U.S. border militarization and foreign policy: A symbiotic relationship

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Abstract

U.S. government security along the U.S.–Mexican border has been increasingly militarized. This domestic militarization has been influenced by U.S. government military intervention abroad. Preparing for and executing foreign interventions involves investing in physical and human capital to effectively coerce and control the target population. The U.S. government's "war on drugs" and "war on terror" created the conditions for this capital to be repurposed for domestic use in border-security efforts. While foreign policy created the conditions for border militarization, border militarization has also influenced foreign interventions. This article explores the symbiotic relationship between U.S. border militarization and foreign policy.

In recent decades, the United States Border Patrol has increasingly used military hardware and methods to enforce immigration restrictions and drug laws, as well as to surveil the U.S.–Mexico border. This has included the use of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) or drones to monitor the border, surveillance towers purchased from major defense contractors, and the use of tear gas grenades and tactical riot gear. Border Patrol personnel, particularly those associated with SWAT-style teams like the Border Patrol Tactical Unit (BORTAC), receive training that is directly modeled on military training. In addition, Border Patrol personnel collaborate with military personnel on joint operations.

Our core argument is that the militarization of domestic security efforts along the U.S.–Mexico border is linked to U.S. military interventions abroad. During these interventions, officials experiment with new ways to subdue, monitor, coerce, and control populations abroad. In the process, they invest in and develop both physical capital and human capital that is useful for social control. This capital does not remain abroad. Instead, it is brought home, where its availability lowers the relative price of engaging in militarized domestic social control. Border security officials must choose among different law enforcement strategies. When the relative price of militarized strategies falls, officials will (all else being equal) choose more militarized tactics. However, the price that government officials face when they decide which strategy to embrace rarely reflects the social costs of the tactics selected. Militarized strategies externalize costs onto various third parties, so the fact that government officials choose these tactics need not mean that they are worth the cost.

Once created and integrated into the border security apparatus, officials and contractors face incentives to maintain and expand militarized programs. This includes the expansion of operations beyond U.S. borders. For instance, BORTAC has traveled to numerous countries to train police and military forces to secure, monitor, and police borders. Sometimes, this has meant traveling to Central American countries during peacetime. In other cases, it has meant aiding the U.S. military's nation-building efforts in Afghanistan and Iraq. While these are foreign intervention militarized U.S. border security efforts, border militarization has created a bureaucratic apparatus that now directly engages in U.S. government interventions abroad.

U.S.–Mexico border militarization shows a symbiotic relationship between government foreign policy and border security. Foreign military interventions result in investments in physical and human capital that are brought back home for militarized forms of social control. Conversely, border security personnel have been sent abroad thereby exporting this militarized social control as part of foreign policy. As such, foreign policy has real effects on the fabric of domestic life; and domestic life, in turn, has real effects on foreign affairs. This fostering of a culture of militarism which is self-extending and self-perpetuating has costs which are understated.

This article's main contribution is the exploration of the symbiotic relationship between U.S. border militarization and the foreign policy of the U.S. government. Border militarization matters for four reasons. First, border militarization raises issues pertaining to the rights and liberties of both non-U.S. and U.S. persons. Tools of violent social control grant power to those who wield them over others. The exercise of this power can be direct (e.g., direct violence against others), or indirect (e.g., violations of privacy through surveillance). Second, the militarization of the border contributes to threat inflation related to the supposed "immigration threat," consisting of economic and criminal harms from immigrants, despite evidence to the contrary.[1] Stakeholders in the border security apparatus have an incentive to fan the flames of fear associated with this threat to entrench and extend their resources and power. Third, the militarization of the border diverts migrants towards more dangerous routes, increases the reliance on coyotes (smugglers) to navigate the more dangerous routes, results in increased migrant deaths, and raises the cost of migrants returning to Mexico once in the United States due to increased border security.[2] Finally, the militarization of the border fosters a broader culture of militarization whereby force becomes the primary instrument for social and foreign relations. This elevates violence and zero-sum conflict over alternative, non-violent and potentially positive-sum means of resolving collective action challenges.

Our analysis is best understood in the context of two categories of scholarship. The first is the growing literature on border militarization.[3] The second is scholarship on how military intervention abroad influences domestic politics and the growth of government.[4]

The next section offers a theory of foreign intervention's domestic consequences, emphasizing the role of physical and human capital in this process. We then apply this theory to explain how foreign interventions contributed to the militarization of U.S. security activities along the U.S.–Mexico border. The subsequent section explains how militarized U.S. border security bureaucracies became involved in foreign interventions abroad. We conclude with a discussion of the implications of our analysis.

Foreign intervention and the capital structure

At the foundation of any foreign intervention is the desire by interveners to alter the actions of those being intervened upon. If actions abroad already matched the desires of the interveners, then intervention would be unnecessary. To alter foreigners' actions and ensure compliance, interveners may use a variety of forms of social control, including surveillance, intimidation, imprisonment, occupation, policing, and physical violence.

To effectively engage in this type of social control, the interveners must first invest in capital that is particularly suited to the task. This includes physical capital, such as surveillance equipment, aircraft, armored vehicles, and weaponry. It also includes human capital, skills and knowledge that make soldiers, intelligence officers, and other interveners more effective at producing social control. Capital is heterogeneous and multi-specific.[5] Capital

1 Dunn (2021, p. 36).
2 Cornelius (2001); Massey, Pren and Durand (2016); Massey (2017); Chambers et al. (2021).
3 Dunn (1996, 2009, 2021); Parenti (1999); Palafox (2000); Cornelius (2001); Nevins (2002); Huspek (2001); Andreas (2009); Cornelius and Lewis (2007); Michalowski (2007); Slack et al. (2016); Miller (2019a, b); Chambers et al. 2021).
4 Higgs (1987, 2004, 2007, 2012); Porter (1994); Coyne and Hall (2014, 2018).
5 Lachmann (1956).

ISSN 1749-852X

heterogeneity means that once capital is created, it can only be used for some types of projects, but not others. For instance, a Blackhawk helicopter cannot be used to bake bread. However, capital is also multi-specific, meaning it can be used for multiple types of projects. A Blackhawk helicopter is useful for foreign wars *and* for patrolling the U.S.–Mexico border.

Prior to engaging in foreign military interventions, government officials invest in physical capital that is particularly useful for militarized social control. While some of this capital will be destroyed or rendered useless due to combat, much of it remains operational after the intervention. As it is brought home, this equipment increases the supply of physical capital available for militarized domestic social control. For public officials as well as private contractors, this lowers the relative price of choosing militarized means to achieve their domestic goals.

All else being equal, an official is therefore more likely to choose the militarized approach because of the availability of physical capital allowing for more effective social control. An official within an immigration enforcement bureaucracy can choose among multiple strategies for enforcing immigration laws. One method might be auditing employers to identify and fine those who hire undocumented immigrants. Another might consist of surveilling the border using drones, night vision goggles, and Blackhawk helicopters.

Similar logic applies to human capital. Prior to engaging in foreign intervention, interveners develop skills, knowledge, habits, and expertise related to surveilling, intimidating, and controlling other people. These skills are refined and honed through on-the-ground experiences with interventions abroad. While this human capital may atrophy with disuse, it does not simply go away once interveners return home. Once they return home, they integrate into domestic life. Some pursue opportunities to advance their careers using what they learned abroad, which can mean deploying social control techniques domestically.

Existing scholarship documents a variety of cases in which physical and human capital developed through foreign intervention return home.[6] For example, veterans of the Vietnam and Korean wars used human capital they acquired during those operations to develop one of the first domestic Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) teams in Los Angeles, California, in the 1960s. These militarized police units then proliferated around the country, using weaponry and other military hardware provided by the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD). In other words, both human capital and physical capital developed for use abroad were later deployed in domestic policing in the United States. The same type of process has occurred in the realm of border security. Physical and human capital developed abroad has been brought home and repurposed by federal officials for border security efforts.

Militarizing the American border

Border security efforts have been repurposing capital from the military for decades.[7] In 1945, military officials transferred several Stinson L-5 aircraft to the Border Patrol. These airplanes were used for aerial surveillance and sent radio transmissions to Border Patrol agents on the ground when they observed unauthorized migrants.[8] Physical capital used in World War II was thereby repurposed to monitor the U.S.–Mexico border.

Officials escalated their militarization of the border in the late 1960s with the beginnings of President Richard Nixon's "war on drugs". In June 1969, Nixon created a "new working group to devise and implement a 'frontal attack' on border narcotics traffic."[9] This task force featured "members from the Bureau of Customs, Defense Department, Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs, Criminal Division of the Justice Department, Federal Bureau

6 Coyne and Hall (2014, 2018).
7 Dunn (1996, 2021).
8 Hernández (2010, p. 105).
9 Craig (1980, p. 560).

of Investigation, Immigration and Naturalization Service, and Transportation Department."[10] This task force designed and launched "Operation Intercept", which intensified searches and surveillance along the U.S.–Mexico border for purposes of drug interdiction.

Throughout the 1970s the Border Patrol acquired additional physical capital. For instance, in 1973 and 1974, Border Patrol agents placed various electronic intrusion ground sensors along the border with Mexico. By the late 1970s the Border Patrol used small fixed-wing aircraft for surveillance in all sectors of the U.S.–Mexico border.[11] This buildup further accelerated in the next decade.

In the 1980s, several policy changes expanded transfers of physical and human capital from the military to domestic law enforcement, including border security. The Defense Authorization Act of 1982 introduced "a new chapter to U.S. law regarding the use of the military, entitled 'Military Cooperation with Civilian Law Enforcement Officials'."[12] As a result, "military personnel were now explicitly allowed to *assist* (not just support) civilian law enforcement agencies in newly specified ways—by operating and maintaining military equipment loaned to federal law enforcement agencies."[13] The law also authorized the Secretary of Defense to give law enforcement officers access to military facilities and empowered military officials to share information with law enforcement.[14] Notably, however, these powers were "limited to agencies with the jurisdiction to enforce *drug, customs, and immigration laws*."[15]

Using these new powers, President Ronald Reagan's administration created task forces that brought border security officials together with military leaders. For instance, in 1982 the South Florida Task Force on Organized Crime brought leaders from numerous agencies together to work on drug interdiction under the direction of Vice President George H.W. Bush. Law enforcement officers used the task force to access physical capital from the military, including "E-2B, E-2C, and P-3 radar and surveillance aircraft and UH-1N helicopters, as well as hydrofoil, frigate, and destroyer sea vessels, for the Navy; AWACS (or E-3) radar aircraft and aerostat radar aircraft and radar balloons for the Air Force; and UH-1H, Cobra, and Blackhawk helicopters, as well as OV-1 Mohawk tracker aircraft, for the Army."[16]

In 1983, the "South Florida Task Force model was extended to the borderlands…when President Reagan created the National Narcotics Border Interdiction System (NNBIS)."[17] Vice President Bush directed this effort as well. The task force brought agents from the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) and the Customs Service together with officials from the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA), and such military branches as the Army, Air Force, and Navy. The military transferred hardware to various domestic law enforcement agencies through the NNBIS.

In addition to lending and transferring physical capital, the military also used their soldiers' human capital to police the border. From 1983 to 1985 "the U.S. Army Intelligence School at Fort Huachaca, Arizona, initiated two frequently conducted border surveillance operations."[18] One of these programs, Operation Groundhog, "reported 1,083 targets which resulted in the apprehension of 372 illegal aliens by the Border Patrol" within a single year.[19]

10 Craig (1980: 560).
11 Dunn (1996: 38).
12 Dunn (1996, p. 106).
13 Dunn (1996, p. 106, emphasis in original).
14 Dunn (1996, p. 107).
15 Dunn (1996, p. 107, emphasis in original).
16 Dunn (1996, p. 108).
17 Dunn (1996, p. 109).
18 Dunn (1996, p. 110).
19 Quoted in Dunn (1996, p. 110).

The other, Operation Hawkeye, "consisted of ongoing OV-1 Mohawk aerial surveillance training flights along the border between Douglas and Nogales, Arizona."[20]

Building on the NNBIS model, Vice President Bush and Attorney General Edwin Meese spearheaded Operation Alliance, "an ongoing effort to interdict drugs along the border, based on the coordination of local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies, with the military playing a support role."[21] The INS, Border Patrol, and Customs Service played a key role in Operation Alliance, and they were joined by other federal law enforcement agencies such as the FBI and DEA. In addition to these federal participants, Operation Alliance featured "representatives from various law enforcement agencies of each of the four border states."[22] As part of Operation Alliance, the Department of Defense provided physical capital through "aerial surveillance and extensive loans of such resources as night-vision equipment and portable on the ground radar" and human capital through "joint training exercises with civilian law enforcement agencies."[23]

Given these increasing partnerships with the armed forces, it is no surprise that the INS's access to military hardware increased throughout the Reagan administration. For example, they went from having 28 fixed-wing aircraft to 46 fixed-wing aircraft and they acquired 20 new helicopters. They also purchased 278 new night-vision scopes.[24] Some equipment that the Reagan administration deployed at the border had been directly used in prior foreign wars. For instance, "some of the ground sensors being set out along that border were leftovers from Vietnam."[25]

In 1984, officials formed the Border Patrol Tactical Unit (BORTAC) "to serve a civil disturbance function in response to rioting at legacy Immigration and Naturalization Service detention facilities."[26] BORTAC agents "received special training in riot control, counterterrorism, and other paramilitary activities similar to the training provided to U.S. marshals and the FBI Special Weapons and Training [sic] (SWAT) teams."[27] Such training replicates human capital initially developed through foreign interventions. To understand why, consider the history of SWAT teams.

In Los Angeles, John Nelson and Daryl Gates of the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) created one of the country's first SWAT teams in 1967. As a Marine, Nelson "served in an elite Force Recon unit" in Vietnam.[28] Such units were significantly more lethal and aggressive than other Marine units as "Force Recon teams were trained to engage and kill, and they did so efficiently."[29] To address riots in Los Angeles, Nelson proposed creating a new unit modeled after the Force Recon unit he served in abroad. Inspector Daryl Gates, who had served in the Navy during World War II, supported the idea and worked with Nelson to bring it to fruition. Each team member they recruited "for the original SWAT team had specialized experience and prior military service."[30] Together they used the human capital they cultivated abroad to militarize policing in Los Angeles. Those innovations in militarization quickly spread beyond Los Angeles. SWAT teams are now used by police departments and law enforcement agencies all around the country.

The creation of BORTAC in 1984 meant bringing SWAT tactics to border policing. But SWAT teams were not

20 Dunn (1996: 110).
21 Dunn (1996, p. 113).
22 Dunn (1996: 113).
23 Dunn (1996, p. 113).
24 Dunn (1996, pp. 43-44).
25 Grandin (2019).
26 Customs and Border Protection (2014).
27 Dunn (1996, p. 52).
28 Coyne and Hall (2018, p. 105).
29 Coyne and Hall (2018, p. 105).
30 Coyne and Hall (2018, p. 107).

the only route by which the U.S. military influenced BORTAC's human capital. BORTAC also deliberately emulated the military, specifically special forces. Border Patrol agents understood BORTAC as "much like a *special forces team* for us."[31] More recent official materials note that "BORTAC's Selection and Training Course (BSTC) was designed to mirror aspects of the U.S. Special Operations Forces' selection courses."[32] So BORTAC agents are trained to emulate the practices and skills used by U.S. Special Forces teams.

While BORTAC was initially created to address riots, their role expanded over time, empowering them to address additional issues. "By 1987 BORTAC was taking part in drug enforcement and crop eradication efforts in the United States."[33] BORTAC agents collaborated with the National Guard on "clandestine reconnaissance patrolling operations (dubbed Operation Unity)…in Big Bend National Park in the fall of 1988 and spring of 1989 for one week and two weeks, respectively, as a pilot project to assess the feasibility of such operations."[34] In 1990, BORTAC collaborated with the New Mexico National Guard on an anti-narcotics operation. Any given bureaucratic organization seeks to maintain and expand its budget[35], which in this case meant that their specialized military training was used to enforce drug prohibition.

Border militarization continued throughout the 1990s and into the 21st century. In 1990, President George H.W. Bush established the 1280 program which authorized the Department of Defense to transfer surplus military equipment to federal and state agencies involved in counternarcotics. In 1997, President Bill Clinton expanded this program by authorizing The Law Enforcement Support Office (LESO) to implement the 1033 Program to transfer military hardware from the Department of Defense to police departments. Under the Clinton Administration, the Border Patrol acquired "infrared night scopes, thermal-imaging devices, motion detectors, in-ground sensors, and software that allowed biometric scanning of all apprehended migrants."[36]

To date, empirical studies of the effects of transfers under the 1033 program are mixed. Some studies find that 1033 Program transfers are associated with increased deaths of suspects at the hands of police.[37] There is evidence that police militarization harms police reputation, as well as evidence that SWAT teams are deployed more often in communities of color.[38] The impacts of SWAT teams and 1033 Program transfers on crime and officer safety are disputed. At least one study finds no evidence that militarization improves officer safety,[39] while other studies find that some types of military equipment (e.g., armor and clothing) reduce assaults.[40] Some studies find evidence that police militarization is associated with reductions in crime,[41] while others fail to find evidence of this effect.[42] Recent research suggests that military hardware transfers contribute to reductions in crime rates, but they find that some of this is achieved by displacing crime into neighboring jurisdictions, thereby causing negative spillovers.[43] Despite the lack of consensus on the effects, both physical capital and human capital continue to flow from the Department of Defense to law enforcement, including border security agencies such as Customs and Border Protection (CBP).[44]

31 Quoted in Dunn (1996, p. 52).
32 Customs and Border Protection (2014).
33 Dunn (1996, p. 52).
34 Dunn (1996, p. 129).
35 Niskanen (1968, 1971).
36 Grandin (2019).
37 Delehanty et al. (2017); Lawson (2019).
38 Mummolo (2018).
39 Mummolo (2018).
40 Carriere and Encinosa (2017); Harris et al. (2017).
41 Bove and Gavrilova (2017); Harris et al. (2017); Masera (2021).
42 Gunderson et al. (2021); Mummolo (2018).
43 Masera (2021).
44 Davenport et al. (2018).

Nation building and border building

On September 11, 2001, terrorists hijacked multiple aircraft within American borders and used them to target buildings such as the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. These high-profile terrorist attacks killed over 2,900 people.[45] In response, U.S. government officials began implementing a range of new programs and policies in the name of counterterrorism, including the reorganization of domestic law enforcement bureaucracies and border policing. The United States Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) disbanded, with its core functions split between U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), both of which were housed under the newly created Department of Homeland Security (DHS). The Border Patrol, including its militarized units, such as BORTAC, was placed within CBP.

In addition to these domestic reorganizations, the 9/11 attacks were used to justify multiple U.S. foreign interventions, most notably in Afghanistan and Iraq. While most analysis of these interventions focuses on the role of the U.S. military, the Border Patrol also played a significant role in these foreign occupations. To understand why, consider how U.S. officials reconceived the role of border security after 9/11.

Border security became heavily tied to "homeland security," a concept that took on an expansive meaning. As the 9/11 Commission Report concluded, "9/11 has taught us that terrorism against Americans 'over there' should be regarded just as we regard terrorism against Americans 'over here'. In this same sense the American homeland is the planet."[46] This broad view of threats and security shaped U.S. government counter-terrorism policies, including border security, across multiple federal bureaucracies. As one Border Patrol agent put it:

> *"It is now understood by the U.S. government and its citizens that the U.S. must 'take the fight' to the people who are attempting to do the U.S. harm. Although on a smaller scale, CBP has a direct parallel to the Department of Defense and the 'War on Terror' in order to prevent attacks on the homeland. CBP is expanding into foreign countries to be more effective and keep the bad actors away from U.S. soil".*[47]

Former U.S. CBP commissioner Alan Bersin described this shift towards an expansive, global approach to border security as a "massive paradigm change."[48]

As CBP turned their attention abroad, BORTAC played a crucial role. They already had some experience internationally. For instance, they had provided "international airport security details during Operation Desert Storm."[49] They also participated in international counter-narcotics efforts, such as an intervention in Latin America called Operation Snowcap, which began in 1987.[50] However, after the 9/11 attacks, international efforts became a larger part of BORTAC's mission. For example, now one of BORTAC's signature features is "that it conducts training and operations both in the United States and in other countries in furtherance of the U.S. Border Patrol's mission."[51] Their tactics and training, which imitate the training given to the military's Special Operations forces, were adapted for domestic use and then redeployed abroad.

BORTAC's participation in Operation Iraqi Freedom and its aftermath illustrates how border security officials became involved in foreign intervention and nation building. In 2003, the United States invaded Iraq and overthrew

45 CNN (2021).
46 Quoted in Miller (2019a, p. 6).
47 Seiler (2017, p. 5).
48 Quoted in Miller (2019a, p. 6).
49 Jacobellis (2014).
50 Jacobellis (2014).
51 Customs and Border Protection (2014).

Saddam Hussein. By overthrowing Saddam Hussein's government, U.S. and coalition forces eliminated Iraq's previous border security arrangements. To fill this gap, the U.S. government sent "thousands of soldiers, Marines, military police, special operations forces and aviation units" to patrol Iraq's border with Syria and train Iraqi border patrol under Operation Phantom Linebacker.[52] However, officials eventually concluded that CBP agents could bring expertise that soldiers lacked, and, in 2005, the Department of Defense requested that CBP agents come to Iraq.[53]

CBP agents in Iraq were organized into Border Support Teams (BSTs). Members of each BST worked alongside the U.S. military, training both Iraqi personnel and U.S. military personnel in a range of border policing tactics. For CBP agents in the early years of the Iraq War, "[f]irefights with insurgents were a regular occurrence…".[54] Over the years CBP officers in Iraq shifted their emphasis "from training individuals to the work of advising the leaders in the Iraqi Ministry of Interior on how they can create and sustain modern training and management techniques."[55] This move also involved shifting away from working closely with the U.S. military and towards working more with the U.S. embassy. Despite this shift, CBP's work in Iraq was consistently oriented towards nation building, with the aim of developing a strong border security bureaucracy in Iraq that reflected many of the border security practices used within the United States.

In 2011, U.S. troops withdrew from Iraq, as the Status of Forces Agreement expired.[56] However, CBP personnel remained in Iraq even when the occupation formally ended. Their continued presence was "part of an effort known as the Police Development Program, or PDP, managed by the Department of State's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement, or INL."[57] This program ended in 2013.[58]

BORTAC's operations abroad extend beyond the Middle East and the global war on terror. For instance, BORTAC also actively trains police in Central America, largely to support the U.S. government's ongoing war on drugs. Border security training in countries like Guatemala has largely been funded through the State Department's Central American Regional Security Initiative (CARSI) program.[59] In Africa, BORTAC and CBP have "trained new patrol and homeland security units for Kenyan, Tanzanian, and Ugandan borders."[60] Likewise, on the Indian subcontinent, "CBP has an attaché office in New Delhi."[61] Meanwhile, in Eastern Europe, "U.S. Border Patrol and Drug Enforcement Administration officials trained the Ukrainian 'Sokil' rapid-reaction unit."[62]

Operations abroad continue to be a key part of American border security strategies. For example, the Department of Homeland Security's fiscal year 2020 budget request stated that "The 'home game' has merged with the 'away game' and DHS actions abroad are just as important as our security operations here at home."[63] In their communications with Congress, DHS officials make it clear that they see homeland security and border security policies as closely intertwined with U.S. foreign policy. CBP, which has been militarized using capital from U.S. government foreign military interventions, is now being used in numerous countries to advance U.S. foreign policy objectives and enhance allied nation states' border security capabilities.[64]

52 Mazzetti (2004).
53 Mayfield (2012).
54 Mayfield (2012, p. 9).
55 Mayfield (2012, p. 9).
56 Sky (2017).
57 Mayfield (2012, p. 12).
58 Ackerman (2013).
59 Miller (2019a, p. 37).
60 Miller (2019a, p. 32).
61 Miller (2019a, p. 33).
62 Miller (2019a, p. 32).
63 Department of Homeland Security (2019, p. 2).
64 Ibid.

ISSN 1749-852X

Conclusion

The history of American border militarization shows a symbiotic relationship between U.S. government foreign policy and border security. Foreign military interventions result in investments in physical and human capital that are useful for militarized forms of social control. As these forms of capital are brought back home, the relative price of choosing militarized forms of domestic social control falls. Physical and human capital used abroad are repurposed for use at home. This influence is bi-directional. Militarized border security personnel have been sent abroad, both to aid overt U.S. government nation building as part of military interventions and, more often, to train the border security personnel of other governments. The main implications are twofold.

First, foreign policy and domestic life cannot be neatly separated into distinct and non-interactive arenas. Foreign policy has real effects on the fabric of domestic life; and domestic life, in turn, has real effects on foreign affairs. The methods, techniques, and mentalities associated with a proactive military-driven foreign policy often return home and become integrated into domestic life. Likewise, tools of social control employed domestically are often exported, affecting other societies.

Second, the costs of war and foreign intervention are understated. A substantial literature discusses the costs of war,[65] but largely focuses on the direct opportunity costs of monetary outlays, casualties, and deaths, as well as health costs and the effects of conflict and military expenditure on economic growth. But the history of border militarization shows that the overall costs are greater in terms of fostering a culture of militarism which is self-extending and self-perpetuating. This has immediate costs on those directly affected by these policies, but also broader costs in terms of crowding out alternative, more peaceful, solutions to social interaction challenges between people irrespective of their country of origin.

We have analyzed some of the ways that foreign policy and border security policy interact. However, there are more interactions of this sort that we have not explored. For instance, hardening borders in one location may divert migrant flows; if migrants are diverted into conflict-prone countries with weak institutions, this may undermine foreign policy goals or exacerbate conflict. Migration restrictions can also trap people in conflict zones, which may force those individuals to devote their efforts to zero-sum conflict rather than productive activity. Whether in the examples we have discussed or in these other cases, policies do not operate in isolation. Instead, they alter the incentives and constraints faced by other decision-makers, causing important, often perverse, unintended consequences.

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65 See, for instance, Collier (1999); Ghobarah, Huth, and Russett (2003); Stiglitz and Bilmes (2008); Dunne and Tian (2013, 2019); Smith (2014).

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