

Project Proposal: Lebanese Emigration Shift and European Immigration Policy

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Currently I am working on a project looking at the change of destination for Lebanese emigrants. Historically Lebanese emigrants have not migrated to Europe in large numbers, even though Lebanon is a former French colony. Instead they have opted for the United States and Canada, South America (and more specifically Brazil and Argentina), and Australia, although some have immigrated to France. The issue of migration is an important one for Lebanon, as the Lebanese are a highly disparate population, with roughly one million Lebanese national residing outside the country. My theory is that for Lebanese émigrés the locus of destination is beginning to shift, provided we understand two overwhelming factors: First, the tightening of American visa restrictions, and the perceived and real discrimination of Middle Easterners on the part of American immigration authorities; second, greater openness on the part of European countries, indebted to a general gradual shift on EU countries from citizenship based on *jus sanguinis* to citizenship based more on *jus soli*.

Consequently my project will look at three factors: First, I will give an account of where Lebanon's past have historically immigrated to, focusing on the period past 1975, when the Lebanese civil war began. Then I will roughly look at the shift in American immigration policy post-September 11. Third, I will look at arguments supporting the claim that Europe is becoming more responsive to incoming immigrants. This will focus on the fact that Europe is now locale of immigration and not emigration, and that the broadening of the European Union, specifically with respect to affecting immigration policy, is creating a more inviting locus for potential immigrants. After all of this, I will

contribute my own research concerning the desire on the part of potential destinations on the part of potential Lebanese émigrés.

Given the almost constant instability of the Lebanese state (from disruption from within and without) coupled with the relatively high level of education among Lebanese citizens, it is understandable that Lebanon would exhibit a high rate of migration. Currently Lebanon has a population of approximately 3.8 million¹, and estimates put the number of Lebanese émigrés at anywhere between half a million² and a highly speculative fifteen million, although the real and relevant number is probably closer to the former. However, it is estimated that during the civil war period of 1975-90 roughly one million Lebanese emigrated³. Most of these Lebanese nationals left for other Arab countries and North and South America, with the bulk of the remainder immigrating to Australia, Europe and the African continent⁴. Given the continuing crises in Lebanon, it is likely that Lebanese emigration is going to continue, although certainly not in its civil war numbers. Thus, to understand Lebanese migration we should also understand the changes in policy to preferred destination, i.e., the levels of openness of America and the EU.

As we have seen America has typically been a destination for Lebanese migrants. However, given the recent changes in American immigration policy this is deemed to change. In the aftermath of Sept. 11 the United States made hasty changes to its immigration policies, many specifically targeting Arabs or Muslims: deporting individuals rose to record numbers⁵ (Johnson & Trujillo, 3); requiring “special registration” for Muslim and Arab foreigners⁶ (ibid., 14); secret immigration hearings for individual suspected of terrorism⁷ (ibid., 16); increasing citizenship standards to work⁸

(ibid., 19); and cracking down on immigration more generally. These have pushed many away from immigrating to the United States, and in particular it has alienated Middle Easterners from residing on American soil. Furthermore, it has discouraged citizens of Middle Eastern countries from immigrating to the United States.

The third part of my project will survey literature on the status of immigration policy across the EU, looking at whether or not European countries are opening or closing their doors to immigrants. My theory is that via the EU, and the sort of radical moves away from state sovereignty that it has engendered along with the general shift from *jus sanguinis* immigration law to the more immigrant-friendly *jus soli* philosophy⁹, Europe is moving closer to a more nominally pluralistic environment, and subsequently, European states' policies will be more open to immigration.

Finally, if I can, very simply, show that America is tightening its restrictions and immigrant appeal while Europe is moving in the opposite direction, then I will focus my shift from the destination countries to Lebanon. I will randomly survey members of the middle class, particularly university students, asking where members of their family have historically gone (since almost every Lebanese has family abroad, this is a meaningful question), if they are planning on immigration after graduation, and if so, where would they like to go. I believe that there is a shift right now, reflected not only in the immigration policies of Europe and the US, but in the desire among potential Lebanese émigrés to prioritize Europe in a novel way. Correspondingly, I think Europe is moving towards a position amiable to this desire.

1 CIA Factbook, <https://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/le.html>

2 Fargues, 2005; p 10

3 Ed. Albert Hourani and Nadim Shehadi. *The Lebanese in the World: A Century of Emigration*. (The Centre for Lebanese Studies in association with I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd Publishers, London; 1991??) 610.

4 Ibid., 608.

5 Kevin B. Johnson and Bernard Trujillo. "Immigration Reform, National Security After September 11, and the Future of North American Integration." UC Davis Legal Studies Research Paper Series. Can be found at: p. 3.

⁶ Ibid., 14.

⁷ Ibid., 16.

⁸ Ibid., 19.

⁹ For a more detailed account of *jus soli* versus *jus sanguinis* see: Chapter 6 in Rey Koslowski. Migrants and Citizens: Demographic Change in the European State System. (Cornell University Press, London; 200). Also see: James Brown Scott, "Jus Soli and Jus Sanguinis" *The American Journal of International Law*, Vol. 24, No. 1. (Jan., 1930). 58-64.