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Publié le 6 mai 2021 – Mis à jour le 4 juin 2021

Date

Le 12 mai 2021 De 17:30 à 18:30

Webinaire : Économie des migrations

from the Progressive Era

Immigrant franchise and
immigration policy: Evidence

RÉSUMÉ

What is the role played by immigrant groups in shaping migration policy in the destination country? To study this question we exploit historical variation in access to the franchise induced by different residency requirements across U.S. states. We start by documenting that naturalized immigrants were more geographically mobile than natives. Next we show that congressmen representing districts with large numbers of naturalized U.S. citizens were more likely to support an open migration policy, but that more stringent residency requirements attenuate this effect. Our results indicate that congressmen electoral accountability to naturalized immigrants was a key factor in explaining this outcome.

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