

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

Maine Sustainability & Water Conference, March 30, 2023

Rachel Renders & Lauren Oertel, Cornell University



Photo: Getty

Agenda:

01

Who moves to / within Northeast and why?

02

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

03

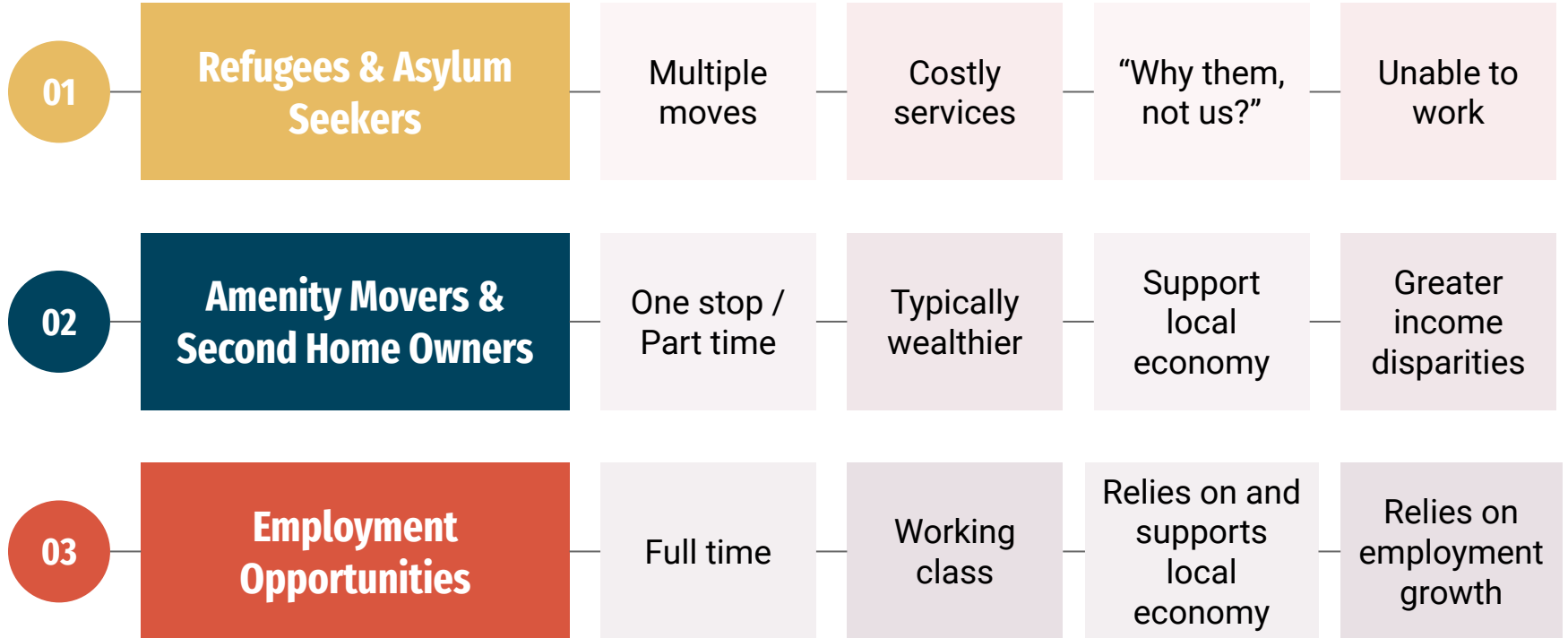
Case Studies & Lessons Learned

04

Predicted impact of Climate change on where people live



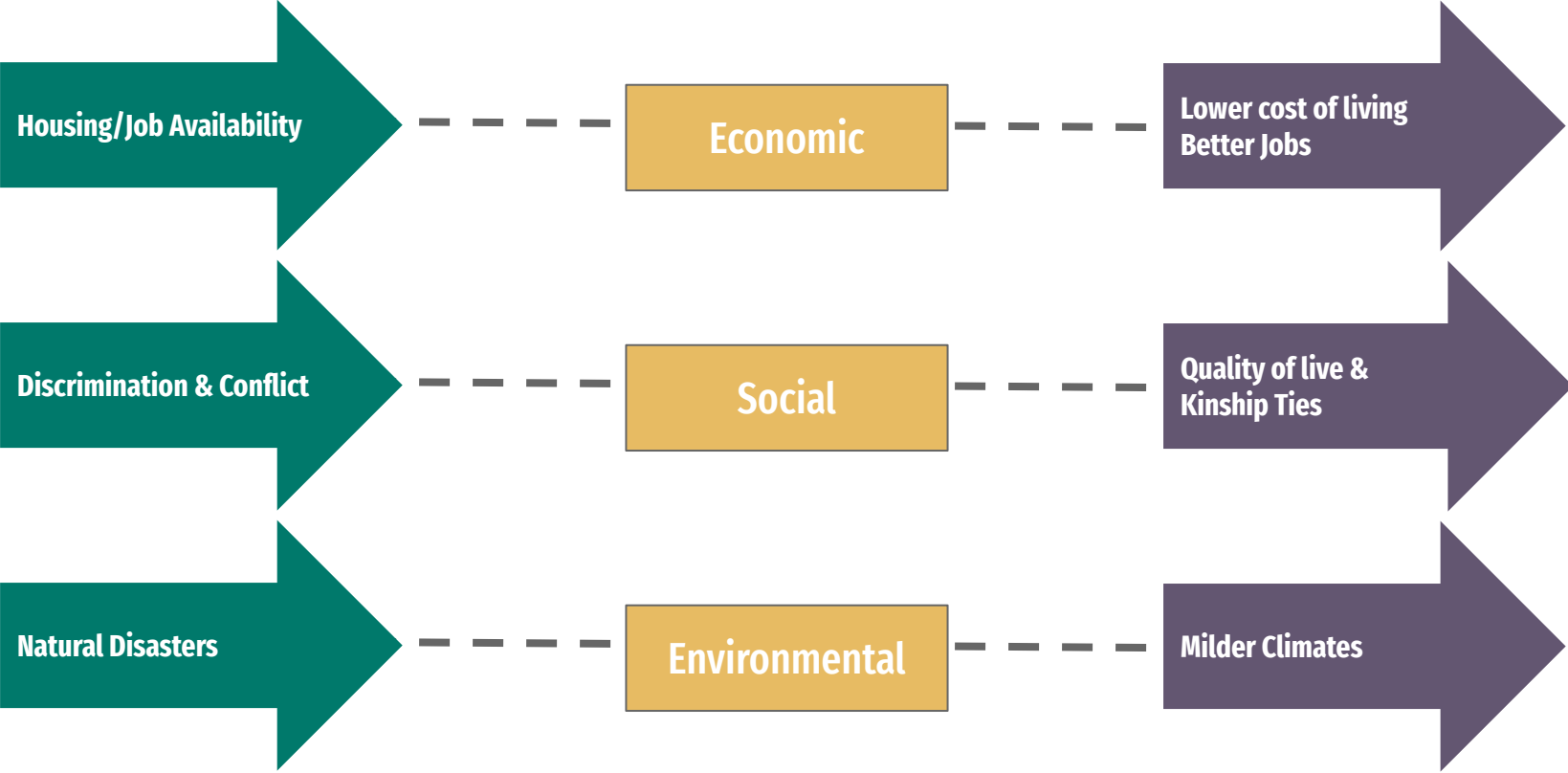
(Some) Types of Migrants



Why Do People Move?

Push factors

Pull factors



Covid-19 Pandemic



Less Populated Areas

Slide credit: Andrew Epps
MRP '23 Cornell University

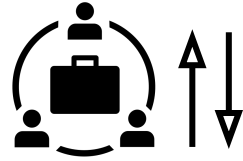
Challenges Receiving Communities Face



Displacement of
local populations



Housing



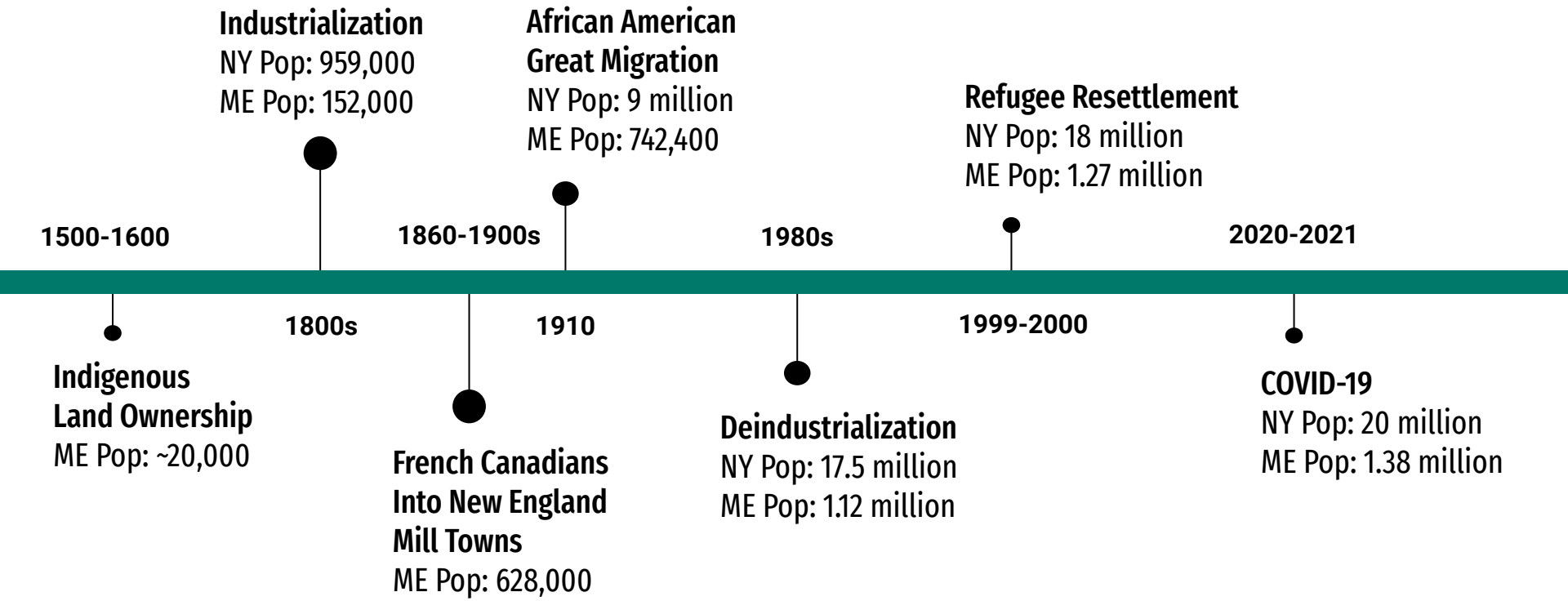
Economic
opportunities



Culture Clashes

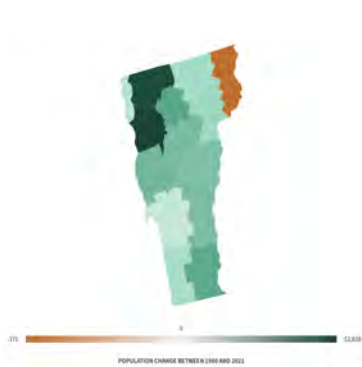
All of these are challenges communities are currently dealing with and they will only be exacerbated by climate change

Major Migration Events in the Northeast

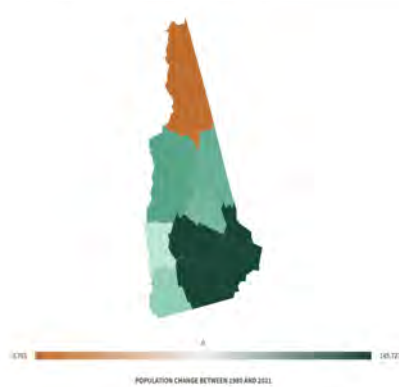


Migration is a Lifeline for Northeastern Communities

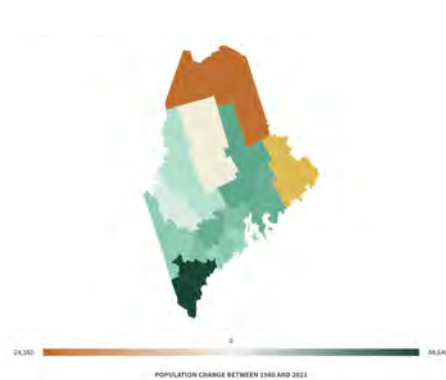
Vermont



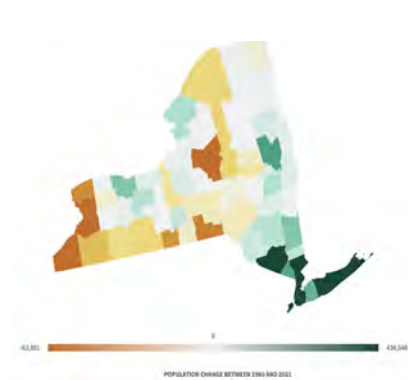
New Hampshire



Maine



New York



Population Change between 1980 and 2021

- Pop. Loss
- Largest Pop. Gain

Domestic Migration:

Movement of populations that occurs during specified periods of time within the United States



Case study: Lewiston, ME

Lewiston vacancy rate in 1999: Vacancy rate was ~20%

Lewiston vacancy rate 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



French language clubs 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 Sherman/AFSA

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



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



Case Study: New York Rust Belt

Puerto Rican in-migration mid-20th century & post-Hurricane Maria

Economic opportunities, family ties,
and political factors in 1960's were
leading factors

State Sponsored: Rochester Smart Growth Activities

- Rochester Land Bank
- Rochester Complete Streets Policy



Migration Events

Case Studies

Place	Displacement	Housing	Economic Opportunity	Cultural Clashes
French Catholic	✗	✓	✓	✓
African American Great Migration	✗	✓	✓	✓
Covid-19	✓	✓	✓	✓
Lewiston	✗	✓	✓	✓
Stonington	✓	✓	✓	✗
Rochester	✗	✓	✓	✓

Climate Change: Predicted Impact

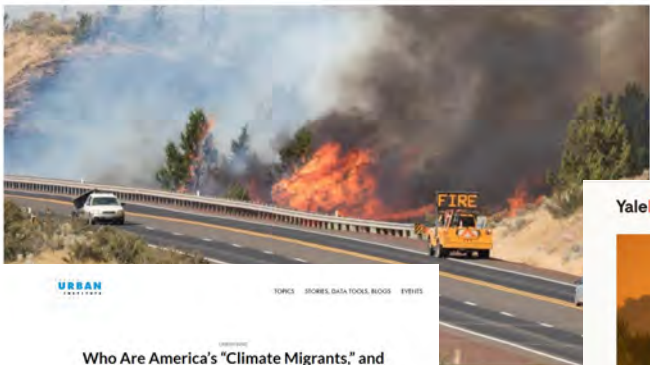
Home Improvement | Features | 2016: Of Americans Cite Climate Change As A Motivator To Move In 2023 | Advertisement Disclosure

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

By Samantha Allen
Editor

Updated Nov 12, 2023, 10:00am

We earn a commission from partner links on Forbes Home. Commissions do not affect our editors' opinions or evaluations.



URBAN
INSIGHTS

TOPICS | BROWSE | DATA TOOLS | BLOGS | EVENTS

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

Carina Mays
October 26, 2023

••••



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 8:08 AM EDT



Salvador Rodriguez
@SAL16

SHARE [f](#) [t](#) [in](#) [e](#)

YaleEnvironment360

Published at the
Yale School of the Environment

Explore Search About E360

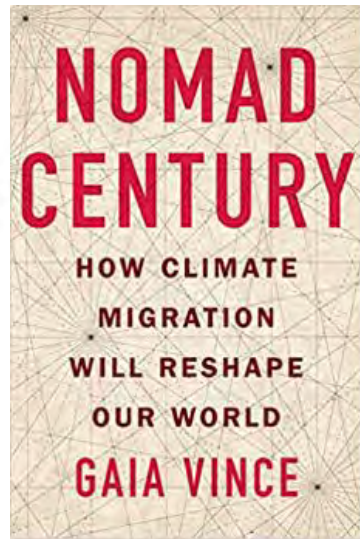


The Springs Fire burning on a house in Carpinteria, California in 2015. Sarah Hochstetler / Getty Images

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 | 9:30am | Here & Now



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

10:17 AM
00:04

July 21, 2023 | By Tom Clavin | Maine Public Radio

[t](#) [f](#) [e](#) [s](#)

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?

Free! Bever of Maine Public Radio reports.

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?



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

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

Presenter Rachel Renders - rar335@cornell.edu

Presenter Lauren Oertel - lro24@cornell.edu