

# Leaving America



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Today more than ever, large numbers of Americans are leaving the United States. It is estimated that by the end of the decade, some 10 million of the brightest and most talented Americans, representing an estimated \$136 billion in wages, will be living and working overseas. This emigration trend contradicts the internalized myth of America as the land of affluence, opportunity, and freedom. What is behind this trend? Wennersten argues that many people these days, from college students to retirees, are uncertain or ambivalent about what it means to be an American. For example, many are uncomfortable with that they believe America has come to represent to the rest of the world. At the same time, globalization and advances in technology have enabled the growth of a telecommuting work force whose members can live in one country and work in another, and this trend, among other factors, has encouraged a new generation of people to respond to the pull of global citizenship. "Leaving America" is an important reexamination of one of the most central stories in the history of American culture--the story of the immigrant coming to the Promised Land. While millions still come to America and millions more still wish to do so, there is an important counterflow of emigration from America to distant parts of the planet. This book focuses on modern American expatriates as a significant and heretofore largely ignored counterpoint phenomenon every bit as central to understanding modern America as is the image of a nation of immigrants. The greatest irony in America today may well be that while argument and discord prevail in the edifice of American democracy about diversity, economic justice, equality, and the Iraq War, many of the most thoughtful citizens have already left the building.

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