

CSLS SPEAKER SERIES

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Monday, October 25, 2021

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“The Economic Costs of Segregation: Evidence from the Federal Government Under Wilson”

During the Great Depression, thousands of Mexican Americans and Mexican immigrants repatriated from the United States to Mexico. There remains considerable debate concerning the extent to which these migrants left voluntarily or were coerced to do so. While prior research has mainly emphasized factors such as the depth of economic crisis or the surge of xenophobic sentiment, we argue that local electoral politics conditioned the migration of Mexican communities within the United States. We claim that local political bosses had an incentive to shield Mexican Americans from repatriation pressures because, wherever sufficiently concentrated, they provided votes on which political machines often depended. Mexican immigrants, however, lacked the ability to trade votes for political protection. To assess this patronage protection hypothesis, we examine net migration in Texas counties between 1930 and 1940. We find that Depression-era outmigration among Mexican Americans was significantly lower in counties controlled by patronage machines. We find higher outmigration from counties with a history of anti-Mexican mob violence, but this effect only holds for Mexican immigrants. We further show that these electoral and violence dynamics were specific to Mexican populations; they have no correlation with the net migration of White American, White European, or African American populations in Texas.

PLACE Zoom - [Register on our website for the zoom link.](#)
TIME 12:45 - 2:00pm (PST)
INFO csls.berkeley.edu

If you require an accommodation for effective communication (ASL interpreting/CART captioning, alternative media formats, etc.) to fully participate in this event, please contact csls@law.berkeley.edu with as much advance notice as possible and at least 10 days in advance of the event.