Roundtable

Adam Goodman, *The Deportation Machine: America's Long History of Expelling Immigrants* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2020). ISBN 978-0-691-20420-8 (paper, $19.95)

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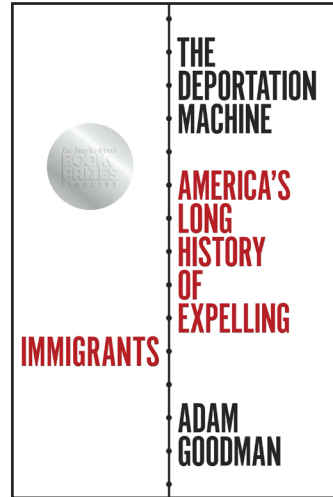## Introduction by Maddalena Marinari, Gustavus Adolphus College

Adam Goodman's timely and haunting book, *The Deportation Machine: America's Long History of Expelling Immigrants*, explores the history of the systematic efforts to demonize, terrorize, and expel immigrants from the United States over the last 140 years. The book traces when, why, and how the practice of deportation has changed over time and vividly documents the impact that these changes have had on immigrant communities since the end of the 19th century. Goodman shows how, beginning in 1882, federal, state, and local officials meticulously built a deportation system that targeted various groups of so-called undesirable immigrants for expulsion with the help of bureaucrats, businesspeople, and ordinary citizens who pushed for and often profited from these deportations. While the system has alternately targeted Chinese, Central Americans, Europeans, and Muslims for expulsion, Goodman argues that,

ultimately, the history of deportation from the United States has been the history of removing Mexicans. This roundtable brings together scholars from different fields to engage with Goodman's book and speak to the contributions *The Deportation Machine* makes to the study of immigration history, borderlands history, legal history, and U.S. history more broadly.

Eladio Bobadilla, a historian of social movements, immigration, and Latinx history in the United States, focuses his analysis on Goodman's reframing of the history of deportation by centering voluntary departures. In doing so, Bobadilla argues, *The Deportation Machine* asks its readers to consider how the U.S. deportation apparatus has systematically used voluntary deportations to target vulnerable migrants, assert state power, and reinforce existing racial hierarchies. Voluntary departure encouraged migrants entering the country illegally to return home without going through a formal deportation. Originally a cost-saving measure for a cash-strapped immigration bureaucracy, voluntary departure soon emerged as a better alternative for migrants to deportation because it allowed them to reenter the country without having to wait for the prescribed length of time after formal deportation. Nonetheless, although immigration officials framed voluntary departure as a choice available to eligible undocumented immigrants, they soon began to use it as another punitive mechanism to force more migrants out of the country. As Bobadilla notes, immigration authorities waged a veritable psychological war on immigrant communities, one that often reaches deep in the interior of the country and away from the border where immigration patrols more commonly operate.

Amanda Frost, a legal scholar who specializes in immigration and citizenship law, federal courts and jurisdiction, and judicial ethics, applauds Goodman for exploring one of the collateral consequences of a racist deportation machine: the harassment of legal immigrants and citizens of color, who are stopped by officials for whom brown skin equates with being a noncitizen. As *The Deportation Machine* clearly shows, the procedural protections to prevent erroneous deportations of those with a legal right to remain leads to unjustified apprehensions, interrogations, and searches of U.S. citizens and legal immigrants of color. In some cases, such informal removal methods result in deportations of citizens, as occurred during the mass roundups of the 1930s and 1950s, and in similar federal actions that continue to this day. As Frost points out, these mistakes, although rare, would not occur if the U.S. government did not seek to replace formal removal procedures with ad hoc, informal initiatives to save money or assert its power.

Deborah Kang, a borderlands, legal, and immigration historian, explores how *The Deportation Machine* represents a powerful challenge to the persisting myth about the United States as a nation of immigrants. As she notes, the book shows how the United States has more frequently excluded, detained, and punished noncitizens in its midst. During the past century, in fact, the United States has deported more immigrants than it has admitted for permanent residence. Rather than hope and optimism, the migrants' stories shared in the book illustrate how terror and fear characterized their lives in the United States even when they fought back against the deportation machine. These stories of resistance are all the more illuminating given the limited legal rights and the few economic resources that many people in the United States without authorization have at their disposal. Kang finds that Goodman's broadening of our notion of deportation, of the complex causes behind the rise of the current deportation regime, and of the wide-ranging human costs it imposes on immigrant communities across the country has opened new and important venues of research for future scholars.

Yael Schacher, deputy director for the Americas and Europe at Refugees International, reflects on how the resistance to the deportation machine by immigrants and their supporters shaped its workings. Given her experience at Refugees International, she also deftly shows how *The Deportation Machine* helps us better understand today's immigration policies. As she mentions, voluntary departure set an important precedent for today's formal removal procedures and helped cement the idea that Mexicans and Central Americans cannot be refugees. The book's focus on voluntary departure also provides us with a fuller understanding of the long and racialized history of the criminalization of unauthorized entry that centers Mexican migrants as the quintessentially undocumented. Finally, in Schacher's view, Goodman's examination of the Mexican government's involvement in its citizens' deportation foreshadows current efforts of the U.S. government to recruit Mexico in managing refugees and asylum seekers arriving at the southern border through inhumane initiatives like the Remain in Mexico Program or to use funding for the assisted voluntary return (AVR) programs of the International Organization of Migration, a U.N. agency, to outsource voluntary departures.

Together, these scholars also use their reflections on Goodman's book as a jumping-off point to suggest additional research avenues that *The Deportation Machine* could inspire. Bobadilla encourages future scholars to move beyond the early decades of the century when focusing on immigration reform and nativist and pro-immigrant responses to help us better understand the centrality of immigration history to American history more broadly. Kang agrees but also

urges scholars to study how formal deportation itself changed over time and to uncover more of the political machinations at the local, state, and federal levels that shaped the deportation machine. Schacher urges scholars to continue to unearth the history of the Mexican government's role in the workings of the deportation machine and to look at the role of foreign relations more generally, which we can understand to include diplomatic relations and the consequences of wars, ethnic conflicts, and global migrations. Frost, on the other hand, encourages the author, and by extension the readers of his book, to consider not just how, but whether, to deport individuals who, as Goodman puts it, have "done nothing more than enter the country without inspection or overstay a visa" (6). Such questions can help us re-envision and reform our immigration system.

Goodman's answer to these scholars' readings of *The Deportation Machine* offers critical insights into the book's central argument and takeaways and presents an invaluable view into the development of the book itself. We get a better sense of how the project evolved over time and how Goodman's thinking changed as he conducted research for his book. His reflection also speaks to another major contribution of the book. Goodman faced a double methodological challenge. He had to find a way to tell the stories of migrants who are often largely absent from traditional archives while chronicling the history of a process that, by design, hasn't left much of a paper trail. His response helps us see how he thought creatively about the types of sources to use to demonstrate how the deportation machine emerged out of laws, policies, means, and strategies that together facilitate mass expulsion and enable authorities to exert control over those who remain. To document the human impact of the deportation machine, he interviewed immigrants who had been removed or who had self-deported as well as lawyers, activists, union organizers, and immigration officials who felt comfortable speaking openly about the subject. To piece together the inner workings of the immigration bureaucracy, he relied on government reports, immigration hearings, and Freedom of Information Act filings, and also on fragmentary but useful evidence like stories published in newspapers in Mexico and the United States.

Scholars and the public have paid little attention to voluntary departures and self-deportations because they have taken place far from public view and without due process. Yet, as Goodman persuasively shows, these seemingly less severe methods have been central to immigration enforcement policy and have terrorized communities for most of the country's history. What makes *The Deportation Machine* so powerful is that it goes beyond the bureaucratic history of expulsion to explore how undocumented immigrants and their allies have fought for their

constitutional rights and challenged what they considered to be unjust laws and inhumane treatment, despite unrelenting campaigns to terrorize them and criminalize them by promoting nativist attitudes and encouraging vigilantism. More broadly, the book reveals not only how the processes of deportation have evolved throughout U.S. history but also how they have shaped larger debates about citizenship and belonging that reverberate to this day. In closing, I would like readers of this roundtable and beyond to consider and build on the question that Goodman poses to immigration officials in his response to the authors of this roundtable: are the physical, psychological, and material costs of the deportation machine on noncitizens and citizens worth it? What does it say about the current moment that we can't and won't imagine an alternative to the status quo?

Review by Eladio B. Bobadilla, University of Kentucky

Removal, exclusion, and deportation have been on the minds of Americans a great deal as of late thanks to the presidency of Donald Trump, who rose to power on a tough-on-immigration platform and was propelled to success by way of his ties to nativist and neo-nationalist movements and their appeals to anti-immigrant resentment. Famously, Trump's platform included outlandish and outrageous promises to "build the wall" along the U.S.–Mexico border (a wall, it should be noted, already existed along 650 miles of the boundary) to end Latin American immigration. Trump's presidency also brought to light the horrific practice of family separation, which many observers assumed was a new tactic.

But for immigrant families and communities, deportation and family separation were daily threats and facts of life long before Trump, or even before his predecessor, Barack Obama, who earned the unflattering label of "deporter-in-chief" because of the huge number of deportations that took place during his tenure (three million people according to the most reliable estimates). For decades, undocumented immigrants and their families have lived in constant vigilance and fear. They have tried to survive, in what has become a cliché by now, "in the shadows."

Adam Goodman, an immigration historian and associate professor in the Latin American and Latino Studies program at the University of Illinois Chicago, joins good company with the publication of *The Deportation Machine*. From groundbreaking classics like Mae Ngai's *Impossible Subjects* and Kelly Lytle Hernandez's *Migra!* to recent works on immigration history like Ana Minian's *Undocumented Lives* and Sarah Coleman's *The Walls Within*, as well as a host of

sociological and political science scholarship on the topic—all naturally informed by recent developments—scholars have written about and debated the significance of deportation in American history for some time, shedding light on the ways that state power has been employed to inflict terror upon immigrants at the border and beyond. What is novel about Goodman's book, however, is a much-needed focus on the history of voluntary and "self-deportation." The dearth of writing on the subject is surprising, given that, as Goodman points out, the vast majority of removals have historically come via "voluntary departure"—some 85 percent—and not through formal deportation (1). While *The Deportation Machine* is not, strictly speaking, a legal history, Goodman pays close attention to the parallels between this process and procedures like plea bargaining in the criminal justice system.

By rethinking the history of deportation and centering "voluntary" removals, Goodman asks us to consider how the U.S. deportation apparatus has historically worked in tandem with other forces to craft modes of control that target vulnerable immigrants. To make sense of this history, Goodman rejects a narrow temporal or geographic focus, providing instead a broad overview that allows him to explore the full scale and scope of migration control, its full "magnitude," as he says (6). In doing so, he provides a long view of this story, which he traces all the way back to the anti-Chinese hysteria that produced the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882 (13). And although Goodman skillfully distinguishes the different forms of removal—formal, voluntary, and "self-deportation"—he finds that the latter two are no less coercive than the former, only more efficient, sometimes terrifyingly so.

The rise of voluntary removal and self-deportation as immigration control mechanisms emerged primarily for economic reasons. Deporting immigrants has always been expensive. By the middle of the 20th century, the immigration service was spending large proportions of its budget to transport (mostly Mexican) deportees south of the border by bus, rail, and eventually by air (77). Deportation became big business for transporters who were all too happy to provide their services in exchange for massive and lucrative government contracts. The process became so mechanistic and inhumane, Goodman points out, that government officials began to think of immigrants as little more than "personal property," as a logistical problem (79). To combat the ever-rising costs of transportation, the United States turned toward an innovative approach: making voluntary departure an option to immigrants, who would forego formal hearings and proceedings and choose to leave the country on their own dime. These are the so-called "voluntary" removals. Goodman defines them as distinct from the practice of "self-deportation,"

which is often pre-emptive in nature: immigrants leaving to avoid being caught and formally booked and processed. (It is also next to impossible to quantify.)

Self-deportation has often come on the heels of raids designed to terrorize immigrant workers, anti-immigrant legislation designed to threaten immigrants' security and stability, and media campaigns designed to publicize these measures. This is one of the most valuable and original contributions of Goodman's book since he convincingly shows that "there is nothing voluntary" about voluntary departure or self-deportation (3). Coercion has always been baked into immigration policy and has always been designed to assert state power and cement racial dominance and hierarchies (2). By targeting immigrants in informal ways while also promoting nativist attitudes and encouraging vigilantism, the immigration service (in its various iterations, from the Immigration and Naturalization Service to Immigration and Customs Enforcement), has waged psychological war on immigrant communities, often deep in the interior of the country (its "internal borders," as Goodman puts it), where immigrants live and work, away from the border where immigration patrols more commonly operate (122).

In writing this book, Goodman faced a unique methodological challenge: documenting an undocumented history—undocumented both in the sense that he is writing a story of undocumented people, but also in the sense that by design, this process has seldom left much of a paper trail. Goodman attempts to solve this problem by interviewing immigrants who have been removed or who have self-deported, as well as immigration lawyers, immigrants' rights activists, union organizers, and the few immigration officials willing to speak to him about the subject. He also draws on government reports and hearings on immigration and on Freedom of Information Act filings as well as on other fragmentary but useful evidence, including published narratives in newspapers in both Mexico and the United States. These sources, especially the oral histories, allow him to fill in some of the blanks, though the limits of this approach are always evident in the rather small population sample he is able to engage in the book. Despite these challenges, Goodman at once probes the inner workings of this system and amplifies the voices of its targets, who have otherwise been regularly reduced to abstract numbers and simplistic stereotypes. In doing so, Goodman demonstrates the angst and agony of the choices immigrants have been forced to make, which often involved deciding whether to leave the country and its opportunities or stay and accept a life of constant fear. One wishes for more of these voices in the book, though there are legitimate methodological and ethical reasons—ones that anyone writing about immigration and immigrants will understand—for their relative absence.

Carefully researched and analytically grounded, *The Deportation Machine* nevertheless reads as—and is no doubt intended to be, at least in part—a political manifesto, one that aims to re-assert the humanity and human struggle of immigrants who have faced decades of anxiety, exploitation, terror, and violence, both legal and extra-legal. But they are not framed as passive victims here. In fact, Goodman stresses—perhaps overstates, as many well-meaning immigration scholars and advocates do—the effectiveness of migrant resistance, as well as that of their allies and advocates. Goodman traces how through lawsuits, conferences, demonstrations, and sanctuary, immigrants' rights activists have defied the powerful forces of immigration control.

This is not a definitive history—nor is it intended to be. Other scholars will surely look at the subject he introduces here and engage and challenge Goodman's interpretations. This should be welcomed, especially because too much of immigration history remains focused on the nativism of the early 20th century and the reforms of the middle of the century. Considering immigration reform and both nativist and pro-immigrant responses since that time will better help us understand the centrality of immigration history to American history writ large. Goodman's *The Deportation Machine*, like much of the other recent literature produced by emerging scholars, will help us get there. This is, indeed, an exciting contribution to that literature.

However future scholarship shapes out, it will be deeply influenced by Goodman's book. The story he tells here is understudied, underappreciated, and often misunderstood. It reveals not only how border and immigration control has been structured, but what they have meant for larger debates about citizenship and belonging—critical concepts for understanding and navigating our troubled times.

Review by Amanda Frost, University of Virginia School of Law

On the surface, Adam Goodman's deeply researched and disturbing book, *The Deportation Machine: America's Long History of Expelling Immigrants*, takes aim at the government's inhumane *methods* of removing immigrants. Lurking underneath, however, is a more radical objection—not just how, but *whether*, to deport immigrants who, as he puts it, have "done nothing more than enter the country without inspection or overstay a visa" (6). For the most part, the two critiques overlap and reinforce each other, but occasionally they feel in conflict.

Goodman's critique of the deportation machine's methods is masterful. As he explains, deportation is often cruel, frequently infused with racism, and lacks the

procedural protections to prevent erroneous deportations of those with a legal right to remain.

Goodman begins the book by describing the efforts to remove Chinese immigrants at the turn of the 20th century, which combines all three of these problems. Chinese immigrants, legal or not, were vilified, segregated, attacked, lynched, and forcibly driven out of cities and towns. These immigrants constructed the transcontinental railroad and labored in the mines, sustaining westward expansion through this dangerous and difficult work. In the words of Stanford historians Gordon Chang and Shelley Fisher Fishkin, they quite literally "helped build America."[1] But after an economic downturn in the 1870s their white neighbors declared the "Chinese must go!" and then used coercion, threats, and violence to accomplish that goal.[2]

Goodman brings the topic alive with vivid historical examples. He investigated the town of Truckee, California, which perfected a combination of economic boycotts, violence, arson, and threats to drive approximately a hundred Chinese immigrants out of town—a recipe for removal so effective that the "Truckee method" was adopted by other communities hoping for the same result (14–20).

As Goodman explains, the private, extralegal measures used in Truckee and many other communities helped to bridge the gap between restrictive immigration laws and the limited funds to enforce them (23). Lacking the manpower to arrest, detain, and then provide a formal deportation hearing for each unwanted immigrant, the government resorted to less formal means to accomplish the same goal. One such method is voluntary departure, now codified into law, under which immigrants can avoid detention, but only if they agree to leave and forgo the opportunity for a formal deportation hearing. Another is so-called "self-deportation"—the extralegal method of making life so miserable for immigrants that they "choose" to leave the country. In the early decades of the 20th century, Goodman finds, these methods far outnumbered formal deportations (38).

In the 1930s, in the depth of the Great Depression, the government launched mass deportation campaigns combining informal and formal deportation methods to drive out Mexican immigrants and their American-born children (42–43). (Tellingly, one official referred to a target of deportation as an "American-born

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[1] Gordon H. Chang and Shelley Fisher Fishkin, "The Chinese Helped Build America," *Forbes,* May 12, 2014.

[2] See, Beth Lew-Williams, *The Chinese Must Go: Violence, Exclusion, and the Making of the Alien in America* (Harvard University Press, 2018).

Mexican.") (43). Some were arrested and forced to leave, but many more self-deported after they were fired from their jobs, cut off from government benefits, and threatened with separation from their families. Building on the work of historians of the era, Goodman estimates that a combination of formal deportation, voluntary departure, and self-deportation resulted in removal of at least half a million Mexican immigrants and Mexican Americans between 1929 and 1939 (45).

The government resorted to the same tactics 20 years later. A similarly cruel removal campaign—the infamous "Operation Wetback"—forced or coerced the removal of one million people of Mexican heritage in the 1950s. Some were deported in boats that were so dangerously overcrowded and with conditions so inhumane that they were compared at the time to slave ships (101). Cruelty was effective. The more immigrants feared the deportation machine, the more they were likely to leave voluntarily. Goodman reports that by 1945, five times more immigrants were leaving through voluntary departures than as a result of formal deportations, and by 1950 that ratio had exploded to 56 voluntary departures to every 1 formal removal (53).

As Goodman explains, harsh enforcement policies continue to this day. Enhanced border enforcement leads migrants to cross the border in more desolate areas, resulting in death from hypothermia, heatstroke, and drowning (175). The Trump administration's 2018 "zero tolerance" policy sought to deter migration by separating immigrant children from their parents arriving at the border (201). Policies like the Migrant Protection Protocols (colloquially known as the "remain in Mexico" policy) force immigrants to remain in squalid and dangerous refugee camps outside the United States while awaiting asylum hearings.

As these examples illustrate, deportation is shot through with racism—sometimes explicitly in the law, more often in its implementation. At every turn, the government chooses to target those who look to immigration officials like undocumented immigrants. Mass raids on factories, random stops and searches, and added scrutiny at border crossings are all far likelier for those with brown skin, or who speak Spanish, or who have an accent. The unsurprising result is disproportionate enforcement of immigration laws against Latinos and, to a lesser degree, Arabs and South Asians (180).

The collateral consequence of this racist deportation machine is the harassment of *legal* immigrants and citizens of color, who are stopped by officials for whom brown skin equates with being a noncitizen. Goodman describes how the lack of procedural protections leads to unjustified apprehensions, interrogations,

and searches of U.S. citizens and legal immigrants of color. In some cases, such informal removal methods even result in deportations of citizens, as occurred during the mass roundups of the 1930s and 1950s, and in similar federal actions that continue to this day.[3] Such mistakes are relatively rare, to be sure, but would be rarer still if the government did not seek to replace formal removal procedures with ad hoc, informal ones.

That last point brings me back to the tension between Goodman's competing critiques of the deportation machine. Although Goodman's primary concern is with "inhumane enforcement" of immigration law, at other times he appears to question deportation of any unauthorized immigrant, under any circumstances.

In a chapter entitled "Fighting the Machine in the Streets and in the Courts," Goodman favorably describes legal strategies of groups like the Center for Autonomous Social Action (CASA), which has as its motto "We Are One People without Borders." CASA educated undocumented immigrants about their rights, reasoning that if they insisted upon being granted those rights they "stood a much greater chance of fighting off any attempt to expel them." (140). Goodman appears to criticize immigration officials for "target[ing] women [and] men for doing nothing more than entering the country without inspection"—that is, for entering illegally (50). In another chapter, Goodman describes a performance artist who imagines the chaos that would ensue if all the undocumented immigrants were deported, concluding the performance by asking: "Are you guys truly, truly aware of the logical consequences of your anti-immigrant politics?" (193). In the epilogue, Goodman observes that despite the deportation machine, "the vast majority of the estimated 10 million to 12 million undocumented immigrants in the United States stayed" through the Trump era—and then decries that they must live in "constant fear" of removal (203).

Goodman's stealth critique of the "deportation machine" suggests he believes it should be abolished, not improved. The core injustice, for Goodman, is not inhumane deportation methods, but rather the existence of borders and laws to enforce those borders—that is, a set of laws and policies that give some the right to enter and remain the United States while barring others from doing so.[4]

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[3] William Finnegan, "The Deportation Machine," *The New Yorker,* April 29, 2013; Jacqueline Stevens, "U.S. Government Unlawfully Detaining and Deporting U.S. Citizens as Aliens," *Virginia Journal of Social Policy and the Law* 18:3 (2011): 606–720; "Some Citizens being held as illegal immigrants," NBC News, April 13, 2009.

[4] See, e.g., Angélica Chàzaro, "The End of Deportation," *UCLA Law Review* 68 (2021): 1040–1128 (critiquing scholarship focused on improving immigration removal procedures, and arguing instead for abolition of deportation).

In this respect, his book reminds me of the evolution of the legal academic literature challenging mass incarceration in the United States. Much of that literature began with a focus on cruel, racist, error-prone methods by which the criminal justice system operates.[5] But the movement has now morphed into a critique of incarceration for all but the most dangerous offenders.[6] I am curious whether Goodman likewise envisions his book critiquing methods of enforcing immigration restrictions as a step toward questioning the restrictions themselves.

I would ask Goodman to imagine a reformed immigration system in which every undocumented immigrant was treated with dignity and respect, provided all the procedural bells and whistles of a full removal hearing, and then deported in a safe and humane way. In other words, to imagine a system in which the cruel, racist, and dangerously sloppy procedures he exposes were replaced by the best procedural practices. And now imagine that this reformed deportation machine was used to remove most of the 10 to 12 million undocumented immigrants in the United States.

Would Goodman be satisfied? I think not. I suspect that Goodman's primary concern is not *how* the deportation machine operates, but rather *whether* deportation should occur at all. I hope that will be the subject of his next book.

Review by Deborah Kang, University of Virginia

For decades, migration scholars have challenged the popular myth of the United States as a nation of immigrants. Far from being a site of refuge and inclusion, the American nation has more frequently excluded, detained, and punished noncitizens in its midst. In *The Deportation Machine: America's Long History of Expelling Immigrants*, Adam Goodman presents one of the most powerful rebuttals to this national myth. During the last century, the United States, Goodman argues, deported more foreigners than it admitted for permanent residence. These expulsions transpired not only through official deportation proceedings but also through less formal channels such as voluntary departure and what the

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[5] See, e.g., Brandon Garrett, *Convicting the Innocent: Where Criminal Prosecutions Go Wrong* (Harvard University Press, 2012); Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* (The New Press, 2010).

[6] See, e.g., Marie Gottschalk, *Caught: The Prison State and the Lockdown of American Politics* (Princeton University Press, 2016); Adriaan Lanni, "Taking Restorative Justice Seriously," *Buffalo Law Review* 69:3 (2021): 635–81.

author refers to as "self-deportation." Yet, in Goodman's rendering statistics alone cannot compel a rethinking of our immigrant past. Of equal importance are the experiences of the deportees themselves—experiences that illustrate how terror and fear rather than optimism and hope suffused the immigrant experience.

In expanding our understanding of deportation, Goodman eschews explanations that highlight the role of policymakers and political elites and centers the experiences of the migrants themselves. This is not to say that Goodman rejects the methods and conclusions of immigration policy historians; rather, it is to say that he brilliantly grasps that deterrence and fear are two sides of the same coin. While policymakers and policy historians might situate the history of deportation in a broader history of immigration deterrence, migrants themselves understand that same history from the perspective of individuals enduring a lifetime of fear. For Goodman, the history of U.S. deportation policy is incomplete without an account of how state and non-state actors deployed fear to shape migrant behaviors, drive them from their homes and livelihoods, and, in turn, preserve the predominantly white racial composition of the polity.

Given the centrality of fear to Goodman's narrative, it is fitting that he begins *The Deportation Machine* in the American West where, due to the weaknesses of local, state, and federal policing institutions, vigilante violence was widespread. Building upon the work of migration scholars such as Beth Lew Williams and Jean Pfaelzer, Goodman describes how settler colonial impulses led residents of Truckee, California, to devise tactics, collectively known as the "Truckee method," to drive Chinese immigrants out of town. These strategies included boycotts of Chinese-owned businesses, the firing of Chinese workers, the constant threat of physical assault, and public harassment. Ultimately, the fear campaign led to the self-deportation of thousands of Chinese men, women, and children not only in Truckee but also in hundreds of other towns in the American West that implemented similar measures.

The anti-Chinese movement in the West constituted a key factor in the creation of a federal immigration infrastructure that assumed the sole and nearly unreviewable authority to exclude and expel noncitizens. Yet, a lack of political will and funding diluted the authority of the new federal immigration enforcement mechanisms; as a result, as Goodman observes, "rather than obviating the need for self-deportation campaigns, federal control over immigration came to depend on them." Even more important, federal officials relied heavily on a procedure known as voluntary departure; "between 1927 and 1965," Goodman writes, "voluntary departures

outnumbered formal deportations nearly nine to one, representing more than 90 percent of the nearly 6.4 million expulsions the federal government recorded." (38) While the precise contours of voluntary departure would change over time, the procedure enabled migrants to leave the country on their own rather than undergo a formal deportation. For the nation's cash-strapped immigration bureaucracy, voluntary departure saved the time and expense surrounding detention and deportation. For migrants, voluntary departure, unlike deportation, enabled them to reenter the country. Although immigration officials framed voluntary departure in benign terms as a choice freely made available to eligible migrants, it, as Goodman extensively documents, became another instrument used to force migrants out of the country.

By mid-century, fear campaigns and voluntary departure became the "dominant mechanisms of expulsion." (38) Most of these expulsions, moreover, targeted Mexican migrants as the number of Chinese entries declined after the passage of the Chinese exclusion acts. During the Great Depression, Americans scapegoated Mexicans for the economic crisis and called for their deportation. Fiscal shortfalls, however, limited the ability of immigration officials to initiate formal deportation proceedings against thousands of Mexican migrants. As a result, local, state, and federal officials relied on alternatives that deprived migrants of the few due process rights they might have enjoyed in a deportation hearing but saved the public fisc. These alternatives included fear campaigns that led hundreds of thousands of ethnic Mexicans to self-deport or voluntarily depart. Attesting to the significance of self-deportation and voluntary departure in this period, Goodman notes, "Government officials repatriated more than twice as many Mexicans in 1931 alone (138,500) as they formally deported during the entire decade (64,000)." (46) During the 1950s, voluntary departures once again dwarfed formal deportations during the mass removal campaign known as Operation Wetback.

Bureaucratic and individual self-interest serve as the motive forces driving the narrative of the book. More specifically, the accumulative impulses of Anglo settlers in the American West, the multiple fiscal crises faced by federal agencies, and the profit motives of transportation companies informed the decisions of public and private actors to elect the most draconian approaches to expulsion. In the third and most fascinating chapter of the book, Goodman explains how bureaucratic cost-cutting imperatives and corporate profiteering came together to commodify migrants as cargo on the rails, planes, buses, and, in particular, ships that took them to Mexico. For Mexican shipping companies, contracts with the U.S. government ensured that their holds were never empty; they shipped

"bananas, cement and other cargo" (83) north while transporting deportees south. To further maximize their profits, they crowded as many migrants as possible into the holds and on deck, failed to provide mattresses and pillows, served spoilt food, and skirted safety standards. At the same time, the INS and shipping companies compounded the deportees' misery by insisting that they defray the costs of their own journeys with any funds they had on hand.

Despite their fears, migrants and their advocates, Goodman reminds us, routinely fought back. In the final chapters of the book, he explains how they took to the streets and the courts to protest INS factory raids of the late 1970s—raids that continued to rely heavily on voluntary departures rather than formal deportations. One class-action lawsuit filed on behalf of immigrant workers at the Sbicca shoe factory in Los Angeles resulted in a settlement that had broad implications for the millions of immigrants who fell within the sightlines of the deportation machine. Under the settlement, the INS agreed to advise detained migrants of their rights and give them an opportunity to seek legal counsel.

Today, the deportation machine, Goodman concludes, has largely "remained the same." (197) This is particularly the case when one views the history of deportation from the perspectives of the migrants themselves; for them, as Goodman poignantly conveys in the book's epilogue, the fear of deportation persists as a constant in their lives. The continuities of this history also underscore a truism of immigration policy development: when presented with a menu of policy options, policymakers, for over 100 years, have taken the path of least resistance. Rather than choose to create robust asylum, refugee, and immigration admissions systems, they have built a massive immigration enforcement apparatus that includes the deportation machine. Presenting fewer fiscal and political costs, the machine, Goodman rightly observes, grinds on.

The Deportation Machine may not provide a detailed account of how formal deportation itself changed over time and the specific varieties of voluntary departure created by the INS during the 20th century. It may not satisfy those who want to know more about the political machinations at the local, state, and federal levels that shaped the deportation machine. A more extensive account of the social and legal responses to deportation and voluntary departure would also be of great interest to legal scholars and immigration advocates. Nevertheless, *The Deportation Machine* is a must-read for scholars of migration and borders. It is a deeply researched and beautifully written book that challenges us to broaden our notions of deportation and enriches our understanding of its causes and human impacts.

Review by Yael Schacher, Refugees International

The word expulsion in Goodman's subtitle is deliberate: it is meant to include various ways that immigrants have been pushed out of the United States regardless of the procedural or legal vehicle used. It is the same word in the title of Hidetaka Hirota's book—*Expelling the Poor*—about the treatment of (mostly) Irish immigrants in the 19th century.[1] Both books use this term to get away from an exclusive focus on the federal government's handling of deportation. For Goodman, expulsion is an "umbrella term" that encapsulates "three mechanisms: formal deportation, voluntary departure, and self deportation."

In Goodman's telling, by the mid-20th century, the federal government was doing everything it could to get Mexicans to leave the United States aside from paying for deportation hearings, prolonged detention, and travel costs in most cases. Goodman focuses on the government's support for vigilante violence, fear campaigns, and voluntary departures that were not so much voluntary—as those caught by the INS *had* to leave—as cost-saving deprivations of procedural rights. When, in the mid 1950s, the federal government paid a private shipping company to take Mexicans deep into Mexico to deter migration, it did so with deliberate and dramatic inhumanity that backfired as the result of a "mutinous uprising" by deportees and criticism in the press. Especially in his fifth chapter—"fighting the machine in the streets and in the courts"—Goodman shows that resistance to the machine by immigrants and their supporters shaped its workings.

But there are three elements regarding the workings of the deportation machine that Goodman could have explored further, each of which has important implications for today's immigration policy.

The first has to do with the history of the use of voluntary departure. As Goodman points out, immigration authorities began using voluntary departure in the early 20th century especially to quickly expel Mexicans. The concept of "voluntary" did not actually mean voluntary: Mexicans had to leave but were given a choice about the procedure they would be put through. Voluntary departure was easier for the government to do and did not impact the immigrant's ability to remigrate to the United States. In my own research on the history of asylum, I found that voluntary departure was used to different effect. When asylum seekers in the 1920s and 1930s

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[1] Hidetaka Hirota, *Expelling the Poor: Atlantic Seaboard States and the Nineteenth-Century Origins of American Immigration Policy* (Oxford, 2019).

said they feared harm should they be returned to their home country, immigration officials sometimes allowed them to "voluntarily depart" to another country, so long as they could secure entry documents and pay their way there. Voluntary departure was thus used, before World War II, to get around acknowledging the reality of forced displacement and to avoid creating a category of refugee in U.S. immigration law. Today, removal procedure allows asylum seekers to specify an alternative country of removal should they be denied asylum. But the Department of Homeland Security usually insists on removal to home country, knowing it will be exceedingly difficult, if not impossible, to get any other country to accept deportation of a non-national. It knows this because there are many asylum seekers who have won "withholding of removal" to their home countries that DHS would like to deport elsewhere but cannot. These individuals are frequently detained for long periods. All of this attests to the reality that, as Goodman explains towards the end of his book (and graphically shows in figure 37 on page 168), voluntary departure has been almost entirely supplanted by formal removal procedures with "consequences," including prolonged detention and bars on readmission. This, coinciding with a shift in the demographics of border arrivals, has cemented the idea that Mexicans and Central Americans cannot be refugees. Further, it is not simply coincidental that the lawyers fighting against the use of voluntary departure in the 1970s came to do so through the representation of Jose Jacques Medina, a Mexican asylum seeker turned Center for Autonomous Social Action (CASA) activist. Just a short time afterwards, in the early 1980s, the same lawyers who helped the Sbicca workers fought against the use of voluntary departure to prevent Salvadorans from exercising their right to seek asylum in southern California.

A second, related, omission has to do with the history of enforcement against unauthorized entry at the border specifically. The focus on voluntary departure sidesteps the long, racialized, and anti-Mexican-focused history of the criminalization of unauthorized entry, a history that began with the 1929 law establishing criminal penalties for the acts of illegal entry and re-entry (as analyzed by historians such as Kelly Lytle Hernandez) but that has gained increased prominence since the 1990s with prosecutions under sections 1325 and 1326 of the 1996 immigration law. Further, the proportion of removals of *recent border arrivals* to those living in the interior of the country has grown tremendously in recent years. Democratic administrations, in particular, have distinguished between recent unauthorized border arrivals—whom they target for enforcement—and unauthorized immigrants living in the interior for longer, to whom they provide discretionary relief from deportation. Today, the vast majority of the people in ICE detention facilities all over the country awaiting removal are

recent border arrivals. And yet, despite this overwhelming focus on removing those who cross the border without authorization and criminally prosecuting them if they are caught entering again, the Border Patrol and its union complain bitterly of Department of Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas's leniency using language reminiscent of that hurled at Secretary Leonel Castillo in the 1970s (as recounted by Goodman in chapter four).

The history of the Mexican government's role in workings of the deportation machine, and the role of foreign relations more generally, also merit more attention. As scholars such as Romeo Guzman, Alberto Garcia, and Ana Minian have shown, Mexican government officials have played a varied and complex role in managing migration— getting involved in everything from recruitment of Mexican laborers, to advocating for the rights of Mexican migrants in the United States, to working with the United States on migration enforcement.[2] The motives of the Mexican government and the impact of migration on the evolution of Mexican-U.S. relations over time does not get adequate attention in Goodman's discussion of the boatlifts at midcentury and externalization of migration control in the late 20th century. More generally, in the 21st century, when the use of voluntary departure has become increasingly rare, the deportation machine cannot work without the consent of the countries deportees are sent to. Formal deportation is a question of international relations. Expulsions under Title 42 of the public health code during the COVID-19 pandemic has been an interesting mix. For Mexicans and people from the northern triangle countries of Central America and Haiti, it has meant expulsion without due process or legal consequences similar to voluntary departure. Since migrants from certain other countries—Nicaragua, Cuba, and Venezuela—cannot be sent back to their home countries, the United States has redoubled efforts to have allied transit countries (including Mexico) prevent their entry or take them back. Beyond noting the shift of immigration enforcement south of the U.S.-Mexico border, little has been written scrutinizing how this has influenced politics and policy in Mexico (and other countries) and the experience of migrants in the hemisphere. Another interesting development in recent years has been the effort by the United States to export the "voluntary departure" component of its deportation machine via funding for the "assisted voluntary return" (AVR) programs of the International Organization of Migration (IOM, a UN agency). So, for example, a Honduran migrant in Mexico who finds himself unable to seek asylum in the

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[2] Romeo Guzmán, "Paper Trails: Repatriates, Mexican Consuls, and Transnational Mobility during the Great Depression," *Journal of American History* 109, no. 2 (September 2022): 336–47; Alberto Garcia, *Abandoning their Beloved Land: The Politics of Bracero Migration in Mexico* (University of California Press, 2023); Ana Minian, "Offshoring Migration Control: Guatemalan Transmigrants and the Construction of Mexico as a Buffer Zone," *American Historical Review* 125, no. 1 (February 2020): 89–111.

United States because of new border policies might "voluntarily" return home (from Mexico) through the IOM AVR program. This program, like so many elements of the deportation machine, is about migration control and international relations—and has little to do with the needs and hopes of migrants. A more general question raised for me reading the book with an eye towards other countries: are the elements of the deportation machine as described by Goodman unique to the United States? What elements of the machine have counterparts elsewhere?

Author's Response by Adam Goodman, University of Illinois Chicago

Some say that writing a book is a solitary endeavor. True enough. There's nothing quite like the acute isolation one feels while staring at the blinking cursor on the blank white screen, fingers motionless on the keyboard. Yet, working on *The Deportation Machine* over the course of a decade also connected me to people across the United States and Mexico. Family and friends offered support and encouragement, colleagues and students shared feedback and ideas, archivists and librarians directed me to sources, and the individuals I interviewed welcomed me into their homes, offices, and lives.

Now that the book is out, I am grateful to Benjamin Guterman, editor of *Federal History*, for organizing this roundtable and providing me with the opportunity to engage with a group of scholars whom I admire. My sincere thanks to Maddalena Marinari for her kind introduction and Eladio Bobadilla, Amanda Frost, S. Deborah Kang, and Yael Schacher for their smart, generous reviews. They raise important points and questions, both historical and political in nature. I appreciate the chance to respond, while also highlighting some of *The Deportation Machine*'s central arguments and takeaways.

My book traces the long, bipartisan history of deportation from the United States, revealing how authorities have forced or coerced 57 million people out of the country since the 1880s. But that's not the book I first set out to write. I originally thought that I'd explore the transnational history of Mexican migration and expulsion during a shorter period, perhaps a decade or two in the middle of the 20th century. I imagined a circular narrative that would follow people as they crossed the border and lived and worked in the United States before being apprehended, detained, and deported. Then I'd pick up the story as they navigated life back in Mexico and decided whether to migrate north again. Structuring the book in this way would have enabled me to take up Schacher's suggestion to offer a more substantive analysis of the role that international relations play in the history

of deportation. Several historians have made significant contributions in this area.[1] Future scholars will no doubt build on their work. In this case, however, the archives led me in a different direction.

Early in my research, after scouring the records of the Immigration and Naturalization Service and Department of Homeland Security and crunching numbers from statistical reports, I came to a startling realization: 85 percent of all deportations during the past 140 years had occurred via an administrative mechanism euphemistically known as "voluntary departure." We knew little about these informal expulsions, which most scholars had dismissed or only mentioned in passing. But the sources clearly indicated that we can't understand the history of immigration enforcement, or how it has shaped U.S. politics and ideas of what it means to be American, without centering coercive deportations.[2] Voluntary departures and self-deportation campaigns grounded in fear enabled immigration officials to sidestep the rigid, costly legal processes that formal removals entailed. At least 94 percent of deportations from the United States prior to the 21st century occurred as a result of the unilateral decisions of low-level bureaucrats, not bilateral negotiations between nation-states.[3] The unfettered power to deport large

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[1] In addition to the scholars Schacher mentions, see, for example, Kelly Lytle Hernández, *Migra!: A History of the U.S. Border Patrol* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010); Torrie Hester, *Deportation: The Origins of U.S. Policy* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017); Hidetaka Hirota, *Expelling the Poor: Atlantic Seaboard States and the 19th-Century Origins of American Immigration Policy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017); Donna R. Gabaccia, *Foreign Relations: American Immigration in Global Perspective* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2012); Laura D. Gutiérrez, "A Constant Threat: Deportation and Return Migration to Northern Mexico, 1918–1965" (Ph.D. diss., University of California, San Diego, 2016); Emily Pope-Obeda, "National Expulsions in a Transnational World: The Global Dimensions of American Deportation Practice, 1920–1935," in *Deportation in the Americas: Histories of Exclusion and Resistance*, eds. Kenyon Zimmer and Cristina Salinas (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2018), 18–49.

[2] Schacher is right that voluntary departure sometimes served as a benefit or privilege extended to migrants who couldn't return to their home countries. This is an important observation that deserves more attention. However, in the vast majority of cases, officials turned to voluntary departure as a punitive mechanism to expel Mexican migrants.

[3] My book builds on and is in conversation with influential scholarship that has examined the inner workings of the immigration bureaucracy. See, for example, Lytle Hernández, *Migra!*; S. Deborah Kang, *The INS on the Line: Making Immigration Law on the U.S.-Mexico Border, 1917–1954* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017); Lucy Salyer, *Laws Harsh as Tigers: Chinese Immigrants and the Shaping of Modern Immigration Law* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995); Mae M. Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004); Kitty Calavita, *Inside the State: The Bracero Program, Immigration and the I.N.S.* (New York: Routledge, 1992); Erika Lee, *At America's Gates: Chinese Immigration during the Exclusion Era, 1882–1943* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003); Josiah McC. Heyman, "Putting Power in the Anthropology of Bureaucracy: The Immigration and Naturalization Service at the Mexico-United States Border," *Current Anthropology* 36, no. 2 (Apr. 1995): 261–87; Jeffrey S. Kahn, *Islands of Sovereignty: Haitian Migration and the Borders of Empire* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2019).

numbers of people remains central to U.S. migration control policy today, even as formal deportations have increased. The clearest evidence of this, as Schacher acknowledges, is the fact that officials have carried out more than two million fast-track expulsions under Title 42 of the public health code since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic.[4]

Examining the history of deportation and the experiences of deportees over nearly a century-and-a-half allowed me to identify important continuities. The reviewers note many of these. The mechanisms of expulsion—formal deportation, voluntary departure, and self-deportation—have stayed the same, even as the machine has changed dramatically (more on this below).[5] A second through line is the demand in the United States for cheap, exploitable immigrant labor and the role that authorities have played in determining who can live and work in the country, and under what conditions. A related point, which Kang and Bobadilla elucidate, is that centering the experiences of deportees illuminates the devastating impact that punishment- and profit-driven immigration policies have had on individuals, families, and communities. Another continuity is that U.S. authorities have disproportionately targeted Mexicans for expulsion, especially via voluntary departure and self-deportation. Their near-exclusive focus on a single group for the better part of a century created the stereotype of ethnic Mexicans—irrespective of legal status—as prototypical "illegal aliens," functioning as a form of what historian Barbara Fields and sociologist Karen Fields have called "racecraft." The machine made and reified a racist ideology that, when combined with bureaucratic self-interest and capitalist imperatives, fueled the machine.[6]

Undocumented immigrants and their allies have also consistently fought against deportation. Bobadilla is right to assert that it's possible to overstate "the effectiveness of migrant resistance." I did my best not to, noting that many people in the United

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[4] It's also important to note, as I explain in the book's sixth chapter, that formal deportations, which carry harsher consequences than informal expulsions, have come to resemble voluntary departures in their expedited nature and restrictions on due process. U.S. Customs and Border Protection, "Nationwide Encounters" (accessed July 26, 2022), *https://www.cbp.gov/newsroom/stats/nationwide-encounters*.

[5] The deportation machine is composed of laws, policies, means, and strategies that together facilitate mass expulsion and enable authorities to exert control over those who remain.

[6] As Barbara Fields argues in her 1990 *New Left Review* essay, later reprinted in the Fields sisters' book: "Race is neither biology nor an idea absorbed into biology by Lamarckian inheritance. It is ideology, and ideologies do not have lives of their own. … If race lives on today, it does not live on because we have inherited it from our forebears of the seventeenth century or the eighteenth or nineteenth, but because we continue to create it today." Karen E. Fields and Barbara J. Fields, *Racecraft: The Soul of Inequality in American Life* (New York: Verso, 2012), 146.

States without authorization have limited legal rights and few economic resources. Moreover, those who contest their cases often face an insurmountable imbalance of power when confronting the federal immigration bureaucracy. The deck is stacked against them. Despite this bleak reality, it's also true that people have been struggling against the machine for as long as it has existed.

The reviewers pay less attention to another of the book's aims and contributions: delineating when, why, and how deportation has changed over time, and to what effect. The story I tell pinpoints and analyzes critical junctures in the machine's history, rather than flattening them out. I want to emphasize a few of these pivotal moments.

One, which Bobadilla, Frost, and Kang discuss, is my decision to begin the book in the last decades of the 19th century, a time defined by the hardening of international borders and the transition to federal control over immigration. The deportation machine came into being during this period, when authorities invested most of their energies and resources into regulating migration from China, and soon from Japan and Southern and Eastern Europe. They only started singling out Mexicans in the late 1910s and 1920s, after Congress severely curtailed trans-Pacific and trans-Atlantic migration, leaving U.S. employers to look south for the much-needed labor once supplied by migrants from around the world.

Forty years later, Congress ended the bracero guest worker program on December 31, 1964, and implemented a cap on immigration from the Western Hemisphere under the Immigration Act of 1965. The confluence of these two actions closed off opportunities for authorized Mexican migration, resulting in a spike in undocumented border crossings and a subsequent crackdown by authorities. Previous expulsion campaigns had largely been episodic, but as officials ramped up border enforcement and neighborhood and workplace raids in the 1970s, the possibility of apprehension and deportation became a fact of everyday life for many Mexicans. In the two decades after 1976, deportations exceeded one million per year on average, with voluntary departures to Mexico never accounting for fewer than 95 percent of total expulsions. This, I argue, marked the dawn of a new era: the age of mass expulsion.

The deportation machine has undergone a radical transformation since the turn of the 21st century. The Immigration Act of 1996, signed into law by President Bill Clinton, expanded the scope of who U.S. officials could formally deport, limited the rights of people facing expulsion, and augmented the enforcement budget. The events

of September 11, 2001, and the creation of the Department of Homeland Security led federal officials to dedicate tens of billions of dollars, an unprecedented amount, to the newly established Customs and Border Protection and Immigration and Customs Enforcement agencies. A decade later, formal deportations outnumbered informal expulsions for the first time in 70 years. The criminalization of migration, militarization of the border, expansion of immigration detention, and increased reliance on formal removals has made deportation more punitive than ever.

This, in turn, brings me to Frost's question about whether I believe that expulsions should occur. Though my book offers no prescriptions, policymakers would be wise to consider its empirical findings and implications. Migration has been a constant throughout human history, and people across time and place have continued to migrate, regardless of border controls. Acknowledging this, the question for public officials then becomes: at what cost? The deportation machine has exacted extraordinary physical, psychological, and material costs on both noncitizens and citizens for more than a century. Rather than expelling undocumented immigrants, federal authorities should enable them to regularize their legal status. Yet there's little political will among Democratic and Republican elected officials to do so— which is not to say that nothing can be done or that the status quo is inevitable.

Just as past laws and policies built the deportation machine, future laws and policies can dismantle it. The legislative and executive branches can take meaningful action today that would go a long way toward making our immigration system more humane and fiscally sound. Congress can provide a pathway to citizenship for undocumented immigrants already living in the country and expand opportunities for authorized immigration moving forward. The second provision is essential. Otherwise, in a few decades we'll find ourselves in a similar predicament as we're in now, almost 40 years after the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 allowed millions of people in the United States to legalize but, crucially, didn't address future migration.

Political problems demand political solutions, and history shows that policymakers usually don't act unless pushed. Change will come from broad coalitions of people organizing for socially meaningful power.