

Philanthropy among Arab Americans: Motivation and Type as Indicators for Group Identity
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Abstract

At a time in history when Arab identity is a matter of global interest, this study seeks to use philanthropy—the giving of time and money—among members of the United States' diverse Arab American communities as an indicator for their identity as Arabs. For this paper, Mr. Wilcke combined research of the public records of Arab American organizations, both nationally and locally, with field research in Brooklyn, New York. The most challenging question in this research examined philanthropic motivations. Religion provided the strongest common focus for Arab Americans. This philanthropy is not always channeled toward Islamic organizations, reflecting that many Eastern Orthodox churches reside in Middle Eastern countries (the Chaldeans in Iraq, the Maronites in Lebanon, the Copts in Egypt, etc). Other foci for philanthropy were the needs of newly arrived immigrants (language instruction and employment guidance); professional interests; and preserving Arab culture and heritage.

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