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Migration as a Method of Coping with Turbulence among Palestinians

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INTRODUCTION

Migration is one way individuals and families cope with economic uncertainty and political turbulence. Migrations in search of stability may be embarked upon with the intention to resettle temporarily or permanently, and these intentions may change over time. Migrants may include only income-producers or entire families. While migration chosen as a strategy for coping with turbulence and uncertainty is often thought of as voluntary migration, many scholars consider the dislocations and disruptions caused by conflict and globalization as events that force migration to occur. This article is about Palestinian migration from Jordan to the United States, the experiences of these migrants while in the United States, their ideas about circular migration, and the potential impact of Post 9/11 U.S. policies and social climate on this migration.

Palestinians have resettled extensively within and outside the Arab World since the creation of the State of Israel in 1948 and the 1967 Israeli military occupation of the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and Gaza (Cainkar, 1988). Indeed, more than 50% of the Palestinian population lives in exile. Many Palestinians are "twice migrants" (Bhachu, 1985). They planted their roots in bordering countries after becoming refugees in 1948 or 1967, or upon locating employment opportunities and safety following the social, political, and economic destabilization that accompanied Israeli military occupation, and then migrated once again in search of better lives. The border country of Jordan which has been the largest single recipient of Palestinians in exile, has more than 2 million Palestinians. Major sites of Palestinian second migration include the Arab Gulf countries, especially Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, and the United States. Palestinian migration to the Gulf States occurred in large numbers between the 1950s and 1990 (Brand, 1988). While this migration returned lucrative rewards until the late 1980s, it largely came to an end with the Gulf War of 1990-91. Indeed, the vast majority of Palestinian migrants were expelled from these countries during and after the 1990-91 Gulf War (Cainkar, 1994). Palestinians began migrating to the United States around the turn of the

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20th Century (Al-Tahir, 1952; Cainkar, 1988). This migration accelerated after 1948, increased again after the 1965 change in U.S. immigration laws, and has continued unabated through the turn of the 21st Century. Palestinians living in Jordan have also increased their levels of migration to the U.S. Data for immigrants to the U.S. carrying Jordanian passports, which includes West Bank Palestinians travelling on Jordanian passports, Jordanians, and Palestinian citizens of Jordan, show increases through 2001, excluding the years 1982-89. During these years, more Palestinians came to the U.S. to study than as immigrants (Cainkar, 1988). Since the 1990-91 Gulf War, the United States has become one of the primary locations of Palestinian resettlement.

Graph 1: Immigrants to the US from Jordan (country of birth)

Source: INS Yearbooks.

QUALITY OF LIFE IN THE UNITED STATES

A study by Cainkar (1998) revealed, among other things, a growing low-income sector of the Palestinian immigrant population in Chicago, a community that in the past had been characterized largely by upward economic mobility. This growth was explained by a complex interaction of factors, including lowered remittances sent "back home", changes in the local Chicago economy, political pressures on Arab shopkeepers, and changing migration patterns (Cainkar, 1999). One of the more striking findings of this study was that a majority of low- and low-middle-income Palestinian respondents said that they would prefer to return to their homes in Palestine (largely the West Bank) or Jordan if they could. They felt that the quality of their lives was superior in their home country or in their country of first resettlement, even though they were economically better off and their children had more opportunities in Chicago. They spoke of the poor quality of their networks of social relations in the U.S., as compared to "back home", and of the perceived hazards of raising children in the United States. This finding showed that the outcomes of quality of life measures could vary considerably depending on the indicators used. One’s life can be quantitatively rich, but qualitatively poor.

The results of this study led to the development of a follow-up study comparing low-income Palestinians in Amman, Jordan and Chicago. The follow-up study examines the respective roles played by economic and social capital in perceptions of quality of life in the
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two different migratory contexts and more fully explores the varying roles of social networks (social capital) in the lives of low-income families by location. The study also examines whether the way in which public aid is distributed in the United States hinders the development of social capital by severing the relationship between economic support and networks of social support. Such knowledge could inform policy and practice in the U.S. and in developing countries by identifying patterns of social support, which provide greater leveraging for financial inputs.

The pilot for the follow-up study included in-depth qualitative interviews with nine low-income Palestinian men and women in Amman and eight low-income Palestinian men and women in Chicago, as well as two focus groups in each city. All of these Palestinians were members of families whose origins were in historic Palestine, but who at some point, by force or voluntarily, migrated to Amman, Jordan. The adult Palestinian immigrants interviewed in Chicago were members of families that had experienced at least two migrations, although the interviewees themselves may have been born in Jordan.

Some families in this group experienced more than two movements. Suha, for instance, was born in 1965 in her family’s village near Jerusalem. When Israel occupied the West Bank in 1967, the whole family moved to Jordan. Shortly afterwards, Suha’s father went to work in Kuwait, leaving the family in Amman. Suha’s father’s brother lived in Detroit, and the family eventually decided to move there for family reunification. Suha’s father got a job at a Chrysler plant. In 1981, however, he was laid off, so the family moved to Chicago, where they had other relatives, and opened a grocery store. Such itineraries are not uncommon among Palestinians.

Themes emerging from the pilot study include the finding that most Palestinians see their migration to the United States as temporary, timed to stages in their own and their children’s life cycles. The migration was a strategy to cope with political and economic turbulence, designed to maximize the family’s security, produce income, and develop the human capital of the children so their future prospects would be better than their parents. Rich social networks left behind upon migration were sacrificed for economic gain. But at a stage in the life cycle when social capital is seen as critically important — after age 60 — the strategy calls for return to a society that nourishes social relationships. This finding supports earlier research conducted by Cainkar and Al-Tahir.

The reality of life in America is more stressful than many of these immigrants had expected. For men, the daily routine is characterized by long work hours, low pay, and few opportunities for quality time with children and socializing with friends. Parents, especially mothers, find life in Chicago is often worrisome, due to concerns about their children’s exposure to serious and pervasive risks from gangs, drugs, and crime, and is fraught with difficulties trying to raise children who appreciate the cultural and religious values that are important to their parents. Visiting friends and relatives is often difficult due to long urban travel times and complicated schedules. One man in Chicago said, “social life is much worse in Chicago [than in Amman]. People here are too busy and you have to arrange appointments to see them. In Jordan, people see each other more and are closer.” One woman in Chicago told us she missed holidays in Jordan, where people are surrounded by family, while in Chicago, “we
spend them alone at home.” Family economic gains and human capital gains for children make these discomforts worth bearing, but do not translate into a perceived high quality of life. When the working years are near completion, these adult Palestinian immigrants look to return “home.”

**REASONS TO LEAVE JORDAN**

Making a living is tenuous for many in Jordan. Jobs are hard to find and salaries are low, while the cost of living is relatively quite high. The Pew Research Center’s 2002 Global Attitudes Survey, conducted with national representative samples in 44 countries, found that only 31% of Jordanians said they were “satisfied” with their household income, the fifth lowest satisfaction level among 44 countries.1 Even more striking, only 20% of employed Jordanians said they were satisfied with their jobs, the lowest rate in any of the 44 countries. By contrast, 86% of the employed in the U.S. and UK, 70% of employed Egyptians, and two thirds of employed Lebanese said they were satisfied with their jobs (Pew Research Center, 2002: Table 9). Two-thirds of Jordanians agreed that the economic situation in the country was “bad” or “very bad.” (Pew Research Center, 2002: Table 15). Nearly two-fifths of Jordanians reported that in the past year there had been times when they did not have enough money to buy food, health care, and clothes that their families needed. While these numbers were better than in many countries, particularly in Africa, the proportions in Jordan were very similar to those in Poland, Bangladesh and Mali; and slightly better than in Mexico (Pew Research Center, 2002: Table 67).

While expressing a high degree of dissatisfaction with their economic state, people in Jordan feel safer than do people in most of the countries surveyed. Sixty-five percent of Jordanians did not think that crime was a “big problem,” as compared 7% of Pakistanis, 8% of Americans, 18% of Turks, and 22% of Lebanese (Pew Research Center, 2002: Table 18).

Clearly, each society — American and Jordanian — offers advantages and disadvantages. Jobs are easier to find in the U.S. and better paid, but have longer hours than in Amman and require sacrificing quality family time. Support networks, safety, a sense of dignity, and the emotive relationships needed for a qualitatively rich life are better in Jordan. Palestinian migrants to the U.S. seek to maximize these advantages.

**CIRCULARITY OF MIGRATION**

Many Palestinian immigrants from Jordan say they do not intend to settle permanently in the U.S., even if they have lived in the U.S. for many years. (Palestinians from East Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza operate under very different conditions. Their right to return home is limited by Israeli policy.) Rather, they speak about living transnationally — moving between the two countries at different stages in their own, and their children’s, life cycle. Some adults talked about sending children back to Jordan for periods of time to live with relatives, providing a safer environment than in Chicago, as well as socialization in Arab values. Many adults say they will return to Amman when they are older, although some worry that they will

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1 This was considerably lower than the 53% of Lebanese and 75% of Egyptians satisfied with their household incomes.
be trapped in Chicago by economic circumstances. Parents also worry about how their U.S.-born children will cope with or accept a move to Jordan, a society with which they are very unfamiliar. Precisely to meet these needs, scores of private schools have opened in Amman that cater to kids "returning" from the West.

Despite obstacles, families do return, or send their children back. Even Palestinians whose homes are under Israeli occupation send their children back for periods of time. The 1997 Palestinian census found that 9.5% (some 250,000 persons) of the 2.6 million Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip (excluding East Jerusalem) were born in another country. Of these, more than seven thousand were born in the United States, and 83% of these were under the age of nineteen, compared to 43% of all Palestinians born outside Palestine. The much younger age of Palestinians born in the United States, as compared with those born in other countries and regions, suggests that many Palestinian parents in the United States are sending their U.S.-born children to live with relatives, alongside those returning to the West Bank and Gaza with their migrant parents (Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 1997).

While the immigration literature has viewed migration as a watershed act in a person's life (Rumbaut and Portes, 1996), we see a picture of families who try to maximize what they see as the relative advantages of social geographies (Chicago and Amman) by moving between locations at different points in the life cycle. To what degree migrants fulfill these dreams is another question. Barriers to achieving these desired outcomes would appear to be related to family economics as well as U.S. policies and circumstances in the country of origin.

Douglas Massey (1998) discusses a similar phenomenon in his work on circular migration. Massey argues that circularity characterizes much of the migratory movement between Mexico and the United States. Contrary to commonly held views that wage differentials between the two countries are the primary motive for migration, Massey found that wage differentials are almost insignificant. The primary motivation for Mexicans to migrate to the United States is capital accumulation in order to invest back home (i.e. buy land, a house, a business or increase consumption), not income maximization. This theory is supported by the very high return rate of Mexican migrants, who tend to make multiple temporary trips to the United States throughout their life. U.S. immigration policy and its enforcement are built on the assumption that Mexicans intend to resettle permanently in the United States. Increasing border militarization, argues Massey, increases the risks involved in international movement, and therefore has the reverse effect of encouraging Mexicans, many of whom arrive without legal documents, to remain in the United States, rather than risk being unable to move back and forth.

Circularity would involve different factors for Palestinians. The vast majority of Palestinians arrive in the United States with legal documents, therefore at least for Palestinians from Jordan, leaving and returning would be inhibited more by economics (the costs of flights and gifts) than legal barriers. As noted earlier, Palestinians from areas under Israeli control may face serious obstacles to returning home. Since 2001, however, U.S. immigration and domestic policies that target Arabs and Muslims may be raising new barriers for all Arabs, irrespective of their legal status in the U.S. or their country of birth. Fear of harassment, detention without cause, not being allowed to fly, not being able to return, or being stripped of one's legal status, might operate to turn a transnational flow into a uni-directional one, or change the
flow altogether. It is too early to draw conclusions about the impact of the Post 9/11 environment on the migration patterns of Palestinians from Jordan, but preliminary data indicate that some things have changed.

**POST 9/11 POLICIES AND THEIR POTENTIAL IMPACT ON TRANSNATIONAL MIGRATION PATTERNS**

Since the September 11, 2001 attacks on the United States, the federal government has implemented more than twenty executive orders, rule changes, procedures, and laws that affect immigrants and migrants. Of these, seventeen predominantly target Arabs and Muslims, including some that do not distinguish between those who are and are not U.S. citizens (Cainkar, 2002; 2003). These policies include profiling of Arabs and Muslims at U.S. airports, special security checks, removal from airplanes, and the 2003 introduction of the Computer Assisted Passenger Prescreening System (CAPPS II). CAPPS II generates "no fly" lists by assigning a threat level to everyone who purchases an airplane ticket. Since the September 11 attacks there have also been a series of round-ups of persons from Arab and Muslim countries living in the U.S., which have produced few tangible results in terms of capturing terrorist suspects. In the fall of 2001, upwards of 1,200 U.S. citizens and non-citizens, most of them of Middle Eastern descent, were rounded up and detained by the federal government without charge. Many of them were deported on minor visa violations; none was charged with terrorism. While U.S. citizens were eventually released to their families, some subsequently have chosen not to live in the United States. Since the late fall of 2001, the Justice Department and the FBI have launched repeated initiatives to interview individuals who came to the U.S. from Arab and Muslim countries. In early 2003, Iraqis living in the U.S. — citizens, refugees, and visitors became the targets of these interviews. The federal government sometimes asks for local police cooperation in these actions, placing the local police in the position of monitoring persons they are supposed to protect.

On May 14, 2002, Congress enacted the Enhanced Border Security and Visa Entry Reform Act. Among the many provisions of this act is a restriction on non-immigrant visas for individuals from countries identified as state sponsors of terrorism. In early summer 2002, the Department of Justice asked immigration and customs agents to search all Yemenis entering the United States, including American citizens. Non-immigrant visa applications submitted by men aged 18-45 from 26 countries, nearly all of them Arab or Muslim, are subjected to special security clearances. The applications are sent to Washington for approval, with no time limit imposed on the response. Long delays have cost students their scholarships, medical residents their placements, and cancer patients their treatment. The Special Registration program, begun on September 11, 2002 requires persons in the U.S. from 24 Arab and Muslim countries (and North Korea) who are neither U.S. citizens nor permanent residents to report to the immigration authorities for fingerprinting, photographing, and questioning. Arabs and Muslims so registered can only leave from ports with the registry system in place. In January 2003, a Palestinian permanent resident applicant who had been granted re-entry documents by the INS was denied entry to the United States when returning from a trip to Jordan. The Ph.D.-holding director of a Chicago organization that encourages Muslims to vote, he has not been charged with any offense. His reentry denial was overturned in the courts, but the executive branch of the federal government continues to block his return. According to a Council on American-Islamic Relations report released in April 2002, more
than 60,000 individuals had been affected by government actions of discrimination, interrogation, raids, arrests, detentions and institutional closures in the first seven months of these policies.

The social context in which U.S. Arab and Muslim communities live is also highly charged. Hate crimes occurred with frequency immediately after the September 11 attack, and surged again with the March 2003 U.S. attack on Iraq. The U.S. government has issued warnings to vital industries (e.g., communications, banks, industries, utilities, and emergency services) to examine threats from “insider” employees, turning Arab and Muslim employees into potential suspects. The definition of what constitutes terrorist activity has changed to include misdeeds and rule infractions committed by Arabs and Muslims. For example, of the sixty-two international terrorism indictments handed down in New Jersey in 2003, sixty of them were issued against Middle Eastern students accused of paying others to take English tests for them. Those whose cases have been concluded were fined and deported. Indeed, the times for Arabs and Muslims in America are not very good.

Pakistani newspaper editor and visiting Brookings Institute scholar, Ejaz Haider, himself picked up by the immigration authorities and taken to a detention facility, wrote in a February op-ed piece in the *Washington Post*, “Mere rhetoric about Islam being a great religion or the fact that the war on terrorism is not a war on Islam or even that registration is not about racial and religious profiling will not do. People out there are neither stupid nor intellectually challenged.” If these policies are to increase the security of the United States, “a worse way of doing so cannot be imagined. Perhaps, for the first time in American history, we are witnessing the spectacle of families migrating from the United States in search of safety.”

**CHANGING ATTITUDES ABOUT MIGRATION TO THE U.S. IN JORDAN**

We sought to determine if these actions had any impact on persons in Jordan who were thinking about travelling, and in September 2002, we conducted brief face to face interviews with thirty-three residents of Amman, Jordan and asked them this question. The sample included thirteen men and twenty women, of whom nineteen were under age 30 and fourteen were aged 30 and over. Eighteen lived in Wadi Haddadeh, a low-income neighborhood in eastern Amman, adjacent to the Jabal Hussein refugee camp for Palestinian refugees, and fifteen lived in western Amman, a large, affluent part of the Jordanian capital. There were no significant differences in the sex/age distribution among the east and west Amman groups.

Interviewees were contacted through personal relationships or community organizations. We ruled out random sampling because we judged that “strangers” asking questions about both the September 11 events and interviewees’ personal travel plans would arouse fears which would lead to a high number of refusals or affect responses. All respondents were assured of complete anonymity, and only one person declined a request for an interview. Each respondent was asked three main questions and some follow-up questions to elicit detail. The main questions were: “Have you ever thought about traveling to Europe, the United States, or any other country?” “Did the events of September 11 change your thoughts or plans for the future?” and “Do you have relatives in Europe, the United States, or any other country?”
Seventy percent of respondents had relatives in the United States, 24% had relatives in Europe and 12% had relatives in other countries. Overall, 70% of respondents said they had been contemplating traveling — 87% among the much more affluent west Amman group and 56% in the Wadi Haddadeh group. Women were more likely than men to have considered it. There was a strong relationship between having relatives abroad and thinking about travel. Seventy-eight percent (21/27) of those who had relatives living abroad said they had thought about traveling, while among those who had no relatives living abroad, only one third (2/6) said they had thought about traveling. Seventy-three percent (16/22) mentioned the United States as their contemplated travel destination, 46% mentioned Europe, and 32% mentioned other countries. Socio-economic status had a significant effect on choice of destination: 92% of the west Amman group who had thought about travelling gave the United States as a possible destination, as opposed to 44% of persons from Wadi Haddadeh. When asked their primary reason for traveling, 44% chose “work,” 30% chose “visit,” 17% chose “study,” and the remainder picked “other,” or did not indicate a purpose. There were no significant differences by sex, age or social class, although men were more likely to give work as a primary purpose, while women were more likely to indicate a desire to visit.

Overall, 64% of respondents agreed that “their views or plans about the future had changed” as a result of the September 11 events. Three quarters of women said they were affected, whereas slightly less than half of the men said so. There were no major differences by socio-economic status or age. When asked to elaborate on how their plans or views had been affected, all but one said that they would be less likely or more reluctant to go to the United States. Most of the comments showed a concern for personal security in the U.S. and a fear that Arabs traveling or living in the U.S. are subjected to increased scrutiny and harassment. Six cited their disagreement with U.S. foreign policy positions with respect to the Middle East. One woman said “Arabs are treated worse in the U.S. now, because they are blamed for September 11.” Another woman pointed out that Arabs were attacked in the United States after September 11, especially women wearing headscarves, but that she believed things have calmed down. A third woman said that she would feel safer in any Arab country than in the U.S. Several respondents said that while they would hesitate to go to the U.S., they would have no problem going to Europe. Three respondents said that they would still like to go abroad, even to the United States, but feared it would be harder to get there, or work would be harder to find due to discrimination. Others expressed general anxiety about the process of travel and the scrutiny or inconvenience it might entail.

A 19-year-old woman from Wadi Haddadeh with a relative in the U.S. and who had previously thought about going there said:

I would not like to go there now, because there is a lot of fear there (khawf) and there is no safety (aman). Also their treatment of Arabs has become bad, characterized by lack of respect. They have no justice and equality between Arabs and others even though when they come here we treat them with utmost respect.

A 29-year-old man in Wadi Haddadeh said he has had the opportunity to emigrate to the U.S. for years, because he has two brothers already there, but has never wanted to go. Even though the economic situation in Jordan now is extremely bad, he said, “I reject the idea of
leaving.” He said that “social and family ties” kept him in Jordan. The man, who worked in a furniture store, said that his two brothers thought of returning to Jordan after September 11 but decided to stay in the U.S. once things calmed down. Some of his relatives, however, who are in the process of emigrating to the U.S. are now having second thoughts.

This small survey indicates that the events of September 11 have had an impact on how people in Jordan think about traveling to and living in the United States. Despite the strong reservations expressed by most respondents about life in the U.S., many people (70% in this sample) have relatives in the United States. This exploration of opinions one year after the events of September 11 suggests that the perceived social climate and U.S. policies may attenuate the flow of migration to the U.S. or encourage Arabs living there to return.

**EVIDENCE ABOUT EFFECT OF SEPTEMBER 11 ON ARABS’ WILLINGNESS TO COME TO U.S., FROM VISA LOTTERY**

Statistics from the United States’ annual Diversity Immigrant Visa Program (DV) provide another indication of the immediate effects of the aftermath of the September 11 attacks on immigration from Arab and Muslim countries. Although the data have limitations, they suggest that the September 11 attacks have had an immediate negative effect on desires to immigrate to the United States for persons from Arab and Muslim countries.

The DV program allows anyone in the world, except for citizens of a handful of countries which already account for a large proportion of immigrants to the U.S., to apply for a chance in a lottery to receive one of fifty thousand immigrant visas. Lottery winners are not granted automatic entry to the United States, but are entitled to apply within a limited period for adjustment of status to permanent residency, and must undergo the same background checks as any other would-be immigrant.

During the period October 1, 2000 to February 28, 2001 a total of 16,308 visas were granted to winners of the lottery conducted in 1999 for visas to be issued in fiscal year 2001 (DV-2001). For the identical period a year later — the five months following the September 11 attacks — this number fell to 14,074 (These latter applicants would have entered a lottery in 2000, for visas to be issued in fiscal 2002). A State Department official was quoted in media reports saying that almost all of this 14% decline was accounted for by a decrease in the number of visas granted to nationals from Muslim countries (Associated Press, 2002). Because all of the lottery entrants granted visas in these two periods submitted their lottery entry forms prior to the September 11 attacks, the decline is almost certainly the product of a change in U.S. policy and not a decrease in the number of applicants from these countries.

The statistics from the lottery for visas to be issued in fiscal year 2003 (DV-2003), indicate that the September 11 attacks did at least in their immediate aftermath discourage many people from seeking to immigrate to the United States. The application period for the DV-2003 program ran from October 1 to 31,2001. The total number of qualified and unqualified applicants worldwide fell to 8.7 million from 13 million the previous year. This was a sharp reverse in what had been a rising trend (see Table 1).

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“Unqualified applications” are those disqualified from the lottery either because they were received outside the mail-in period, or they did not properly follow the instructions.
Table 1

Qualified and unqualified applicants for Diversity Immigrant Visa Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Program</th>
<th>Application Period</th>
<th>Total number of qualified and unqualified applications (millions)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DV-1997</td>
<td>Feb 12 to Mar 12, 1996</td>
<td>7.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DV-1998</td>
<td>Feb 3 to Mar 5, 1997</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DV-1999</td>
<td>Oct 24 to Nov 24, 1997</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DV-2001</td>
<td>Oct 4 to Nov 3, 1999</td>
<td>13.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DV-2002</td>
<td>Oct 2 to Nov 1, 2000</td>
<td>13.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DV-2003</td>
<td>Oct 1 to Oct 31, 2001</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The State Department does not publish a breakdown of the number of lottery entrants by country, but it does publish the number of visas allocated to each country. Using State Department data, we compared the number of visas allocated for DV-2002 and DV-2003 for all countries (N=181). Only the first fifty thousand lottery winners each year successfully apply for permanent residency in the United States. The State Department, however, draws more than fifty-thousand winners from the lottery on the assumption that a significant number of lottery winners will either not apply for permanent residency, or be denied it later — much like a selective college admits more students each year than it has the capacity to enroll. Table 2 shows that the State Department allocated 87,200 visas for DV-2003, a decrease of 3% from the previous year.

Table 2

Change in Diversity Immigrant Visas awarded to Arab/Muslim countries 2000-2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Diversity Visas Allocated in the Lottery (rounded)</th>
<th>% Change in number of visas allocated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DV-2002</td>
<td>DV-2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Countries (n=181)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All non-Arab/non-Muslim Countries (n=140)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arab and Muslim Countries (n=41)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslim non-Arab Countries (n=19)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arab Countries Only (n=22)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While non-Arab, non-Muslim countries received slightly more visas for DV-2003, Arab countries received 13% fewer. Arab and Muslim countries combined received 11% fewer visas. The differences in the number of visas largely reflect changes in the number of applications received from each country. Overall, the data suggest that in the immediate aftermath of September 11, the number of people in Muslim and Arab countries willing to consider emigrating to the United States fell significantly.

CONCLUSION

Migration has been a Palestinian mechanism for managing political turbulence and economic uncertainty since the late 1940s. Research shows that such migration has not dampened the desire of Palestinians living in the U.S. to return to the Middle East, where they feel more culturally comfortable and have a qualitatively better social life. Preliminary data from our study show that Palestinians in the U.S. calculate their return to occur at times that are most advantageous to meeting their family's needs. Socialization in Arab values and protection of children, as well as spending retirement years in an environment of strong social bonds, were primary among these calculations, while life in the U.S. was best when income production and education were most important. These transnational migration schemes are possible to achieve when finances allow them and movement is easy. The post September 11th environment in the U.S. may change Palestinian migration strategies, if living in the U.S. continues to be stressful and travel remains an invitation for harassment. As of spring 2003, it appeared that renewed conflict and turmoil in the Middle East brought about by the U.S. attack on Iraq, and the institutionalization of discriminatory rules in the United States, may increase pressures on Arabs and Muslims to emigrate from the U.S. and decrease the desire of Arabs and Muslims to seek a better life there.

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3 We defined a Muslim country as any country whose population is at least 50% Muslim according to the CIA World Factbook 2001 (Washington DC: Central Intelligence Agency, 2001). We defined an Arab country as any country that is a member of the League of Arab States. All Arab countries fit the definition of Muslim countries.

4 The State Department allocates visas among six geographic regions, based on the number of immigrants from each region over the previous five years. Occasionally the countries permitted to participate in the lottery are modified. Unless there are major modifications from one year to the next, the number of visas allocated to each country is proportional to the number of valid applications received from nationals of that country. The countries eligible for DV-2002 and DV-2003 were the same, and there were no major changes in the regional allocations. Source: Interview with Lorraine Lewis, State Department Immigrant Visa Reporting Office, November 18, 2002.

5 While the vast majority of Muslim and Arab countries saw significant declines in visa allocations from DV-2002 to DV-2003, this was not always the case. Morocco, for example, saw its allocation rise from 2,056 to 3,083, while that of Libya rose from 26 to 61.
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