

**Lecture**

Police Killings of Blacks and the Legacy of Racial Violence in the U.S. South

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The rate of police-involved killings in the U.S. greatly exceeds that of other industrialized nations. Tensions surrounding the United States’ unique experience with lethal police violence have reached a boiling point over the last few years with a number of high profile shootings of often unarmed black individuals. Yet, we know very little about the antecedents of police violence, and even less about what explains the distribution of police killings across space. In this talk, I ask whether there is a connection between contemporary police killings of Blacks in the U.S. and the country’s unique history of racial subjugation and violence. I focus particularly on lynching era violence in the South—in which thousands of recently-freed Blacks were killed by mob violence between 1877 and 1950—and theorize how this legacy of racial terror casts a long shadow that continues to shape implicit biases of law enforcement today. I explore the potential pathways that lynching violence in the past might connect with contemporary police violence. I test these pathways with unique data on lethal police shootings of Blacks between 2013 and 2017.

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**Organizers:**

Antonio Maturo, Dipartimento di Sociologia e Diritto dell’Economia, Unibo

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