CHAPTER 3

Colorado: National Crossroads

Immigrant workers from Mexico and Central America are valued in Colorado's mountain resort towns, as they are elsewhere, for their willingness to work hard for low pay. The demand for cheap, exploitable labor, though, has not been matched with an equal concern for affordable housing. Immigrant workers find it nearly impossible to reside anywhere near Aspen, Vail, Keystone, or the other winter playgrounds where they work. In the mid-1990s, the *Rocky Mountain News* reported that families of four were living in tents without water and electricity because they could not afford the pricey rents in the exclusive resort towns (Kelly 1994). The high cost of housing in the ski areas forced many low income workers to commute twenty or thirty miles, snarling traffic and burdening existing infrastructure. The poor housing conditions and low pay prompted the Catholic Archdiocese in Denver to finance the construction of multifamily housing in several mixed income mountain communities while pressuring the recreation industry to increase wages and benefits. Where low-paying service jobs were once held by young white ski bums who came and went seasonally, the immigrant workers have families and are looking to settle down permanently (Kelly 1994; Weller 1994; Frazier 1994). The resort owners and wealthy part-time residents have sent clear signals that cheap temporary labor was welcome but affordable permanent housing for the laborers was not.

Colorado's population growth has been typical of the states in the Mountain West. The state grew by 156 percent from 1950 to 1992, and much of this growth occurred after 1970. In the late 1980s, the state saw a drop in its growth rate as its energy-resource sector experienced the same recession that hit Texas, Oklahoma, and nearby "oil-patch" states. Natural resource extraction has declined steadily since the 1930s, and high-paying jobs in the mining and timber industries are increasingly hard to

find. Trade, tourism, and services are the expanding economic sectors (Abbott, Leonard, and McComb 1982; Hamel and Schreiner 1989).

Up until the mid-1990s, Colorado's immigrant population remained small and politically inconsequential. Most of the demographic change in the state's recent history has been the result of interstate migration, drawn to Colorado for employment and the attractiveness of its environment. The foreign born constituted a mere 4 percent of the population in 1990, while the population born in the United States but out of state stood at 55 percent. The Hispanic population is a significant ethnic presence that has had a strong historic foothold especially in southern Colorado. Hispanics amounted to 13 percent of the state's population in 1990, blacks constituted 4 percent, and Asians about 1.8 percent.

Population growth in the state's sixty-three counties is depicted on map 3.1. The demographic sectionalism in Colorado's development is clear. The plains of eastern and southeastern Colorado have become depopulated. The largest city in the state, Denver, stands out as an island of slow growth among exploding suburban counties (Lewis 1996). Like central cities elsewhere, Denver's white population has declined since 1970, while its immigrant and minority populations have increased. Local historians describe the contrast between Denver and its suburbs in terms familiar to scholars of urban development:

> The [income] gap widened in the 1960s, as Denver itself increasingly became an island of old people, poor people and minority group members surrounded by a sea of middle-class white families who found that suburban living allowed the greatest enjoyment of Colorado's space and climate. (Abbott, Leonard, and McComb 1982, 283)

The four counties bordering Denver—Douglas, Jefferson, Adams, and Arapahoe—have led the state's growth. Douglas County's population is now twenty times greater than it was in 1950. Further from Denver, Boulder and Larimer Counties saw their populations more than triple from 1950 to 1992. Growth has also been strong in several of the mountain counties (Eagle, Pitkin, Summit) where resort towns have sprung up to take advantage of the demand for outdoor recreation in the Rockies. The wealthy residents of these counties have been described as "urban corporate dropouts" who leave Wall Street style jobs to work in ski lodges and open small retail businesses (Hamel and Schreiner 1990). Others are wealthy celebrities whose mansions sit empty much of the year (Kelly

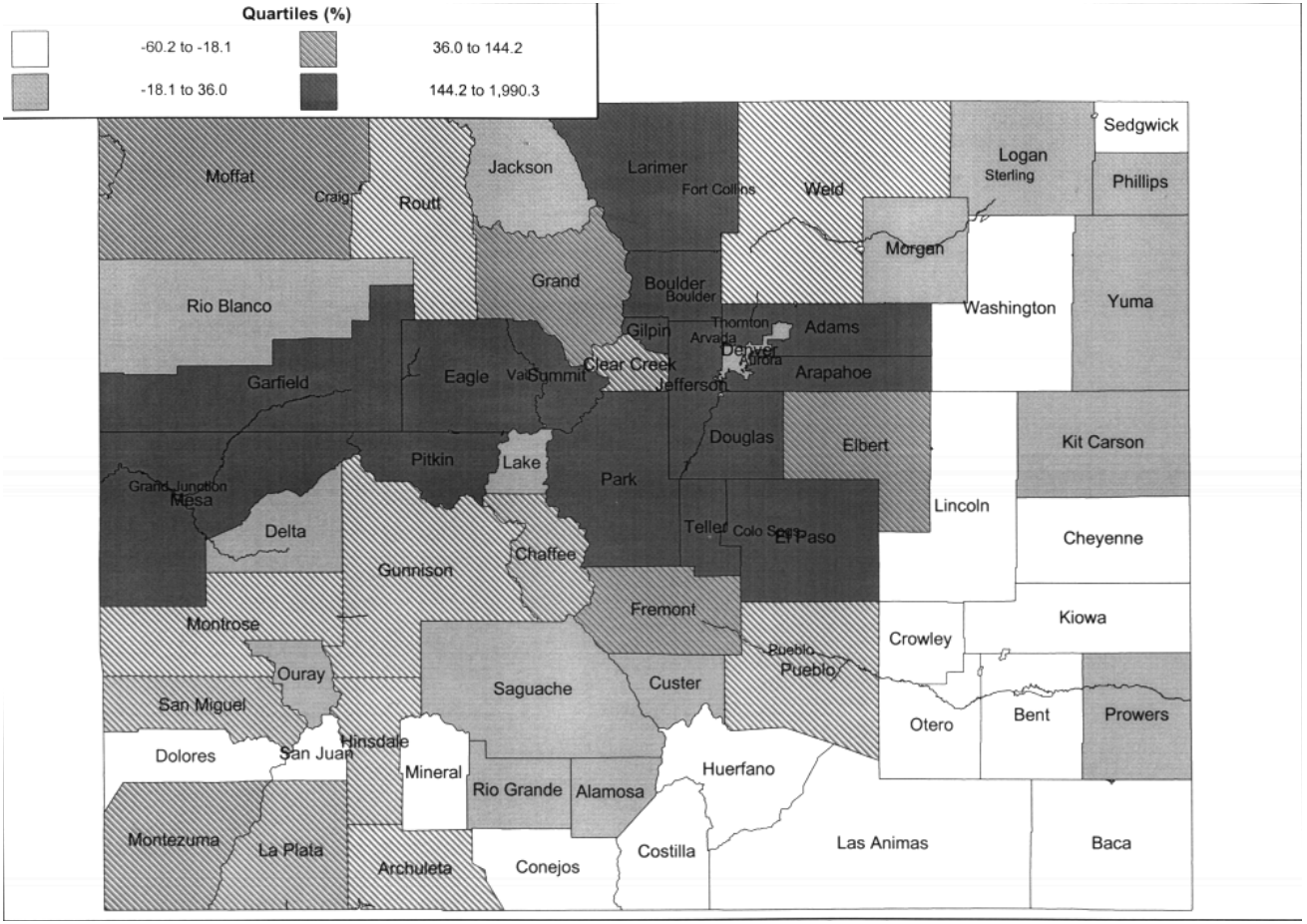
1994). The western slope counties are a patchwork of slow- and fast-growing areas. The faster ones (Garfield and Mesa, the latter containing the city of Grand Junction) appear to be growing due to increases in small industry, tourism, service jobs, and retail trade. The slower counties are more dependent on government employment and the winter resort business. Eastern Colorado, sparsely populated to begin with, has experienced depopulation since midcentury due to the decline in plains agriculture and decreasing competition within the meatpacking industry.

The foreign-born population was just under 5 percent of the total population in 1990, but, as in California, a decreasing proportion of the immigrant population is white. In 1970, more than 90 percent of the foreign-born population was white. By the early 1990s, this had dropped to less than 60 percent. The composition of that foreign-born population for 1990 is depicted in figure 3.1. Of the 142,000 immigrants at that time, about one-fourth were from Mexico, with another 5 percent from Central and South America. Twenty-six percent of the foreign-born population is Asian, and about 30 percent is European. This latter figure stands in marked contrast to California, where only 9 percent of the foreign-born population in 1990 hailed from European nations (see fig. 2.1).

Colorado's small Asian population is dispersed. When the dissimilarity index (see chap. 2, n. 1) is calculated to measure the concentration of ethnic groups across the state's counties, it shows that about 24 percent of Asians would be required to move in order for their number to be evenly distributed across the state. Blacks and Hispanics are more concentrated—in 1990, about 49 percent of blacks would have to move, and about 34 percent of Hispanics, for these groups to be evenly spread.

The distribution of political party support in Colorado is also clustered, or "lumpy," making the parties less politically competitive at the local level than they are in California. About 25 percent of Republicans (or Democrats) would have to relocate in order to ensure perfectly even partisan registration across all of the state's counties. This figure reflects the heavily Democratic registration of Denver and certain Hispanic areas in southern Colorado and the one-sided Republicanism of Colorado Springs (El Paso County) and several rural counties.

A comparison of the basic demographic characteristics of migrants, natives, and immigrants shows that the generalizations made in chapter 1 about the wealth, race, and education levels of these three groups also hold for Colorado (see appendix A, table A3.1). The 1990 PUMS data for Coloradans over the age of eighteen shows that those born outside the state



Map 3.1. Population growth in Colorado counties, 1950–92. (Mean = 156.3, Moran's I = .34)

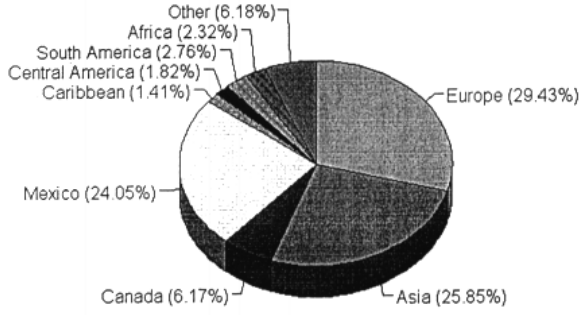


Fig. 3.1. Composition of the foreign-born population in Colorado, 1990

earned, on average, $3,700 more per year than Colorado natives and $4,500 more than immigrants. Immigrants and native Coloradans were closer together in income, with immigrants reporting slightly higher *median* incomes than native Coloradans. The income figures of native Coloradans are admittedly influenced by the frequent and heavy losses reported by those employed as farmers. Even so, it is clear that internal migration has made the state both wealthier and more white, while immigration has made it poorer and more ethnically diverse. Interstate migrants in 1990 were 89 percent non-Hispanic white, but only 77 percent of natives and 52 percent of immigrants were non-Hispanic white. Table A3.1 also shows that migrants to Colorado from other states are older and have higher Social Security incomes than either natives or immigrants, suggesting that many of the new residents in the state are retirees.

Settlement Patterns of Migrants and Immigrants

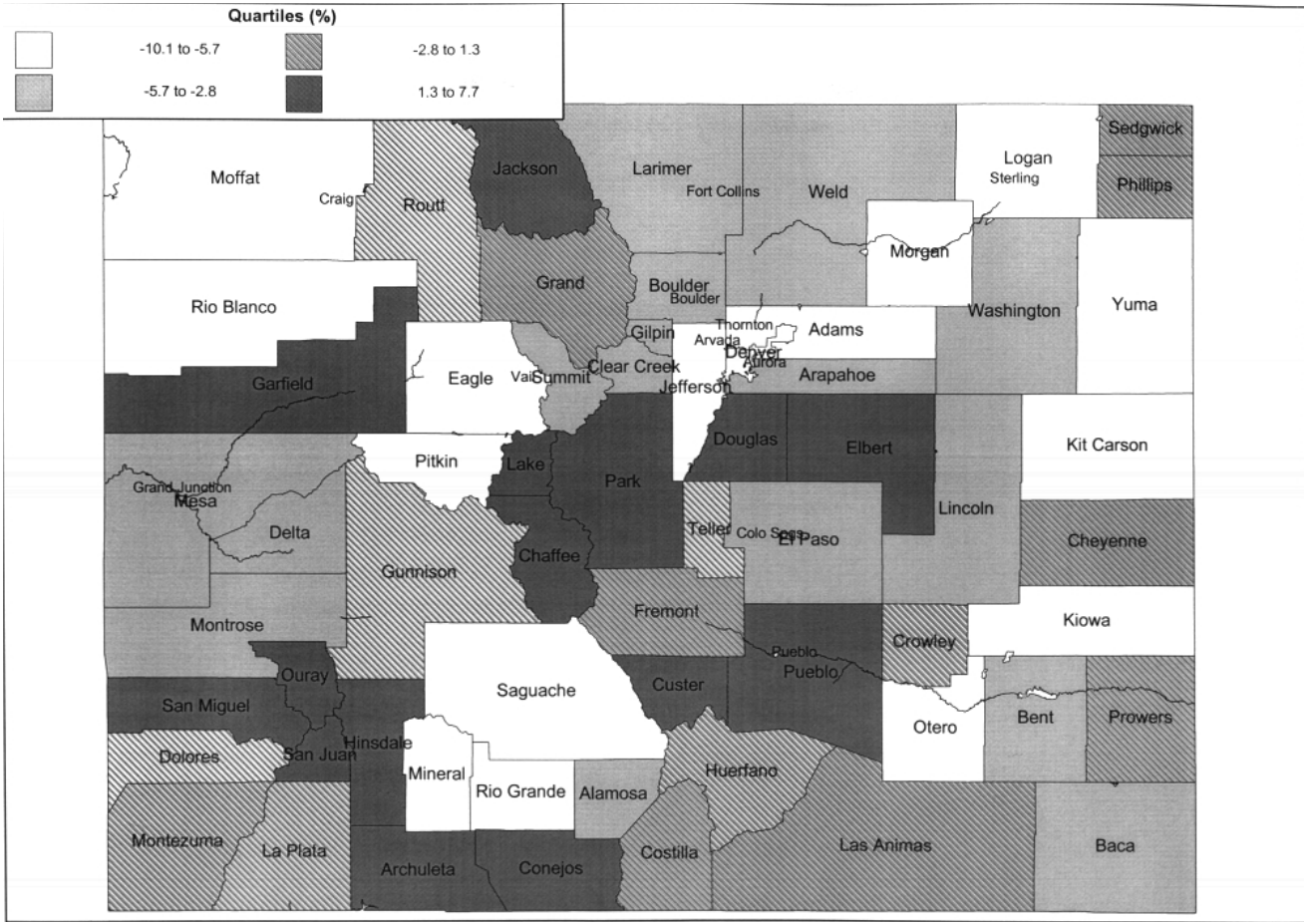
Determining where the migrant and immigrant populations are settling is a sure way of evaluating whether they are drawn to expanding enclaves or dispersing throughout the majority white population. The PUMS data for Colorado (table A3.1) indicate that the internal migrant and immigrant populations do not share the same level of wealth and education and are ethnically distinct. Based on these characteristics alone, we would hardly expect them to settle in the same locations. Maps 3.2 and 3.3 serve as useful gauges of the growth in visibility of internal migrants and immigrants from 1980 to 1990. Map 3.2 shows that internal migrants are becoming more noticeable in Denver's outlying suburbs (Douglas and Elbert Coun-

ties) and in the mountain counties containing the state's winter resorts. Note that internal migrants have not been drawn to the northeastern section of the state. Immigrants, on the other hand, are a rising proportion of the population in two counties in the northeast, Morgan and Washington (see map 3.3). They are also a more noticeable presence in some of the same mountain counties where the internal migrant population has increased (Eagle, Pitkin, Lake, and Summit).

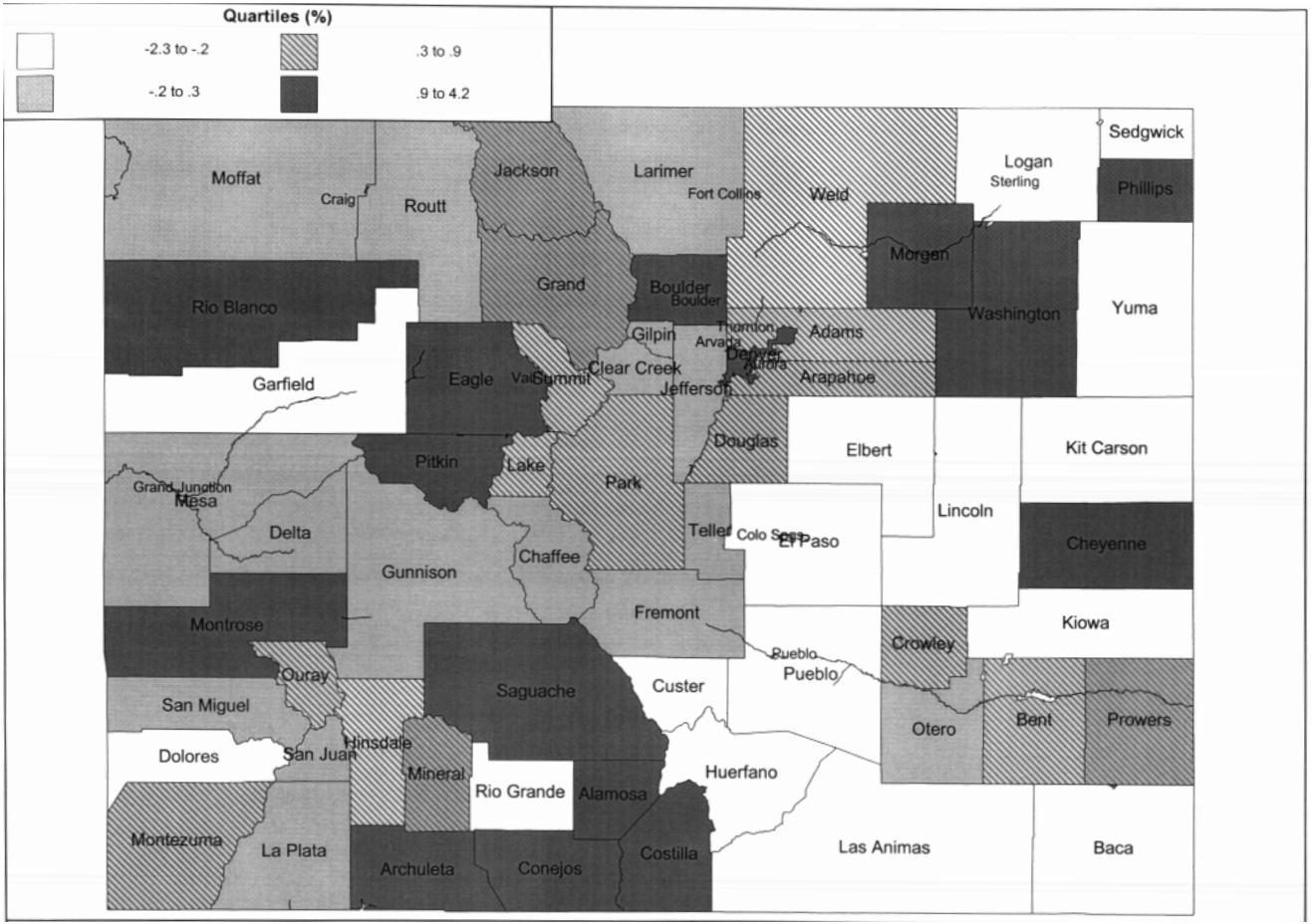
Following the procedure employed in chapter 2, I model the locational distribution of immigrants and migrants using data to determine whether the changing proportion of immigrants and migrants across the state's sixty-three counties can be explained by local unemployment and income growth, the presence of coethnics, or some combination of both. As in the California case (chap. 2), the dependent variable is the change in the size of the particular group as a percentage of the total population from 1980 to 1990. The goal, then, is not to explain a group's numerical increase but to explain changes in the group's size relative to the rest of the population of the county. Following the strategy of chapter 2, I also take account of spatial dependency in the observations by including a spatially lagged dependent variable among the explanatory variables.

The results for this model are presented in table 3.1 for U.S. internal migrants, Canadians, Mexicans, and immigrants from several of the world's major regions. As in California, Asians and Mexicans are becoming more noticeable components of the population in the areas where they settle. These two groups show the greatest propensity to locate in areas of prior coethnic settlement. For nearly all of the other groups, however, there is an inverse relationship between the size of the group's population in 1980 and the growth in that population from 1980 to 1990. Africans, Canadians, Europeans, and South and Central Americans are especially likely to wind up in areas where their group's presence is *declining* as a proportion of the total population for a couple of reasons. First, their numbers are small; and second, their growth has been outpaced by that of the native-born population. For Canadians and Europeans, in particular, there is no tendency to cluster in areas of prior coethnic settlement.

Most of the economic growth in the state is occurring along the eastern slope of the Rockies (known as the Front Range); the counties running from Larimer (north of Denver) to Pueblo in the south (see map 3.1). Several of the immigrant groups, especially Asians and Europeans, are apparently informed enough about local conditions to avoid concentrating in areas of high unemployment. Growth in the Mexican and Central Ameri-



Map 3.2. Change in the proportion of internal migrants in Colorado counties, 1980–90. (Mean = –1.98, Moran's I = .23)



Map 3.3. Change in the proportion of immigrants in Colorado counties, 1980–90. (Mean = .44, Moran's I = .09)

TABLE 3.1. Influences on Population Concentration in Colorado Counties, 1980–90

Variable	U.S. Migrants	African Immigrants	Asian Immigrants	European Immigrants	Canadian Immigrants	Mexican Immigrants	Central American Immigrants	South American Immigrants
% 1980 group population	–.08 (.05)	–.94* (.22)	.29** (.10)	–.33** (.04)	–.62** (.07)	.57** (.19)	–.78** (.45)	–.55** (.13)
% unemployment, 1980	.55** (.18)	–.006 (.004)	–.09** (.01)	–.02** (.01)	–.006 (.004)	.04 (.04)	.005 (.01)	–.003 (.003)
Change in real median family income, 1980–90	–.19 (.11)	.001 (.02)	.03** (.01)	.04** (.01)	.008** (.003)	.02 (.03)	.02 (.009)	.005** (.002)
% net population change	.05** (.01)	–.0001 (.0003)	.0001 (.001)	–.001 (.001)	.001** (.0002)	.001 (.003)	–.0002 (.001)	.0002 (.0002)
Population density	–.0008** (.0003)	–.00003** (.000007)	–.00007 (.00006)	.00001 (.00002)	.00001** (.000008)	.0003** (.00009)	.00005** (.00003)	.00003** (.000006)
% college students	.13 (.13)	–.005* (.003)	–.002 (.01)	.003 (.008)	.006** (.003)	.03 (.03)	.004 (.01)	–.003* (.002)
Spatial lag	.34** (.12)	.47** (.17)	–.10 (.15)	–.005 (.17)	.38** (.10)	.27** (.11)	.25 (.22)	.12 (.11)
Constant	–1.89	.07	.52	.29	.10	–.46	–.18	.06
N	63	63	63	63	63	63	63	63
R^2_a	.53	.57	.51	.70	.68	.57	.01	.40

Note: Spatial autoregressive model, weighted for population; income coefficients expressed in thousands of 1992 dollars; dependent variable = change in population group as a percent of total population. See appendix A for a full description of variables.

*$p < .10$. **$p < .05$.

can populations, though, was unrelated to employment conditions at the beginning of the decade. This disregard for local labor market conditions is a potentially problematic finding since immigrant use of public services, including welfare, has stimulated much of the recent anti-immigrant sentiment across the country. Map 3.2 illustrates the areas of highest Mexican immigrant concentration in 1990. It ranges from a low of zero to a high of 33 percent in several south-central Colorado counties (Conejos, Costilla, Alamosa). But there are differences between recent Mexican immigrants and the state's long-established Hispanic population. Hispanic settlements in southern Colorado date from the 1600s. Recent Mexican immigrants are a sizable minority within the Hispanic population but still only a minority. Concentrated Hispanic populations of mostly Mexican ancestry are found throughout eastern Colorado, where they have been associated with the sugar beet and meatpacking industries. Starting in the mid-1940s, Colorado farmers directly recruited Mexican immigrant workers as part of the Bracero program. Many stayed on after the growing season to take more permanent jobs in northeastern Colorado's slaughterhouses and feedlots (especially in Weld, Morgan, and Washington Counties; see Andreas 1994, chap. 1).

The newer waves of Mexican immigrants are drawn to cities, especially Greeley, Pueblo, and Denver, where there are established Mexican American communities. Hispanics in Denver, who constituted about one-fourth of the city's population in 1990, are concentrated in the north and west. Early in the century, in both Denver and Pueblo, Hispanics were segregated in poor neighborhoods comparable to the "black ghettos" of the East (Elazar 1970, 343). Their ever increasing numbers translated into political clout in the 1980s and 1990s when a Hispanic candidate, Federico Peña, won the Denver mayoralty twice and a black candidate, Wellington Webb, won mayoral runoffs on the basis of a Hispanic-black coalition (Hero 1987, 1989). Evidence emerged in the early 1990s of a growing immigrant, mostly Mexican, population in the mountain counties, where record numbers of immigrants were being hired in the restaurant and lodging businesses in resort towns (Charland 1995). The movement of low-skill immigrants into the wealthy ski resort areas has generated the serious housing shortage described at the beginning of this chapter. In the mid-1990s, rents in the resort towns were $1,000 per month, while median salaries were only $1,400 per month (Kelly 1994; Weller 1994).

The Asian population is scattered north and south along the most

populated areas of the Front Range where there has been impressive growth in real median income. Asian settlements are least likely to develop in areas afflicted with high unemployment (see table 3.1). There are no Asian enclaves of the scale one finds in California, although by standards internal to Colorado the rapid growth of the Asian population in Denver's suburbs could make this subgroup a political force in the twenty-first century.

Interestingly, the settlement patterns of U.S. internal migrants are distinct from those of Asians and Mexicans. Rather than becoming a more noticeable presence in areas where internal migrants have previously settled, they are shrinking as a proportion of the population in such areas. Still, the settlement patterns of internal migrants are not associated with economic conditions in the way I originally hypothesized. Indeed, the concentration of internal migrants increased in areas that began the decade with the highest unemployment rates. Perhaps this is a sign that internal migration to Colorado is driven more by lifestyle considerations than the economic climate. An alternative explanation is that Colorado's unemployment in the early 1980s was confined to specific industry sectors and did not discourage migrants who came to work in other industries.

The spatial concentration of the internal migrant population is illustrated in map 3.3. Internal migrants are a minor presence in the southeastern plains counties where Hispanic concentrations are greatest. Instead, they prefer to locate in the Denver suburbs (Arapahoe, Douglas, and Jefferson Counties) and in mountain resort areas where net population growth has been brisk but population densities remain low.

Finally, the spatially lagged dependent variable (table 3.2) indicates that U.S. migrants, Africans, Canadians, and Mexicans are becoming more noticeable in particular geographic pockets or subregions of the state that cross jurisdictional boundaries. In other words, the growth in the proportion of migrants from these areas is related to similar growth trends in nearby jurisdictions. The other groups show no increase in concentration by subregion when other variables are included in the model.

Ethnic Balkanization and Naturalization Rates in Colorado

The county-level data show that balkanization along ethnic and racial lines has further differentiated areas where immigrants settle from those they avoid. Asians and Mexicans became a more noticeable presence dur-

ing the 1980s in the areas where they had settled in previous times. This was not true, though, for U.S. internal migrants and other immigrant groups whose settlement patterns were more diffused and whose growth rates were dwarfed by those of other populations. Even at the county level of aggregation, where considerable local variation may be obscured, we see the concentration of some groups and the diffusion of others. Before cities and counties become ethnically distinct, neighborhoods do. Much of the variation in the racial homogeneity of areas is internal to cities and counties. In California, the ethnic isolation of minority from white voters was associated with low naturalization rates among Hispanic immigrants but not for Asians (see appendix A, table A2.1, for California results). The results in table A3.2 help shed light on whether the segregation of minority groups from whites within Colorado counties is related to low naturalization rates for immigrants residing in those counties. As in California, the size of the foreign-born population in a county is inversely related to naturalization in the 1990 data. Specifically, a 1 percent increase in the proportion of the population comprised of immigrants is associated with a two-point drop in the naturalization rate. As in California, places where the foreign born are concentrated are typified by less political capital than those of native concentration. It is not clear from the data in table A3.2 that segregation patterns have a consistent impact on naturalization once the overall size of the foreign-born population is taken into account. Counties with high levels of white-Hispanic segregation definitely show low naturalization rates in 1980 but not in 1990. White-Asian segregation has no relevance to aggregate naturalization rates, probably due to the small Asian population in the state. The spatial lag does indicate that counties with the highest naturalization rates form a distinct geographic pocket that supersedes county jurisdictional boundaries. The counties with the highest naturalization rates are those with the fewest recent immigrants—two sets of counties in the eastern plains and southern regions of the state that have small populations and few employment prospects for Mexican or Asian laborers.

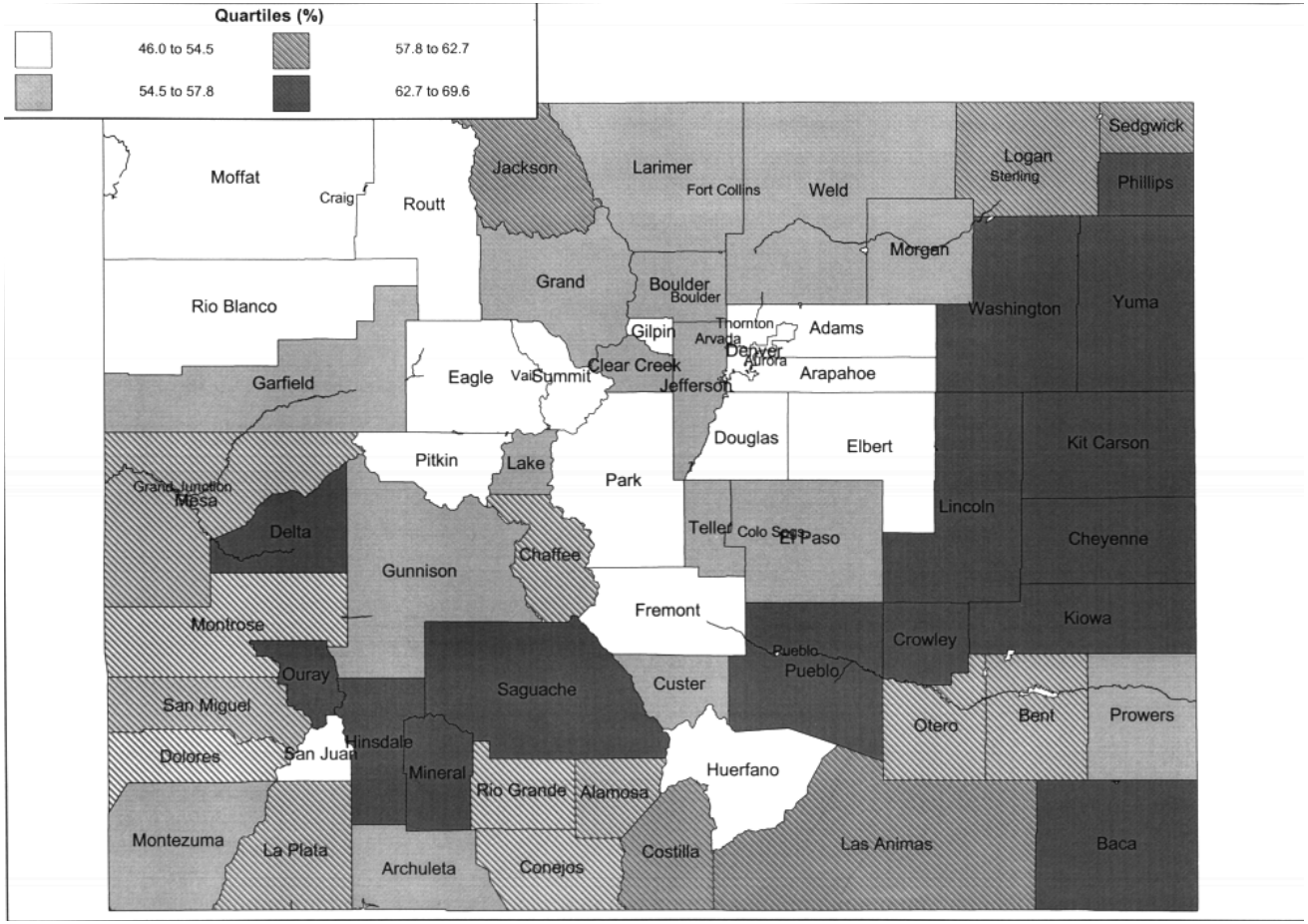
Migrants, Immigrants, and Voter Turnout in Colorado

Political participation rates within states are rarely uniform. Some places in Colorado are characterized by a high level of political empowerment, while others are not, and it has probably always been that way. Average turnout rates for counties across two Colorado gubernatorial elections in

the 1990s are shown on map 3.4. It is noteworthy that the depopulated eastern plains counties show the highest turnout rates (darkest shading), while those that have experienced the most rapid population growth, around Denver and in the mountain resort areas, are in the lowest turnout quartile (light shading).

With a small statewide immigrant population, it is not clear that an analysis of county-level data will reveal that current immigration patterns have any significant impact on political outcome variables such as voter turnout. Internal cross-state migrants, on the other hand, constitute a majority of Colorado's population. Perhaps this indicator of population mobility does have the expected impact on turnout, actually decreasing it relative to areas populated mostly with Colorado natives. Results of an analysis of the influence of several variables in predicting turnout rates in five recent Colorado elections appears in table 3.2. As in chapter 2, I have included a model that pools the elections in the 1990s. Control variables have been added for education, the segregation of the minority from the white population, population density, and the percentage of the population that is African American. The results show that the percentage of the population born outside Colorado does not have a consistently negative impact on countywide turnout. The proportion of the population comprised of immigrants who arrived after 1970 is associated with lower turnout levels across all of the elections but especially in the gubernatorial races of 1990 and 1994. The spatial isolation of white from minority voters is associated with higher turnout in the presidential election years of 1980 and 1992, but the signs are negative for the off-year elections. Education does not boost turnout across Colorado as it does in California and other states. This is because education is closely associated with other variables, including internal migration and population growth in Colorado. Douglas County is a good example of a place where the influx of well-educated, wealthy suburbanites has had the effect of depressing participation levels because so many of the newcomers are from outside the state. This rapidly growing county immediately south of the Denver metropolitan area was inundated with migrants from other states and elsewhere in Colorado from 1980 to 1990, and turnout in Douglas is among the lowest in the state—a mere 47 percent in 1990 when the state average stood at 58 percent. Again, in 1994 Douglas County's turnout ran about ten points below the state average.

It is especially noteworthy that the immigrant population is negatively associated with turnout in all five elections. An example of where the



Map 3.4. Average turnout in Colorado gubernatorial elections, 1990–94. (Mean = 58.3, Moran's I = .49)

TABLE 3.2. Impact of Population Mobility on Voter Turnout in Colorado Counties, 1980–94

Variable	1980	1982	1990	1992	1994	Pooled 1990s
% college educated	–.32*	.15	–.06	–.02†	–.11	–.07
	(.18)	(.14)	(.10)	(.11)	(.10)	(.07)
Isolation of minorities from whites (within counties)	.46**	–.03	–.03	.05*	–.03	–.004
	(.16)	(.02)	(.02)	(.03)	(.03)	(.02)
% post-1970 immigrants	–.15	–.22	–1.00**	–.30	–.88*	–.75**
	(.1.30)	(.93)	(.48)	(.54)	(.51)	(.34)
% born out of state	.06	–.12	–.02	.05	.11	.06
	(.09)	(.08)	(.08)	(.10)	(.09)	(.06)
% black	.59	–.36	.12	.10	–.71**	–.10
	(.46)	(.33)	(.27)	(.32)	(.30)	(.19)
Population density	–.0004**	.001	–.0006[a]	–.0004[a]	.004**	.001
	(.001)	(.001)	(.001)	(.001)	(.001)	(.001)
Spatial lag	.46**	.44**	.57**	.14	.66**	.60**
	(.16)	(.15)	(.09)	(.21)	(.12)	(.08)
Presidential race	—	—	—	—	—	5.78**
						(.61)
Constant	47.52	42.33	28.74	45.48	18.38	20.44
N	58	58	58	58	58	174
R^2_a	.42	.52	.69	.05	.62	.65

Note: Spatial autoregressive model, weighted for population; dependent variable = percentage turnout by county. See appendix A for a full description of variables.

[a]Variables with low tolerances and high standard errors due to multicollinearity.

*$p < .10$. **$p < .05$.

recent influx of *immigrants* has decreased turnout is Weld County (in which Greeley is located), where participation has run eight to ten points below the state average in nonpresidential election years. Places typified by high mobility wind up with poorer representation than those with greater stability, as the lower turnout ensures that these areas have less influence in statewide elections than their numbers would otherwise dictate.

Finally, the observations for turnout in Colorado are positively autocorrelated, as evidenced by the coefficient for the spatial lag in table 3.2. Lower turnout counties include the fastest growing areas around Denver (Arapahoe, Douglas, Adams, and Weld) as well as the resort counties in the mountains. High turnout areas are those with small and stable populations on the plains and the Western Slope. The statistical significance of the spatial lag indicates that there is a regional basis to patterns of participation in the state, which cannot be captured by conventional demographic variables for education and population migration alone.

Migrants, Immigrants, and Party Regularity in Colorado

Patterns of party regularity in voting at the individual level are an important sign of the utility of partisanship as a cue in general election voting behavior. At an aggregate level, such as a city, county, or state, they are an indication of the predictability of an electorate. The predictability of an electorate has a bearing on the efforts that must be expended by candidates and party organizations in locating and mobilizing voters (Gimpel 1996). As in chapter 2, I hypothesize that migrants from elsewhere serve to unravel the party system (Brown 1988), increasing differences between party registration and actual voting in Colorado jurisdictions. An analysis of the impact of several demographic variables on differences between registration and voting appears in table 3.3. Several variables have a consistent influence on reducing the difference between party registration and party voting: education, population density, and the percentage of the population comprised of recent immigrants. The presence of black voters, though, has the effect of increasing the difference between registration and voting. This is certainly contrary to the California case, in which black populations were often associated with voting in line with registration. The finding is also at odds with individual-level results that show blacks voting consistently and overwhelmingly Democratic. The danger of committing the ecological fallacy looms large when aggregate data produce results so discrepant from survey data (King 1997). The results can be understood as an artifact of aggregation bias. Several of Colorado's

TABLE 3.3. Similarity of Party Registration to Party Voting in Colorado Counties, 1980–94

Variable	1980	1982	1990	1992	1994	Pooled 1990s
% college educated	–.003	.27	–.38**	–.25**	–.66**	–.44**
	(.15)	(.18)	(.11)	(.07)	(.11)	(.07)
% born out of state	.04	–.16	.35**	.12	.22**	.25**
	(.07)	(.10)	(.10)	(.07)	(.11)	(.07)
% post-1970 immigrants	–1.18	–2.69**	–.59	–.54	–.16	–.25
	(1.10)	(1.17)	(.57)	(.35)	(.57)	(.34)
% black	–.03	1.26**	1.16**	.29[a]	–.18[a]	.42**
	(.36)	(.39)	(.33)	(.22)	(.35)	(.21)
Population density	–.001†	–.002**	–.004**	–.0007	.0004	–.001*
	(.001)	(.001)	(.001)	(.001)	(.001)	(.001)
% turnout	.54**	.05	.06	.22**	–.16	.08
	(.10)	(.16)	(.14)	(.10)	(.12)	(.07)
Spatial lag	.33**	.63**	.43**	.27*	.48**	.52**
	(.11)	(.15)	(.18)	(.16)	(.10)	(.08)
Presidential race	—	—	—	—	—	–1.98**
						(.90)
Constant	–21.55	5.50	17.37	–9.04	18.29	–2.46
N	63	63	63	63	63	63
R^2_a	.77	.52	.80	.59	.75	.65

Note: Spatial autoregressive model, weighted for population; dependent variable = Abs (% Republican vote – % Republican registration); high positive values indicate counties where voting differed from registration. See appendix A for a full description of variables.

[a]Variables with low tolerances and high standard errors due to multicollinearity.

*$p < .10$. **$p < .05$.

medium-sized cities with small but significant black populations (*significant* by Colorado standards can be understood to mean any countywide proportion greater than the statewide percentage of 4 percent black) have lopsided Republican leanings. One of these is El Paso County (Colorado Springs), where 7 percent of the population is black and Republican voting always runs well ahead of Republican Party registration. The black population in cities like these is just not sufficiently large to redirect these powerful GOP currents even when the minority population is fully mobilized.

Whereas the black population in Colorado's urban areas is not a strong political force anywhere outside of Denver, the influence of the Hispanic population is largely captured by the variable for post-1970 immigration in table 3.3. This population seems to keep differences between registration and voting to a minimum, thus enforcing party regularity. The places that follow their registration quite closely are the politically competitive Denver suburbs and other cities along the Front Range where the Hispanic, African American, and Asian populations are growing rapidly (Patty 1996). In these more densely populated areas, then, the Hispanic population apparently exercises the same influence on the consistency of Democratic margins in Colorado that blacks exercise in many other states. They are active enough to be a predictable Democratic bloc in state and local elections.

The Hispanic counties in southern and southeastern Colorado are different from other areas with large Hispanic populations because Republicans often do well enough to be competitive in spite of imbalanced party registration figures. In rural Costilla County, for example, Republican registration stood at a mere 9 percent in 1994, but Republicans won 28 percent of the gubernatorial vote that year. Similar figures obtain for the neighboring counties of Saguache, Mineral, and Rio Grande. Apparently the processes that have socialized the Hispanic population into the politics of the Democratic Party in Colorado's more urban areas have not been at work in the southern counties.

Changes in Party Registration in Colorado

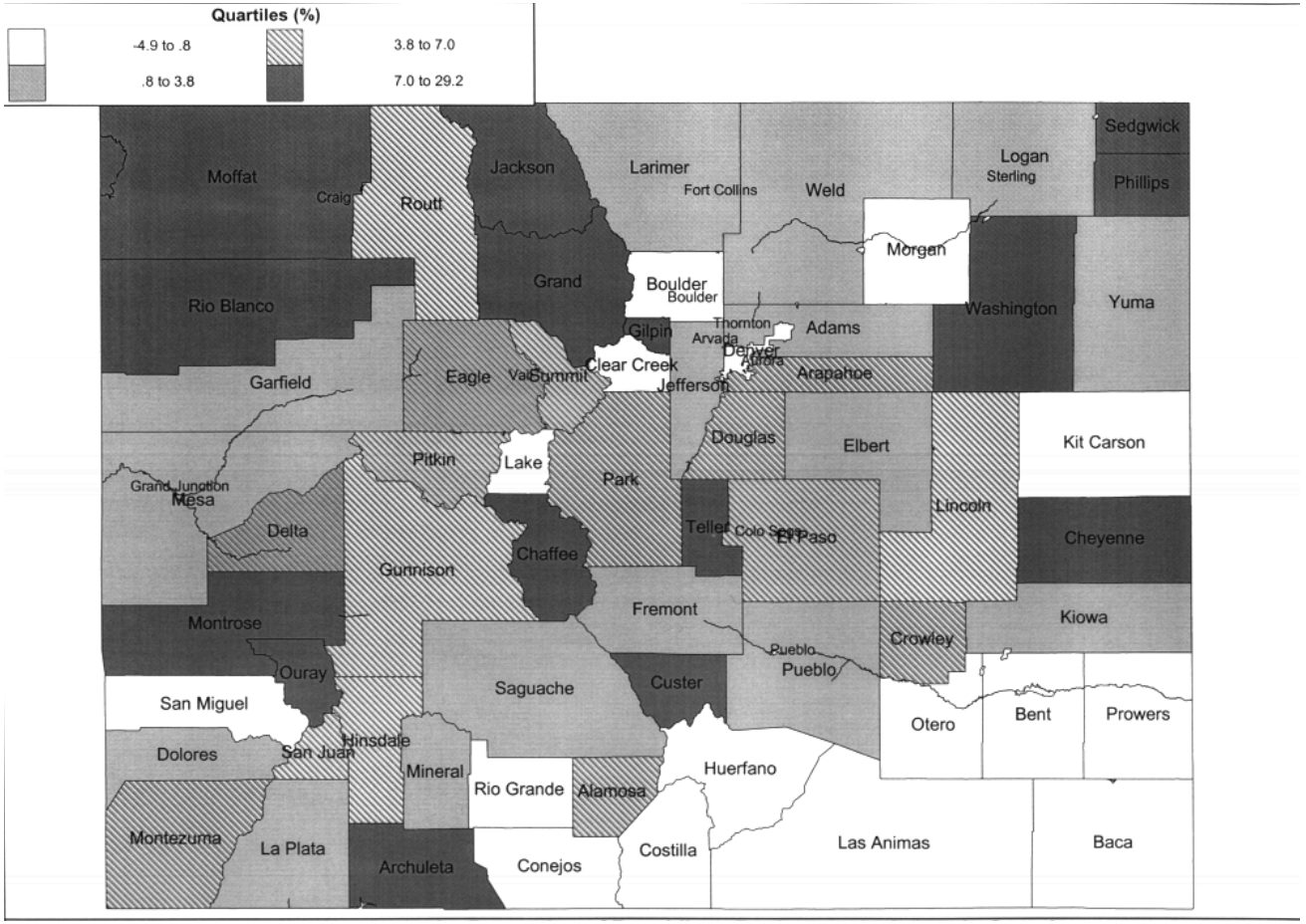
As in California and many other states, the 1970s were not kind to the GOP in Colorado. Some of the heaviest losses occurred in rural counties, where just a few departing voters or new arrivals could radically alter the political balance. In Denver and Boulder, Republicans also lost ground to Democrats and independent registrants. The 1980s reversed this trend,

with Republicans surging back to retake lost ground. But often their gains did not occur in areas where they had previously lost ground. Republicans continued to lose ground in Denver and Boulder, although they rebounded in many rural counties (see map 3.5).

What explains the gains and losses in these two decades? The impact of population mobility and other demographic characteristics of Colorado counties on changes in Republican Party registration are summarized in table 3.4. As in chapter 2, my central hypothesis going into this analysis is that population growth generally increases Republican registration, especially population growth from outside of the state. The results in table 3.4 suggest, however, that exactly the opposite occurred in the 1970s. In that decade, the increase in the population from out of state diminished Republican registration growth. In the following decade, though, the hypothesis is confirmed, as Republican growth was about 3.5 points higher for every ten-point increase in the percentage of the population moving in from one of the other forty-nine states.

In reference to the result for the 1970s in which population growth appears to hurt Republican registration, one should not necessarily conclude that the Democrats benefited from the arrival of migrants from outside Colorado. Independent and third-party registration increased 61 percent statewide from 1970 to 1980, rising most sharply in the counties with the most out-of-state migrants. Apparently, the growth of the Asian and Hispanic immigrant populations has neither hurt nor helped GOP prospects (table 3.4). The foreign-born population is simply too small to register much impact at such a gross level of aggregation, and the 1980s indicated no widespread political reaction among natives against the influx of immigrants.

The demographic shift toward more non-Coloradans helped the Republican Party in the 1980s but was modestly associated with Republican losses during the 1970s. The losses in the 1970s can be explained by reference to the fact that Colorado began the decade of the 1970s so strongly Republican. Those who track patterns of party change over time have noted the existence of equilibrium cycles in the balance of party strength (Stokes and Iverson 1962; Sellers 1965). In two-party competitive settings, one party's ascendancy is only temporary, as the other party gradually returns to a competitive position and then moves into its own position of superiority for a time. This ebb and flow of equilibrium cycles would predict that if Colorado Republicans reached their peak in the late 1960s subsequent years would witness a GOP decline. Through the 1970s, explo-



Map 3.5. Change in the proportion of Republican registrants in Colorado counties, 1980–90. (Mean = 5.3, Moran's I = .04)

ration of the data indicates that modest population changes were enough to diminish the historically Republican inclination in many areas. A one-point increase in the percentage of Republican registrants on the voter rolls across counties in 1970 was associated with a .14 point drop in GOP registration by 1980. The Denver suburbs were affected by this trend toward weakening Republican strength. Population growth in the Denver suburbs, for example, often came at the expense of Denver itself, the one Democratic stronghold in the state. Denverites of middle-class standing and with ethnic backgrounds wound up exporting their party affiliations to the suburbs. As for the outsiders, Colorado has always been attractive to citizens who are concerned about environmental protection and conservation, including many Californians escaping that state's overcrowding (Ferraro 1994). These migrants are far more likely to register as independents or Democrats than as Republicans because the GOP has historically

TABLE 3.4. Impact of Population Mobility on Changes in Republican Party Registration in Colorado Counties, 1970–80, 1980–90

Variable	1970–80	1980–90
% born out of state, 1970 (1980)	.05	.06
	(.05)	(.05)
Change in % born out of state	–.09	.35**
	(.09)	(.13)
% foreign born, 1970 (1980)	–.64	.47
	(.56)	(.48)
Change in % foreign born	.08	.05
	(.69)	(.51)
% Republican registrants, 1970 (1980)	–.14**	.21**
	(.06)	(.07)
Population density	–.0003	–.001
	(.0004)	(.001)
Spatial lag	.21	.04
	(.16)	(.11)
Constant	3.96	–6.85
N	63	63
R^2_a	.17	.47

Note: Spatial autoregressive model, weighted for population; dependent variable = change in the percentage of Republican Party registration. See appendix A for a full description of variables.

*$p < .10$. **$p < .05$.

favored development over preservation and growth control. Outside of Denver and Boulder, the long-time Anglo natives, on the other hand, are the most entrenched Republican identifiers. In fact, the counties with the most rapid Republican growth during the 1980s are those that were untouched by the major internal migration and immigration flows during that decade.

The Colorado case reminds us that one cannot understand the impact of migration on the politics of a place by looking only at the migrants. It is equally important to understand their destination—the places to which they are moving. Suppose that a given migration stream is 70 percent Republican and 30 percent Democratic. In some destinations, say, those that are split evenly between the parties, in-migration of this nature will benefit the GOP because seven out of ten new migrants will import Republican Party identifications. But suppose that a destination is 80 percent Republican at the beginning of the migration influx. In that case, a migration stream that is divided 70–30 in favor of Republicans will either leave the place unchanged or gradually water down GOP strength. In this manner, the characteristics of the migrants interact with the characteristics of the population at their destination to determine the extent and direction of political change. In Colorado, where so many areas began the 1970s with strong Republican leanings, the in-migration of outsiders could only weaken the GOP in the ensuing years.

Ethnicity and Political Behavior at the Individual Level

The aggregate data from the regression analyses in tables 3.2, 3.3, and 3.4 provide an approximate picture of how political outcomes may change as the demographic attributes of jurisdictions vary from place to place and across time. Political stratification across Colorado has been exacerbated by the sorting process that accompanies population mobility. We can see, for example, that the influx of well-educated residents from outside Colorado helps to explain low voter turnout in many elections. We know that in areas heavily populated by recent immigrants political participation is lower than in counties not so populated. It is also the case that the populations in many rural counties do not cling to their Democratic Party registration. In these areas, party registration is a very poor predictor of voting. Finally, we have seen that areas where the non-Colorado-born population grew more noticeable became more Republican in the 1980s but not in the previous decade. Like California, the state can be described

as having developed a politics that distinguishes substate regions on the basis of ethnicity and population mobility. But the patterns in these tables and maps are different from those in chapter 2 in some key respects that can only be understood by examining survey data.

Evaluating the political orientation of Coloradans at the individual level is in order if the ambiguities present in the ecological data are to be clarified. Only then can one determine whether the Hispanic population truly is as Democratic as the aggregate data suggest in areas of Hispanic concentration. Figures for party identification by race from the 1990–94 VRS exit polls are presented in table 3.5. The comparison with California (table 2.5) is striking. First, white voters in Colorado are not as Republican as they are in California. Indeed, the gulf between the two states is surprisingly wide. In 1994, 45.3 percent of white voters in California identified themselves as Republicans, while only 27 percent in Colorado did so. For blacks, the figures are similar. Black voters are as hostile to the Republican Party in Colorado as they are anywhere else. Hispanics in Colorado, however, are far more likely to be Democrats than they are in California. In 1994, 77 percent of Hispanic voters identified with the Democratic Party in Colorado, compared to only 65 percent in California. Finally, Asians in Colorado, while constituting only a small percentage of the electorate, are also slightly more likely to be Democratic than they are in California, where they are more evenly divided.

TABLE 3.5. Party Identification by Race/Ethnicity in Recent Colorado Elections, 1990–94

Race/Ethnic Group	Year	Democrat	Independent	Republican
White	1990	27.1	34.0	38.9
	1992	41.3	31.2	29.0
	1994	44.2	29.0	26.8
Black	1990	77.0	15.1	7.9
	1992	67.8	29.6	2.6
	1994	83.5	9.2	7.3
Hispanic	1990	62.7	15.1	22.2
	1992	75.4	13.2	11.3
	1994	76.7	12.2	11.2
Asian	1990	56.3	26.4	17.3
	1992	60.6	24.2	15.1
	1994	34.2	54.3	11.5

Source: Voter Research and Surveys, General Election Exit Polls, 1990–94 (weighted data).

The differences between the two states are surprising and too large to be ignored as random biases of survey research. In using the ecological inference method developed by King (1997) to come up with estimates of the statewide proportion of Hispanics that register Republican, the results indicated that Colorado's Hispanic population is slightly less likely to support the GOP than the Hispanic population in California through the early 1990s. Similar estimates for the Asian population were unreliable given severe aggregation bias and the limited amount of information available about the Asian population in the state. What accounts for the strongly one-sided Democratic inclination of Hispanics in Colorado and the apparently lopsided inclination of the few Asians in the state? One plausible explanation is that the Hispanics in Colorado are more Democratic than in California because they are more homogeneously of Mexican ancestry (even though a majority may not be *recent* Mexican immigrants, the population is still predominantly Mexican American), spatially concentrated in a few areas of the state, and positioned in blue collar, working-class jobs. Peter Skerry has pointed out that Mexicans in some parts of the country are likely to view themselves as racial minorities and claim special rights (1993). This automatically aligns them with the Democratic Party, long identified with civil rights, labor unions, and the plight of the oppressed. The areas where Mexican American politics takes on an especially racial character tend to be urban and suburban communities where consciousness of minority status can be quite acute—areas where discrimination by whites against minorities is a common occurrence. Colorado, with its mostly white population, much of which was originally rooted in migration from southern states, is one of these areas.

A simpler explanation for the Hispanic inclination to identify with the Democratic Party in Colorado is that the level of affluence enjoyed by Hispanics elsewhere in the country does not exist there. There are far fewer high-income Hispanics (income greater than $75,000 in 1994) in Colorado than in California and therefore far fewer Hispanics who for class reasons can imagine themselves identifying with Republicans. One study conducted during the 1970s suggested that Denver's Hispanics were "poorer, more heavily working class and less well educated than even the disadvantaged blacks" (Lovrich and Marenin 1976, 289–90).

The few Asians in Colorado are a heterogeneous mixture, 70 percent of whom come from six different countries: China, Japan, Korea, Laos, the Philippines, and Vietnam. Slightly over half (55 percent) are very recent immigrants, having entered the country since 1980. Colorado's

Asians are neither as well established nor as wealthy as their counterparts in California. They are scattered across the Front Range but in much smaller pockets than one is likely to find in California or other port of entry states.

Finally, the extent to which ethnic minorities could find themselves fitting into the GOP has a lot to do with the traditions and ethnic makeup of that party in local politics. Republicans in Colorado are far more homogeneously white, suburban, and rural than is the case in California. The Democrats have always been the more ethnic of the two parties, of course, but there is even less of an ethnic tradition within the Colorado Republican Party than elsewhere. Hence, it is not surprising that in such a political setting, where clear signals identify the Republicans as a Caucasian, middle-class group, ethnic, blue collar, and service industry workers would be drawn to the Democrats.

Sustained high levels of immigration from Asia and Mexico will probably hurt Republican prospects rather than help them. Mexicans are well entrenched in the Democratic Party, making it difficult for recently arrived Latinos to develop an affinity for the Republicans. Asians, of course, do not have as strong a tradition in the state, and their small numbers ensure that they will be overlooked as a political force in all but the most local elections. Incoming Asians will have more freedom to develop a political identity independent of their communities. At the same time, the population growth from out of state has had mixed effects on the Republican registration edge in Anglo Colorado. Democrats are more competitive in this state than they have ever been. Colorado appears to be a Republican stronghold that has weakened with demographic change.

Political Change and the Internal Composition of Colorado Counties

Understanding patterns of electoral balkanization and change in places around the country is the primary object of this book. To this end, in chapter 2 I examined several places in California with the aim of shedding light on their political variability by examining the internal composition of their population. In that chapter, I argued that Republican registration growth was greatly enhanced by the absence of forces that would abate that growth, in particular, immigrant and ethnic populations that were more likely to strengthen the Democratic Party than the Republican. The force for Republican growth in Placer County, California, for instance, was in-

migration of white voters from both within and outside the state. Hispanic, black, and Asian voters, on the other hand, have not become much of a presence in these northern Sacramento suburbs. The instrument of the exclusion of these groups has been restrictive zoning. In Kern County, Republican growth was facilitated by the spatial separation of Hispanics from white voters in a vast and sparsely settled territory. I argued that such spatial separation diminished the degree of ethnic conflict that would be translated directly into political mobilization. In Los Angeles and Alameda Counties, on the other hand, the presence of Asians, whites, African Americans, and Latinos in close proximity ensured that trends in Republican Party growth would be offset by corresponding trends in the growth of the competing party. Proximity breeds political mobilization, even polarization, of the contending groups in a society.

Does this theory stand up in Colorado? Do we find Republicans excelling there when their jurisdictions are safe from the encroachment and mobilization of Democratically inclined ethnics? The models of partisan change presented in table 3.4 suggest that the Colorado picture may be more complicated. The growth in the proportion of internal migrants is positively related to GOP growth in the 1980s, but there is no statistically significant relationship in the 1970s. If any effect is to be found in the 1970s, the data indicate that Colorado Republicans gained ground in those jurisdictions where native Coloradans maintained a solid majority. Which party benefits from the influx of migrants is contingent not only on the characteristics of the migrants, such as their party leanings, but on the characteristics of the natives.

To obtain a more complete understanding of the state's political dynamics, I examined five counties in the state with varying degrees of political party registration change from 1980 to 1990: Denver, Douglas, Larimer, Pueblo, and Weld (see map 3.1). The average Colorado county saw the GOP's share of registrants rise a substantial 5.3 percent during the decade. Denver's Republicans lost ground, dropping by 1.2 percent. Suburban and rapidly growing Douglas county saw growth at the state's average rate. Larimer Republicans gained about 2.7 points over their rivals. Heavily Democratic Pueblo saw a gain of about one point for Republicans. Finally, Weld County, home of the Colorado meatpacking industry and a large Hispanic population, saw the Republicans move up two points from 1980 to 1990.

It is possible that the settlement patterns of rival populations in these locales may influence patterns of political mobilization and partisan

change. Using a dissimilarity index for the five counties, one can evaluate the extent to which the ethnic population is segregated from the white non-ethnic population. As I explained in chapter 2, the dissimilarity index captures the percentage of each minority group that would have to move in order for that group to be evenly distributed across all census tracts. Where there is a high degree of spatial segregation or clustering, one can expect low levels of party activism and turnout among lower income minority groups. Republicans are likely to do well in settings like these, growing at least at the state average. On the other hand, where there is very little clustering, or where ethnic clustering occurs in densely populated areas, the level of partisan activism by minority groups will be much higher. Given this activism, Republicans are likely to do poorly, their numbers growing at a rate well below what statewide trends would predict.

Ordinarily, values of dissimilarity above .60 are considered high, while those under .30 are low. Values between .30 and .60 suggest a moderate level of segregation (Denton and Massey 1988, 806). However, the dissimilarity measure has been customarily applied to metropolitan areas, not to countywide settlement patterns. High values on the dissimilarity index are far more likely when they are calculated for an entire metropolitan area. Dissimilarity values for tracts within the much more limited geography of counties are likely to be lower. For the analysis presented here, then, values of dissimilarity above .50 will be considered high, those below .20 low, and those between .20 and .50 moderate.

The dissimilarity indices show that blacks are most highly segregated from whites in Denver and Weld Counties and only slightly less clustered in 1990 than in 1980 (see table 3.6). Efforts to integrate the schools through busing have done little to integrate Denver. In 1995, school busing to achieve integration was officially ended. Hispanics are highly clustered in Denver and Weld but less segregated from whites in Douglas and Larimer. The small Asian population is most segregated from white voters in Pueblo, Denver, and Larimer Counties and least clustered in burgeoning, predominantly white Douglas. As in other areas of the country, neither Asians nor Hispanics are as segregated as blacks.

Denver

Black-white relations in Denver have been strained in recent mayoral races, as black Mayor Wellington Webb accused his white opponent in the 1995 contest of being racially biased (Weber 1995a). Webb's opponent, Councilwoman Mary DeGroot, had proposed the elimination of racial

TABLE 3.6. Index of Dissimilarity for the Black, Asian, and Hispanic Populations Relative to Whites in the State and in Five Colorado Counties, 1980 and 1990, by Census Tract

	Colorado		Denver		Pueblo		Larimer		Weld		Douglas	
Variable	1980	1990	1980	1990	1980	1990	1980	1990	1980	1990	1980	1990
Asians	.33	.35	.26	.30	.30	.28	.27	.33	.26	.22	.24	.18
Blacks	.68	.65	.71	.66	.40	.34	.35	.35	.83	.66	.45	.22
Hispanics	.44	.41	.51	.47	.28	.25	.26	.21	.27	.28	.16	.11
N	979	979	181	181	48	48	44	44	33	33	17	17

Source: U.S. Census 1990, and author's calculations.

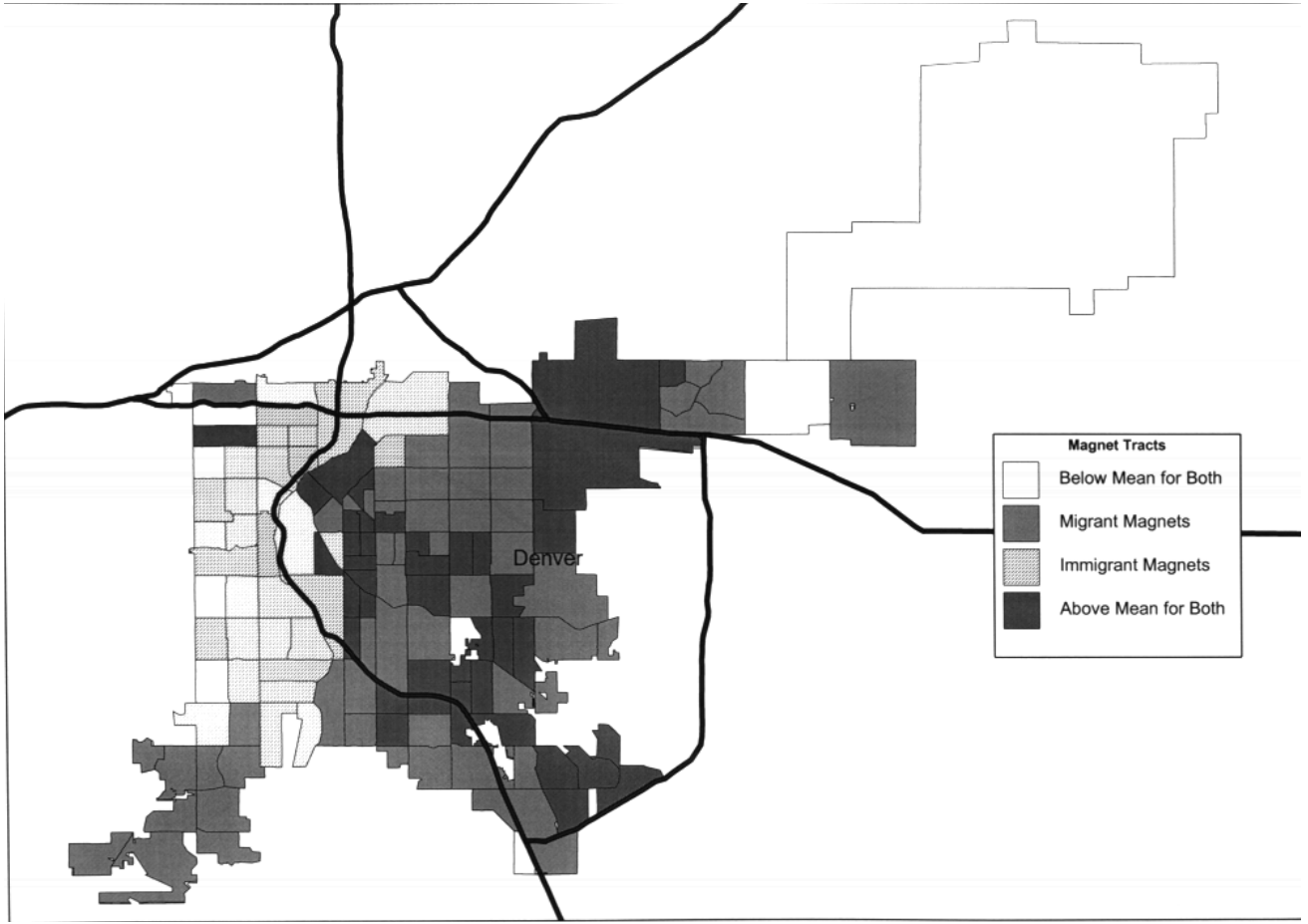
Note: Figures represent the percentage of each group that would have to move in order for the group to be evenly distributed across census tracts in the county.

preferences for an income-based affirmative action scheme (Weber 1995b). It appears from press coverage that both candidates used the race issue to mobilize their respective constituencies. But the black population in Colorado, while segregated, is comparatively small. Even in Denver, it constituted only 12.8 percent of the population in 1990. Webb's support has come from a black-Hispanic coalition (Hero 1989). The same Hispanic neighborhoods that supported Federico Peña's mayoral candidacy in the 1980s supported Webb in his first election and subsequent reelection. Because the black population is small, the residential segregation of the large Hispanic population from whites is more politically consequential than the segregation of blacks from whites. In Denver, roughly half of the Hispanic population would have to move in order to achieve an equal presence across Denver's 181 census tracts. The pattern of Hispanic concentration is illustrated in map 3.6, where the light shading illustrates those tracts that have attracted immigrants. The Hispanic neighborhoods are located on the west and north sides of Denver. These are the areas where black politicians like Webb have had to mobilize voters by playing up minority versus white divisions in local politics.

Hispanics in Denver come into regular contact with members of other groups due to the density of the city's population, and this contact makes the group highly conscious of its ethnicity. There is also a higher degree of social stratification in cities like Denver than in more rural areas. The interaction of distinct ethnic groups and social classes in large cities is likely to contribute to feelings of deprivation or injustice among the underprivileged (McVeigh 1995, 465). This generates a demand for redistributive policies and makes the Democratic Party an attractive instrument for channeling grievances into political action via public policy. Republicans have a hard time benefiting from the kind of segregation that occurs in urban areas when the minority community is aware that class disparities vary directly with the racial constitution of neighborhoods. In short, Democratic dominance and growth in Denver and the appeal of minority candidates like Peña and Webb can be explained by the city's large and active ethnic population.

Pueblo

Pueblo, while not nearly as ethnically segregated as Denver, is similar in many respects. It has an ethnically heterogeneous and politically active population that has shaped the city's politics since the early 1900s. Most of the early Anglo settlers came from southern, Democratic states (Elazar 1970, 165, 176). They were followed first by southern European and then



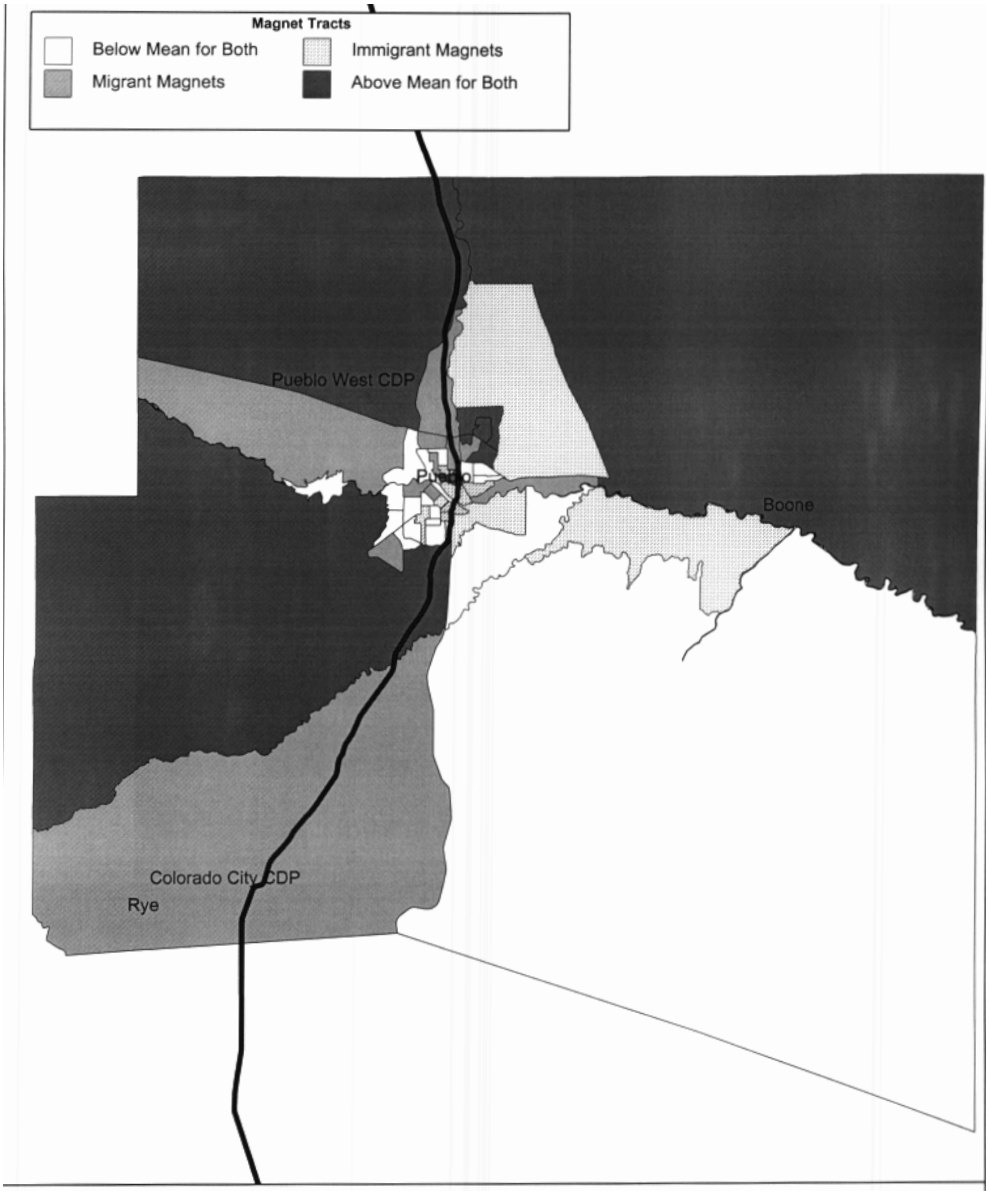
Map 3.6. Internal migrant and immigrant magnets in Denver County, Colorado, 1990

by Mexican immigrants who worked in blue collar industries and developed a Democratic identification as a consequence of their class status. As one of the few truly industrial cities in the West, Republicans have been a minority party since the New Deal. Steel was the city's cornerstone industry until the 1980s, when the Colorado Fuel and Iron Corporation (CFI) closed, later to reopen under the ownership of Oregon Steel. Jobs at the reopened plant paid far less than at the old CFI. Labor unions still have a presence in the area, although the service sector is now the fastest growing part of the economy.

Like Denver, Pueblo County's white population has declined in recent years while its Latino population has increased (Vest 1994, 6). Most of the Hispanics are natives, but immigrants have also found their way there. Pueblo's patterns of immigrant and internal migrant settlement are illustrated in map 3.7. Note that in the city itself, on the southeast side, a large number of the tracts are above the local average in their proportion of immigrants. Twenty-two percent of the county's tracts are majority Hispanic, and even the least Hispanic tract is comprised of 5 percent Hispanic residents. There is substantial income variation among these neighborhoods. The poorest Latino neighborhood is in the southern end of the city and contains a large immigrant population, but there are many middle income Hispanic areas. Judging from table 3.6, we can see that the large Hispanic population is moderately segregated, though far less so than Denver (see the dissimilarity index in table 3.6). Pueblo is often represented by liberal Hispanics in the state legislature, and within the county ethnic conflict is not much of an issue. The local election board has drawn upon majority Hispanic election districts for the municipal council with little attendant controversy. There is occasionally some conflict over how many local officeholding politicians are Hispanic, but even Latino leaders are willing to admit that sometimes their underrepresentation in office is the result of having too few candidates. Pueblo's established Hispanic population and its high level of political engagement made it difficult for Republicans to make much headway even during the 1980s when GOP growth was the norm. Local sources suggest that Pueblo's population is becoming less Democratic, but this is because some voters are becoming independents not Republicans.

Greeley and Weld County

Pueblo is a socially stratified, ethnically heterogeneous, and politically active area where Republican growth has been slow. There are, of course,



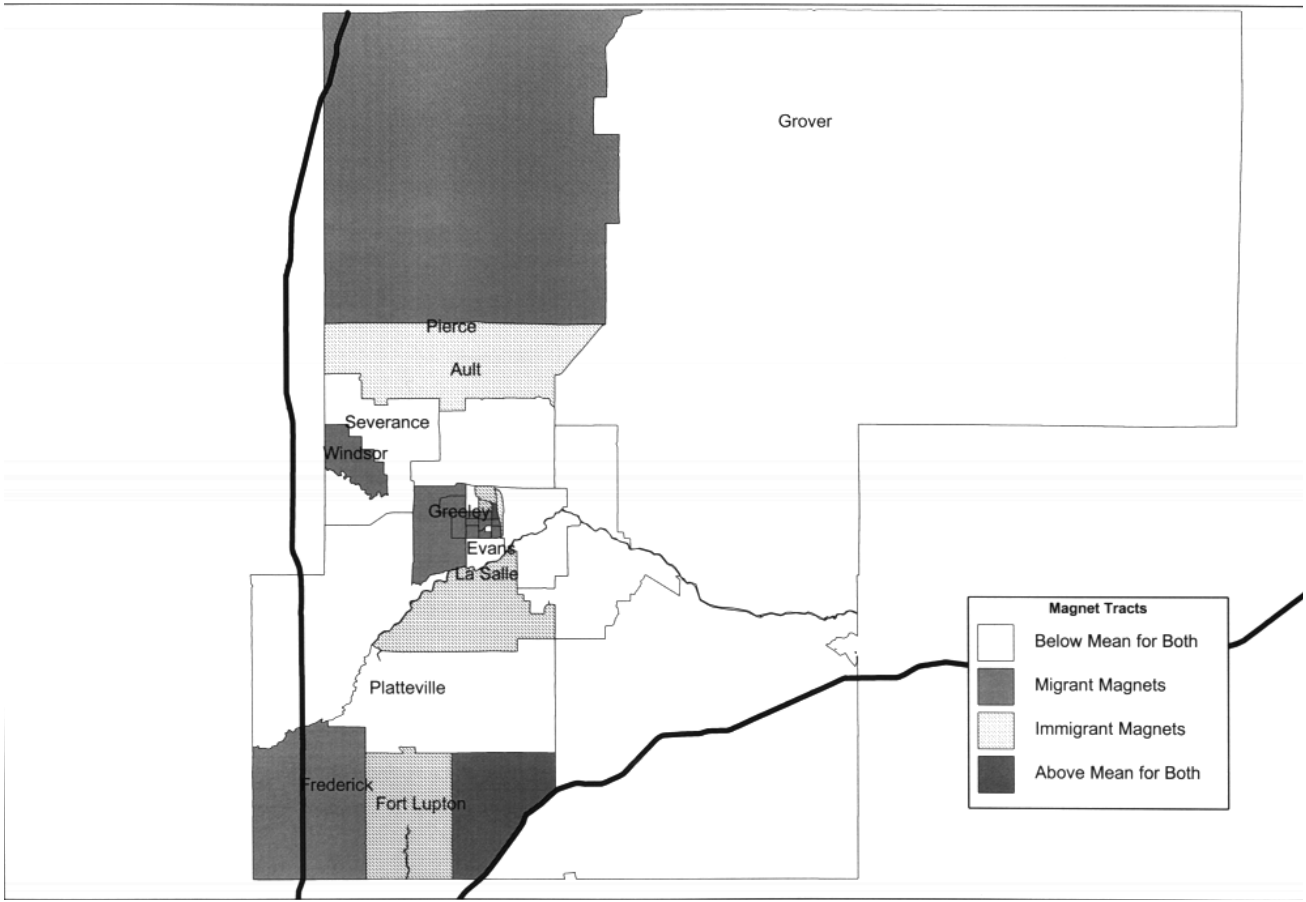
Map 3.7. Internal migrant and immigrant magnets in Pueblo County, Colorado, 1990

socially stratified, ethnically heterogeneous areas in Colorado where Republicans have done well. Certainly Weld County is one of those. The Hispanic population there is only slightly more spatially isolated today than Pueblo's, but the educational attainment of Hispanics ran fully ten points lower in Weld than in Pueblo according to 1990 census figures. The lower education levels undoubtedly dampen levels of political participation (DeSipio and Rocha 1992; Garcia 1987). The Hispanic population in Weld County is not well established. Weld's Mexican immigrant population consists of more recent foreign-born arrivals than Pueblo's, and their ability to speak English and their knowledge of electoral politics are more limited. Fully one-fourth of Weld County's Mexican population reported not speaking English "very well" in 1990, compared to only 13 percent in Pueblo County. This is an important difference because English fluency is a powerful indicator of assimilation, naturalization, and political involvement. Immigrants in Weld County have been pushed to the outskirts of Greeley, to neighborhoods on the north side and towns such as LaSalle, Ault, and Fort Lupton (map 3.8).

Labor organizations have often helped raise the awareness of immigrants and ethnic minorities, seeking to mobilize them for political action. Interestingly, unions have been less of a political force in the Greeley area than in Pueblo. One major meatpacking union that organized some Hispanic workers in Greeley was broken when the Monfort plant closed in 1980 (Andreas 1994, 5). Although it reopened two years later and was purchased by the international conglomerate ConAgra in the late 1980s, the union has never regained its strength. The alternative to meatpacking for Mexican migrants is work in the sugar beet or onion fields. Pay is low in the agricultural sector. The average family of six earned only $7,000 per year in 1988 (Andreas 1994, 24). By contrast, in Pueblo, Hispanics are more likely to find themselves in professional and managerial jobs and far fewer are employed as agricultural laborers. No wonder, then, that the Republicans have done far better in Weld County than in Pueblo. Much of the Hispanic population in the Greeley area remains disenfranchised and without much influence in the political life of the area.

Larimer County

Larimer County, home to the cities of Fort Collins and Longmont, borders Weld County on the west, but the two are light years apart in social and economic terms. Unlike Pueblo and Weld, Larimer has a small Hispanic population, most of which is clustered along the Weld County bor-



Map 3.8. Internal migrant and immigrant magnets in Weld County, Colorado, 1990

der on the east. In spite of its homogeneous white population, though, Republican gains have been modest. There was a slight 2.7 percent increase from 1980 to 1990, not much larger than the increase in neighboring Weld and only 1.5 points greater than in heavily Democratic and heterogeneous Pueblo. In its ethnic composition, high income, and pattern of development, it looks rather like Placer County, California. Larimer even resembles Placer in its physical geography. The western end of the county abuts the mountains and is the home of Estes Park and wealthy housing tracts. The question for Larimer is why this white-only locale did not experience stronger Republican growth during the 1980s. The answer lies in the nature of white population change in the area. In-migrants to Larimer County as early as the 1970s were far less likely to import Republican Party affiliations than were in-migrants to Placer County. A strong contingent of environmental activists in Fort Collins have mobilized against the county's seemingly unstoppable growth. Many of the new residents of Fort Collins and Longmont are from middle-class Denver neighborhoods and have brought their Democratic inclinations with them. While Larimer is a wealthier county than neighboring Weld, it lags well behind very wealthy areas like suburban Douglas County further south. Entering the 1980s, this part of northern Colorado often voted Republican, but the Democrats were always a competitive force. Those socialized into the prevailing political ways around Fort Collins were nearly as likely to find a home in the Democratic Party as in the Republican.

Douglas County

Just south of the Denver metropolitan area is Douglas County, historically comprised of cattle ranches and several small towns. Bridging the Colorado Springs and Denver metropolitan areas, this county tripled in size between 1980 and 1992. High-end suburban development has caught up with it. Very few large ranches remain. Upscale housing tracts have sprung up, with custom homes on expansive lots dotting the northern part of the county. It is now home to the largest unincorporated homeowners association in Colorado, Highlands Ranch, and in the late 1990s became home to the Denver metro area's largest shopping center, the taxes from which will be used to finance further development. These suburbs remain mostly residential, however, which means that the burden of infrastructure development falls squarely on homeowners, driving up the local cost of living (Kerven 1992).

Republican registration edged up about five points in Douglas County between 1980 and 1990 and this trend can be attributed to the class of residents drawn there: wealthy and white. Unlike Larimer, where white newcomers bring a mix of Republican and Democratic affiliations with them, Douglas County's costs are affordable mainly to those who fit a GOP economic profile. There are almost no ethnic minorities. The population is only 3 percent Hispanic and less than 1 percent Asian, all of whom, judging by the figures in table 3.6, are highly dispersed throughout the seventeen census tracts. In-migrants during the 1980s came mostly from Denver's older suburbs to commute to work in Arapahoe County (Lewis 1996). Local observers claim that Douglas is a haven for those trying to escape crime and gang problems. Only 772 black residents are recorded as having moved in between 1985 and 1990. The mechanism for keeping the minority population to a minimum is development governed by complex restrictive covenants coupled with development impact fees that add to the cost of new housing. There is multifamily housing planned for construction at the northern end of the county, but the rents in these developments, coupled with the costly commute to jobs, place these neighborhoods out of the financial reach of most minority citizens.

Ethnic Settlement Patterns and Political Balkanization

From the comparisons of internal population dynamics across these five counties, some generalizations may be possible. As in California, Republican growth was on an upswing during the 1980s and early 1990s. This growth did not take place evenly across the state. Instead there was significant political variance, which corresponds to the ethnic character of places. At one extreme, Denver, with its dense, ethnically mixed population, saw Republican registration decline during this period. Other areas of ethnic heterogeneity saw only modest Republican growth (Pueblo). If the ethnic population was politically inactive, however, as it appears to have been in the Greeley area, Republicans often made solid gains. Areas with mostly white populations were mixed in their propensity to move into the Republican column. The growing middle income white counties, such as Larimer, saw some Republican growth, but this was tempered by the arrival of many white Democrats. At the other extreme, suburban Douglas County saw impressive Republican gains, as did many parts of rural Colorado. The counties that saw the most rapid Republican growth were

not only Anglo dominated and experiencing in-migration from outside the state but also the ones that became even less ethnic over the course of the decade.

Hispanics are spatially concentrated within the four larger counties but most of all in Denver. Like Los Angeles, and other urban areas, Denver's dense population mitigates the impact of the ethnic homogeneity of its neighborhoods on political participation. Interracial contact is high enough to ensure that local politics contains a racial element. The same is true in Pueblo, with its mostly urban but established ethnic population. Hispanic natives with deep roots interact with Anglos regularly and have developed a distinct racial component to their politics. Weld County, on the other hand, has a large rural immigrant population, economically similar to that of Kern County, California. The population is less isolated than in Kern, but it is mostly inactive in politics due to the characteristics of its ethnic population: poor, uneducated, and often migratory. With its population of more recent immigrants, Weld County is not a hotbed of Latino mobilization. For immigrants who are often initially fearful of getting involved in politics, economic empowerment precedes political action. But in the Greeley area immigrants are not even aware of their basic economic rights under state and national law let alone their political rights. According to Carol Andreas, recent immigrants are unaware of the basic protections against discrimination, job safety provisions, and workers' compensation, all of which are guaranteed by law, and that is why the union movement in the Greeley meatpacking industry has been so weak. What will happen in Weld County in the future is a more open question. The education of immigrants is the key to their political acculturation (Garcia 1987). Maintenance of Weld County's traditional Republicanism depends upon the sustained subjugation and inactivity of the growing Mexican American community.

Colorado has become a national crossroads, and the sheer number of out-of-state license plates one sees in the Denver suburbs attests to this inundation. People migrate there from both coasts and from neighboring states, contributing to the electoral volatility of the Front Range (Beatty 1981). Long-term residency in Colorado is worn like a badge of honor. In town meetings, the claim that one is a thirty-year resident gives one's opinion more weight in discussions of growth control and development. The long-term residents are also the most Republican, and controlling growth has become a GOP cry in some counties as natives try to protect an older way of life.

Colorado does show some degree of ethnic balkanization. It comes as no great surprise to learn that of all the state's ethnic groups, blacks remain the most spatially segregated from the white population. But many new Mexican and Asian arrivals move to areas where there are coethnic communities (Carnahan 1992). As a consequence, the Asian and Hispanic populations are becoming larger proportions of the population in the counties where they have settled. Internal to Colorado's counties, though, the degree of ethnic segregation of white from Hispanic and Asian neighborhoods is understated because the immigrant population is either very large and dispersed (Pueblo, Weld) or so small that it remains unnoticed (Douglas, Larimer). Race and immigration issues have not been as controversial in Colorado as in California. Small minority populations are less threatening to whites than large ones. The Hispanics in southern Colorado are well established, with settlements predating Anglo exploration. No one questions their claim to public services, and most speak fluent English. The relatively high level of integration of the white and Hispanic communities in Pueblo County has bred a strong sense of economic and political empowerment among minorities. The Hispanics in northeastern Colorado are subject to more discrimination because they do not have this history. They face barriers Hispanics in southern Colorado do not confront, not the least of which is their limited facility with English. Racism in Greeley is said to be serious, but Weld County residents also realize that this population is an important labor resource for the local vegetable farmers. The Mexican migrants in Weld County will be tolerated as long as they can be exploited. As of the mid-1990s, Coloradans were not on the verge of passing their own version of Proposition 187, but pressure to do so could become a reality in the new century in Denver suburbs and the growing areas along the Front Range.

Since 1970, Colorado's patterns of electoral change have been more influenced by internal U.S. migration than by immigration, and the Anglo outsiders slowly bolstering Republican registration. In the homogeneously white areas where Republican margins have increased, the flood of new residents has accelerated the trend toward GOP domination of the state.

Finally, the long-standing partisan traditions of localities account for some of the growth in Republican and Democratic registration. Republican areas such as Weld, Larimer, and Douglas Counties generated an upswing in GOP registration in the 1980s. The only thing that keeps Denver's suburbs from being even more Republican is the large number of

migrants who import independent and Democratic political orientations. Similarly, Democratic areas in southern Colorado have held fast to their traditions, as Republican registration dropped during the 1980s even though GOP candidates performed better than their registration figures would predict.

The data I present contain ambiguities that are not easily cleared up. We do not know from what has been presented how many of the new migrants to Colorado are actually Republicans and how soon they become politically active. Nor do we know how the political affiliations of Colorado natives may change in response to growth pressures. In response, I have tried to talk about the changing politics of places, not of people. In addition, comparisons of the developments in Colorado with those in other states to be dealt with in the remaining chapters are clearly in order. The Colorado case indicates that any generalizations about the ways in which population mobility is thought to influence the political system must be carefully qualified. *Whether internal migrants strengthen or weaken the party leaning of an area depends to a great extent on the political orientation of the natives when the new residents arrive.* In many of Denver's outlying suburbs, including those in Larimer County, long-time Colorado natives are more Republican than their newly arriving neighbors. In these cases, new migrants may leave the balance of party registrants untouched or gradually steer a place away from its traditional moorings.