

BRAIN DRAIN AND ITS REPERCUSSIONS ON THE NEEDS OF THE PALESTINIAN LABOR MARKET: A STUDY OF THE CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES OF MIGRATION AMONG EDUCATED YOUTH

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Abstract: *This study examines the consequences of the outflow of young people from the occupied territories for the Palestinian labor market. This phenomenon is labeled a "drain" because it deprives the area of many educated individuals needed for its development. Commonly discussed as a political issue and as a consequence of war, the problem is often not addressed as an economic issue. Moreover, emigration exacerbates the population problem as young females and males leave the area for neighboring states and seek permanent sanctuary in them. When this group is not present to aid in the process of internal development, the investment in their education is lost. In all areas of the world, one may observe graduations from universities and other institutions leading to the majority of proficient students leaving or attempting to leave to assume responsible positions. This exodus constitutes a serious problem for the donor country in the sense of its youth development, and a serious problem for the recipient country deprived of the services of these skilled graduates. The total "drain" of the talented becomes an important economic problem. The outflow of trained individuals is not unique to Palestine; therefore, similar serious situations are prevalent in many developing countries, particularly those situated in proximity to concentrations of wealth. The magnitude of the Palestinian outflow, however, has not previously been demonstrated. The analysis of Palestine's probable situation was accepted reluctantly, as many information sources refused or were too cautious to share statistics related to this study. The specific objective of the analysis is to present these and related statistics. The concern in this paper is with the consequences of the phenomenon and the associated costs in disutility. There are other consequences and costs, all of which are important.*

Keywords: Brain Drain, Palestinian Labor Market, Migration
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INTRODUCTION

Brain drain is not a new phenomenon, but its severity can greatly vary according to the economic and intellectual capabilities of different countries around the world. It is indeed a global phenomenon characterized by both negative and positive impacts that resonate across various regions. The phenomenon negatively affects the pressing need of donor countries for highly qualified individuals and has a positive impact on developing countries as it helps in increasing the qualifications and skills of migrants who move from one nation to another (Kreichati, 2023).

The specific causes for the massive migration around the Palestinian territories have their roots deeply embedded in the long-standing occupation that has plagued the region for decades. Poverty and high unemployment rates are the primary motives for migration, amidst other planned and systematic actions taken in order to create a climate that is particularly tempting for Palestinians to emigrate to different lands. Low wages, terrible economic conditions, and the dramatic absence of available jobs have become regular and unfortunate traits among Palestinians, compelling many to seek opportunities elsewhere. This study is divided into six detailed sections. The introduction is specifically chosen for the first section in order

to thoroughly clarify the various causes, the significance of the issue at hand, and the multiple motives driving this study forward in light of the ongoing challenges faced by these individuals (Hiltermann, 2021).

The second section of the study clarifies the concept of brain drain, elaborating on its definition as well as its underlying motives. This phenomenon is complex and multifaceted, with both positive and negative aspects that can significantly impact nations and individuals alike. The third section delves into Palestinian emigration, which bears particular relevance due to the unique circumstances surrounding the country. The roots of this movement are deeply entrenched in the enduring occupation, making the phenomenon of emigration from Palestine significantly older than the establishment of the state itself (Bukhari et al.2024).

The ongoing situation has resulted in a creation of surplus labor within Palestine, a direct consequence of systematic hindrances to any form of Palestinian development. This environment fosters a climate that tempts many Palestinians to seek migration as a viable solution to their struggles. The fourth part of this study thoroughly discusses the research methodology employed, offering detailed insights into the various techniques used for data collection (Bukhari et al.2024).

This approach is crucial in order to derive reliable conclusions concerning this complex issue of emigration. Meanwhile, section five addresses the results derived from this study, particularly focusing on the reasons behind youth emigration, charting the various factors influencing this decision among the younger demographics. The final section systematically illustrates all findings and presents a series of thoughtfully considered ideas, ultimately providing valuable recommendations based on the data collected. This information is intended for the benefit of government officials, policy formulators, and decision-makers who are in positions to exert influence and implement change (Loewenstein, 2024).

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

In light of the ongoing intra-Palestinian rift and the successive Israeli wars that have caused extensive devastation and left the economic sectors in a state of complete collapse, it has been observed that the percentage of educated individuals migrating abroad has increased relatively significantly. This rise in educated migration from Palestine is manifesting in the notable trend among individuals, particularly the growing number of students at Palestinian universities, who are increasingly opting to migrate abroad in pursuit of completing their higher studies. This prominent phenomenon of Palestinian migration carries with it a multitude of negative social and economic repercussions that affect not only the daily lives of Palestinians but also the fabric of the Palestinian community from which this migration originates. The implications of this trend continue to unfold, raising urgent questions about the future stability and development of Palestinian society as well as its ability to retain its educated youth (Fischer et al.,2021).

The Palestinian education system is grappling with a multitude of challenges that significantly hinder the sustainability and effectiveness of investments that are being poured into

the educational process. One of the most pressing issues faced by the educational sector is the alarming trend of migration among students. A striking statistic indicates that the number of individuals who chose to migrate in 2006 reached approximately 60,000, a considerable increase compared to only 45,000 during the turbulent years of the Intifada. In addition to this, there is a concerning number of about 11,000 individuals who already possess the necessary travel documents and are currently engaged in their studies while merely waiting for their scholarships to facilitate their migration.

This data starkly confirms a troubling rise in educated migration, which poses significant challenges for the local education system. In light of these findings, the objectives of this research have been carefully refocused and now encompass several critical areas: First and foremost, the demographic and educational landscape will be mapped out, specifically targeting Palestinian students who are pursuing their studies at the higher educational levels within both Palestinian and supervised universities. Second, the research will delve into the most significant reasons and motivations that drive these students to seek migration in order to further their academic studies, as well as the various educational stages and specializations they wish to pursue at these supervised universities. Third, an exploration of the professional aspirations that these students harbor for their futures will be undertaken. Fourth, the investigation will assess the most impactful positive and negative implications that migrate may bear on the families of these students. Finally, the research will highlight and examine some of the societal efforts that have been made to curb this trend of migration and retain talent within the local context (Cummings et al., 2022).

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review provides a comprehensive overview of migrational trends in general, as well as an in-depth examination of brain drain specifically within developing countries and the Arab world. This review also delves into the unique phenomenon of brain drain as it pertains to the Palestinian context. Migration, which can occur at various levels, plays a pivotal role in fostering both economic and social development by enabling individuals to adapt to the dynamics of a changing economy. Additionally, migration can serve as a viable strategy to escape high rates of unemployment that individuals face in their home regions. There are numerous factors propelling people to migrate from their places of origin: the pursuit of enhanced job opportunities, the desire to expand their knowledge, acquire new skills, gain experiences, and ultimately, to establish a stable and decent life for themselves and their families (Latukha et al.2022).

In certain cases, particularly in some regions, we observe that the most qualified and best-trained individuals are often the first to leave, which poses a severe challenge for their countries of origin. This trend not only undermines the growth and development of these nations but may also exacerbate existing inequalities both between countries and within them. Consequently, the outcome is a net loss encapsulated in the term "brain drain." This phenomenon has sparked considerable discussion, debate, and research among policymakers, scholars,

and students in the field of development studies since the mid-1950s. Regrettably, the findings and conclusions derived from this body of work frequently resemble a metaphorical spherical chicken—pursued primarily for the elegance and novelty of the endeavor rather than yielding any realistic expectations that such a uniquely-shaped, spherical version of poultry could ever come to fruition (Anetoh & Onwudinjo2020).

Definition and Concept of Brain Drain

The term migration is used more often with the negative connotation of brain drain. But actually, the impact of migration depends mainly on the quality of those moving and on the development level of both the country of origin and the host country. All countries profit from the international brain exchange if the terms of the movement of highly competent manpower are regulated by generally accepted rules, especially when the supply of professionals is limited in the host country. The study tries to give further understanding of the reasons and consequences of migration among the educated sectors of the labor market. The use of the world's intelligentia and highly compressed technology diffusion are consequences frustrating employment creation and development in the origins. The presence or absence of rules in the social game is studied by analyzing migration on the basis of so-called push-pull factors on the side of the origin and the host country (Kaczan & Orgill-Meyer, 2020).

Brain drain, understood as the unplanned migration of workers capable of contributing to development, is an astonishing fact. Normally, people adjust to changes. Why do many specialists, especially those in demand everywhere in the world, decide so quickly to leave their countries and settle in a host country, often without knowing where to live and initially living in a kind of manipulated limbo? Underdeveloped and advanced countries profit from the international exchange of knowledge and leading technology if, at the same time, the movement of highly skilled manpower is restricted. The capitalization of brain with advanced technology diffusion is expected only for a limited number of source countries. Brain waste and brain overflow occur for the remaining source countries. The international brain exchange is often compared with the international trade of goods and exchange rates, the lack of efficient regulation of land utilization, and the availability and exclusion of mobility, land ownership, and the activity of specialized actors in the world's foreign exchange markets acting in the absence of rules regulating exchange rates. The purpose of the study is to explain the present absence of important rules at the actual transfer of manpower and to derive recommendations permitting the increase of the positive effects of international brain exchange, respecting the interests and enhancing development by fighting the costs of cabin fever among the origin countries. (Pastor-García et al.,2024).

Global Trends in Brain Drain

In recent years, an increasing number of highly skilled individuals have been attracted to the developed world, particularly through various human capital initiatives and neoliberal eco-

nomic policies. This trend is creating a new era of globalism and transforming the world into a competitive free market environment for highly skilled workers. The developed world's growing interest in acquiring and utilizing highly skilled labor has led to a significant increase in the movement of these workers across international borders. This phenomenon can be observed as a form of global brain drain, which has significant implications for both sending and receiving countries. Movements of highly skilled labor to the developed world, particularly from numerous developing countries, have resulted in unprecedented and far-reaching negative economic, political, and social consequences. This unidirectional flow of talent not only creates acute shortages of essential professionals such as doctors, nurses, hairdressers, farmers, and various other skilled workers in the sending countries, but brain drain also deprives these countries of crucial intellectual, human, and service capital. This capital is critically needed to build and sustain their home economies and to address severe issues related to economic deprivation and social deterioration. The loss of such valuable human resources hampers developmental progress and exacerbates existing challenges in those countries striving for growth and stability (Hongal and Kinange,2020).

The international labor market is increasingly demanding trained personnel from less developed countries, particularly as their populations continue to age and face demographic shifts. Meanwhile, the developed world is struggling to produce a sufficient number of individuals with expertise in highly specialized areas, especially during a time when the previously unforeseen flexible service economy is expanding at an impressive rate. The most notable rise in brain drain has been seen among those with advanced academic degrees; for instance, during the seventies, the number of academics who moved to the United States reached approximately 200,000 individuals. Fast forward to the early 1990s, where there was a significant escalation in the movement of highly skilled professionals, including software engineers and information systems experts. Currently, more than 20,000 individuals every year are awarded diplomas through various Management Information Systems (MIS) programs. A considerable portion of these graduates ultimately decides to migrate in search of better opportunities and living conditions. As a result, the number of developing countries is actively seeking and implementing various strategies to expand and strengthen their higher education systems, ensuring that they can nurture and retain their educated workforce effectively in the face of ongoing global competition (Rani & Furrer, 2021).

Brain Drain in the Palestinian Context

In the Arab world, there exist exceptionally high levels of educational achievement among emigrants, particularly among those individuals who are highly qualified and possess advanced degrees, as well as prestigious academic titles. The achievements of these educated emigrants play an undeniably significant role in bolstering the economic development of the host countries or the recipient nations where they decide to settle. This phenomenon is especially noticeable within the context of the Middle Eastern countries, particularly the oil-

rich nations, which have been remarkably impacted by the influx of skilled labor that these emigrants bring with them. Among the educated segments of the Palestinian population, there exists a stark and extreme disparity between the returns they receive on their educational investments and the meager income levels that they are often faced with. This pronounced imbalance strongly contributes to a persistent inclination toward emigration to the more prosperous Arab oil-rich nations, which typically offer better job opportunities and a higher quality of life. Historical estimates have indicated that approximately one-third of the Palestinian labor force was working abroad as early as the year 1952. This significant statistic compelled policymakers in East Bank Jordan to start formulating comprehensive and strategic plans aimed at developing an economic infrastructure designed to reduce the heavy reliance of East Bank Jordan on the inflow of Palestinian labor, thereby fostering a more self-sufficient economic environment that would promote local job creation and retention (Hallaq & Daas, 2024).

In the Palestinian context, the complex web of professional and familial connections with expatriates has woven a bittersweet narrative that is both hopeful and challenging. On one hand, the remittances sent back by Palestinian expatriates serve as a vital lifeline, significantly alleviating the social and economic struggles endured by the indigenous Palestinian population who face various hardships in their daily lives. This financial support is crucial for many families and contributes positively to the overall resilience of the community. On the other hand, the persistent issue of brain drain leads to a substantial loss of highly educated individuals, which, while alleviating immediate financial pressures, simultaneously serves as a troubling indictment of the indigenous economy. This situation reveals its inability to adequately absorb, retain, and reward the talents and skills of the local educated labor force within the country.

Additionally, during periods when the economy heavily relies on foreign aid as a critical lender of last resort, the support from expatriates becomes incredibly vulnerable to withdrawal. Such withdrawals can occur as political circumstances fluctuate in the host countries where these expatriates reside, while at the same time, the coordination of Palestinian and Israeli policies in response to these shifting developments often complicates matters further. Given these political risks, it becomes alarmingly clear that the recipient of expatriate remittances must strive to achieve as high a degree of economic independence as possible to protect against the volatility of this external support. This necessity drives home the importance of developing a more robust and self-sustaining local economy that can provide for its citizens without overly relying on foreign assistance (Yunitasari et al., 2021).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The data utilized for this comprehensive study has been gathered from an extensive survey, specifically targeting the directors of senior secondary and vocational secondary schools located in the West Bank region. The survey was meticulously designed to encompass a variety of questions that address

diverse aspects of the schools, including the facilities available, the demographic composition of the student body, and the overall nature of the educational programs being offered by these institutions. In addition to these inquiries, the survey also included questions that pertained to crucial factors such as teacher wages, the length of their service in the educational field, and their respective levels of educational qualifications. It was deemed essential to engage with these individuals to ensure a thorough understanding of the schools' dynamics, as they were expected to possess detailed and in-depth knowledge regarding the unique circumstances and developments occurring within their schools. Moreover, these school directors are likely to have reasonably accurate insights concerning the transitions of their students, as well as the prevailing demands associated with the graduates of their schools, largely due to their ongoing interactions with key players in the private sector and with the graduates themselves. Their day-to-day interactions provide them with a comprehensive understanding of how their graduates are faring in the job market. Additionally, the fact that these individuals are entrenched within the administration of the Public Education Sector further enhances their access to valuable data, which includes important information about where the graduates are securing employment following their educational experiences. This unique position enables them to possess and share a distinctive perspective on various activities transpiring within the labor market, especially with regard to documenting and analyzing the role that the flight of educated individuals has played in contributing to significant wage disparities. Furthermore, the insights gleaned from their experiences encapsulate crucial information about employment levels and salary standards across different sectors of the economy (Ibay & Pa-alisbo, 2020).

Research Design

This section delves into the essential variables that play a crucial role in the study, which directly address the research questions posed. Additionally, it presents the hypotheses that this research will rigorously test through its chosen research methodology. The section encompasses a thorough exploration of the study variables, providing their conceptual definitions along with potential avenues for operationalization, making them ready for empirical testing. Furthermore, it presents a detailed outline of the research design employed in this study. The previous section successfully addressed the first research question, which aimed to comprehensively determine the underlying causes and far-reaching consequences associated with youth-educated migration. In turn, the first part of this section takes a closer look at and effectively answers the second research question by examining the theoretical framework that supports the investigation into the causes and consequences of educated migrant youth within the labor markets of the country of origin. To further expand upon this inquiry, the second part of this section distinctly presents the second research question, articulating the nature of the relationship that exists between the aforementioned causes and consequences, specifically about the dependent variable being examined (Mikac and Wahdyudin, 2021).

The necessary data for conducting thorough empirical testing is gathered through the careful distribution of a meticulously crafted one-page questionnaire, which was initially drafted in English. This initial version was translated into Arabic with the invaluable assistance of friends knowledgeable in both languages, ensuring clarity and accuracy in conveying the intended questions. The students from the Arab-American University played a pivotal role in this process, as they generously returned a significant number of filled-in questionnaires. Each of these responses has proven invaluable in capturing and identifying various predictive causes related to the multifaceted issue of migration. Moreover, they provide ample and rich information regarding the long-term outcomes connected to this complex subject. These initial findings have been further enhanced and elaborated upon by conducting a set of more extensive interviews, allowing for deeper insights. The explanatory variables utilized in this analysis have been carefully adapted from existing research that delves into the various causes and consequential effects of migration. Additionally, both the independent and dependent variables were influenced by focus groups that provided qualitative input, specifically identified within the context of the Palestinian informal labor market by examining the population of a local university. The estimations employed in this study are closely related to other established models of wage equations that have been previously estimated for the Palestinian territories, as well as for several Arab countries, thus providing a robust framework for understanding the economic dynamics at play within the migration discourse (Shet et al., 2021).

Data for this study are meticulously gathered at the esteemed Arab-American University, a leading institution where a dedicated team of six individuals has collaborated intensely to prepare and execute 20 separate focus groups that involve the active participation of approximately 25 students in each session. Out of these focus groups, eight out of the ten correspond to male members, while the remaining ten focus groups are comprised entirely of female members, providing a balanced representation of the study. Each focus group meeting was carefully structured and took place over two-hour sessions every two days, amounting to three to six days a week, relative to the various academic majors offered by the university's colleges. This systematic approach ensured that a diverse range of opinions and experiences were collected during the meeting times. After thoroughly analyzing the audio recordings from each of the 20 focus groups, an impartial third person was assigned to take detailed notes, particularly focusing on the disbursement of discount fares discussed among the participants. In the following part of this document, we will present the specific conceptual definitions of the study variables, which are crucial for understanding the framework of our research. The table below outlines this important step in further detail and provides a clear example of how we will construct the design of the questionnaire, with careful attention to both the observations and questions columns that will guide our inquiry.

Data Collection Methods

This research was meticulously based on primary data that was systematically collected using both the mini-survey and the comprehensive interview guides. Colleagues and students at Al-Quds University played a pivotal role in distributing the mini surveys to a diverse range of participants. To ensure an adequate stratification concerning gender, age, and major, students from the same university were utilized to conduct various focus group meetings. In contrast, a distinct and tailored data collection strategy was implemented to gather data from returned migrants residing in two European countries. In this case, acquaintances and fellow students in the relevant academic field, who live in the same cities, took the initiative to engage with potential participants and guide them in choosing individuals with whom to set up an appointment. In both scenarios, the partners were diligent in informing the participants about the overarching project objectives and the specific interview dates (Punnett et al., 2020).

After nearly all the interviews had been successfully conducted, the women's meetings were strategically scheduled to gather further insights. These meetings were all audiotaped for thorough documentation and were facilitated by one pair of researchers, with one individual performing the role of the speaker, posing questions, and engaging with the participants while the second researcher meticulously took notes during the discussions. The primary objective in recording the meetings was to create an environment that would encourage the participants to share their common predilections and experiences more freely. We operated under the assumption that the women would engage with one another in a manner that fostered open dialogue and facilitated frankness due to their shared backgrounds and circumstances. The topics of discussion during the meetings primarily revolved around employment issues that they could potentially face as newcomers to the labor market and other pressing concerns they were likely to encounter in that landscape. Additionally, the conversations delved into various factors they took into account while considering their decisions regarding studying abroad, making the choice to return to their homeland after their educational pursuits, the courses they could take, and the professional opportunities available to them without the necessity of emigrating to another country. Participants also expressed any fears, obstacles, and concerns they faced during or were associated with their academic studies. Even though all of the meetings commenced with the same set of foundational questions, the order in which the questions were posed was sometimes adjusted or tailored in response to the particular interests of the respondents involved. Occasionally, academic meetings were also held, some of which bore similarities to the women's focus group discussions, enriching the dialogue and enhancing the depth of understanding about their experiences (Karl et al., 2022).

Data Analysis Techniques

This section is primarily dedicated to a comprehensive discussion of the data and methodology that were employed in the development of the questionnaire survey for this particular study. The initial focus will be on the way in which the questionnaire was carefully framed, its overall coverage, and the various sources of data that were utilized for conducting the questionnaire survey. Following this, we will delve into the specific methodology used for measuring and analyzing the independent and dependent variables that are central to this research. Furthermore, the descriptive, inferential, and multivariate statistical techniques that were applied in the empirical analysis sections will also be thoroughly described in this segment. This detailed explanation will provide clarity on how the research was structured and the analytical approaches employed throughout the process (Hoffmann et al., 2021).

Survey Methodology and Data Sources

The survey utilized for this in-depth research study employed a comprehensive and well-structured questionnaire, necessitating approximately one full hour for a respondent to thoroughly answer all the questions related to the various causes and far-reaching consequences of youth migration. This detailed questionnaire was carried out in three significant Palestinian cities: Nablus, Ramallah, and Hebron. These specific cities were deliberately chosen for several important reasons that underpin the research objectives: firstly, they provide the essential data and foundational information necessary to analyze the size and scope of emigration; secondly, they are primarily considered the economic and commercial hubs of the region and embody the typical characteristics associated with vibrant commercial and economic cities; thirdly, they exhibit high levels of economic competitiveness, viability, and dynamism; lastly, they are home to a range of institutions of higher learning and education that draw youth from various backgrounds. Each of these aspects played a crucial role in shaping our selection criteria for the survey. The data for these cities were systematically collected through a series of well-designed questionnaires distributed among the respondents. (Hamarshah & Amro, 2020).

CAUSES OF BRAIN DRAIN AMONG PALESTINIAN YOUTH

Among other significant reasons contributing to the increased emigration of Palestinians, particularly those individuals possessing basic educational qualifications, are the persistent work-related challenges and economic problems that have arisen from the ongoing occupation. These issues manifest in the form of heavy taxation rates and widespread unemployment, which particularly affect the younger generations more acutely than other demographics. The intifada led to severe restrictions that resulted in the closure of the job market, which previously served as the primary employer for many individuals, especially those with merely a primary level of education. However, when discussing the main issues driving young people who contemplate emigration, it is crucial to highlight the

devastating impacts of house demolitions and the uprooting of families, which compel a considerable number of them to live in precarious and unsafe shelters, often lacking basic amenities and security. The second major reason motivating these individuals is a notable increase in the desire for a better quality of life, both on a personal level and collectively as a community striving for improvement, in essence, pursuing a lifestyle that aligns more closely with that of the civilized world. Furthermore, among the reasons that lead educated youth to leave the territories, one must consider the limited acceptance rates at local universities. Many believe there are more promising opportunities available, such as scholarships and courses of high quality that come at a reduced financial burden. Additionally, the ongoing dire economic, political, and security conditions play a significant role in influencing their decisions to seek opportunities beyond their current circumstances (Hijawi, 2022).

Economic Factors

The search for a better economic future, alongside the desperate need to escape from unemployment and poverty, is among the principal reasons that drive individuals to migrate, particularly among the youth who often feel trapped with limited opportunities. The significant decline in real wages that occurred after the Intifada, largely as a direct consequence of the sweeping closure policies, is deemed another one of the urgent causes of this migration trend. Furthermore, there has been a notable decrease in the active labor force, which exacerbates the situation, creating an increased burden on manufacturers and contributing to the rising production costs in the domestic labor market. These factors collectively serve to prompt economic migration as people look for better circumstances. The aspiration for a higher standard of living, which is readily available in developed countries, and the stark disparity between the modern standards of living compared to the traditional ones, also act as powerful push factors. Additionally, there exists a strong yearning to reside in a society that values freedom and democracy, where individuals can escape the pressures of the prevailing political system that adversely impacts the stability and security of individuals within their current places of residence. Migrating not only symbolizes hope for better economic conditions but also the need for social and political freedoms that can lead to a more fulfilling and secure life. (Hassan & Aref, 2023).

Globally, the persistent question re-emerges: Why do a substantial segment of young educated individuals, who benefit from the myriad advantages of elevated cultural and scientific standards, actively seek job opportunities beyond their immediate communities and national borders? In the case of Palestine, however, the search for viable job opportunities and a stable income is largely contingent upon the accumulation of human capital. This accumulated human capital is essential until a person reaches a point where they can join the ranks of decision-makers or assert some level of control over a segment of a productive project. Achieving this milestone is typically a rather costly and time-consuming process. Consequently, this reality drives a significant number of job seekers to pursue employment opportunities outside the borders of Pales-

tine, irrespective of whether their skills and talents are in high demand in those foreign countries. Moreover, this migratory movement is bolstered by a variety of encouraging factors that significantly include ethnic backgrounds, familial relations, religious beliefs, and political affiliations. These aspects are often highly regarded in the labor markets of other nations. The phenomenon of brain drain transpires when certain push factors propagate this outflow of skilled individuals. Additionally, the existence of specific pull factors plays a crucial role in attracting these immigrants, while the synergistic effect of hybrid push-pull factors further complicates this dynamic situation, driving the ongoing trend of skilled professionals seeking better prospects abroad. (Hamarsheh & Amro, 2020).

Political Factors

In the Palestinian case, the influence of political factors is perceived to be considerably more severe than elsewhere, as the relentless persistence of occupation policies exerts substantial pressure, serving as a significant push factor for labor emigration among the populace. Many of those who possess voting rights firmly believe that elections, conducted among a suffering population, impose an essential functional commitment on the leadership to actively seek to improve the challenging life circumstances of the people. However, the prevailing atmosphere of despair often transforms even the most noble efforts into mere inaction, primarily due to the incapable official circumstances that entrap decision-makers. Irrefutable aspects to the contrary vividly reflect the everyday harsh realities that these outcasts must endure. When millions of ordinary citizens share their plight, the election process and the ensuing political power struggle inaugurate a critical dimension of life-related authority. This dynamic ultimately alters the nature of what are deemed invalid voting rights and leads to governmental isolation and the control of citizens' lives. This widespread and palpable distrust varies widely between different administrations, manifesting to the point where the interaction between leaders and the general public regarding political decision-making takes a turn for the worse; trust in the opposition remains frustratingly incomplete. At some unknown level of significance, elections are said to benefit the entire population, bringing forth a clearer understanding of the complete equation, which loses none of its inherent legitimacy. However, only a few rudimentary physical components of life's fundamental requirements are needed, which are often suppressed or truncated by economic power dynamics. Political assessments concerning the Palestinians frequently manipulate criteria that mislead broader perspectives; what is evidently shown to exacerbate adversity within our nation is alarmingly close to a precarious balance of power. The intricate web of societal struggles continues to ensnare the everyday lives of countless citizens, prompting a desperate need for genuine political engagement and resolution. (Hassan & Aref, 2023).

Social Factors

The high cost of marriage and settling down in life is a real challenge facing young graduates. The estimated 36,000 young men and women studying in universities and junior

colleges constitute 6 percent of the population, and they live under high living expenses in big cities. They cannot afford the current high prices of real estate, weddings, and items of dowry, which makes it difficult for them to think about forming families. Securing an apartment is also an obstacle for anyone wishing to get married. The economic conditions and shortage of jobs lead to competition and unequal relationships between the two parties as they try to adjust their relationships and financial responsibilities to suit the means of the partners (Yamamoto & Kawabata, 2022).

Ever since the end of the 1980s, the problem of work opportunities has been the main cause for the delay of marriage, as the difficult financial conditions make the prospects of finding a job challenging. Families often prevent their adult children from getting married due to not having the conditions that make marriage easy and provide for its outcome, as well as the high commercial prices and the expenses of everyday life. The number of expensive marriage contracts, from the perspective of the young, is increasing, for whom qualities and criteria are unimportant, whereas the partner is seen as a temporary solution for fulfilling their natural needs, such as reproduction. What concerns the youth of either sex who enroll in universities and institutes are the chances of getting compromised and married to become honored in the present and the future. The high commercial prices and the phenomenon of offering are factors that do not help increase enrollment, especially in girls' institutes. Why then would a girl go to college under these expensive conditions and bear a large expense when she will only remain single, unwed, and unable to form a family? (Keblawi & Al-Sahili, 2022).

CONSEQUENCES OF BRAIN DRAIN ON THE PALESTINIAN LABOR MARKET

One notable and evident effect of brain drain on the labor market is the increasing difficulty and growing challenge of finding and obtaining well-trained and highly educated individuals who can adequately meet the diverse needs of the labor market, particularly in the field of higher education. In the case of Gaza, the situation is particularly critical and alarming. The growing and expired need to provide specific services, coupled with the frequent and continual closures of border crossings, strongly dissuades many holders of entry visas from making the decision to return to Gaza, as they fear the possibility of being unable to leave and subsequently go back again. This fear significantly damages their professional careers and jeopardizes their own futures. Such circumstances only exacerbate the difficulty of addressing both quantitative and qualitative deficiencies that exist among skilled laborers, as viewed through a functionalist lens. The transfer of advanced knowledge, whether it is sector-specific or general, which the migrants could potentially transmit back to their native place, constitutes the applicable knowledge profile of the Palestinians; however, this valuable knowledge remains largely unused and unutilized within the borders of Gaza. The general level of qualification among Palestinian society does not necessarily place the country at a disadvantage. Nonetheless, the profile, structure, and regional distribution of educational qualifications reveal significant in-

adequacies and shortcomings, rendering the overall profile incomplete. This situation thereby justifies the concept of “out-skilling,” which translates to the excess or deficit of the level of qualification that is needed for a certain occupation compared to the qualifications of workers that are currently present in the market. A disturbing and evident discrepancy between the primary source of professional qualifications and the actual skills that are accorded is apparent in the careers of graduates who find themselves unable to secure employment, as well as in the workforce that remains inactive and does not engage in productive work (Alsaud et al., 2022).

Impact on Economic Development

The Palestinian economy suffers from a serious problem known as the “brain drain.” In light of this, the return of educated or skilled individuals has an encouraging effect on the development and economic life of society. This research has defined the concept of brain drain and its classifications and then studied the most important reasons behind it, such as the lack of job opportunities, low salaries, and the search for better living standards. This study also presents the dimensions of the phenomenon in a statistical and informative manner and identifies the sectors that suffer from such a phenomenon. Finally, the study suggests a number of important recommendations to reduce the phenomenon and its seriousness, including the improvement of living standards, the creation of specialized centers to absorb educated Palestinian cadres, the support of creativity, the increase of funds for projects, and the availability of fund allocation for these projects in a way that guarantees that these individuals will return to their home country and invest their expertise and experiences in order to achieve the goals of economic and social development. The causes of migration and the lack of necessary qualifications in the local labor market have left negative effects on Palestinian society as a series of transformations and consequences, both of which are of a social, economic, or political nature. Therefore, the unified demographic model reflects these changes as they are reflected in the reduction of growth rates and entry into the composed. The shortage of manpower and the economic difficulties force these Palestinian workers to resort to Israel and work in hard and difficult jobs at a time when this sector can be occupied by Palestinian workers. This would help to increase demand for labor, reduce unemployment problems, and expand anti-occupation efforts. The return of educated individuals also has a driving force on the development and economic life of society; they attempt to change the traditional Palestinian economy into an integrated and well-organized economy that relies on knowledge production. The return of educated individuals to their homeland increases the supply of manpower in various required specializations, thereby placing pressure on the demand for different types of services. These individuals also work in the education, training, and teaching sectors, undertake responsibility for training and sophistication, and benefit institutions with their capabilities and qualifications by attracting the latest scientific and technological experiments. Their return also improves productive and research sectors due to their direct positive impact on the quality of productivity, the public budget, life, and societal satisfaction.

Skill Shortages and Mismatch

Numerous studies of labor market failures, conducted across various regions around the globe, have concluded that markets consistently demonstrate a slow pace in adjusting to persistent imbalances between demand and supply, leading to widespread labor shortages that are evident across many sectors. The findings derived from a significant number of these comprehensive studies suggest that an employment policy focused solely on skill training and retraining initiatives can at best marginally decrease the overall number of job seekers who are unable to find meaningful employment. However, such a policy fails to enact any substantial changes in the fundamental workings of the labor market as it currently stands. The direct and indirect costs associated with unemployment are relatively straightforward to measure and quantify, yet what remains less tangible is the cost incurred from the inability to find the right person for a given role, the mere act of rejecting a highly qualified applicant, the implications of offering an attractive job to someone who may not genuinely fit the role, promoting an unqualified individual into a position of responsibility, or the unfortunate accidents that may arise due to a lack of necessary skills, qualifications, and overall job satisfaction. In the numerous dealings that take place within the labor market, one fundamental fact must always be taken into account: asymmetric information is often a prevailing issue. Different stakeholders, including employers, employees, movement institutions, training institutions, trade unions, and various government bodies, each possess distinct and potentially conflicting goals, objectives, and attitudes that can significantly hinder cohesive action and resolution in addressing labor market challenges (Keblawi & Al-Sahili, 2022).

The varying ways in which these goals and attitudes have so far been managed consistently have led to the implementation of certain policies perceived as having been formulated with a view to implementing them to benefit the greater number of job seekers. Prior to the Gulf War, many studies had demonstrated the existence of skill shortages and occupational mismatch as common and serious labor market failures in many developing and developed countries, both in times of economic contraction and expansion. In many Arab countries which the shortage of skilled and qualified personnel has many causes, such as the low level of funds provided to promote education and training, and very often, a portion of education budgets does not reach its intended users. Indeed, in times of depressed oil prices, some Arab countries reduced their provision of education and training, whereas others gave priority to defense activities and programs to fight desertification, leaving poverty and unemployment still high (Altarifi et al., 2024).

Policy Implications

The policy implications drawn from the findings of this important study are varied and multifaceted. In order to effectively contain the human capital being lost from the region, which primarily originates from the challenging structural conditions of life there, priority must be given to implementing drastic and comprehensive structural changes. These

changes must not be simply of a temporary nature; rather, they should serve as a solid and sustainable starting point for evolving and developing the essential building blocks of the future. The ongoing and unfolding process of occupation is implanting sour seeds that persistently burn the youth away, preventing them from maturing and thriving enough to eventually bear the fruits of their potential. Addressing this issue is not an easy task, and it requires a concerted international effort aimed at actively participating in the attainment of specific, well-defined objectives within a clear timeline that encourages accountability and progress (Helal & Zawawi, 2024).

The Palestinian leadership, which encompasses a wide range of perspectives and backgrounds, must embark on a comprehensive twin approach to effectively counter the current trends that are deeply ingrained in the political structure of the region, as well as the complex and foundational issues that are closely linked with the Palestinian question. It is absolutely crucial that these initial steps are not taken without securing a solid international guarantee, ensuring that the process is supported on a global scale. The proposed solutions must have a substantial and meaningful connection with the broader questions surrounding Palestine, as they are inextricably linked. In addition to this, a structured and differentiated approach must be implemented to address the ongoing exodus of Palestinians. This approach should also focus on the potential for optimizing the talents and expertise of qualified Palestinian scientists and professionals, facilitating the possibility for some of the expatriates to return to their homeland to live and contribute their skills and knowledge in the region. This strategy, therefore, needs to be considered as an essential component of the comprehensive solution that addresses both the political and social aspects of the ongoing challenges faced by the Palestinian people (Natour et al., 2020).

MITIGATING BRAIN DRAIN: POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Palestinian authorities should take measures to mitigate the brain drain and its economic and social repercussions on the Palestinian labor market. Several relevant economic and labor market policies need to be carefully and jointly developed. Policy measures to stem brain drain are as follows: 1. Helping students finance their studies by increasing grants, reducing interest rates on student loans, and providing practice opportunities during the summer months; 2. Increasing available levels of government research, enhancing levels of excellence, and driving government research that makes greater utilization of private sector resources; 3. Assisting colleges and their students to make good decisions, such as requiring colleges to pay a fair portion of excess government spending and introducing performance measures by institutions; 4. Overhauling tuition grants and working methods at college. This means making the system more focused on need and merit, maintaining institutions responsible for results, and simplifying the entire process; 5. Exploiting new technologies to challenge the prevailing higher education business model. This may involve lifting obstacles and bringing new ideas to the marketplace of ideas by means of innovative new ways

of financing the learning that occurs at college. Collectively, these changes in public policy could restrict an exodus that, while profitable for the participants, will reduce future economic growth while increasing social divisions now and in the future (Badrasawi et al., 2020).

Education and Skills Development Policies

There are three main elements of educational policies under the conditions of occupation and economic instability: First, the different branches of education have to go hand in hand to provide graduates with different knowledge, skills, and attitudes required for self-employment. Technical education for all must be intensified to reduce the dependency of the economy on outside expertise and create employment for young graduates. Second, the relative advantage and the potential role of each student under occupation conditions must be identified so that before entering higher qualifications, there should be informed choices and increased enrollment in the right avenue of studies under social justice. Third, the economic use of the available supply of human and non-human resources must be given due consideration. The above-mentioned indication will help relatively in responding to the nature of the Palestinian economy, and in turn, may help absorb a considerable irony of our present time: although human beings with dignity and talent constitute the principal wealth and pride of the Palestinian people, they have not reaped the fruit of their innovative effort at home, and the more learned individuals are the most ready to go abroad to seek decent work conditions and secure living quarters and education for their children (Badrasawi et al., 2020).

Labor Market Reforms

The Palestinian economy, especially in the West Bank and Gaza, operates under difficult circumstances, and the operation of the labor market is no exception. The driving force behind the Palestinian economy, the labor force, faces severe restrictions due to the military conditions under which this force operates, as well as social, political, and economic factors that have accumulated over the years. This labor force is not free to move in accordance with the economic mechanisms that operate within it and govern the relationship between supply and demand for labor. It does not operate in an open competitive labor market that is free from racial and ethnic discrimination. It suffers from the institutional arrangements in the labor market in particular, and the institutional arrangements in general, which reduce the effectiveness, creativity, and productivity of the labor force. The labor force is also forced to work in arduous conditions that reduce income and increase the hours of work. All of these challenges and others have crippled this force (Assaf, 2023).

Regarding the labor force cost, the occupation authorities imposed a number of measures after the establishment of the National Authority, which is the Labor Law imposed on the level of the Palestinian worker in the areas controlled by the Palestinian Authority. They also imposed other measures during periods of closure and siege, including lengthy security

examinations, which increased travel time from one hour to eight hours or more, and the transfer of workers from inside the occupied territories. This includes physical detention and blindfolding, and money and food are not allowed to be carried with them. These measures affect the cost of the Palestinian labor force due to delays and food shortages, and the contractor may not be able to collect food at all after that, which affects productivity and the quality of the work being performed. The measures also include cutting off electricity from within the Palestinian territories, which increases transport times if workers are forced to travel in the early hours of the day. In addition to the increase in transport time, the conditions of the workforce in detention cells also contribute to the spread of chronic diseases. The low cost of the labor force is also connected to the cost of Palestinian workers, due to the additional expenditure resulting from the imposition of travel restrictions, so the Palestinian worker's income is always lower than that of his counterpart. Likewise, the low cost of the labor force has led to a reduction in the demand for Palestinian workers (Helal & Zawawi, 2024).

Incentives for Return Migration

Despite the pessimistic and often negative attitude of successive governments towards the people's migration, the Palestinian government has continued to adopt a variety of measures aimed at encouraging return migration. Some of these measures include exemptions from customs duties, the freezing of academic rank and seniority, as well as exemption from the need to pay back grants, loans, and essential equipment. All these incentives represent an earnest attempt to alleviate the adverse consequences resulting from the migration of the educated class, thus encouraging them to return to their homeland. In addition, these incentives have become an increasingly important aspect of the Palestinian emigration policy framework. However, despite the introduction of these policies, the overall emigration strategy, with its various instruments, has proven to be quite weak and ineffective in reversing the prevalent trends of migration that have been observed in recent years. The challenges linked to engaging the educated class in returning to their homeland remain significant (Hassan & Aref, 2023).

It is known, however, that the success of these policies depends on the environment inside the country. The policies should be comprehensive and applicable and should be combined with planning that takes into account the nature of the country and the migrants' needs and goals. The Palestinian experience has not been successful so far, not only because of the stress and strain the whole country is experiencing these days but also because the policies the country has followed have not been comprehensive and integrated. Additionally, the opportunities that are expected to be available in the local market have been limited, except for a few areas like education and health. It is highly recommended that the target specializations be identified at the early stages, given the available limited resources. The main aim of these well-defined policies is to urge educated Palestinian expatriates to return to their homeland (Hijjawi, 2022).

CONCLUSION

All people, in principle, have the right to move and settle anywhere. However, the exercise of this right by educated young people in Palestinian society and similar societies leads to an untimely drain of human resources, one from which there can be no return: a drain that changes its components and increases its dimensions over time, one that has extended effects on growth, quality of life, and the structure of society. Society faces a difficult moral dilemma. It should allow the right individuals to realize the benefits of their human qualities, but it should also be alert that in encouraging the right to migrate, it does not do so at the expense of the rights of brothers and sisters to enjoy the same benefits. In general, it should pay equal attention to economic costs and benefits, as well as to ethics and equity. The duty of the policymaker is to construct regimes that balance both needs, past experiences, and the values of society. Society could agree on international mobility regimes that have as a mandatory characteristic that the right of people to seek and determine the place of their residence should not diminish the right of each society to safeguard its sources of production of skills.

Finding a balance between these points of view implies raising the living conditions and medium- and long-term prospects for the vitality of the territory left by those who emigrate. Simple ways of confirming that belonging through utilization can be advantageously substituted with the pride of living and working, through their contribution, in the place where they were born and to which they should feel attached for the duty of making it more hospitable, more just, and with equal opportunities for personal growth, for the degree of social well-being that each person deserves, and for the essential elements of individual and collective success. A real and true commitment to the development and growth of Palestinian society could reduce conflicts with the rights sensitive to educated young people who have chosen to build their future outside their republic, improving their ability to take risks. The importance of the brain drain and how it could definitely affect the small markets based on certain skills is significant. Recommendations include solving the political and scientific injustices that cause this brain drain, identifying examples from various countries that try to restore some of their losses, and focusing on temporary solutions like holding workshops and seminars for young people interested in emigrating.

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