Dear Ashraf,

Please, if you can, give me your comments on this potential response to the article.

This is interesting, but barely scratches the surface of the problem.

Brains leave "drained" not just to find a job. Intelligent brains are vibrant, they want to be able to contribute by using their brains, they need to be able to have the freedom to breathe intellectual work, to be able to have the security of a good education for their children, to earn a decent living and have some security in the uncertainty of old age, to have the freedom to live and express their well-considered opinion without fear of losing their jobs or freedom, to be responsible citizens wherever they are, yet receive citizens' rights in dignity, and for that in return the “drained brain” wants to know that he/she is contributing also to the well-being of the society they live in and to be proud of one's contribution, no matter how large or small.

Those who allow their brains to be drained depart "home" reluctantly because of deeply-rooted belief that they and their country of origin deserve a better composite (political, economic and cultural) system of governance and an environment and an enriching way of life. This they seek and often find in the country which behaves in a way that it knows it is lucky to have them, offer them a place to settle in without fear of being chucked out when they have "outlived their usefulness" for sadly not all countries treat migrated brains with the dignity they deserve or as described above in the majority of civilized states which respect intellect.

One last point: Most, if not all, of the Yemeni brains that left and continue to be drained, retain deep attachment to their birth places; with careful thought indeed here a response to assist in Yemen does not require too much to appeal to. All it needs is some carefully considered thought, and it is not nationalism that one needs to appeal to. I think appealing to nationalist fervor may actually be counterproductive...it is emotional and not rational. Such migrated brains need a rational approach.

Thus in amongst the great deal of necessary exploration, to my mind, this is the area that is in dire need of a good solid verifiable valid academic research, to guide the best way these brains can contribute to Yemen's wellbeing. It will be immensely naïve to simply ask for them to return. Beyond numbers and salaries, it is the core problems that forced the migrated brain to fly away that is in need of addressing. Central thought, and policy need to grasp the deeper social, political and economic issues that lead brains to migrate. Central political philosophy needs to grasp the nettle of change and to place what is needed to be done to stop or reverse the brain drain as an immense unavoidable priority...The United Kingdom was not immune to a significant Brain Drain
in the late 1960s early 1970s. Policy changed to retain and reverse the drain trend, and it was not nationalistic fervor that did it…it was simple political will. The migrated brains cannot be blamed or held responsible for the woes Yemen is in. They "escaped" because they could not do more.

Adel

Dear Adel

Sorry for being late in replying.

I agree with you with regard that the article on Yemeni brain drain or human capital flight has relied on the remedies rather than the causes. It scratched only the surface of the problem.

The most important key reason in my opinion is the social environment for human migration. Political instability, lack of opportunity, freedom of speech, thought and movement.

A case in point is my migration to Canada in 1969. I never thought of migration if it was not for saving my life and my family's. Mind you I owe it to Abdul Karim Ali Abdo who encouraged me to leave Aden for the unknown!!!! I had to be secretive about my departure and nobody knew except my immediate family. Why? Because of any political repercussions!

Another case in point is Qais Ghanem who returned in the 80s to work in Sana’a Yemen. He stayed for few years but could not hack it any more. Why? Because of the social environment, political turmoil. corruption, patronage and lack of opportunities which plague many Arab countries.

Unless the social environment of Arab countries change the problem of human migration will remain.