



Environmental stress effects are physical in nature and environmental degradation (global, national, and local) are manifestations of the effects. Environmental effects could include scarcity of resources more generally, that is where a resource is depleted (the running down of oil stocks) as opposed to degradation of renewable resources. The two major variables influencing the environmental effect are total population and per capita environmental stress. Per capita environmental stress in turn is dependent upon affluence, a per capita variable that implicitly takes into account the use of physical resources, and the technology used in the production process. "Affluence" identifies the fact that the average citizen of a developed country and the average citizen of a developing country do not have the same level of resource consumption, and thus do not inflict the same level of environmental stress. A third variable influencing the environmental effect is the vulnerability of the ecosystem to human activity. Social factors, such as preferences for types of food - meat versus cereals - also influence the affluence variable.

The box labelled Social Effects refers to the social effects that arise from or are exacerbated by environmental stress. Two key potential social effects of environmental stress are population displacement - both internal migrants and emigrants to other countries - and economic decline. For example, land degradation