

Separate Destinations

Migration, Immigration, and the Politics of Places

JAMES G. GIMPEL

Ann Arbor

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*To my father,
the late Graydon G. Gimpel, and my
late father-in-law, Abdon Omar Yacobucci,
who were very familiar with the costs
of migration.*

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Preface

I started this project several years ago when I took an interest in reading about population mobility internal to the United States. My interest in the subject stems from my background as well as from interesting books I have read as a social scientist. Having grown up in a family whose history involved considerable internal migration, I have long wondered about the impact of population mobility on people's lives. But a less studied subject in the social sciences is what happens to the places affected by mobility. The strong preference for survey data in the social sciences has made it hard to find works about the effect of mobility on places. An equally strong bias in favor of "topic" oriented studies, and against "area" or "place" oriented studies, has made it more difficult to publish works about political or geographic units below the national level. In spite of disciplinary conventions, here I seek to ask questions such as: What happens to a *place* when half of its population leaves over the course of two decades? Who leaves? Who remains behind? And what happens to the places the people are moving to? Answering these questions requires a heterodox methodology. Individual-level data are important, but aggregate data are also necessary. A large number of cases must be analyzed, along with careful and detailed examinations of important cases, both typical and atypical.

The two books that I count as my starting points on the subject of internal migration come at the topic from very different angles. James N. Gregory's *American Exodus* (1989) is the story of the southwestern migration to California in the 1930s—not the fictionalized version of John Steinbeck but one more true to the facts of migration and resettlement. Thad Brown's *Migration and Politics* (1988) is the best political science work on the subject of internal migration. Brown lays down an indispensable theoretical foundation for considering the effect of mobility on political behavior and takes steps to verify his hypotheses with survey data. I consider

these books to be major contributions to the study of internal migration in the United States.

The immigration ideas in this project were stirred up on a Maryland beach in the summer of 1995. There I read a controversial polemic by a well-known journalist against the generous immigration policy the United States had adopted thirty years before. I wanted to test a few of the claims that were made in that book and elsewhere about the settlement patterns of immigrants. The immigration debate is controversial and vitriolic. Those on each side want to know where academic researchers stand. "Open borders or slam the door shut? With whom will you align yourself?" were the demanding questions that so many were asking as I wrote this book and collaborated on another. I have no particular ax to grind. The immigration issue piques my curiosity. Still, I am not a totally disinterested observer. While my own immigrant roots are some distance in the past, I am the spouse of a recent immigrant and the father of another. I am not for slamming shut the golden door. But I don't think we can accommodate everyone who would like to come here either.

I have benefited from the comments and criticism of colleagues who sat in on presentations at professional conferences. Parts of the book were presented at the Midwest Political Science Association meeting in 1996 and the American Political Science Association meeting in 1997. Serious studies of migration must inevitably take one away from political science, however, where very little work is being done on the subject. On the subject of internal migration, I have learned a lot from William Frey of the University of Michigan's Population Studies Center. A demographer and sociologist, Frey introduced me to several of the important ideas I develop throughout the manuscript. Conversations with anthropologists, with their wealth of local or "place specific" knowledge, were very helpful, as were discussions with several labor economists who specialize in population mobility.

Several people provided data, information, and suggestions on particular states and localities. These include Dario Moreno (for Florida), Rodney Hero (for Colorado), Carol Andreas (for Colorado), Don Stull (for Kansas), and Suzanne Parker (for Florida). The University of Kentucky Data Center provided survey data for the 1991 and 1995 gubernatorial elections in that state (free of charge!). At Suzanne Parker's direction, Florida State University provided data from its annual policy surveys, again free of charge.

I interviewed many state and local experts and observers to obtain a ground-level understanding of what was happening in the places where

they live and work. Reporters from local newspapers were helpful, but so were city and county planners whose job it is to study population movement and its impact. A partial list of sources includes the following: John Engelenner, *Sacramento Bee*; Don Vest, City of Pueblo Planning Department; Janet Day, *Denver Post*; Randy Olthoff, Elmira County Planning Department; April Hunt, *Elmira Star-Gazette*; Rick Moriarty, *Syracuse Post Standard*; Steve Hughes, Elmira City Council; Joe Salvo, New York City Planning Department; Frank Varty, New York City Planning Department; Tony DiStefano, *Newsday* (New York); Ann Devinney, *Gettysburg Times*; Chris Barber, *Daily Local News* (Chester County, PA); Jim McKay, *Pittsburgh Press*; Dennis Roddy, *Pittsburgh Press*; Fred Rapone, *Daily Press* (McKeesport); Dave Skelly, Erie County Planning Department; Tom Fiedler, *Miami Herald*; Mark Washburn, *Miami Herald*; Mark Silva, *Miami Herald*; Tony Boylan, *Florida Today* (Melbourne, FL); Allen Horton, *Herald-Tribune* (Sarasota); Bill Berlow, *Tallahassee Democrat*; Brett Cott, Kansas State Democratic Party; Rick Aom, *Wichita Eagle*; Steve Nicely, *Kansas City Star*; Bill Bardleman, *Paducah Sun*; Jim Riis, *Kentucky Post*; and Patrick Crowley, *Cincinnati Enquirer*.

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