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Mansoor Moaddel, Jean Kors, and
Johan Gärde

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Sectarianism in Lebanon

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Mansoor Moaddel
Eastern Michigan University, USA

Jean Kors
International Center for Organizational Development, Lebanon

Johan Gärde
Ersta Sköndal University College, Sweden

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Direct all correspondence to Mansoor Moaddel, Department of Sociology, Anthropology, and Criminology, Eastern Michigan University, Ypsilanti, MI 48197, email: MMoaddel@umich.edu, or phone: 734-998-1082.

ABSTRACT

In examining the social correlates of sectarianism in Lebanon, this paper first assesses the significance of two major factors. One is political, pertaining to the structure of inter-confessional power relations, and the other is cultural, measured in terms of orientations toward historically significant issues. The paper argues that an historical shift in power relations resulted in parity among the major political players in Lebanon: Christians, Sunnis, and Shi'is. This change thus removed the functional need for sectarianism in the structure of power inequality. Drawing on data from a 2008 world values survey in Lebanon, the paper also shows that on the cultural level, the differences in Lebanese attitudes and value orientations toward historically significant issues do not quite fall on religious fault-lines. Although Christians and Muslims differ significantly in their attitudes toward gender relations and religious fundamentalism, the Shi'is and Sunnis, despite their political rivalries, appear to be quite similar on many issues. The paper posits that attitudes against sectarianism are positively associated with inter-confessional trust and support for liberal values, and inversely related to religious fundamentalism and favorable attitudes toward foreign intervention.

INTRODUCTION

On March 6, 2011 in Beirut, Lebanon, around 8,000 Lebanese rallied against the sectarianism that has been the governing principle of the country's politics since the formation of its first republic in 1926. The protesters claimed this system was hindering development, engendering corruption, and entrenching incompetent political leaders. A representative banner read: "Bread, knowledge, freedom, and no to political sectarianism."¹ Such criticisms are not new in Lebanon; historians have long posited that sectarianism has undermined national politics and governance. Discussing Lebanon's current sectarianism, Cleveland and Bunton, for example, claim that

the perseverance of sectarian communal loyalties stultified Lebanon's political development and allowed family and religious ties to prevail over national ones. Politics was dominated by established families whose power derived from feudalism, economic status and a long-standing tradition of leadership. Within each of the country's electoral districts, a political leader (*za'eem*) from the leading family of the region manipulated elections and distributed political favors and financial rewards.²

Although the Lebanese Constitution does not directly recognize division of power among the dominant religious communities, it emphasizes the need to uphold the "pact of communal coexistence."³

A normative preference for non-sectarian egalitarian politics, however, may not be enough motivation for dismantling the sectarian system. It is also important to assess the historical and socio-cultural functions of sectarianism that served to both maintain the structure of power relations and protect the cultural boundaries that separate different confessions. Of key concern here is how sectarianism may affect the balance of power in Lebanon and how sociocultural divides may maintain sectarianism. That is, to what extent is the existing power relation unequal and thus in need of a sectarian system to protect it? Also, do the cultural differences among Lebanese fall on the confessional fault-lines, which explains the persistence of sectarianism? In this paper, we argue that the answers to both questions are negative. In regard to the first question, we assert that from the independence in 1943, to the Taif Accord in 1989, to the rise of Hezbollah-dominated Shi'is since the turn of the century, the multiple shifts in power relations among the followers of major religions (Christians, Sunnis, and Shi'is) have resulted in the leveling of political influence among the groups in Lebanon today. Given the current

“natural” balance of power, itself is no longer a functional need in the structure of power relations for existence of the sectarian system. In regard to the second question, we provide evidence that the differences in political and cultural outlooks among Lebanese citizens are not entirely sectarian-based. Nonetheless, we note that favorable attitudes toward sectarianism are positively linked to religious fundamentalism, intra-confessional trust (in-group solidarity), and favorable attitudes toward foreign interventions. These attitudes, on the other hand, are linked negatively to inter-confessional trust, greater support for political equality and liberal values, and unfavorable attitudes toward foreign interventions. To assess these arguments, we consider the historical changes in power relations in 20th-century Lebanon, as well as findings from a world values survey that was carried out in the country in 2008.

We begin by tracing historical contentions for political power that resulted in, first, the institutionalization of the Maronites supremacy right after the independence, then, the shift in the balance of power in favor of the Sunnis after the civil war (1975-1990) and the signing of the 1989 Taif Accord, and, finally, the rise of the Shi’i political power in recent decades. We posit a resultant state of near-parity in power relations and a shift in the center of political conflict from Christian versus Muslim to Sunni versus Shi’i. Inter-confessional coalitions have thus become an important mechanism in Lebanon for gaining and maintaining political influence on the national level, as has been shown, for example, in the recent alliance between the Shi’i political elite and a significant section of Christian politicians as well as the Druze leadership.

Regarding cultural values, we analyze data from a 2008 values survey to assess the degree to which the differences in the sociopolitical and cultural attitudes among Lebanese correspond to religious divisions. We focus on variations in attitudes toward principles of social organization such as individualism, gender equality, form of government, basis of identity, and religious fundamentalism by sectarian affiliations—Shi’is, Sunnis, Druze, Maronites, Greek Catholics (hereafter Catholics), and Orthodox. We also assess the linkages among attitudes toward sectarianism, inter-confessional trust, liberal values, religious fundamentalism, and foreign interventions.

LEVELING OF POWER: HISTORICAL CHANGES IN POWER RELATIONS

The equality of all political voices was the universal principle that created the unity of purpose among the diverse Lebanese religious groups that opposed the Ottomans in the late 19th century. Nonetheless, the historical process that inspired a drive toward political universalism also created sectarian barriers that blocked its realization. Some of the forerunners of the movement for political equality were members of the same group of prominent Christians that erected the sectarian political system. Thus, despite an initial common desire for a discursive framework that supported both political equality and tolerance, de facto political equality was gained in Lebanon only after about 75 years of power struggle – from the formation of the first republic in 1926 under the French Mandate to the beginning of the 21st century.

The intellectual drives for equality and the sectarian political movements were outcomes of the large-scale historical processes that engulfed the Middle East: incorporation into the world economy, the development of capitalism, changes in class relations, the decline of the Ottoman empire, heightening interventions of the European powers into the affairs of the indigenous people, the diffusion of modern culture into the region, the expansion of modern education, and the rise of the educated elite who were the primary producers and consumers of modern ideas.⁴ One consequence of these changes was the accumulation of wealth by members of Christian community.⁵ In the district of Mount Lebanon, they also enjoyed a numerical majority. In 1914, Christians, about 60% of whom belonged to the Maronite denomination, comprised 80% of Mount Lebanon's estimated population of 400,000, while the rest were Muslims, including the Druze.⁶ Wealth and demography brought resources and power to the Christian community.

Nonetheless, these advantages by themselves were not enough to lend credence to the Christians' claim of political supremacy. A favorable political opportunity was also necessary for these claim-makers to accord themselves this right. The contour of this opportunity was shaped by a 19th-century vision for an independent Lebanon. This vision rested on principles that were held in common by Christian and Muslim Arabs, and that united them in a struggle against the Ottoman's religious authoritarian rule. These principles included the equality of all religious faiths, the right of a people to a political community, the organization of such a community under terms other than religion, and a conception of history that went far beyond the Islamic period. By relaxing the norms of religious inequality hitherto practiced under their rule, the Ottomans also contributed to the rise of this alternative vision. Known as *Tanzimat*, the reforms instituted

during this period (1837-1876) expanded the religious and cultural freedoms of the minorities. Such reforms as the 1839 *Hatt-i Sherif* (Noble Rescript) of Gülhane, which recognized the right to life, property, and honor, and the equality of all religious groups before the law; the 1856 *Hatt-i Humayun* (Imperial Rescript), which guaranteed the right of non-Muslims to serve in the army; and a new civil code, the *Mejelle*, issued in 1870, changed the very concept of Ottoman society and challenged the notion of Muslim supremacy.⁷

This reform process was reinforced and institutionalized by the establishment of modern educational institutions in Lebanon. In Beirut province (*wilayat*), the number of state schools alone rose from 153 in 1886 to 359 in 1914, a growth rate faster than that of the population. Beirut's influential Ottoman Islamic College became the training ground for a whole generation of Beirut Arabists.⁸ Such prominent Christian intellectuals as Butrus al-Bustani, Adib Ishaq, Ibrahim al-Yaziji, Ahmad Faris al-Shidya, Faris Nimr, Ya'qub Sarruf, and Shahin Makarius commonly promoted Arabism as well as the idea of political equality. It is thus likely that these newly educated Christians, who were leading the movement toward independence from the Ottomans, developed a strong sense of their destined role in the creation of a modern Lebanon.⁹ In particular, Maronite Christians viewed themselves as capable of bringing about universalism via "the enlightenment and openness that they have gained by bridging the Western and Eastern worlds."¹⁰ Their numerical majority also would have favored their political supremacy.

However, the politics of Lebanon got complicated following the formation of the Greater Lebanon in 1920 by the French, a move also supported by the landowners who had vested interests beyond Mount Lebanon. The boundaries of the new country expanded to include (subsequently disputed) territories encompassing the coastal cities of Tripoli, Beirut, Sidon and Tyre, southern Lebanon, and the eastern Bekaa valley – areas traditionally considered part of Syria. Territorial expansion also significantly enlarged the Muslim proportion of the population,¹¹ which set the stage for power struggles among different religious confessions. Although the National Pact of 1943 attempted to resolve political power inequalities by endorsing the principle of shared ownership of the country by all confessions, it also institutionalized a hierarchically organized sectarian democracy, whereby political equality was expected within, but not among, confessions. The unwritten National Pact gave enormous powers to the Maronite-controlled presidency, which included the right to appoint the prime minister and to refuse to implement legislation.

The rise of the Maronites and the subsequent shifts in the balance of power—first in favor of the Sunnis in the Taif Accord and then toward the Shi'is after the Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon—have not simply been a function of the organizational prowess and resources at the disposal of the political organizations representing these religious confessions. Nor were they merely an outcome of the changes in the structure of political opportunity that might have worked to the benefit of the ascending religious confession. These shifts also appear to have been governed by that confession's ability to acquire substantial political capital within the context of the national struggle against foreign domination. The Maronites managed to dominate politics because they were at the forefront of the struggle against foreign rule; their political supremacy and the country's independence went hand in hand. But when these Christians were perceived by other power contenders as being too cozy with the Western powers and Israel, they lost considerable political capital. In fact, during the 15-year-long civil war, it is likely that those fighting the Christians did not view Christians as fellow Lebanese so much as collaborators with “imperialists” and the “Zionist enemy”—attitudes that were also promoted by Palestinians and the former Soviet Union. These attitudes might have also been supported by the Sunnis, who felt that they were being marginalized as a result of the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon.¹² This context thus provided a favorable opportunity for the Sunnis to reassert political power. Ratified on November 4, 1989, the Taif Accord that ended the civil war and produced the Second Republic, significantly reduced the power of the Maronite-controlled presidency in favor of the Sunni-controlled Cabinet and premiership.¹³

The rise in Shi'i power in the last decade of the 20th century also appears to conform to the same nationalist dynamic of political capital accumulation. Despite being the most populous confession in the country, Shi'is' share of political power fell far below their numerical superiority. By the mid-1970s, the Shi'is were still denied access to the positions of political leadership and a proper share of parliamentary representation. Sunni representation among the ruling elite was much larger than the Shi'i, and even the much smaller Druze, a religious offshoot from Sevever Shi'ism, had a representation larger than its share in the population.¹⁴ The Shi'is' weakness was partly a consequence of political fragmentation; they were divided between the Baathists, the Communists, and the Nasserites. However, unity, while important, is by itself no guarantee of success in politics. Equally important is how this unity is used to further the national objective of protecting the country's territorial integrity and national sovereignty. To

this end, the Shi'is first experimented with peace. In 1974, prominent Shi'i cleric Imam Musa Sadr founded the Movement of the Dispossessed.¹⁵ As a man of peace, Sadr established a political forum to communicate his community's concerns to the state. He also worked hard to build dialogue between Muslims and Christians and to promote a unity government.¹⁶ The Shi'is had good reasons to be supportive of peace; the civil war was harming their daily lives.¹⁷

Nonetheless, the peaceful approach under the condition of the Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon did not appear to be an effective means of enhancing Shi'i standing in national politics. Both the intensification of the civil war and the disappearance of Imam Musa Sadr in Libya in 1978 further weakened interest in this approach. As a result, the idea of adopting a militant strategy to fight foreign intrusion and defend the Shi'is community became quite appealing to the Shi'i activists. This turn to militancy was also reinforced by changes in the structure of political opportunity brought about by outbreak of the Iranian Revolution in 1979. The revolution had replaced the pro-Israeli Shah with staunchly anti-Zionist Ayatollah Khomeini, who was eager to provide broad support to his followers among the Lebanese Shi'is. With his assistance, the Hezbollah was born in the early 1980s. Portraying itself as the champion of national defense against foreign occupation, the Hezbollah launched persistent guerrilla attacks against the Israeli forces. Its units fought these forces so effectively that the government of Israel decided to pull all its troops out of southern Lebanon in May 2000, ending 22 years of military occupation.

The path to Hezbollah's success followed a route similar to past changes in power relations. Christians advanced their ownership of Lebanon within the context of the nationalist struggle against the Ottomans. This struggle rested on principles shared by non-Christian members of the Lebanese political community. Similarly, the Sunnis reasserted their power within the context of the struggle against foreign domination and Christians' alleged collusions with foreigners. In a parallel fashion, the Hezbollah-led Shi'i political ascendancy and subsequent claim for a larger share of political power transpired within the context of struggle against Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon. Hezbollah's success in forcing the Israelis out of the country enhanced their popularity in the region and brought them substantial political capital. The rise of the Hezbollah also marked the leveling of political power among the three main power players in the country.

VALUE ORIENTATIONS AND SECTARIANISM

Parity in political power may not diminish the prevalence and salience of the sectarian system if cultural differences fall within confessional boundaries. In terms of religious beliefs and practices, it is self-evident that the Christians, Sunnis, and Shi'is differ from one another. Nonetheless, it is important to determine what aspects of religious beliefs and attitudes enhance the feeling of in-group solidarity or weaken inter-confessional trust and therefore contribute to sectarianism among Lebanese citizens. Further, social groups may differ from one another in a variety of ways, and the dimensions of these differences may also vary across societies, regions, and cultural traditions. In some cases, social group differences may be confined to life-style and consumption habits. In other cases, they may encompass value orientations and attitudes toward historically significant issues. These issues, which vary from society to society, underpin key dimensions of social organization. Cultural debates, religious disputations, and political conflicts in a society often transpire over these issues. In the contemporary Middle East, historically significant issues include those pertaining to (a) social individualism, (b) gender relations, (c) forms of government, (d) the relationship between religion and politics, (e) the basis of identity, (f) the nature of the outside world, the West in particular; and (g) religious fundamentalism.

These issues have featured prominently in the discourses of intellectual leaders in the region in the contemporary period. The manner in which these issues were resolved resulted in the emergence of such diverse cultural episodes as Islamic modernism, secularism, liberal nationalism, territorial nationalism, Arabism and pan-Arab nationalism, and Islamic fundamentalism. In Islamic modernism, for example, Western culture is acknowledged favorably, Islamic political theory and the idea of constitutionalism are reconciled, the construction of the modern state is endorsed, an Islamic feminism is advanced to defend women's rights, and moderate and peaceful political actions are endorsed. The harbingers of Islamic fundamentalism, by contrast, had taken positions on these issues quite different from, if not diametrically opposed to, the positions taken by the leaders of Islamic modernism. In Islamic fundamentalism, Western culture is portrayed as decadent, constitutionalism is abandoned in favor of the unity of religion and politics in an Islamic government, the institutions of male domination and gender segregation are prescribed and rigorously defended, and revolutionary methods of change are often encouraged.¹⁸

We argue that insofar as variations in Lebanese citizens' orientations toward these issues correspond to religious confessions, sectarianism is rooted in inter-confessional cultural differences. To assess this correspondence, we use data from a 2008 nationally representative values survey carried out in Lebanon. First, we gauge the extent to which attitudes toward these issues differ significantly among the followers of the six major religious confessions: Maronites, Catholics, Orthodox, Shi'is, Sunnis, and Druze. Then, we assess the extent to which attitudes toward the sectarian system are linked to inter-confessional trust, liberal values, religious fundamentalism, and attitudes toward the role of foreign countries in Lebanon.

ISSUES AND THE LEBANESE PUBLIC

Social Individualism

Social individualism is conceptualized in terms of the degree to which the autonomy of individuals and their choices are recognized. In modern democratic societies, this autonomy is recognized most of the time. The patriarchal culture, on the other hand, gives priority to the role of a patriarch and emphasizes the individual's obedience to authority in family and society.

We consider four indicators of social individualism. The first indicator is constructed from the respondents' answer to the question regarding the basis for marriage: "In your view, which of the following is the more important basis for marriage: (1) parental approval, or (2) love?" Scholars have noted the development of individualism in the West in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Reflecting individualistic values is the recognition of the right of individual choice, which Deutsch refers to as "the Romeo and Juliet revolution," which prevailed by the seventeenth century. The latter had its basis in the humanism movement in Europe during the 16th and 17th centuries that gave priority to individual choice over religious dogma and tradition.¹⁹ We thus propose that people who consider love as a more important basis for marriage than parental approval are more supportive of social individualism than those who do not. We created a dummy variable **love** (love=1, parental approval=0).

The other three indicators are selected from among characteristics chosen by survey respondents as favorable qualities for children. The respondents were instructed to choose up to five from among ten qualities: independence, hard work, feeling of responsibility, imagination, tolerance, thrift/saving, determination/perseverance, religious faith, unselfishness, and obedience. These three indicators are **independence** (1=selected, 0=not selected), **imagination**

(1=selected, 0=not selected), **obedience** (1=not selected, 0=selected). Respondents who selected independence and imagination but not obedience as favorable qualities for children are considered to have a more positive attitude toward social individualism than those who made other selections.

A composite measure of social individualism is constructed as a linear combination of these four dummy variables, and ranges from 0, least individualistic, to 4, most individualistic:

$$\text{Social Individualism} = \text{independence} + \text{imagination} + \text{obedience} + \text{love}$$

Gender Equality

The gender equality variable measures attitudes toward equality between men and women in family, politics, and job market. This variable is also a composite measure of three indicators measured in the Likert scale format. “Do you (1) strongly agree, (2) agree, (3) disagree, or (4) strongly disagree that a wife must always obey her husband (**obedience**); men make better political leaders (**political leadership**), and when jobs are scarce, men should have more right to a job than women (**job market**)?” These variables are added together to create a gender-equality variable, and then divided by 3.

$$\text{Gender equality} = (\text{obedience} + \text{political leadership} + \text{job market})/3$$

The minimum value is 1, where the respondents strongly agree strongly with gender advantages for men in all three arenas; the maximum is 4, where the respondents strongly disagree with male advantages. Higher values on this variable indicate stronger support for gender equality than lower values.

Form of Government

Variables related to form of government include attitudes toward democracy, secular politics, the role of religious laws in the formation of government policies, the significance of the religiosity of the people running for public office, and the role of religious leaders in politics.

More than 95% of the Lebanese respondents from the 2008 survey strongly agreed or agreed that democracy is the best form of government. Given the small variation on this measure, it is not used in the analysis. Two composite variables are used for the form of government. The first consists of orientations toward **Secular Politicians**. This measure is a combination of four indicators—all in the Likert scale format, using 5-pt scale: “Do you (1)

strongly agree, (2) agree, (3) neither agree or disagree, (4) disagree, or (5) strongly disagree that politicians who do not believe in God are unfit to work for government in high offices (**atheist politicians**), it would be better for Lebanon if more people with strong religious beliefs held public office (**no religious politicians**), and religious leaders should not interfere in politics (**religious leaders refrain from politics**)?” The answer categories for the last item were recoded so that higher values indicated a stronger agreement with the statement. The fourth indicator (**shari’a/Christian value**) asks respondents whether they consider it (1) very important, (2) important, (3) somewhat important, (4) least important, or (5) not at all important for a good government to implement only the shari’a law (for Muslim respondents) or only the laws inspired by Christian values (for Christian respondents).

$$\text{Secular politicians} = (\text{atheist politicians} + \text{no religious politicians} + \text{religious leaders refrain from politics} + \text{Shari’a/Christian values unimportant})/4$$

This variable, the average of the 4 indicators, ranges between 1 and 5. Respondents with a higher number demonstrate strong support for secular politicians – that is, they more strongly disagree that atheist politicians are unfit for public office, they more strongly disagree that it would be better if people with strong religious beliefs held public office, they more strongly agree that religious leaders should not interfere in politics, and they attach less importance to the statement that a good government implement religious laws.

The other composite variable is attitudes toward **Secular Politics**. This measure is a combination of two indicators. One indicator (**separation of religion and politics**) asks if respondents (1) strongly agree, (2) agree, (3) disagree, or (4) strongly disagree that Lebanon would be a better place if religion and politics were separated; and the other (**no religious government**) asks if it would be (1) very good, (2) fairly good, (3) fairly bad, or (4) very bad for Lebanon to have an Islamic government where religious authorities have absolute power (for Muslim respondents), to have a Christian government where religious authorities have absolute power (for Christian respondents). Answers to the first question were recoded so that higher values indicate stronger support for the separation of religion and politics.

$$\text{Secular politics} = (\text{separation of religion and politics} + \text{no religious government})/2$$

This variable ranges between 1 and 4; a higher value indicates stronger support for secular politics.

National Identity

To measure identity, respondents were asked, “Which of the following best describes you: (1) above all, I am a Lebanese, (2) above all, I am a Muslim (for Muslim respondents)/ Christian (for Christian respondent), (3) Above all I am an Arab, or (4) other?”

For a more effective analysis of between-group variation in terms of identity, a dummy variable is created where 1 = Lebanese identity (those who responded that they were Lebanese, above all), and 0 otherwise.

Religious Fundamentalism

Religious fundamentalism is defined in general terms as a set of beliefs about and attitudes toward whatever religious beliefs one has. For example, believing that one’s religion is superior to the religions of others, that one’s religion is the only true religion on earth, and that one’s religion is closer to God than other religions does not address religious tenets per se, but rather attitudes toward the significance of one’s religion. This orientation is conceptualized as a fundamentalist orientation. Religious fundamentalism also projects an image of the deity that is disciplinarian. That is, God severely punishes those who engaged in a minor violation of His law. It advances and vigorously defends a reading of the religious scriptures that is literal, inerrant, and infallible; and bestows a standing to its religion that is superior to, intolerant of, and more exclusivist (i.e., closer to God) than other religions.²⁰

Five indicator measures of religious fundamentalism are used in this study. They are all in the Likert scale format. “Do you (1) strongly agree, (2) agree, (3) disagree, or (4) strongly disagree that only good Muslims/Christians will go to heaven, non-Muslims/non-Christians will not, no matter how good they are (**exclusivism₁**); non-Muslim/non-Christian religions have a lot of weird beliefs and pagan ways (**religious centrism**); the religion of Islam/Christianity is closer to God than other religions(**exclusivism₂**); whenever there is a conflict between science and religion, religion is probably right (**inerrancy**); Islam/Christianity should be the only religion taught in our public schools (**intolerance**)?” The response categories are recoded so that higher values indicated stronger belief in religious fundamentalism. The five measures are then combined into a single composite variable, religious fundamentalism:

$$\text{Religious fundamentalism} = (\text{exclusivism}_1 + \text{exclusivism}_2 + \text{religious centrism} + \text{inerrancy} + \text{intolerance})/5$$

SAMPLING AND SURVEY METHODOLOGY

The 2008 Lebanon survey used a nationally representative sample of 3,039 adult citizens (age 18 and over) from all sections of Lebanese society. The sample included 954 (31%) Shi'is, 753 (25%) Sunnis, 198 (7%) Druze, 599 (20%) Maronites, 338 (11%) Orthodox, 149 (5%) Catholics, and 48 (2%) respondents who belonged to other religions. It covered all six governorates in proportion to size—960 (32%) from Beirut, 578 (19%) from Mount Lebanon, 621 (20%) from the North, 339 (11%) from Biqqa, and 539 (18%) from the South and Nabatieth. The face-to-face interviews took approximately 50 minutes to complete and were conducted by Lebanese personnel in the respondents' residences. The total number of completed interviews represented 86% of attempted observations. Data collection started in April 2008 and was completed at the end of September 2008. Turbulent political and security situations in Lebanon in the spring and summer prolonged the survey period. The respondents had an average age of 33 years, 1,694 (55.7%) were male, and 998 (32.8%) had a college degree. In terms of socioeconomic status, 55 (1.8%) of the respondents described themselves as members of the upper class, 847 (27.9%) upper middle class, 788 (25.9%) lower middle class, 683 (22.5%) working class, and 522 (17.2%) lower class. Only 1,597 (52.6%) indicated that they had jobs.

ANALYTIC STRATEGIES AND FINDINGS

We employ two analytical strategies to assess the significance of the sectarian system. First, we use the analysis of variance (ANOVA) statistical model to evaluate the similarities and differences in cultural attitudes among the six religious confessions. Second, we focus on a variable that measures Lebanese attitudes toward the sectarian system and assess its linkages with inter-confessional trust, liberal values, religious fundamentalism, and foreign intervention.

Table 1 shows descriptive statistics for the six attitudinal variables for each of the six religious confessions. A graphic presentation of the group means for each of the variables are shown in Figure 1. As shown by both the table and figure, the mean scores for the Sunni and Shi'is are lower than the other four groups for the measures of social individualism, gender equality, secular politicians, secular politics, and national identity. On the measure of religious fundamentalism, on the other hand, they score higher than the other groups. On measures of secular politicians, secular politics, and national identity, the Druze score higher than any other groups; on other measures, they fall between the Muslim and Christian groups.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics and results of ANOVA for the effects of confessions on attitudes

Religious Confessions	Social individualism		Gender equality		Secular politicians		Secular politics		National identity		Religious fundamentalism	
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
Shi'i	2.52	1.03	2.33	.68	2.99	.80	3.05	.80	.61	.49	2.65	.51
Sunni	2.29	1.08	2.24	.71	3.03	.80	2.99	.77	.62	.49	2.73	.57
Druze	2.55	.99	2.50	.58	3.97	.79	3.76	.33	.96	.20	2.55	.54
Maronite	2.71	.94	2.55	.70	3.14	.80	3.44	.59	.73	.45	2.26	.61
Orthodox	2.67	.94	2.56	.72	3.54	.86	3.56	.54	.72	.45	2.29	.65
Catholic	2.57	.96	2.74	.67	3.42	.86	3.45	.61	.66	.48	2.23	.58
Total	2.52	1.02	2.40	.70	3.15	.84	3.25	.73	.67	.47	2.53	.60
F-ratio $p < .001$	$F_{5,2443} = 11.08$		$F_{5,2540} = 23.02,$		$F_{5,2380} = 39.22$		$F_{5,2620} = 76.33$		$F_{5,2959} = 23.36,$		$F_{5,2801} = 71.09$	

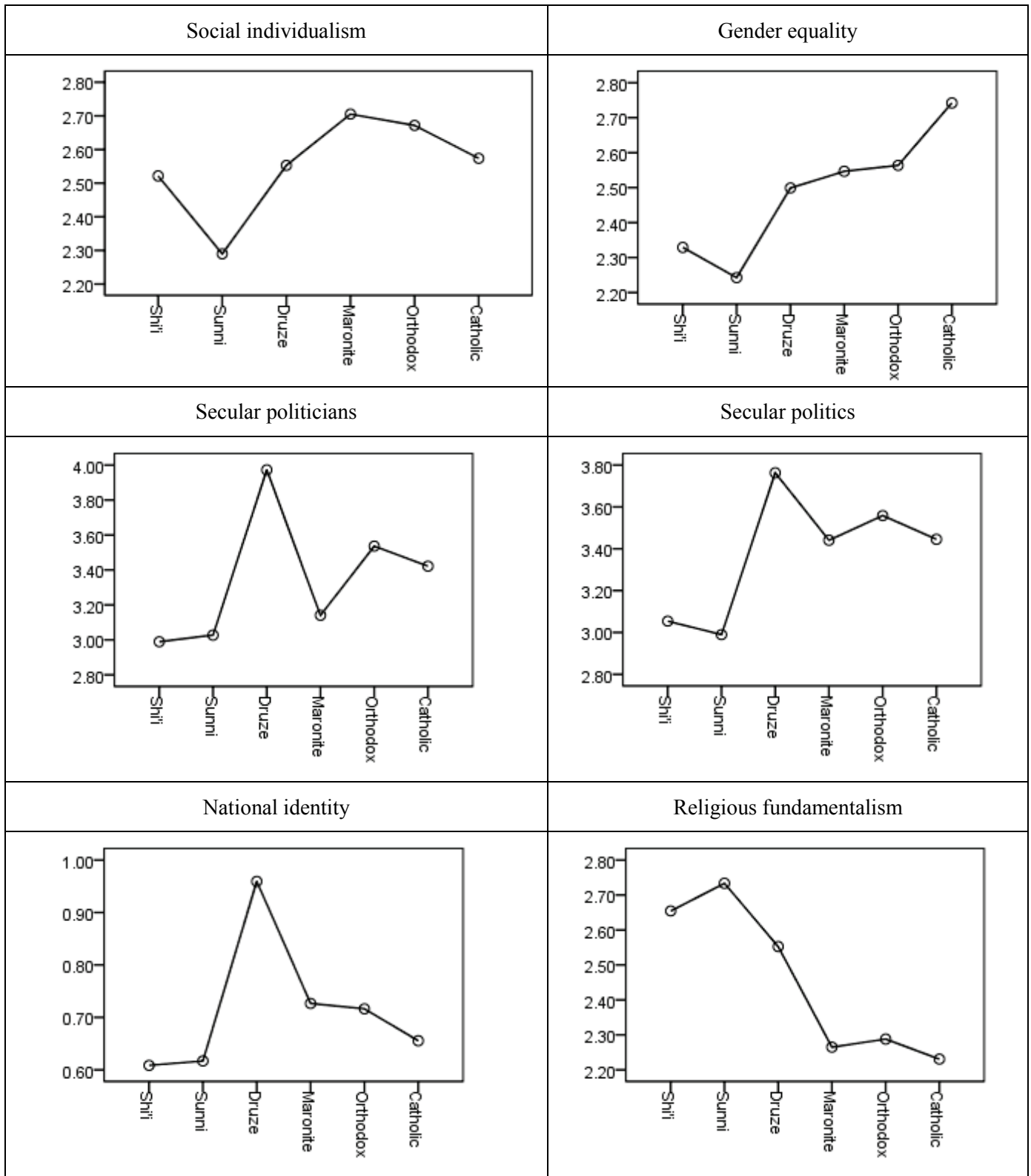
Table 1 also summarizes the results of the univariate analysis of variance showing strong main effects of religious confessions on each of the variables. As shown by the significance of the F-ratios across all the six variables, between-group differences are significantly larger than variations within group. This means that at least two of the confession groups significantly differ from each other in terms of social individualism, gender equality, secular politicians, secular politics, national identity, and religious fundamentalism.

We employ post-hoc group comparisons using the Scheffe test to assess the statistical significance of the differences in group means that were reported in Table 1. The results of these comparisons are reported in Table 2. The mean differences that are shown in bold indicate those differences between column 'I' and column 'J' that are statistically significant.

Social Individualism

According to Table 2, on the social individualism measure, the only significant group difference is between the Sunnis, on the one hand, and the Shi'is (-.232), the Maronites (-.415), and the Orthodox (-.382), on the other, indicating that the Sunnis, on average, are less individualistic than the members of these confessions. The post-hoc group comparisons generate two homogeneous groups: (1) the Sunnis, Druze, and Catholics; and (2) the Druze, Catholics, Shi'is, Maronites, and Orthodox, with the Druze and Catholics being overlapping groups. These differences, therefore, do not correspond to sectarian boundaries.

Figure 1. Means for religious confessions for each attitudinal variable



Gender Equality

On gender equality, Table 2 shows no significant mean score difference between the Sunnis and Shi'is or between Christians and the Druze. The Sunnis and Shi'is, however, differ significantly with all the Christian groups as do the Sunnis and Druze (-.257). The Sunnis and Shi'is are less supportive of gender equality than the Maronites (-.304, -.218), Orthodox (-.321, -.235), and Catholics (-.500, -.413), respectively. That is, except for the Druze, the Muslim groups are less supportive of gender equality than the Christian groups in the sample. Attitudes toward women thus only partially correspond to sectarian borders, forming a cultural fault-line separating the Shi'is and Sunnis from the Christians.

Table 2: Between group mean differences in sociopolitical and cultural attitudes

		Social individualism	Gender equality	Secular politicians	Secular politics	Lebanese Identity	Religious Fundamentalism
I	J	B/w group diff: I-J	B/w group diff: I-J	B/w group diff: I-J	B/w group diff: I-J	B/w group diff: I-J	B/w group diff: I-J
Sunnis	Shi'i	-.232^c	-.086	.038	-.065	.008	.079
	Druze	-.263	-.257^c	-.945^a	-.774^a	-.343^a	.181^c
	Maronite	-.415^a	-.304^a	-.113	-.451^a	-.110^c	.469^a
	Orthodox	-.382^a	-.321^a	-.509^a	-.569^a	-.100	.446^a
	Catholic	-.284	-.500^a	-.394^a	-.456^a	-.039	.503^a
Shi'i	Druze	-.031	-.170	-.983^a	-.709^a	-.351^a	.102
	Maronite	-.184	-.218^a	-.151	-.387^a	-.118^a	.389^a
	Orthodox	-.150	-.235^a	-.547^a	-.504^a	-.108^d	.366^a
	Catholic	-.052	-.413^a	-.432^a	-.391^a	-.047	.424^a
Druze	Maronite	-.152	-.048	.832^a	.322^a	.233^a	.288^a
	Orthodox	-.119	-.064	.436^c	.204	.243^a	.265^a
	Catholic	-.021	-.243	.551^b	.318^c	.304^a	.322^a
Maronite	Orthodox	.034	-.017	-.396^a	-.118	.010	-.023
	Catholic	.132	-.196	-.281^d	-.004	.071	.034
Orthodox	Catholic	.098	-.179	.115	.113	.061	.057

Bold face indicates statistically significant: a < .0001, b < .001, c < .01, d < .05

Secular Politicians

In terms of attitudes toward secular politicians, no significant group difference is found between the Sunnis, Shi'is, and Maronites. These groups are less in favor of secular politicians than the Druze (-.945, -.983, -.832), Orthodox (-.509, -.547, -.396), and Catholics (-.394, -.432, -.281), respectively. The Druze, however, display much stronger support for secular politicians than any other group. This analysis indicates three homogeneous groups on secular politicians.

From smallest to largest group means, they are: (1) the Sunnis, Shi'is, and Maronites; (2) the Catholics and Orthodox; and (3) the Druze.

These categories, therefore, do not correspond to sectarianism.

Secular Politics

As for secular politics, no significant difference exists between the Sunni and Shi'is or between Christians. Sunni and Shi'i mean score differences with the Druze (-.774, -.709), Maronites (-.451, -.387), Orthodox (-.569, -.504), and Catholics (-.456, -.391), respectively, are significant. The Druze's mean score is larger than that of the Maronites (.322) and Catholics (.318). Group comparisons have thus produced three homogeneous groups on this attitude (from the smallest to largest group means): (1) the Sunnis and Shi'is; (2) the Maronites, Catholics, and Orthodox; and (3) the Druze and Catholics.

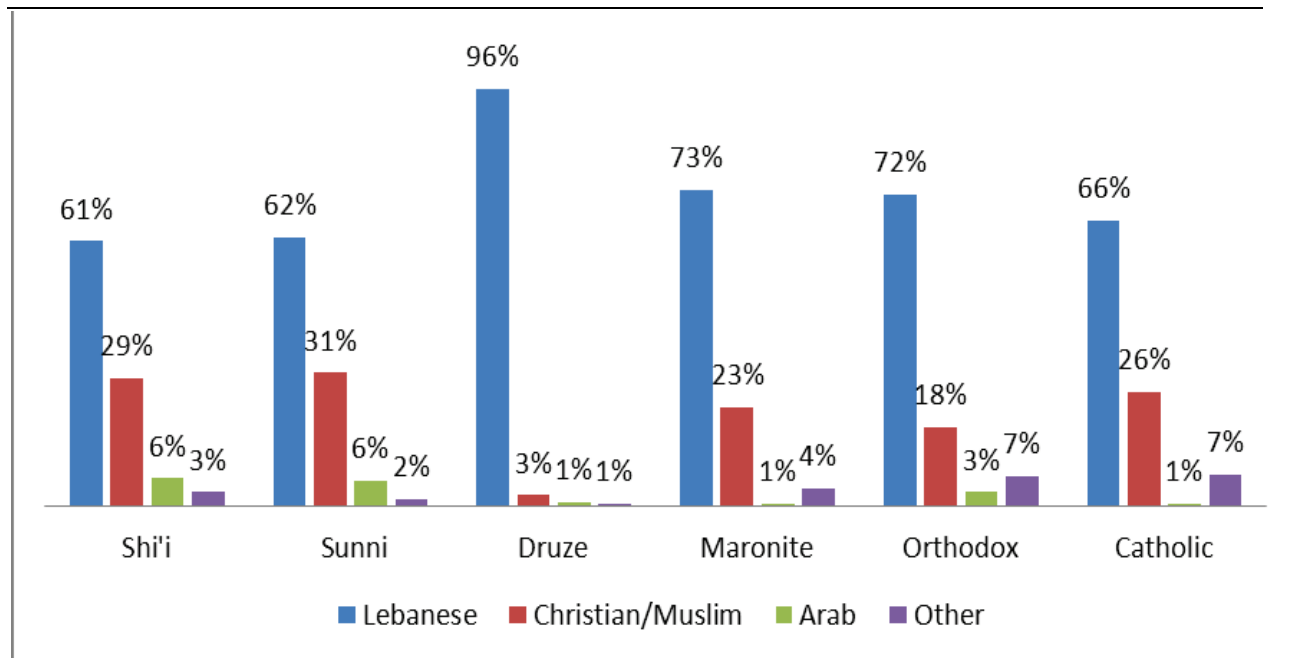
These divisions partially correspond to sectarian boundaries. However, the Sunnis and Shi'is having similarly lower support for secular politics does not provide a basis for inter-confessional cooperation. Lower support for secular politics means a stronger support for Shi'i or Sunni fundamentalism, two rival religious tendencies that tend to intensify Shi'i-Sunni political rivalries.

National Identity

Figure 2 shows Lebanese adherence to various types of identity by confessions. The majority of respondents across all confessions considered themselves "Lebanese above all": The Shi'is (61%), Sunnis (62%), Druze (96%), Maronites (73%), Orthodox (72%), and Catholics (66%). Identification with religion is a distant second, as the figures for those defining selves as "Muslim or Christian above all" are 29%, 31%, 3%, 23%, 18%, and 26%, respectively. Only a small portion of the respondents defined themselves as Arab above all.

We transformed identity into a dummy variable (1 = Lebanese above all, 0 = otherwise). The post-hoc comparisons of group means shown in Table 2 indicate no significant difference between the Sunnis and Shi'is or between Christian groups, but the mean score for the Sunnis is significantly lower than the score for the Druze (-.343) and Maronites (-.110); the score for the Shi'is is significantly lower than for the Druze (-.351), Maronites (-.118), and Orthodox' (-.108); and the score for the Druze is much higher than for the Maronites (.223), Orthodox (.243) and Catholics (.304). These comparisons thus generate four groups on the issue of Lebanese identity.

Figure 2. Percent Lebanese defining themselves as Lebanese, Christian/Muslim, Arab, or Other, above all



The first three groups overlap, while the fourth is separate: (1) the Shi'is and Sunnis; (2) the Sunnis, Orthodox, and Catholics; (3) the Orthodox, Catholics, and Maronite; and (4) the Druze.

Although there are some confessional variations in adherence to national identity, these variations are not extensive enough to justify sectarian division. Moreover, the majority of the members of each religious confession identify with the territorial nation rather than religion.

Religious Fundamentalism

On fundamentalism, no significant difference in mean fundamentalism score was found between the Sunnis and Shi'is, the Shi'is and Druze, or among Christians. Nonetheless, the Maronites, Orthodox, and Catholics have lower mean fundamentalism scores than the Sunnis (.469, .446, and .503, respectively), the Shi'is (.389, .366, and .424, respectively), and the Druze (.288, .265, and .322, respectively). The Druze's score is also lower than the Sunnis' (.181).

Considering all the six variables together, the pattern of responses among the followers of the six religious confessions shows either no significant differences among them that reflect sectarianism (e.g., on social individualism), considerable overlap among them (e.g., on secular politicians and national identity), or partial sectarian groupings (on secular politics). On some

measures the Druze stand alone as a separate group (secular politician, secular politics, and national identity).

Religious rather than confessional differences were found, however, in attitudes toward gender equality and fundamentalism, where the Sunnis and Shi'is are on one end, less supportive of gender equality and more fundamentalist, and Christians on another end, more supportive of gender equality and less fundamentalist, and the Druze falling somewhere in between. Further, the Shi'is and Sunnis having similar fundamentalist orientations, far from contributing to Muslim-Christian confrontation appears to have contributed to Shi'i and Sunni political rivalries, as these orientations reinforce sectarianism (see below).

SECTARIANISM, TRUST, LIBERALISM, FUNDAMENTALISM, FOREIGN INTERVENTION

In this section, we assess the extent to which Lebanese attitudes toward the sectarian system are linked to inter-confessional trust, liberal values, fundamentalism, and the role of foreign countries in Lebanon. Because Lebanese politics are dominated by the Shi'is, Sunnis, and Maronites, this analysis focuses on only these three groups.

Attitudes toward Sectarianism

The respondents were asked if they (1) strongly agree, (2) agree, (3) disagree, or (4) strongly disagree that "Lebanon will be a better place if people treat one another as Lebanese rather than on the basis of their confession." We recoded this variable so that the larger value indicates stronger support for non-sectarian Lebanon. As shown in Table 3, on average, respondents from all groups favor non-sectarianism. However, the Shi'is are the least in favor of non-sectarian system (mean = 3.25), the Maronites are the most in favor (mean = 3.79), and the Sunnis are in between (mean = 3.71). The lower support for non-sectarianism among the Shi'is may reflect the pervasiveness of "confessional pride" among them as a result of the increase in their political power in recent years. At the same time, a much larger standard deviation for the Shi'is (1.06) than for the other two groups (.54 and .45 for the Sunnis and Maronites, respectively) may indicate more variations in sectarian views among the Shi'is than among the Sunnis or Maronites.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics for the attitudes toward Sectarianism

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	S.D.
Shi'i	889	1.00	4.00	3.25	1.06
Sunni	736	1.00	4.00	3.71	.54
Maronites	581	1.00	4.00	3.79	.45

Inter-Confessional Trust

Empirical research has shown that trust among people is a *sine qua non* to stable social relationships and exchange, the core of social capital, and one of the key resources for the development of a democratic society. Social trust is said to reduce transaction costs, contribute to economic growth, help to solve collective action problems, promote inclusive and open society, foster societal happiness and a general feeling of well-being, facilitate civic engagement, and create better government.²¹ Within the context of Lebanon, we may argue that people's attitudes toward the sectarian system are shaped by the extent to which the members of each confession trust the members of other confessions. That is, a high level of inter-confessional trust yields less support for the sectarian system than does a low level of inter-confessional trust.

We use a series of survey questions that asked respondents how much they trusted members of their own confessions and members of other confessions. The respondents were asked "I am going to name a number of groups. For each one, could you tell me how much trust, in general, you have in them? Is it (4) a great deal of trust, (3) some trust, (2) not very much trust or (1) none at all: Shi'is, Sunnis, Druze, Maronites, Catholics, or Orthodox?" Table 4 shows the results for the Shi'is, Sunnis, and Maronites. We found confessional variation in the extent to which respondents reported a great deal of trust for its own group members versus members of the other groups. Fully 72.0% of the Shi'is trusted other Shi'is a great deal, while only 16.9% trusted the Sunnis and 21.7% trusted the Maronites a great deal. Likewise, 83.2% of the Sunnis trusted Sunnis a great deal, but only 32.5% and 31.7% of the Sunnis trusted the Shi'is and Maronites, respectively, a great deal. The Maronites also follow the same pattern: 58% of the Maronites trusted a great deal other Maronites, but the Maronites who trusted the Shi'is and Sunnis a great deal were 18.2% and 13.8%, respectively. As it is also shown by the mean scores, the Shi'is display the lowest and the Maronites the highest inter-confessional trust.

Table 4. Percent Members of Different Religious Confessions Expressing “A Great Deal of Trust” in Members of Their Own and Others

Group Trusted	Religious Confessions				
	Shi'i	Sunni	Maronite	Mean	S.D.
Shi'i	72.0	32.5	18.2	-1.01	0.88
Sunnis	16.9	83.2	13.8	-0.87	0.77
Maronite	21.7	31.7	58.2	-0.68	0.66

Note: Own confession trust in bold

Based on these responses, a measure of inter-confessional trust (**Inter-Confessional Trust**) is constructed:

$$\text{Inter-Confessional Trust for individual } i \text{ in confession } j_1(1, 6) = \text{Mean}(\text{trust in confession}_{j_2} + \text{confession}_{j_3} + \text{confession}_{j_4} + \text{confession}_{j_5} + \text{confession}_{j_6}) - \text{trust in his/her confession}_{j_1}$$

A positive value indicates the respondent having more trusts in the members of other confessions than in his/her own. A negative value, on the other hand, indicates having more trust in one's own confession than in the members of other confessions. For a given confession level, the smaller group mean on this measure, the lower is inter-confessional trust and the higher **in-group solidarity** among the members of that confession.

Attitudes toward Foreign Interventions

Different countries in the region and beyond have attempted to influence politics in Lebanon in the contemporary period. In recent years, however, several countries appear to have interfered in Lebanon's affairs more extensively than others. These are Iran, Syria, Saudi Arabia, the U.S., Israel, and France. To assess Lebanese attitudes toward these countries, respondents were asked: “Some people believe that Lebanon is experiencing considerable political problems and violence nowadays, and some of these problems are caused by foreign countries. In your opinion, how do you rate the role of the following countries in affecting these conditions in Lebanon? “1” means very negative and “5” means very positive.”

Lebanese ratings for Iran and Syria are highly positively correlated, as are the ratings for U.S., France, and Israel. The rating for Saudi Arabia stands alone, although it is moderately

correlated with the ratings for other countries, negatively with the ratings for Iran and Syria, and positively with the ratings for the U.S., France, and Israel (not shown). For better comprehension of the data, the ratings with high correlations are combined and the five variables are thus reduced to three.

Saudi role=Saudi's role in Lebanon

Iran-Syria role= (Iran's role in Lebanon + Syria's Role in Lebanon)/2

Western role= (U.S. role + France's role + Israel's role)/3

Table 5 presents the means, standard deviations, and upper and lower limits of these ratings for the Shi'is, Sunnis, and Maronites. As this table shows, the three confessions are divided on the effects of foreign influence on the affairs of their nation. Concerning the role of Saudi Arabia, the Shi'is, on average, gave the lowest and the Sunnis the highest ratings. This relationship is reversed considering Iran-Syria role; the Sunnis and Maronites on average treated this role as negative. The Shi'is, on the other hand, felt otherwise, giving it much higher ratings. Western role is viewed negatively by all the three groups, with the Shi'is giving it the lowest and Maronites the highest ratings.

Table 5. Descriptive statistics on Lebanese rating of the effects of foreign intervention into the affairs of the countries (“1” very negative and “5” very positive)

Religious groups	N	Mean	S.D.	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Min	Max
					Lower limit	Upper limit		
<i>Saudi role</i>								
Shi'i	935	1.55	0.89	0.03	1.49	1.61	1	5
Maronite	582	2.38	1.44	0.06	2.26	2.50	1	5
Sunni	750	3.63	1.58	0.06	3.51	3.74	1	5
<i>Iran and Syria role</i>								
Sunni	750	1.36	0.75	0.03	1.30	1.41	1	5
Maronite	585	1.41	0.80	0.03	1.34	1.47	1	5
Shi'i	937	2.94	1.24	0.04	2.86	3.02	1	5
<i>Western role</i>								
Shi'i	933	1.63	0.81	0.03	1.58	1.69	1	5
Sunni	742	1.73	0.74	0.03	1.67	1.78	1	4.3
Maronite	580	2.06	0.94	0.04	1.99	2.14	1	5

Liberal Values

For a more parsimonious description, a single measure of liberal values is constructed. This measure is based on a linear combination of social individualism, gender equality, secular politicians, and secular politics. That is:

Liberal values = Social individualism + Gender equality + Secular politician + Secular politics

A higher score on this measure means stronger support for liberal values, while a lower score indicates support for conservative and traditional values.

FINDINGS

Table 6 shows the correlation coefficient matrices for non-sectarianism, inter-confessional trust, liberal values, fundamentalism, and ratings of Iran-Syria, Saudi, and Western roles. As this table shows, among the Shi'is, non-sectarianism is positively linked to inter-confessional trust ($r=.123$) and liberal values ($r=.303$) but negatively to religious fundamentalism ($r=-.266$). This pattern is also true among the Sunnis ($r=.025$, $.218$, and $-.095$, respectively) and Maronites ($r=.153$, $.133$, and $-.262$, respectively). The only exception is that correlation between non-sectarianism and inter-confessional trust among the Sunni is not significant.

Concerning the role of foreign countries, ratings of Iran-Syria role are negatively linked to non-sectarianism among the Shi'is ($r=-.129$) and Sunnis ($r=-.097$). Among the Maronites, while being negative, this link is not significant ($r=-.063$). Non-sectarianism and Saudi role are positively linked among the Shi'is ($r=.097$), no-significant among the Sunnis ($r=.063$), and negatively linked among the Maronites ($r=-.186$). Finally, non-sectarianism and Western role are negatively linked among the three confessions ($r=-.261$ for the Shi'is, $-.138$ for the Sunnis, and $-.117$ for the Maronites). Generally, in most of the cases, non-sectarianism is strengthened by inter-confessional trust and liberal values but weakened by religious fundamentalism and foreign intervention.

Further, across the three confessions, inter-confessional trust is linked positively to liberal values ($r=.293$ for the Shi'is, $.342$ for the Sunni, and $.324$ for the Maronites) but negatively to religious fundamentalism ($r=-.337$, $-.309$, and $-.229$, respectively). Its linkages with foreign interventions depend on the confession and the country in question.

Table 6. Correlation coefficients between non-sectarianism, liberal values, fundamentalism, and attitudes toward foreign interventions

	Shi'i				Sunni				Maronites			
	Non-sectarian	Inter-conf. trust	Liberal values	Religious fund.	Non-sectarian	Inter-conf. trust	Liberal values	Religious fund.	Non-sectarian	Inter-conf. trust	Liberal values	Religious fund.
Inter-conf. trust	.123^b				.025		.		.153^a			
Liberal values	.303^a	.293^a			.218^a	.342^a			.133^c	.324^a		
Religious fund.	-.266^a	-.337^a	-.488^a		-.095^c	-.309^a	-.488^a		-.262^a	-.229^a	-.355^a	
Iran-Syria role	-0.129^a	-.405^a	-.217^a	.316^a	-.097^c	.122^c	.110^d	-.055	-.063	.142^b	.100	-.048
Saudi role	.097^c	.034	.001	.000	.063	-.233^a	-.217^a	.450^a	-.186^a	-.089^a	-.045	.269
Western role	-.261^a	-.041	-.041	.095^c	-.138^a	-.037	-.086	.001	-.117^c	-.016	-.091	-.039
Bold face indicates statistically significant: a < .0001, b < .001, c < .01, d < .05												

Among the Shi'is, it is negatively linked to Iran-Syria role ($r=-.405$). Among the Sunnis and Maronites, it is positively linked to Iran-Syria role ($r=.122$ and $.142$, respectively) but negatively to Saudi role ($r=-.233$ and $-.089$, respectively). Liberal values and religious fundamentalism are negatively linked across the three confessions ($r=-.488$, $-.488$, and $-.355$). The variable liberal values is negatively linked to Iran-Syria role among the Shi'is ($r=-.217$) but positively among the Sunnis ($r=.110$). It is, however, negatively linked to Saudi role among the Sunnis ($-.217$). Religious fundamentalism is positively linked to Iran-Syria role and Western role among the Shi'is ($r=.316$ and $.095$, respectively) and positively to Saudi role among the Sunnis ($r=.450$).

These findings are significant as they show that non-sectarianism, inter-confessional trust liberal values appear to reinforce each other. Across the three confessions, religious fundamentalism undermines non-sectarianism, inter-confessional trust, and liberal values. While Western interventions undermine non-sectarianism across the three confessions, Iran-Syria role reinforces fundamentalism among the Shi'is and Saudi role reinforces fundamentalism among the Sunnis and Maronites.

CONCLUSIONS

The foregoing analysis attempted to explain how the dynamic of change in the structure of power relations resulted in the leveling of power among the major political players in the country and how this balance has removed the functionality of the sectarianism system for the emergent power relations. It also showed that the differences in attitudes and value orientations among Lebanese citizens do not quite fall on confessional lines, while there are serious differences between Muslims and Christians in attitudes and beliefs related to gender equality and religious fundamentalism. Finally, the paper identified several factors that tend to strengthen or attenuate sectarianism among the Lebanese public.

The paper noted that the Lebanese movement for independence was simultaneously subject to contradictory universalizing discourse of political equality and particularistic sectarian tendencies of nationalist claim-makers. The Christian intellectual leaders and activists who rose against Ottoman authoritarian rule framed their nationalist aspirations in terms of the equality of all political voices. Insofar as an independent Lebanon was to be established in Mount Lebanon, where the Christians had a numerical majority, there was no contradiction between

egalitarianism and Christian desire for political supremacy. This supremacy, however, could not be guaranteed after the territories of the new country were expanded to cover the Greater Lebanon. The sectarian system was thus devised to maintain the unequally distributed power, which in turn set the stage for political conflict among diverse confession-based power contenders. The successful challenge to Christian power by the Sunnis and later the rise of Shi'i power resulted in the leveling of political power.

On the cultural front, this paper showed that variation among Lebanese attitudes and value orientations toward some of the most important principles of social organization, including those that are related to social individualism, gender equality, secular politics, and national identity only partially correspond to confessional boundaries. In fact, the two most belligerent political rivals, the Shi'is and Sunnis, have displayed similar orientations.

This paper thus argued that neither the structure of power relations nor cultural distinctions account for the persistence of sectarianism. Our analysis of the survey data, however, uncovered two sets of factors that attenuated or reinforced sectarianism. First, non-sectarian attitudes, favorable orientations toward the principles of political equality and liberalism, and inter-confessional trust appear to reinforce one another. Thus, the more the Lebanese public support political equality and the more they trust the members of the confessions other than their own, the weaker is their sectarianism. Second, sectarianism, religious fundamentalism, and foreign intervention tend to reinforce one another. This implies that the more Lebanese adopt fundamentalist attitudes and beliefs, and the more they display favorable attitudes toward foreign interventions, the stronger are their sectarian attitudes. In particular, attitudes toward the countries that are friendly to a particular confession tend to reinforce religious fundamentalism and sectarianism among the members of that confession. That is, favorable attitudes toward Iran and Syria by the Shi'is tend to reinforce sectarianism, religious fundamentalism, in-group solidarity (or weaken inter-confessional trust), and anti-liberalism among the Shi'is. Likewise, favorable attitudes toward Saudi Arabia by the Sunnis are linked to in-group solidarity, anti-liberalism, and religious fundamentalism among the Sunnis. Finally, favorable attitudes toward the West are linked to sectarian attitudes across the three major confessions.

Thus, findings from the values surveys appear to support our historical argument regarding the interaction between struggle against foreign intervention and nationalist claim makers. In the same way that first the Maronites, then the Sunnis, and finally the Shi'is enhanced

their standing in Lebanese society by fighting against foreign domination, nationalist aspirations were compromised, inter-confessional trust declined, fundamentalism enhanced, and sectarianism strengthened when different sections of Lebanese societies opted to ally with a foreign power, as the Shi'is allied with Iran and Syria and the Sunnis with Saudi Arabia.

The foregoing analysis has also implications for the social scientific understanding of the relationship between social context and democratic outcomes. As our narrative indicated, for the emergence of democracy and egalitarian rule, it is important for politics to be framed in terms of egalitarian principles and liberalism and that the contending groups also accept this principle. For the de facto emergence of political equality, there must be diverse organizations with power and resources so that they can effectively check each other out and balance the distribution of power. One of the key conditions for dismantling sectarianism and the formation of an egalitarian political system rest among Lebanese themselves; in the willingness to trust one another beyond confessions, abandon religious fundamentalism, and refrain from the formation of confession-based alliance with a foreign power.

ENDNOTES

¹See *Arab News*, Monday, March 7, 2011, page 4, column 6.

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³*The Lebanese Constitution*, "Preamble," point j. See also John Keegan, "Shedding Light on Lebanon," *Atlantic Monthly* (April 1984), theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1984/04/shedding-light-on-lebanon/5238/, retrieved on January 14, 2012; Hassan Krayem, "Lebanon: Confessionalism and the Crisis of Democracy." Pp. 67-67 in *Secularism, Women & the State: The Mediterranean World in the 21st Century*, edited by Barry A. Kosmin & Ariela Keysar (Hartford, Conn.: Institute for the Study of Secularism in Society and Culture, 2009) and "*The Lebanese War and the Taif Agreement*. American University of Beirut" <http://ddc.aub.edu.lb/projects/pspa/conflict-resolution.html>, retrieved on March 23, 2012; and Farid El-Khazen, *The Communal Pact of National Identities: The Making and Politics of the 1943 National Pact* (Oxford, U.K.: Centre for Lebanese Studies, 1991).

⁴Moshe Ma'oz, *Ottoman Reform in Syria and Palestine, 1840–1861: The Impact of the Tanzimat on Politics and Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968), pp.1, 4; Tabitha Petran, *Syria* (New York: Praeger, 1972), pp. 42-43; Dominique Chevallier, "Western Development and Eastern Crisis in the Mid-Nineteenth Century: Syria Confronted with the European Economy,"

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⁵Ira M. Lapidus, 1988. *A History of Islamic Societies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 598-600; Ma'oz, *Ottoman Reform*.

⁶Malcolm E. Yapp, *The Near East since the First World War* (Harlow: Longman, 1991), pp. 104-115.

⁷Lapidus, *History of Islamic Societies*, pp. 598–600; see also Ma'oz, *Ottoman Reform*, pp. 21–7.

⁸Rashid Khalidi, "Ottomanism and Arabism in Syria before 1914: A Reassessment," in *The Origins of Arab Nationalism*, edited by Rashid Khalidi, Lisa Anderson, Muhammad Muslih, and Reeva S. Simon (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991).

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¹⁰Elaine C. Hagopian, "Maronite Hegemony to Maronite Militancy: The Creation and Disintegration of Lebanon," *Third World Quarterly*, 11, 4 (October 1989), p. 109.

¹¹Hagopian, "Maronite Hegemony," p. 102; Keegan, "Shedding Light on Lebanon." According to Keegan, "Historically, 'Syria' is the terms for an eclectic region, loosely held by the Ottomans, lying between the Taurus Mountains of Turkey in the north and the desert of Sinai in the south and extending as far inland as the headwaters of the Tigris and the Euphrates. The division of the region between British and French mandates, and the creation of the Arab kingdoms that they sponsored in Transjordan and Iraq, sundered that loose but historical unity. And the French went further. Rather than rule their mandated territory as a single unit, they chose to divide it into quarters: A Druze state in what is now southern Syria, an Alawite state in northern Syria, the rest of modern Syria, and 'Greater Lebanon'" (p. 8).

¹²Fawwaz Traboulsi, *A History of Modern Lebanon* (London: Pluto Press, 2007)

¹³Tamirace Muehlbacher Fakhoury, *Democracy and Power-Sharing in Stormy Weather: The Case of Lebanon* (Wiesbaden: Vs Verlag, 2009).

¹⁴Cited in Sandra M. Saseen, "The Taif Accord and Lebanon's Struggle to Regain its Sovereignty," *American University International Law Review*, 6, 1 (1990), p. 69.

¹⁵Sadr was an Iranian cleric whose family is said to have originally come from Lebanon. He was invited to lead the Lebanese Shiite community in 1959.

¹⁶Fouad Ajami, *The Vanished Imam* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1986), p. 156.

¹⁷Caught in the crossfire between Palestinians using southern Lebanon to launch attacks on Israel and the Israeli counterattacks, a large number of Shi'is had to leave southern Lebanon, a great majority of them ended up as squatters in Beirut's southern suburbs. When Israeli troops entered Lebanon, they were pleasantly surprised to be greeted by the Shi'is in the south.

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- ¹⁸Mansoor Moaddel and Kamran Talattof, *Contemporary Debates in Islam: An Anthology of Modernist and Fundamentalist Thought*, New York: Saint Martin's Press, 2000; Mansoor Moaddel, "Conditions for Ideological Production: The Origins of Islamic Modernism in India, Egypt, and Iran," *Theory and Society* 30 (October 2001): 669-731, and *Islamic Modernism, Nationalism, and Fundamentalism: Episode and Discourse*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2005.
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