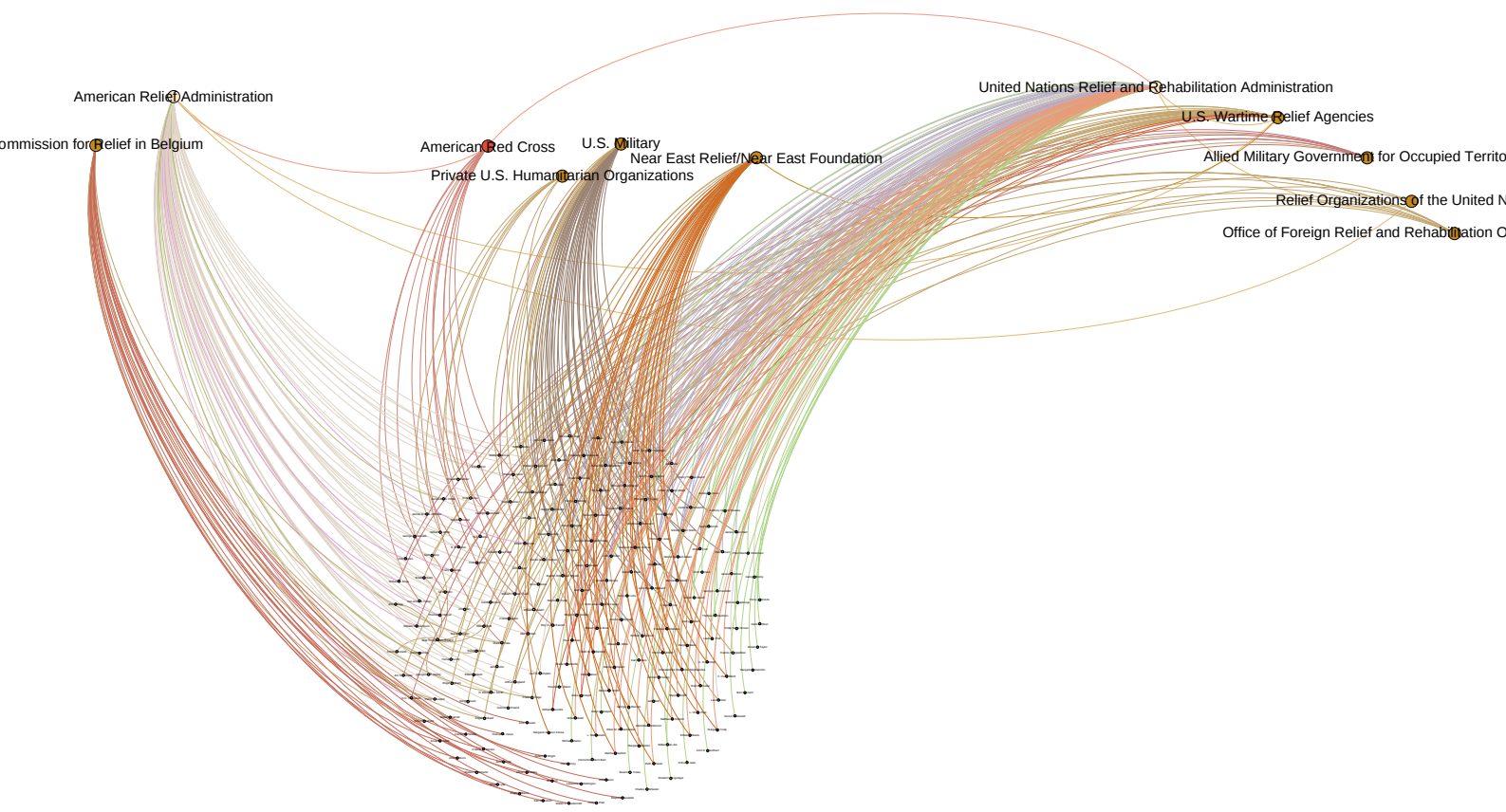**Mapping American Humanitarian Networks**

E. Kyle Romero

Using GEPHI, this project maps the networks of humanitarian workers who worked for multiple institutions during World War I, the interwar years, and during World War II. The network analysis graph tracks eleven different organizations that operated over the course of the twentieth century. The chart separates the groups of institutions into three sections that display, from left to right, organizations operating during World War I, the interwar years, and World War II. The first two of these organizations (the American Relief Administration and the Commission for Relief in Belgium) both operated during World War I and closed down shortly after the war's end. The next four groups of organizations (The American Red Cross; Near East Relief/Foundation; the U.S. Military; and various small private humanitarian agencies) all operated to some degree throughout the twentieth century, bridging each of the world wars and continuing to exist until today. The final group of organizations (The United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration; U.S. Wartime Agencies including Lend-Lease, Board of Economic Warfare, and President's Committee on Relief; Allied Military Government for Occupied Territories; Relief Organizations of the United Nations; and the Office of Foreign Relief and Rehabilitation Operations) were all founded either during World War II or in the war's immediate aftermath. The central circle of nodes displays the names of over 250 humanitarian workers who worked for more than one of these agencies. This is not an exhaustive list of every agency's employees, but rather an attempt to highlight how many humanitarian workers sought employment from multiple agencies throughout their careers, highlighting the connections and overlap in personnel among different institutions.

This chart offers new insight into the historiography on American humanitarian institutions and practice in the twentieth century. The first generation of scholars who studied non-governmental organizations articulated a straightforward narrative of the interwar years: a brief burst of "Wilsonian Internationalism" after World War I resulted in American engagement abroad, followed by American withdrawal, the rise of restrictive ethno-nationalist nation-states, and the decline of internationalism. This narrative ends after World War II, with the U.S. poised as the new global superpower, once again eager to engage with international politics.[1] One historian even termed World War I "a dry run," where the few humanitarian organizations created failed to respond to the enormity of the crisis and largely faded away, having made no significant impact.[2] This conception of the interwar years as a period of relative unimportance, however, glosses over and minimizes key continuities between the World Wars, both ideological and in terms of the personnel that staffed and organized humanitarian institutions. In terms of personnel, this graph highlights the many connections between organizations in operation throughout the first half of the twentieth century. By highlighting the personal connections that undergirded American humanitarian projects in this period, this graph emphasizes the structural continuities that defined U.S. engagement with the world in the twentieth century.

---

[1] For examples of this grand historical narrative that decenters World War I and the interwar years see Amos Yoder, *The Evolution of the United Nations System* , 2nd edn (Taylor & Francis, 1993). For more sophisticated versions of this narrative, see e.g. Akira Ariye, *Cultural Internationalism and World Order* (Baltimore, 1997); Zara Steiner, *The Lights that Failed: European International History, 1919–1933* (Oxford, 2005). For a more thorough historiographical review of how this mode of thinking became so dominant in scholarship see, Jessica Reinisch, "Internationalism in Relief: The Birth (and Death) of UNRRA" *Past & Present* 210:6 (2011), Pages 258–289.
[2] Michael Barnett, *Empire of Humanity: A History of Humanitarianism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013), 40.

American Relief Administration

Commission for Relief in Belgium

American Red Cross

U.S. Military

Private U.S. Humanitarian Organizations

Near East Relief/Near East Foundation

United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration

U.S. Wartime Relief Agencies

Allied Military Government for Occupied Territories

Relief Organizations of the United Nations

Office of Foreign Relief and Rehabilitation Operations

Sources

Personnel records are drawn from papers and records from the following archival collections:

Papers of Mark Bristol. Library of Congress. Washington D.C.

Papers of Fred. K. Hoehler. University of Minnesota Library. Minneapolis, MN.

Papers of Near East Relief. Union Theological Seminary. New York, NY

Records of the American Relief Administration Association. Herbert Hoover Presidential Library and Museum. West Branch, IA.

Records of the Bureau of Services. United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration Fond. United Nations Archive. Geneva, Switzerland.

Records of the Commission for Relief in Belgium. Hoover Institution Library and Archive. Stanford, CA.

Records of the Near East Foundation. Rockefeller Archive Center. Sleepy Hollow, NY.

Records of the Secretariat. United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration Records. Columbia University. New York, NY.