. I argue that US-hosted educational exchange programs are one mechanism whereby citizens of nondemocratic states might experience life firsthand in a democratic country. Their experiences may impact the political institutions and influence political behavior in their home countries. In order for this process to take place, I argue that at least three contextual conditions are important: (i) the depth and extent of social interactions that occur while abroad, (ii) the sharing of a sense of community or common identity between participants and their hosts, and (iii) the attainment of a politically influential position by the exchange participant when they return home. In this article, I test these hypotheses and find support for what advocates of soft power often contend: US-hosted exchange programs can play an important role in the diffusion of liberal values and practices across the borders of authoritarian states.

The current war in Iraq has illustrated the difficulties of imposing democratic institutions in states where democratic norms are underdeveloped and citizens have little previous experience of the everyday functioning of democratic practices. One consequence has been calls for the United States to engage in a ''war of ideas'' with nonliberal forces that have impeded the spread and development of democratic norms and practices. But how might the United States actually ''fight'' such a war? Soft power advocates, US policy makers, and scholars have frequently claimed that US-hosted educational exchange programs might provide one strategy for the United States to effectively engage its ideational adversaries (e.g., Nye and Owens 1996; Nye 2004; Williams 2004; Rice 2006; US White House 2006; Phillips and Brooks 2008). While such claims are made, there has been little attempt to systematically evaluate them. Exceptions are a few studies that have argued that attendance by foreign military officers at US military schools has had a positive impact on the development of democratic institutions (Cope 1995; Gibler and Ruby 2002; Atkinson 2006; Miller 2006). The research presented in this article complements and expands the scope of these studies by empirically evaluating the impact of both military and civilian exchanges.

When we think about what is meant by liberal practices, two observable phenomena come to mind: first, whether a state's institutions are democratic or authoritarian, and second, whether leaders respect the life and fundamental liberties of their citizens. Building the political institutions of democracy is certainly

important, yet institutions are only part of the process. Democratic governance also depends on citizens' knowledge about how these institutions should function. US-hosted educational exchange programs are one mechanism whereby citizens of nondemocratic states might experience life firsthand in a democratic country. Through the exchange experience, participants (who may have little exposure to democratic norms and ideas) observe how people behave within a democratic system, acquire knowledge about how democracy functions, and learn what to expect of their own leaders and institutions. These ideas travel across geographic borders when exchange participants return home. Once home, participants may hold their own government institutions accountable through overt actions such as protests. But more likely their influence is more subtle. Some participants may enter into government service and the ideas that had been learned abroad may be used to reform existing practices or political institutions. Others may already hold politically powerful positions in their governments and can directly alter policies. Others may simply share their experiences with friends and family. As Nye (2004:13) argues, these interactions are not trivial: ''The ideas and values that America exports in the minds of more than half a million foreign students who study every year in American universities and then return to their home countries (…) tend to reach elites with power. Most of China's leaders have a son or daughter educated in the States (…) when the United States was trying to persuade President Musharraf of Pakistan to change his policies and be more supportive of American measures in Afghanistan, it probably helped that he could hear from a son working in the Boston area.''

In this article, I first show how student exchanges in the past have affected their participants and influenced political behavior in their home countries. I then examine the conditions under which an exchange program is more likely to be an effective conveyor of norms and ideas across geographic and ideological borders. I argue that at least three contextual conditions make some exchanges more influential than others: (i) the depth and extent of social interactions that occur while abroad, (ii) the sharing of a sense of community or common identity between participants and their hosts, and (iii) the attainment of a politically influential position by the exchange participant after returning home. Finally, I test my hypotheses, present results, and discuss policy implications. The empirical evidence confirms what advocates of exchanges have often claimed: US-hosted student exchange programs can play an important role in the diffusion of liberal values and practices within authoritarian states.

Student Exchange Programs as Transnational Channels of Norms and Ideas

According to Joseph Nye (2004:5) soft power is the ability to obtain one's own goals because others admire your ideas and want to emulate your example: ''In international politics, the resources that produce soft power arise in large part from the values an organization or country expresses in its culture, in the examples it sets by its internal practices and policies, and in the way it handles relations with others'' (Nye 2004:8). To enhance one's soft power it is necessary to share experiences with those whom you wish to co-opt to your way of doing things. Nye argues that hosting educational exchanges is one way of socializing others to your own norms, ideas, and procedures; and in the process build soft power.

Historically, statesmen have advocated educational exchange programs as a way to gain influence and shape international political behavior. For example, both of the protagonists in the Cold War pursued political influence through student exchange programs. On the Soviet side, students who studied at the International Lenin School in Moscow were more likely to achieve prominent positions within the communist party in Great Britain during the 1920s through

1940s (Cohen 2005:229–230). On the US side, US-hosted exchanges exposed future political leaders within the Soviet Union to the freedoms and prosperity found under a democratic government and free-market system. Scholarly exchanges increased Western influence particularly within the Russian intelligentsia whose interactions in Western political, scientific, and academic circles helped foster gradual liberalization in the Soviet Union that contributed to the eventual collapse of the Soviet system (Richmond 2003; Nye 2004). Former KGB[1] General Oleg Kalugin, who spent a year as an exchange student at Columbia University in 1958–1959, noted the importance of such programs in undermining the ideational basis of the Soviet communist system: ''Exchanges were a Trojan Horse in the Soviet Union. They played a tremendous role in the erosion of the Soviet system. They opened up a closed society. They greatly influenced younger people who saw the world with more open eyes, and they kept infecting more and more people over the years'' (Oleg Kalugin as quoted in Richmond 2003:32).

Research has consistently shown that exchange students return home with a more positive view of the country in which they studied and the people with whom they interacted. Frequently after returning home, they try to use the knowledge gained during their time abroad to improve the situation in their home country (Wilson and Bonilla 1955; Watson and Lippitt 1958; Selltiz, Christ, Havel, and Cook 1963; Wang 1991; Richmond 2003; Miller 2006). Exchange students often describe their own impressions of how their experience abroad changed their personal views. One such student is Qian Ning, the son of former Chinese foreign minister Qian Qichen, who studied at the University of Michigan. In an interview for *Newsweek* he noted that for Chinese students: ''our experiences made us see that there are alternative ways for China to develop and for us to lead our personal lives. Being in the United States made us realize that things in China can be different'' (Qian 1997:38). In addition to university exchanges, research on US government-funded programs has found evidence that selected US training programs[2] aimed at mid-career professionals promote a more positive attitude toward the United States as well as enhancing ''international communication which may indirectly reinforce the democratic values and orientations of program participants'' (Miller 2006:26). Educators have echoed social scientists arguing, ''education, while inseparable from context, is fundamental to the support and growth of democracy. One of the most effective mechanisms for the dissemination of democratic ideals is international educational exchange'' (Williams 2004:36).

US policy makers have promoted educational exchanges as one way that US soft power (and security) might be enhanced through the democratic socialization of potential ruling elites of nonliberal states. Former Secretary of State Rice pointed specifically to this goal: ''every foreign student attending one of our universities represents an opportunity to enhance democracy in America and to strengthen the cause of freedom abroad'' (Rice 2006). Notably, the *National Security Strategy of the United States* recommends educational exchange programs as one strategy whereby the United States might promote democracy and effectively engage in the so-called ''battle of ideas'' with nonliberal forces. Military as well as civilian programs are believed to contribute to this long-term goal. The strategy calls for ''tailoring assistance and training of military forces to support civilian control of the military and military respect for human rights in a democratic society'' (US White House 2006:6). More generally, it recommends ''expanding

[1] KGB is the transliteration of the acronym for the Soviet Union's secret police that was tasked with maintaining internal security and enforcing loyalty to the Communist Party.

[2] International Military Education and Training, Community Connections Program, Community Partnership Program, and Global Training for Development; see Miller (2006) for details.

educational opportunities for Americans to learn about foreign languages and cultures and for foreign students and scholars to study in the United States'' (US White House 2006:45). Scholars at the Heritage Foundation, a conservative think tank, see exchanges as a way to liberalize Iran: ''Educational exchanges with Western students would help to bolster and open up communications with Iran's restive students, who historically have played a leading role in their country's reform movements'' (Phillips and Brooks 2008).

While educational exchange programs are claimed to promote liberalization in nondemocratic countries, to date there has been little systematic empirical examination of their long-term effects across the international system. Noted democratization scholar Adam Przeworski has pointed specifically to this deficiency:

> We can match on observables. But should we not worry about unobservables? Suppose that leaders of some countries go to study in Cambridge, where they absorb the ideals of democracy and learn how to promote growth. Leaders of other countries, however, go to the School for [sic] the Americas, where they learn how to repress and nothing about economics. Dictatorships will then generate lower growth because of the quality of the leadership (…) Since this is a variable we could not observe systematically, we cannot match on it. And it may matter. Conditional mean independence—the assumption that unobserved factors do not matter—is very strong, and likely to be often false in cross-national research. (Przeworski 2007:161)

Likewise, in their study of US Fulbright scholars, Sunal and Sunal (1991:98) noted that although a lot of information was available about US sponsored exchanges it ''did not provide much help, however, in generalizing about the possible effects of the overseas experience on the individuals involved or in determining relationships between important variables in the Fulbright experience.''

Military Officers in Educational Exchange Programs

When we think of US-hosted student exchange programs what most often comes to mind are the young students from a wide range of countries that come to study at US universities. However, not as visible, are the thousands of foreign military personnel who receive training and education within the United States. Although, the US Congress has continued to fund these programs on the assumption that they will have a positive influence on the development of democratic institutions and practices, systematic evidence of their impact is lacking.[3] Within academia, research has focused on the coercive use of military force rather than the normative influence of military organizations. The few existing studies are mostly anecdotal, or suffer from selection bias by focusing narrowly on one school or a small sample of cases. For example, scholars often point to the US Army's School of the Americas as a negative influence on states' human rights practices. However, in practice the US military has developed a wide array of programs, most notably by routinely incorporating large numbers of foreign officers from a vast variety of countries into its professional military schools.

Recent empirical work has started to show how attendance at these military schools influences liberal political socialization. Cope (1995) is the most comprehensive qualitative research to date. Investigators used extensive process tracing techniques to learn the extent to which military exchange students were influenced by their experience in the United States; both how their ideas about democracy were shaped and how this affected political transitions in their home

[3] A former staff member of the House International Relations Committee remarked to the author that the US government had sporadic record keeping, little evidence, and few mechanisms to evaluate whether the military exchanges had any impact.

countries. Another qualitative study, Miller (2006), used extensive interviews of participants in several US government-funded person-to-person contact programs in Georgia, Ukraine, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Kazakhstan. He found that while foreign aid funding does not promote democratic values and behaviors per se, one military educational exchange program, International Military Education and Training Program (IMET), produced significantly more pro-Western attitudes and increased transnational communication.

These qualitative results have been supported by recent large-*n* empirical research that found participation in military educational exchanges increased the chances that nondemocratic states would transition toward more liberal political institutions (Atkinson 2006). While these studies have contributed valuable insights, there has been no attempt to empirically evaluate whether the exchange programs influence human rights practices.

Conditions Affecting Socialization

While advocates promote the benefits of educational exchanges as a useful mechanism of liberal socialization, it is likely that not all exchanges are equal in their potential to influence participants. There are a number of contextual conditions under which educational exchanges might operate as more effective socialization environments. These conditions are (i) the depth and extent of social interactions between the exchange student and local populations, (ii) the extent to which the exchange student shares a sense of community or common identity with the local people with whom the social interactions occur, and (iii) whether the exchange student returns to the home country and attains a politically influential position.

Depth and Extent of Social Contacts

Research from a variety of disciplines that differ in methodology, scope, and timeframe, argue that type and extent of social interactions help define the quality of the exchange experience for students and influence the students' subsequent attitudes toward their host country (e.g., Selltiz et al. 1963; Sunal and Sunal 1991; Ye 2001; Miller 2006). Early work focusing on the patterns of social interaction and the attitudes of foreign students in the United States found that the closer the personal social interactions a student had with Americans the more favorable their attitude toward the United States, both toward American people and their lifestyle (Selltiz et al. 1963). The same impact was found for US students who studied abroad. US Fulbright participants who maintained continuing contacts with the professionals and students they had met while abroad were more likely to report that the exchange experience had had a significant impact in their professional lives (Sunal and Sunal 1991). For example, Fulbright scholars who went to African countries reported that the experience had a deep personal impact, generating ''a lasting interest in Africa, scholarly activity relating to African topics, and long-term professional contact with African academics'' (Sunal and Sunal 1991:118).

The US-hosted exchange programs that provide students with extensive interactions with US people are more likely to engender positive attitudes toward American people and life in the United States. The structured and integrated military exchange programs may be more effective than the less structured civilian exchanges because of the depth and extent of social interactions with local US communities.[4] For example, Qian (2002:138) observed that ''[Chinese]

[4] In interviews and informal discussions, foreign students at US universities frequently comment that they spend most of their time with students from the same country or same language group.

students often confined their lives to a small circle of friends and activities. [While] studying abroad could provide an opportunity for radically broadening a person's perspective on life. In fact, most [Chinese] students lived very confined lives.''

In the military exchanges, many participants live in local US communities and bring their families with them. Children of the officers attend local US schools and the families often participate in community activities. In classrooms and official activities foreign military officers are integrated with their US counterparts. While the military programs contain formal instruction dealing with democratic governance and human rights; most importantly, they also provide the opportunity for officers from authoritarian states to ''live democracy,'' that is to say, they expose participants to the everyday experience of being a military officer in a democratic state. Deeply embedded within the US military culture, the exchange officers experience firsthand how military personnel behave in a democracy, as well as how military personnel interact on a daily basis within their local communities. The US military community serves as a ''socialization channel'' through which formal programs and informal interactions reinforce ideas on civil–military relations in a democratic state. In contrast to Qian's observation on the isolation of Chinese students, foreign military officers often cite their personal vacations traveling across America and their participation in community activities with their children and spouses as highlights of their year abroad.[5]

Common Identity as Facilitator

While the extent of person-to-person interactions is an important factor, it also matters with whom the social interactions occur. Nye (2004:16) emphasizes the relevance of community on socialization processes: ''All power depends on context—who relates to whom under what circumstances—but soft power depends more than hard power upon the existence of willing interpreters and receivers.'' Spanning time and different cultures, scholars have noted the importance of belonging to a community or sharing a common identity with those in the host country as an important factor affecting foreign students' attitudes (Selltiz et al. 1963; Ye 2001). Akerlof and Kranton (2005) have shown how common identity can be a powerful motivating force often employed where material incentives are difficult to institute or costly to maintain. They argued that military organizations purposefully inculcate a common identity within their members. The common identity as military professionals serves as an effective motivator and builds a strong sense of community. One need only encounter the culture of the US Marine Corps exemplified by its motto of *Semper Fidelis*[6] to have an idea of the strength of military socialization and the very powerful sense of community and common identity among its members. This is important when we differentiate between civilian and military programs. Participants in educational exchanges hosted by the US military all share a deeply imbedded common identity as military professionals.

Influence After Returning Home

The extent to which exchange participants might exert influence in their own home countries varies greatly. Researchers have noted that for students who have studied abroad, political conditions in the home country as well as age and experience determine the extent to which returnees are influential (Wilson and Bonilla 1955; Sunal and Sunal 1991; Ye 2001). Military officers are mid-career

[5] Author survey of foreign military officers studying in the United States.

[6] The motto is Latin for ''always faithful.''

professionals and are, by definition, members of their country's political structure. As such, they have greater potential for access to the ruling elite particularly in the shorter term. While their political influence may be observable such as participating in open dissent, it is much more likely to be unobservable such as in training of subordinates, deciding to do nothing to help a dictator, or deciding to not become politically involved in times of internal conflict.

To have influence within the political structure of the home country, it is necessary that participants do, in fact, return home. While military exchange students must return to their home countries, the same is not true for foreign students who study at US universities. For example, although Chinese students form the largest cohort in US universities, many do not return to China and those that do return are often excluded from the political arena (Wang 1991; Ye 2001). Wang (1991:300–301) noted that these numbers are substantial, particularly since the mid-1980s: ''Of about 80,000 students and scholars who came to the United States between 1979 and 1989, only 26,000 have returned, most of them before 1986.'' It is also important to consider who among the civilian students is most likely to return home. Typically those who choose to remain in the United States are the students who most like the United States (for a variety of reasons). If those who least like the United States return home, it would not be surprising to find that participation in the civilian exchange programs would have less impact because those who return to their home countries would be less inclined to promulgate US values or ideas in a positive manner. This difference allows us to examine one selection effect: we would expect to find less effect for civilian exchanges than for the military exchanges. The importance of repatriation is supported by the experience of Soviet educational exchange participants who invariably returned to the USSR. Their inability to remain in the United States resulted in the introduction of outside views and ideas into the very closed Soviet system. Richmond (2003) argued that these exchange participants went back to the Soviet Union and diffused new ideas that were later instrumental in supporting liberalization. Many became advocates for improved human rights as well as the liberalization of state institutions (Nye 2004:45). The Soviet case is interesting because we would assume that the Soviet leadership chose exchange participants who were bright and who were thought to be impervious to capitalist–imperialist propaganda. The Soviet case, then, provides an excellent example of the conditions under which liberal ideas learned during US-hosted educational exchange programs influenced authoritarian political ideas and institutions.

Testable Research Propositions

As we have seen above, evidence from a variety of academic as well as popular sources, from different countries and geographic regions, and across time, indicates that educational exchanges socialize participants to new ways of viewing their host country as well as their home country. Two basic hypotheses result.

Hypothesis 1: *States that send their military officers to study at military institutes in the United States are more likely to be associated with an improved human rights record compared to states that do not send their military officers.*

Hypothesis 2: *The higher the level of participation in US university studies by foreign students the better the human rights records in the home states of the students.*

We have also seen that socialization across states' boundaries is likely to be facilitated when contacts are between members of a larger community, that is to say when there are ties or common identities that cut across the boundaries of

states. And, to have a significant effect on state behavior, those who wish to induce change must also occupy positions likely to influence elite political behavior when they return to their home country. These previous research findings come together in the third hypothesis.

Hypothesis 3: *Military educational exchange programs are more likely to affect human rights practices in participating states than civilian educational exchanges.*

Finally, improved human rights practices are a key outcome of the liberalization of political institutions. Educational exchanges might also promote the transition to more liberal political institutions. If this is the case, then the level of development of democratic political institutions might serve as an intervening factor whereby the effects of the educational exchange programs are on the development of democratic political institutions and these political institutions then influence the human rights practices of the government. In all of the analyses, I also evaluated the extent to which both military and civilian exchange programs influence ideas and policies on human rights practices apart from their influence on a state's political institutions. The goal was to determine the extent to which the effect of educational exchange programs on human rights practices is direct rather than indirect through the development of democratic political institutions.

Methodological Approach

To test these hypotheses I collected data that spanned the years 1980–2006. The data set consisted of annual observations for each year for countries with a population of at least 500,000. Regime type was fairly evenly spread with 28% of the countries being highly authoritarian, 39% democratic, and 33% mixed.[7] To analyze this data I used a new modeling approach: generalized multilevel longitudinal models.

Traditionally within the human rights literature scholars have used regression models with lagged dependent variables (e.g., Poe and Tate 1994; Poe, Tate, and Keith 1999). One fundamental assumption of these types of models is that observations are statistically independent. However in longitudinal studies where observations are made of the same unit over time this assumption is problematic. Observations taken within any one country over time are likely to be dependent on observed and unobserved factors specific to the country.[8] If observations are not independent, then using standard regression techniques is problematic because the violation of the assumption of statistical independence may result in spurious ''significant'' results and loss of efficiency (Hox 2002; Luke 2004). The problem of how to deal with temporally correlated data has been addressed by a number of researchers. One method that has been used in human rights literature has been to include a lagged dependent variable as an explanatory variable while disregarding the clustered structure in the data. However, such a technique has been shown to make matters worse, particularly when data are heavily trended (Achen 2000).

[7] Categorization followed stand practice using the Polity IV 21 point scale where 0 is most authoritarian. Highly authoritarian countries were those with a polity rating of 0–3; democratic countries were those with a polity rating of 17–20 and mixed regimes were those in between.

[8] As an example, Liang and Zeger (1993) noted that in a study of the development of low birth weight children, weight measurements of any one individual are dependent on the previous weight measurement. Additionally, because the children live in the same home environment and share similar genetic material, children within the same family are more likely to be similar to each other than to other children not in their family. This example of clustered data and longitudinal dependence is similar to the structure of the data in this study in which time series data are clustered by country, and current values are likely to be correlated with past values.

The generalized multilevel longitudinal models that I used are class of models that were specifically formulated to analyze longitudinal clustered data such as this. Multilevel modeling relaxes the regression assumption that observations are independent. As such, the multilevel models will estimate appropriate, unbiased errors for the clustered data (Luke 2004:21–22).[9]

For the analyzes, I used one form of multilevel models: an ordered logit model with random intercepts. The random intercept represents the combined effect of unobserved contextual factors that lead some countries to be more prone to improve their human rights performance than others (Rabe-Hesketh and Skrondal 2008:247). This modeling technique takes into account the natural heterogeneity between countries and models country-specific probabilities as well as the overall mean response. The models were estimated using adaptive quadrature algorithms to generate the maximum likelihood estimates of the model parameters.[10] Level-1 units were observations for each year for each country (country-years); they were clustered within level-2 units, countries.

The Dependent Variable: Level of Human Rights Abuse

The dependent variable was operationalized using Cingranelli–Richards (CIRI) human rights data (Cingranelli and Richards 2008a).[11] The CIRI data set has the advantage of specifically coding government actions and disaggregating various types of human rights practices.[12] The CIRI data include two alternative measures of government respect for human rights. The Physical Integrity Rights Index measures government respect for the right against torture, extrajudicial killing, political imprisonment, and disappearance. In the original CIRI data, the index ranges from 0 (no respect) to 8 (full respect). The Empowerment Rights Index measures government respect for freedom of movement, speech, religion, political participation, and workers' rights. It ranges from 0 (no respect) to 10 (full respect). For easier interpretation, I reversed both indices so that 0 denoted full respect for rights with increasing values indicating greater abuse of rights.

Key Explanatory Variables

This study focused on two explanatory factors: participation by a state's military in US-hosted military educational exchanges and the number of university students from a particular state studying in the United States. *Military exchange,* the measure of participation by foreign military officers in US military education and training programs in the United States, is a dichotomous variable.[13] Selection bias may be a concern if democratic states are disproportionately represented. However, an examination of the data showed that the stereotype that such programs primarily host officers from democratic countries or host officers from

[9] For further discussion on multilevel models, see Liang and Zeger (1993), Hox (2002), Luke (2004), and Rabe-Hesketh and Skrondal (2008).

[10] The models were estimated using Generalized Linear Latent and Mixed Model (gllamm) estimation commands in Stata 9.2; Rabe-Hesketh and Skrondal (2008) provides a detailed discussion. I thank Giacomo Chiozza for his advice and assistance on modeling issues.

[11] The CIRI indices were chosen as the best available measure, with less bias than the Political Terror Scale. I thank the late Steven Poe for his comments on this issue.

[12] For coding details, see Cingranelli and Richards (2008b).

[13] Data limitations forced the use of a dichotomous measure. The US government has not historically collected this data, and the military schools have not kept complete records. Although the final variable was dichotomous, it was constructed from two other measures to provide the best indicator of which countries participated in military exchanges: US government annual grant funding for IMET programs and professional military education attendance data.

countries that are in the process of democratizing is false.[14] Many consolidated authoritarian countries routinely participated in the military programs; these participants included Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, Oman, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Indonesia, Morocco, Swaziland, Lesotho, Malawi, Djibouti, Uganda, Zaire, Côte d'Ivoire, Niger, Mali, Haiti, Guyana, and Paraguay.[15] Much like the Soviet case discussed earlier, these countries sent their military personnel to US programs for a variety of reasons, such as gaining knowledge to improve their military's effectiveness, making useful contacts with military personnel from other countries, or simply the prestige of participating, and discounted the potential socialization impact.

The second key explanatory variable is the level of participation of foreign students in university-level studies in the United States, *Civilian exchange*. It is a measure of the number of foreign exchange students studying in US universities normalized by the total population of the home country for each country-year.[16] Data for students were compiled using the Institute of International Education's *Open Doors Report on International Educational Exchange* (Institute of International Education 2000) and the subsequent annual reports (Institute of International Education 2001–2008).

Independent Variables

Understanding the link between a government's propensity to use repression and the probability of developing democratic political institutions has been an important and prominent research agenda in the last several decades. In perhaps the best summary of the statistical research to date, Poe et al. (1999:309) concluded: ''the picture that emerges indicates that civil war, democracy, population size, international war, and economic standing are among the strongest determinants of repression.'' In study after study researchers have found that as political institutions become more democratic, governments are more likely to respect the rights of their citizens (Henderson 1991; Poe and Tate 1994; Poe et al. 1999; Davenport and Armstrong 2004; Bueno De Mesquita, Downs, Smith, and Cherif 2005; Hafner-Burton 2005). Consistent with past studies, the measure *Level of democracy* was based on the Polity IV annual polity rating (Marshall, Jaggers, and Gurr 2008; Marshall and Jaggers 2009). It was coded as a 21-point scale varying from highly authoritarian at a score of 0 to very democratic at score of 20. Level of economic development was another key factor affecting the development of democratic institutions (Przeworski, Alvarez, Cheibub, and Limongi 2000) and the propensity of governments to use repressive strategies. *Level of economic development* was measured as gross domestic product (GDP) per capita in purchasing power parity.[17]

In addition to political institutions and economic development, it has been argued that war increases the propensity of governments to use repression and abuse human rights. States that are in armed conflict with either another state or their own internal groups may use repressive measures that violate citizens'

[14] The correlations between *Military exchange* and *Level of democracy* and *Civilian exchange* and *Level of democracy* were 0.31 and 0.16, respectively. These low correlation values indicate that students come from a wide range of countries, not solely, or even primarily, from democracies.

[15] The complete list consists of 57 highly authoritarian countries that either regularly or intermittently participated in military educational exchanges during the years in which they were also identified by Polity IV as highly authoritarian, that is to say having a polity rating of 0–3 on a 21 point scale where 0 is most authoritarian.

[16] Sources for population data used to normalize were Atkinson (2006), the United Nations (2007) *Common Statistical Database*, United Nations (2000) *Demographic Yearbook CD-ROM, Historical Supplement 1948–1997*, and US Bureau of the Census (2008) *International Data Base*.

[17] Primary data source was the US Department of Agriculture (2009) supplemented with data from version 5.0 of Gleditsch (2002) available at: privatehttp://www.essex.ac.uk/~ksg/exptradegdp.html.

rights to deal more effectively with their opponents. Poe et al. (1999) found that both interstate and civil war were associated with increased repression. While the civil war hypothesis has received strong support in research; the results for the interstate war hypothesis have not been as consistent. Davenport and Armstrong (2004) found a strong effect for civil war and a weaker, but still significant effect for interstate war. The existence and intensity of civil wars and interstate wars are important factors and were measured using war occurrence data from the Centre for the Study of Civil War. *Interstate war* is an indicator of war between states resulting in over 1,000 battle deaths per year. *Interstate conflict, low level* is an indicator of conflict between states resulting in 25–999 battle deaths per year. *Internal war* is an indicator of war between a state's government and internal groups resulting in over 1,000 battle deaths per year. *Internal conflict, low level* is an indicator of conflict between a state's government and internal groups resulting in 25–999 battle deaths per year (Gleditsch, Wallensteen, Eriksson, Sollenberg, and Strand 2002; UCDP/PRIO 2008, 2009).

Scholars have also studied the effects of population pressures on scarce resources as a factor affecting a state's propensity to use repression (Poe and Tate 1994; Poe et al. 1999; Davenport and Armstrong 2004; Bueno De Mesquita et al. 2005; Hafner-Burton 2005). Hafner-Burton (2005:617) argued that ''population pressure can exacerbate resource scarcity and increase the likelihood that a government will use repression to control civil violence.'' In their study of civil war, Collier and Hoeffler (2004:588) concluded, ''the risk of conflict is proportional to a country's population.'' As in these studies, population pressure was included and measured as *Population density*.[18] Researchers have also argued that governments ruled by a military leader have a greater propensity to use repression and more direct control of the means than other types of government (Poe and Tate 1994; Poe et al. 1999). *Military dictatorship* is an indicator variable coded 1 during any year in which the state was a military dictatorship; coded 0 otherwise. Additionally, consolidated democracies are less likely to abuse human rights. If a country was identified as a democracy, the *Age of democracy* measure is a year count of how long the country has been democratic. If the country was not identified as democratic, the measure was coded 0.[19] Status as a former British colony has been shown in several studies to be positively associated with the ability to sustain democratic forms of government. *Former British colony* is an indicator variable coded 1 for every year if the country was a British colony at any time after 1918, and coded 0 otherwise. In addition to wealth, it is generally believed that trade relations promote liberalization (Hafner-Burton 2005). To account for the economic influence of the United States, *Trade openness* was included and measured as: (exports to US + imports from US)/country's current GDP.[20] Finally, *Time* is a count variable with the first data year coded 0; the second year coded 1; and so forth.

Results

Six sets of eight models were estimated to test the three hypotheses as well as the intervening role that might be played by democratic institutions. Models were calculated using a time lag of 1 through 6 years for the key explanatory

[18] Population data were from the US Bureau of the Census (2008) *International Data Base*, supplemented by United Nations (2000) *Demographic Yearbook CD-ROM, Historical Supplement 1948–1997*, and Atkinson (2006). Land area was from US Bureau of the Census (2008) *International Data Base*, supplemented by US Central Intelligence Agency (1989) *CIA Factbook*, and Atkinson (2006).

[19] Data used to identify a state as a military dictatorship or democracy and for determining the longevity of democracy was based on Cheibub and Gandhi (2004) data that I updated.

[20] Trade data were from Barbieri, Keshk, and Pollins (2008). GDP data were from US Department of Agriculture (2009) supplemented with data from version 5.0 of Gleditsch (2002).

variables (*Civilian exchange* and *Military exchange*) to try to capture short-term as well as longer-term impacts of the educational exchanges.[21] Within each set, the two educational exchange variables were also operationalized alternatively with the CIRI Physical Integrity Index and then the CIRI Empowerment Rights Index as the dependent variable. To test the extent to which educational exchanges have an independent and direct effect on human rights practices apart from political institutions each of the models was also run excluding the measure *Level of democracy* that was hypothesized to play an intervening role.[22] Results for all 48 models are summarized below. Following the summary, I discuss the eight models using the 3-year lag of the key explanatory variables.[23]

A summary of results is shown below in Table 1 for the *Empowerment Rights* dependent variable and in Table 2 for the *Physical Integrity* dependent variable. The tables report the coefficients for *Military exchange* and *Civilian exchange* for all model variants. Columns 1 and 3 show results for models that included *Level of democracy*; columns 2 and 4 show results for models that excluded *Level of democracy*.

A quick glance shows that the results are robust and stable across the different time lags. Negative coefficients indicate that exchanges were associated with improving respect for rights. In Table 1, we can see that both types of

Table 1. Educational Exchange Coefficients in Empowerment Rights Models

Lag in years	*Military exchange includes Level of democracy*	*Military exchange*	*Civilian exchange includes Level of democracy*	*Civilian exchange*
1	−0.733***	−1.088***	–	−1.062***
2	−0.563***	−0.863***	−0.982**	−1.068***
3	−0.443***	−0.692***	−0.860*	−0.886**
4	−0.414***	−0.653***	−0.858**	−0.845**
5	−0.313**	−0.499***	−0.717**	−0.654**
6	−0.243*	−0.434***	−0.460*	–

(*Notes.* All 24 models were estimated including the 12 control variables as discussed in the main text. Entries are ordered logit coefficients of the military exchange and civilian exchange variables in cases where they achieved significance; ***$p < 0.01$, **$p < 0.05$, and *$p < 0.1$; a dash (–) indicates the coefficient was not significant).

Table 2. Educational Exchange Coefficients in Physical Integrity Models

Lag in years	*Military exchange includes Level of democracy*	*Military exchange*	*Civilian exchange includes Level of democracy*	*Civilian exchange*
1	–	−0.412***	–	–
2	–	−0.312**	–	–
3	–	–	–	–
4	–	–	–	+0.431*
5	–	–	–	–
6	–	–	–	–

(*Notes.* All 24 models were estimated including the 12 control variables as discussed in the main text. Entries are ordered logit coefficients of the military exchange and civilian exchange variables in cases where they achieved significance; ***$p < 0.01$, **$p < 0.05$, and *$p < 0.1$; a dash (–) indicates the coefficient was not significant).

[21] All other independent variables were lagged 1 year. The purpose was to reduce the risk of reverse causation. There was no theoretical reason to extend the multiyear lags to the other independent variables.

[22] Blalock (1979:468–477) and Ray (2005) discuss the modeling of intervening variables.

[23] The 3-year lagged variants were chosen as representative. Results were consistent across the other lagged variants.

educational exchanges were associated with increased government respect for basic rights of freedom of movement, speech, religion, political participation, and workers' rights. The finding is somewhat stronger for the military exchanges which consistently achieved high levels of significance.

Turning to Table 2 we can see quite different results when human rights practices were measured in terms of the right not to be tortured, killed, disappeared, or imprisoned. In two of the models military exchanges were significant and associated with improved respect for physical integrity rights; however, in one model civilian exchanges were associated with decreased respect for people's physical security. The results in Tables 1 and 2 show that exchanges have had a positive impact on government respect for basic rights, but less impact on government respect for the physical integrity rights of its citizens.

The analyses also assessed the extent to which the development of democratic institutions was an intervening factor between educational exchanges and human rights practices. To assess this relationship, we can compare the models that included *Level of democracy* to those that excluded it. In Table 1, *Military exchange* was significant in all of the models. These results indicate that military exchanges have a direct impact on respect for human rights. Nevertheless, there is some indication that the development of democratic political institutions served as a weak intervening factor. If we compare columns 1 and 2 (Table 1), we can see that the coefficient for *Military exchange* consistently became smaller (in absolute terms) when *Level of democracy* was included. In Table 2 (columns 1 and 2), we can also see that in two cases, *Military exchange* lost significance when *Level of democracy* was included.

For civilian exchanges, the intervening role played by the development of democratic institutions is ambiguous. In Table 1 (columns 3 and 4), we can see that *Civilian exchange* lost significance in the 1 year lagged model, but gained significance in the 6 years lagged model when *Level of democracy* was included. Coefficients did not consistently become smaller (in absolute terms) when *Level of democracy* was included. In Table 2 (columns 3 and 4) *Civilian exchange* lost significance in one case when *Level of democracy* was included. In this one case civilian exchanges were associated with decreased respect for rights.

The full models for the 3-year lagged variants are presented in Tables 3 and 4. Table 3 shows models using the *Empowerment rights* measure; Table 4 shows those using the *Physical integrity* measure. The tables report estimated coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.[24] All estimations report robust standard errors. All models had an estimated intra-class correlation of nearly 0.5 or greater confirming that multilevel models were indeed a good choice for analysis of the data.[25]

Turning first to Table 3, we can see that both types of educational exchanges were associated with increased propensity to respect human rights conceived of as basic rights to freedom of movement, speech, religion, political participation, and workers' rights. States that sent their military officers to study at military institutes in the United States were more likely to be associated with an improving human rights record than states that did not send their military officers. Also, those countries that sent a greater proportion of their citizens to study at US universities were more likely to have an improving human rights record than countries that sent fewer students. Predicted probabilities generated for an

[24] Tests show that multi-collinearity was not a major problem in this data: Variance Inflation Factors for the independent variables were smaller than the conventional threshold of 5 (the largest was 3.62 for the *Age of democracy* variable).

[25] This means that the expected correlation for any two randomly chosen measurements for any single country is at least 0.5. The estimated intra-class correlation measure ρ indicates the proportion of variance explained by the clustering of units by country. See Rabe-Hesketh and Skrondal (2008:59) and Hox (2002:14–15) for a description of the intraclass correlation measure ρ.

TABLE 3. Empowerment Rights Models Using 3-Year Lag

	Military + Democracy		*Civilian + Democracy*		*Military − Democracy*		*Civilian − Democracy*	
	Coefficient	*SE*	*Coefficient*	*SE*	*Coefficient*	*SE*	*Coefficient*	*SE*
Military exchange	−0.443***	0.137			−0.692***	0.155		
Civilian exchange			−0.860*	0.451			−0.886**	0.362
Level of democracy	−0.268***	0.024	−0.275***	0.024				
Level of economic development	−0.051**	0.022	−0.041*	0.021	−0.021	0.025	−0.005	0.025
Trade openness	−0.027	0.056	−0.011	0.055	−0.027	0.058	−0.008	0.056
Internal war	0.479	0.300	0.472	0.305	0.444	0.304	0.438	0.309
Internal conflict, low level	0.346	0.281	0.284	0.284	0.150	0.253	0.061	0.255
Interstate war	−0.395	0.371	−0.404	0.362	−0.331	0.353	−0.347	0.352
Interstate conflict, low level	0.185	0.580	0.178	0.595	0.404	0.408	0.396	0.423
Military dictator	−0.237	0.299	−0.305	0.310	1.512***	0.222	1.481***	0.246
Former British colony	0.057	0.354	0.239	0.391	0.290	0.453	0.481	0.479
Population density	−0.164	0.156	−0.108	0.164	−0.091	0.189	−0.045	0.188
Age of democracy	−0.023**	0.011	−0.024**	0.011	−0.041***	0.013	−0.045***	0.013
Time	0.082***	0.012	0.080***	0.011	0.031**	0.013	0.027**	0.013
τ_1	−7.466***	0.386	−7.344***	0.385	−4.604***	0.363	−4.251***	0.372
τ_2	−5.643***	0.378	−5.516***	0.378	−2.852***	0.342	−2.498***	0.345
τ_3	−4.258***	0.370	−4.134***	0.371	−1.595***	0.337	−1.252***	0.337
τ_4	−3.149***	0.383	−3.024***	0.383	−0.626*	0.341	−0.288	0.337
τ_5	−2.319***	0.379	−2.192***	0.378	0.110	0.343	0.447	0.338
τ_6	−1.360***	0.385	−1.229***	0.384	0.977***	0.351	1.313***	0.345
τ_7	−0.450	0.384	−0.315	0.383	1.842***	0.360	2.178***	0.352
τ_8	0.444	0.393	0.582	0.391	2.686***	0.373	3.020***	0.363
τ_9	1.493***	0.420	1.632***	0.418	3.676***	0.402	4.004***	0.390
τ_{10}	2.533***	0.441	2.672***	0.441	4.678***	0.428	5.000***	0.418
Log likelihood	−5,806.88		−5,805.34		−6,110.38		−6,126.01	
Random intercept variance (*SE*)	3.377 (0.605)		3.594 (0.654)		6.377 (1.043)		6.772 (1.146)	
Estimated intraclass correlation	0.507		0.522		0.660		0.673	
Number of observations	3,545		3,542		3,559		3,556	
Number of clusters (countries)[a]	157		157		158		158	

(*Notes*. Entries represent ordered logit coefficients with robust standard errors. τ is the threshold parameter or cut point for the latent variable calculation; ***$p < 0.01$, **$p < 0.05$, *$p < 0.1$. [a]The country lacking a polity rating is Bosnia-Herzegovina).

Table 4. Physical Integrity Models Using 3-Year Lag

	Military + Democracy		*Civilian + Democracy*		*Military − Democracy*		*Civilian − Democracy*	
	Coefficient	*SE*	*Coefficient*	*SE*	*Coefficient*	*SE*	*Coefficient*	*SE*
Military exchange	−0.067	0.147			−0.234	0.153		
Civilian exchange			0.307	0.277			0.357	0.283
Level of democracy	−0.129***	0.020	−0.130***	0.019				
Level of economic development	−0.080***	0.025	−0.083***	0.025	−0.054**	0.026	−0.053**	0.027
Trade openness	−0.031	0.064	−0.030	0.062	−0.034	0.062	−0.029	0.058
Internal war	2.293***	0.341	2.289***	0.339	2.271***	0.349	2.268***	0.349
Internal conflict, low level	1.533***	0.404	1.531***	0.405	1.403***	0.382	1.391***	0.382
Interstate war	0.512	0.381	0.486	0.386	0.572	0.357	0.532	0.362
Interstate conflict, low level	0.302	0.459	0.303	0.458	0.484	0.514	0.496	0.510
Military dictator	0.349	0.284	0.345	0.281	1.216***	0.270	1.216***	0.274
Former British colony	0.205	0.354	0.114	0.375	0.382	0.385	0.269	0.408
Population density	−0.066	0.260	−0.101	0.263	−0.051	0.259	−0.108	0.264
Age of democracy	−0.001	0.011	−0.002	0.011	−0.015	0.011	−0.018	0.011
Time	0.079***	0.011	0.079***	0.011	0.055***	0.010	0.055***	0.011
τ_1	−4.723***	0.350	−4.689***	0.340	−3.408***	0.319	−3.264***	0.292
τ_2	−2.593***	0.333	−2.555***	0.324	−1.343***	0.326	−1.197***	0.302
τ_3	−1.123***	0.322	−1.087***	0.313	0.098	0.324	0.243	0.302
τ_4	0.225	0.312	0.261	0.302	1.420***	0.321	1.566***	0.298
τ_5	1.487***	0.313	1.522***	0.303	2.666***	0.328	2.810***	0.307
τ_6	2.498***	0.315	2.532***	0.306	3.665***	0.331	3.804***	0.312
τ_7	3.597***	0.333	3.630***	0.325	4.737***	0.351	4.873***	0.335
τ_8	4.879***	0.337	4.911***	0.331	5.994***	0.362	6.127***	0.349
Log likelihood	−5,544.53		−5,540.20		−5,642.08		−5,640.34	
Random intercept variance (*SE*)	3.205 (0.538)		3.223 (0.535)		3.727 (0.642)		3.772 (0.643)	
Estimated intraclass correlation	0.493		0.495		0.531		0.534	
Number of observations	3,525		3,522		3,537		3,534	
Number of clusters (countries)[a]	157		157		158		158	

(*Notes.* Entries represent ordered logit coefficients with robust standard errors; τ is the threshold parameter or cut point for the latent variable calculation; ***$p < 0.01$, **$p < 0.05$, and *$p < 0.1$; [a]The country lacking a polity rating is Bosnia-Herzegovina).

average hypothetical country showed that participation in military exchanges increased the likelihood of *better* empowerment rights practices by 7.81% in comparison to a country that did not participate and decreased the likelihood of *worse* empowerment rights practices by 6.69%. For the same hypothetical average country, a high level of participation in civilian exchanges increased the likelihood of better empowerment rights practices by 2% in comparison to a low level of participation and decreased the likelihood of worse empowerment rights practices by 1.69%.[26] Military exchanges did have a greater impact than their civilian counterparts.

Turning to the other independent variables, *Level of democracy* was the single best predictor of whether citizens were able to exercise basic freedoms and rights. These results confirmed previous research that found that as democratic institutions flourished, the government was more likely to respect human rights. The significance of *Military dictatorship* when *Level of democracy* was removed from the models (columns 3 and 4) indicated that military dictatorships were no worse than civilian dictatorships when it came to their propensity to abuse and repress their citizens.

Turning to Table 4, we can see that both types of educational exchanges had no discernible effect on the propensity of a government to physically abuse its citizens. For the other independent variables, the results confirmed findings from previous studies. Government respect for human rights increased as political institutions became more democratic, as the level of economic development rose, and when internal conflicts were less intense. Once again we can see that military dictatorships were no worse than civilian dictatorships when it came to their propensity to abuse and repress their citizens.

Summary and Discussion

To summarize, there is evidence to support the first hypothesis: states that sent their military officers to study at military institutes in the United States were more likely to be associated with improved human rights than those states that did not send their military officers. There is also evidence supporting the second hypothesis: greater participation in US university studies by foreign students was associated with improving human rights records in the home states of the students. For both the military exchanges as well as the civilian exchanges, the impact is on human rights conceived of as government respect for basic freedoms and liberties rather than protection from physical abuses such as torture, assassination, and imprisonment. There was an indication that military exchanges increased government respect for physical integrity rights of its citizens, but only as a function of their positive impact on the development of democratic political institutions, that were then responsible for decreasing abuses.

The empirical evidence also supported the contention that military exchanges were more effective than their civilian counterparts. *Military exchange* consistently achieved high levels of significance throughout all years, and coefficients were consistently negative indicating increased respect for rights. The same cannot be said of *Civilian exchange*. Predicted probabilities showed that participation in military exchanges increased the likelihood of *better* empowerment rights practices by nearly 8% and decreased the likelihood of *worse* empowerment rights practices by about 6.7%. Comparable figures for civilian exchanges were 2% and about

[26] Predicted probabilities were computed by (1) setting the value of the explanatory variables to their median value and (2) setting the value of the random effects to zero; then (3a) switching the dichotomous indicator *Military exchange* from 0 to 1; or, alternatively (3b) switching the value of *Civilian exchange* from the 25th percentile to the 75th percentile. *Better* empowerment rights practices are defined as a value of 3 or lower; *Worse* empowerment rights practices are defined as a value of 7 or higher on the 11-point dependent variable.

1.7%. The relative effectiveness of the military exchanges point to the three socialization micro-mechanisms (depth and extent of contacts, common identity, and influence after returning home) at work.[27]

It is worth emphasizing that all of the results were obtained while controlling for preconditions that are known to be associated with human rights practices. Additionally, the results were consistent across multiple time lags. While it is always possible to invoke the presence of unobservable factors, the controls in the models represent our best knowledge of the factors affecting human rights practices. The theory and analyses in this article are a first empirical stab at accounting for previously unobserved factors.[28] It is hoped that these results might serve as encouragement for other positivist-minded scholars to identify unobservable factors thought to influence political behavior beyond those presented here. It is also important to recognize that the models do show differential effects: exchanges clearly support the development of respect for basic freedoms and liberties but not respect for physical integrity. This is important methodologically because it demonstrates that the models do capture disconfirming effects as well as those that support my hypotheses.

The question of why certain types of rights are influenced and others are not, is an interesting question that arises from the analyses. One might hypothesize that US-hosted educational exchanges have a greater effect on empowerment rights because US citizens are generally safe from physical abuse by their government whereas the discussion of intellectual freedoms is one foundation upon which US universities thrive. Thus, exchange participants encounter much more discussion of intellectual freedoms and empowerment rights. One might also hypothesize that when exchange participants return home, they find that efforts to improve empowerment rights is less threatening to elites in power. It is one thing accuse a political leader of denying people the right to participate in elections; it is another thing to accuse him of torture and extra-judicial killing. Thus, those who wish to improve human rights practices in their home countries may more frequently choose to work to improve basic rights and freedoms as a first step in a process of gradual liberalization toward full democracy, rather than fight against physical abuse, torture, and killing.

In summary, the results show that student exchanges do have a positive impact on governments' propensity to respect citizens' rights of movement, speech, religion, political participation, and workers' rights. The results are less promising for the right not to be physically abused. At worst, educational exchanges have no impact on a government's propensity to torture, engage in extrajudicial killing, political imprisonment, and disappearance; at best, military exchanges may have a beneficial effect, because countries that participate in the military exchanges are more likely to develop democratic political institutions (Atkinson 2006) that then lead to a decrease in levels of physical abuse. The difference in impact of the two types of exchanges might be attributed to two of the micro-mechanisms of socialization, level of influence and common identity, working together. Common identity and a sense of community within the political elite may facilitate change in the home countries of exchange participants by making change less threatening to those in power. Change coming from within the power elite; especially in the case of torture, physical abuse, and killing of citizens; may be more viable if instituted from within by elites because it is less threatening. Grassroots movements that attempt to expose and pressure elites

[27] Future research in the form of interviews and survey data will help to elaborate and trace the impact of these factors.

[28] As advocated by Przeworski (2007:161) when he singled-out educational exchanges as an important ''unobservable'' that ''may matter.''

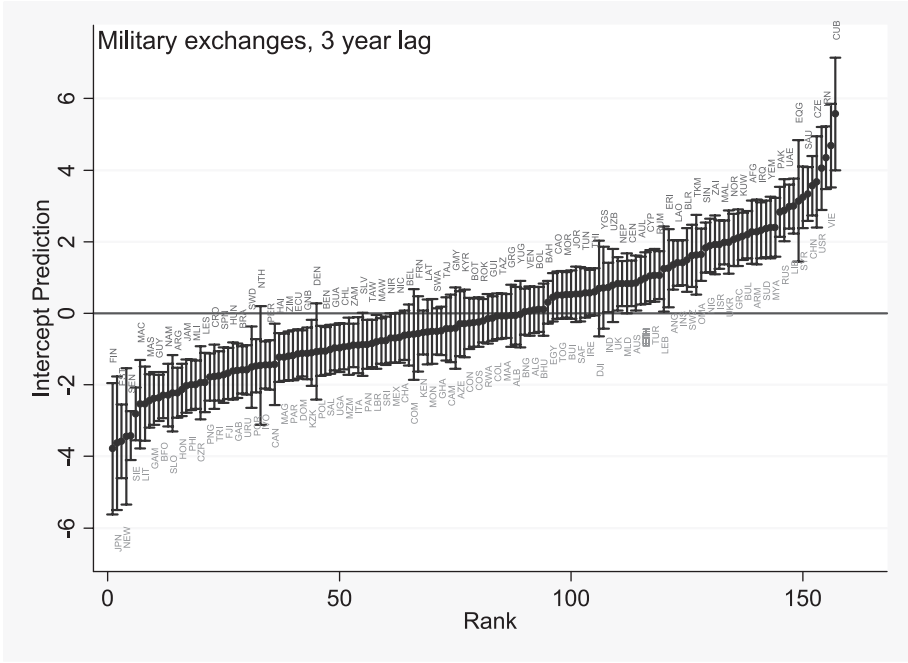

FIG 1. Random Intercept Predictions by Country. Note: Modeled using CIRI Empowerment Rights Index. Shown are rank ordered random intercept predictions with 95% confidence intervals for each country estimated using empirical Bayes prediction. Labels for country name abbreviations alternate: FIN for Finland is ranked first; JPN for Japan is ranked second; EST for Estonia is ranked third; and so forth.

from outside, may only cause military and political elites to ''circle the wagons'' and push back with increased repressive measures.

While the above results allow us to say something about overall trends, what has been the experience of individual countries? Figure 1 shows empirical Bayes predictions of the random intercepts for each country with their corresponding 95% confidence intervals for the 3-year lagged *Military exchange* model that used the Empowerment Rights Index and included *Level of democracy* (Luke 2004:42–47; Rabe-Hesketh and Skrondal 2008:167–168).[29] This figure illustrates how the model results pertain to the specific experiences of different countries. Negative random intercepts identify countries that had human rights records that were better than expected given the explanatory variables in the model whereas positive random intercepts identify countries that had records worse than expected given the factors modeled. So, for example, countries that had better than expected records included Finland, Japan, Estonia, and New Zealand; countries with worse than expected records included Cuba, Vietnam, Iran, and the Soviet Union.

[29] The post-estimation command gllapred was used to obtain empirical Bayes predictions for the random intercepts and the corresponding means and standard deviations used to calculate the 95% confidence intervals. For an in-depth discussion see Rabe-Hesketh and Skrondal (2008:77–78, 80–83, and 167–168). The comparable graph for *Civilian exchange* was nearly identical.

Conclusion

In this article, I evaluated the extent to which educational exchanges function as one mechanism of the broader phenomenon of soft power. The empirical evidence confirmed what soft power advocates and US policy makers have often claimed: US-hosted educational exchange programs do play an important role in supporting the development of liberal values and practices in authoritarian states. Such programs are systematically associated with liberal trends and serve an important role in liberal norm diffusion. Metaphorically, we might liken the student exchanges to fertile soil that provides an environment conducive to the growth and blossoming of government respect for human rights. Such an environment nurtures all, both long-lasting hardcore authoritarian countries as well as those with improving human rights records. But the point is that without fertile soil, little will grow on parched earth and hard rock.

Theoretically, I also sought to extend our understanding of the micro-processes of political socialization and norm diffusion inherent in the idea of soft power. By comparing military and civilian educational exchanges, I evaluated several factors that might help policy makers design exchange programs to increase their potential to socialize participants. First, transnational communities of professionals who share similar life experiences and knowledge are more likely to serve as an effective socialization channel than unstructured exchanges of diverse persons. Second, programs with explicit socialization opportunities and goals are more likely to be effective than unstructured exchanges. Third, effects may never be felt if exchange students remain abroad. Fourth, it is important to engage potential political elites, such as military officers and other government, business, and academic professionals. The military programs are unique and deserve special attention because it is often military organizations that help repressive governments stay in power.

The theoretical argument and empirical evaluation presented in this article provides a basis upon which further research can expand. I have focused on understanding the conditions under which educational exchanges might serve as a mechanism whereby democratic countries might help advance liberalization in authoritarian states. But this theoretical framework can also provide a starting point for others interested in studying the impact of transnational channels of norm diffusion; such as the transfer of ideas about democracy and weapons use through scientific exchanges and transnational contacts between nuclear physicists.[30] Case study research might also help to illuminate the micro-processes that contribute to the findings of the large-*n* analysis presented here.

The policy consequences of these results are important because the US government often uses educational exchanges as a negative sanction; prohibiting or limiting attendance by countries with poor human rights records. However, my findings show that when the United States allows only ''well behaved'' countries to participate, it restricts its ability to build its own soft power across the international system. Over the long term, engaging potential political elites from authoritarian states, rather than excluding them from programs, provides an opportunity to channel liberal ideas into some of the most democratically austere regions of the world. National security, in the traditional sense of the concept, is enhanced for all states within the community of democratic states: armed conflict is unlikely among fellow democracies. Additionally, security in the non-traditional sense, that is to say human security, is a benefit reaped by the ordinary people who are citizens of democratic states: political repression and human rights abuses are less likely.

[30] I thank Dr. Siegfried Hecker former director of Los Alamos National Laboratory for this example.

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