

# Myrdal On Wall Street

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## Myrdal On Wall Street

Myrdal's economic theory of circular and cumulative causation is depicted in the film *Roger and Me*. In Flint, Michigan, General Motors closes eleven factories, which causes over thirty thousand people to become unemployed. The company claims that they need to close the [factories](#) to "stay competitive." The viewer sees the truth; they are greedy and will make money wherever they can, regardless of the people they may harm. Labor is much less expensive in Mexico, where GM only has to pay the workers \$0.70 an hour. As a result, General Motors begins to close plants in Flint and move them to Mexico. Some people leave Flint to find work elsewhere and some remain, struggling to find new forms of employment. As more and more workers lose their jobs, poverty in Flint becomes more severe. Increasingly people are evicted from their homes, become ill, the violent crime rate in Flint becomes the highest in the country, and the general standard of living plummets for the poor. Michael Moore describes their living conditions, "The rat population has now surpassed the human population." Their environment worsens to the point where *Money Magazine* declares Flint the worst place to live in the country. The poor citizens in Flint live Myrdal's circular and cumulative causation theory.

In addition, the rich population of Flint prospers during this time of great poverty. The wealthy community of Flint spends their time at the ballet, golfing and relaxing at Grosse Point. When the jail becomes too full and another one is built there is a large party in which couples pay one hundred dollars to stay over night in one of the new cells. They didn't seem to mind "celebrating American tragedy," as Moore had said in another instance. At the end of the documentary, Michael Moore says, "The rich were richer, the poor, poorer and the people everywhere had a lot less lint thanks to the lint rollers in my town. It truly was a dawn of a new era."

Myrdal's theory is also highlighted in the films, [Wall Street](#) and The Boiler Room. By not hiring women and creating a male dominated environment, the men progressively gain power, just like the rich getting richer in Roger and Me. The women do not have the same opportunities to earn money and power.

Several factors contribute the portrayal of Myrdal's theory of circular and cumulative causation.

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