

Moving Mapper:

The “Invisible Train” of
Gentrification and
Displacement

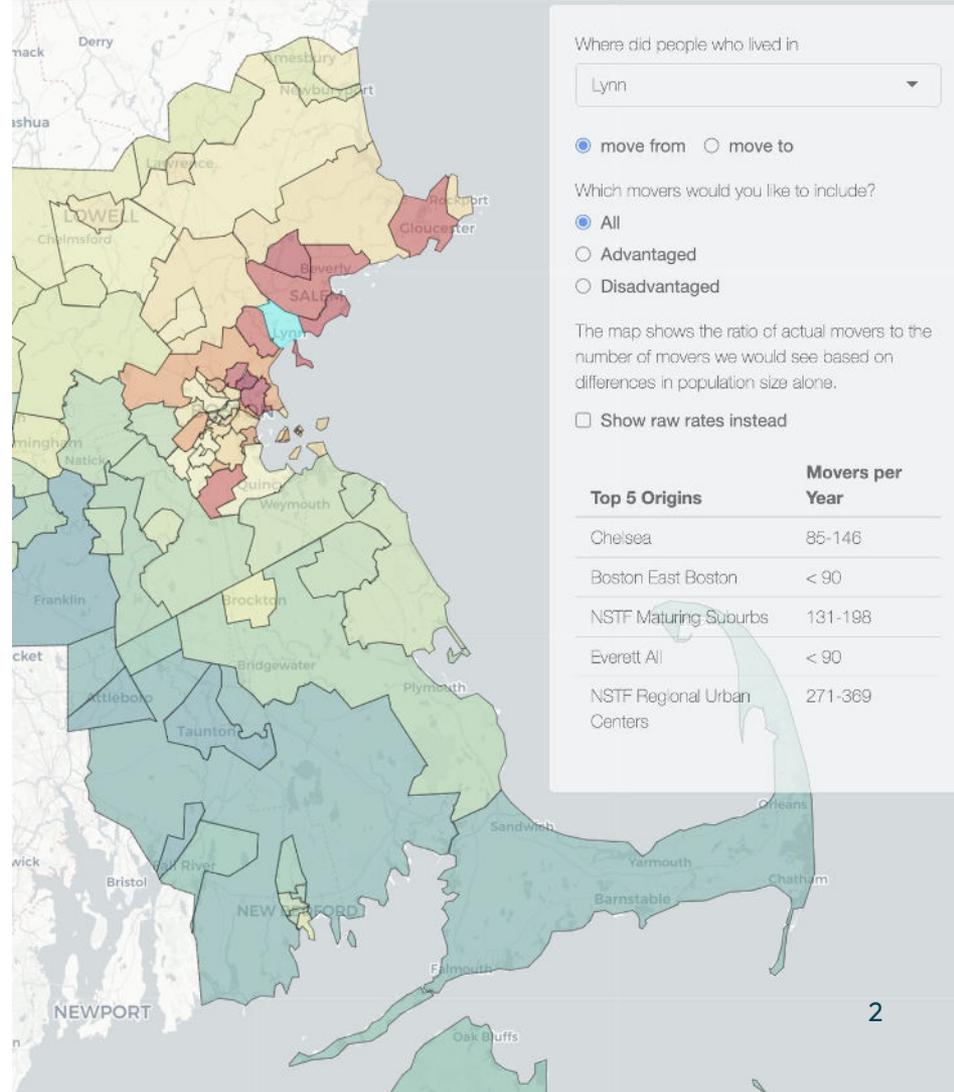
October 21, 2022



What is the Moving Mapper?

An online mapping tool that provides a snapshot of where residents moved to and from within Massachusetts, from 2009 to 2019.

hns.media.mit.edu



Our Research Questions

Residents were experiencing neighbors and friends being “pushed out” as housing prices skyrocketed in HNS communities. There seemed to be patterns in where people were moving - farther north and farther south, along an invisible, yet seemingly predictable path.

But, there was no data on moving patterns to document or verify what residents were experiences.

This lack of “proof” made organizing between communities linked by people moving between them challenging.

How many people are moving in and out?

Are people being “pushed out”?

Where are they moving to/from?

Who is moving?

Why are they moving?

How can we organize across communities?

How we answered them

Step 1: find data source

EQUIFAX

Credit score data provided by the Federal Reserve of Boston

Can tell us...

- Where people live (*address*)
- Economic advantage (*credit risk score*)
- Defined “economic disadvantage” based on credit risk score

Can't tell us...

- Who (*age, race/ethnicity, gender*)
- Why (*reasons for movers*)

Step 2: design analysis

Identify movers as "advantaged" or "disadvantaged", based on their access to credit.

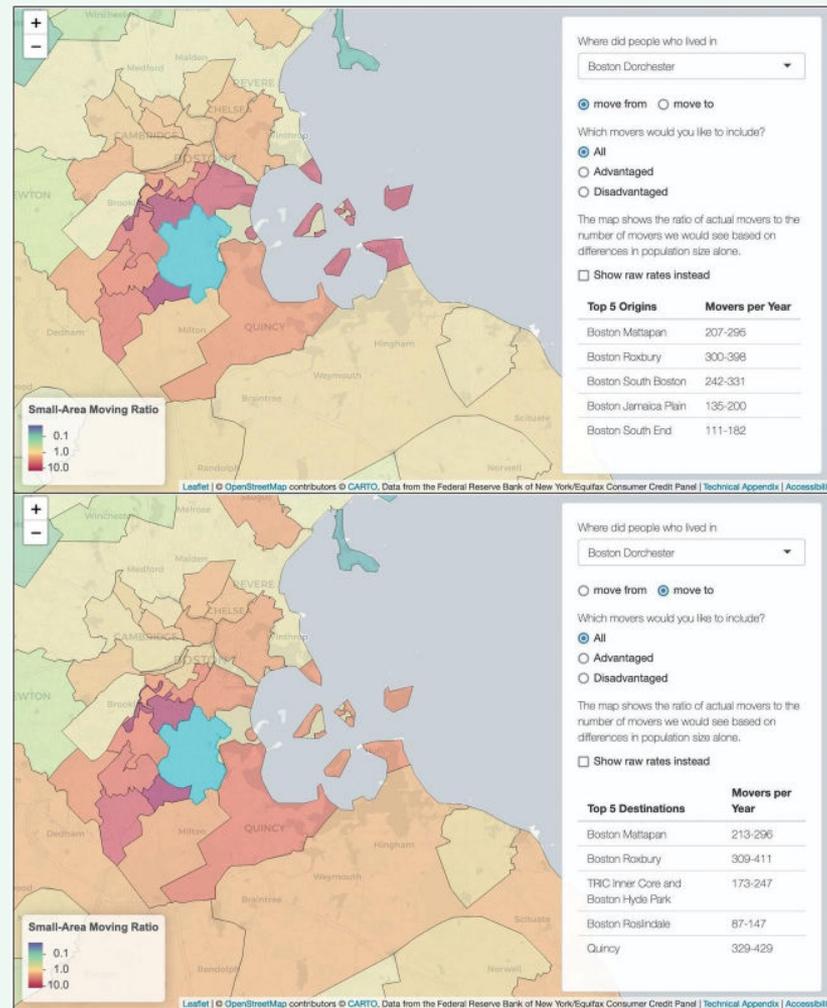
Map the geography and rates of moves into and out of neighborhoods across MA.

(neighborhoods were defined based on locally meaningful boundaries)

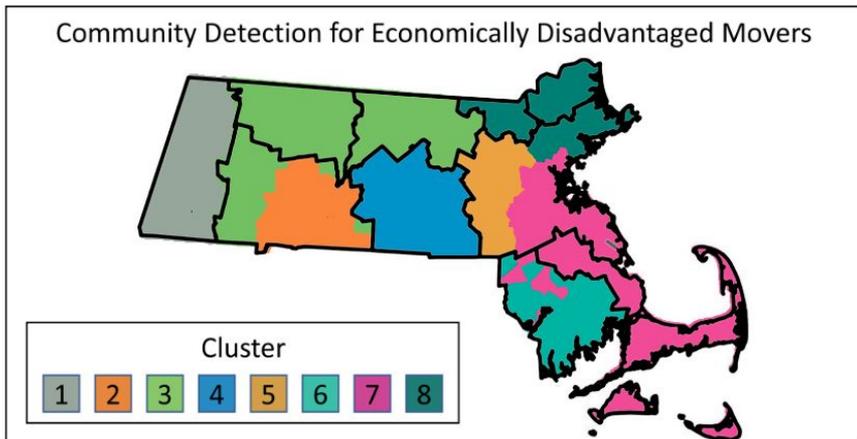
What we learned

Economically disadvantaged residents are moving outward, both:

- in a **predictable** pattern, and
- **farther** away from the HNS communities and from the urban core.



What we learned

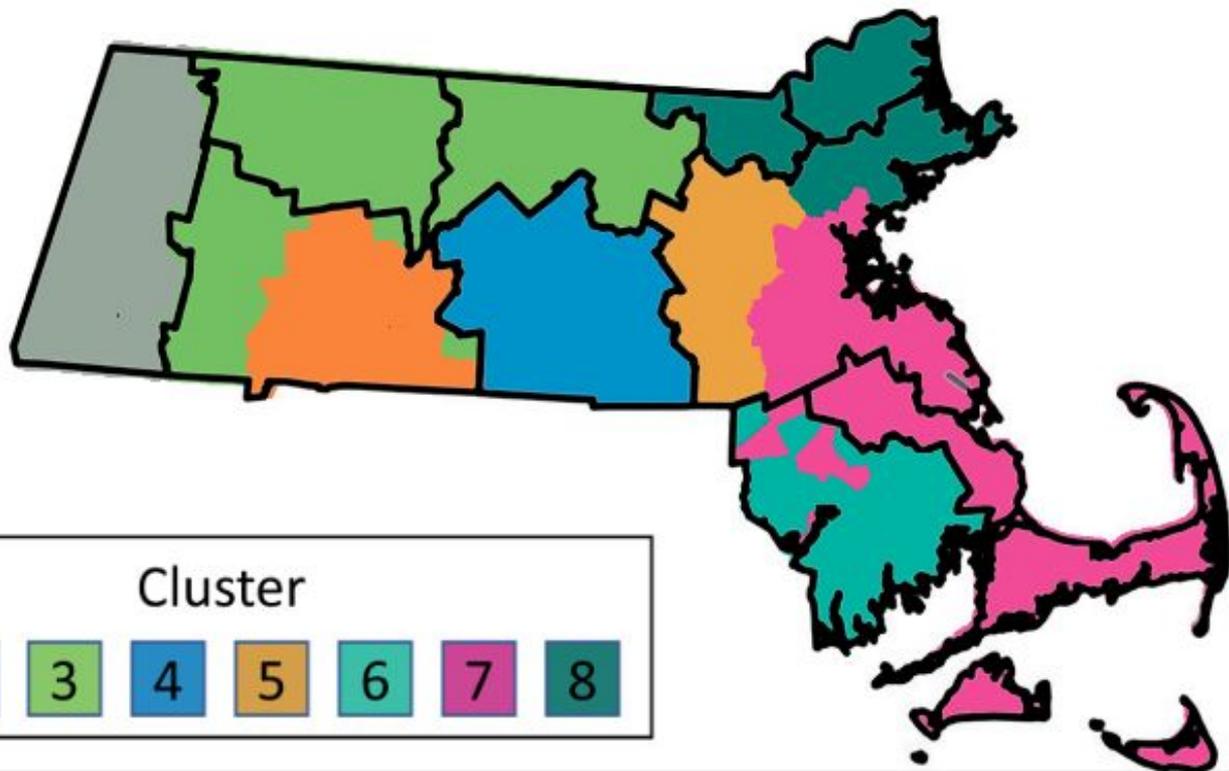


Clusters represent areas disadvantaged movers tend to move within. Black boundaries represent Massachusetts planning agency boundaries.

Less advantaged people are pushed farther away from their communities of origin, and are limited in their moving options.

- Less advantaged people are moving outward from HNS communities.
- Less advantaged people are moving in the pattern that residents predicted - outward farther away from their communities, up the north coast and down the south coast.
- Advantaged people move to a wider range of communities across the state and communities located within planning boundaries used by policymakers.
- Less advantaged people move to a more limited set of nearby communities and communities that are not located within existing planning boundaries.

Community Detection for Economically Disadvantaged Movers



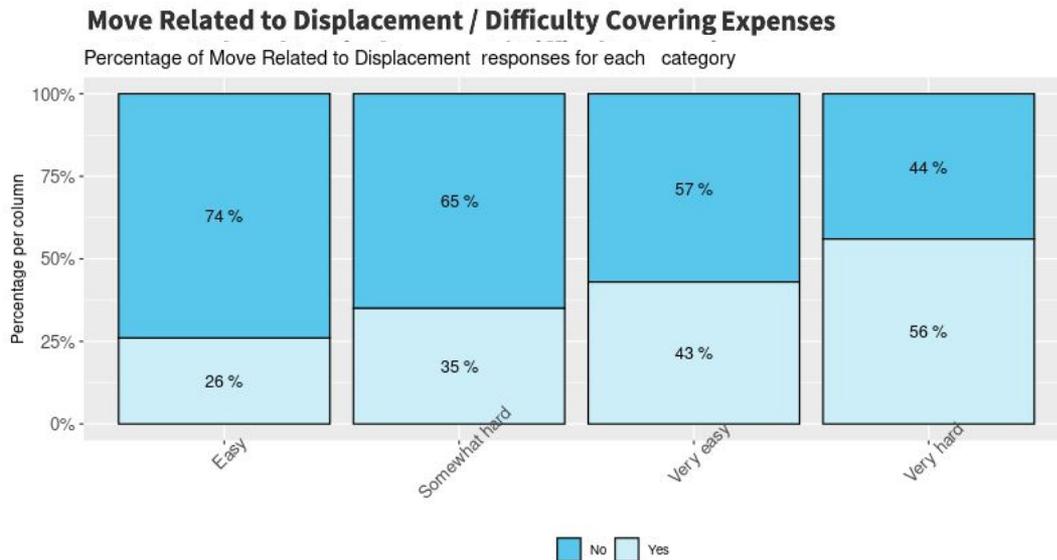
What does this miss?

Who: the analysis can't tell us the demographics of the movers (eg. race, age etc) because this information is not included in the consumer credit panel database.

Why: the analysis can't tell us why people are moving, or if they are being displaced.

Data on displacement and reasons for moved is available to explore at

<https://hns.mit.edu/datadashboard/>

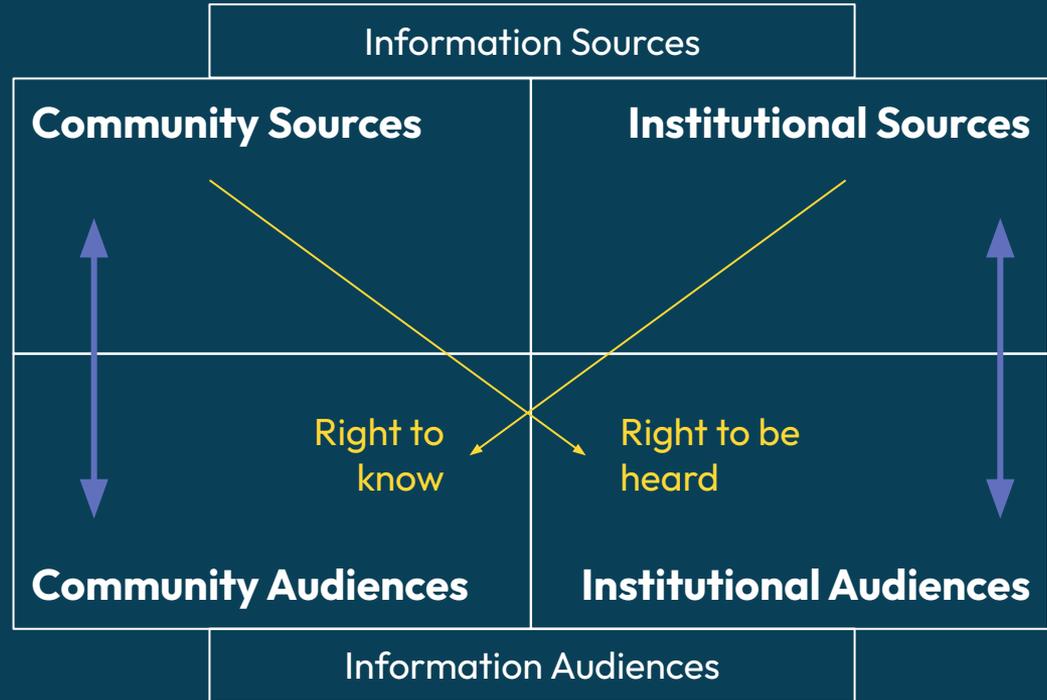


Why this matters: building community power

Communities have the right to know and be heard through research!

Communities need institutional information, but often lack access to it (even when it concerns the community itself)

Communities have valuable information about themselves, but their voices and stories are often dismissed as anecdotal



Why this matters: building community power

Kathleen O'Brien, Everett

“It’s helpful to have these data laid out visually, so that when community groups from Everett and Chelsea work on anti-displacement measures, we have the evidence and tools to show what we have always heard from our residents.”

Right to know

Right to be heard

Ronel Remy, Brockton

“This research confirms what many people in my community have been saying for years. People are being pushed out along an invisible train track farther and farther away from Boston. And that was planned. Someone made that decision for our communities years ago.”

How can the Moving Mapper be used?



Planners & policymakers

Demonstrates that changing mobility patterns for economically disadvantaged residents are a regional problem requiring regional solutions.



Researchers, advocates, & policymakers

Identifies places (whether “moved to” or “moved from”) with changing needs and informs work across communities to develop necessary supports.

What is HNS?

The Healthy Neighborhoods Study (HNS) is the nation's largest community-based participatory action research study focused on the health impacts of neighborhood change. A goal of the study is to support organizing, advocacy, and planning for healthy and equitable community development that prevents displacement. HNS includes a network of academic researchers, 50 resident researchers, grassroots community organizations, regional planning agencies, and advocacy groups that represent nine communities across Eastern Massachusetts.

Find out more at hns.mit.edu



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