Manufacturing jobs bleed slowly rather than hemorrhage. A square block plant of brick and concrete, filled with machine tools, has a long economic life. As forces of changing competition push and pull work elsewhere, however, the work of many factories withers and the blood of taxes and Little League coaches flows from the community. Most important, a community’s self-respect bleeds away.

Profitable manufacturers strengthen communities. The wages, benefits, and taxes they generate lead not only to prosperity and opportunity, but also to pride in community identity. Yet the concentration of production sites has shifted, due to many forces. Companies, confronted by increased competition, gain efficiencies by moving selected processes to other plants. They shift production to get closer to customers or skilled workers. They reappraise their factory locations when their equipment becomes outmoded or they lack the room to expand.

Part II maps the movements that have occurred in the last quarter of the 20th Century at the county level to see what they tell us about American manufacturing today. Chapter 4 outlines our methodology and describes the forces that drive the movement of manufacturing.

Chapters 5 and 6 concentrate on the counties gaining and losing industrial momentum.

Chapter 7 moves in for a closer look at how manufacturing losses have wounded core cities, with the focus on Philadelphia.
Chapter 8 defines the links, in all of the counties we studied, between manufacturing and community well-being.