

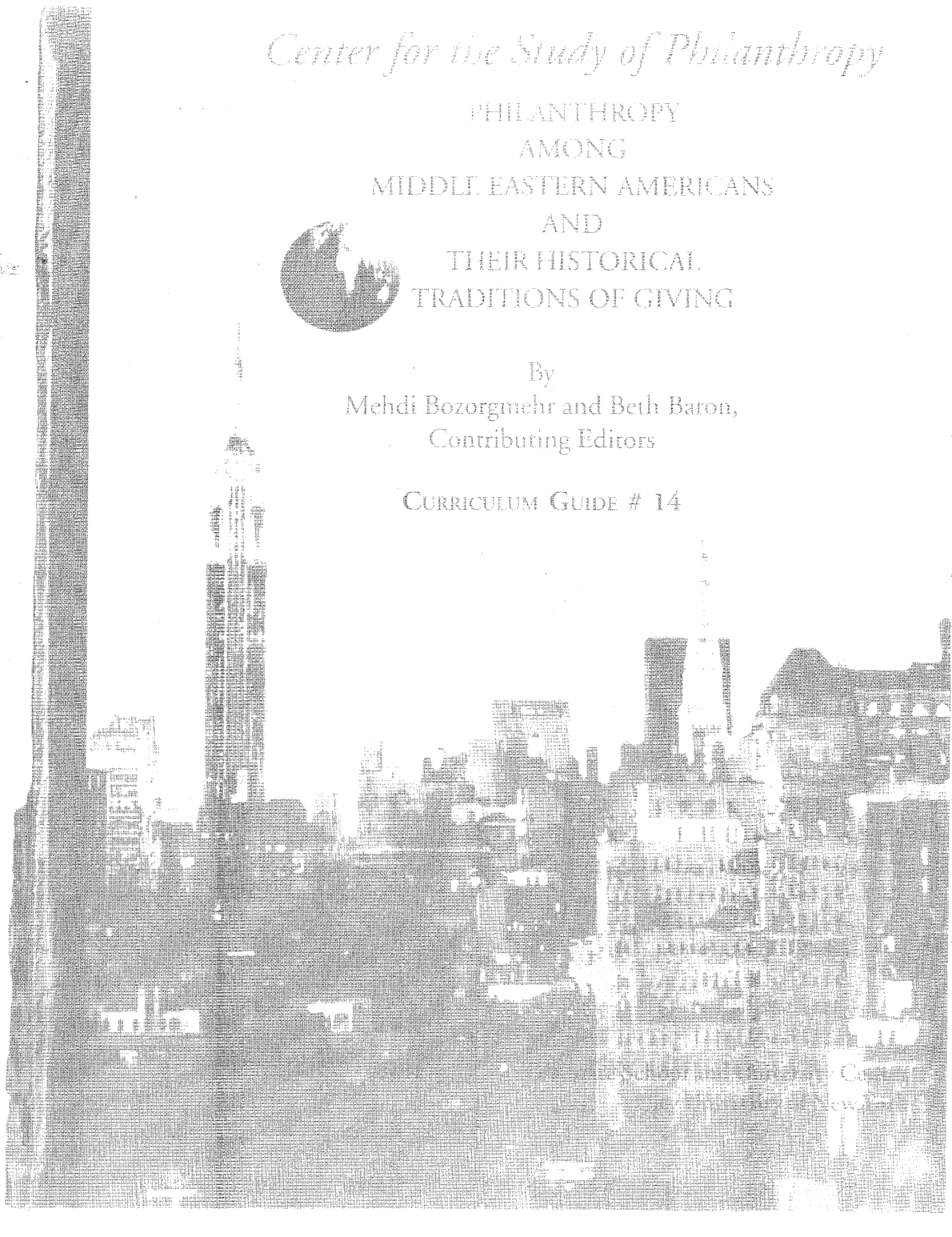
Center for the Study of Philanthropy

PHILANTHROPY AMONG MIDDLE EASTERN AMERICANS AND THEIR HISTORICAL TRADITIONS OF GIVING



By
Mehdi Bozorgmehr and Beth Baron,
Contributing Editors

CURRICULUM GUIDE # 14



*CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF
PHILANTHROPY*

*MEHDI BOZORGMEHR AND BETH BARON
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*Philanthropy Among Middle Eastern Americans
And Their Historical Traditions Of Giving*

CURRICULUM GUIDE #14

*Kathleen D. McCarthy
Center for the Study of Philanthropy
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Series Editor
Multicultural Philanthropy Curriculum Guides**

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A NOTE ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This guide was researched and written from 1999 to August 2001, prior to the attacks on the World Trade Center of 11 September 2001. That event has already tested, and will certainly reshape, Middle Eastern American philanthropic organizations.

The guide provides a tool for understanding the demography and diversity of contemporary Middle Eastern American communities, as well as their philanthropic associational activities. The annotated list of organizations and the bibliography together identify a body of existing work and highlight a starting point for further research.

In addition, the guide provides a look at the deep historical roots of charity in the Middle East, focusing on Islam's attentiveness to society's most vulnerable. In this way, the volume also contains materials for nonprofit practitioners and educators who are looking for ways to educate American society at large about the heritage of giving and voluntarism in these communities.

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September 2001

INTRODUCTION TO THE MULTICULTURAL PHILANTHROPY CURRICULUM PROJECT

Giving and voluntarism are deeply ingrained traditions in American life. Yet these activities are frequently overlooked in the curricula of the nation's colleges and universities, or mistakenly portrayed as the exclusive province of elites.

To address this, the Center for the Study of Philanthropy at The Graduate School and University Center of The City University of New York is developing a variety of materials to illuminate the significance of philanthropic activities at every level of society. A series of curriculum guides is one of several resources designed to encourage the development of undergraduate, graduate and extension courses on multicultural philanthropy.

These materials reflect a variety of disciplinary approaches, examining the ways in which twelve different (but not necessarily mutually exclusive) groups—women, Catholics, Protestants, Jews, African Americans, Latinos, Northern Europeans, Southern and Eastern Europeans, Middle Easterners, South and Southeast Asians, East Asians, and Native Americans—historically used their gifts of time and money to create nonprofit institutions, forge public/private partnerships, promote social and legislative change, build communities, and participate in public policymaking at the local, state, and federal levels.

Each curriculum guide considers a variety of factors including: 1) the traditions of charity, mutual aid, and helping behavior of different groups in the United States; 2) the ways in which these practices were adapted to the American social and political context; and 3) the role of philanthropy (i.e., the giving of time, money and/or valuables for public benefit) in enabling each group to claim a public role within the American democratic system.

Identification of the relevant literature has been another important goal. Each guide includes an annotated bibliography and additional bibliographic citations, which ultimately will also be available as part of a regularly-updated, comprehensive, on-line database on international philanthropy. Additional information on the on-line bibliography can be obtained by visiting the Center's web site at: www.philanthropy.org.

The curriculum guides and annotated bibliography, together with the other components of the initiative—volunteer guides, video/television programming, faculty seminars, and a Distinguished Lecturer series—reflect the Center's ongoing commitment to enhancing public understanding of the role that philanthropy has historically played within the multicultural mosaic of American society.

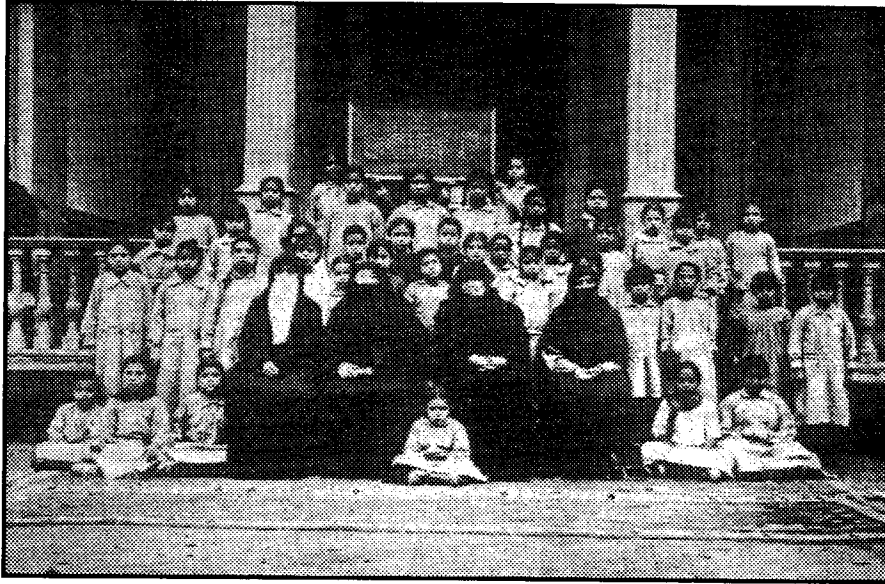
FOREWORD

The Middle East and Middle Eastern American Center (MEMEAC) at The Graduate Center, The City University of New York was founded in 2001 with a generous grant from the Ford Foundation's "Crossing Borders" program. It is the first Center in the U.S. to explicitly cover the Middle East Diaspora and combine this with the study of the Middle East region. **Mehdi Bozorgmehr** (Sociology, City College and The Graduate Center) and **Beth Baron** (History, City College and The Graduate Center), the contributing editors for this guide, are Founding Directors of MEMEAC.

The Center aims to bring together CUNY faculty with a specialization on the Middle East or Middle Easterners to work on research and teaching projects. It is currently designing a Certificate Program for students and exploring ways in which the resources in New York City can be integrated into teaching and research. It offers lectures, workshops, colloquia, and conferences to the academic community and the public. MEMEAC also conducts original research projects on the Middle East and its Diaspora, of which philanthropic activity is the first.

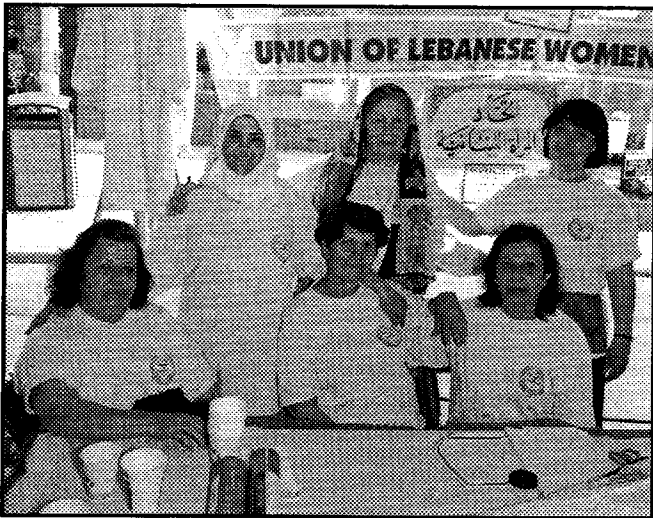
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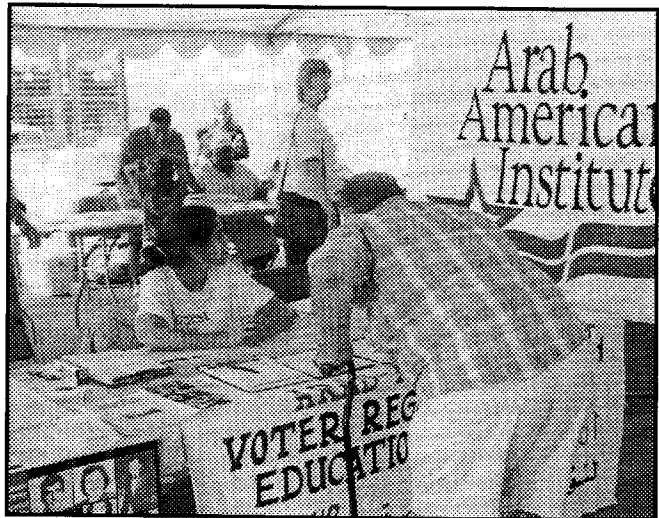


Photograph of the girls of the Institute and Workshop of the Society of Women's Awakening, the day of its opening, in Egypt.

From Majallat al-Nahda al-Nisa'iyya 3, no.7 (February 1924): 252.



Members of the Union of Lebanese Women combine traditional and contemporary, as well as secular and religious, in their organizational activities.



The Arab American Institute in action, encouraging participation in American political and civic life.

Photos by Steven J. Gold

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Preface

By Beth Baron and Mehdi Bozorgmehr

Middle Eastern Americans have not developed as extensive a network of charitable associations that are directed at communities here in the U.S. as some other immigrant groups covered in this series on multicultural philanthropy, or as might have been expected given the cultural traditions of giving in their homelands. Initially when they organized (mostly along religious lines), they tended to direct funds to concerns back in their countries of origin. Preliminary research shows, however, that Middle Eastern immigrants have begun to build up philanthropic associations that address their needs in the U.S. In this curriculum guide, we will discuss philanthropy among Middle Eastern Americans, and assess the extent and nature of these activities.

We will start by looking at the waves of immigration from the Middle East, the characteristics and adaptation of major Middle Eastern American groups (who form a heterogeneous category) and their influences on philanthropic activities. We will then turn to a history of philanthropy in the Middle East to examine indigenous traditions of giving that form the basis of charitable patterns among Middle Eastern Americans. We include a select bibliography on Middle Eastern Americans, the first of its kind, organized by major groups (Arabs, Armenians, Iranians, Israelis, and others). We also include a select bibliography on philanthropy in the Middle East.

There has been very little research on Middle Eastern Americans as a whole, and hardly any on their philanthropic associations in particular. The study of philanthropy in the Middle East is also still in an early stage. Thus, unlike other publications in this series, this guide seeks to propose only the general outlines of a curriculum. Feeling that the timing is premature, the editors would prefer to suggest areas for research in the hope of provoking interest in this important and neglected topic.

The fit between the sociological and historical sections of this guide is not perfect, partly because the population of Middle Eastern Americans does not reflect the ethnic and religious balance of the Middle East. Minorities, particularly religious minorities, have greater representation among the Middle East population in the United States than back home. Middle East migration is also selective in social class, thus some

Middle Eastern Americans of Muslim origin, particularly from the elite, are not religiously observant. Historians of philanthropy in the Middle East, however, have started with the majority population. Given the infancy of the study of philanthropy in the Middle East, it is much too early to create a tighter match. Our historical overview is a broad brushstroke designed to give a sense of the cultural context out of which Middle East immigrants have come at different moments.

The historical overview is concerned with formal as well as informal modes of giving. The latter are difficult to document and are not as likely to show up in associational philanthropic activities among Middle Eastern Americans. The historical overview suggests some patterns that may have been ruptured and others that have persisted or might be reconstituted once immigrants become more securely settled. Tentatively, we can suggest that the community-based giving in the countries of origin (e.g. feeding the neighborhood poor) does not work in the U.S. because the new communities in which immigrants find themselves are constituted in completely different ways.

We intend to continue this dialogue between past and present, the U.S. and the Middle East, and sociology and history, striving for greater insight into the issue of Middle Easterners and philanthropy in the U.S. Future research might pay greater attention to the question of gender among Middle East immigrants, and gender roles in philanthropic organizations. Finally, many Middle East immigrants come as political refugees. Thus, greater attention should also be paid to an assessment of the philanthropic response to the needs of these refugees by the more established and affluent members of Middle Eastern communities. If the response proves inadequate, charitable giving by Middle Easterners for Middle Easterners may be encouraged by drawing either on cultural traditions or the successful experiences of some Middle Eastern groups in the United States.

Part I. Middle Easterners and Philanthropy in the United States

By Mehdi Bozorgmehr

Introduction

The task of writing about Middle Eastern American philanthropy is daunting, as there is no single publication on this ethnic group as a whole¹ and no available bibliography. The study of broad ethnic groups such as Asian Americans and Hispanics is facilitated by the availability of official data. These groups organized along panethnic categories during the civil rights movements in the 1960s, and as a result lobbied for the collection of more detailed population data by official government agencies (e.g., the race question in the U.S. Census). Starting in 1970, a Hispanic origin question was added to the U.S. Census, and the Asian category was expanded to include Pacific Islanders. Middle Easterners were not as numerous or organized at the time, and hence did not make similar demands. As a result, they have been arbitrarily classified under the "white" category in the census and other governmental forms. Nevertheless, one of the unintended consequences of the ancestry question, which was first added in the 1980 census, was to provide information on persons of Middle Eastern origin. Middle Easterners are not considered a legal minority, despite being a sociological one. They identify themselves in terms of a specific national group (e.g., Iranian, Israeli), or an ethnic group (e.g., Arabs, Armenians), but not as a panethnic category. Yet Middle Eastern groups have much more in common with each other, both culturally and in characteristics, than they have with whites or even with other immigrant/ethnic groups, and hence it is meaningful to treat them as an umbrella category. Moreover, they are frequently treated as a residual category in publications based on governmentally collected data (e.g., the U.S. Census and the Immigration and Nationalization Service), after all other broad regional categories have been accounted for. Middle Eastern Americans are defined as people who trace their ancestry to the countries in the Middle East, North Africa, and now Central Asia.

The purpose of Part I of this guide is to provide an overview of the background, migration, and basic demographic and socio-economic characteristics of Middle Eastern groups in the United States. This overview is necessary to situate the Middle Eastern experience, including philanthropy, in the context of historical and contemporary immigration to the United States. Contrary to the popular stereotypes of Middle Easterners, this minority is one of the most ethnically diverse groups in America. Yet they share social and economic characteristics that set them apart from many other groups, with the possible exception of Asians, and clearly distinguish them from the turn-of-the-century immigrants to the United States. Several Middle Eastern groups, especially the foreign-born, have very high levels of education, high rates of self-employment, and a high proportion in professional specialty occupations, often exceeding the levels for the total foreign-born population, and for the native-born population of the U.S. as well.

Background

Exile or refugee status and ethnic diversity are two distinctive features of many Middle Easterners. These seemingly unrelated traits are, in reality, closely tied together. Cataclysmic events in the Middle East have produced a steady refugee flow. Many of these refugees or exiles were members of religious minority groups who suffered varying degrees of persecution during periods of rising Islamic sentiments and xenophobia. While non-Muslim minorities make up a small fraction of the overall population in the Middle East, they are over-represented among immigrants from this region to America. These minorities include Armenians, who belong to the Armenian Apostolic, Protestant and Catholic churches, and Jews from all over the Middle East; Christian sects such as Assyrians and Chaldeans from Iran and Iraq; Copts from Egypt; as well as Bahais and Zoroastrians from Iran, to name a few. Some of these groups played a classic trading minority role in Middle Eastern societies (e.g., Armenians and Jews). These occupational niches in trade and commerce explain their proclivity toward entrepreneurship. Given their generally high levels of education and occupation, Middle Easterners are highly vulnerable to assimilation. However, contrary to predictions, their rates of assimilation are low, a fact partly attributed to their entrepreneurship.

Middle Eastern immigrants originate from over twenty countries in Southwest Asia and North Africa.² With the exception of Iran, Israel, and Turkey, the remaining countries in the Middle East and North Africa

are predominantly Arab. Arabs come from a vast area stretching from Morocco to Iraq and the Gulf countries, but their language and culture is Arabic. Though there are significant differences in the vernacular, the classical Arabic of the Koran used in modernized form in the print media, legal and other official documents, unifies these diverse peoples into a socially and politically recognizable whole. Contrary to the popular stereotype, the Arab population includes Christians and Jews, although most Arabs are Muslims. Iranians are not Arabs; they speak Persian and have a distinctive culture and history. Most, but not all Israeli-born immigrants are Hebrew-speaking Jews. Armenians pride themselves in being the first nation in the world to embrace Christianity. Even after centuries of residence in various Middle Eastern countries, Armenians have maintained their distinctive language, culture and ethnic identity. Armenians are a majority population only in the newly established, independent Republic of Armenia. Because Arabs, Armenians, Iranians, and Israelis are the four largest groups of Middle Easterners in the U.S., these diaspora populations will be the focus of this guide.

The Middle East is aptly called "the cradle of civilization" since Judaism, Christianity, and Islam—three of the world's major religions—originated in the region. Christians and Jews have a small but significant presence in the region. There are also other non-Muslim minorities that add to the religious pluralism in the area. Ethnic diversity among Middle Easterners takes many forms, setting them apart from all other major ethnic groups in the United States. Like Asians and Hispanics, Middle Easterners come from disparate countries of origin. However, unlike Hispanics, and to a lesser degree Asians, religion and ethnicity further subdivide each Middle Eastern nationality. For instance, Iranian immigrants consist of not only Muslims, the majority population in Iran, but also Jews, Armenians, and smaller numbers of Assyrians, Bahais and Zoroastrians. This has to do with the phenomenon of migrant selectivity, which is particularly pronounced along ethnic and religious lines among refugees and exiles, and thus prominent among Middle Easterners. Conversely, each ethnic group consists of a multinational population; for example, Arab immigrants from nearly every country in the Middle East and North Africa are now residing in the U.S.

Whatever their nationality, religion, or ethnicity, Middle Easterners share a common history and geographical origin with some distinctive features. In the pre-colonial era, powerful Muslim empires dominated the Middle East and North Africa, and challenged Western hegemony.

The rise of Islam and the Arab conquest of the Byzantine Empire in Southwest Asia and North Africa annexed large parts of the Eastern Christian Churches (Gregorians, Copts, and Assyrian sects). The second encounter with the West was with Catholic Christianity during the Crusades. The third encounter involved European colonial incursion into the region, which began in the late 18th century and continued well after World War I. Specifically, the position of minorities deteriorated in the post-colonial era, in part as a reaction to European powers who used the minorities as intermediaries with the local majority population.

The fragility of the situation of minorities can in part be attributed to their relationship with the European colonial powers, and in part to their exclusion during the transformation from empire to nation-states, e.g., in the case of the Ottoman Empire to a Turkish or Arab nation-state. Nationalism in the region was often fused with Islam, which made the situation of religious minorities more precarious. Consequently, minorities have been over-represented among the ranks of emigrants from the Middle East. Even though all Middle Eastern and North African countries gained independence by the 1960s, the region remains economically and politically dependent in many ways on Europe and the United States. This dependence and resulting interference has not gone unchallenged; often it has resulted in outbreaks of violence. This can be seen in the protracted Arab-Israeli conflict and the earlier and current Palestinian *intifada* (uprising), the Iranian revolution, the Lebanese civil war, the Gulf war, and the rise of religious militancy. These upheavals have produced successive waves of Middle Eastern exiles and refugees to the United States. Some Middle Easterners have also come to the U.S. for economic reasons, as the next section will show.

From the Middle East to America

Although they come from many different countries, Middle Eastern immigrants can be divided into three main groupings—students, economic migrants, and exiles or refugees—which correspond to the historical context for emigration. As a part of the turn-of-the-century tidal wave of immigration, the first wave of Middle Eastern immigration started in the late 19th century and lasted until the 1920s. Since very small quotas were assigned to Middle Eastern countries under restrictive legislation, only a few Middle Easterners could immigrate to the United States at that time. The first wave included mainly Armenian refugees fleeing persecutions and massacres in the Ottoman Empire, and Syrio-Lebanese Christians, whose migration was economically

motivated. Like other immigrants at the time, Syrio-Lebanese immigrants were of peasant origins. Armenian refugees also arrived with meager resources, though most were of higher social class origins. Most of these immigrants settled on the East Coast, although some Armenians settled or resettled in Fresno, California as farmers and landowners, and Arab peddlers roamed the land. Today, second- and third-generation Armenians and Arabs in America have experienced considerable social and geographical mobility, and are dispersed throughout the U.S.

The 1965 revision of U.S. immigration laws, which abolished earlier quotas, facilitated a second major wave of migration from the Middle East. However, the impetus for the new immigration has come from the home countries. Conflicts in the region, both international (e.g., Iran-Iraq, Iraq-Kuwait) and internal (Lebanon, Iran), have forced many to seek a more secure life in the United States. Economically, massive industrialization drives in oil-producing countries greatly increased the need for highly skilled professionals, whose training could be acquired through education abroad. The tremendous availability of hard currency from oil revenues enabled the migration of Middle Easterner students who wanted to pursue college education in the United States. This student migration, especially from the Arab countries and Iran, started in the early 1970s and was made possible by the oil boom. Many of these college students, especially from Iran, have remained in the U.S. because of political and economic instability in their homelands.

For the most part, the immigrants who comprise this new, post-1965 wave are far more diverse in terms of national and socio-economic origins than their predecessors. Today's population of Middle Eastern immigrants contains groups entirely new to America since the 1970s, of whom the Iranians are the most notable example. They also come from a broader national cross-section of the Middle East: the new Arab Americans, for example, are more religiously and geographically diverse than the earlier arrivals who were mostly Christians and originated from today's Syria and especially Lebanon.

Population Size and Distribution

Despite their regional significance, Middle Easterners in the U.S. are perhaps the most neglected of all major ethnic groups in scholarly publications. This oversight cannot be attributed to the small population size of Middle Easterners. As Table 1 shows, the population of persons of

Middle Eastern descent in the U.S. was almost 1.4 million in 1990, and a decade later has certainly exceeded that figure, as the 2000 Census will soon confirm. The Middle Eastern population is substantial and rapidly increasing, mainly due to immigration. The data in Table 1 are based on the "first" ancestry reported in response to the following open-ended U.S. Census question: "What is this person's ancestry or ethnic origin?"³ Thus, the 1990 U.S. Census underestimates the actual size of the Middle Eastern population since some may have reported a non-Middle Eastern "first" ancestry and a Middle Eastern "second" one (e.g., American and Arab). Classifying Middle Easterners according to both ancestry and place of birth resulted in a higher figure (1.7 million persons) of Middle Eastern descent in the United States in 1990, but even this figure is too low.

Virtually every ethnic group claims a larger population size than reported by the census. Groups such as Middle Easterners, or its subgroups, who are not listed separately in the census forms, are especially likely to question the accuracy of the count. Still, the census figures give us an idea about the population size of Middle Eastern groups relative to each other, and even other ancestry groups. Table 1 provides specific data on the population size of the Arabs, further divided by specific subgroups. With over 700,000 persons officially counted, Arabs are the most sizable group, among whom the Lebanese with a population of 310,000 are the largest subgroup. This number clearly underestimates the true population size of Arabs in America, which some suggest is between two and a half to three million. With 268,000 and 220,000, respectively, Armenians and Iranians are the second and third largest groups. Like Arabs, Armenians are another group subject to underenumeration due to their multi-generational status and self-identification in the ancestry question. According to the official data, there seem to be as many Turks as Israelis (66,000 and 69,000, respectively). But there are more Israelis in the U.S. (about 200,000) since many were born elsewhere and then moved to Israel and obtained an Israeli citizenship. At 46,000, Christian Assyrians are the smallest of the major Middle Eastern groups in the United States. Almost half of all Middle Easterners are foreign-born, reflecting the recency of migration (see Table 1). The percentage of those foreign-born is highest among Iranians (77%) and lowest among Arabs (41%) and Armenians (45%). Since Arabs and Armenians are so numerous, they depress the overall percentage of the foreign-born among Middle Easterners. As the oldest migration flows, the two largest Arab groups (Lebanese and Syrians) have the lowest percentage of foreign-born individuals (26% and 23%, respectively). With the exception of Assyrians, approximately half and

sometimes an even higher percentage of the foreign-born are recent arrivals (1980-90 period), contributing to the rapid growth of these populations (see Table 1). In sum, the picture that emerges from Table 1 is that Middle Eastern groups consist of a sizable foreign-born population with many newcomers.

Like many other immigrants and ethnic groups, Middle Easterners are concentrated in a few states. Although Arabs are the most dispersed group in the U.S., partly due to their initial peddling occupational niche at the turn of the 20th century, their largest concentrations are in California, New York and Michigan, in that order. Both Armenians and Iranians are heavily concentrated in California, though there are sizable Armenian communities in Massachusetts and New York, and there are numerous Iranians in the New York and Washington, D.C. metropolitan areas. Israelis reside almost entirely in New York and California. California has emerged as the largest center of Middle Easterners in the United States, since three of the four largest Middle Eastern groups are concentrated there (especially in Los Angeles), followed by New York and Michigan. Not surprisingly, most of the Middle Eastern philanthropic organizations are located in these three states, as well as Washington, D.C. (see list of philanthropic organizations).

Social and Economic Characteristics

Contemporary immigrant groups to the U.S. can be classified according to their typical mode of economic adaptation, namely as manual laborers, professionals, entrepreneurs, and refugees/asylees. Of these four modes, the salaried professional/managerial and independent entrepreneurial routes are most conducive to economic success.⁴ From this perspective, Middle Eastern groups generally fall into the entrepreneurial and professional modes, and as such they are expected to be economically successful, which is indeed often the case. The analysis below is based on the published 1990 U.S. Census data, which report the basic socio-economic characteristics of Middle Eastern ancestry groups.⁵ The data are further divided by nativity, or country of birth, to distinguish between the foreign-born and native- or U.S.-born segments of each ancestry group (Tables 2 and 3).

Often arriving in the U.S. with capital, high levels of education, and professional experience, recent Middle Eastern immigrants are unlikely to follow the traditional immigrant pattern of starting out at the bottom of the socio-economic ladder. As a whole, Middle Easterners are among

the most educated groups in the U.S. Their overall level of education, as measured by the percentage who have completed bachelors degrees or higher (37.3% in Table 2), is almost twice as high as that of the U.S. native- and foreign-born populations in general (20%). Remarkably, this percentage is slightly higher for the foreign-born Middle Easterners (39%) than it is for their native-born counterparts (35%), partly due to the presence of elite exiles and former college students. Middle Easterners' levels of education, even among those groups with the lowest educational attainment, with the exception of Assyrians, exceed the national average.

Professionals, managers, and entrepreneurs predominate among Middle Easterners, both foreign- and native-born. In 1990, over one-third of Middle Easterners held managerial and professional occupations, a proportion much higher than the quarter reported for the U.S. population as a whole. These occupations were particularly prominent among the highly educated Middle Eastern groups (i.e., Egyptians, Iranians and Israelis).

Middle Easterners outpace most other major ethnic groups by a considerable extent in self-employment. Prior experience as trading minorities and independent professionals, the availability of capital, and a desire to escape discrimination in hiring and promotion are some of the factors that account for this high rate of self-employment. The rate of self-employment for all Middle Eastern groups in the U.S. is high, and often in the double-digit teens (Table 3). By excluding the incorporated self-employed in published ancestry data, however, the Census Bureau underestimates the actual rates of self-employment of groups such as Middle Easterners, whose populations consist of many self-employed professionals such as doctors, dentists and lawyers.⁶ According to an analysis of the 1990 Census, which included the incorporated self-employed, six Middle Eastern groups ranked among the top ten ancestry groups in terms of self-employment rate. Even though the first rank went to Koreans, Israelis came second, Palestinians third; Egyptians fifth; Iranians and Armenians sixth and seventh, respectively; and Lebanese tenth.⁷ The rates for Middle Eastern groups range from about 17% for the Lebanese to 22% for Israelis. These rates are slightly lower than that of Koreans (24%), who consistently rank first in entrepreneurship among all U.S. ancestry groups. However, unlike Koreans, who are an ethnically homogenous group, the presence of former trading minorities among Middle Eastern groups partly accounts for their proclivity towards entrepreneurship. For instance, with

the possible exception of Armenians from the former Soviet Union, the Armenian group is entirely made up of these former commercial minorities. According to the U.S. Census classification of Israeli ancestry, which excludes Arabs, Israelis consist only of Jews, a group known for its cultural entrepreneurship. Jews also make up a substantial segment of Iranians, thus pushing upward an already high rate of self-employment among this population. Arabs include fewer former minorities (e.g., Egyptian Copts) than the other major groups. Nevertheless, the Arab group has a long and well-defined history of commerce in the U.S., starting with the original Syrio-Lebanese peddlers. The rates of self-employment among women for all Middle Eastern groups are substantially lower than their male counterparts, thus depressing the rates reported in Table 3. The two major consequences of concentration in self-employment are opportunities for upward social mobility, and paradoxically resistance to assimilation, since immigrant entrepreneurs often work in a co-ethnic milieu.

Although many Middle Easterners in the United States are professionals and entrepreneurs, there is variation among specific groups. Egyptians, Iranians, Israelis, and Turks have the highest percentages of professionals, reflecting their high levels of education. Similarly, foreign-born Armenians and Palestinians are the most entrepreneurial. This is not to suggest that all Middle Easterners fit the professional/managerial or entrepreneurial types; the most visible exceptions are the sizable Arab working-class population in Detroit, Michigan. The next section turns to a discussion of philanthropic activities among Middle Eastern groups in the U.S.

Philanthropy

As broadly defined by the Center for the Study of Philanthropy, philanthropy includes giving, voluntarism, and non-profit activities by individuals, foundations, and corporations. In this guide, however, we use the more conventional definition and focus only on giving and charitable activities. Using the broad definition, i.e., the inclusion of voluntarism, exaggerates the extent of philanthropy among Middle Eastern Americans. Moreover, it is harder to document voluntary activities than charitable ones.

Variations among ethnic groups in these kinds of activities is a function of the cultural traditions in the homelands (the subject of Part II of this guide), the involvement of immigrants in these traditions, migration process, and finally the post-migration creation or recreation of these

benevolent actions. Unfortunately, little precise information is available on these components of philanthropy, since the evidence on immigrants and ethnic groups is often collected for purposes other than that undertaken here. While piecing together impressionistic and anecdotal evidence about the giving patterns of individuals or the nonprofit activities of associations may provide some insight into the behavior of national groups, it is not a good substitute for hard evidence. This is why further research in this area is recommended.

As noted by Phillips and Gold in their study of Jewish Philanthropy, most research has emphasized the collective basis of philanthropy, drawing on a long tradition of self-help among this persecuted minority group. This collectivism can either be formal through organizations, or informal, through friends, family, business, or professional contacts. Formal philanthropy is easier to document since it is accomplished through associations or organizations. Thus, due to budget limitations for research, we focus on this type of philanthropic activity.

The more assimilated a group, the less its sense of collectivism. The relationship between philanthropy and assimilation, however, is not as clear-cut as it may seem. While lack of assimilation enhances community members' sense of collective obligation, it may not necessarily increase giving as newly arrived immigrants struggle to gain a foothold in the new country. Established Jewish communities are noteworthy for their higher rates of giving than the communities of new immigrants who have not yet developed linkages to existing institutions such as the Jewish Federation. Jewish immigrants from Iran are culturally unfamiliar with the practice of making financial donations to organizations since Iranian society is not very associational. Israelis are not used to donating to federations since they come from a religious/socialist state. In Israel, government funds support religious and social services, whereas in the U.S. these activities are often privately funded. American Jews often criticize their inaction, and cannot comprehend it especially in light of these immigrants' relative affluence compared to early Jewish immigrants. One Israeli responded to the question "Why don't you donate?" with "Because I don't know where the money goes to and sometimes the money that you're donating here goes to places that I don't think it should go to and you don't have no control of it. When you will show me what control you have on the money, I'll start donating."⁸

The selected list of philanthropic organizations in Part III was compiled through contact with knowledgeable persons about various Middle

Eastern American communities. Information about specific organizations and their activities was gathered through web research. We have only listed major, and currently active, organizations. The annotation under each organization briefly describes the mission and objectives of each organization. Contact information for each organization is also included.

It goes without saying that groups with a longer history of immigration to the U.S. (Syrio-Lebanese and Armenians) have older and more established organizations, whereas new immigrants such as Iranians are still in the process of developing organized charitable activities. The emergence of the new second generation of these Middle Easterners will invariably lead to more philanthropic organizations among these groups since philanthropy is an integral part of American life. Philanthropy is particularly prevalent among the affluent, and persons of Middle Eastern origin are increasingly entering their ranks.

Given the overlap of ethnicity, nationality, and religion among this population mentioned above, it is difficult to organize this list on any one dimension. The philanthropic associations are organized by nationality (Iranian), ethno-religiosity (Armenian, Jewish/Sephardic), panethnicity (Arab), as well as religion (Muslim and Druze).⁹ The religious organizations, especially Muslim, are not exclusively Middle Eastern in membership, though Middle Easterners make up a sizable component of the membership of these organizations. Some nationality-specific organizations are listed under the broader co-religionist organizations (e.g., Armenian and Jewish Iranian organizations are not listed under the Iranian category), thus giving the impression that fewer philanthropic organizations exist for this group than is actually the case. In general, religious minorities from the Middle East have developed extensive philanthropic organizations relative to their small populations, in part because of their pre-migration experience, and in part because they can tap into existing co-religionist associations in the U.S. This applies to Jews from Iran and other parts of the Middle East, but not to Jews from Israel who constitute the majority in that country. Although Israelis come from the Middle East, about half of them are of European origin. When they first immigrated to Israel, they transplanted European traditions and organizational skills. Furthermore, Israeli immigrants are drawn from the highly educated strata of their society, and therefore are more inclined than other Middle Eastern Jews to participate in organizations, including philanthropic ones.

We have only identified one philanthropic group that cuts across the entire region, the Middle East Children's Alliance (MECA). But several Muslim organizations exist which are open to contribution by Muslims regardless of nationality.

Arab-American organizations include panethnic types such as the Arab American Institute, as well as nationality-specific organizations concerning Lebanon, Syria and Yemen. Syrio-Lebanese organizations were established very early (e.g., Ehden Lebanese American Club in 1915).

National organizations are located in Washington, D.C., and New York City, whereas localized organizations correspond to the areas of concentration of Middle Eastern subgroups. Thus, many Arab-American organizations are located in Michigan, Armenian organizations in California and Massachusetts, and Israeli organizations in New York.

There are some exclusively women's organizations such as Hadassah (Jewish), the Syrian American Women Association and the Armenian International Women's Association. In one instance, Chaldeans from Iraq have joined forces with Arab Americans to form a council in southeastern Michigan.

In terms of substantive focus, the philanthropic Middle Eastern organizations reflect the major groups' histories, migration process, and adaptation problems. Accordingly, philanthropy is directed towards the homeland, refugees, and life in the diaspora. Arab and Jewish organizations are particularly concerned with the resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict, which is less tendentious between Arabs and Jews in the U.S. Thus many of the Arab organizational activities are directed toward social services and economic aid in the Arab Middle East. Some Jewish organizations receive assistance from the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS) in helping refugees from the Middle East resettle in the U.S. Muslim philanthropy is principally concerned with advocacy to challenge the negative stereotype associated with this group, as well as the usual social services for the Muslim community of believers. Many Armenian charitable organizations emerged at the time of the massacres to attend to the needs of Armenians as they were dispersed throughout the world. Notable among Armenian philanthropic associations is the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) established in Egypt in 1906 (see Part III). Philanthropic activities among this population have been oriented lately toward improving living conditions in the newly-established Republic of Armenia (1991—replacing the former Armenia

SSR), and particularly to relief for the survivors of Armenia's recent devastating earthquake in 1988. As a stateless people for nearly a century, Armenians have been dispersed throughout the world, and thus many of their charitable activities are directed towards the diaspora.

In sum, our preliminary research has shown that philanthropy among Middle Easterners is not negligible. Further research, especially on informal philanthropic activities, will reveal many more charitable activities among this population. The purpose of this guide is to stimulate that kind of research in the hope of identifying areas where need is most acute.

**POPULATION OF MIDDLE EASTERN ANCESTRY GROUPS BY
NATIVITY AND YEAR OF ENTRY, UNITED STATES, 1990**

TABLE 1

Ancestry Group	All Persons	% Foreign- Born	IMMIGRATED 1980-90	
			Number	% Foreign- Born
Egyptian	73,097	69.2	25,234	49.9
Iraqi	20,657	69.5	6,336	44.1
Lebanese	309,578	25.5	38,602	49.0
Palestinian	44,651	56.9	11,487	45.2
Syrian	95,155	23.4	11,366	51.1
Other Arab	173,253	57.9	57,335	57.1
Total Arab	716,391	40.7	150,360	51.5
Armenian	267,975	44.5	60,238	50.6
Assyrian	46,099	58.6	10,250	37.9
Iranian	220,714	77.0	82,180	48.4
Israeli	69,018	56.6	21,980	56.3
Turkish	66,492	53.5	16,724	47.0
Total Middle Eastern	1,386,689	46.3	341,732	50.5
Total U.S. Population	248,709,873	7.9	19,767,316	43.8

* Ancestry is based on first ancestry reported in response to the following open-ended census question: "What is this person's ancestry or ethnic origin?"

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1990 Census of Population, Ancestry of the Population in the United States (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Commerce, 1993), Table 1.

TABLE 2

**EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF MIDDLE EASTERN ANCESTRY
GROUPS BY NATIVITY, UNITED STATES, 1990**

Ancestry Group	% Completed Bachelors Degree and Higher*		
	All Persons	Native-Born	Foreign-Born
Egyptian	60.4	47.7	61.3
Iraqi	34.2	53.0	32.4
Lebanese	34.6	34.5	34.9
Palestinian	36.6	45.1	34.5
Syrian	29.3	27.9	32.9
Other Arab	33.2	28.4	34.4
Total Arab	36.3	33.1	39.4
Armenian	28.6	38.1	19.2
Assyrian	18.5	35.6	13.1
Iranian	56.2	51.1	56.4
Israeli	42.3	48.5	40.2
Turkish	40.9	36.4	43.3
Total Middle Eastern	37.3	34.5	39.3
Total U.S. Population	20.3	20.3	20.4

* Persons 25 years and older.

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1990 Census of Population, Ancestry of the Population in the United States (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Commerce, 1993), Table 3.

**PROFESSIONAL/MANAGERIAL AND SELF-EMPLOYED WORKERS,
MIDDLE EASTERN ANCESTRY GROUPS BY NATIVITY, U. S., 1990**

TABLE 3

Ancestry Group	% Professionals and Managers*			% Self-Employed**		
	All Persons	NB	FB	All Persons	NB	FB
Egyptian	45.6	36.9	46.6	8.9	5.2	9.4
Iraqi	33.0	48.4	30.1	13.3	11.3	13.6
Lebanese	38.1	38.6	36.9	10.4	9.9	11.7
Palestinian	33.3	34.6	32.9	14.9	9.6	16.8
Syrian	34.1	34.0	34.2	9.7	8.2	14.2
Other Arab	30.2	29.5	30.4	11.8	8.6	12.8
Total Arab	36.4	36.8	35.9	10.8	9.3	12.3
Armenian	35.2	38.9	29.6	12.7	10.3	16.2
Assyrian	23.0	38.2	16.7	10.9	8.9	11.7
Iranian	43.1	34.4	43.8	12.4	7.8	12.7
Israeli	44.6	44.1	44.8	12.3	9.2	13.5
Turkish	40.1	39.2	40.6	10.0	8.5	10.9
Total Middle Eastern	37.4	37.6	37.3	11.4	9.5	12.8
Total U.S. Population	26.4	26.8	22.2	7.4	7.4	7.4

* Employed persons 16 years and older

** Employed persons 16 years and older. Includes unpaid family workers but excludes self-employed persons whose business was incorporated. NB = Native-born, FB = Foreign-born

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1990 Census of Population, Ancestry of the Population in the United States (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Commerce, 1993), Table 4.

Endnotes

¹ For exceptions, see Mehdi Bozorgmehr and Alison Feldman, eds., Middle Eastern Diaspora Communities in America (New York: Kevorkian Center for Near Eastern Studies, New York University, 1996); Mehdi Bozorgmehr, Claudia Der-Martirosian, and Georges Sabagh, "Middle Easterners: A New Kind of Immigrant," in Ethnic Los Angeles, ed. Roger Waldinger and Mehdi Bozorgmehr, 345-378 (New York: Russell Sage, 1996).

² Although Afghanistan is excluded, it was a part of past empires in the Middle East. Sudan, Somalia, and Mauritania are also excluded, as are the newly-established independent states with majority Muslim and Armenian populations in the former Soviet Union. Sudan and Somalia are Arabic-speaking countries, and Mauritania has some Arabic-speaking populations, and as such are sometimes included among Arabs.

³ Since the Census Bureau is legally proscribed from collecting data on religion, it does not code reported ancestries that are strictly religious in character (e.g., Jewish).

⁴ Alejandro Portes and Ruben Rumbaut, Immigrant America (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1990).

⁵ The foreign-born and ancestry data from the Census 2000 are not yet available.

⁶ This explains the discrepancy between the above data and those presented in Table 3 on Egyptians, a group with many self-employed professionals.

⁷ In-Jin Yoon, On My Own: Korean Business and Race Relations in America (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), Table 1.4.

⁸ Quoted in Bruce Phillips and Steven Gold, "The Communal Dimensions of Federation Involvement: A Qualitative Study of Jewish Philanthropy." Draft report to the Aspen Foundation, 1996, 66.

⁹ The Druze are from Lebanon, Syria and Israel. They have their own distinctive identity, religious traditions and practices.



Part II. An Historical Overview of Charity in the Middle East

By Mine Ener

Introduction

Charity and care for the poor and needy are essential features of Islamic societies. Thomas Thornton, visiting the Ottoman Empire in the first decades of the nineteenth century, described how Islam was imbued with a genuine spirit of piety and noted that as a religion it was best characterized by its acts of public utility.¹ Hospitality to strangers and giving alms to the poor were important virtues of this Islamic society. Thornton noted how a peasant offered the corner of his hut to a traveler, and owners of gardens and orchards did not impose rights to proprietorship if a person were to enter to take some fruit.² Charity and the incumbence upon Muslims to “do good” is put forth in the Koran. The Koran dictates that alms are to be given to—among others—the poor and needy, converts, and travelers. *Sura* 9:60 (“repentance”) reads:

The alms are for the poor and the needy, and those who collect them, and those whose hearts are to be reconciled [converts], and to free the captives and the debtors, and for the cause of God, and for the wayfarers; a duty imposed by God. God is knower, wise.

Hence, the compassion and welcome displayed to the poor and travelers (*ibn al-sabil*, or wayfarers) fit within an ethos of charity mandated by religion.

Islam’s attentiveness to society’s most vulnerable was similar to Judaic-Christian traditions of assistance to the poor (including, for example, the imposition of a poor-tax, the *zakat*, similar to the contributions Jewish community members made toward their needy co-religionists). It emerged within the very context in which this religion was revealed

to the Prophet Muhammad in the seventh century. The number of Muslims was small and there was great necessity in affording them all protection. In addition to the hospitality to those in need made mandatory in the Koran and the *Hadith* (the sayings and actions attributed to the Prophet Muhammad), as the Islamic Empire expanded it synthesized charitable practices of other societies in which it came into contact. Hence, for example, Turkic and Persio-Iranian customs of a ruler displaying his benevolence through feeding his men at his table came to influence a tradition of caring and feeding within Islamic society, and, as illustrated below, influenced practices of imperial and public displays of charity in the Ottoman Empire.

Charity, in Islamic societies, is deemed a meritorious act, a way in which a Muslim can atone for sins, and also a means through which the bestowers of benevolence bring themselves closer to God. *Sadaka*, the giving of alms, has never been intended to be ostentatious nor is it a means to call attention to one's benevolence in public. "Charity," remarked Thornton, citing the Persian poet Jami, "was comparable to musk." Its substance, "though concealed from the sight, is discovered by the grateful odour which it diffuses."³

As we look most specifically at charity in the Middle East we see that Muslims throughout this region have practiced charitable giving in a multitude of ways. Yet the unostentatious nature of charity (the way in which an individual was not supposed to use charity to draw attention to him or herself), as well as the means by which charity was a day-to-day feature of local communities and kin-groups, inhibits our ability to fully document the extent of charitable practice in this society. We know that families (historically, as well as in the contemporary period) frequently took in relatives' orphaned children and destitute girls. These were often taken in as servants and, in exchange for their assistance, received food and clothing, a roof over their heads, familial care, and tutelage.

At the level of the community, in urban areas, neighborhoods watched out for their own, with richer members of the community distributing food and clothing on religious occasions and even going so far as to adopt poorer families who expected forms of assistance. For example, tables were (and continue to be) set up in a neighborhood during the month of Ramadan where the poor broke their fast at sunset, and an allotment of meat and clothing was distributed to poorer families on the occasion of the *'Aid al-Fitr* and *'Aid al-Ihda*. Similarly, beggars in the nineteenth century, as described by European visitors to Cairo and

Discussion Topics

- Consider the importance of religion and family in charitable practices in the Middle East. Do other factors/forces influence charitable actions, and if so what are they?
- Discuss whether these influences and practices are similar to or different from those of other communities and regions. How do they compare with those of your own ethnic or religious background/group?

Istanbul, for example, were sure to receive enough food and basic assistance to ensure their survival.

In the description provided by the Baroness Minutoli, resident in Cairo in the first half of the nineteenth century, we learn that shopkeepers typically provided scraps of food to beggars who passed by their shops and stands. Beggars who congregated outside of mosques in nineteenth-century Istanbul, noted Reverend Walsh, were also sure to receive alms from Muslims as they exited the mosques. Beggars frequently solicited alms through the sale of small items and trinkets in the streets of the city.⁴ In rural areas, communities felt a collective responsibility toward their poorer members, even when those members were not close kin. Such forms of communal obligation continue in contemporary Turkey, where village inhabitants have collective strategies for survival and assistance. They build homes for their neighbors and provide care for the elderly in their community who are without kin or other means of support.

Kin networks in the Middle East, like those of urban areas of Europe and North America, were an important source of support. As in the case of the West, families in Middle Eastern countries continued to live in close proximity to one another even after marriage so as to ensure sources of support.

Familiarity—and a common cause—meant that charity was also practiced within religious communities. Historically, Christians and Jews in the Middle East provided for the needy among their co-religionists. As in the case of Muslims, Christians and Jews endowed property and gave alms to support the poor. Within the Jewish community, collective (and mandatory) means of relief were achieved through a form of taxation. As Abraham Marcus argues, ensuring care for the poor members of their communities was intended as a defense against conversion. Minority religious groups' impoverished members might be tempted to convert to escape the financial burden of the poll taxes.⁵

As the above accounts of families and neighbors taking care of their poorer members illustrate, a sense of obligation to one's relatives and to the needy was infused throughout Middle Eastern society. In addition to acknowledging the importance of the "safety net of support" maintained by family and kin, this guide seeks to explore other ways in which charity was practiced within the Middle East. Its focus is predominantly urban and, to a great extent, centers primarily upon the Muslim community. As studies of poverty and charity in the Middle East are at the most

preliminary stage, our examination of the practice of charity is largely restricted to the urban areas of Aleppo, Cairo, Istanbul, and Tunis.

Documenting the day-to-day practice of charity is difficult. Yet it is in the realm of ceremonies—local and community-centered ceremonies such as the nightly *iftar* tables during the month of Ramadan and the distribution of food and clothing to the poor at religious holidays as well as imperial manifestations of charitable giving—and thanks to the endurance of Islamic works of architecture that we have the most extensive wealth of materials bearing witness to the historic practice of Islamic forms of charity and philanthropy.

Background Readings

Carol Delaney, *The Seed and the Soil: Gender and Cosmology in Turkish Village Society* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), see pages 151-52 for a discussion on networks of support in twentieth-century Turkish villages.

Michael Dols, *Majnun: The Madman in Medieval Islamic Society* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992).

Peter Mandler, "Poverty and Charity in the Nineteenth-Century Metropolis: An Introduction," in *The Uses of Charity: The Poor on Relief in the Nineteenth-Century Metropolis*, 1-38 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990).

Abraham Marcus, *The Middle East on the Eve of Modernity: Aleppo in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989).

Norman Stillman, "Charity and Social Services in Medieval Islam," *Societas*, 1975: 105-15.

Public Manifestations of Benevolence

As we look most specifically at the Ottoman Empire (late 14th century-1922), we see that the very act of feeding the poor was rich with symbolism characteristic of the Ottoman state, and the act of feeding went well beyond individual communities or neighborhoods. As a

Discussion Topic

• For centuries, in the Ottoman Empire, and elsewhere, ceremony and symbolism were important elements of poor relief. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages—both for the givers and recipients of such relief—of linking care for the needy with acts of religious and royal celebration.

practice stemming from Turkic and Persian traditions, as well as Islam, Ottoman rulers fed their subordinates at nightly *iftar* during the month of Ramadan and also distributed (sometimes personally) food to the poor during the *Aid al-Adha*. Soup kitchens established by Ottoman rulers and their families in religiously significant and administratively important cities of the empire (such as Medina, Mecca, Jerusalem, and Istanbul) were a further extension of the patrimonial symbolism that pervaded the very act of feeding the poor. Through representing the means by which the Sultan bestowed his benevolence on the poor, soup kitchens and other ceremonies of food distribution served to strengthen the bonds between the ruler and his subjects.⁶

Ceremonies in which sultans partook at specific religious holidays and the celebrations that were staged to mark ascension to the throne, or to herald the birth or circumcision of a son, were another important moment at which charity was distributed and the bonds between the ruler and his subjects were strengthened. At royal circumcision ceremonies, a number of poor or orphaned boys were frequently chosen to be circumcised along with the ruler's sons, thus further exemplifying the patrimonial connections between the ruler and the Muslims from among the populace. During royal celebrations, food and money were distributed to all in attendance.

The poor and the general population of the Ottoman Empire, and other Islamic societies preceding it, benefitted from royal ceremonies. Rulers of the numerous Islamic empires who governed Egypt, for example, distributed food and money to the general population (as well as to the poor and officials) at public ceremonies marking royal events, the rise of the Nile, and religious festivals. The Abbasids, during their rule from the capital of Baghdad, also partook in public ceremonies. Like the ceremonies of the Ottomans in later centuries, each occasion marked the symbolic connection between the rulers and their subjects.

Such ceremonies, however, represent an ephemeral and somewhat impractical form of poor relief. They marked an occasion and solidified an Islamic ruler's obligation toward his populace, yet they did not provide long term assistance to the poor and needy of a society nor did they represent a viable option of care for the destitute who experienced either chronic or acute cases of poverty. Public ceremonies, arguably, benefitted the ruler's attempts to demonstrate legitimacy, but they did not constitute a means of welfare. For the welfare aspect of Middle Eastern societies, we must look to another form of assistance which served religious, social, and economic purposes: the system of religious endowments.

Religious endowments (*waqf*) were established by rulers and statesmen and by private individuals. Combined with community and local forms of poor relief, institutions funded through these endowments provided a range of options for poor relief. Imperial *waqf* served to emphasize, for pious and political purposes, the benevolence of rulers and their concern for the health and well-being of their subjects.

Background Readings

Nabia Abbott, Two Queens of Baghdad: The Mother and Wife of Harun al-Rashid (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980).

Paula Sanders, Ritual, Politics, and the City in Fatimid Cairo (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), *for a discussion of ceremonials in Fatimid Egypt, see 72, 79-84.*

Institutions Funded through Religious Endowments

The institution of *waqf* was a means by which an individual (a private individual or a ruler or members of his family) designated the income from property (such as shops or land) to go toward the foundation and/or upkeep of a particular charitable institution. Since business enterprises (such as shops and other structures intended for commerce) were frequently identified as *waqf*, we find that such businesses were located in close proximity to mosque complexes.

In addition to benefitting society as a whole, the creation of religious endowments served numerous personal economic ends. For example, in theory, *waqf* property remained inalienable in perpetuity, was not subject to taxation, and could not be seized by the state. Designating one's heirs as beneficiaries or managers of religious endowments protected property from being appropriated by the state or divided following death and also enabled specific family members to profit from the endowments. With this end in mind, women frequently established religious endowments so as to "safeguard their own property and its income from encroachment by their husbands and their husbands' families."⁷ At times of economic or political instability, additionally, designating property as religious endowments ensured that the property would not be confiscated by the state and hence enabled individuals such as Mamluk⁸ emirs to not only amass large amounts of property but

also ensured that they could maintain this wealth after their fall from power and pass on these riches to their own progeny.

Institutions financed through religious endowments that were established by Ottoman rulers, statesmen, and their families benefitted the general public as well as those who were designated as particularly needy of assistance. Religious endowments created the vast infrastructure necessary for commerce and trade as well as the very sanitation apparatuses of a city or town. *Sabils* (water fountains) set along public thoroughfares granted all who passed by clean water and refreshment. Bridges were founded and maintained through religious endowments, as were waterworks. Caravanserais and sufi lodges (also funded through religious endowments) constituted institutions in which those in need could find temporary shelter, a meal, or water to drink. A key characteristic of these institutions was the means by which, in the words of Busbecq, a Flemish diplomat resident in Istanbul in the sixteenth century, such institutions “helped not only everyone, but everyone equally.”⁹ Mosques also were another example of a public institution founded and supported through religious endowments. These structures served as more than just places of worship; they also were places in which the weary could rest and wash. Attached to the more prominent and richly endowed mosques were vast complexes which included soup kitchens, schools, and, in some cases, hospitals.

Mosques, like churches and synagogues elsewhere (and at other times), were at the center of distribution of assistance to the poor. Imperially supported mosques frequently had attached to them other institutions which also served the poor and the community at large. The mosque complex of the Mamluk Sultan Qala’un, established in the thirteenth century in Cairo, included a hospital and a school for orphans. Following the Ottoman conquest, mosques of Istanbul were endowed by the Sultan and his family and staff, and were strategically located throughout the city. That of Istanbul’s conquerer, Mehmed II, initially functioned as the city’s central treasury and distribution point for salaries and pensions to the empire’s disabled soldiers and their families or the widows and families of the deceased from among the military. Rules and regulations mandating the services to be provided through the *imaret* (soup kitchen) connected to this mosque designated the persons who were to be recipients of food and shelter. Food was designated for this institution’s 140 guests, 600 students, then its employees; if food was left over, widows and orphans of the neighborhood had first priority.

As the Ottoman capital, Istanbul was particularly well endowed with mosques and accompanying institutions which provided for the poor of this city and beyond. Evliya Celebi, remarking upon the *imaret* of Istanbul, noted that, having traveled through 19 different dominions over the course of 51 years, the *imaret* of this city were the best and most extensive that he had seen anywhere.¹⁰ Popular knowledge about the availability of poor relief, in fact, served as a draw for the empire's poor. The *imaret*, which constituted a kitchen, an eating area, rooms for visitors, and a pantry for storing food, were a place in which the destitute from within Istanbul, as well as recent migrants in need, would receive both short and long term assistance. Contemporary *imaret* in Istanbul continue to provide food to the poor of this city and serve as distribution points for meat during the month of Ramadan and religious holidays.

Hospitals were another institution frequently built alongside imperial-funded mosques. One example of such a richly endowed hospital was an institution attached to the mosque complex of the Mamluk Sultan Qala'un (completed in 1284). With revenues to keep it functioning coming from lands in Egypt, public baths, caravanserais, and other investments, the complex Qala'un commissioned to have built included a hospital, a mosque, and a school for orphans. The hospital itself was immense: there were separate sections for the blind, for those needing surgery and for patients suffering from stomach ailments, as well as separate halls for women and men. Hospitals frequently included sections for the insane, as well as training facilities for doctors. Hospitals also functioned as places where the indigent resided for long periods of time. Nancy Gallagher discusses how the Maristan of Tunis, founded in 1662, included not only medical facilities but also was intended for "the poor who had no shelter nor persons to care for them in the city."¹¹

Educational facilities were also a target of charity. Endowments funded the establishment and upkeep of schools and they ensured the payment of stipends and the provisioning of food to students and learned scholars.

Alongside the very public service-oriented role of the institutions funded through imperial endowments, their establishment also spoke to and advertised the beneficence of a particular ruler and served as a lasting legacy of his charity and piety. The skyline of Istanbul and major cities throughout the Middle East are graced with the silhouettes of mosques and their accompanying institutions. Their continued presence and upkeep bears witness to the centrality of their role in the Ottoman Empire and Islam's heritage of piousness and charity. During the time of their establishment, they represented their founders' piety

Discussion Topics

- Examine the motivations (religious, political, and/or social) that influenced a ruler or private citizens to build or support charitable works and institutions.
- Discuss the function the waqf plays in Islamic Society.
- Describe the distinct characteristics of charity by and for women. Consider how such charity reflects the place of women in Islamic society.

and commitment to provisioning for the needy. The creation of religious endowments was a means by which, like other manifestations of charity, the founder brought him or herself closer to God.

The very placement of imperial mosque complexes also speaks to the political motivations behind their founding. These complexes were frequently built in important administrative centers as well as in religiously significant cities. Zubayda, the wife of the Abbasid ruler Harun al-Rashid, like her mother-in-law Khayzuran, established numerous charitable works, including wells and water conduits in the vicinity of Mecca. During the reign of the Sultan Suleyman (sixteenth century), six mosque complexes were built in the Ottoman capital of Istanbul. Family members, such as his wife Hurrem, also had endowed in their name other charitable institutions, such as a mosque complex in Jerusalem which included a soup-kitchen, hospital, and school.

Women of the royal family recognized the vulnerability of poor women in Ottoman society. For this reason, many of their charitable actions centered on poor women. For example, one member of the royal family singled out as meriting charity orphan girls who were unable to marry due to a lack of financial means; another female member of the Ottoman household bequeathed funds toward the ransom of Muslim prisoners of war and requested female captives be released as a first priority.

The strategic considerations that went into the location of imperial *waqf* left many major urban areas, as well as the rural countryside, outside of the purview of spaces designated for these forms of construction as well as the services they provided. In areas where imperial forms of endowments had not provided hospitals and soup kitchens, inhabitants were dependent upon family and the community, the first line of defense when one fell ill or needed assistance.

Private individuals also were active in creating religious endowments. Though few could afford to establish large mosque complexes, individuals' smaller endowments benefitted society in a number of ways. Individuals designated land and other property (such as shops) as *waqf*, with the revenue from this property intended for the family of the founder, and when the family line died out, the community at large. (This type of endowment was known as an *waqf ahli*, or a familial endowment.) Alternatively, a founder of a religious endowment could designate the poor of one's community as the immediate beneficiaries (a *waqf khayri*—benevolent endowment). In this manner, they might specify

that funds pay for public recitations of the Koran, distribution of water and food, contribute toward the upkeep of a *madrasa* (school), or ensure the provision of financial assistance to poor students. Or they might earmark their endowment as a contribution toward the maintenance of a larger institution. For example, a family or founder of a *waqf* might designate this endowment as their beneficiary either in an *abli* or a *khayri waqf*. Due to disease and short life spans for individuals of this era, family lines were frequently extinguished within a short period of time. Hence both *abli* and *khayri waqfs* benefitted the community within a short time after their founding.

The establishment of a *waqf* and other acts of charity were a means by which a Muslim brought him or herself closer to God: charity was an act of piety. Yet charity, as we have seen in the above discussion, served multiple purposes. Rulers established institutions intended for the poor—mosques, hospitals, and soup kitchens—and in this manner drew attention to themselves as benefactors. Rulers' cognisance of the political purposes served through the creation of charitable works is made evident in the strategic placement of these institutions. They were frequently built in important urban areas. The charitable actions of rulers and their families as well as the actions of private individuals, despite the political purposes they may have had and regardless of the means by which they might have served economic ends, most importantly, served society as a whole.

It may be argued that religious endowments *financed* Islamic societies.¹² In the Ottoman Empire and previous empires in the Middle East, institutions founded and maintained through these charitable works provided education to rich and poor alike. They endowed hospitals giving at least a bare modicum of care, and set up soup kitchens and shelters that gave a safety net to those individuals whose families could not provide for them. Although we have information on a range of forms of assistance to the poor, to date we have very little understanding of state efforts to *combat* poverty. One recent analysis of Egypt's rural areas in the nineteenth century demonstrates how the Egyptian government endeavored to distribute land to poor peasants.¹³ It is possible that such efforts were also underway in other locales. However, to the best of our knowledge, efforts to ameliorate poverty only became a feature of charitable actions in the late nineteenth century at the time of the advent of philanthropic associations in the region.

Background Readings

Nabia Abbott, Two Queens of Baghdad: The Mother and Wife of Harun al-Rashid (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), *see for a discussion of the imperial endowments of these two women.*

Miriam Hoexter, Endowments, Rulers, and Community: Waqf al-Haramayn in Ottoman Algiers (Leiden: Brill, 1998), *see for an exhaustive analysis of a religious endowment in Ottoman Algiers which provided funds for the Waqf al-Haramayn (an endowment dedicated to the poor of Mecca and Medina as well as the poor of Algiers).*

Robert D. McChesney, Charity and Philanthropy in Islam: Institutionalizing the Call to Do Good (Indianapolis: Indiana University Center on Philanthropy, 1995), *regarding historical background on waqf.*

Leslie Peirce, The Imperial Harem: Women and Sovereignty in the Ottoman Empire (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993).

Carl Petry, "A Paradox of Patronage during the Later Mamluk Period," The Muslim World, 73, no. 3-4 (July/October 1983):182-207. *This article deals with the period of Mamluk rule in Egypt (1250 to 1517).*

Restrictions on Charity

As we look at the range of familial and communal forms of relief and public-oriented institutions which served as a safety net for the poor of the Ottoman Empire and a number of other empires in the Middle East, we must keep in mind that charity had its limits. As in European practices of charity and forms of poor relief, certain mechanisms served to differentiate between the deserving and the able-bodied poor. As early as the first centuries after the establishment of Islam, a city official known as the *muhtasib* (the market inspector) prohibited begging at mosques by the able-bodied and called for the punishment of these beggars. *Hadith* (the sayings and actions attributed to the Prophet Muhammad) were cited to illustrate how importunate begging was to be punished by hellfire. Legists such as the 16th century Ottoman Shaykh al-Islam Ebu's-su'ud Effendi also grappled with the problem of 'sturdy' (i.e., able bodied) beggars taking advantage of the charity of the public. As he discussed the virtues of charity, Ebu's-su'ud noted that *cerrarlar* (troublesome beggars) should be reprimanded and forbidden from

gathering at mosques, but nonetheless, the actions of those who gave them alms were virtuous.¹⁴

Restrictions on migration to urban areas were also a means to prohibit the able-bodied poor's uninhibited access to charity. For this reason, Egyptian peasants caught begging far from home in the markets of Istanbul were returned to their villages of origin, and passport systems were introduced to control vagrants' access to Istanbul. Frequently governments tried to control the movement of the rural poor—and most specifically deny their access to the urban areas—at times of famine and dearth.

Demands for labor and military prerogatives, as well as government concern about religious mendicants' unrestricted access to charity in the nineteenth century, also resulted in efforts to centralize charity and prohibit begging. In the case of early nineteenth-century Egypt, the military programs of Muhammad Ali (governor of Egypt from 1805-1848) resulted in the creation of numerous public health programs and the construction of hospitals. His government also attempted to curtail peasant flight to urban areas through a passport system for, according to government decrees, peasants were shirking their labor obligations in the countryside and instead turning to the easy life of begging. During the 1830s, in an effort to recruit labor for nascent industrial projects, the police of Cairo were ordered to arrest the idle poor and put them to work; officials visiting government-sponsored poor shelters also called for the employment of the able-bodied poor from among the shelters' residents.

Concern about the public presence of the poor during the nineteenth century also resulted in broad-scale prohibitions on begging and requisites that individuals caught begging were only to be released from government supervision upon the guarantee (provided by a family member, relative, or others) that the person never return to begging.¹⁵ Despite their efforts, Egyptian governments, before and during the British occupation of Egypt (1882-1952), had great difficulty controlling the presence of beggars. British officials were particularly concerned about the potential criminality of sturdy male vagrants and instituted numerous calls for their apprehension and punishment.¹⁶

Restrictions on the public presence of beggars in the Ottoman Empire's capital of Istanbul were instituted much later than in Cairo. Only in 1896 do we see the establishment of a government-run poor shelter whose goal was the confinement of beggars.¹⁷ In previous centuries,

Discussion Topics

- *Discuss the efforts taken to restrict the movements of the poor in Egypt and Turkey more than 100 years ago. Do you find these descriptions familiar?*
- *Why did changes occur during the 19th century in the control and care of the poor?*

municipal authorities had frequently expelled vagrant men and had initiated programs of forcibly employing them, although begging by the "deserving" poor (women and elderly or invalid men, for example) was not restricted. One site of contention, however, was among religious mendicants. Simultaneous to efforts to centralize imperial endowments (due to charges of corruption), the Ottoman government called for the registration of religious students in sufi lodges.

In both Cairo and Istanbul, the nineteenth century witnessed the intensification of state intervention in poor relief. In both of these locales, poor shelters were established with the purpose of clearing the streets of beggars. Yet, records of these institutions also draw our attention to the means by which the poor actively sought the assistance of the state. While admittance to the shelters in Egypt was intended initially to be a form of punishment, we also find ample evidence that the poor frequently sought admittance to these institutions. Desperation arising from dire circumstances and the absence of family systems of support forced the poor to seek the charity of the state. In so doing, the demands of the poor helped shape poor relief during this era.

State initiated forms of charity in Egypt and Istanbul were frequently posited within a religious discourse of care for the poor. In the case of Egypt, we see that free medical assistance for the destitute, the poor's admittance to state-run shelters, and care for orphaned and abandoned children were provided, as government records attest, "out of the charity" of Egypt's ruler. The creation of a bureaucracy and administrative apparatus charged with providing assistance to the poor indicated a move away from the personal nature of charity. However, the religious obligation of charity remained an essential feature of state involvement in care for the poor. The pious connotations of charity and charitable acts also ensured that private persons' involvement in the provisioning of alms and some means of assistance to society's most destitute was (and remains) an important aspect of Middle Eastern societies. By late in the nineteenth century, efforts to provide for the poor (who were, during this era in the cases of Cairo and Istanbul becoming a much more noticeable public presence due to increasingly dire economic circumstances and conflict-borne migration) were consolidated. Coterminous with individual provisioning of alms and the continued establishment of institutions funded through religious endowments, wealthy members of society began to join together to create charitable associations whose goals included assistance to the poor.

Background Readings:

John Barnes, An Introduction to Religious Foundations in the Ottoman Empire (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1986).

Mine Ener, "Prohibitions on Begging and Loitering in Nineteenth-Century Egypt." Die Welt des Islams 39 (1999): 319-39.

Laverne Kuhnke, Lives at Risk: Public Health in Nineteenth-Century Egypt (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990).

The Rise of Associations

In addition to the centralization of state institutions and poor relief at the center of the Ottoman Empire and in Egypt, the nineteenth century also witnessed the advent of charitable associations. While private forms of *waqf*, as well as imperial institutions, continued to serve alongside familial and community forms of charity, groups of individuals joined together to develop forms of assistance for the poor. In the case of both Egypt and late-Ottoman Istanbul, the purposes of such charitable associations encompassed more than just indiscriminate charitable giving. Instead, central to their activities and goals were efforts to provide training and educational opportunities for the poor.

Frequently, such organizations targeted specific groups in society. For example, women's philanthropic associations in late-nineteenth and early twentieth-century Egypt developed training facilities for young girls so as to ensure that they could earn a living. Concerned about infant mortality, women's organizations in early twentieth-century Egypt also established children's dispensaries and organized programs whereby mothers were educated in hygiene and "proper" child rearing. Concern for Muslim families during conflicts in the Balkans and World War I catalyzed the founding and activities of a number of women's organizations in early twentieth-century Istanbul. In some instances, philanthropic organizations were denominationally centered. Late nineteenth-century Egypt witnessed the introduction of Coptic Benevolent Societies and Muslim Benevolent Associations, with each having branches throughout the country. Unlike charitable actions in the past, such organizations focused their efforts on ameliorating poverty through ensuring that the poor could become self-sufficient. These associations provided educational scholarships and vocational

Discussion Topics

- Discuss how the new forms of charitable associations which arose in the 19th century differed from private forms of *waqf* or from existing state institutions for poor relief.
- Consider the impact of nationalism upon the institutions and practices of benevolent action.
- In what ways may "competition" be considered to spur the development of new or varying institutions to provide services to the poor? Does such competition tend to reinforce or diverge from the traditional practices of caring for the poor in one's own community?

training opportunities for poor youths in addition to their programs of provisioning medical assistance and distributing food to the poor.

The rise of philanthropic organizations in both of these locales stems from a convergence of the creation of a new elite, a sense of religious and *national* obligations, and the absence or inadequacy of governmental forms of relief. The development of associational philanthropy in late nineteenth-century Egypt is particularly illustrative of this convergence. The founders of the Muslim Benevolent Society (1879 and 1891) were members of Egypt's new elite. Many of this organization's founders had links to Freemasonry and, having traveled to Europe for their education, were impressed by the activities of associations in, for example, France. The goals of this organization were framed within a language of religious obligation—the wealthy's obligation toward their destitute brethren—but their benevolent actions were also contextualized within a discourse of nationalism. Establishment of schools and educational facilities was necessary given the inadequacy of such institutions during the British occupation of Egypt (1882-1952).¹⁸

In early twentieth-century Iran, women's associations which also functioned as philanthropic organizations—like those of Egypt and the Ottoman Empire—emerged simultaneously with nationalism. For example, a women's organization committed to providing care for orphans and establishing schools and hospitals was founded during the Constitutional Revolution (1906-1911). As in the case of other philanthropic associations being founded at this time, its goals included the provisioning of care for the vulnerable and providing those in need with the means to attain self-sufficiency.

Competition between organizations geared toward the poor also spurred the development of a variety of institutions. Members of the Muslim Benevolent Society were aware that the Muslim poor frequently received services from the Coptic Benevolent Society and the Egyptian press included discussions of missionary organizations proselytizing among the Muslim poor. Egyptian women (including members of the royal family) involved in the foundation of a children's dispensary posited their actions as a response to the activities of British colonial officials' wives and families in the field of poor relief and namely their establishment of the Lady Cromer Dispensary. In 1911, when a princess of the royal family, `Ayn al-Hayat, proposed the idea of establishing a dispensary along the lines of the Lady Cromer dispensary, she indicated that "[i]t is, indeed, shameful that we in Egypt do not undertake such

projects . . . , ourselves. It is our duty to be at the head of charitable works in Egypt. I intend to sponsor a dispensary."¹⁹

Charitable associations frequently geared their activities toward the association's own co-religionists. In many ways, such a denominational focus grew out of traditions of each religious community caring for their own poor. But in the era following Egypt's struggle for independence from British Rule (the 1919 Revolution), we also see the emergence of associations whose membership and targeted poor were multi-denominational. In this respect, we see elite men and women from different religious backgrounds joining together to create children's dispensaries and shelters and training facilities for vagrant boys. The efforts of such associations were posited within a language of national obligation and the poor themselves were described as citizens whose health and well-being was essential for the future of the Egyptian nation.

Background Readings

Janet Afary, The Iranian Constitutional Revolution, 1906-1911 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996).

Margot Badran, Feminists, Islam, and the Nation: Gender and the Making of Modern Egypt (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995).

Beth Baron, The Women's Awakening in Egypt: Culture, Society, and the Press (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994).

Conclusion

Unlike studies of charity and philanthropy in Western societies, scholarship on these topics in Middle East studies is at a most nascent stage. Analysis of institutions founded through religious endowments have largely focused on the motivations of donors or architectural features of the structures themselves. Only a small number of scholars have begun to explore transformations in these institutions' use over time, as well as the recipients of relief. To find information on the lives of the poor, Middle East historians have begun to make use of a variety of sources. Analysis of court and police records, for example, have revealed moments at which the poor sought assistance from the government and also illustrate survival strategies of the poor.

While a growing number of scholars of the Middle East are currently seeking to document forms of charity and the provisioning of care, understanding the reasons for poverty as well as its scope is a more difficult endeavor. Because care for the poor was such a private (i.e., familial) matter, we only are aware of the poor's existence at times of dire necessity or at moments when they came into contact with government officials. During famines and dearth, the poor became a more public sight.

Assessing the reasons for poverty is also a topic which has not, heretofore, been sufficiently analyzed by scholars of the region. Ruptures in family networks due to migration and disease certainly took a toll on families' abilities to provide for their own kin. The gendering of poverty and women's particular vulnerability to impoverishment were recognized by the state, as well as by the endowers of charitable works. Women, particularly women with small children, were frequently identified as the "deserving" poor, and royal women of the Ottoman household directed charity toward poor women and orphans. Women philanthropists in much of the Middle East also acknowledged the economic vulnerability of women and dedicated their own charitable actions toward projects which would ensure economic self-sufficiency for poor women and girls.

As has been argued throughout these pages, the range of provisions for the poor in the Middle East included familial and community forms of support as well as institutions in major urban areas (such as soup kitchens, hospitals, and shelters). Because of its religious connotations, philanthropy had always been at the core of Middle Eastern societies and has been practiced by all of this region's religious groups. By the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, due to economic dislocations and political strife and warfare, the poor came increasingly to the attention of better-off members of society who sought to introduce projects intended to improve the lives of the poor. These members of the elite who participated in the creation of philanthropic associations posited their actions within newly formulated ideas of the nation and nationalism. But their sense of obligation toward those in need remained solidly grounded in a religious framework of charity.

Endnotes

- ¹ Thomas Thornton, The Present State of Turkey, vol. II (London: Joseph Mawman Publishers, 1809), 155.
- ² Thornton, The Present State of Turkey, vol. II, 159.
- ³ Thornton, The Present State of Turkey, vol. II, 155-56.
- ⁴ The Baroness Minutoli, Recollections of Egypt (Philadelphia: Carey, Lea, and Carey Publishers, 1827), 50; R. Walsh, Constantinople during a period including the commencement and termination of the Greek and Turkish Revolutions, vol. II (London: Frederick Westley and A. H. Davis, 1836), 457; also see Charles Thornton Forster and F. H. Blackburne Daniell, The Life and Letters of Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq, vol. I (London: C. Kegan Paul and Co., 1881), 209.
- ⁵ Abraham Marcus, The Middle East on the Eve of Modernity: Aleppo in the Eighteenth Century (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), 216-17.
- ⁶ Encyclopedia of Islam, new edition (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1991), s.v., "Matbakh," by Halil Inalcik.
- ⁷ Gabriel Baer, "Women and Waqf: An Analysis of the Istanbul Tahrir of 1546," Asian and African Studies 17 (1983): 21.
- ⁸ The Mamluks ruled Egypt from 1250-1517.
- ⁹ Forster and Daniell, The Life and Letters of Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq, vol. I, 136-139.
- ¹⁰ Narrative of Travels in Europe, Asia, and Africa in the Seventeenth Century, trans. [from the Turkish] Ritter Joseph von Hammer (New York: Johnson Reprint Corporation, [1834] 1968), 174.
- ¹¹ Gallagher, Medicine and Power in Tunisia, 1780-1900 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 20-21. Medieval European hospitals also served multiple purposes. On hospitals in the medieval Islamic period and in the Ottoman Empire, also see Yasser Tabaa, "The Functional Aspects of Medieval Islamic Hospitals" and Miri Shefer, "Charity and Hospitality: Hospitals in Three Ottoman Capitals in the Early Modern Period," papers presented at

workshop, *Poverty and Charity in Middle Eastern Contexts*, Ann Arbor, MI, May, 2000.

¹² See, for example, Marshall Hodgson, The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization, vol. II (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), 124.

¹³ Maha Ghalwash, "Land Acquisition by the Peasants of Mid-Nineteenth Century Egypt: the Ramya System," Studia Islamica, 1998: 121-39.

¹⁴ For the medieval period and policies toward sturdy beggars, see Bosworth, The Mediaeval Islamic Underworld (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1976), 13-16. Concern about beggars in the sixteenth century is found among *fatwa* (religious rulings) of this era. For examples of these rulings, see Mehmet Ertugrul Düzdag, Seyhülislam Ebüssüüd Efendi Fetvalari Isiginda 16. Asir Turk Hayati (Istanbul: Enderün Kitabevi, 1972).

¹⁵ Mine Ener, "Getting into Takiyat Tulun," in Outside In: On the Margins of the Modern Middle East, ed. Eugene Rogan (I.B. Tauris, forthcoming).

¹⁶ Mine Ener, "Getting into Takiyat Tulun."

¹⁷ Nuran Yildirim, Istanbul Darülaceze Müessesesi Tarihi [The History of the Establishment of Darülaceze] (Istanbul: Foundation for the Darülaceze, 1996).

¹⁸ Hilmi Ahmad Shalabi, Harakat al-Islah al-Ijtima'iyya fi Misr [Social Reform Movements in Egypt] (Cairo, al-Ha'ya al-Misriyya al-'Amma li-l-Kitab, 1988).

¹⁹ Huda Sha'rawi, Harem Years: The Memoirs of an Egyptian Feminist, trans. Margot Badran (London: Virago Press, 1986), 94-98.



Part III.

Middle Eastern Philanthropic Organizations in the United States: A Select Annotated List

Annotated by Zahera Saed

The following list includes only major, and currently active, organizations. The annotations briefly describe the mission and objectives of each organization.

Organizations

ARAB AMERICAN

American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee

Hala Maksoud, President
4201 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Suite 300
Washington, DC 20008
Phone: (202) 244-2990; Fax: (202) 244-3196
Email: ADC@adc.org; Website: www.adc.org

The American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee is a non-sectarian, non-partisan civil rights organization devoted to defending the rights of Arab Americans and promoting the cultural heritage of Arab people. The grassroots organization has national chapters and was founded in 1980 by former Senator James Abourezk.

American Federation of Ramallah, Palestine

Samir Mashni, President
27484 Ann Arbor Trail
Westland, MI 48185
Phone: (734) 425-1600; Fax: (734) 425-3985
Email: afrp@afrp.org; Website: www.afrp.org

The American Federation of Ramallah, Palestine was founded in 1958 in order to promote close ties among all Ramallah people through the

establishment of local clubs in cities across the country. They offer the following community and charitable services: Ramallah Relief Fund; Project Loving Care; Ramallah Infant Welfare Society; Ramallah Women's Union; Al-Hahda Women's Society; Ramallah Hospital; K. Abu Raya Rehabilitation Center; and higher education scholarships and grants.

Arab-American and Chaldean Council

Haifa Fakhouri, Executive Director
28551 Southfield Road
Suite #204
Lathrup Village, MI 48076
Phone: (248) 559-1990
Email: acc@arabacc.org; Website: www.arabacc.org

Since its inception in 1979, the Arab-American and Chaldean Council has provided socio-economic, health, educational and cultural services to Arab Americans and the Chaldean community of southeastern Michigan. The following support services are offered: continuing adult education; counseling services; health screening; immigration assistance; information and referral; job training, search and placement; language interpretation; outpatient health facilities, mental health treatment, prenatal and postpartum care; protective services; refugee services; substance abuse education services; supplemental nutrition programs; and older adult/disabled transportation services.

The Arab-American Family Support Center, Inc.

Emira Habiby-Brown, Executive Director
150 Court Street 3rd Floor
Brooklyn, NY 11201-6244
Phone: (718) 643-8000
Email: aafsc@aol.com

The Arab-American Family Support Center serves the Arabic-speaking community living in New York City. Established in 1993, the Center's goals are the following: to strengthen families and to help them adapt to life in the United States; to overcome cultural and language barriers; to encourage positive leadership; and to promote a stronger and more united Arab American community. The Center is non-sectarian and staffed by Arabic-speaking professionals of all faiths who are sensitive to the religious, cultural, and language needs of families of Arab background.

Arab American Institute

James Zogby, Executive Director
918 16th Street NW, Suite 601
Washington, DC 20006-2902
Phone: (202) 429-9214; Fax: (202) 429-9214
Email: aaif@aaiusa.org; Website: www.arab-aai.org

The Arab American Institute (AAI) encourages Arab Americans to directly participate in American political and civic life by providing training and resources. AAI teaches political effectiveness through participation in party politics, public boards and commissions, city councils and state legislatures, as well as congressional and presidential elections. AAI, founded in 1985, functions as a resource on the history and future of the Arab American constituency for government, academe, and civic groups.

Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services (ACCESS)

Ismael Ahmed, Executive Director
2651 Saulino Court
Dearborn, MI 48120
Email: access@accesscommunity.org; Website: www.accesscommunity.org

The Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services is one of the largest community groups in Michigan catering to Arab Americans. Established in 1985, they offer mental health and family counseling, a community health center, employment and training, youth, and education services for Arab American Michigan residents.

Association of Arab-American University Graduates (AAUG)

Randa Kayyali, Executive Director
4201 Connecticut Avenue NW, Suite 303
Washington, DC 20008
Phone (202) 237-8312; Fax (202) 237-8313
Email: aaug@aaug.org; Website: www.aaug.org

Founded in 1967, the Association of Arab-American University Graduates (AAUG) is an educational and cultural organization dedicated to fostering better understanding between the Arab and American peoples, and promoting informed discussion of critical issues concerning the Arab world and the United States.

Bir Zeit Society

George Khoury, Chairman
10104 Vernon
Huntington Woods, MI 48070
Phone: (248) 544-2190

An international philanthropic organization, the Bir Zeit Society is devoted to the improvement of Bir Zeit, Palestine and Bir Zeit University. The Bir Zeit Society has been assisting in policy and community issues over the past ten years. The range of community services they provide includes: publishing organizational magazines; community building and networking; assistance to the needy; and offering scholarships for universities and trade schools.

Ehden Lebanese American Club

Joseph R. Carrah, President
3 Garthwait Road
Wolcott, CT 06716
Phone: (203) 879-6955
Email: EhdenClub@yahoo.com; Website: www.ehden.org

Established in 1915, Ehden Lebanese American Club is a social, cultural, and charitable organization created to further communication and friendship between the peoples of the United States and Lebanon, to assist one another to maintain a good citizenship status, and to protect, maintain, and advance the interests of the Lebanese American people. The Ehden Lebanese American Club is the social and cultural center for the community and directs activities oriented towards charitable enterprises.

Lebanese American Association (LAA)

Dr. Nasser Aboukhalil, President
P.O. Box 4464
Burlingame, CA 94010-4464
Phone: (650) 259-9871; Fax: (650) 259-9874
Email: laa@laa.org; Website: www.laa.org

The Lebanese American Association, founded in 1989, is a cultural and philanthropic organization based in the San Francisco Bay area. The Lebanese American Association (LAA) is dedicated to promoting Lebanese heritage and uniting the Lebanese community for cultural, educational, and charitable events.

National Association of Arab Americans (NAAA)

1212 New York Avenue NW, Suite 230
Washington, DC 20005
Phone: (202) 842-1840; Fax: (202) 842-1614
Email: naaa-inc@erols.com

Founded in 1972, the National Association of Arab Americans lobbies the U.S. Congress and Administration for an evenhanded U.S. foreign policy based on justice and peace for all people of the region. They are involved in a wide range of issues pertaining to U.S.-Arab bilateral relations, including the Middle East peace process, the economic reconstruction of Lebanon, U.S. foreign aid, regional security concerns, and other economic, political, and security aspects of U.S. relations with the Arab world.

Palestine Aid Society of Ann Arbor

Rabia Shafie, President
P.O. Box 130031
Ann Arbor, MI 48113
Phone: (734) 741-1113; Fax: (734) 668-1957

The Palestine Aid Society was founded in 1978 in order to provide financial support to the Palestinian people in the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and the refugee camps in Lebanon. The Society is devoted to the preservation of Palestinian identity through cultural and educational activities and promotes a greater understanding among the American people about the Palestinian struggle.

Southern Federation of Syrian Lebanese American Clubs (SfSLAC)

SfSLAC Home Office
P.O. Box 869
Missouri City, TX 77459-0869
Phone: (713) 787-6474; Fax: (713) 787-6611
Email: sfslac@sfslac.org

The main charitable division of the Southern Federation of Syrian Lebanese American Clubs is the Southern Federation Foundation, Inc., which provides scholarships to graduating high school seniors and makes contributions to selected charities throughout the world, including ALSAC/St. Jude's Children Research Hospital. Established in 1931, the foundation also supports an active cultural committee whose primary objective is to educate, promote, and foster the

preservation of a precious heritage through a variety of projects, displays, exhibits, and activities.

Syrian-American Women's Association (SAWA)

Sawsan Khayat Al-Moualem, Founder
1199 Cypress Tree Place
Herndon, VA 20170
Phone: (703) 834-1019; Fax: (703) 437-0868
Email: info@syrianamericanwomen.org
Website: www.syrianamericanwomen.org

The Syrian-American Women's (Charitable) Association assists the poor and the ailing. The organization promotes humanitarian cooperation between the peoples of the Syrian Arab Republic and the U.S. SAWA was established in District of Columbia in 1993.

Yemeni American Association

Dr. Najeeb Ismail, Director
2502 Goodson
Hamtramck, MI 48212
Phone: 313-873-1955; Fax: 313-842-7020

The Yemeni American Association was established to assist with the daily needs of the Yemeni American community and provide a place for community members to meet for social activities and general support.

Yemeni American Benevolent Association (YABA)

Abdel Razak Al Soofi, President
2121 Salina
Dearborn, MI 48120
Phone: (313) 841-3333; Fax: (313) 841-1925

The Yemeni American Benevolent Association is located in the South End of Dearborn and serves the surrounding community by providing social, educational, cultural, and human services to meet the community's changing needs. The services they provide are tutoring in all subject areas, computer training, translation services, English classes, and instruction in Arabic. They are also active in holding fundraising activities for charitable causes.

**ARMENIAN
AMERICAN**

Yemeni American League

Shaker Alashwal, Director
198 Court Street #6
Brooklyn, NY 11201
Fax: (718) 237-6085
Email: Yalnet@aol.com

The Yemeni American League (YAL) was instituted in 1995 to unite members of the Yemeni American community and to work towards the betterment of the Yemeni American community in New York. YAL publishes informational material on issues concerning the Yemeni American community. It also establishes partnerships with local public schools that Yemeni children attend to help the schools address their educational concerns.

Armenia Fund USA Inc.

Mary Ann Kibarian, Executive Director
152 Madison Avenue, Suite 803
New York, NY 10016
Phone: (212) 689-5307; Fax: (212) 689-5317
Email: AFUSA@aol.com

Founded in 1992, Armenia Fund USA Inc. works to finance large-scale development, infrastructure and humanitarian projects in Armenia and Karabagh. Major projects include the restoration of the earthquake-damaged Vanadzor school in Armenia, the construction of highways, and funds to care for 8,000 children.

Armenia Health Alliance Inc.

Carolann S. Najarian, MD
215 First Street, 5th Floor
Cambridge, MA 02142
Phone: (617) 259-0202; Fax: (617) 259-9510

The Armenia Health Alliances provides assistance to people of Armenia and Karabagh/Artsalah through a primary care center in Gumri where people receive free medical care; and through the ARPEN Center for expectant mothers in Stepanagerd. Women receive nutrition, vitamins, soap, clothing, etc.

Armenian American Faith Charity

6470 N. Rafael Avenue

Fresno, CA 93711

Email: FaithCharity2000@aol.com; Website: www.faithcharity.org

The Armenian American Faith Charity provides project support and financial assistance to individuals, charitable groups, and arts organizations within the United States and throughout the world. They support educational, artistic and/or faith-based programs that are culturally diverse and promote the preservation of Armenian heritage, history, self-identity, culture and art.

Armenian American Health Association of Greater Washington

Arek Tatevossian, Treasurer

1532 Red Rock Court

Vienna, VA 22182

Founded in 1991, the Armenian American Health Association of Greater Washington helps provide health care and medicine in Armenia and for the Armenian community of the greater Washington DC area.

Armenian American Support and Educational Center, Inc. (AASEC)

Hirant Gulian, President

13 East Palisades Boulevard

Palisades Park, NJ 07650

Phone: (201) 346-0599; Fax: (201) 592-9518

Since its inception in 1976, the Armenian American Support and Educational Center, Inc. has provided over \$2,000,000 worth of goods to Armenia, mainly for educational resources and medical equipment.

Armenian Assembly of America

Van Krikorian, Chairman

122 C Street NW, Suite 350

Washington, DC 20001

Phone: (202) 393-3434

Website: www.aaainc.org

The Armenian Assembly of America, established in 1972, is a nationwide nonprofit organization based in Washington DC. The Assembly promotes public awareness of Armenian issues, encourages greater

Armenian American participation in the American democratic process, and assists in humanitarian and development programs in Armenia.

Armenian Association for the Disabled

P. O. Box 29369
Los Angeles, CA 90027
Phone: (800) 696-8171

In 1989, the Armenian Association for the Disabled was founded to help disabled individuals in Armenia, primarily children, and to promote their physical, social, and psychological rehabilitation. They also educate the public through the dissemination of information on the issues of disability, and assist the disabled to become self-sufficient and contributing members of Armenia.

Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU)

Louise Manoogian Simone, President
55 East 59th Street
New York, NY 10022
Phone: (212) 319-6383; Fax: (212) 319-6507
Email: nysip@agbu.org; Website: www.agbu.org

One of the oldest Armenian American Associations, the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) was established in 1906 to preserve and promote Armenian identity and heritage through educational, cultural and humanitarian programs. They have instituted 24 primary, secondary, preparatory and Saturday schools in the diaspora, provide international scholarship grants and loans, and support the American University of Armenia and numerous cultural, economic and medical needs.

Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA)

310 Century Road
Paramus, NJ 07652
Phone: (201) 265-2607; Fax: (201) 265-6015
Email: ammainc@aol.com

Founded in 1918, the Armenian Missionary Association of America was established to further the mission of the Armenian Evangelical Church, including relief and social services.

Armenian National Hospital Union, Inc.

Anna Yavshaian, President
P.O. Box 164
Belmont, MA 02478

Founded in 1920, this non-political organization offers financial assistance to Sourp Purgich Hospital of Istanbul, Turkey.

Armenian Relief Society of North America, Inc.

80 Bigelow Avenue
Watertown, MA 01278
Phone: (617) 926-3801; Fax: (617) 924-7238

The Armenian Relief Society of North America serves the social and educational needs of Armenian communities everywhere, seeking to preserve the cultural identity of the Armenian nation, and bring humanitarian help to communities in distress. The Armenian Relief Society also encourages Armenian American participation in local organizations engaged in community activities and social services compatible with the principles of the Society. The Society acts as an information resource and cooperates with organizations with similar aims.

Bay Area Friends for Armenia (BAFA)

Francois Antounian, M.D., Executive Director
P.O. Box 3584
Daly City, CA 94015

Bay Area Friends for Armenia was founded in 1993 to help Armenia in the areas of health, education and welfare. They support projects such as the "Soup Kitchens," known as "Pare Kordzakan Djasharan." They also send medical supplies to Erebouni Hospital's different departments, and train orthopedic surgeons and nurses at Erebouni Hospital in Armenia.

Fund for Armenia Relief (FAR)

Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, President
630 Second Avenue
New York, NY 10016
Phone: (212) 889-5150; Fax: (212) 889-4849
Email: garo@farusa.org

The Fund for Armenia Relief plans and implements humanitarian and development projects in Armenia and Karabagh to distribute food and other assistance to orphanages. FAR is involved in rebuilding several

schools, restarting irrigation systems in some rural areas, and also helping in emergency economic development.

Fund for Children's Homes of Armenia Inc.

Jenia Aidinian Rezaieh, President
10660 Wilshire Boulevard #101
Los Angeles, CA 90024
Phone: (310) 441-9878; Fax: (310) 441-9378

Founded in 1992, this non-political organization mainly serves to help orphans and needy families in Armenia.

Hekemian Foundation

505 Main Street
P.O. Box 667
Hackensack, NJ 07602
Phone: (201) 487-1500

The Hekemian family members established this foundation in 1961 to support public charities.

Howard Karagheusian Commemorative Corporation

Harry A. Dorian, Director
386 Park Avenue South #1601
New York, NY 10016

Founded in 1921, the Karagheusian Commemorative Corporation is a private operating foundation established to promote child welfare, public health services, and relief programs for Armenian refugee communities in Greece, Lebanon, Syria, and on a smaller scale for native Muslim Arab groups in the same communities.

Lincy Foundation

James D. Aljian, President
4045 S. Spencer Street #A57
Las Vegas, NV 89119
Phone: (702) 736-7878

In 1989, businessman Kirk Krikorian founded the Lincy Foundation to provide humanitarian grants for worthy causes. The Foundation is committed to Armenia's economic development, and finances projects related to Armenian tourism and infrastructure development, as well as the rehabilitation of roads, cultural objects, and the earthquake zone.

Baha'i National Center Friends of Persian Culture Association

Manuchehr Derakhshani
c/o Persian-American Affairs Office
1233 Central Street
Evanston, IL 60201
Phone: (847) 733-3526; Fax: (847) 733-3545
Email: mderakhshani@usbnc.org

**IRANIAN
AMERICAN**

The Friends of Persian Culture Association serves to promote the arts and culture of Iran. They organize annual conferences in Persian at the national level and publish the proceedings of these conferences.

California Zoroastrian Center

8952 Hazard Avenue
Westminster, CA 92683
Phone: (714) 893-4737

The California Zoroastrian Center promotes the study, understanding, and practice of the Zoroastrian faith and the welfare of Zoroastrian communities, including those from Iran. The Center engages in charitable activities as required by the Zoroastrian faith, and supports any other activities that nurture and support the Zoroastrian faith and communities.

Children of Persia

Shiva Davoodpour, President
P. O. Box 2602
Montgomery Village, MD 20866-2602
Phone: (301) 315-0750
E-mail: www.ChildrenofPersia.org

Children of Persia, founded in 1999, provides health care, education and related facilities that promote the well-being of needy children in Iran. The organization has no affiliation with any religious, political or secular organizations, and all members work as volunteers.

**MUSLIM
AMERICAN**

Daayeh

Soheila Bana, USA Board of Directors

Phone: (510) 669-0311

Email: Soheila@daayeh.org; Website: www.daayeh.org

Daayeh is dedicated to providing humanitarian assistance to children in Iran and other countries. Daayeh's goal is to enable the children to have a positive future by providing educational materials and assisting them with basic human necessities such as food, clothing, shelter and health care.

American Muslim Council (AMC)

Yahya Basha, President

1212 New York Avenue NW, Suite 400

Washington DC 20005

Phone: (202) 789-2262; Fax: (202) 789-2550

Email: amc@amconline.org; Website: www.amconline.org

The American Muslim Council was established in 1990 to increase the effective participation of American Muslims in the U.S. political and public policy arenas. AMC encourages the active political participation and inclusion of American Muslims to increase the community's voice in domestic and foreign policy. AMC educates and lobbies the Administration and Congress on issues of concern to American Muslims. AMC chapters are based in all major metropolitan areas in order to develop effective grassroots activities.

American Red Crescent, Inc.

280 Liberty Road, Suite 201

Englewood, NJ 07631-2146

Phone: (201) 567-5375; Fax: (201) 567-3153

Based in New Jersey, the American Red Crescent was instituted to provide assistance to Muslims in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Bangladesh, India, Sudan, Egypt, Kashmir, and Palestine. The American Red Crescent also offers free medical clinics in New York and New Jersey. All projects depend on the efforts of volunteers.

Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR)

453 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, DC 20003-4034
Phone: (202) 488-8787; Fax: (202) 659-2254
Website: www.cair-net.org

The Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR), based in Washington, DC with chapters across America, was established to promote a positive image of Islam and Muslims in America. CAIR presents Islamic perspectives on issues of importance to the American public. By offering this perspective, the organization seeks to empower the Muslim community in America through political and social activism.

Islamic Center of America

15571 Joy Road
Detroit, MI 48228
Phone: (313) 582-7442; Fax: (313) 582-0988
Website: www.icofa.com

Founded in 1961, the Islamic Center of America is one of the oldest mosques and Islamic institutions in North America. The mosque offers the following community services: religious education and schooling; a weekly speaker on special topics during Ramadan; social and community events and seminars; and resources on Islam.

Islamic Circle of North America (ICNA)

[Headquarters]
166-26, 89th Avenue
Jamaica, NY 11432
Phone: (718) 658-7028; Fax: (718) 658-3434
Email: info@reliefonline.org; Website: www.reliefonline.org

[Midwest Office]
12309 McDougal Avenue
Detroit, MI 48212
Phone: (313) 366-6800; Fax: (313) 366-2978

A division of the Islamic Circle of North America, ICNA Relief is a humanitarian and development organization responding to human suffering in emergency and disaster situations at home and abroad. In addition to providing humanitarian aid to Muslims abroad, ICNA Relief also assists the needy in poor neighborhoods in cities throughout North

America. It has started a family counseling service in New York, and is in the process of establishing a soup-kitchen.

Islamic Health and Human Services

Imam Sharif A. Muhammad, Executive Director

Book Tower Building, Suite 2040

1249 Washington Boulevard

Detroit, MI 48226

Phone: (313) 961-0678; Fax: (313) 981-1538

Email: SMUSLIM@aol.com; Website: www.hammoude.com/Ihhs.html

Founded in 1991, the Islamic Health and Human Services (IHHS) is a social service agency staffed by volunteer health care professionals. The IHHS provides physical and psychological health care according to the laws and traditions of Islam. IHHS provides *halal* food and medications to Muslim patients. They offer complete *hijab* service and same-gender service for Muslim women patients. Their assistance in medical care, psychological services, and marriage and family counseling are all within religious compliance.

Islamic Society of North America (ISNA)

P. O. Box 38

Plainfield, IN 46168

Phone: (317) 839-8157; Fax: (317) 839-1840

The Islamic Society of North America is an association of Muslim organizations and individuals that serves the diverse needs of Muslims in North America. ISNA provides a unified platform of expression for Islam; develops educational, *da'wab*, and social services that translate the teachings of the Koran and the *Sunnah* into everyday living; and enhances Islamic identity in the Society. ISNA's *Zakat* Fund is designated to help the needy, orphans, and any person who qualifies, according to the guidelines in the Koran, for receiving *Zakat*. ISNA's Social Services Department assists Muslim social service providers with networking, conferences, training workshops, and the development of model clinics.

Islamic-American Zakat Foundation

Imad Ahmad, President
4323 Rosedale Avenue
Bethesda, MD 20814
Phone: (301) 907-0997
Email: dean.ahmad@iad.blkcat.com

The Islamic-American Zakat Foundation supplies assistance to poor and needy individuals as prescribed by the Holy Koran, in the form of food, shelter, and clothing. The Zakat Foundation assists the homeless in the greater Washington area; provides aid to victims of natural disasters and man-made atrocities around the world; helps to feed and clothe Palestinian children; helps needy American Muslims; distributes Korans to prisoners and hospital patients; and helps war victims in Chechnya, Bosnia, and Kashmir.

Karamah: Muslim Women Lawyers for Human Rights

Sameera Fazili, Executive Director
The T.C. Williams School of Law
University of Richmond
Richmond, VA 23173
Phone: (804) 289-8466; Fax: (804) 289-8683
Email: fazili@karamah.org; Website: www.karamah.org

Founded in 1986, Karamah is a charitable, educational organization that focuses upon the domestic and global issues of human rights for Muslims. Karamah is founded upon the idea that education, dialogue, and action can counter the dangerous and destructive effects of ignorance, silence, and prejudice. Their objectives are to increase the familiarity of the Muslim community with Islamic, American, and international laws on the issues of human rights; to advise and assist individuals, institutions, and organizations on matters of human rights as seen from the perspective of Islamic law; to advise and assist Muslims, particularly women, on matters adversely affecting the free exercise of their religion, freedom of expression, and other constitutional rights in the United States; and to provide educational materials on legal and human rights issues to American Muslim women.

**JEWISH/
SEPHARDIC**

Stepping Together Inc.

P. O. Box 16028
Oakland, CA 94610-6028
Phone/Fax: (510) 317-0383
LifeLine (24hr): (800) 909-1606
Email: director@steppingtogether.org
Website: www.steppingtogether.org

Stepping Together was formed in 1985 as a charitable foundation to provide health, educational, and social services to the Muslim community in the San Francisco Bay area. The organization provides an array of services that include domestic violence intervention, improving health care access, financial services to the poor, and educational forums. However, their services are not limited to Muslims because many of these same problems affect the larger non-Muslim community as well. Stepping Together has developed a series of collaborative efforts among the different religious communities.

Abraham Fund

[United States] Staci Light, Director of Development
477 Madison Avenue, 4th Floor
New York, NY 10022
Phone: (212) 303-9421; Fax: (212) 935-1834; 1-800-301-FUND (3863)
Email: info@abrahamfund.org; Website: www.abrahamfund.org

[Israel] Dan Pattir, Executive Vice President
15 Arlozorov Street
Jerusalem, Israel 92181
Phone: 02-566-5133; 02-566-5136; Fax: 02-566-5139
Email: tafer@netvision.net.il

The Abraham Fund is a fundraising and educational organization dedicated to enhancing coexistence between Israel's Jewish and Arab citizens. It supports grassroots coexistence projects that bring Jews and Arabs together to learn about one another and break down destructive stereotypes. The Abraham Fund is both a funding source, an educational resource, and a catalyst for those interested in developing constructive coexistence opportunities. Since their inception in 1989, they have provided vision and leadership in the field of coexistence.

B'nai B'rith Center for Community Action

Richard D. Heideman, International President
1640 Rhode Island Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20036-3278
Phone: (202) 857-6589; Fax: (202) 857-6609
Email: internet@bnaibrith.org; Website: www.bnaibrith.org

Since its founding in 1843, B'nai B'rith Center for Community Action has been developing community programs and encouraging individuals to volunteer in promoting Jewish values of social responsibility through community service. The organization is committed to caring for the poor and the needy, visiting and attending to the sick, and helping widows and orphans. B'nai B'rith's volunteers serve all individuals of a community, Jewish and non-Jewish alike.

Council of Iranian-American Jewish Organizations

George Haroonian, President
P. O. Box 3074
Beverly Hills, CA 90212
Phone: (310) 535-6610; Fax: (310) 843-9266

The members of the Council of Iranian-American Jewish Organizations are active in providing assistance to the needy, providing religious and educational service to the community, defending the rights of the Iranian Jewish community in Iran, and assisting in acculturating newly arrived immigrants. The Council members include some of the largest and most active organizations of the community such as: Eretz Cultural Center, Or Emonah Congregation, International Judea Foundation, Beth David Congregation, and the Committee for Religious Minority Rights in Iran (CRMRI).

Hadassah Foundation

50 West 58th Street
New York, NY 10019
Phone: (212) 355-7900
Email: webmaster@hadassah.org; Website: www.hadassah.org

Hadassah, the Women's Zionist Organization of America, is a volunteer women's organization whose members are motivated and inspired to strengthen their partnership with Israel, ensure Jewish continuity, and realize their potential as a dynamic force in American society. Established in 1994, the Hadassah Foundation is dedicated to

innovative and creative funding for women and girls in the United States and Israel. The foundation's goals are to improve the status, health and well being of women and girls; bring their contributions, issues, and needs from the margins to the center of Jewish concern; and encourage and facilitate their active participation in decision-making and leadership in all spheres of life.

Iranian American Jewish Federation

Dr. Ayoub Ebrahimi, Director
1317 N. Crescent Heights Boulevard
Los Angeles, CA 90046
Phone: (323) 654-4700; Fax: (323) 654-1791

The Iranian American Jewish Federation assists refugees from Iran and other countries where Iranian Jews live. The Iranian Federation works in cooperation with the Cedars-Sinai Medical Center and Jewish Vocational Service to provide volunteer support.

New Israel Fund

165 East 56th Street, 2nd Floor
New York, NY 10022
Phone: (212) 750-2333; Fax: (212) 750-8043
Email: riva@nifny.org; Website: www.nif.org

Established in 1979, the New Israel Fund—a nonpartisan philanthropic partnership of North Americans, Israelis, and Europeans—works to strengthen Israeli democracy and promote social justice. It supports a network of non-government organizations in Israel that safeguards civil and human rights, promotes Jewish-Arab equality and coexistence, advances the status of women, fosters tolerance and pluralism, bridges social and economic gaps, pursues environmental justice, and encourages government accountability. The Fund provides grants and technical assistance to Israeli public-interest groups, and conducts public education in North America, Israel, and Great Britain about the challenges to Israeli democracy.

American Druze Foundation

P.O. Box 7718

Flint, MI 48507

Phone: (810) 235-3200

Email: adf@druzeadf.com; Website: www.druzeadf.com**DRUZE
AMERICAN**

The American Druze Foundation was established in order to advance the development of a deeper understanding and appreciation of the religious and cultural heritage of the Druze people, and to preserve and enhance the Druze faith and traditions within the Druze communities in the United States. The foundation supports diverse interfaith activities and programs, and shares the richness of Druze values and traditions with other religious and cultural organizations. It supports the establishment of Druze cultural centers in the United States in order to foster interaction between American Druze and those of other faiths. It also serves as an educational resource center for authoritative materials concerning the history, faith, philosophy, traditions and civil status of the Druze people throughout the world. The foundation sustains comprehensive scholarship and research programs for the purpose of expanding English-language publications concerning the Druze religion and people.

American Druze Society (ADS)

P. O. Box 9276

Glendale, CA 91226

Phone: (323) 255-5ADS (237); (323) 255-1455; Fax: (323) 255-9155

Email: druze@druze.org; Website: www.druze.org

Founded by early Druze immigrants in 1908, the American Druze Society's goals are to perpetuate the universal teachings of the Druze faith, to enhance fellowship among Druze and Druze descendants, and to advance Druze religious, literary, and cultural knowledge through education and research. The Society was established for the betterment of all Druze people through charitable work.

GENERAL

Middle East Children's Alliance (MECA)

905 Parker Street

Berkeley, CA 94710

Phone: (510) 548-0542; Fax: (510) 548-0543

Email: meca@mecaforpeace.org; Website: www.mecaforpeace.org

The Middle East Children's Alliance works for peace and justice in the Middle East, focusing on Palestine, Israel, Lebanon, and Iraq. The organization emphasizes the need to educate North Americans about the Middle East and U.S. foreign policy, to support projects that aid and empower communities, and to insure the human rights of all people in the region, especially the rights of children.



Part IV.

Bibliographies

A. Middle Eastern Americans: A Select Bibliography

Compiled by Medhi Bozorgmehr

Introduction

This is the first general bibliography on Middle Eastern Americans. Although bibliographies exist for different Middle Eastern groups, none cover all groups from the Middle East. This is mainly because no edited or authored books have been published on Middle Eastern Americans which would include a comprehensive bibliography or a list of references. Given the long history of immigration, diversity, and distinctiveness of Middle Easterners in America, this is quite surprising. By necessity, and as a first effort, the following bibliography only includes major and readily accessible publications. Unpublished material (e.g., dissertations) have been kept to a minimum and listed only when they have not yet resulted in a publication. While there are a few publications on turn-of-the-century Middle Eastern immigrants, there is an ever-growing literature on the post-1965 immigrant populations from the region. This is obviously in part a response to a new and growing influx from the region, but also because many of the new arrivals were college students turned researchers and professors. Given that field research in the Middle East is often not feasible, some have turned their attention to Middle Easterners in the diaspora. The bibliography that follows is organized into five major groups (Arabs, Armenians, Iranians, Israelis, and others). The last category includes all Middle Easterners, as well as Chaldeans/Assyrians and Turks for whom a small literature exists.

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Part V.

Appendix—Sample Syllabus

PHILANTHROPY AND VOLUNTARISM AMONG MIDDLE-EAST AND MIDDLE-EASTERN AMERICAN COMMUNITIES

Middle Eastern Philanthropy in the U.S.

Week 1: Introduction – Questions, Debates, Sources

Week 2: Immigration Patterns to the U.S.

Week 3: Christians (Lebanese, Syrians, Armenians, Assyrians,
Chaldeans, Copts)

Week 4: Jews (Sephardic, Oriental-Mizrachi, Israeli)

Week 5: Muslims (Arabs)

Week 6: Muslims (Iranians)

Week 7: Giving Back (sending charitable funds back to the Middle
East through a variety of organizations)

History of Philanthropy in the Middle East

Week 8: Roots and Forms of Individual Giving (religious texts, legal
institutions, waqfs, trusts, alms)

Week 9: Minorities in Muslim Empires (millet, separate schools)

Week 10: Nationalism and New Philanthropic Societies (transition from private ventures to formal organizations)

Week 11: Women and Volunteerism (starting orphanages, clinics, fundraising)

Week 12: Civil Society and the State (limits of the welfare state)

Week 13: Islamists and Charity (Islamist groups fill the vacuum which the state's neglect of basic services has created)

Week 14: Conclusions

Part VI.

Contributors

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Beth Baron is Professor of History at City College and The Graduate Center, The City University of New York. She authored The Women's Awakening in Egypt (Yale University Press, 1994), which has recently appeared in Arabic as well. She edited Women in Middle Eastern History (Yale University Press, 1991) with Nikki Keddie, and Iran and Beyond: Essays in Middle Eastern History (Mazda Press, 2000) with Rudi Matthee. Dr. Baron is Co-Director with Dr. Bozorgmehr of the newly founded Middle East and Middle Eastern American Center (MEMEAC) at The Graduate Center, The City University of New York.

MEHDI BOZORGMEHR

Mehdi Bozorgmehr is Associate Professor of Sociology at City College and The Graduate Center, The City University of New York. In his research and work he specializes in Middle Easterners (especially Iranians) in the United States, about whom he has published numerous articles and book chapters. He is co-editor of the award winning book Ethnic Los Angeles (Russell Sage, 1996), Middle Eastern Diaspora Communities in America (Center for Near Eastern Studies, New York University, 1996), and is guest editor of a special issue of Iranian Studies (1998) on "Iranians in America." Dr. Bozorgmehr is Co-Director with Dr. Baron of the newly founded Middle East and Middle Eastern American Center (MEMEAC) at The Graduate Center, The City University of New York.

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Mine Ener is Assistant Professor of Islamic Civilization and Modern Middle East History at Villanova University. Articles examining state and private initiatives of poor relief in Egypt in the 19th and early 20th

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ZAHERA SAED

Zahera Saed is a doctoral student in English Literature at The Graduate Center of The City University of New York where she focuses on Middle Eastern/Asian American literature. She is currently co-editing a collection of post-Soviet War Afghan literature. For her MFA in poetry at Brooklyn College (June 2000), she wrote a thesis combining Afghan folktales with memoirs of the somber history of Afghanistan during and after the Cold War. More recently, she worked with Professor Bozorgmehr to compile information on the philanthropic organizations of Middle East communities in the United States.

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Philanthropy Among Middle Eastern Americans

NOTES

Center for the Study of Philanthropy

Founded in September 1986 at The Graduate School and University Center of The City University of New York, Center for the Study of Philanthropy focuses attention on giving, voluntarism, and nonprofit entrepreneurship by individual donors, foundations, and corporations in the United States and around the world.

The focus of the Center's work is to broaden the pool of scholars engaged in the study of giving and voluntarism, to increase the opportunities for collaboration with practitioners in the field, and to enhance public awareness of philanthropic trends through a variety of formats of seminars, symposia, conferences, courses, research projects, awards, and publications.



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