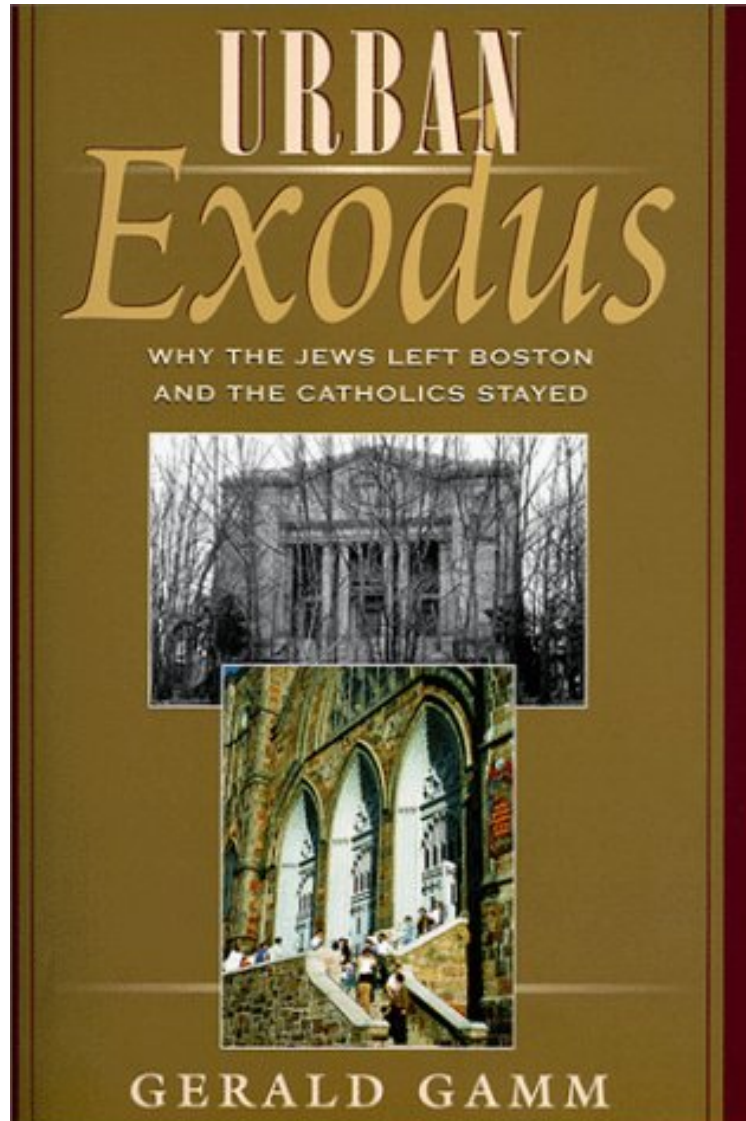


(Free pdf) Urban Exodus: Why the Jews Left Boston and the Catholics Stayed

Urban Exodus: Why the Jews Left Boston and the Catholics Stayed

Prof. Gerald Gamm

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Prof. Gerald Gamm : Urban Exodus: Why the Jews Left Boston and the Catholics Stayed before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Urban Exodus: Why the Jews Left Boston and the Catholics Stayed:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. How Religion and Culture Played a Significant Role in the White Flight from Boston By Alan Gregg An interesting comparison as to how the heirarchy of the Catholic Church versus the much less structured Jewish religious and cultural community, which affected the demographics and subsequent white

flight in the Roxbury and Dorchester sections of Boston. Due to the inability of the movement of Catholic parishes versus the unhindered mobility of Jewish organizations, the book shows how redlining and blockbusting made it easier for the Jewish community to abandon the changing demographics of the city for the new suburbs, whereas the Catholic community was tied more to the community by virtue of the fact that the parish and parochial school would stay in the community and that if a Catholic chose to relocate from the city to the suburbs, how they would have to join a new parish and thus religious community, albeit of their co-religionists. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Shame on Boston By Arthur Bloom The reasons behind the exodus of Jews from Dorchester and Roxbury where my friends and I grew up is a bit of a shameful story, shameful for the real estate people and the bankers who saw to it for their own economic advantage. The screwing of the Blacks who would move in is awful to read about, systematic as it was. A story well told, not widely enough known, but well documented and clear. As history and as a lesson in civics this is very worth reading. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. ... a revisionist history of demographic change in Boston neighborhoods like Roxbury, Dorchester By J. Zorn Gamm does well to articulate a revisionist history of demographic change in Boston neighborhoods like Roxbury, Dorchester, and Mattapan. The accepted view is that of Harmon and Levine in *The Death of an American Jewish Community*: redlining and blockbusting were the main causes. Greedy banking and real estate interests kept Jews, then blacks restricted to those certain districts and pressured the Jews to flee, opening super-profits for themselves in captive markets. Gamm argues for the untenability of this hypothesis, letting the bankers and realtors too far off the hook, in my judgment. He's very good on the respective commitments of temples and parish churches in their immediate neighborhoods. I wish he had said more about the stances toward upward mobility among Irish and Jewish citizens of Boston, and indeed among blacks as well.

Across the country, white ethnics have fled cities for suburbs. But many have stayed in their old neighborhoods. When the busing crisis erupted in Boston in the 1970s, Catholics were in the forefront of resistance. Jews, 70,000 of whom had lived in Roxbury and Dorchester in the early 1950s, were invisible during the crisis. They were silent because they departed the city more quickly and more thoroughly than Boston's Catholics. Only scattered Jews remained in Dorchester and Roxbury by the mid-1970s. In telling the story of why the Jews left and the Catholics stayed, Gerald Gamm places neighborhood institutions--churches, synagogues, community centers, schools--at its center. He challenges the long-held assumption that bankers and real estate agents were responsible for the rapid Jewish exodus. Rather, according to Gamm, basic institutional rules explain the strength of Catholic attachments to neighborhood and the weakness of Jewish attachments. Because they are rooted, territorially defined, and hierarchical, parishes have frustrated the urban exodus of Catholic families. And because their survival was predicated on their portability and autonomy, Jewish institutions exacerbated the Jewish exodus. Gamm shows that the dramatic transformation of urban neighborhoods began not in the 1950s or 1960s, but in the 1920s. Not since Anthony Lukas's *Common Ground* has there been a book that so brilliantly explores not just Boston's dilemma but the roots of the American urban crisis.

.com Boston's so-called white flight of the 1960s and '70s became a national symbol of the urban crisis. But what caused whites to move to the suburbs in such great numbers? Common knowledge holds that an influx of African Americans, assisted by the Boston Banks Urban Renewal Group, pushed Jews out of their neighborhoods and into the suburbs. In *Urban Exodus*, however, historian Gerald H. Gamm argues that the driving force behind suburbanization is not race but religion. Gamm studies two remarkably similar Boston neighborhoods, Roxbury and Dorchester, and argues that, while the Jewish population left, the Catholics stayed because of religious rules--rules that "are real not because they are written down but because they are obeyed." Looking at canon law and Talmudic guidelines, he separates issues of membership, authority, and "rootedness." In brief, Catholic congregations are bound by the geographical lines of their parishes and the physical structures of their parish churches, as established by Church hierarchy. Jewish congregations, on the other hand, are more autonomous, with the power to create and dissolve synagogues--and worshippers are not bound by geography and can attend the synagogues of their choice. Gamm is quick to point out that he does not argue that Catholics are necessarily more likely than Jews to stay in urban neighborhoods, but that the Catholic parish is better able to sustain neighborhood attachments. He also notes that race is a newer issue--"only after the urban exodus had nearly run its course, emptying apartments and lowering rents, were blacks able to overcome longstanding barriers to entry." Indeed, it was the growing population of the automobile and automobile suburbs in the 1920s that pushed suburbanization, as middle-class whites left still-white urban neighborhoods. *Urban Exodus* is a thought-provoking look at the shifting populations in America's cities--and the role organized religion plays in those shifts. --Sunny Delaney This thoroughly reported and elegantly written book surely is the best interpretation of Boston politics since J. Anthony Lukas's *Common Ground* in 1985. (David Warsh *Boston Globe*) Focusing on Boston's Roxbury and Dorchester neighborhoods from 1870 to the 1970s, Gamm argues that Jewish and Roman Catholic institutions and their white congregants responded differently to the changing urban environment. Correctly tracing the origins of the urban crisis to 1920s suburbanization, he concludes that Catholic and Jewish institutions' different rules, including those of membership, rootedness, and authority, accounted for these

different responses...Urban Exodus is an interesting and challenging study. (J. Borchert Choice)Synagogues and parishes, Gamm contends, essentially dictated who stayed in Boston's neighborhoods, who left for the suburbs, when, and why. It's an intriguing argument, one almost provocative in its simplicity...Urban Exodus takes its place in an increasingly impressive collection of books on urban conflict from Los Angeles to Yonkers, which seriously consider the intricacies of geography (not to mention religion). To paraphrase that eminent Bostonian, Tip O'Neil, we're finally learning that a good deal of American history is local. (Tom Deignan Commonweal)Through vivid stories and carefully presented evidence, Gamm shows that religious institutions shape neighborhoods and affect patterns of urban change. He does this by telling the fascinating story of upheaval and change in Boston's twentieth-century Jewish and Catholic neighborhoods, with lessons for Sharon [Massachusetts] in the twenty-first century. (Sharon Advocate 2001-05-25)Urban Exodus is more than a pioneering work in comparative sociology. It is also a thoughtful and challenging contribution to American Jewish history, and tells a story that occurred in Detroit, Washington, Newark, Cleveland, Minneapolis, New York, and elsewhere...According to Gamm...the difference between the demographic mobility of Jews and Roman Catholics stemmed from the different institutional structures of the two groups. As a result of a close examination of church and synagogue records, census data, newspaper accounts, Boston government records, and other primary source material, Gamm argues that "what primarily distinguishes Jews from Catholics is not a different capacity for racist behavior but a different attachment to territory. Catholics have a strong sense of turf, regarding their neighborhoods as defended geographical communities. (Edward S. Shapiro American Jewish History 2001-03-01)Throughout the book, Gamm follows the lives of two Dorchester institutions - St. Peter's, the largest preeminent Catholic parish, and Mishka Tefilan, Boston's oldest conservative congregation. Statistically and anecdotally, Gamm thoroughly demonstrates how divergent modes of governance affected Jews and Catholics as well. (Paula M. Kane Church History)This carefully written, impressively researched book begins with the puzzle suggested in its subtitle: Why did almost all of Boston's 70,000 Jews leave the neighborhoods of Dorchester and Roxbury for suburban destinations during the 1950s and 1960sIn its broad contours Urban Exodus persuades, and Gamm's achievement is noteworthy. He traces the life history of over one hundred Boston churches and synagogues, itself an accomplishment, and weaves them into a story of considerable power. (John T. McGreevy s in American History)The great merit of Gerald Gamm's study of the Catholic and Jewish neighborhoods of modern Boston is that it carefully balances the forces, visible and invisible, which caused those groups to behave as they did. (James M. O'Toole Catholic Historical) Urban Exodus takes a fresh look at two long running themes in Boston history: tribalism and turf. It examines the glue that holds a neighborhood together. And it explains Boston's reputation as a city of distinct parishes, even in the wake of demographic change. (Thomas M. Menino, Mayor of Boston)