The Mexican repatriation

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# Introduction

The Mexican repatriation was a mass deportation of Mexicans from America. This deportation took place between the years of 1929 and 1936. The American authorities from that time, believed that ailing Mexicans, along with the increasing tides of Mexican immigrants coming to America, threaten the peace in the United States. Different historians cite different reasons for the repatriation of Mexicans, but a majority of scholars agree that these numbers range between 0.4 to 2 million (Hoffman 1974). The people who were deported to Mexico mainly included patients admitted in American hospitals and the Bright Red Americans. The reason for deporting the Bright Red Americans was the political motivations. As some believed that Red Americans had been a victim of racial violence from long before and they were not extended the citizenship rights, either. During the formative years of America, these Red Americans also faced swerving repercussions, which resulted in mass migrations in the early years as well.

During this repatriation process, the Red Americans constituted around sixty percent of the people who were forced to leave the American land. Some also cite the World Wars as the primary reason for the repatriation process, since the American economy had not come out of the effects of the great depression. From the formative years of America and after setting of the international boundaries between Mexico and America, the proximity has allowed many illegal immigrants to lengthen their stay in America. Such a mass inflow of Mexicans, therefore, forced the U.S. authorities to take coercive measures against the Mexican and Red Americans. Like the Mexicans, Mestizos and Red Americans were easily identifiable, which allowed the American authorities to initiate organized deportations (Hoffman 1974). At the local level, state and domestic governments were responsible to initiate measure of local people, whereas, the federal government-sponsored such programs, in the areas which were out of the state control. Seeing the brutal manners initiated by American governments against Mexicans, the Mexican repatriation meets the modern characterizations of ethnic cleansing.

# Discussion

## Conceding of Mexican territories

America and Mexico had never shared warmth in the early history of their bilateral relations. In addition to the repatriation, the history of American-Mexican relations suggest that they had not remained upright in the formative phases. With the American-Mexican wars of 1845, the seed of discord between both the nations were laid. America, for one reason or another, had remained involved in the internal politics of Mexico, as well. According to historians, there were several factors, some of them were related to Mexican Government instability after Independence. As time went on, it became very difficult to control such a vast territory with different political ideas. There was a liberal group who wanted Mexico to become the Federal Republic and there was another which wanted it to be the Central Republic, for this specific group it became complicated to control the Northern part of the country, so Texas got its independence favored by some American citizens who had already settled there (Balderrama and Rodríguez 2006).

In the later years, based on the Manifest Destiny, United States began a furious plan to take control over all the North American territory, it was very difficult for the Mexican Government to stop this plan as their army was inferior in men and equipment, and therefore they could defend only a little part of the territory. The Treaty of Guadalupe finally brought the US invasion to an end, and both the countries agreed on setting the new borders. Within the phases following the U.S.-Mexican wars and the manifest destiny, United States remained successful in annexing the territories of Gadsden, Texas, California, New Mexico, Utah, Colorado, Wyoming and Arizona. During the annexation of these territories, the Mexicans there numbered around eighty thousand to a hundred thousand. These Mexicans were promised U.S. citizenship, but later they were denied the basic citizenship rights, as well (Balderrama and Rodríguez 2006). These evidence revealed how the United States paved its way toward annexing the Mexican territories, in the first place.

## Immigration towards America

In the early phases of the formation of the United States and Mexico, immigration to either side was not easy, unless the opposing side were to take the control of land, as America did in its attempt to capture the lands of Mexico. As time went on, the communication between both sides improved, and there were better rail and road links, which mostly allowed the Mexicans to leave their former lands. In the early phases of immigration, the Mexicans moved toward the Southwest side of America, as it had better railway linkages. Since Mexicans started to make their way toward America, they found the new land more feasible in terms of economy and labor. The Mexican revolution was also a significant factor in the increase in immigration. During the years between 1910 to 1920, and during the Cristero Wars until the end of the second decade of the twentieth century, a significant number of Mexicans crossed the border toward America.

On the American side, there was a mixed reaction about immigration. Americans who wanted cheaper labor, both in the fields and in industries, endorsed immigration, however, those who had nationalistic feelings avoided interacting with the new people (Balderrama and Rodríguez 2006). Some authors have also cited instances where the wealthy Americans made direct requests to the Mexican President of that time to send in more labor, as they were lacking the human resource. Such Americans later violated the norms of labor and recruitment enacted by the U.S. government and made such Mexicans live an impoverished life. They were then left with no other option than to adopt crime and illegal activities to make both ends meet. These waves of immigration gradually paved the way for the economic downturn of America. In the years of depression and following those years, there was a strong feeling among Americans, that their government was spending too large of a fund over Mexicans, which in the time of crisis is unfitting.

## Immigration act and citizenship law of America

Geographically-barred people who immigrated to the U.S. were the main target of the Immigration act and citizenship laws of America, passed in 1921 and 1929, subsequently. These Acts placed extensive authority at the prerogative of immigration control authorities, especially for the people of Mexican origin, and set high preferences for Europeans also, who were wishing to immigrate toward America. For such reason, one may surmise that economic and cultural linkages between the U.S. and Mexico started declining, however, between the US and Europe, started strengthening. Such laws and acts, more correctly stated as the Immigration Act of 1929, limited absolute numbers of immigration and imposed a quota on immigrants from any one country to 2% of the people from that country in the USA as of the 1890 census (Balderrama and Rodríguez 2006). There were many causes, but chief among them was the backlash against immigration from Mexico and South & Central/Eastern Europe during the first two decades of the 20th Century.

At this time, there was internationally much unrest and worry about subversives, and had been a number of domestic terrorist attacks by Polish/Italian and other immigrants from the region and their second-generation descendants. Some scholars have also cited these immigration laws as legal maneuvering towards eliminating Mexicans from America. After the formal acceptance of these laws by the U.S. House of Representatives and The Senate, Mexicans started accepting the fact that there remained nothing more they could do, but to return to their lands, willfully. Soon after these acts, the American authorities initiated coercive measures to limit the movement of Mexicans inside the American territories. It took not much longer, when first, the Los Angeles Welfare Department announced the removal of Mexican patients from the hospitals. After the removal of patients, formally, the repatriation drives started in full swing. According to Hoffman, the people who were deported from America during this deportation drive included more than 60 percent of Americans, who were left with no other option, other than being left helpless at the Mexican border, who finally chose Mexico as their new homeland (Hoffman 1974).

# Conclusion

As Balderrama terms ethnic cleansing as the mass exclusion of people from one place to another, therefore, the above-mentioned evidence suggests that Mexican repatriation was more alike the modern definition of ethnic cleansing (Balderrama 2005). The mass repatriation of Mexicans to their lands, with no services at hand, left the Mexicans with no other option, other than to accept and adopt the circumstances. The American authors neglect to mention the term “repatriation” since it leaves the worst aspect of American statesmanship over the minds of the coming generations. Even the official documents related to U.S. history skip mention of the Mexican repatriation events. The three events mentioned above, further suggest, how the Mexican repatriation was, in fact, the ethnic cleansing of the Mexicans. As with conceding of the Mexican territories, the Mexicans were deprived of the lands, and with the mass immigration toward America, they faced brutal oppression, and finally, the immigration acts and laws left no stone unturned, that the Mexicans were forced to leave American land, as early as possible. These facts, along with the phenomenon mentioned above, suggest that Mexican repatriation conforms to each aspect of ethnic cleansing.

# References:

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