

50 MIN • SECONDARY/POST-SECONDARY

Interrogating Push & Pull Factors

Objective: Students will be introduced to the concept of push and pull factors and will critically evaluate the usefulness of the concept.

Preparation: This workshop requires no preparation.

Lesson Plan

Task 1: Introductory Activity

15 MIN

Concept Sort

Don't tell the students how they should sort the following statements or let them know that the lesson is about push/pull factors before this.

Show students the following list. In partners, they need to divide the statements into groups. They can have as many groups as they would like. As they sort, they should come up with a general rule for how they are sorting them and write that rule down. Once they have sorted all of the statements, they should come up with at least 2 additional statements (from their life or the news) and add them to the appropriate group (according to their rule).

List:

- War, family connections, famine, political unrest, economic opportunities, poverty, job opportunities, poor economic situation, persecution, ecological deterioration, educational opportunities, natural disaster, safety, unemployment, fear, political stability, drought, insecurity, religious freedom, better living conditions.

Discussion:

- Have students explain their rule and include their additional statements.

Interrogating Push and Pull Factors

Relabel

5 MIN

Explain that there is a way that theorists would divide them – push and pull factors. ‘Push’ & ‘pull’ factors are terms used to describe why people decide to migrate. Push factors are events or conditions that compel a person to leave a particular place. Pull factors are events or conditions that attract a person to move to a particular place.

As a group – relabel all of the statements as push or pull factors

- Push: War, famine, political unrest, poverty, poor economic situation, persecution, ecological degradation, natural disaster, unemployment, fear, drought, insecurity.
- Pull: family connections, economic opportunities, job opportunities, education opportunities, political stability, religious freedom, better living conditions, safety.

Task 2: Engaging Oral History

Listen

15 MIN

Before playing the clip, instruct students to jot down push factors that are expressed in the recording. Though he doesn’t talk about pull factors, have students anticipate what some pull factors might be for Canada or the United States. They should be prepared to share after the clip.

At age 14, Santiago travelled through Central America in hopes of making it to the United States. The civil war in El Salvador meant that his safety was in jeopardy. During this time, his mother was seeking resettlement for their family in Canada.



8:59 - 14:30

[*Listen to the excerpt from Santiago's interview*](#)

Interrogating Push and Pull Factors

Discuss

- What were some of the push factors expressed in this clip? (civil war in 1989, running out of food, couldn't go out because of bullets, challenge of getting to the market, dead people on the streets, militia and guerilla confrontations, dangerous crossfire)
- What might you anticipate would be a pull factor? (perception that US/Canada would be safer, availability of food)

Explore

5 MIN

Push and pull factors are a way of simplifying how we think about **why** people migrate, but what might be a problem with this simplification? (some answers might include – it doesn't include reasons why a person might not want to leave, it assumes that the country they are moving to only has positive attributes, in reality the decisions people make are difficult to simplify this much because personal choice is much more complicated) .

Task 3: Concluding Activity

10 MIN

Depending on class makeup – either discuss or have students write down a response to the following prompt

- Are push and pull factors a helpful way of thinking about migration? Why or why not?
 - Use examples from today's class.

Interrogating Push and Pull Factors

Resources

WINDSOR • 1 HR 39 MIN

Santiago's story

"We were very lucky not to get killed that day...."



[LISTEN TO SANTIAGO'S STORY](#)



TRISTAN ATWOOD

Immigration: Push-Pull or is it More Complicated?

<https://tristanatwood.wordpress.com/immigration-push-pull-or-is-it-more-complicated/>



THE INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION REVIEW

Portes, A., & Böröcz, J. (1989). Contemporary Immigration: Theoretical Perspectives on Its Determinants and Modes of Incorporation. 23(3), 606-630.

[doi:10.2307/2546431](https://doi.org/10.2307/2546431)



THE INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION REVIEW

Van Hear, N., Bakewell, O., & Long, K. (2020). Push-pull plus: reconsidering the drivers of migration. In *Aspiration, Desire and the Drivers of Migration* (pp. 19-36). Routledge.

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/1369183X.2017.1384135>

50 MIN • SECONDARY/POST-SECONDARY

Interrogating Concepts

Preparation: This workshop requires no preparation.

Student Handout

Task 1: Introductory Activity

15 MIN

Concept Sort

Here is a list of statements.

- War, family connections, famine, political unrest, economic opportunities, poverty, job opportunities, poor economic situation, persecution, ecological deterioration, educational opportunities, natural disaster, safety, unemployment, fear, political stability, drought, insecurity, religious freedom, better living conditions.

With a partner, divide the statements into groups or categories. You can have as many groups as you wish. As you sort, come up with a general rule for how you are sorting them and write that rule down. Once you have sorted all of the statements, come up with at least 2 additional statements (from your life or the news) and add them to the appropriate group (according to your rule).

Be prepared to explain your rule and share your additional statements with the class.

Relabel

5 MIN

How would migration theorists divide this list?

Relabel your statements based on the information shared with you by your instructor.

Task 2: Engaging Oral History

Listen

15 MIN

While listening to Santiago's clip jot down push factors that he talks about. Anticipate what some pull factors might be for Canada or the United States. Be prepared to share after the clip.

To follow along, see the attached transcript.

At age 14, Santiago travelled through Central America in hopes of making it to the United States. The civil war in El Salvador meant that his safety was in jeopardy. During this time, his mother was seeking resettlement for their family in Canada.



8:59-14:30

[Listen to the excerpt from Santiago's interview](#)

Explore

5 MIN

Push and pull factors are a way of simplifying how we think about **why** people migrate, but what might be a problem with this simplification?

Task 3: Concluding Activity

10 MIN

Discuss

In your group or partners discuss the question:

- Are push and pull factors a helpful way of thinking about migration? Why or why not?
 - Use examples from today's class.

Resources

WINDSOR • 1 HR 39 MIN

Santiago's story

"We were very lucky not to get killed that day..."



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[Read the excerpt from Santiago's story](#)

Santiago

Windsor, Ontario

25 July 2019

RRTeam: You mentioned that you lived in the city. The both sides of the city.

Santiago: Yes. In the capital, San Salvador and just different cities. We can say Windsor and Tecumseh but it's still in the capital. And then I just started learning to take bus when I was eight maybe, a little bit of a young age. You learn a lot of stuff like that, you grow up very fast. When I say eight, I was taking buses already. Maybe before that, you can say I take number four, take me to this bus stop and then you take to the one this side. I knew where I was, and it's so normal. So normal.

RRTeam: That was maybe '85, '86?

Santiago: Yeah. '88. Yeah, about that time. Then that's what the last offensive. The last war that happen, the civil war in '89 in El Salvador. I was about ten, suppose about 11. I was about 11. At that time, when my dad leave, it was very active area for guerilla, so terrorist. He brought me back to my mom. Where my mom lived, where my mom was. I was there and eventually they get there, too. At that time, I couldn't move back to anywhere. We have to stay there, you don't go out. You used to...

We stay there in the house and you just wait. You couldn't go out because the only thing you hear was bullet and helicopters. At night, you see the red bullets coming down, you know, hitting their targets. It got to a point where everybody run out of food and there were militia took cover the town were my mom was. Then after that, all the people were complaining to them, you know, "We don't have food, we don't have food."

I was just telling my wife about that too, that what they did is they open up all the markets. We were about 20 to 25 minutes walking distance to a market. A market over there opens and then they have stores around. Those private stores, like Walmart, they all open up, the militia open all that so people can go grab food during the day. Me and my brother went. We were very lucky not to get killed that day because that day they had a confrontation with the army. I clearly remember growing up behind a post when bullets were going by in the airplane.

After that, we took whatever we could and then somehow we made it back home. That's when I have all my memories, to see that people left and right where you see from the militias, some dead, some armies and everywhere. We always walk in with a white flag and bags of food supply, whatever we could find in there. That last quite a bit in there. That was I believe was at the end '89 when that happened.

RRTeam: That was a common practice, for civilians to walk with a white flag?

Santiago: Yeah, because they didn't know. A lot of people got killed like that, too because the army didn't know if these people was really civilian or they were the militia, the guerrillas. They didn't know but we always walk with... One thing I remember, is that nobody wear black or red. If we go out, we don't put red or black because it was a color for the guerrillas to use. We never, we try to wear light colors and white thing in our hands so that they know that we were civilian trying to get through.

It got to a point that the aunt, they had a house and that's more like a county, everything is more spread. We flee to that house where my grandma on my mom's side, my mom's mom house, and we went to aunt house because the area, we couldn't stay. My aunt has four girls, too. Then my mom at that point, we're only two boys. So we went there. Over there, it was more, you didn't hear much bullet. They were not there. But it was a little bit of food, too. We had struggles trying to get food but just wait out until everything calm down, either the militia kill the army or the army kill them. I will sleep over, that's what I remember.

Seeing all these people dead. Seeing the army just throwing gasoline over the dead bodies and just seeing all these flame and the smell of the burned skin and seeing dead and the skull. I'm 40 now, that's what? Almost 30 years ago. This year I'm going to be 41 so I can still remember. I have that picture in my head, seeing that and seeing kids next to their parents crying, trying to wake them up. Like a head or something. They lose their life.