

Climate Migration: Who is coming, going, and why?

Presentation to CAW-CCAP and NOAA NEST on March 9, 2023

Linda Shi and Rachel Renders, Cornell University



Agenda:

01 Who moves to / within NE and why?

02 What impacts have migrants had to the region and its localities?

03 Case Studies & future considerations



Climate Change: Predicted Impact

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30% Of Americans Cite Climate Change As A Motivator To Move In 2023

By Samantha Allen
Editor

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Who Are America's "Climate Migrants," and Where Will They Go?

Carlos Martin
October 20, 2021

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ADAPTATION

Climate migration is already happening — for homeowners who can afford it

PUBLISHED THU, SEP 16 2021 7:30 AM EDT | UPDATED THU, SEP 16 2021 8:59 AM EDT

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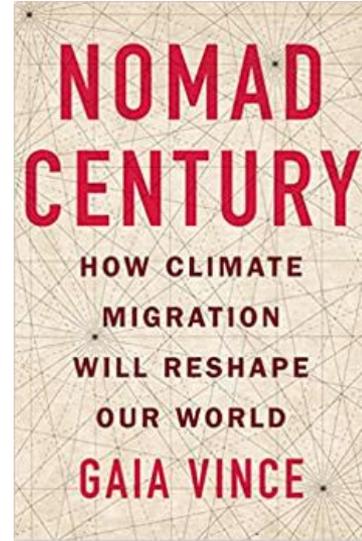


The Springs Fire encroaching on a house in Capistrano, California in 2015. SOURCE: NEWSPHOTO / GETTY IMAGES

As Climate Fears Mount, Some in U.S. Are Deciding to Relocate

As wildfires worsen and sea levels rise, a small but growing number of Americans are choosing to move to places such as New England or the Appalachian Mountains that are seen as safe havens from climate change. Researchers say this phenomenon will intensify in the coming decades.

BY JON HURDLE | MARCH 24, 2022



Home // Radio // Here & Now



Interior Maine could be a viable climate refuge — but is it ready to host potential refugees?

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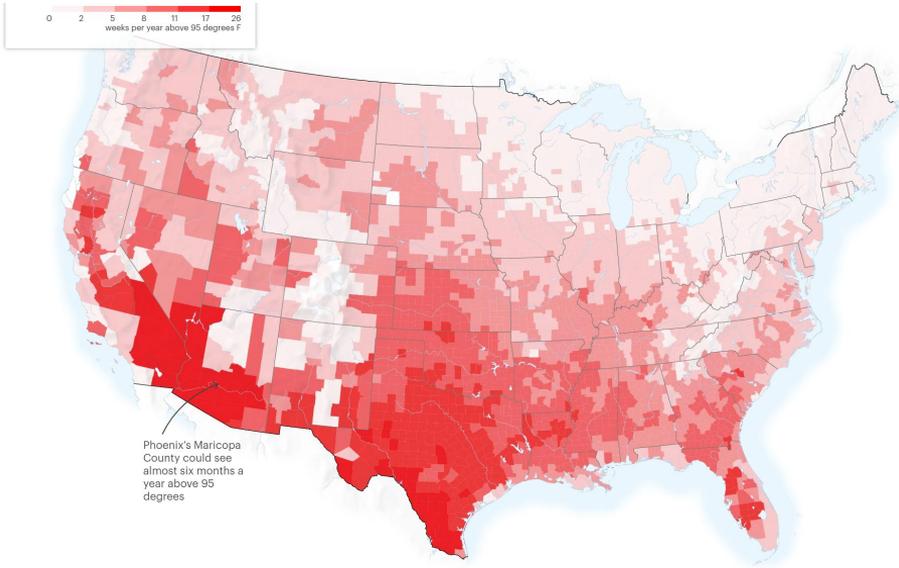
July 21, 2022 By Fred Bever, Maine Public Radio

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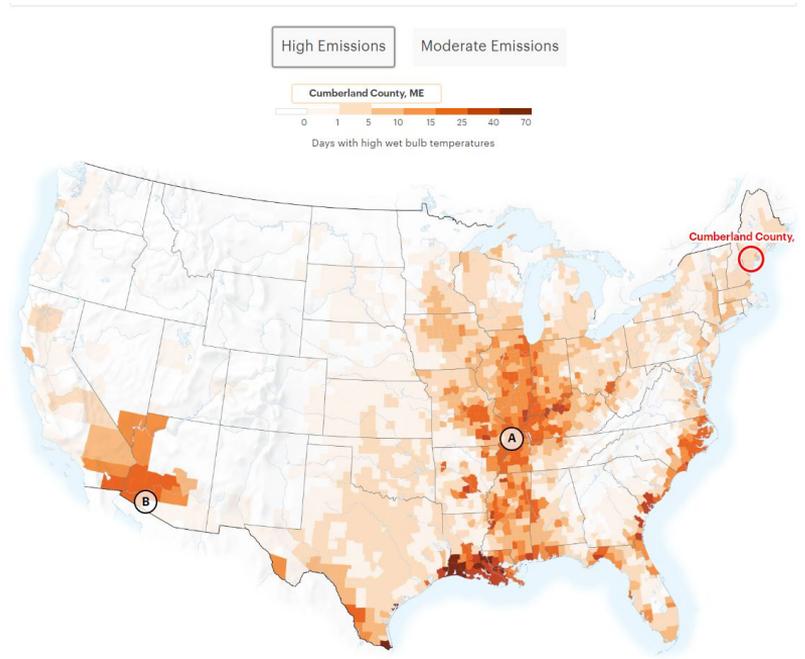
As many regions of the United States endure the extreme effects of climate change, some scientists believe [interior Maine](#) could be a refuge. But is the state ready for an influx of climate refugees?

[Fred Bever](#) of Maine Public Radio reports.

Is climate change driving migration patterns within the United States?

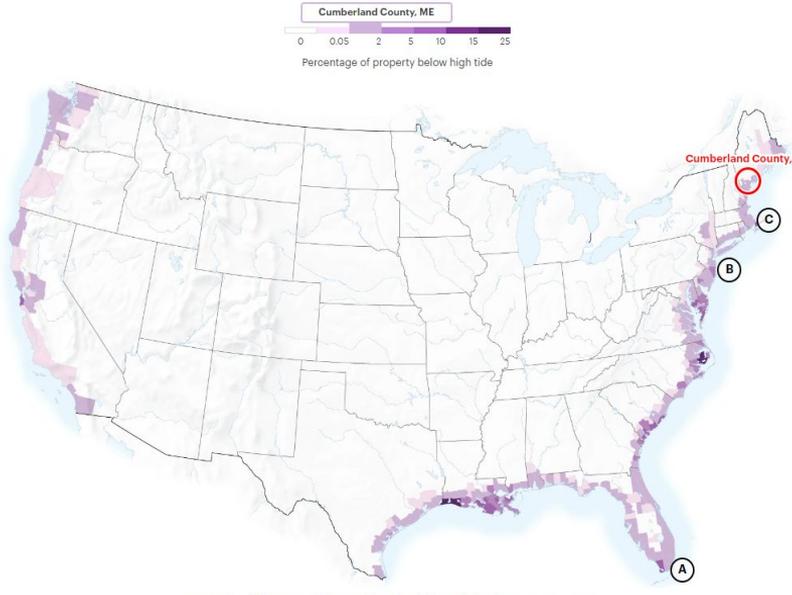


Under a “business as usual scenario” temperatures will continue to rise on average across the southern US.

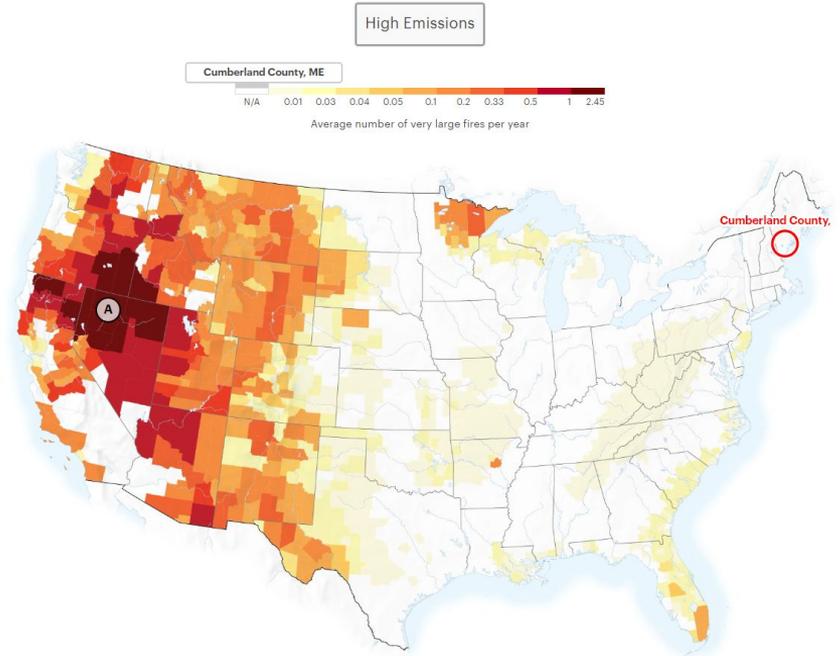


Maine and New Hampshire see minimal increase in high wet bulb temperature days.

Sea level rise will displace people along the coast, forcing populations to move inland.

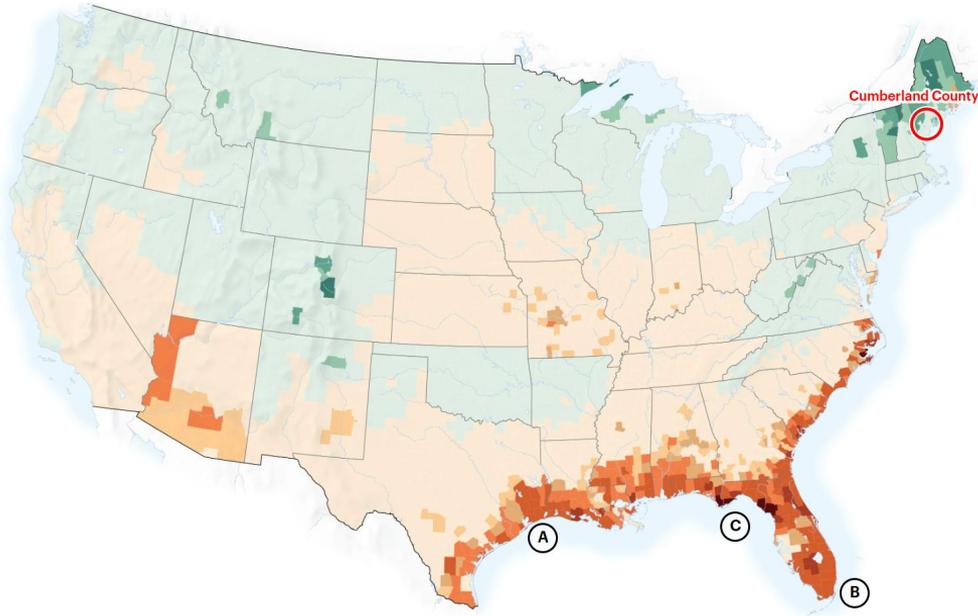


Under 1.8m sea level rise → estimated a potential 13.1 million persons could be at risk of migrating by 2100 Mathew E. Hauer



The midwest and west coast will become increasingly prone to fires, enticing people to move East.

Climate change as a percent of GDP 2040-2060



Climate Change will Drive Where People Want to Live Within the United States

Reasons Climate Impacts GDP

- Low crop yields
- Deaths from high heat (south)
- Sea Level Rise
- Increase in violent crimes
- Loss of real estate value
- Increased natural disasters

Climate Migration presents a unique opportunity for the Northeast to benefit economically.

Why Do People Move?

Push factors

- Lack of job opportunities
- Low economic activity
- High cost of living
- Housing affordability

- Discrimination
- Conflict

- Natural disaster(s)
- Climatic hazard(s)

Economic

Social

Environmental

Pull factors

- Better job opportunities
- Lower cost of living
- Housing availability

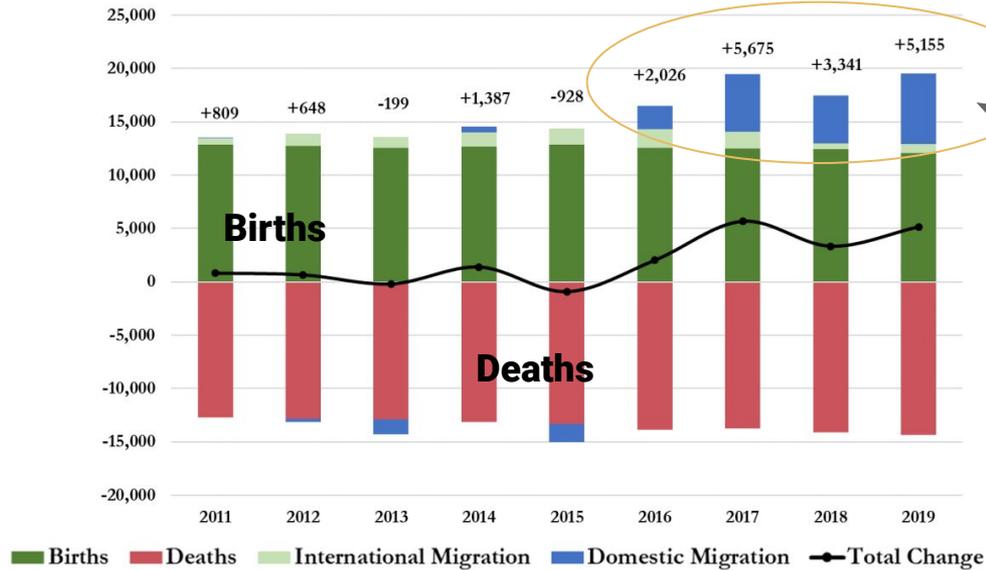
- Quality of life
- Improved amenities
- Kinship / cultural ties

- Milder climate
- Natural amenities

Migration is a life line for North Eastern Communities

Source: Population Estimates Program

Components of Population Change, Maine (2011-2019)

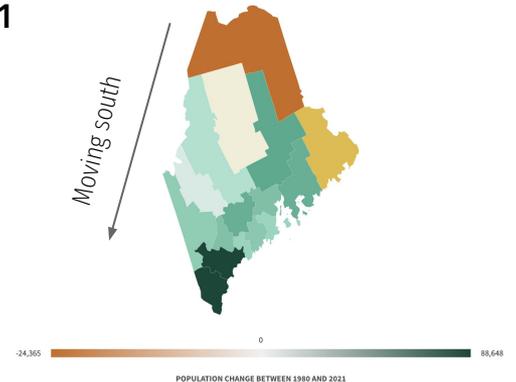


In 2021, Maine became a leading state for in-migration. 58% of all moves were inbound and only 42% outbound.

- Atlas Van Lines

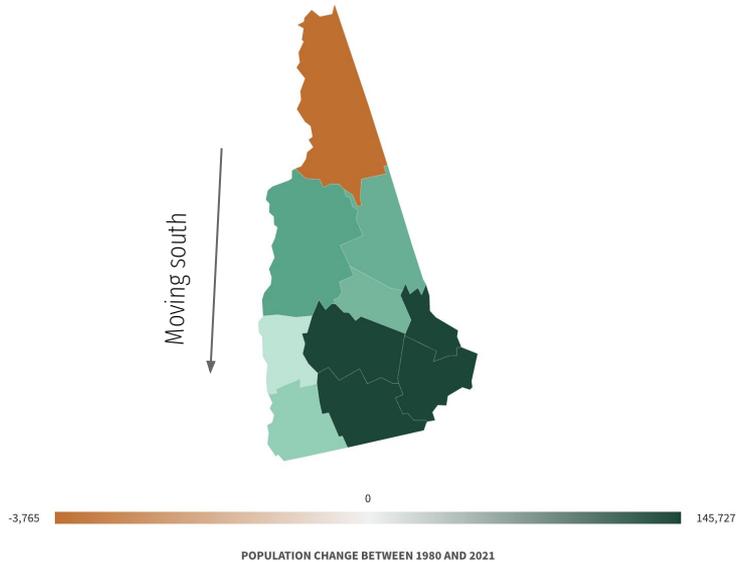
Domestic Migration

Population Change between 1980 and 2021



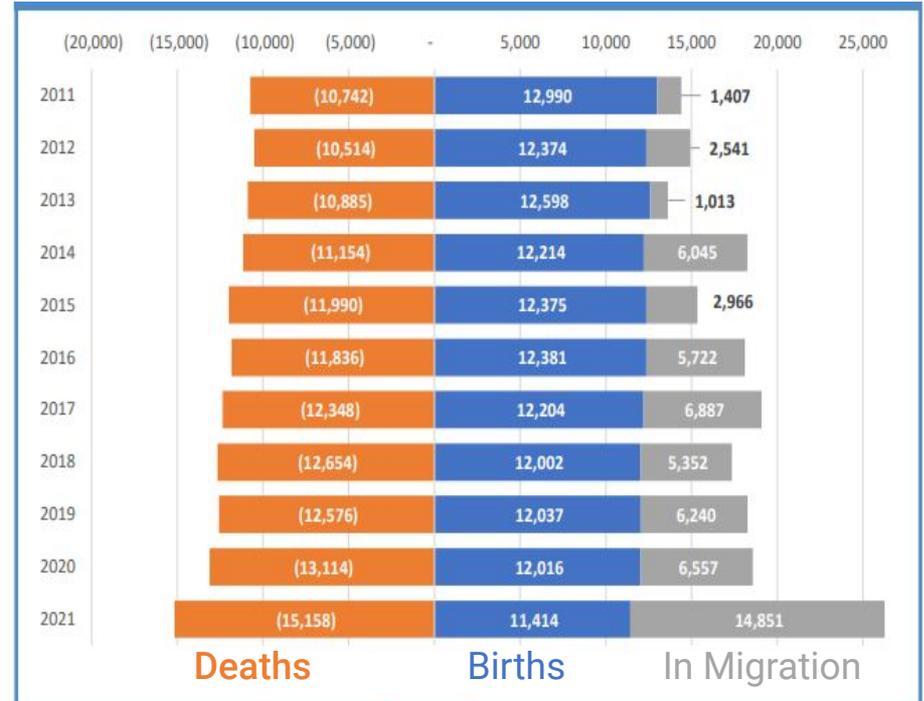
New Hampshire is experiencing similar population growth to Maine

Population Change between 1980 and 2021



Same unequal population distribution across the state

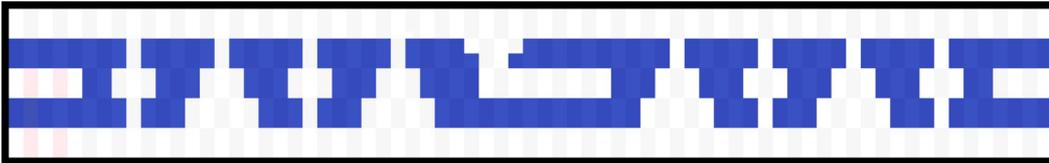
Components of NH Population Change: 2011-2021



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Estimates

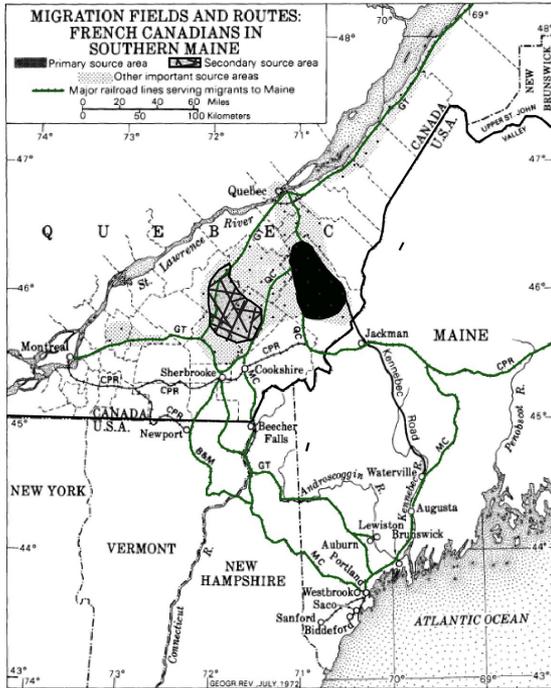
Examples of Great Migrations

- Indigenous populations were decimated by colonial in-migration
- Industrialization brought Europeans into New England mill towns spurring growth in the region
- African Americans moved north after the civil war to work in industrial cities
- Collapse of manufacturing and New England agriculture led to period of out migration
- COVID-19 Pandemic encouraged people to move out of cities



Historic Examples of Migration in NE

(Allen, 1972)



Once the railways were built, easier routes into New England

French Catholics from Quebec

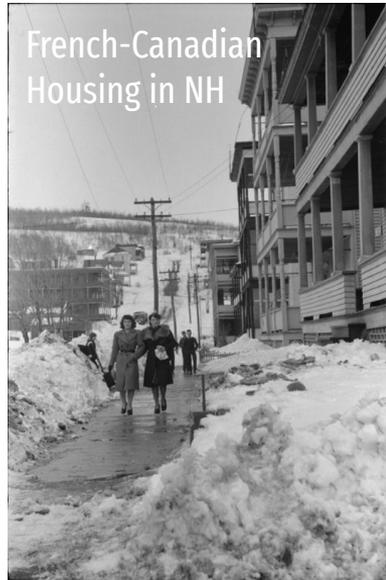


Image: Library of Congress



Basilica of Saints Peter and Paul

Founded in 1870, is the oldest parish for the French-speaking Catholics in the Diocese of Portland.

Culture Wars - Protestant vs Catholic

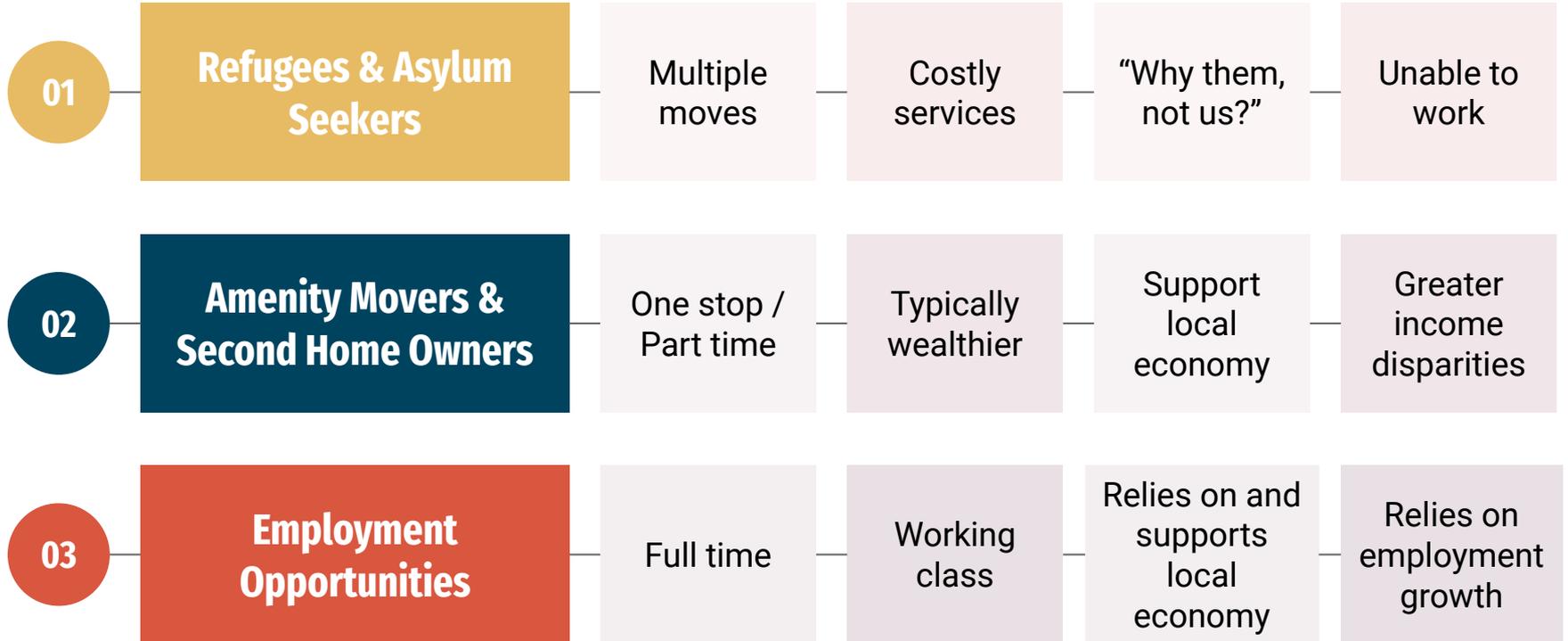


1920's: Largest chapter of the KKK outside of the southern United States



Americans who distrusted their Catholic, French-speaking neighbors burned the Old South Church in Bath, Maine. Painting by John Hilling. Courtesy of the [National Gallery of Art](#).

(Some) Types of Migrants



Challenges Communities will Face

Displacement of local
populations

Housing Shortages

Creation of economic
opportunities

Culture Clashes

All of these are challenges communities are currently dealing with and they will only be exacerbated by climate change

Portland, ME

*Actively promoting/branding themselves as a **welcoming city**
Don't have the housing for people to move into.*

Gateway for Growth Community (2017-2018)

“Our vision is to ensure that Portland is the most inclusive city in New England by fostering a strong sense of belonging in all aspects of city life”

Housing shortage is already severe: In 2019, Portland-South Portland Metro area was short 8000 units

Foreign-born residents accounted for 75 percent of the population growth in the Portland-South Portland region from 2011 to 2016

Foreign-born residents pumped \$1.2 billion into the area's economy in 2016 - Portland Regional Chamber





Case study: Lewiston, ME

A small number of Somali families who tried to move to Portland, ME.

- available housing stock was less than 3 % - in Lewiston the rate was 20%.
- Housing Vacancy rate in Lewiston today is ~8%

35% of those Somalis that resettled in Lewiston said it was because of social networks

- convey information about affordable housing which is the priority of many secondary migration groups
- Better opportunities for education

L.L. Bean mandates native-born employees take a course on Somali culture to encourage cross-cultural understanding and communication



L.L. Bean factory in Lewiston, Maine – Photo by: The Sun Journal

Collision of historic migration trends and current immigration

French clubs in
Lewiston Maine help
french speaking
African Migrants
adjust to life in Maine.



French clubs like this one have become de facto support groups for African immigrants in Lewiston, Maine.

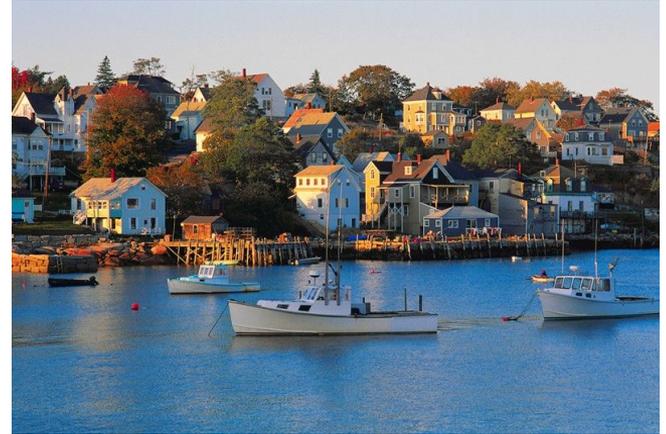
Susan Sharon/MPBN

Case Study: Town of Stonington

Amenity Migration Impact

Constant battle between short term residents and the year round community

Fishermen commuting an hour and a half from Bangor because they can't find affordable housing near the coast.



Design for in-progress affordable rental workforce housing - IWH

Brunswick, Maine

LOOK WHO'S DOING BUSINESS AT BRUNSWICK LANDING



SaviLinx



Mölnlycke Health Care



Rear of Mölnlycke building



Southern Maine Community College Midcoast Campus



Anaerobic Digester



Wayfair

Actively working to attract new residents through the re-development of the Naval Air Station Brunswick.

Developing additional housing units for Brunswick Landing Workers

BRUNSWICK LANDING HOMES

CONTACT

LIVE, WORK & PLAY NEAR EVERYTHING

MARINER'S LANDING CONDOMINIUMS

WOODLAND VILLAGE CONDOMINIUMS

WOODLAND VILLAGE SOUTH

BRUNSWICK LANDING CAMPUS

#LIVE WORK PLAY

Comparison of Case Study Communities

Brunswick:

- Creation of economic opportunities to attract workers out of old industry
- 2,500 jobs created in town
- Increased tax revenue
- Concern from long time residents about new developments for worker housing

Lewiston:

- “All American City” in 2007
- Decrease in vacant housing
- Incoming migrants as an economic lifeline
- Current residents concerned about cost of social services needed for refugees (us vs them)

Portland:

- Rent cap to keep prices from rising
- “PortLand of opportunity”
- Cannot house all of the refugees it is hosting in hotels
- People pushed out of Portland driven to nearby places such as South Portland, Westbrook and Biddeford, increasing prices in towns that were once considered affordable

Stonington:

- Non-Profit building affordable rentals
- Amenity movers are pushing out year round residents
- Residents losing their sense of community
- Seasonal residents vs year round

Housing Shortages

Existing Resident
Displacement

Economic Impacts and
Opportunities

Culture Clashes

Takeaways

01

Climate migration is uncertain and difficult to project. Communities have **agency** in how much to attract or resist in-migration.

02

In-migration inevitably creates tensions between existing working class residents, international refugees, wealthier amenity migrants. Cultural, class, religious, and **social differences underlie conflicts over jobs, housing, and land use, but are rarely discussed in planning.**

03

The region can learn from each other's experiences with retaining residents and attracting and living with in-migrants. Very little is known about migration programs' effectiveness and impact.

Questions communities will have to grapple with

01

Are the people communities are trying to attract the ones who are actually attracting? Are investments and plans fantastic or realistic?

02

Whose existing needs have gone unmet, who has been disinvested in, and why?

03

How can we effectively meet current needs as a basis for being a community attractive to others? How can in-migration communities welcome and integrate new residents in ways that support those most in need of housing and support?

04

Who are we leaving out of the conversation?



Thank you for listening and joining us today for this workshop!

If you have any follow up questions please feel free to reach out to:

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