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**Palestinian Youth Emigration from the Gaza Strip:
Reasons to Leave**

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List of Images

Image 1	The Humanitarian Impact of Movement restrictions on People & Goods - OCHA
Image 2	Word Clouding from Interview Analysis

List of Acronyms

ACAPS	The Assessment Capacities Project
B'Tselem	The Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories
DW	Deutsche Welle
IOM	International Organization for Migration
KAN	Israeli Public Broadcasting Corporation
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (United Nations)
PCBS	Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics
PLO	Palestine Liberation Organization
PRC	Palestinian Return Centre
PCHR	Palestinian Centre for Human Rights
UNRWA	The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (Near East)
UNISPAL	The United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine

Abstract

This study reveals the Israeli and Palestinian policies that push Palestinian youth to emigrate from the Gaza Strip. This is important because of the large numbers of Gazan youth emigrate, which still exists without finding solutions that are expected to be reduced as shown from the high percentage of youth emigration from the Strip. In the context of successive wars on the Gaza Strip, especially the Israeli aggression in 2014, many young Gazans emigrated in search of a decent life away from the economic, psychological, and political conditions that the Strip suffers from. Accordingly, this research seeks to understand the different discourses of Palestinian youth in conjunction with the Israeli and Palestinian policies that push youth to emigrate. I discuss their discourses from different perspectives. It turns out there remains a great desire on the part of youth to emigrate, and this includes those with qualifications. Through a number of semi-structured interviews with different youth groups from the Gaza Strip, the research reviews the underlying motives behind youth emigration and the impact of Israeli and Palestinian policies on their motives for emigration. My research findings are that the political and economic conditions contribute to promoting the idea of emigration and that emigration is viewed as a risk worth taking, for most young people, despite the many obstacles they face. Furthermore, the priorities of youth were mainly economic, since this aspect is what would give them better life opportunities. Additionally to being political, the Israeli occupation and its repressive practices against Palestinian people, create division and political isolation in Gaza, which help push youth to emigrate.

Relevance to Development Studies

Emigration discourses are an important aspect of development studies because emigration involves different challenges and opportunities affecting the development of society. Migration can contribute economically and socially to the host and home community, except where it drains skills and youth. In Palestinian society, youth have a prominent role in light of continuing conflict under Israeli Occupation, and continued destabilization of the region due to divisions, and potentially as voters in Palestinian elections. Focusing on Palestinian youth emigration from Gaza this study highlights one of the major issues in the world and explores the possible ways of addressing it. Palestinian emigration is a unique case because of the suffering under Israeli occupation, and the parties' conflict across Palestine. The lack of jobs ultimately pushes youth, including cadres and qualified people, to choose emigration. It's important to reconsider the whole question of youth emigration since youth are the source of strength and base for launching development in the future. Only greater investment in the human element, the key to achieving growth for a better tomorrow, can contribute to the development process and slow down the pace of youth emigration.

Keywords

Emigration, Brain Drain, Gaza Strip, Palestinian Youth, Insecurity, Israeli Occupation, Policies, Israeli Aggressions, Unemployment, Youth Emigration, Economic problems, Emigration Motives.

Chapter 1 Contextualizing Palestinian Youth Emigration

“You know what home is? It’s the longing for death in order to restore the right and the land. Home is not land. But it’s the land and the right together, the right is with you, and the land is with them” (Mahmoud Darwish, *Journal of an Ordinary Grief*, 1973).

1.1 Contextual Background

When the Palestinian poet and writer, Mahmoud Darwish wrote about the first period of his life in Palestine, before his displacement, his diaries were characterized by sadness and revolt. Darwish describes in prose the state of the Palestinian people and their sufferings from the aggressive Israeli enemy in the occupied homeland and in exile. Palestinian migration is one of the oldest and longest forced migrations in the world in terms of the proportion of displaced Palestinian refugees. According to the Palestinian Return Centre (2020), “the percentage of Palestinian refugees remains among the highest percentage of a people displaced from their land compared to any in the world.”

Palestinian migration has increased in recent years, whether in the territories occupied in 1967, or from refugee camps. Recently, emigration rates began to escalate with the severity of the collective measures imposed by Israel on the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. Israel encourages emigration, and increasingly the concern is that permanent emigration may be an intended effect of Israel’s siege policy. This involves closure, economic suffocation, the policy of confiscation of lands, (illegal) settlement activities, the destruction of infrastructure in the public and private sectors, and the construction of the apartheid wall. Yet according to (Al-Arabid, 2012 as cited in Hijazi, 2014), he suggests that emigration from Palestine is increasingly voluntary, rather than forced, especially for youth and skilled people. He suggests that the desire for voluntary departure has spread in recent years among Palestinian youth, from the various governorates of the Palestinian nation. Contrariwise, Kana’na (2000) emphasized that “emigration or displacement in the Palestinian's life is never voluntary, but rather it's forced and is a direct result of intent conditions created by the occupation.”

However, it remains the case that the Israeli blockade on Palestinians pushes them to emigrate from the Gaza Strip and West Bank. This makes it likely that migration is not entirely a voluntary matter, but that circumstances forced most youth to move, due to the long-term damaging and short-term military effects of Israeli policies combined. At its core, this emigration is forced, whether young people want to leave or not (Erdal and Oeppen, 2018: 989). This is a problem this study will explore.

On the other hand, paradoxically, the Palestinian governments’ own policies also push young people to emigrate. For example, in a report for ACAPS (2021) the effects of the Palestinian division between Gaza and the West Bank for more than 15 years, embodied in political problems between the two main parties representing Palestinians, divides Palestinian communities and weakens them. Discrimination on both sides can lead to the economic and social exclusion of those seen to support ‘the other party’. Poor prospects for the Palestinian national project and the apparent failure of both

parties to manage to serve young Palestinians mean that youth emigrate for education and to find improved job opportunities is likely to continue. This theme is examined in this study.

Youth is considered by many theories of nation-building to be the pillar of a country's future. Youth advocates consider young people to be the key form of wealth and energy for the development of society, and hence deserving particular care and attention. The problem is to explain the great desire of many young Palestinians in Gaza to emigrate abroad. This study will not include the West Bank; the main focus is youth emigrants from Gaza. According to Yaghi in DW website report (2020):

“There are no accurate statistics on the people's percentage who left Gaza, however, in May 2019 the Israeli broadcaster Kan cited that more than 40,000 emigrants left Gaza as of the same time in 2018. While United Nations estimated about 20,000 people left and according to human rights experts in Gaza, 70,000 people left from the period of 2014 until 2020.”

This suggests that emigration is high, although this is a rough estimate. Given that the population of Gaza today is over 2 million, this is a fairly high rate, and many of these are young people. Emigration is thought to have increased in recent years, especially since the 2014 aggression on the Gaza Strip by Israeli military forces. This study focuses on the period since 2014 in particular, when attacks led to widespread destruction in the Gaza Strip, further damaging of infrastructure, death and injury of thousands, and the collapse of various economic sectors. It was to be expected that Israel's war would be followed by a further rise in youth emigration in particular.

This research concentrates on youth from Gaza Strip, emigrants and also non-emigrants, exploring their experiences and motivations around emigration in terms of economic, psychological, and political factors, related to the influence of Israeli and Palestinian policies. In this research, I discover how economic, psychological, and political conditions in the Gaza Strip, with a focus on the post-war period since 2014, have more or less forced many Palestinian youth to “choose” to emigrate (or plan to emigrate) outside the Gaza Strip. My observations will be guided by analyzing information generated by young people and considering various interviews from the Israeli perspective, the Palestinian perspective, the academic perspective. However central is the perspective of youth themselves, and to gain a deeper understanding of their motivations for emigration and whether or not they have the same reasons for emigrating. Moreover, I try to understand how they view emigration despite their potential knowledge of its risks, including in some cases risking their lives.

1.2 Research Questions and Objectives

In order to understand Gazan youth experiences and desires around emigration, this research will try to answer the following question:

- How and why do Palestinian youth decide to emigrate from Gaza Strip?

To answer this question, I need to understand the motives of youth who emigrate, or plan to emigrate, from the Gaza Strip. By listening to their experiences and stories from their side, and how the Israeli and Palestinian policies are included in their motives for emigration. It's to be expected that

the reasons vary among individuals. There are likely to be some personal reasons for each young person, as well as some common economic, psychological, political and other motives. For example, there are those who emigrated because there are no job opportunities for them in the Gaza Strip. There are also those who despite having a job, have either emigrated or plan to do so. Hence, we can say that each individual has experienced something different from the other, and yet they share some common motivations due to the background context in Gaza.

So, in order to answer the main research question, I pose four sub-questions. The first and second questions deal with the motives of young people to emigrate, the third question deals with their knowledge and vision of the Palestinian national project, and the fourth question deals with practical solutions that, from their perspective, could prevent the forced emigration of youth, in future.

1. What is the propensity of the Palestinian youth in the Gaza Strip to emigrate?
2. After the 2014 Israeli aggression on the Gaza Strip what socioeconomic, psychological, and political considerations motivated youth to emigrate from the Gaza Strip?
3. How does emigration or non-emigration of young Palestinians from the Gaza Strip relate to the national project?
4. Are there realistic and practical solutions to reduce Palestinian youth emigration from Gaza?

1.3 Original Contribution and Justification of the Study

The phenomenon of emigration is a fact and a reality that cannot be overlooked in Palestinian society, especially in the Gaza Strip. The emergence of the phenomenon of emigration among youth can be seen as a result of the Israeli and Palestinian policies towards the Strip. The research was inspired by a widespread feeling that most youth in the Gaza Strip are more or less obsessed with emigrating. This may be because they suffer from problems that prevent them from realizing their ambitions, dreams, job opportunities, and even the minimum necessities of life. In this context, many young people seek to embark on a journey of emigration, by any means possible. They sometimes do this regardless of the risks, even if this means facing the possibility of their own death. Pressures to leave seem to be increasing with the escalation of the ongoing Palestinian-Israeli conflict, and the intra-Palestinian conflict that both create hardships, divisions, and lack of opportunities.

Therefore, this phenomenon needs serious research on a theoretical and practical level, and given its importance, there are already several studies on Palestinian emigration, including Lubbad's study (2008) *Palestinian migration: any circularity?* There is also, *Researching in an Unsuitable Environment: The Palestinian Case* by Al-Malki (2011) and *The emigration of Palestinian youth abroad* by Abdel Ati (2017). These have been important sources for this study. However, few of these studies have focused on Palestinian youth leaving the Gaza Strip, and few existing studies have examined or sought possible solutions to problem of youth emigration. This study will address the actual motives that push youth (male and female) to emigrate from the Gaza Strip, analyzing various reasons young people have to choose for emigration from Gaza.

To reach scholarly, realistic and also practical conclusions, to address emigration of youth from the Gaza Strip, despite the difficulty of amending or changing Israeli and Palestinian policies, youth still deal with disappointment and grievances due to these policies. The research presents innovative aspects in studying the emigration of Palestinian youth from the Gaza Strip. Firstly, by interviewing youth of both sexes, and including emigrants and potential emigrants, the study seeks their motives in their own words, for wishing to or actually emigrating. The study focuses especially on their perceptions and sensitive points, as young Palestinians, enabling them to express their ideas and experiences as freely as possible. It helps that I have lived in Gaza myself since I was seven and consider myself part of Palestine's youth. Furthermore, I adopted an analytical and exploratory approach to discover how collective or structural conditions from the Gazan context were experienced by the youth, in their decisions to emigrate, and how various policies contributed to their motivation. By analyzing different discourses about perceptions and opinions, youth are placed centre stage in the problem of mass emigration from the Gaza Strip. Finally, the results of this research are intended to be useful for decision-makers and civil society organizations. As well as asking youth about their experiences, the study also sought their ideas for solutions, which are presented in the concluding chapter. I quote:

“We were not able to participate in any political decisions, and nor are the two parties listening to our demands and rights” (Tamer, Gaza, 15 July 2021).

It's unclear that special programs for youth, set up to provide job opportunities or revive the economy, would necessarily reduce youth emigration. Palestinian officials, from both PLO and Hamas, already pay considerable attention to the emigration issue, because it indirectly serves the Zionist ambition to seize even more, leaving Palestine without its people and open as a place which the Israelis would call their alleged homeland.

1.4. Methodological Journey

1.4.1. Analytic and Exploratory Approach

The study uses an analytical-exploratory method. First, I used an analytical approach to analyze how the desire of youth to emigrate was formed and to analyze the various discourses about perceptions and opinions related to youth emigration. I also analyzed Israeli and Palestinian policies in light of their direct relation to the emigration motives of youth, and are the consequences of these macro-level policies.

Second, the exploratory element is to consider the deeper motives and desires behind decisions or plans of Palestinian youth to emigrate. This will provide deeper understanding and more information about this phenomenon. Qualitative interviews were used as they can be exploratory (open-ended) in nature.

I chose these two methodologies because I saw them as the most appropriate for my research topic, given the sensitive topic. I hope to gain sufficient information about the actual motives for emigration and differences about what this subject means to various individuals. I used the qualitative

interview method when talking with participants in different places in the Gaza Strip, from the Philippines online and through social networking sites on a number of times. My ethnic identity as a Palestinian woman helped me create a comfortable atmosphere for me and the participants, especially as we speak the same language. The semi-structured interviews helped me to understand more deeply what was on their minds and to reveal their feelings as well as their material motivations. There were two assumptions, the first assumption was that everyone would agree to do interviews. However, I found there were those who refrained from conducting the interview and did not accept to be among the participants. Some did the interviews, but then preferred me not to publish their opinions because the topic was very sensitive. Others saw the whole question as politicized. This was frustrating for me because I was on good terms with them and thought I had gained their confidence so they would agree to the interview and feel safe that I would protect their identity. I thought it couldn't harm them in any way to take part, but they felt differently. Most asked me not to reveal their names and so, accordingly, I have used nicknames for everyone so that nobody can be identified.

The second assumption was that everyone wanted to emigrate and had their actual motives to do so. However, I found some participants who did not want to emigrate. These two assumptions taught me somethings. The first taught me about my position as a researcher, and although I am from the same country and the same age as my interviewees – and a Palestine, nevertheless the subject of my research created a barrier, as it was considered controversial, or sensitive. The other thing is that there are things that are deeper than what we see, and not everything we see is dominant. Sometimes feeling can run deep. Many Gazan youth want to remain, in spite of the difficult life conditions they face.

1.4.2. Data Collection and Limitations of the Study:

Originally, I aimed to sample 50 Palestinian youth between the ages of 18 and 29 residing in and outside the Gaza Strip. I was able to contact 40, and then to proceed with 33 interviews, given some concerns mentioned previously. I chose the age group of 18 to 29 years old, because this is how youth are defined according to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS). My aim was a good, rich data set to provide enough information to work with. In addition, "Sampling continues until the researcher senses she has reached saturation" (Guest et al. 2006; Mason 2010; Morse 1995). Using this principle, at around 25-30 interviews, the respondents started to echo earlier respondents, especially centring on economic motivations and context. Thus, I felt that I had enough data for my research.

The interviewees are from different backgrounds and ages, some are unemployed and some who, and they helped me identify many important themes in discourses on emigration. To investigate the matter, an interview-based study of Palestinian youth's perceptions of motives for emigration was conducted online via social media platforms or face-to-face. There were many open questions in the interview guide, which were divided into four axes based on the objectives of the research. The questions were open and did not have a 'correct' answer, providing the opportunity for young people to say what they wanted as honestly as possible. The first axis was related to their motives for emigration, the second axis was related to the economic, political and psychological conditions of the

youth, the third axis was about the Palestinian national project, and the fourth axis was the youth's perceptions of emigration.

The sample was randomly selected from 40 people living in or outside the Gaza Strip. I sent invitations to them to allow me to do the interview, and most responded positively to my request and a few refused to conduct the interview. The interviews lasted between half an hour to an hour, and I recorded some, while others were written down. But before each interview, I asked the participants whether I was allowed to record or not and they felt free to say yes or no. The final sample consisted of 32 interviews, 25 non-emigrants, 8 emigrants, all of whose names are anonymous, in accordance with the confidentiality of private research ethics since my research concerns a sensitive topic. From the responses elicited in these interviews, I was able to identify several common sets of motivations to emigrate.

Most participants were from my own circle of friends, network and family, both male and female. Of the 33 interviews I was able to complete, in some cases meetings face to face was not possible due to security concerns and the COVID restrictions in place, which were adhered to throughout. The interviews were conducted over a period of a month. In a few cases, I met my respondents in person in public spaces or in their homes. In most cases, the majority, were interviewed via WhatsApp to comply with restrictions associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. My Palestinian nationality and the fact that I speak fluent Arabic helped me gain the trust of most participants. This enabled most participants to feel comfortable with the researcher and the questions, and to discuss their feelings, experiences and motivations around the sensitive topic of emigration. Of 33 in total, three individuals, involved in media, later asked me not to use their interviews. This request has been respected. I conducted all interviews in Arabic, because Arabic is the primary language used among Palestinians. The dialect as recorded or noted was first transcribed into written Arabic and then translated into English.

In addition, this research relied on documents and reports issued by international community organizations, the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, and civil institutions in Palestine. After conducting semi-structured interviews, I sought to process them qualitatively using an analytical and exploratory approach, known as the Nvivo program. This program allows researchers to analyze large quantities of qualitative data and I intended to use this to achieve more 'scientific' and replicable results. At the beginning I also used an ATLAS.ti program, but found this too time-consuming to use to analyse data generated by the interviews. I did use the Nvivo program, which I found more user friendly than ATLAS.ti, but due to tight deadlines I was only able to partially code all the data. Nonetheless this was a very useful exercise for organising the material in what were exploratory and fairly unstructured interviews, going beyond the purely intuitive in terms of making sense of the data. This is not a study that seeks to offer a 'random sample' of youth, meaning that the results cannot be generalized beyond those interviewed. Given the number of young people in the Gaza Strip, it would be necessary to carry out a much larger-scale survey than was possible or necessary for an ISS research paper, with its length limitations. However, the study can be a starting point for a deeper and wider understanding of the drivers of youth emigration in future, and how policies should be designed to meet the aspirations of potential youth emigrants from Gaza.

1.5. Structure of the Paper

Besides this introductory chapter, the study contains five other chapters. In chapter two, I discussed the theoretical framework that inspired the research. In the third and fourth chapters, I discussed the Israeli and Palestinian policies. In chapter Five, I discussed the many different discourses and perceptions towards youth emigration, once from an Israeli perspective and from a Palestinian perspective, the other is from the perspective of youth themselves and data analysis. In Chapter Six, the final chapter, I reviewed the discussion and conclusion.

Chapter 2 Theoretical framework:

2.1. Introduction

The causes of emigration vary from person to person, although there are also similar sets of motivations, both in permanent and temporary emigrations. Emigration also has consequences, since it ends up changing the home area, and the stability of the region. One of the greatest factors in emigration is the decline in the economic level and rise in poverty, yet these can also be among the consequences of emigration as well. Economic motives are among the most important motivations for many young people to migrate to areas where better living possibilities are available.

Therefore, the globalization of the economies of the various countries of the world has increased the phenomenon of emigration. Developed countries are interested in this phenomenon because they're the countries of the future, where people emigrate for employment, especially from third-world countries. Therefore, many studies have emerged that look at the magnitude of this phenomenon and the economic and social effects on receiving countries of migrant labour. Third-world countries have often viewed emigration as a solution to generate sources of employment.

2.2. The Concept of Emigration

Definitions of emigration have varied and according to the perspective of different disciplines. The definition of emigration from the point of view of Geography, for example, is not the same as from the point of view of Economics or Demography. Each social science analyzes and defines the movement or travel of people in and out of countries across borders, within or between countries and regions, in different ways. For Sudanese (2010), he indicates that most definitions of emigration emphasize the search for livelihood, economic gain, or various kinds of manual, functional, or service work. Emigration is therefore generally defined as the transfer of persons or groups from one region to another geographical area, intended for permanent or non-permanent residence and with an economic motive. While in the sociology dictionary, emigration is defined as a relatively permanent movement by a person or group, transcending political boundaries towards a new area or community of residence (Ghaith, 2012: 289).

Musleh (2017) defines emigration as a process of movement, involving cultural change, by an individual or community from one area where they used to reside to another or within the borders of one country to an area outside the borders of that country, which may be carried out by the will of the group or without their will. While in Al-Astal's view (2017), emigration is the movement of human beings from one place to another, whether in an individual or collective form for political, economic, social, or security reasons. Similarly, according to Abu Ayyana (1998), emigration is the movement of a person from his homeland or environment to another homeland or environment, for the purpose of livelihood, or any other economic or other reason (e.g. family, education). When this transition takes place across political or international borders, emigration is defined as external in order to distinguish it from internal migration that occurs within the borders of one country.

Conversely, Abu Zeid (2006) suggests it's difficult to establish a precise and acceptable definition of the concept of emigration. He suggests many simply define it as permanent transition or permanent relocation to a place far from the original habitat, whether cross-border or not. Therefore, emigration from the above definitions is any population movement in which the individual or group moves from the home to a new homeland for one or many reasons, which may be due to war, power struggles, new employment, education, marriage, work, or several of these, or for other reasons. Emigration is thus usually defined as a geographical movement by individuals or groups, whereas migration can be internal or external.

2.3. Types of Emigration

Emigration in terms of motives and causes can be classified according to Hillis (2016) into two types: Voluntary (optional) emigration: the type in which an individual makes his or her decision to move elsewhere without official pressure or compulsion, and termed positive emigration. The other type is Forced (compulsory) emigration: this type refers to the authorities forcing some individuals or groups to emigrate or evacuate from a particular area. This type is called displacement or eviction and is also called passive emigration.

In terms of duration, emigration can be classified into two types (Fugo, 2012: 12). Permanent emigration means emigration without returning to the home country. The other type is Temporary emigration. This emigration is temporary for the purpose of educational attainment or to improve the standard of living. Or for political and security reasons, so that the emigrant individual returns after achieving his or her goal or the temporary causes eventually disappear to his or her home country.

2.4. Emigration Patterns

Specialists have identified a number of emigration patterns where they can be confidential or public, individual or collective, voluntary or coercive, legitimate or illegal. In all its forms, emigration is considered a global phenomenon in developed countries like Europe for example. Emigration can also be social or economic, representing the geographical movements of individuals and groups in search of better livelihoods, and it can be also motivated by other political, religious, or scientific motives.

There must be a distinction between emigration and displacement and asylum. Displacement, which is an individual or collective movement, is often caused by natural or abnormal man-made disasters within the borders of the homeland. The United Nations added that the displacement was to leave people home without warning to other areas of the same State. Asylum includes anyone who leaves the country to which he belongs for fear of persecution or danger due to religious, ethnic, social, or political color or to escape wars, conflicts, and their repercussions, torture or internal unrest, as well as those who cannot return home for fear of any of these reasons (Lourdes, 2014: 13).

2.4.1 Reasons for Emigration:

The reasons for expulsion and attraction are associated with many factors in the choice of place of emigration, namely, available employment opportunities, individual skills, and low wages in the place of origin, as well as political and religious factors, wars, and cultural differences.

For Arvida (2017), the main reasons for emigration are the lack of adequate employment opportunities for youth, as well as the high unemployment rate and the accompanying depressions and psychological and social pressures that have dominated youth, pushing them to emigrate abroad. In confirmation of this, one respondent in the interview stated:

“I thought about emigrating because of the bad economic situation, the low level of salaries, and the lack of job opportunities that fit my field.” (Hamza, Gaza, 16 July 2021)

Another interviewee stated as I quote:

“Yes, in general, most of the residents of the Gaza Strip were affected psychologically and economically. The fear and terror that we witnessed in the aggression and the psychological pressure that the occupation forces let us suffer is very bad” (Raghad, Gaza, 15 July 2021).

Additionally, the pressures on political life and economic conflicts by many governments, especially in Arab countries which are mostly lacking in terms of western life from freedoms and diversity in cultures, where economic and urban progress and respect for laws and human rights. This's often not available in the society to which the emigrant belongs. I quote one of the participant's words:

“In addition to the social pressures practiced by the society regarding the level of personal and intellectual freedoms, customs and traditions, factors of frustration and interference in every major and minor thing in private life, constitute another reason for leaving Gaza” (Arkaan, WhatsApp, 29 August 2021).

2.4.2 The Pros and Cons of Emigration:

According to Hammad (2017), there are many positives to emigration, as for example when the country's economy is threatened by financial crises, high material prices, and low per capita income compared to the prices of essential necessities in the country, then the individual cannot live in extreme poverty. Hence, the individual finds it necessary to emigrate to other countries with good employment opportunities, thereby reducing the burden on the origin country.

Furthermore, the individual sometimes needs to emigrate because of marriage purposes, as the husband lives in one country and the wife in another, which calls for reunification between emigrant families. As one of the emigrant participants stated:

“I emigrated to Sweden to get married.” (Abdallah, WhatsApp, 02 October 2021).

His emigration is also for family reasons and humanitarian considerations, as well as exchanging cultures between people. In addition, the national economy has been provided with significant financial resources through other currency transfers to the origin country by its emigrant citizens. I quote:

“I am helping my family in Gaza by sending money so that they can live from that” (Ahmad, Philippines, 02 September 2021).

Besides, labor emigration can have numerous advantageous features for migrant workers, as well as for those countries that send and receive them, as it can help both origin and destination nations in their development and economic growth. The traditional distinction between skilled and unskilled workers is in certain respects an unhelpful one, as it fails to do justice to the complexity of international migration. For example, many countries are currently eager to recruit migrants who are specialists in information technology and engineering, but they’re equally eager to attract migrants who are able to provide high-quality care to elderly people and children. While they may have different levels of educational achievement, all of them could be legitimately described as essential workers (Levatino and Pécoud, 2012: 1264).

There are many drawbacks that can be summarized as follows, mass emigration due to natural disasters or internal conflicts leads to overcrowding in the attractive country, which makes it more difficult to overcome such measures imposed on emigrants, thereby hampering such emigrations, although the problem of overcrowding of emigrant elements collectively is a global problem that is difficult to overcome (ibid). Mass emigrations involve, among other things, the excessive use of financial resources in the country to which they’re migrating, whether through the provision of housing, food, medicine, and other supplies to migrants, thereby disrupting those resources.

Also, one of the most influential drawbacks is the emigration of competencies, which leads to the emptying of the country's cadres and scientific competencies, particularly in third world countries that are in dire need of construction and reconstruction, and the dual emigration between the desire of the emigrant and the temptations of the states attracting these emigrations, whether for professional qualifications or for religious or national reasons.

2.5. Implications of Emigration

Emigration has consequences and implications both in societies and the receiving state and in the communities and states sent to these emigrants. In terms of population, emigration leads to changes in the proportion of species, both in terms of expulsion and attraction, where emigration changes in population distribution, increasing the numbers of young people in the new citizen and affecting the age structure of the population, which leads to higher fertility rates while the home country loses this population, affecting the age structure and the likelihood of low fertility levels. Also, emigration, not only changes the population but also the area and nature of the land on which they operate or exploit, it also leads to professional changes, as emigrants often change their profession or craft in their home country, and indigenous peoples may change their craft in the light of new emigrations.

Economically, emigration affects the investment of natural resources in the receiving countries and makes them gain new labor, as emigrants are often of working age and production, as well as emigration leads to the movement of capital from one place to another and a change in the economic situation, adversely affecting areas of expulsion where labor is low and commodity prices are rising or decreasing. In addition, the loss of brains and minds is a financial, scientific, technical, and technical

loss for the country sending emigrants, i.e. a loss of money invested in their education and training on the one hand and a loss in the employment of their sciences and experience in foreign countries from which they earn financial and economic returns, rather than being employed in their native countries to promote it and invest its potential in order to achieve the overall development of their society.

Moreover, emigration is not limited to the economic and population aspects but also to the social aspect, the social effects of emigration are great, as by moving from one place to another they cut off their ties and social relations with their relatives, and these social relations with their relatives may be weakened and the individual may get rid of most of his social obligations, as well as lose all the benefits of social cohesion because the country of emigrants lacks those advantages and as a result of his or her preoccupation with work and new life, resulting in the lack of interest in their families and relatives. Besides, the fact that the emigrant doesn't have social status or status in groups or layers of the emigrant community to which they're automatically emigrating must seek to do so through a period of social experience.

Therefore, the emigrant is obliged to remove from himself the role of the original citizen and take the role of stranger, the process of accepting himself in the new home and its stability may not be pleasant or quick. Additionally, according to Arvida (2017), emigrants may encounter many racial and linguistic problems related to religion and politics, which make them live in isolation and cause them social pressure.

2.6. Mind the Gap: Skilled Emigration

Brain drain refers to the transfer of scientific, technical, intellectual, and rich energy from a developing country or even from a developed country and its dissemination to other developed or more wealthy and advanced countries that include all fields of study and human activity without exception with a focus on science.

The synonyms of brain drain are too many, the most important of which is brain drain talent, skills, intellectuals, technical specialists, teachers, university-qualified people with university degrees, scientists, art, culture, and educated elite men. Brain drain is “a preference for specialists with higher degrees supported by intelligence and dignity to live and work in foreign countries and in the service of their people.” (Al-Farjani, 2019: 145). While Al-Arabi (2017) sees it as the permanent migration of more educated or qualified competencies or groups, usually graduates of higher education and above, out of their homelands in search of wider opportunities in their specialties, or a more attractive community environment and a certain level better for them and their families.

The migration of minds from developing to developed countries is one of the most important, difficult, and complex problems facing and threatens social development plans and projects with certain failure, as the development process itself is carried out only by bringing about civilized changes in society, i.e. through which the various individuals and humanitarian groups are moved from their state of mind and behavior to a new state of mind and behavior that is more open and close to the world since the process of civilized development and the development process is carried out only

through the development of the various ideas and concepts that prevail in the lives of different human societies.

The role played by scientists in bringing about that development is very important and dangerous, and therefore scientific competencies are a great loss for the economy of different countries, especially developing countries because they lack part of the human element that performs the process of development and development in various fields (Saleh, 2011: 61).

2.7. Palestinian Youth Emigration

The Palestinian youth, who share all their daily concerns, suffer from a real crisis that has made them succumb to frustration and despair and become a big deal for the Israeli plot planned several years ago aimed at pulling back the Palestinian competencies, which are the effective element in the process of building and giving to forced emigration under the prevailing conditions in order to empty the homeland of Palestinian identity and achieve ambitions.

As a result of political instability, lack of employment opportunities, deteriorating living and economic conditions, and the absence of an atmosphere of security and future security, especially after the recent Israeli aggression against the Gaza Strip, which cast a shadow over citizens and their living conditions, in addition to the situation of fragmentation and internal division, which negatively affected Palestinians. All these factors and more motivate Palestinian youth to emigrate despite the serious risks of emigrating abroad, the idea still dominates the majority of youth who have sought emigration visas in European countries in the hope of finding a safe haven that will guarantee them a quiet and stable life away from the siege, destruction, and devastation that constantly haunts them even in their dreams (Khalaf, 2017: 54).

It's clear that the human being generally doesn't realize the magnitude of any issue whatsoever unless it touches its threads and approaches it, and over the years many Arab countries have suffered, particularly Palestine, from the emigration of its youth and scientific cadres abroad. In the absence of opportunities, deteriorating security conditions, and crippling the economy. Emigration has become the best solution for many youth in Palestine, especially Gaza's youth.

2.8. Emigration and the Palestinian National Project:

There is no doubt that the youth formed the fuel driving the Palestinian national action in all its different stages, but the tragedy that the youth in Palestine were shocked by many events and circumstances that reflected on their reality, at some point and with the establishment of the Palestinian National Authority, the Palestinian youth thought that the dream has become in many periods closer to completion, but the events that Palestine went through from the beginning of Intifada Al-Aqsa through the events of the Palestinian division, siege, and various economic crises. In addition to the lack of participation, the tyranny of one party, whether in the West Bank or in the

Gaza Strip, the confusion in the strategic and political program, repression, and censorship. All these have shattered the hopes of Palestinian youth and affected them badly.

It was found that most of the interviews among those who were aware of the Palestinian National Project, stated that the emigration of youth affected the project and vice versa. They stated that Youth is the main source of support for the project to succeed. In contrast, emigration causes part of the project failure. Hence, the relationship between Youth and the Palestinian project as complementary. One participant stated,

“Yes, if the project fails, from my point of view, youth will receive another slap, which will make them lose hope and passion or even seek change, and in this case, they will have no choice but to emigrate, especially since this project was a gateway to hope for them.” (Fadi, WhatsApp, 29 August 2021)

On the other hand, they feel that the success of the project can improve the economic, social, psychological situation of Gaza if it was implemented as planned. If planned and implemented well, the future of Palestinians will be better. I quote:

“If the project is carried out as it should without achieving private interests and making the public interest the most important, this project will certainly be the beginning of the path to a better life and a more prosperous life, which may help young people to move forward without thinking about emigration” (Shareef, WhatsApp, 29 August 2021)

While some stated that the project has worsened the economic and psychological conditions. One of them stated,

“On the contrary, it made matters worse. I believe that stability will return to the region if the occupation is completely defeated, and the Palestinian home is reunited and arranged to overcome the racism and arrogance of the occupation.” (Ali, WhatsApp, 29 August 2021)

Many studies have been conducted to reveal the dimensions of the problem of emigration to Palestinians and their national project. Salah Abdel Ati (2017) conducted a field study on the emigration of Palestinian youth. He explained that the issue of emigration is one of the most important issues that Palestinian officials should be concerned about, as this is one of the most influential issues on the Palestinian national project. It serves the Zionist ambition to seize land without a people, stressing that the policies of the Zionist authorities are part of an Israeli plan planned to force Palestinian youth to emigrate to see a safe future that is not lived in the Palestinian territories. Furthermore, Israel has largely succeeded in displacing a large number of Palestinian youth through its policy of aborting development within the Palestinian territories (Ayyash, 2016: 29).

Abdel Ati (2017) states that Palestinian society has also contributed to the increasing proportion of young emigrants through the poor political situation that has resulted in a deteriorating economic situation. Not only are government jobs limited to those who have mediation but also the absence of national unity, the absence of a phased and strategic Palestinian national program to care for young graduates, and widespread unemployment, which in one way or another has exacerbated the phenomenon.

2.9. Conclusion

The phenomenon of youth emigration is a very complex phenomenon caused by the interaction of multiple and overlapping factors between economy, politics, sociology, and culture. Emigration is not a phenomenon born of a certain historical period, but rather a phenomenon that has accompanied the development of human societies since ancient times, but each historical stage has been characterized by a set of characteristics, and this is influenced by the circumstances associated with the stage. Moreover, emigration in contemporary societies has become a broad-based issue because of the interactions it brings about within exporting and receiving emigrant communities. It has become a key issue in the elections of receiving countries and this is in response to the roles and influences they have become within the structures and institutions of these societies. Integration as well in receiving countries have become seen as a key and important factor in the industry of stability and harmony within these societies.

Moreover, emigration as its known is a demographic feature which means the right to movement, and it can have both negative and positive impacts either for emigrants or the emigrant communities or even for the adopted counties that can transfer the skills and the enrichment of cultures positively.

Chapter 3 Israeli Policies and Youth Emigration from Gaza Strip

3.1 Introduction

The Israeli occupation is indeed the main issue facing the entire Palestinian society. While the occupation is still ongoing, this means the obliteration of freedoms, continuous suffering, recurring torture, and crime that doesn't exclude any of the Palestinian people from colonialism until this day. The Israeli occupation has mastered many policies towards the Palestinian people. For particular in the Gaza Strip, where "Israel derived its policies towards the Gaza Strip from its overall strategy towards the Palestinian cause in the context of its strategy that aimed to break the will of the Palestinian people" (Mohareb, 2020: 5). Therefore, in this chapter, I will try to explore the Israeli policies towards the Gaza Strip in particular, which have resulted in bad results that have affected the Strip so far and greatly affected the youth in particular, and thus, led them to emigrate from the Gaza Strip.

3.2. Siege on the Gaza Strip

The systematic siege policy practiced by the occupation on the Gaza Strip has left a difficult situation that has had almost catastrophic results in various aspects of economic and social life in the Strip. Accordingly, it led to a decline in economic indicators on the one hand, as it affected the gross domestic product, productive sectors, infrastructure, and others became weak, and paralyzed all economic interests. The Gaza Strip has entered a state of stagnation since the Israeli blockade. It also affected social indicators on the other hand, as the blockade led to high rates of unemployment and poverty and a low level of education and health. These consequences resulted in making emigration an option that a large percentage of youth, and even families recourse to.

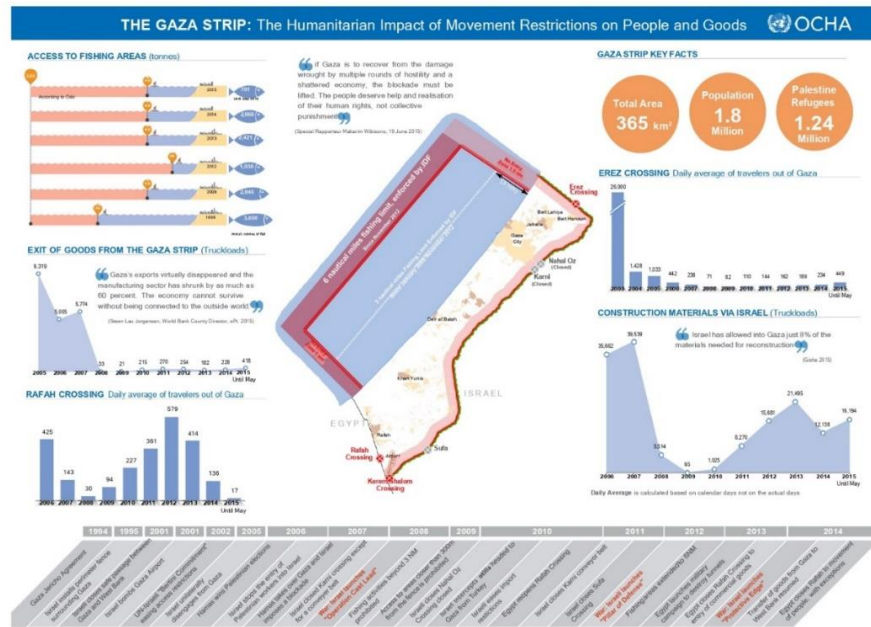
Furthermore, the blockade included the flow of import and export of goods, except those goods that Israel doesn't allow to pass through the border, as it narrowly and tightly restricts the quantity and types of goods allowed to enter the Gaza Strip, and prevents residents of the Gaza Strip from leaving it except in specific exceptional cases. Not to mention that Egypt's control of one of the crossings - the Rafah crossing - is the only one that is not controlled by Israel and connects Gaza with the outside. The Egyptian forces closed the crossing almost completely and reopened it in 2018, with the imposition of many severe restrictions and inhumane restrictions and being subjected to frequent and humiliating inspections, additionally, to restrict the type and number of people allowed to travel, which led to many of them, especially youth, to pay huge sums of "unofficial coordination fees" in order to be allowed to leave the Gaza Strip. Not to mention that the travel period from the Gaza Strip to Egypt doesn't take more than 6 hours in the normal situation, but these practices cause to extend travel time, which may reach more than 9 hours, days, and even months, during the continuous closure. On the other hand, Israel controls all other ports (land, air, sea).

Moreover, Israel has reduced the area allowed for fishing in the shores of the Gaza Sea, and has set security limits on the fence in the eastern region of the Strip, allowing farmers to approach only a few meters and sometimes target them, and imposed a distance of more than 1,000 m from the fence,

noting that these lands are valid for agriculture, but also subject to the Israeli occupation and isolated from the Strip, pointing out that the occupation is spraying these farms with pesticides along the border, thus damaging the crops, which results in the loss of livelihood for these farmers.

Israeli policies deliberately seek to, “reduce the quantities of gasoline, diesel, cooking gas and industrial fuels used to operate the single power plant in the Gaza Strip” (OCHA, 2009: 2). This drop led to a severe shortage of electricity and negatively affected the lives of residents, in addition to affecting infrastructure, sanitation, and water cuts. Not to mention that the electricity crisis lapse back to the beginning of the siege when the Israeli occupation bombed the only power station in the Gaza Strip, and despite the partial repair, however, this policy of restriction on fuel leads to the interruption of electricity hours of more than 12 hours per day due to the shortage of fuel to operate the generators at the station. Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Monitor (2021) sees that “97% of Gaza's water has become contaminated; a situation made substantially worse by an acute electricity crisis that stifles the operation of water wells and sewage treatment plants”

Image 1: Humanitarian Implications of Movement (Gaza)



Source: THE GAZA STRIP: The Humanitarian Impact of the Blockade (OCHA Factsheet, 2015: 2).

As a result, all these inhumane Israeli practices, which has been mastered, have pushed many people to emigrate in search of a livelihood, which may have serious political repercussions, as it has harassed the vast majority of the Palestinian people, especially youth, and has subjected the Palestinian economy and society to countless restrictions, which led to insecurity and the emergence of many problems that affected all humanitarian, economic, social and political aspects in the Gaza Strip and limited the economic and societal growth and development.

3.3. The Israeli economic policy

Although the Palestinian Authority has signed many trade agreements with other countries, these agreements didn't change economic relations. Israel continues to impose its control over all Palestinian borders, restricting imports and revenues, and controlling the movement of goods and raw materials as mentioned earlier. This helps Israel obtain part of Palestinian taxes and customs revenues, and Israeli occupation also has served to cut all Palestinian economic ties with the economies of the Arab world, through controlling export and import routes and outlets. According to Hillis (2019),

“Since the beginning of the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories in 1967, the occupation authorities have worked, in a programmed and planned manner, to link the Palestinian economy to the Israeli economy, and to consolidate its dependence and make it weak and unable to compete.” Consequently, this matter constituted an obstacle to the development of the Palestinian economy, making it a fragile dependent on the Israeli economy and completely dependent on the Israeli occupation.”

The Paris Economic Protocol also had a large impact in establishing the Israeli occupation's control over the Palestinian economy, which B'Tselem Center in the Paris Protocol (2012) states that:

“It's the framework establishing the interim-period economic relations between Israel and the Palestinian Authority in April 1994 and is part of Oslo, the practical effect was a Palestinian economy integrated with and dependent on the Israeli economy.”

Consequently, occupied Palestine and the Israeli occupation are subject to a single tax system, which has resulted in the complete control and domination of Israel over all aspects of Palestinian life and prevented the development of the Palestinian economy away from its economy. The Israeli occupation is based on collecting taxes on imported goods and services, and it receives 3% of the amounts through the Palestinian clearing, and this is a large percentage of the Palestinian Authority's income.

In recent years, the Israeli occupation has been refusing to pay dues to the Palestinian National Authority from tax revenues (tax clearing funds) collected by Israel on behalf of the Palestinian Authority, which has been deprived of more than 60% of Palestinian government revenues and the consequent inability of the Palestinian government to secure employee salaries. This led the Palestinian Authority to take measures against its employees in the Gaza Strip, which resulted in cutting their salaries or forcing some to early retirement.

From here, it can be said that the concluded agreements, whether economic or otherwise, allowed the postponement of many important Palestinian issues, such as achieving political and economic independence and full Palestinian control over resources and everything in them. All this allowed the Israeli occupation to continue its expansionist and racist policies. I quote:

“Yes, the purchasing movement and the economic wheel have completely stopped, which has led to weak power purchasing, interruptions in all foodstuffs, building materials and necessities, high prices, and a shortage of goods due to the imposed siege and Israeli economic policies” (Radwan, WhatsApp, 02 September 2021)

Once again, in the Gaza Strip, the Israeli occupation is still besieging the Strip and controlling everything that enters or exits, whether goods and services or citizens. There are also other restrictions,

whether in fishing or agriculture, as mentioned previously. The practice of these economic policies against the Gaza Strip is considered one of the most important reasons that push youth to emigrate or let them desire to emigrate because of their suffering. The results of these policies include the high unemployment rate, the high prices of goods, low standards of living, and salaries.

3.4. Continuous Attacks on Gaza

The Gaza Strip has witnessed continuous wars over the past years, the last of which was in the current year 2021, the first of which was in December 2008, followed by the war in 2012, and then 2014. These wars and attacks have resulted in killing thousands of Palestinian civilians, wounding tens thousands of them, and the destruction of economic infrastructure and targeting homes and others, which has exacerbated the humanitarian crisis and the exodus of youth from the Gaza Strip. According to Jabrini (2020), “these wars came in the context of the Israeli strategy to restore deterrence against Hamas in the Gaza Strip, forcing it to pay a heavy price in people's lives, property, and economic infrastructure, especially in the Gaza Strip”.

Based on the interviews I conducted with Palestinian youth, whether inside or outside the Gaza Strip, Palestinian youth see that what they witnessed in the successive aggression on the Gaza Strip was one of the reasons that encouraged them or made them think about emigrating, resulted in the deterioration of the economic and political conditions that these aggressions produced. The majority of youth are ready to emigrate if conditions allow them to emigrate. The situation inside the Strip is getting worse, they say. I quote:

“I was feeling very afraid. In the war, our hands are on our hearts because the missiles are expected to rain down on us. The bombing affected everyone without exception, and we didn't sleep for days as we felt the minutes as if they were days” (Marwa, Gaza, 04 July 2021).

Another says:

“I was afraid to wake up to the news of the death of a member of my family or loved ones, so I was afraid every second and I was worried about them more than I worry about myself. We no longer have the ability to continue, and we feel that our days are numbered at every moment of the Israeli aggression on the Gaza Strip.” (Yara, Gaza, 04 July, 2021).

These quotes from interviews illustrate the impact of wars on youth, noting that these aggressions have made the lives of Palestinians in danger and constant anticipation of what will happen and that a person has no value in his country within the repressive policies of the Israeli occupation. Therefore, these aggressions contribute to the high rates of unemployment and poverty in the Gaza Strip and the difficulty of finding job opportunities, as there are those who start their own work and collect their personal savings, but soon their dreams were ended by the Israeli occupation destroying their project without any compensation for these youth. Additionally, the findings showed that almost all of the interviews were negatively affected at the psychological and economic levels. One interviewed summarized that by saying:

“Yes. I don't think that there is anyone who was subjected to this aggression and lived through a reality that was not affected psychologically, economically, or even physically, and this applies to the aggression

of 2008, 2012, and 2021 as well. On the personal level, the scenes of killing, destruction, and displacement that the aggression left on the residents of the Gaza Strip had a negative psychological impact in a significant way, while economically the house was partially damaged as a result of the bombing of a nearby facility to our house.” (Hala, Gaza, 04 July 2021)

The scenes of bombings, killings, and destructions left a negative impact on Gazan psychology. Losing even one relative, friend, or neighbor can affect anyone and make them depressed. Losing so many loved ones can be a permanent scar. I quote:

“Yes, I still suffer from the psychological effects as a result of the successive wars that we have lived through in recent years. I lost my friend in the war and this made me sad all the time” (Jameela, Gaza, 04 July 2021).

Another one stated:

“I was emotionally affected because I was abroad and my family was in Gaza, I was threatened every moment of losing one of them, or perhaps losing my whole family, this feeling was driving me crazy daily” (Mira, Gaza, 05 July 2021).

And another example of this, confirming this view:

“In general, most of Gaza residents were affected psychologically and economically. The fear and terror that we witnessed in the aggression and the psychological pressure that the occupation forces let us suffer is very bad. On the economic side, we’re already facing difficulties before and after the aggression” (Ismael, Gaza, 05 July 2021).

The Israeli occupation is making life in the Gaza Strip difficult to this day, as aggressions have led to the collapse of the economic system in the Strip, with the destruction of infrastructure and facilities. Consequently, unemployment and poverty increased dramatically among youth, which led to the uprooting of their dreams, searching in the unknown for refuge, fleeing in countries other than their homeland, in the hope that they would find what remained of their dreams, which were destroyed by wars, sieges, and other oppressive Israeli policies. It’s no longer acceptable for youth to accept this reality, they seek to emigrate to secure a decent life for themselves and their families, leaving the effects of the Israeli occupation.

According to (UNRWA, 2016 as cited in UNISPAL, 2016), “there are still other 65,000 Gazans who are remain displaced to this day and living in the shelters or rented home supported by UNRWA as they live in catastrophic conditions and lack all the basic necessities of life”. The citizens of Gaza today, after what they lived through and still, from war crimes and difficult living conditions during the successive aggression, are no longer interested in anything but the search for a more stable and secure life that guarantees a better future due to the difficult conditions that Gaza is going through. All these actions work together to frustrate the youth and push them to emigrate.

3.5. Conclusion

These proposals and policies are attempts to influence the youth and push them to emigrate from the Gaza Strip, which is also systematic Israeli policies within the agenda of the Zionist project on the occupied land of Palestine, which is the displacement of Palestinians to undermine the Palestinian

presence and replace them with the Zionists. Hence, this is confirmed by the results of the study as it was found that most of the participants confirmed that the Israeli occupation is one of the main reasons beyond youth emigration. They justified this as the policy of occupation aims to make youth emigrate. I quote:

“Of course, the Israeli occupation is a major factor in emigration because it’s the one who controls the borders, and as I said earlier, we live in a prison.” (Seba, Gaza, 05 July 2021)

Therefore, the occupation government certainly welcomes the idea of youth emigrating from the Gaza Strip because of Hamas. However, these attempts have become useless, as they’re trying in various ways to displace the Palestinian people and ignite strife among them and provide many facilities to push them to emigrate because it constitutes a major crisis for Israel, whether in the armed resistance or the return marches, which push the occupation to search more for means of displacement and population reduction, taking advantage of the difficult circumstances and the absence of Palestinian plans that would build youth in their homeland and open up many horizons for them. Despite the large numbers of youth emigrants who are considering emigrating, the attempts of the Israeli occupation have failed, but it can also be expected that a percentage of youth will deal with these trends secretly and undeclared.

Chapter 4 Palestinian Policies and Youth Emigration

4.1 Introduction

Besides the policies of the Israeli occupation, there are also Palestinian policies towards the Gaza Strip. In this chapter, I will show the policies carried out by both governments (Hamas and Fateh) towards the Gaza Strip, which result in economic and political conditions affecting the people in general and the youth in particular. Thus, the effects of these policies push youth to emigrate.

4.2 The Intra-Palestinian Conflict

There are many who link the Palestinian division to Hamas' control of the Gaza Strip and its disengagement from the West Bank after winning the elections in 2006, followed by Hamas' complete control of the Gaza Strip in 2007 by armed force, and the formation of its own authority away from Palestine Liberation Organization (Fateh), and resulted in two governments, one in the Gaza Strip (Hamas), and the other in the West Bank (Fateh). According to some participants in the interviews, the internal political conflict between the Palestinian parties does push them to leave. I quote:

“For me the main reason for emigration is the internal political conflict that has created a crack in the ground for building a better life” (Khalil, WhatsApp, 03 September 2021).

While the parties and their behaviours also come as the main reason for emigration. One stated:

“...there are some people in the party organizations and the Palestinian Authority who have a major role in the siege and benefit from the situation in Gaza, to further tighten the grip on the government, assuming power in Gaza” (Laith, WhatsApp, 02 September 2021).

On the other hand, there are those who see that this division is nothing but cumulative repercussions that were internal since then, and eventually surfaced and led to the division after the elections, as they believe that the differences began since the establishment of the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) in 1987. Accordingly, it managed to destabilize the Palestinian National Project and not reach any settlement between the two parties, in addition to the effects and repercussions of this division on Palestinian society.

The division, aside from its geographical separation, led to the formation and creation of bodies and enacting other laws, which made the Gaza Strip completely subject to a separate authority. This resulted in the siege imposed by the Israeli occupation on Gaza, the suffering of its residents, and the continuous aggression against Gaza. Since the division occurred, there have been many agreements and initiatives to find a solution between the two parties, but they failed. The first of which was the Cairo Agreement in 2006, ending with the same agreement again in 2017. All of this is attributed to many reasons, such as the two movements' failure to deal with these initiatives responsibly and honestly, as “each side seeks to extract the legitimacy of the other” (The Palestinian Division: Reality & Repercussions: 1). Besides, the initiatives clashed with a factional legacy, as the Palestinian parties did not issue any serious reviews of the political mistakes they had committed. Also,

“the existence of problems related to the administrative sector in the Gaza Strip, and the difficulties of integrating employees and workers in the Strip, and absorbing them into the administrative sector of the Palestinian Authority” (Al-Zubaidi, 2016: 88).

According to the New York Times (2017),

“ Hamas says that its continued control of the resistance’s weapons is not negotiable. But President Abbas has said he will not tolerate the Gaza version of Hezbollah model in Lebanon, where a heavily armed organization exercises influence over weak government and hollow national institutions”.

Alternatively, there are many factors resulting from the interference of external forces, as

“ Hamas’s openness to Iran, Qatar, and Turkey has at least contributed to impeding the implementation of the reconciliation, if not thwarting it at times, given that these parties are linked to regional agendas in their search for leadership and a regional role” (The Palestinian Division: Reality & Repercussions: 1).

In addition, the Palestinian division is considered a positive thing for the Israeli occupation, as this enables it to put pressure on President Mahmoud Abbas and besiege him internationally. Consequently, we can say that the division has become a subject of disputes, interests, and competition for power, at a time where there are supposed to be moral boundaries that accommodate all differences between the two parties because of the chaos it causes and negative impact on all segments of society, especially the youth. According to (Mazzawi 2017 as cited in Carnegie Middle East, 2017), “since the division and until now, Palestinian youth continue to suffer more and more from this matter.” Palestinian youth also continue to suffer from marginalization and lack of participation in Palestinian decision-making in general. However, this is not due to the youth’s inability to participate, but rather their subjection to the process of taming over many years by the political parties, not to mention the distortion of knowledge, democracy, good governance, and other concepts among the youth.

This division and the uncertain efforts of national reconciliation also have other serious repercussions that, in turn, affect the Palestinian society and the establishment of the Palestinian state in general, which is the abeyance of the Palestinian national project, and its impact on the youth emigration in particular. Although there are no official statistics on the number of young emigrants, there are reports and opinion polls carried out by Al-Aqsa University in Gaza City, which showed that more than 50% of young people would be willing to emigrate if they had the opportunity to do so, and their ages ranged from 18 years and over.

This put the Palestinian cause and the Palestinian people in front of great challenges and dangers represented in the progression of the internal contradiction over the fundamental contradiction with the occupation, which did not stop its aggressive plans and practices, and gave Israel the opportunity to invoke the absence of a Palestinian partner for peace, and nullified the possibility of implementing international legitimacy resolutions in the matter of Palestine because international legitimacy talks about the West Bank and Gaza as one unit, and Israel exploited that to serve its interests.

Hence, unfortunately, the repercussions of this division still exist, and political security dominated all aspects of life in Gaza. On the other hand, the economic security of the community was absent. Unemployment has affected thousands of Gazans in an unprecedented manner so that the youth find

themselves surrounded from all sides, and Gaza's Strip life doesn't enable them to live even with the minimum necessities of life like the rest of the world's youth, forcing them to search for better ways and opportunities for life without considering the consequences of emigration.

In the end, the Gazan citizen remains the victim of this conflict between the two parties, especially since what youth care about is finding a job and obtaining an income that enables them to live in dignity, away from the clashes of these two parties.

4.3 The Lack of the Political Participation of Palestinian Youth

Political participation can be defined as “any direct or indirect activity aimed at modifying or changing the existing values and standards in official authorities and institutions.” (Forbrig, 2005: 26). The term political participation came in Palestinian law 2003, as it was considered a Palestinian human right that could be exercised individually or collectively, including voting, forming parties, running for elections, and others. Accordingly, we elicit from the previous definition, the definition of youth participation as involving youth directly or indirectly in the decision-making process.

Active political participation is one of the most important guarantees of good governance that ensures the achievement of sustainable development, as a youth in any society is the main driver of the wheel of development, especially in young societies, as according to PCBS, youth represents more than (25%) of the total population in Palestine. And that

“the percentage of political participation, especially the youth, is one of the most important legal criteria for a particular political system, and the higher the percentage, the more it indicates the existence of a legitimate system that represents the people” (Forbrig, 2005: 12).

Therefore, there is a need to identify and highlight the youth category as a special category, because they're the basis of sustainable development and the system that represents the people, and they have the ability to bring change in societies. This was confirmed by the United Nations in one of the resolutions issued by the General Assembly, which stated that “Youth is the most important human resource for achieving development, and they're capable of achieving social, economic and technological change in societies” (Lührmann, 2013: 14)

Despite all this, youth in Gaza is the exact opposite, as they suffer from a lack of resources, education, the right to participation, job opportunities, etc., and don't receive sufficient attention from Palestinian governments. The countries that care about their youth are countries that support this category. So that it can implement their role in society and raise it, and this is what we need in Palestine, which is to pay attention to youth, leaving partisan and personal interests.

Given the specifics of the Palestinian case, there is a dispute about whether there is a political system or not. The Palestinian people are fighting the occupation in order to liberate their land. On the other hand, they're in the midst of the internal political issue, which unfortunately led to the monopoly of power from one political system to many factions. Accordingly, the compass deviated from its true path and caused an imbalance in the structure of the organizational political work, as many factors also contributed to this, the first of which was the Israeli occupation.

Hence, the political participation of youth in Gaza is absent. The obstacles that prevent their participation and the implementation of their political activities are primarily due to the political situation in Palestine, due to the division between the two governments, where personal partisan interests have prevailed over the interest of the people, and the internal politics has become sluggish in the face of these political shocks and changes. Therefore, one of the Israeli occupation outcomes was established, which is the continuation of division.

As a result, the Palestinian youth found themselves facing dangerous challenges and turning points. On the one hand, they're facing the occupation crisis, and on the other hand, they're facing the political parties' crisis because of the political disagreements existing, a political atmosphere has been created, which has caused the youth to lose their faith in their ability to express their visions. As many youth have refrained from any political thought and from exercising their rights because they found no point in participating, and to avoid any situation that might affect them negatively. Not to mention the lack of freedom of expression and speech among Palestinian youth in societies where democracy is absent.

We can say that there is a need to reform the laws relating to youth in Palestine and develop a single government plan to enhance their ability to participate in political decisions because the ability to influence political decisions is what gives them the ability to bear the circumstances and make them more attached to their society. To Dweikat (2014), "Perhaps the most important thing that the governments do towards youth is to seek to solve their problems, seek to achieve their requirements and meet their needs, which leads to the presence of active and independent youth, capable of taking responsibility, when they find ways to live a decent life" instead of thinking in emigrating abroad where there is democracy and youth is allowed to act freely.

Overall, the policies of each of the parties in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank played a major role in the abstain of the Palestinian youth to participate in politics and thinking about emigration.

4.4 Legal Violations against Gaza Strip

The Palestinian people, especially the youth, continue to suffer persecution in Gaza, especially among the supporters of Fateh and Hamas, where there have been many inhumane violations, humiliations, and abuses from both sides against the citizens of the Gaza Strip and against the youth themselves, simply because they belong to a party or because of their geographical location. The two authorities in Gaza and the West Bank are based on corruption without discrimination, which necessitates expediting the holding of Palestinian elections, to renew legitimacy and to give an opportunity for new political experiences to go through the opportunity of governance and discuss the life details that concern the people.

In a report issued by (PCHR, 2010 as cited in DW 2010) on the right to express, the center confirmed in its report that "Hamas government in the Gaza Strip has played a prominent role in violations of the right to freedom of expression, through arrests of journalists or citizens, and closing or raiding press headquarters. In addition to preventing and obstructing the work of journalists and the distribution of Palestinian newspapers in Gaza".

In response to the previous section, there were movements launched by some Palestinian youth in the Gaza Strip called the digital (Ehbid 194) movement, which was specialized in advocating Palestinian human rights through social media platforms. There is another movement called the people's movement (We Want to Live), which was calling for an improvement in the standard of living conditions in Gaza. As a result, Hamas brutally suppressed this type of movement, arresting and torturing many young people. There was a report on a news website that lists the experiences of young people from Gaza with Hamas. Some have been subjected to torture and political arrests because of the movements conducted by them to demand better living conditions. There are those who stated that they tried to implement their political right, but they soon found themselves detained several times in the security prisons of Hamas.

Accordingly, the psychological impact was present as a result of exposure to such arrests and experiences that prompted many youth to think about emigrating or have already emigrated in order to search for a better life in which security and freedom of expression prevail, in addition to protecting their lives and escaping the harsh living conditions of wars, killing and others.

Therefore, we can say that freedoms are violated in one way or another, and in favouritism and discrimination level, it exists and permeates in most institutions in Gaza, and the benefits are restricted to their supporters. Some have experienced such corruption and discrimination, based on my interviews, some weren't willing to apply for a job because they were aware that it would go to one of the party's supporters. I quote:

“Eliminating nepotism and favouritism should be erased because it would seriously destroy us for not having an appropriate chance for a job and maybe give these opportunities to someone who doesn't deserve it.” (Safi, WhatsApp, 04 September 2021)

Hence, it shows that Nepotism has a negative impact on the youth in Gaza because getting jobs for them is not that simple for them. There is no justice in employing job opportunities in some institutions. Hence, Palestinian youth hope that the elections will be a gateway to a more stable situation at the political, social, and economic levels, and not be exposed to job injustice and nepotism.

On the other hand, there is the PLO, which announced in 2017 a series of procedures and measures on the Gaza Strip, including cutting the salaries of the Palestinian Authority's employees in Gaza in order to pressure Hamas to end its control over the Strip, not to mention that the Israeli occupation wasn't also giving the clearance funds to the authority, on which it was, the citizens of Gaza were sacrificed.

The salaries of more than 61,000 citizens of the Gaza Strip were cut, and some financial benefits such as allowances, transportation, and others were halted. In addition to stopping the supply of electricity, which led to power cuts for long periods, along with the siege that the people of Gaza have been suffering from for more than 15 years, in which human dignity and their various rights have been violated.

The Gaza Strip is an integral part of the State of Palestine. The Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, are occupied land, according to international law. So, international humanitarian law and international human rights law apply to it, but these procedures met a significant

distinction between the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, and although Palestinian law prohibits discrimination between Palestinians, these penalties were applied only to Gaza's employees. Their economic and social rights were violated and the Strip was affected in a very large way.

What is happening in Gaza is a critical abuse of human dignity, affecting more than (2 million) Palestinian citizens. Among them are women, children, and the elderly. The measures taken by the Palestinian Authority in Gaza in many aspects, including cutting employees' salaries, which is the only basic source of income for thousands of families in Gaza, in addition to the relief aid provided by (UNRWA), which is facing a significant reduction in its budget; it leads to the continued exacerbation of the tragic humanitarian conditions in Gaza, which led to the emigration of many young people as a result of the spread of poverty, unemployment, loss of living and food security, deterioration of social and health conditions and the destruction of the economic cycle in Gaza.

The citizens of the Gaza Strip, especially the youth, paid a heavy price due to poverty, which prompted thousands of them to borrow money until many of them became chased as a result of finance receivables, and dozens of them faced extreme suffering due to the absence of justice and respect for Palestinian law by the Palestinian Authority who cut off their livelihoods, affected their families profoundly and made them poor. Therefore, this shows that the security forces in both the Gaza Strip and the West Bank are committing numerous violations against individuals and towards society as a whole, even in the West Bank.

4.5 Conclusion

Palestinian policies, whether in Gaza or the West Bank, seem like working hand to hand with the Israeli occupation to displace Palestinian youth. These policies which are practiced against the Palestinian youth, whether from the occupation or from the two governments, led the Palestinian youth to find themselves unable to live in safety and build a future like all young people in the world in his own country.

In addition, the lack of interest in providing job opportunities and employment for youth in Gaza due to nepotism and discrimination led to high unemployment, which frustrated Palestinian youth. This means that the youth live without purpose, without ambition, without a future, in a place that is supposed to be their homeland. Accordingly, if these youth have the opportunity to go anywhere in the world, they would go without any hesitation. Furthermore, giving them false promises over a quarter of a century led to the dispersal of youth as a mobilized political force. Any person who believes in their own rights will not accept to continue in this situation and will find a way out.

Chapter 5 Different Visions and Discourses around Youth Emigration

5.1 Introduction

Palestinian youth are among the most important elements that all institutions of society (governmental, NGOs, private) must invest in in order to achieve real and sustainable development. Failure to invest in this productive element and leave it without the required care will have a negative impact on society and on the goal of development. In particular, marginalizing the energies of youth and leaving them without empowerment is turning them into destructive elements of the present and future development. Not only that, youth may turn to seeking themselves and employing their energies and creativity through emigration.

The marginalization of youth's energies was not the only reason for the migration of youth. There are other reasons that have forced Palestinian youth to emigrate or want to emigrate, namely, many years of siege, division, repeated Israeli attacks, and the repercussions of this situation and its economic and social impact, including high unemployment rates, which have reached unprecedented levels. In this chapter, I will try to highlight youth's discourses along with the Israeli and Palestinian discourses towards youth emigration.

5.2 Official Israeli Discourses on Palestinian Youth Emigration:

Successive Israeli governments are trying to encourage Palestinians to emigrate by exploiting their difficult economic situations and the desire of some of them to escape the humiliation and oppression they live as a result of the Israeli occupation practices from the siege and restriction, or through the practices of Gaza's government, or as a result of the tough economic situation experienced by youth and their inability to provide the requirements of daily life.

Those familiar with Israeli political discourse find that over the past years the government of the occupation has allocated millions of dollars to be used to encourage Palestinians to emigrate either from the occupied West Bank or Gaza Strip, by exploiting their difficult economic situation and the desire of some of them to escape the humiliation and oppression they live on a daily basis from the punishment of occupation practices. There are Israeli speeches supporting the organized Palestinian emigration from Gaza, and many Israeli politicians have asserted in more than one position that Israel has been working for nearly years to find host states. According to Ahren (2019) in the Times of Israel, “Israel is ready to carry the costs of helping Gazans emigrate, and would even be willing to consider allowing them to use an Israeli airfield close to Gaza to allow them to leave for their new host countries”. The Israeli effort, which began before 2013, comes at a time when young Gazans are more eager to leave. According to Kubovich (2019), “in 2018, 35,000 people left Gaza via Egypt voluntarily and haven’t returned.”

According to Asharq Al-Awsat Site (2019), “data from international relief organizations related to the United Nations, in 2018, 60,907 people left the Gaza Strip to Egypt through the Rafah crossing, while only 37,075 of them returned to Gaza.” This estimating number reflects the highest voluntary emigration from Gaza in recent years.

A Haaretz report (2019), highlighted these figures, explaining that many departures leave through local intermediaries who arrange their travel, while being transported by boat from country to another then reaching Europe. This's due to Gaza's suffering from a continuing deterioration in living conditions and to the nearly 15-year-old blockade in which Hamas rules the Strip, which shows clearly in the significant rise in unemployment and poverty, where unemployment and poverty rates in Gaza exceeded the potential figures, exceeding more than 70 percent of the population..

Israel is trying to exploit this reality and wants to turn emigration into “organized” emigration. According to some speeches by some Israeli officials, the National Security Council has been leading the initiative for several years under former Prime Minister Netanyahu. It has been discussed several times in the National Security Council. According to these officials, the National Security Council spoke with European leaders and even with other countries in the district to ask about their willingness to receive Palestinians who want to leave Gaza as I mentioned previously. This means that the Israeli project aims to open up the prospects for emigration to the people of Gaza, in an attempt to exploit the harsh humanitarian situation against the citizen there.

Through its practices affecting youth, the Israeli occupation obscures the identity of Palestinians and forces them to emigrate, as Palestinian youth and their people suffer daily pain and worries, as Israelis have argued that the occupied territories must be emptied of their population, through several measures, including:

- Refusing to recognize the existence of the Palestinian people as a people with social and economic characteristics and the possibility of enjoying political rights, chiefly the right to self-determination, by claiming that recognizing the Palestinian people’s rights means the elimination of Israel.
- Pushing the population to flee, by all means, Israel has achieved this by instilling fear in the population, killing them, attacking them, and destroying their villages and homes.
- Direct displacement and the removal of the Arab population from their homes, immediately after the occupation of the territories of 1967, the Israeli authorities resorted to several means of forcing the population to migrate, including threats, taxes, and high prices.
- Taking the working class into Israeli enterprises and pushing the rest to emigrate and work in Arab countries and more.

5.3 Official Palestinian Discourse on Youth Emigration

Those familiar with the phenomenon of Palestinian youth emigration clearly believe that the official Palestinian institution, Palestinian associations, and parties don't give the Palestinian emigration issue particular importance in its programs and work mechanisms and that this issue is also not on its agenda, and it doesn't have their interests significantly and clearly. While the Israeli policy gives the emigration of Zionist Jews all its efforts and interests and allocates large private budgets to it. According to Al-Qasim (2018), all Israeli governments are also working to empty the Palestinian territories of the population and to clamp down on them in order to emigrate, so that they say that the land of Palestine is a land without a people, and to weaken the Palestinian demographic factor, which worries it greatly and negatively affects its Zionist entity.

Therefore, the Palestinian emigration outside the Palestinian territories, whether to seek knowledge or to work, etc., serves the interests of the Zionist occupation and empties the Palestinian territories of population and competencies, thereby weakening the internal Palestinian situation economically and politically as well. The Palestinian Authority, and all other Palestinian institutions and charities, are supposed to discourage the emigration of any Palestinian outside the territory of the Palestinian Authority, regardless of its scientific level, by all possible means, and to establish its presence to help it provide a suitable job opportunity, through which it lives appropriately.

On the other hand, it also urged Palestinian brothers living in neighboring countries, and those with civil identities, in particular, to return to their villages and cities, to live among their parents, families, land, and property, and help them provide them with a good living, by building large investment projects in all fields of industrial, agricultural, health, housing, education, and others. In doing so, they preserve their land and property from loss and neglect, contribute to the service of their people, and develop and enlarge the size of the Palestinian demographic in the short, medium, and long term as well (Saruji, 2016: 37).

Besides, the lack of political stability since the outbreak of the Al-Aqsa Intifada in 2000 has played an important role in the spread of the phenomenon of emigration, by different segments of citizens, some in search of work, some of them fleeing the tragic situation caused by the Israeli occupation, and thus it became clear in 2006 that emigration started to take a dangerous turn, as the segment or group that is beginning to emigrate abroad is clearly the academic community and those with higher degrees, due to the suffocating economic situation and the political crisis in the country as a result of the international and Israeli blockade imposed on the Palestinians, which deprives them of the minimum rights to a decent life.

Furthermore, the internal Palestinian political situation has also contributed significantly to this, and the emigration of Palestinian minds has been accompanied by the emigration of capital owners and investors, as the Israeli occupation prevents the entry of foreign passport holders from the Palestinians, and this procedure has caused many heavy losses, which has led them to move to liquidate their businesses and projects inside Palestine and return to the country where they previously resided; all these arbitrary measures carried out by the occupation are in the category of restricting the Palestinian people to impose political agendas that suit Israel and its interests without seriously

considering peace agreements that are talked about by the Israeli government through the global media that mislead world public opinion.

The phenomenon of discrimination, which is very widespread in our Arab societies, also between Palestinians, has made talented youth who rely solely on their talents flee to the wider world, where they deal with competencies without regard to national and religious affiliations. I quote:

“Yes, there is discrimination and preference, and I know examples that I refrain from mentioning. This’s one of the reason I want to emigrate.” (Saleem, WhatsApp, 30 August 2021”).

5.4 Youth’s Imagined Solutions

One of the common themes that I found was that youth were fully aware of the dangers and consequences of emigration as to whether emigration is illegal. Despite this, they want to emigrate, although the idea doesn’t appeal to some, they will do it because, from their personal perspective, it will bring them a good income and provide them with suitable job opportunities and living necessities.

One participant stated that he is totally willing to risk everything in order to emigrate since he is unemployed and has no income. This shows the extent of the despair that the youth in Gaza have reached so that they don’t care about what awaits them and that their main concern is emigration itself. Therefore, despite the serious risks of emigrating abroad, the idea still dominates the majority of youth who have sought emigration visas to America, Canada, Europe, and others in the hope of finding a safe place, ensuring a quiet and stable life away from the siege, closure, destruction, and devastation that constantly haunts them even in their dreams.

The main and major problem lies in the policy of occupation and what contributes to creating a tendency among Palestinian youth to emigrate, divide, and internal division, which is certainly the key element in youth's thinking about emigration that resulted in a critical economic and psychological conditions, and to escape from the reality they live in. The problem of youth emigration has been exacerbated by the interruption of the salaries of government officials due to the financial blockade imposed on the Palestinian people after Hamas won a majority in the Legislative Council. This blockade and the strike of public sector employees, due to their non-payment of salaries, have led to a significant decline in Palestinian national products.

The Israeli occupation authorities' invasion, destruction, settlement, occupation of land, displacement, construction of the racist wall, and the installation of barriers between cities, as well as killings, assassinations, and arrests against the Palestinian people, have directly contributed to the reduction of employment, achievement and development opportunities on the territory of Palestine, which has created a repellent element and the search for other ways to provide them with a decent life, especially since we are living in an internal Palestinian crisis such as insecurity, lack of judicial authority, law and respect for the civil rights of the Palestinian human being (Ayyash, 2016: 32).

The issue of the emigration of youth from Palestine, especially Gaza, is one of the most serious phenomena suffered by Palestinian society, and to reduce this phenomenon, media and institutional efforts must be joined together in order to clarify the risks posed by the phenomenon of emigration,

especially illegality to young people and society in general, through holding workshops, seminars and meetings through various media as a phenomenon that serves the interests of the Israeli enemy in emptying the land of its population, and represents a major threat to the Palestinian national project (Al-Astal, 2017: 137).

According to interviews conducted, the phenomenon of emigration can be addressed through several measures that the Palestinian Authority and the leadership of Palestinian parties have the responsibility to achieve, the most important of which is to complete the file of Palestinian reconciliation and end the internal division that has negatively affected Palestinian society, especially the younger generation, and to provide jobs by fighting widespread unemployment, especially among youth and graduates in particular. The phenomenon of emigration can also be reduced by putting an end to the phenomenon of marginalization of youth, excluding them from social and political participation, and activating their role in decision-making. Work to stop the Israeli violations of its blockade of the Gaza Strip and the repeated destructive wars on the Gaza Strip, to stop discrimination in access to jobs in government and non-governmental institutions, and to work towards self-dignity and a sense of security for citizens, especially for the younger generation.

The majority of the participants confirmed that the primary solution that can reduce the emigration from Gaza Strip is improving the economy of the country. Though they view the economic solutions from different angles most of them mentioned similar economic solutions. Both emigrants and non-immigrants in both male and female have close opinions regarding the economic solutions. The economic solutions for reducing the emigration among Gazans are classified into the following:

Creating opportunities for Youth and newly graduates.

This could be as they suggested by making new innovation projects that absorb graduates and the jobless. As one participant stated: “Providing job opportunities is one of the most important solutions” (Ward, Gaza, 29 August 2021).

Another stated: “Opening projects for graduates and unemployed youth with high wages, can improve their economic conditions” (Amna, Gaza, 29 August 2021). Another made this suggestion:

“Opening small projects to absorb, support and integrate youth into the labor market. In addition to the government’s cooperation with lending institutions, either local and international institutions, or private companies to give opportunities for youth to work through subsidizing a certain percentage of youth.” (Amal, WhatsApp, 03 September 2021)

In addition to creating opportunities, there should be fairness in recruitment and nepotism must be avoided. Nepotism in providing jobs was mentioned as one of the main reasons for emigration. Interviews confirmed that stopping this could result in stability and reduction of youth emigration rates among Gazan Youth. As stated by one participant:

“Creating opportunities in a fair competitive environment, providing and giving rights without discrimination, and believing in youth and their ability; can certainly decrease the emigration” (Zain, WhatsApp, 04 September 2021)

Providing the essentials of life

Young Palestinians interviewed questioned what could push a person to leave his country if the needs and essentials of a good life are there! As one participant stated: “Providing job opportunities, providing the necessities of life such as electricity, and open the crossings/borders; will prevent from our leaving from Gaza to look for opportunities if we have them in our country” (Rahaf, WhatsApp, 04 September 2021).

Another stated:

“Providing decent livelihoods and suitable job opportunities for the unemployed. Also, the awareness of the dangers of random emigration.” (Omar, Gaza, 08 July 2021).

Interviews confirmed that having a good job with good wages and having the life essentials such as electricity, water, housing, and security can play an important role in reducing the emigration rates. Furthermore, holding workshops to educate youth about the dangers of this ill-considered emigration.

Political solutions

The participants stated several political reasons that may, in their points of view, reduce the rates of emigration among Gazan Youth. Among these political solutions is the unification of the Palestinian parties, ending the siege and occupation. The first political solution proposed was the unification of all the political parties in Palestine, and resolving the political conflict between political parties. Interviewees believed that unification can solve the problems of emigration and would have a good impact on the psychology of youth. As one stated: “Unifying political parties as a start, improving economic conditions, and creating places that incubate youth, and ending the siege of Gaza can really end our suffers” (Nisreen, WhatsApp, 04 September 2021). Another stated:

“A single government in both parts of the country will solve all problems, including emigration, electing a civilian government, and that society begins to change itself. These are the most basic factors without which there will be little progress.” (Abdallah, WhatsApp, 05 September 2021)

Ending the occupation and other solutions

However unrealistic in the short to medium-term, participants confirmed that the Israeli occupation aims to enforce Gazans in particular to emigrate, and therefore propose that only by ending this occupation can the rates of emigration among Gazan Youth be reduced. As stated by one participant:

“I repeat what I have previously talked about, which is the necessity of eliminating the occupation, which causes all the crises that afflict the Palestinian reality and future without any other” (Khaled, WhatsApp, 05 September 2021)

Other solutions include one interviewee mentioned other solutions in addition to the economic and political solutions. They believed that education quality can be one factor in reducing the number of emigrants. They added that the reasonable educational fees can encourage Youth to enroll in local universities instead of emigrating outside to complete their studies. In addition, they stated that having recreation and entertainment activities that help them get rid of the stress and depression caused by wars and siege.

5.5 Conclusion

This chapter addressed the views of Palestinian youth about emigration, where it initially reviewed official Israeli discourses on the emigration of Palestinian youth, and it was clear that the Israeli government attempts to encouraging Palestinians youth towards emigration, taking advantage of the economic and social conditions, and it's trying as much as possible to make Palestine a homeland without its people to settle Zionists settlers instead.

Then I addressed the official Palestinian discourse on youth emigration and it was clear that the weakness of the Palestinian official institution's interest in this phenomenon, made the youth feel that they're left behind and no one is hearing them and that this matter served the Zionist interests that they aspire to. Hence, it can be said that the policy of Palestinian governments in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank has played a prominent role also in the emigration of youth as a result of their contribution to the restriction on youth through their policies and continues to be through the strengthening of the policy of Palestinian-Palestinian division, especially in the light of the loss of hope for the future. Also, the Palestinian official bodies remain mere statements on this subject and have not been translated into actions on the ground, and the concern for youth and their problems of unemployment, poverty, and lack of opportunities remains mere statements that have not reached the implementation stage.

Also, at the end of this chapters there was solutions from youth's imaginations that they think it could help in reducing their emigration. However, despite their awareness of the serious risks of emigrating, the idea still dominates the majority of youth. Some are willing to take the risk to find a better life and job, and that their main problem was the Israeli occupation who is leading them to the other issues. Following the Palestinian policies towards Gaza.

The vast majority stated that they want to get a job and this is enough for them. Once the officials provide this, things will be much easier for youth and it will reduce their emigration, and this will lead them to obtain the necessities of life. In addition to ending the Palestinian division, as the more it extends, the greater the rift between the Gaza Strip and the West Bank appear.

priorities of youth were primarily economic conditions because this aspect is what gives them better life opportunities.

Theme two was the educational reasons which is also related to the first question in the study. It shows that the motive that pushed them for emigration is related to education too. They would like to emigrate because they want to follow their education because the education quality in Gaza doesn't meet their expectations in addition to being unaffordable.

Furthermore, theme three was the lack of security and stability reasons. The respondents reported that one of the reasons that motivate them to think of emigration is the lack of stability and security in the Gaza strip. Gaza has been under war and siege for years, and the last theme related to the first sub-question was miscellaneous reasons. There were some miscellaneous reasons for emigration stated by the respondents. Some respondents stated that their motivation to emigrate is due to social reasons. Social reasons were related to getting married and having a stable family. In addition, the social stress on women was reported to be a reason for emigration. Psychological reasons were based on the fact that emigration can give them freedom and help them get rid of the restrictions in their societies.

In contrast, some respondents stated they never think of emigration due to fears of not finding a job and securing needs such as food and house while others stated that they love their country and would not think of leaving it. However, both immigrants and non-immigrants shared the same reasons for immigration in terms of the economic and political situation, needs for educational and professional development, having a better life, looking for stability and security, and other miscellaneous reasons.

Second, results shows that almost all of the interviews were negatively affected at the psychological and economic levels. Economically, the missiles and bombs destructed the houses, streets, shops, factories, and banks. Many people work stopped due to the aggression of Israel and thus everyone was affected. Similarly, they were also socially affected. The social effect is a result of the economic impact as most of them, male and female, stated that they're not married due to financial reasons. Male confirmed that they do have income and thus, they couldn't get married. While female stated that male is incapable of affording food for their families and this makes it harder for them to get married.

Therefore, in their views, the Israeli occupation is one of the main reasons for Gaza Youth emigration. They justified the opinion that Israeli policies under occupation make them emigrate. As Israeli occupation controls the borders, commits an aggressive siege, and threatens to restart war again and this pushes Youth to emigrate. A few stated that this was not the main reason; for some, the main reason was internal political conflicts between Palestinian parties.

Third, more than two-thirds of the participants responded that they have no idea about the Palestinian national project. They confirmed that this is the first time to hear about it and this is due to that youth are not interested in such projects, and thus they never search or look for any information regarding it. In contrast, only one-third of them stated they know the national project. They define it as the project that aims to unify all the Palestinian land and form the State of Palestine.

They indeed support the Palestinian national Project as they justified their support of this project as the basis of having independent rights and sovereign states. However, they think that this project is valueless in the light of occupation and after the signing of the Oslo agreement. It did not achieve its desired objectives and its failure has a negative impact on the Youth.

Fourth, Palestinian youth stress the need to provide them with job opportunities to curb emigration, as all of them agreed that the economic factor, and what it causes from poverty and difficult living conditions, prompted or push them to emigrate. In addition to the presence of favoritism and discrimination in government sectors and other various institutions.

Overall, the experiences of Palestinian youth demonstrate the need to develop a national plan to address the causes that lead to youth emigration. Additionally, ending the division that tears the Palestinian social fabric, its persistence poses a long-term strategic threat, bringing greater economic, political, and societal transformations. Therefore, it calls for a decisive and immediate stand on this phenomenon by all Palestinian factions to stand up to their national responsibility and to develop solutions and strategies that limit the emigration of youth so that it doesn't constitute a drain on youth and society, as a result of these Israeli policies of aggression, siege, and others, and also as a result of the Palestinian policies that turned their back on the needs of youth and closed their future prospects for many years in light of political rivalries and the appeal of personal interests away from the public and national interest of the Palestinian people.

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