

Analysis and Assessment of the “Brain Drain” Phenomenon and its Effects on Caribbean Countries

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Abstract

In this paper I conduct an in-depth analysis of the “Brain Drain” as it relates to the Caribbean based on previous literature and conducted research on the topic. By “Brain Drain” I am referring to is the idea that there is preponderance in the migration of highly skilled and higher educated Caribbean natives to developed countries. Throughout the paper, I develop this definition of “Brain Drain” and include methodological flaws and statistical errors of the data gathered about the “Brain Drain.” I also present some specific data and information about the “Brain Drain” pertaining to the Caribbean. I have included arguments that suggest that the “Brain Drain” does not exist and present rebuttals to these arguments. Finally, I end with discussing some possible solutions to the presented adverse effects of the “Brain Drain” on the Caribbean and what governments and individuals can do.

Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to provide the reader with an in-depth analysis of the “Brain Drain” phenomenon and its implications for Caribbean countries. The “Brain Drain” I am referring to is the idea that there is currently a significant increase in the migration of highly skilled and higher educated Caribbean natives to more developed countries. The idea behind the “Brain Drain” is that when these persons migrate, there is a shortage of persons remaining with the ability to adequately develop the Caribbean countries. The developed (receiving) country gains extra skills and resources from the migration as it continues to become wealthier. On the other hand, the developing (source) country loses highly skilled manpower and human capital and inevitably becomes poorer.

This paper is divided into sections. The first section will present a thorough definition of the “Brain Drain” phenomenon and discuss reasons why it has become a popular topic of discussion among intellectuals and scholars around the globe. In this section, I will also present specific statistical information about the effects that the “Brain Drain” is said to have on the Caribbean. I will consider some of the methodological concerns we should bear in mind regarding the statistical data presented about the “Brain Drain.” In the next section I will present some of the arguments from scholars and researchers who do not equate the international migration of highly skilled natives to “Brain Drain” as well as rebuttal arguments presented by those who assert that the

"Brain Drain" is in fact legitimate phenomenon. Finally, I will end by discussing some possible solutions to the counter possible effects of the 'Brain Drain' on the Caribbean and show the importance of moving from a mindset of "Brain Drain" to one of "Mutual Gain."

What is the "Brain Drain" and why is it important today?

The idea of a "Brain Drain" suggests that there is an unequal distribution of the advantages and disadvantages of global migration. The source countries seem to bear most of the losses and in their estimation, have yet to be adequately compensated for the net contributions their natives have made to the receiving countries. The term "Brain Drain" is not without controversy and there are some scholars, such as David Hart (2006), who prefer to use the term "High Skill Migration" as opposed to "Brain Drain." According to Hart, High Skill Migration (HSM) is the migration of persons with increased levels of skill and education who, if they stayed could contribute significantly to the development of the country. But problems arise when we try and differentiate between high skill migration and general migration or low skill migration. There is no universal standard applicable to every country with regard to who should be considered highly skilled. The reality is that not all migrants provoke an equal level of loss of human capital. The only separating factor (and a very subjective one at that) between general migration and HSM or "Brain Drain" is that in the "Brain Drain," there is human capital, skill and expertise that move with the migrant (Grubel and Scott 1977).

Furthermore, those that leave are likely to be from the middle and professional classes and tend to be educators, health care workers, scientists, engineers, professors and political reformers (Dugger 2005). In the source country, high skilled migrant workers are also distinguished from less skilled migrant laborers by the higher salaries they receive. As I stated previously, the source countries need these skilled, educated workers in order to develop. At the most extreme end of the analysis we could say that the working classes in these countries devote time, energy and resources into educating these people who in turn migrate and leave them to fend for themselves. As such, it becomes evident that some people's freedom to travel and obtain financial well-being is obtained at the expense of their countrymen's freedom from hunger, homelessness, poverty and preventable diseases.

Smaller, less developed and poorer countries are most likely to experience this flight of human capital. For example, many of the High Skilled Migrants going to the U.S. are not from countries affiliated with the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). According to the National Science Foundation, approximately 70% of the U.S. science and engineering workforce are from non-OEDC developing countries (Hart 1). The countries in the global North that benefit the most from the "Brain Drain" do not have a problem acknowledging that it exists, but they do very little to correct it.

Let it be clear that the "Brain Drain" phenomenon is not very new. As early as 1973, the U.N. General Assembly requested that the Secretary General prepare a report on how the world could deal with this problem of the outflow of trained or skilled personnel from developing to developed countries (Grubel and Scott 1977). However, the

discourse of the “Brain Drain” phenomenon seemed to disappear following the Vietnam War and has only re-emerged in the last two decades, but noticeably on a larger scale. The problem in the past was that this international flow of human capital was often overlooked due to migration that was attributed to voluntary exile, political and religious conflict, or involuntary flight from persecution (Grubel and Scott 1977).

In order to understand how the “Brain Drain” happens, we must spend some time discussing migration and the reasons people leave their home countries in the first place. The reasons many Caribbean natives go abroad and fail to return home fall within two categories often referred to as pull and push factors. Push factors are circumstances or events in the home countries that result in persons leaving. Examples of push factors are the structural adjustment programs enforced by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank on developing countries that increased unemployment and reduced government funding on social programs in these countries which then led to increased migration. Pull factors are the incentives in the receiving countries that encourage persons to seek employment opportunities there. Examples of pull factors are the immigration incentive policies of the receiving countries that tend to attract higher educated, skilled and trained personnel. For example, the H-1B visa system in the U.S. is often used as a stepping stone by immigrants who want to acquire employment-based permanent residence there. The current immigration policy in the U.S. enables those applying for the H-1B visa to have the dual intent of attaining temporary work status but intending to apply for permanent residency (Kapur and McHale 2005). Other developed countries have similar immigration policies that continue to attract highly skilled workers from developing countries. Currently in Australia, employers of immigrants are not required to prove that domestic workers will be adversely affected by the employment of foreign employees, in fact, all they need to show is that employing the immigrant will be, in some manner, beneficial to Australia (Kapur and McHale 2005).

It is expected that this flight of human capital from developing countries is likely to worsen since developed countries appear to spend less time investing in their own health care and education sectors. Because of this underinvestment, developed countries constantly find themselves in a state of crisis where they rely on less developed countries to fill the professional gaps in these essential sectors. With the current trends in globalization and trade policies, it can be expected that the demand for skilled workers and professionals will increase in the coming years and global companies and industries will continue to lobby for more flexible immigration policies. We can therefore prepare for an international competition for skilled labor in the future as the more developed countries that experienced the “baby boom” following the Second World War will now be aging. These countries will be looking for more workers, both skilled and unskilled, to help with the social security costs and will also be looking to acquire better health care service providers. They will try their best to attract the higher-earning foreign workers to help pay for pension costs and health care. However, the problem with this philosophy is that although initially the immigrants will help to cover the health costs of the aging population, they too will eventually turn into an aging population. In the end, the country will need an even larger immigrant population to cover the costs of this new

aging population. In this sense, bringing in immigrants will only be a temporary fix to a permanent problem.

The "Brain Drain" is not a phenomenon that only concerns developing countries. In many developed countries, skilled workers are beginning to feel threatened by the large amounts of skilled labor force entering their country because they now have to compete for jobs with migrants (Kapur and McHale 2005). Indeed, it could be argued that they have good reason to worry because, as has already been stated, developed countries are moving towards immigration policies that specifically recruit and attract a higher skilled and more educated workforce. Also, many promising students go to these developed countries to study, assimilate into the culture and lifestyle, find employment and never return to their home countries.

Globalization, with its focus on production and trade has led to an increased international demand for skilled labor. Currently, in the media, there is an evident scare concerning the implications of a worldwide "Brain Drain." Discussions and debates have emerged regarding the fading economic and cultural control of nation-states within their own borders. As a result, nationalism and nationhood are beginning to become important topics of discussion once more. Whenever chants of nationalism are revitalized we can expect that any kind of migration (skilled or unskilled) will be considered a hindrance to the source country's maximum economic output (Grubel and Scott 1977). In this way, the countries that are most concerned with the "Brain Drain" tend to be developing countries that are in need of serious reforms; such as many Caribbean countries. Reforms are especially needed in health care, environmental policies, education and politics. Unfortunately, those most suitable and most likely to bring about such reforms tend to be the people who are also most likely to be internationally marketable (Kapur and McHale 2005).

In his article entitled "Brain Drain Compensation" on BBC's Caribbean website, Sir Ronald Sanders, the former Caribbean diplomat states, "The Caribbean has been losing its highly educated people to industrialized nations at an alarming rate" (Sanders 1). He concludes that the tendency for industrialized nations to "take the cream of the skills" from developing countries is an issue that will only worsen in the coming decades. These kinds of statements in today's media are further cause of scare, fright and panic for many developing nations. Furthermore, the European Commission announced in October 2007 that the European Union was planning to implement a "Blue Card" system, much like the American "Green Card." This "Blue Card" would attract highly skilled immigrants to work in the European Union. The driving force behind this proposal was that by the year 2030, the European Union is expected to experience a shortfall of approximately 20 million skilled workers. This is further demonstration that more developed countries are using immigration policies and international mobile human capital to compete economically with each other (Kapur and McHale 2005). If the U.S. "Green Card" system is any indicator, there is an increased likelihood that many Caribbean natives will continue to migrate, making best use of this opportunity.

The emigration rate among the tertiary educated population in the Caribbean is estimated at 41% , compared to 27% for Western Africa, 18.4% for Eastern Africa and 16% for Central America (Kapur and McHale 2005). Another study by the Organization

for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) found that recently, Guyana, Haiti and Jamaica have lost more than 80% of their college-educated population (Dugger, 2005). In contrast, the same study showed that the larger countries such as India, China, Brazil and Indonesia have less than 5% of their skilled citizens living in an OECD country. The U.S. has always been the primary beneficiary of highly skilled migrants from the Caribbean (Sanders 2007). In a recent survey Suriname had the highest percentage of secondary and tertiary educated persons entering the U.S. at 89.9%, Guyana was second at 85.9%, Jamaica third at 82.5%, Haiti at 81.6%, St. Kitts-Nevis at 71.6% and Antigua and Barbuda at 70% (Sanders 2007). Even if the data is completely accurate, the fact that the majority of U.S. bound educated immigrants originate from the Caribbean should not be discounted. Clearly, the U.S. is the top destination of choice for educated persons from the Caribbean. This is likely to be the case primarily because the U.S. has the largest Caribbean Diaspora. The U.S. is also geographically close to the Caribbean and therefore transportation to and from the U.S. is relatively easy.

In the Caribbean, discussions of the “Brain Drain” have become intricately linked with discussions of remittances. Jamaica gains the most from remittances sent from emigrants working in developed countries. In 2003, remittances in Jamaica represented nearly 18% of its GNP. Remittances in Guyana accounted for 8.1% of GNP, 5.3% in Grenada and 4.5% in Barbados (Sanders 2007). A study by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) found that in 2002, remittances to the Latin America and the Caribbean amounted to \$32 billion. It is not uncommon for the total remittances to exceed foreign aid for many Caribbean countries. Additionally, in the Caribbean, remittances increase significantly in the aftermath of macroeconomic or natural disasters (Kapur and McHale 2005). This is significant for the millions of persons living in the disaster prone Caribbean without sufficient home owners insurance. These people depend on the remittances from their relatives and friends abroad to repair damages following floods, hurricanes, volcanoes and earthquakes.

Despite the convincing arguments put forth by the statistics, we have to be careful of how willing we are to trust the data that we have regarding the “Brain Drain.” Data are hard to come by, and the accessible data are quite limited making it difficult to make accurate comparisons over long periods of time, across countries, and among ill-defined subpopulations such as the “highly skilled” (Hart 2006). Many of these developing Caribbean countries are quite small and experience a significant paucity in resources, something that becomes even more evident when trying to extract migration data. This is so despite the fact that they are the ones who really need to have the accurate data to show causation with regards to the adverse effects of migration. Unfortunately, they often lack the technological ability to compile accurate data. For example, when Caribbean natives migrate on a permanent visa, it is not always recorded whether or not these persons are skilled or unskilled laborers. Furthermore many Caribbean countries do not accurately record the return of native-born persons who can re-enter just by showing their passports (Grubel and Scott 1977). The data presented from the countries gaining from this “Brain Drain” also tends to be flawed. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank are still working at gathering accurate data in this area. The IMF and the World Bank have both found a high correlation between education and legal

migration (Hart 2006). But a correlation is just that; it does not tell us cause and effect and we should be careful of coming to hasty conclusions. Furthermore, let us be mindful that the World Bank and the IMF may have their own agendas and may be looking for data that will legitimize their causes. As always, we must always consider the motives behind those interested in studying migration.

When the researchers are gathering data, they are usually trying to prove their hypothesis. Those who see the benefits or disadvantages of the migration will include data that support their perspective. They select cases that are expected to be positive examples of what they aim to prove. Additionally, the data collected tends not to account for natives who migrated as children. If natives migrated as children, they should not fall into the category of skilled labor force. Data from Jamaica suggests that almost 4 of every 10 emigrants to the United States left before the age of 10 (Dugger 2005). How can we then include these children in the category of skilled, educated and trained contributing to the "Brain Drain"?

The statistics that we are privy to can be quite misleading and may overstate the human capital gains of the developed countries in the global North and underestimate the losses of the rest of the world (Grubel and Scott 1977). The data available to us may not account for the place that migrants received their education. This information is important because if they were educated in the receiving country then they should not be included in the "Brain Drain" count since technically, when they left their country of origin, they were neither educated nor skilled (similar to the case of the children in the preceding paragraph). Furthermore, if the receiving country bore the costs of educating the individual, then it should be able to reap the rewards of its investment. Many of the immigrants who have acquired H-1B working visas and other permanent status visas received their education in the receiving countries.

There is a requirement in the United States that any change of visa status must be done in the person's country of origin. So even though these people go home and acquire their permanent visas there, we cannot overlook the fact that they may have only gone home to acquire their new visa, but still received the majority of their training and education in the receiving country. Thus, we are faced with the dilemma of a possible "Reverse Brain Drain." That is, if students receive the majority of their education in the foreign country and then return to their home country to live and use their acquired skills and knowledge then this also could be considered a form of "Brain Drain." Additionally, even if a person acquires fifteen years of schooling in his or her home country, this tells us very little about the quality of education received. How can we truly measure the loss of human capital under these circumstances? As Kapur and Mchale (2005) accurately point out there are often confounding variables that affect a person's level of skill or future contribution to his or her country such as religion, ethnicity and region of origin.

Furthermore, we cannot always assume that migrants experience a more satisfactory life in the receiving country. Standard of living should not be equated to quality of life. If we want to assess migrants quality of life, we would need to consider the length of hours they are working, the ease with which they can communicate with relatives and friends in the source country, time spent commuting between the place of

residence and the work place, how satisfied they are with the climate, levels of taxation and access to social services (Grubel and Scott 1977). When people decide to leave their home country, they also deal with the opportunity costs of leaving. Not everyone leaves because he or she is fed up or dissatisfied with the conditions in the home country. Many are giving up their meaningful relationships with family and friends and may be leaving behind elements of their culture that were important to them. When they arrive in the new country, they must deal with assimilation and adjustment to the new culture that could include a new language, new customs, laws, societal norms and so on. These are things that affect all types of people considering migration, not just the skilled workers. However, it seems that the data we obtain regarding the “Brain Drain” often suggests that there is something special and unique about the migration of highly skilled workers (Grubel and Scott 1977).

While categorizing “Brain Drain” migrants, it is possible that researchers are erroneously including temporary visitors, such as students on visas, trainees and visiting experts. Such persons are not permanent immigrants and should not be considered to be a loss of human capital. Even if a source country keeps a tally of all the highly skilled persons who leave with permanent visas and counts them as part of the “Brain Drain” emigrants, how can they be certain that when these persons arrive at their destination they won’t change their minds and return? Not even the emigrants can be certain of whether or not they will remain in the new country, despite the fact that they are entering on a supposedly permanent visa. The raw data gathered from many countries do not always take into account the highly skilled professionals who return to their home countries. Grubel and Scott (1977) also remind us of the difficulty determining when an individual who originally entered a country as a student stops learning and starts working. In other words, how and when can we determine that the individual is indeed a highly skilled professional? There are also many international organizations in many developed countries that employ immigrants to work in their organization. Persons who work with these international organizations should not be considered “Brain Drain” migrants.

Does the “Brain Drain” truly exist?

One of the earliest arguments against the concept of the “Brain Drain” was the “Emulation Model” (Grubel and Scott 1977). According to this model, the migration of skilled and educated persons results in those remaining in the source country demanding higher wages and better education. In this sense, they want their countries to emulate the conditions in the receiving countries. Thus, skilled and educated workers who remain in the source country will engage in productive and positive activities that will enable them to receive higher wages that reflect the wages in the more developed countries. Also, the prospect of migration encourages those who remain in the source countries to obtain higher education as they attempt to receive higher compensation. As a result, more persons enter universities and the demand for building more higher education institutions increases. Kapur and McHale (2005) refer to this as the “Prospect Channel” since the prospect of leaving the country changes the potential emigrants’

attitudes toward human, social and financial capital. Unfortunately, what such models fail to take into account are the unrealistic expectations these persons have when they enter higher education. They are not getting a university education to contribute to their country's economy; they are getting a higher education because they often believe that this will improve their chance of migrating.

Another argument suggests that even when the migrants don't return home, the knowledge they acquire often does. Those who argue from this standpoint sometimes posit that some source countries may even be better off if the highly skilled migrants never come back (Hart 2006). This is because in the developed countries, they can learn specialized skills and acquire expertise training that they would have probably forgone had they remained in the home country. As communication channels improve, it has become easier for these migrants to share their newly acquired knowledge with those at home. The "Brain Drain" then becomes a sort of legitimate export industry (Sanders 2007). The source countries provide their citizens with the foundation knowledge and resources, and then they export them to developed countries. In turn those who migrated send back remittances and newly gained knowledge. As a result, it may be more of a mutual gain than a "Brain Drain" as the increase in knowledge and technology will eventually diffuse to the source countries.

Another important factor is the effects of remittances. Remittances refer to money that emigrants send to their families and friends in their home countries (Kapur and McHale 2003). According to Sanders: "In relation to its Gross National Product (GNP), the Caribbean area is the largest recipient in the world of remittances" (1). It is not surprising that the U.S. is the largest source of these remittances. Furthermore, the figure of remittances is higher for many countries, especially those in the Caribbean, since money is not always sent through banks or foreign exchange traders. Many persons send money by way of friends and relatives that travel. Within the home countries we can find many persons who are dependent on these remittances. For instance, in many Caribbean countries, outside the Western Unions and other foreign exchange kiosks one may see natives earnestly waiting to receive their means of subsistence. Many of them are unemployed and without this source of financial support, may have been homeless, hungry or could have otherwise resorted to crime and violence for a living.

Kapur and McHale (2003) discuss remittances as the difference between abject poverty and food on the table for many of the people receiving the funds. They also talk about remittances in terms of "Trickle-Up Economics" since when remittances go to the households; they are firstly spent on basic needs such as clothing, food and basic health care. The remaining money may then be invested in land, farm tools, livestock and possibly travel expenses to send another family member abroad to work (Kapur and McHale 2003). According to Sanders, without these remittances, there would be increases in poverty levels, crime and social instability in many Caribbean countries (2007). Remittances are not just helping the individual friends and relatives that receive funds; they also help the economy of the country. For many Caribbean countries, remittances are a stable source of financial flow and foreign exchange supply. Furthermore, remittances clearly have fewer ties and stipulations than foreign aid or

loans. The government in the receiving country does not have to worry about interest payments on loans or profit repatriation for investments (Kapur and McHale 2003).

Opponents to the “Brain Drain” phenomenon further reiterate that it is nothing new, since for years, the Caribbean has been exporting people for jobs. For example when the Panama Canal was being built many Caribbean workers went to Panama to get jobs in the construction of the canal. Also during the Second World War, many Caribbean countries were still colonies and many citizens left to fight for Britain, work in construction as well as in health services (Sanders 2007). And even during those time periods, the migrant workers sent money back home.

An article in *The Economist* on October 11, 2003, gives the example of Jamaican born Eleanor Brown who received degrees at Brown, Yale and Oxford. At 31 years old, she is back in Jamaica and is the managing director of her own financial-services company and is on the board of five others (*The Economist* 2003). This is not an isolated case, many Caribbean migrants who go to the U.S. and Britain to study return to the Caribbean. The gap between opportunities in New York or Miami and the Caribbean is beginning to narrow and indeed many persons are returning to the Caribbean to take up political offices and other government positions (*The Economist* 2003).

The high level of migration could very well be the incentive some of these source countries need to improve conditions. In Dugger’s article, she gives examples of people “voting with their feet” when they leave their home country (Dugger 2005). They are sending an urgent message to their governments that things need to change. This is becoming an increasingly popular phenomenon as more governments are seeking to satisfy needs and desires of their country’s diasporas in order to obtain financial support. Dual citizenship is something that is becoming more popular and acceptable for many Caribbean countries. There also seems to be a change in politics that is highly reflective of today’s globalization trend. For example, Columbia allows a representative from its diaspora to be elected to congress (Kapur and McHale 2003).

Assuming that this spillover of knowledge (which I discussed earlier) happens, how applicable are the skills and information to the source country? According to Hart, these countries may lack the absorptive capacity to make the most efficient use of the new technological knowledge and expertise acquired by expatriates (2006). Some countries lack resources or maybe even the interest in using the spillover knowledge to develop the country. So whatever knowledge spillover that does occur, may not be very beneficial to those left behind. Furthermore, larger countries such as China and India seem to benefit more from the spillover of knowledge, than do the smaller countries, such as those in the Caribbean that suffer from extreme levels of poverty.

Indeed, some migrants return to the Caribbean, but we should spend time looking on what really happens when they return. In many cases, when migrants return home, after years of living in the developed country, they experience difficulty readjusting to the power failures, bad roads, poor health-care and conservative lifestyles in the Caribbean (*The Economist* 2003). In these cases, returning migrants may find it too hard to readjust, change their minds and often return to the developed countries to live; though this is only an assumption based on scarce data.

Another argument of those opposed to the "Brain Drain" is that when highly skilled citizens leave their home countries, they are sending a message to their governments to do better. But, suppose what they are really doing is the complete opposite. If those with the education and intellect to create change in the government leave, then what is expected to happen to the source country? How can we expect that the country will suddenly find alternate resources and human capital to do the work that needs to get done?

Opponents also spend a lot of time discussing remittances and asserting that the remittances "cancel out" the loss of human capital. It is undeniable that remittances are being sent home, but what if the natives knew that they could no longer depend on the remittances? Wouldn't they be encouraged to gain higher education, develop a trade and gain employment? Also, an increase in the amount of remittances being sent to the Caribbean suggests an increase in the Black market for sending and receiving money as persons try to avoid the fees being charged by banks and other institutions such as Western Union. In discussing the "Brain Drain" what is really being talked about is the high numbers of highly skilled and well educated Caribbean people working abroad. There is a concern that what the Caribbean countries are doing is really bartering their most needed human capital in exchange for remittances. However, it is usually the persons who are relatively well off who are able to afford the education and expertise training that enables them to migrate. The physicians, engineers and professors from the Caribbean usually occupy the upper ten percent of income brackets in the country (Kapur and McHale 2003). Thus, the families they come from are usually those who do not really need the remittances anyway. Remittances should not be considered as an adequate compensation for the "Brain Drain."

Furthermore, on the topic of remittances, it is possible that remittances may be doing more harm than good for a country. It is not farfetched to believe that the continuous money distribution may encourage unemployment, complacency and lack of ambition within the recipients who become dependent on the remittances for their source of survival and livelihood. This is what Kapur and McHale (2005) term "cultural dependency" which basically suggests that money makes people lazy. They also make the point that when parents go abroad and work they often send back money that helps to increase household consumption. However, their children at home may be suffering psychologically as they are often left to grow up without sufficient contact with their parents. Let us also remember that remittances are not always used to fund consumption. They have, in certain circumstances, been used to fund terrorism, civil wars and other violent campaigns (Kapur and McHale 2005).

What can be done about the "Brain Drain?" (Possible Solutions)

It is imperative that Caribbean countries remove or minimize the push factors that contribute to the departure of their citizens. Governments must now become proactive and stop trying to control the people who already left; they can do little about that. Instead, it would be better for them to shift their focus and start finding ways of improving the country for the people remaining as well as provide incentives for people to

stay. Restricting migration is impractical since any severe restriction on migration infringes on basic human rights. Furthermore, severe restrictions on migration will only serve to fuel discontent and illegal activities (Sanders 2007).

Economic and social development should not be depended upon to stop the “Brain Drain” altogether, but it will make tremendous strides in reducing the problem. Three of the main reasons people leave their home country are: to receive higher incomes, to capitalize on better career developmental opportunities and to gain a greater degree of freedom (Grubel and Scott 1977). Globalization has highlighted the Caribbean’s need for a more competitive and highly skilled labor force. However, the dilemma is that as the country invests in education and more people receive higher education then this also becomes an incentive for persons to migrate. Source countries need to work on improving conditions there that will provide greater incentives for the highly skilled laborers to stay. These may include better human rights, wages, changes in the political system, more modern health and education facilities as well as creating a more suitable environment for businesses. Without these changes there may little else that can be done to encourage natives to stay or migrants to return.

Both developed and developing countries need to work on a more equitable distribution of the benefits of highly skilled migration. Receiving countries can contribute to developing education and training in the Caribbean as a means of compensation. Kapur and McHale (2005) list several compensation options that would make development aid become a part of “human capital recruitment” (Kapur and McHale 2005). For example, receiving countries could send skilled workers to act as replacements in the source countries as a form of workers exchange. They also suggested that the receiving countries allow the source countries to benefit from income tax revenues received from migrant workers as well as share the revenue received from visa processing fees. Additionally, source countries could impose education grants for secondary and tertiary education in the home country that would become repayable in the event of migration. But once again there is the problem of deciding how much the compensation should be as well as which country’s economic system the compensation should be based on. Nevertheless, this may be the best solution proposed thus far reaping the greatest rewards for the least costs. Eventually, the goal would be to help source countries learn how to make the best use of the spillover information and develop better “absorptive capacity”.

In many classrooms and children’s libraries throughout the Caribbean, there are posters asserting that “Education is the key to success” and “Reading maketh a successful man.” Yet, there is massive shortage of employment opportunities in the Caribbean. Many university graduates in all fields of study are without work, months and sometimes years after they graduate. Education is constantly promoted and encouraged but then there is limited opportunity for employment and those that are fortunate enough to get job interviews are constantly being told that they are overqualified. Governments must implement new policies to ensure that there are available employment opportunities for their educated labor force.

A revival of nationalism contributes to the dismal way migration is being viewed by developing countries. However, increased nationalism also tends to generate tighter

immigration policies within developed countries that want to reestablish barriers (although they are often unsuccessful in this endeavor). Following the events of September 11, 2001 in New York, a form of xenophobia emerged in the U.S. that is expected to continue to affect immigration and therefore reduce the migration of highly skilled persons. There are also certain subject areas that have restricted the registration of foreign born students. This is a regular occurrence especially in the natural sciences such as chemistry and biology that could be of potential use to terrorists (Hart 2006). If these immigration policies continue to tighten, it is possible that the problem of the "Brain Drain" will solve itself.

Another proposed solution to mitigate the problem is to change the language used in the discourse. In other words, we should abandon the "Brain Drain" terminology since the very mention of "Brain Drain" produces an automatic aversive response. This is why Hart (2006) suggests that we use "High Skill Migration" since this is really the essence of what is taking place and gives a better inclination of what the problem really is.

The case of diaspora communities is something I am interested in and strongly believe that through these diaspora communities, solving the problem of the "Brain Drain" can be achieved. Diasporas of source countries, especially those in the Caribbean, are expanding rapidly in the receiving countries and include many highly skilled migrants. Governments in source countries should capitalize on this by encouraging linkages and partner relationships between the diasporas and institutions in the source countries. These kinds of programs would help members of the diaspora become more socially and economically connected to their countries of origin and could possibly serve as an incentive for them to return home. It should not be assumed that once people leave that they leave their cultures and values behind. Strauss and Quinn (1997) argue that cultures are not bounded; people's experiences can be shared across time and space. Most of the time, the members of the diasporas want to stay connected with those left behind at home. Hart suggests that the governments in the source countries should remove some of the barriers of communication and travel and make it easier for emigrants to send remittances and make investments (2006). They could do this by reducing costs of plane tickets, lowering phone call rates, subsidizing organizational infrastructure of the expatriates and providing incentives for educational, scientific and commercial partnerships between diasporas and institutions in the source countries. Receiving countries can also work with the source countries to develop networks to assist highly skilled migrants set up programs and projects in the source countries with the intention that these programs will be able to branch out and gain independence.

Caribbean countries also need to find more successful ways of making it easier for emigrants to return home if they are unsuccessful in the developed country. Kapur and McHale (2005) suggest that governments in the receiving countries should make social security entitlements portable and help sponsor the return of people whose home countries are in need of their skills. They also suggest that governments in the developed countries should tax the immigrants and put a portion of the revenue from this tax in a special account that will be accessible to the immigrant on his or her return home. Governments can also encourage some form of distant learning programs and forums where Highly Skilled Migrants can share information with students in source countries.

Governments in Caribbean countries need to learn to make better use of the remittances that they receive. They could implement more investment workshops and small business sponsorship programs to help those who receive remittances put their money into better productive investments instead of spending on consumption alone. Also, they could become actively involved with their working diasporas to make sure that they are not being psychologically or economically exploited by way of taxes and other social and cultural avenues in the developed country. This is especially the case for farm workers and other such categories of workers who have a higher probability of being deprived of their full compensation and being treated as modern day slaves. Although seemingly implausible, governments of the receiving countries such as the United States could also encourage migrants to send money home as a form of debt forgiveness for the source country. Proponents of this policy argue that the governments in the receiving countries should do more to encourage the migrants in their country to send money home in a bid to alleviate the high level of poverty that exists (Kapur and McHale 2005). They could do this by providing incentives to migrants who send money home or set up other financial rewards and incentives for sending remittances.

Another proposed solution is that source countries only send students abroad when the subject they want to study is not being offered at home. However, the source country will have to ensure that when these students return home; their newly acquired education can be put to good use. Otherwise, it will be no surprise if these students decide to stay in the receiving country and capitalize on employment opportunities there. Some have argued that the receiving countries should also be obligated not to allow immigrant students to enroll in courses that will not be useful in their home countries. However, this may in the end be an infringement on human rights. Furthermore, in the developed countries there are some professors who will not willingly chair a thesis or dissertation committee of a student who cannot participate in the research of the professor. If restrictions are placed on the types of topics students can study, then there is also the possibility of eliminating some profound research or discovery that these students could be contributing to the world (Grubel and Scott 1977).

Another possible solution to the problem is to make migration more difficult. In other words, there need to be policies put in place that would make permanent migration a less attractive alternative. For example, one policy could be that any student coming to an industrialized or developed country on a student visa, must return to their home country for a specified period of time before they are able to apply for a more permanent status. This would reduce the employment opportunities available to the student in the receiving country as well as present students with an opportunity to explore career options in their home country while they become re-assimilated into their home culture (Grubel and Scott 1977). The problem with this proposed solution is that there is really no guarantee that when the student returns to his or her home country that employment opportunities will be available in the chosen field of study, especially if the chosen area of study is outside the realm of what is normally considered to be "marketable careers" in the home country. It is difficult to ascertain that the student has finished studying after acquiring a bachelor's degree or even a master's degree. Additionally, it is possible that the student does not know whether or not he or she wants to pursue further studies

until just before graduation. Enforcement of these policies will result in not only having students deal with restrictions in the areas of study that they can engage in, they will also be under tremendous pressure to decide and determine the length of their studies from the moment they begin.

Furthermore, dedicating the time and resources to ensure that the student returns to his or her home country and uses his or her acquired education there will be quite difficult to achieve. Students can be ordered to go home after graduation, but this is difficult to enforce. In fact, such policies could push students into a situation of unemployment and hopelessness in their home countries. One must consider the push factors and conditions that encouraged them to leave in the first place. Also, these policies will not be successful unless all governments in both receiving and source countries agree to implement this policy. Nevertheless, this idea of encouraging students to return home after graduation is not altogether obsolete. For example, at the time of writing this paper, there is an out-of-state tuition waiver award being offered by the Florida-Caribbean Linkage Institute to Caribbean nationals on student visas studying in public universities in Florida. One of the conditions of this award is that following the completion of their studies, students must return to their home country for a period equal to the length of time they received the award.

Conclusion

The "Brain Drain" is the preponderance of the migration of highly skilled and educated persons from poor, developing and less industrialized countries to richer, more developed ones. This paper explored the connection between the current globalization paradigm and how it is contributing to this renewed interest in and revitalization of discussions about the "Brain Drain." The Caribbean has most recently been one of the most significantly affected areas with regards to the loss of human capital. The paper presented some alarming statistics about the Caribbean including the fact that the highest percentage of educated persons entering the U.S. come from the Caribbean. Not surprisingly, the Caribbean also receives the largest number of remittances from developed countries. It also looked on some of the methodological concerns regarding the statistics on the "Brain Drain" and the need to be careful when formulating conclusions.

I presented some arguments by those opposed to the concept of "Brain Drain" including the fact that remittances could be a sufficient compensation. There was a discussion of the need to be wary of falling into the trap of victimizing the countries in the third world and blaming their demise solely on countries in the west. Instead focus should also be placed on assessing factors in the home countries that encouraged persons to leave. I also discussed some of the rebuttal arguments that strongly suggest that the "Brain Drain" is indeed a very real phenomenon and that remittances alone are not enough. An important economic question is whether the cost of production, that is, the cost of educating people in the source country is justified by the amount of capital gained through remittances. Finally, I ended with discussing some conclusions to the "Brain Drain" and discovered that the best solution is for developed countries to find

ways of compensating the less developed source countries whereby moving towards mutual gain.

The migration of educated and skilled persons from developing to developed countries will persist as long as international inequalities in standards of living remain as they are now. The smaller and less developed the country is, the more difficult it will be for it to compete globally and retain a skilled workforce. Despite this, there is much that developed countries can do and should do to help such countries combat the problems they face. This can be facilitated by a shift in language signaling a shift in focus. That is, “Brain Drain” signifies alarm and catastrophe whereas a focus on “Brain Gain” would imply some form of hope and encouragement to focus on ways in which countries in the Caribbean can benefit from their highly skilled migrants. In the past, more attention has been paid to the movement and trade of goods and monetary capital, instead of a focus on the movement of human capital—this needs to change. It should not be forgotten that even when the source countries invest and improve their conditions, some citizens will still find it necessary to migrate. Although we can change the larger context within which immigration takes place, the decision to migrate remains an individual one.

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