THE LONG-RUN IMPACTS OF MEXICAN-AMERICAN SCHOOL DESEGREGATION IN THE UNITED STATES

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While historical accounts point to widespread segregation of Mexican-Americans throughout the southwestern United States in the early to mid-20th century, the economics literature has paid relatively little attention to the elimination of de jure segregation for this population. In this paper, we provide the first quantitative analysis of the impact of allowing Mexican-Americans to access white schools by examining the impact of the 1947 Mendez v. Westminster decision on educational outcomes of Hispanics in California. Our results suggest that the impact of school desegregation led to a significant increase in the quantity and quality of schooling for the cohort exposed to the treatment, relative to the cohorts starting school prior to Mendez.

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