

*newpoints*

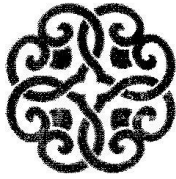
## Middle East and the Mashreq

*The Middle East Institute  
Washington, DC*

April 2010



*Middle East Institute*



## Middle East Institute

**The mission of the Middle East Institute is to promote knowledge of the Middle East in America and strengthen understanding of the United States by the people and governments of the region.**

For more than 60 years, MEI has dealt with the momentous events in the Middle East — from the birth of the state of Israel to the invasion of Iraq. Today, MEI is a foremost authority on contemporary Middle East issues. It provides a vital forum for honest and open debate that attracts politicians, scholars, government officials, and policy experts from the US, Asia, Europe, and the Middle East. MEI enjoys wide access to political and business leaders in countries throughout the region. Along with information exchanges, facilities for research, objective analysis, and thoughtful commentary, MEI's programs and publications help counter simplistic notions about the Middle East and America. We are at the forefront of private sector public diplomacy. *Viewpoints* are another MEI service to audiences interested in learning more about the complexities and issues affecting the Middle East and US relations with the region.

To learn more about the Middle East Institute, visit our website at <http://www.mei.edu>

Photo credits, clockwise from upper left: © International Labour Organization/Crozet M.; © International Labour Organization/Maillard J.; © International Labour Organization/Maillard J.; © International Labour Organization/Crozet M.; © International Labour Organization/Crozet M.; © International Labour Organization/Crozet M.; © International Labour Organization/Bikhazi R.; © International Labour Organization/Maillard J.; © International Labour Organization/Crozet M.

---

## Viewpoints: 1979

The year 1979 was among the most tumultuous, and important, in the history of the modern Middle East. In 2009, the Middle East Institute marked the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of these events in 2009 by launching a year-long special series of our acclaimed publication, *Viewpoints*, which offered perspectives on these events and the influence that they continue to exert on the region today. Each special issue of *Viewpoints* combined the diverse commentaries of policymakers and scholars from around the world with a robust complement of statistics, maps, and bibliographic information in order to encourage and facilitate further research. Each special issue is available, free of charge, on our website, [www.mei.edu](http://www.mei.edu).



February  
*Viewpoints*: The Iranian Revolution



March  
*Viewpoints*: The Egyptian-Israeli Peace Treaty



July  
*Viewpoints*: Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's Fall and Pakistan's New Direction



August  
*Viewpoints*: Oil Shock



November  
*Viewpoints*: The Great Mosque



December  
*Viewpoints*: Afghanistan in the Grip of Conflict

*Don't miss an issue!*

*Be sure to bookmark [www.mei.edu](http://www.mei.edu) today.*

---

***Viewpoints Special Edition***

# **Migration and the Mashreq**

---

# Migration and the Mashreq

---

## Introduction 7

### I. Patterns

Lebanese Migration to the Gulf (1950-2009),  
*by Guita Hourani* 9

Syro-Lebanese Migration (1880-Present): “Push and “Pull” Factors,  
*by Eliane N. Fersan* 13

The Migration of Syrian Christians,  
*by Saïam Kawakibi* 18

Egypt’s Place in the Euro-Mediterranean Migration System,  
*by Ayman Zohry* 24

Indian Labor Migrants in Lebanon: A Comparative Study of Migrants from  
Punjab and Tamil Nadu,  
*by Seema Gaur and Prem C. Saxena* 27

### II. Impacts

The Impact of Migration on Those Left Behind: Evidence from Egypt,  
*by Ragui Assaad* 36

Palestinian and Iraqi Refugees and Urban Change in Lebanon and Syria,  
*by Mohamed Kamel Dorai* 39

Transnational Networks and Local Challenges: Iraqis in Cairo,  
*by Sara Sadek* 42

Remittances of Egyptian Migrants: An Overview,  
*by M.I.T. El-Sakka* 46

The Impacts of the Global Economic Crisis on Migration in the Arab World,  
*by Md. Shahidul Haque and Priyanka Debnath* 51

---

### III. Responses

|                                                                                                                            |    |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| The Labelling of Palestinian Camp Refugees: The Case of Dheishe,<br><i>by Nina Gren</i>                                    | 60 |
| Beyond El-Ghurba: Caught between Homeliness and Homelessness in the<br>Lebanese Diaspora,<br><i>by Nelia Hyndman-Rizik</i> | 64 |
| The Lebanese Jewish Community: Emigration and Diasporic Relations,<br><i>by Paul Tabar</i>                                 | 67 |
| Transnational Networks of the Lebanese-Nigerian Diaspora,<br><i>by Peter Adebayo</i>                                       | 71 |
| State Efforts to Regularize Migration into Jordan,<br><i>by Riad al Khouri</i>                                             | 74 |
| Regulation of Migration in Egypt,<br><i>by Ray Jureidini</i>                                                               | 76 |
| The “Youth Bulge” in Egypt: Is Labor Migration the Solution?,<br><i>by Mona Said and Kathleen O'Neill</i>                  | 80 |

---

## Introduction

---

The first volume of the Migration and the Arab World series dealt primarily with the trends in, consequences of, and policy responses to labor migration in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states since the “oil boom” period of the 1970s. This volume focuses on the countries of the Mashreq (i.e., Egypt and the Levant) as source and destination countries for various migrant groups, dating from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century up to the present day.

The 17 essays included in this volume depict the Mashreq as a magnet for foreign workers and as a labor pool for unskilled and skilled workers who have fanned out across the Middle East and the world. They also depict the Mashreq as home to one of the world’s largest populations of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs), whose presence, among other things, has transformed the region’s urban landscape.

The essays discuss the underlying and proximate causes of migration, as well as the agents and networks that have enabled migrants to find work, finance their trips abroad, sustain themselves, and maintain their attachments to their native lands and the families they have left behind. In so doing, the contributors shed light on the transnational processes that nurture economic interaction and a sense of shared identity between migrant and diaspora populations.

---

## **III. Responses**

---

## Transnational Networks of the Lebanese-Nigerian Diaspora

Peter Adebayo

---

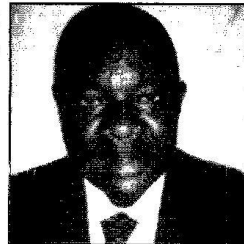
Recent studies have accorded great importance to the role of transnational migrant community networks in international migration.<sup>1</sup> According to Hourani and Dabbous, there are several prerequisites for the development of such networks, including the presence of the migrant community in different parts of the world, diverse transnational relations — financial, commercial, political, religious rituals, or family ceremonies — and visits between the migrants and relatives in their country of origin.<sup>2</sup>

The creation of the Lebanese community in Nigeria, as well as its contributions to Nigeria's economy, began with the arrival of the first Lebanese immigrant, Elias Khoury (who hailed from Miziara in the northern part of Lebanon), in Lagos in 1890.<sup>3</sup> There followed other Lebanese families, and the formation of this community and the related transnational network began to expand. Advances in transportation and communication have strengthened transnational networks of Lebanese-Nigerians between Lebanon and Nigeria as well as between the various Lebanese migrant communities in other parts of the world.

### COMMUNITY CREATION AND NETWORK

Economic prosperity, capital formation, investments, and socio-cultural development, have all been attained as a result of the various components of networks (i.e., family members, friends, business contacts, etc.) used by the Lebanese community. In a survey conducted in Lagos, Kano, Ibadan, Port Harcourt, Calabar, and the villages of Miziara, 80% of the interviewees claimed that their migration and the success of their enterprises in Nigeria were due to such components.<sup>4</sup> The networks have provided information to "help migrants reduce uncertainty and mitigate risks and thereby help them overcome traditional barriers associated with moving."<sup>5</sup> They have helped to support migrants financially, psychologically (through the provision of a social community), and instrumentally by assisting migrants to assimilate into their new community.<sup>6</sup>

The family is the main refuge for members of Lebanese society. Indeed, Lebanese turn first to their families for assistance in almost every aspect of their lives, including migra-



Dr. Peter Adebayo is a Lecturer in International History and Diaspora Studies in the Department of History and International Studies at the University of Ilorin, Nigeria. He is President of the newly formed African Network of Global History. He also is an Associate Researcher at the Lebanese Emigration Research Center, Notre Dame University, Louaize, Lebanon. He specializes mostly in Lebanese diaspora, migration and humanitarian studies. In 2003, he was a Fulbright Scholar at New York University's Multinational Institute of American Studies and in October 2005 he became a laureate of the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa.

1. T. Hammar et al., eds., *International Migration, Immobility and Development: Multidisciplinary Perspectives* (Oxford: Berg, 2000); L. Pries, *International Migration and Transnational Social Spaces* (London: Routledge, 2001); and A. Portes, "Immigration Theory for a New Century: Some Problems and Opportunities," *International Migration Review*, Vol. 31, No. 4 (1997), pp. 799-825.

2. G. Hourani and E. Sensenig-Dabbous, "Insecurity, Migration and Return: The Case of Lebanon Following the Summer 2006 War," Research Report, European-Mediterranean Consortium for Applied Research on International Migration, 2007.

3. P. Adebayo, "The Lebanese in Nigeria: The Lebanese and Economy of Lagos, 1890-1980," Unpublished PhD Thesis, Department of History, University of Ilorin, 2003. Though some continue to dispute the arrival date of the first Lebanese to Nigeria, most historians of West Africa accept 1890.

4. Interviews by author in 2000, 2006, and 2008.

5. D. Leblang, J. Fitzgerald and Teets, "Defying the Law of Gravity: The Political Economy of International Migration," Department of Political Science, University of Colorado, Boulder, November 2006, [http://socsci.colorado.edu/~leblang/Research\\_files/Defying.pdf](http://socsci.colorado.edu/~leblang/Research_files/Defying.pdf). Cited in G. Hourani and E. Sensenig-Dabbous, *Insecurity, Migration and Return*, p. 13.

6. Hourani and Sensenig-Dabbous, *Insecurity, Migration and Return*, p. 13.

---

tion. The kinship contract "has been grounded in material realities. Kinship relations have been, for the Lebanese, the core of social identity, economic stability, political security and religious affiliation and the first, often last line of care. It has been kin against whom one has had irrevocable rights and toward whom one has had religiously mandated, at times legally prescribed, moral responsibilities."<sup>7</sup>

Lebanese-Nigerians have used modern means of communication such as telephone, fax, text messages, video, letters, and photos to remain connected with their families not only in the Christian village of Miziara and the Muslim village of Jwayya but wherever they are located.<sup>8</sup> This aspect was confirmed by various returnees interviewed in the villages of Miziara and Jwayya.<sup>9</sup>

#### FAMILY SUPPORT THROUGH REMITTANCES

Remittances are by far the most outstanding aspect of the network through which the Lebanese-Nigerians have been able to improve the lives of their families and their relatives in the villages of Miziara and Jwayya, as well as in Nigeria. Remittances are vital to the lives of residents, especially during times of crisis. Therefore, it is not surprising that they have emerged as critical insurance mechanisms for residents of countries afflicted by economic and political crisis, such as Lebanon during its civil war. During the 2006 war, Lebanese-Nigerians were able to mobilize \$500,000 that was sent through the Lebanese Ambassador to the victims of the war.<sup>10</sup>

---

**Remittances are a  
fundamental fea-  
ture of Lebanon's  
economy.**

---

Indeed, remittances are a fundamental feature of Lebanon's economy. They represent a sizable proportion of the country's foreign revenue. In 2001, for example, remittances constituted 22% of household incomes and 88% of household savings in Lebanon. In 2004, Lebanon received \$2.7 billion in workers' remittances.<sup>11</sup> According to a survey conducted in Miziara and Jwayya, virtually all of the household respondents stated that they rely mostly on remittances from migrants in Nigeria for survival.<sup>12</sup>

#### TRANSNATIONAL PHILANTHROPY

Transnational philanthropy is an adjunct to remittances. This is a process by which migrants in the diaspora allocate a certain portion of their remittances to fund development projects in their home societies.<sup>13</sup> Formal structures, through which migrants make philanthropic donations, include religious, district, village, or other organizations of common interest, non-governmental organizations; and public relations and lobbying associations outside of the home country. In this respect, the Lebanese Ladies Society of Nigeria — a non-profit, voluntary humanitarian organization established in 1975 — has been involved in charitable activities offering scholarships to indigent students and donating to orphans in Lagos. Informal structures include families, broader kinship groups, and friends.<sup>14</sup>

---

7. S. Joseph, "Civic Myths, Citizenship and Gender in Lebanon," in S. Joseph, ed., *Gender in the Middle East* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2006), p. 116.

8. A. Peleikis, *Lebanese in Motion: The Construction of a "Gendered" Global Village* (Frankfurt: Verlag, 2003), pp. 83-119. See also M. Hudson, "Information Technology, International Politics and Political Change in the Arab World," *Bulletin of the Royal Institute for Inter-Faith Studies*, Vol. 4 (Autumn/Winter 2002), p. 118, <http://nmit.georgetown.edu/papers/mchudson.htm>.

9. Interview by author with Maxelle Chagouri, Miziara, June 2006 and September 2008.

10. Wale Olakitan, *The Guardian*, August 2, 2006.

11. D. Kapur, "Remittances: The New Development Mantra?," G-24 Discussion Paper Series, No. 29, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, April 2004, [http://www.unctad.org/en/docs/gdsmdpbg2420045\\_en.pdf](http://www.unctad.org/en/docs/gdsmdpbg2420045_en.pdf).

12. Interviews by author in Miziara and Jwayya, September and October, 2008.

13. J. Opiniano, "The Dynamics of Transnational Philanthropy by Migrant Workers to Their Communities of Origin: The Case of Pozorubio, Philippines," Fifth International Society for Third-Sector Research (ISTR) International Conference, University of Cape Town, South Africa, July 10, 2002.

14. Interview by author with May El-Khalil, former president of the Lebanese Ladies Society of Nigeria, October 1997.

---

## Adebayo...

In normal times, migrants donate funds to good causes, such as churches or mosques, construction/renovation, rural schools, cemetery improvements, health facilities, rest homes for the elderly, and orphanages. A typical example of this in Nigeria is the donation of a renovated old family building by the Moukarim family, which the Jigawa state government converted into a hospital (the Faiz Moukarim General Hospital, named after the first Lebanese to settle in the village of Majia).<sup>15</sup> The Hajig family renovated a girls' secondary school, renovated Government College Birini Kudu, and constructed a 1.5 kilometer road leading to the school in Jigawa State.<sup>16</sup> Similarly, the El-Khalil family helped renovate some secondary schools in Kano State.<sup>17</sup> In the city of Ibadan, Raymond Zard has provided scholarships to 15 students drawn from various universities across the country.<sup>18</sup> In 1992, Chief Marcel Chagouri built the Mother of Mercies religious monastery for the elderly in Miziara village in northern Lebanon.<sup>19</sup> Mother of Mercies also has served as a religious pilgrimage center. The Lebanese Community in Nigeria, which built a Maronite Church in Lagos in 1966, also built churches in the eastern, western, and northern parts of the country.<sup>20</sup>

It is important to emphasize that remittances have not been the only way of maintaining family members in Lebanon. Because of the proximity of Lagos to Beirut by air, Lebanese-Nigerians are able to visit friends and relatives, assist residents during natural and man-made disasters, and gather to address issues related to their country of origin.<sup>21</sup> Lebanese-Nigerians also have been able to contact their families in West African countries, Australia, Western Europe, Brazil, and American cities — trying to build what Hourani and Dabbous have referred to as a “transnational abode.”<sup>22</sup>

The role of returnees in facilitating and enhancing the various components of network towards developmental activities in both Nigeria and Lebanon, cannot be overemphasized. Members of the first ever Nigerian Trade Delegation to Lebanon (July 28- August 2, 2008) were astonished when they saw the series of development projects undertaken by returnees in the two villages.

---

**Migrants donate funds for such good causes as church or mosques, construction/renovation, pastoral schools, cemetery improvements, health facilities, rest homes for the elderly, and orphanages.**

---

## CONCLUSION

Lebanese-Nigerians have succeeded, not only in maintaining contact with their home villages and elsewhere, but they also have forged local-global linkages and transnational networks. By facilitating interactions between Nigeria and the homeland (Lebanon) and among the Lebanese-Nigerian diaspora (e.g., in Australia, Brazil, Britain, Canada, France, and the United States), these links have created a “transnational abode.” They also have fostered the development of e-commerce. Hopefully, Lebanese-Nigerians will use the transnational network to facilitate and enhance socio-cultural and business trading relationships between Nigeria and Lebanon.

---

15. Interview by author with Chief Hasib Moukarim, Lagos, Nigeria March 2009.

16. Interview by author with Mohammed Hajaig, Beirut, September 5, 2008.

17. Interview by author with Abdul Naser Hajaig, Beirut, September 5, 2008.

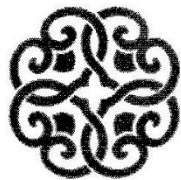
18. “Dr. Are Zard, a Worthy Philanthropist,” *Sunday Tribune*, October 3, 2004, p. 5.

19. Interview with Chief Marcel Chagouri, who built the Monastery of the Holy Mother of Mercies, where I spent one month while conducting research.

20. *Daily Times*, August 12, 2004.

21. A. Siedu, “Some Benefits of Migrants ‘Return Visits’ to Ghana,” paper presented at the International Workshop on Migration and Poverty in West Africa, University of Sussex, Brighton, UK, 2003; M. Leichtmann, “Reexamining the Transnational Migrant: The Afro-Libanais of Senegal,” in P. Tabar, *Lebanese Diaspora: History, Racism and Belonging* (Beirut: Lebanese American University, 2005); and Patricia Nabti, “International Emigration from a Lebanese Village: Bishmizzinis on Six Continents,” PhD dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 1989.

22. G. Hourani and E. Sensenig-Dabbous have introduced the term to mean the environment that emerges from ICT use, through the interaction of a migrant or a community of migrants with his/her resident families, friends, or townspeople in the community of origin, and a migrant or a community of migrants with his/her families, friends, or townspeople in other diasporic communities.



Middle East Institute