Separate Destinations
Migration, Immigration, and the Politics of Places

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Ann Arbor
THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN PRESS
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 your-
selves?” 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 disin-
terested 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 accom-
modate 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 sub-
ject 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 popula-
tion mobility.

Several people provided data, information, and suggestions on partic-
ular states and localities. These include Dario Moreno (for Florida), Rod-
ney 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*.

Valuable comments, criticism, and encouragement came from departmental colleagues Paul Herrnson, Mark Graber, Irwin Morris, Clarence Stone, and Eric Uslaner and from colleagues at other institutions, including Mark Hansen, Peter Skerry, Rodney Hero, Thad Brown, Jim Edwards, Dario Moreno, and Don Stull. This acknowledgment does not mean that they agree with either my general argument or with anything particular I say in the book. I also thank the students in my seminars at the University of Maryland, who contributed valuable insights and provided generous, if often captive, feedback.

I owe a special debt of gratitude to the John M. Olin Foundation for the generous financial support that permitted me release time and technical resources essential to finishing the book.

My editor, Charles Myers, at the University of Michigan Press was patient and supportive as I finished the manuscript and did not balk at making the extra effort to publish the maps. Based on my experience, I can enthusiastically recommend the Press to anyone.

As always, God was with me from beginning to end and cleared away many real and imagined obstacles to the completion of the book. My loyal and loving spouse, Veronica, has faithfully migrated with me through four states spanning a period of thirteen years. Without her, the journey would have been far less pleasant and the effects of migration far less benign.