

**Module: Cultural Geography**  
**Topic Content: Push Factors of Human Migration**

**Push Factors of Human Migration**



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# Module: Cultural Geography

## Topic Content: Push Factors of Human Migration

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The causes of human migration can be categorized as either push or pull factors. Push factors are generally negative, and force people to move away from their homes. Click each button to learn more about push factors.

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### Agricultural Decline



Agricultural decline refers to a decrease in the number of farms and farmers in a region. This can occur for a number of reasons, including overproduction, increased mechanization, and government policy. The United States experienced a significant agricultural decline in the 1920s, as farming became less profitable and required less human labor. The decline led to increased urbanization, as people migrated from rural areas to cities in search of work.

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### Conflict



War and other violent conflict can push people away from their city or country of origin. In 2003, civil war broke out in the Darfur region of Sudan. The conflict has resulted in the deaths of hundreds of thousands of people, and caused the displacement of several million refugees. In 2011, Sudan voted to split into two separate countries, Sudan and South Sudan. Millions of people migrated from one country to the other in an attempt to escape the conflict, which is not entirely resolved.

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**Environmental Degradation**



**Environmental Degradation**

- Caused by pollution and resource depletion
- Negatively impacts plants, animals, and people
- Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant exploded in 1986
- The greater region was evacuated of all residents

**Abandoned building near Chernobyl, Pripyat, Ukraine**

Excessive pollution and the depletion of resources can cause environmental degradation. The quality of the air, water, and soil in an environment can become so degraded that crops are unable to grow, animal habitats are destroyed, and people experience severe health problems. In 1986, the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant in Ukraine exploded, releasing radioactive materials that contaminated the air, water, and soil. All of the residents from the local town and greater region were forced to evacuate the area to avoid radiation poisoning.



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**Lack of Job Opportunities**



A lack of jobs and economic activity in an area can cause people to leave. In the Northeastern United States, during the late twentieth century, many of the industrial manufacturing jobs in the region were eliminated or moved overseas. This resulted in a lack of economic opportunities, causing many people to migrate from the region, now known as the Rust Belt.

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### Limits on Personal Freedom



If the government of a country limits the personal freedoms of its citizens, this can push people to migrate. In the People's Republic of China, the freedom of speech and expression is very restricted. The government has imprisoned and censored many people for protesting government policies, or for distributing ideas that oppose or criticize the government. Many people have left the country to escape these restrictive policies.

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**Natural Hazards**



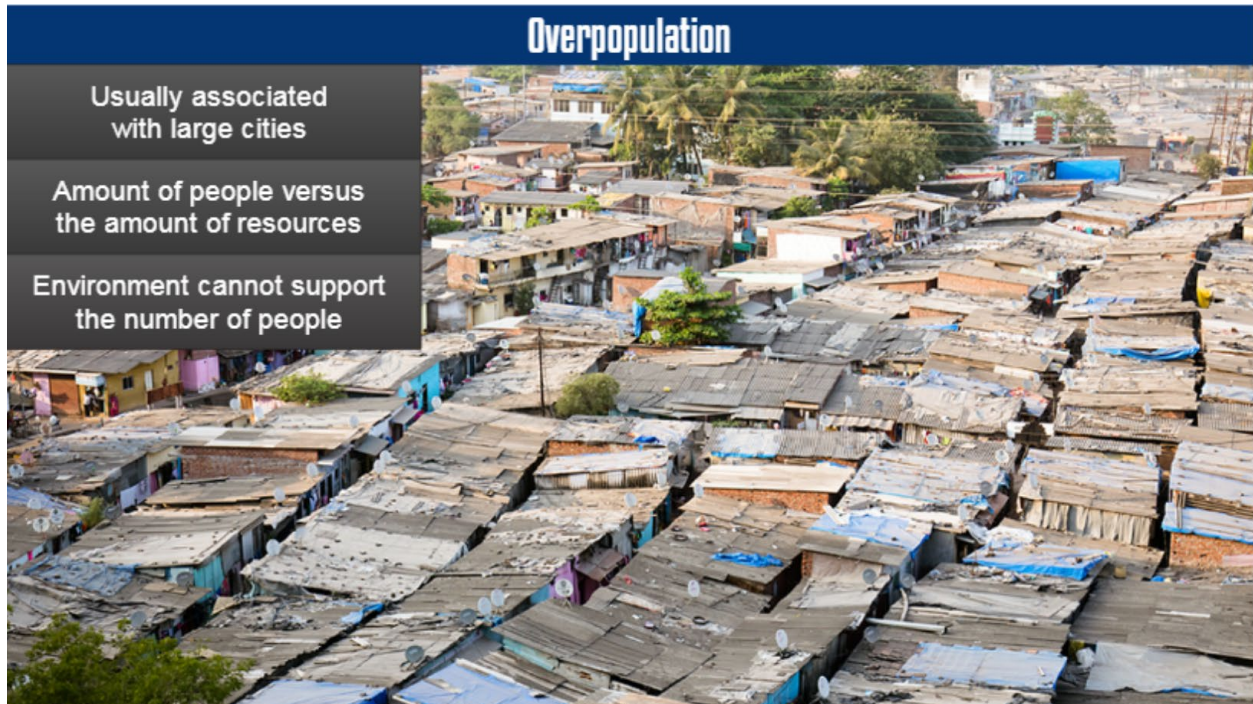
Natural hazards and disasters, like droughts, famines, floods, hurricanes, and volcanic eruptions, can all push people to leave their homes, either temporarily or permanently. Hurricane Katrina hit the Southeastern United States in 2005, forcing more than one million people to evacuate the region. After the storm, many people were unable to return due to the loss of their homes and jobs.



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### Overpopulation



The term overpopulation is usually associated with large cities and other densely populated areas; however, it is more accurately used to describe the amount of people versus the amount of available resources. Specifically, human overpopulation refers to a situation where the number of people in a region is greater than the local environment is able to support.

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**Political Persecution**

**Political Persecution**

- Repression based on political beliefs
- Joseph Stalin led the Great Purge in the 1930s
- People were interrogated, imprisoned, and executed
- Many people fled the Soviet Union during this time

**Joseph Stalin**

The graphic features a dark blue header with the title 'Political Persecution' in white. Below the header is a list of four bullet points in white text on a dark grey background. To the right of the list is a black and white photograph of Joseph Stalin, wearing a military-style cap and a dark jacket, looking slightly to the right. The name 'Joseph Stalin' is printed in white at the bottom right of the photograph.

Political persecution is the repression of a person or group of people based on their political beliefs. In the Soviet Union, during the 1930s, Joseph Stalin led a campaign of political persecution called the Great Purge. People faced interrogation over their political beliefs, and were often imprisoned, sent to labor camps, or executed. During this time, many people fled the Soviet Union, and hundreds of thousands more were deported.

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**Religious Persecution**



Religious persecution is the repression of a person or group of people based on their religious beliefs. Leading up to World War II, many Jewish people fled Europe to escape increasing persecution under Adolph Hitler and Nazi Germany. In addition to those who suffered imprisonment, torture, and forced labor, approximately six million Jewish people were killed for their religious beliefs. After the end of the war, hundreds of thousands of Jewish people migrated to the United States and the newly formed nation of Israel.