

THE GEOGRAPHY OF PROTEST AT THE SCHOOL OF THE AMERICAS

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ABSTRACT

One does not need to look far for examples of protest and social unrest in the history of the United States. Segments of the population fervently opposed the Second World War and the Vietnam War, and, in another time, others battled for civil rights. The spatiality of protest, however, has changed over time as state actors adapt to different threats from within and without. This paper focuses on a specific protest-- the movement to close the now-infamous "School of the Americas" (SOA), which has been reoccurring annually for 20 years. Demonstrations at the SOA, located in Ft. Benning, Georgia, draw as many as 25,000 people annually. I examine the spatiality of the demonstrations, and how that arrangement has changed over the course of years as political and cultural environments have shifted. Contemporary protests, I demonstrate, are influenced by such forces as the Global War on Terror and by divergent ideologies of the state.