Lebanon, the Sectarian Identity Test Lab

APRIL 10, 2019 — MELANI CAMMETT

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Since at least the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003, the Middle East has witnessed the high-pitched politicization of sectarian identities—in some countries, with very bloody consequences. Iraq has experienced waves of large-scale violence that spiked in the middle of the first decade of the new century, with conflict waged in the name of religion by competing Sunni and Shia groups. The war in Syria, which broke out in 2011, quickly became bloody as the regime of Bashar al-Assad cracked down on activists and armed Islamist groups gained the upper hand in the opposition, buttressing the government's claim that Sunni extremists pose a mortal danger to the country. Lebanon has experienced intermittent instability since 2005, and particularly since the outbreak of war in neighboring Syria. Acts of political violence in Lebanon have at times seemed poised to erupt into full-scale civil conflict.

Against this backdrop of mounting tensions and violence, ostensibly along sectarian lines, how is it possible to foster alternative frameworks for citizenship that offer an inclusive, cross-cutting conception of national belonging? To begin to address this question, I ask how ethnoreligious identities become politicized in the first place, potentially ratcheting up intergroup tensions and even resulting in violence. Drawing on social science research on ethnoreligious conflict and

intergroup relations, I briefly describe explanations for the rise of identity-based tensions that focus on the micro-level, including individuals or their immediate social networks, and on the macro-level, primarily centered on nation-states. An overview of the rise and consolidation of sectarianism in Lebanon shows how these types of accounts apply to the Middle East.

In the context of a seemingly inexorable rise in sectarian tensions, how is it possible to reduce intergroup tensions and to foster a more inclusive notion of citizenship and belonging in Middle Eastern countries? While social science research indicates that it is easier to ignite and intensify intergroup conflict than it is to mitigate it, insights from social psychology on "prejudice reduction," as well as more macro-level historical and sociological approaches on state and nation building, point to pathways for reducing intergroup tensions. Findings from a study of political behavior in Lebanon as well as recent experiences of civic activism in the country suggest that a broader civic nationalist citizenship is locally appealing. In this report, I briefly survey existing research on the politicization and depoliticization of religion and ethnicity, and link it to the results of my ongoing collaborative research in Lebanon.

The Politicization of Ethnoreligious Identities

In principle, we cannot understand how to temper intergroup animosities and build more cooperative intergroup relations premised on a common political community without understanding how intergroup tensions arise in the first place. In this section, I provide a brief overview of social science approaches to the politicization of ethnoreligious identities, beginning with macro-level approaches and then turning to more micro-level frameworks. I then focus on the case of Lebanon, where political sectarianism has been well entrenched since the colonial period and wartime and postwar developments have consolidated the influence of sectarian political parties and affiliated groups.

As a foundation for the discussion, it is important to clarify some basic assumptions about what ethnic or sectarian identity means and its relationship to politics. The mere existence of people from diverse ethnic or religious communities living in the same polity does not mean that these identities are a locus of conflict. Many countries encompass people from different ethnic or religious groups but are not divided along ethnic or sectarian lines. Ethnic or sectarian tensions therefore do not automatically arise from the mere presence of diverse cultural communities. Individuals have multiple identities, whether ethnic, religious, occupational, social, or otherwise, and these identities are not relevant in all places and at all times. Thus, I understand sectarianism to refer to the *politicization* of religious differences, and I differentiate between religion as a social identity and politically mobilized religious groups. With this distinction in mind, a key question centers on how ethnic or religious identities become politicized in the first place.[1]

The social science literature on ethnic politics devotes extensive attention to the conditions under which identity-based categories become sites of conflict. By and large, this research is pitched at a relatively high level of aggregation—primarily at the national level and, to a lesser degree, at the subnational level. Early approaches emphasized essentialist or "primordial" approaches, which assume that ethnic, religious or tribal identities are the underlying foundation of people's identities and, thus, their primary source of loyalty and affiliation. Intergroup conflict along ethnic or religious lines, according to this approach, reflects deeply rooted, "ancient" hatreds that are difficult if not impossible to temper. Although this kind of explanation is common in popular and mainstream media accounts of sectarian tensions in the Middle East, essentialist interpretations are almost universally rejected by scholars. The fact that ethnoreligious conflict and violence are rare and tend to erupt at some times and in some places but not in others belies explanations based on primordial notions of identity. Instead, the conventional wisdom in social science and historical research now holds that the politicization of sect or ethnicity is not inevitable, even in places with multiple groups living side by side in the same polity.

The key challenge then is to explain the rise of politicized ethno-sectarian cleavages in particular places or time periods. As Varshney outlines in a comprehensive analysis of the literature on ethnic conflict, existing approaches can be classified into several explanatory traditions, including constructivism, instrumentalism, and institutionalism.[2] Brief summaries of these paradigms are in order, because each implies a different answer to the question of how ethnoreligious identities become politicized and, hence, how they might be tempered in favor of a more encompassing civic nationalist identity.

Constructivism

The core idea behind constructivism is that identity—whether national, ethnic, religious, tribal, or otherwise—emerges out of institutions and practices over time. Although such social identities may have deep roots, they do not reflect immutable affiliations. Rather, they emerge out of specific historical processes, some of which have occurred in relatively recent history. While constructivist approaches may recognize that these categories have real meaning to people, they deny that there is something necessary or innate about them.

Prominent examples of constructivist arguments in the literature on ethnic politics focus on the policies and practices of colonial ruling authorities, and chiefly the

colonial histories on continents of Africa and Asia. For example, the divide-and-rule policies favoring one ethnic or religious group over another either created, altered, or reified ethnic or tribal categories, often laying the groundwork for conflict and violence along identity-based lines in the post-independence period.[3] In the Ottoman Empire, policies on taxation and family law, among other policy realms, arguably strengthened boundaries between religious communities, boundaries that, thanks in no small part to these colonial interventions, have persisted over time. Similarly, in many countries in the post-colonial period, official, government-issued identity cards that list the religious, ethnic, or tribal affiliation of citizens have contributed to the hardening of such identities.[4]

Identity politics may find particularly fertile ground in conditions of insecurity and state weakness. Indeed, as sociologist Andreas Wimmer argues, the nature of ethnic politics is conditioned by state-building processes.[5] In contexts where states have developed significant capacities and have built up a strong presence across their national territory, ethnic or religious identities tend not to be sites of politicization. It follows, then, that when states do not provide protection, including welfare, social benefits, and physical protection, people may turn to alternative forms of political order, such as religious institutions. In authoritarian settings, where sites of civic organization and activism are restricted, religious communities may be the only nonstate organizations permitted to operate relatively independently. Here, religious communities and leaders are often a key source of both social order and concrete material welfare benefits. I explore this theme in more depth below, in the discussion of the intersection between the welfare state and sectarianism in Lebanon.

Instrumentalism

An alternative framework for explaining the rising political salience of identity-based cleavages assumes that economic or political interests are the true motivation behind political mobilization along what appear to be ethnic or religious lines.[6] Elites, especially the leaders of political or social organizations, are key actors in instrumentalist approaches.

Such "cultural entrepreneurs" deploy language, symbols, and appeals rooted in the history or doctrine of a particular ethnic or religious community as they engage in struggles over power, consciously playing upon these identities to shore up their own support. Examples of the instrumentalization of identity abound in the Middle East, such as Bashar al-Assad's use of the "sectarian card" during the Syrian uprising, claiming that the opposition largely consists of Islamic extremists who pose a dire threat to Syria, or Saddam Hussein's promotion of "neo-tribalist" policies to consolidate his authority in the late 1980s and early 1990s.[7]

The boundaries between constructivist and instrumentalist accounts can be blurry, in part because both constructivism and instrumentalism share the notion that identity is constructed.[8] However, political scientist Ashutosh Varshney notes that the two approaches emphasize distinct processes for constructing more inclusive and cross-cutting alternative identities:

> According to instrumentalist reasoning, ethnic identity is not valuable in and of itself; it is basically a mask for a core of "real" interests, political or economic. As interests change, masks also do, making ethnic groups "fluid." One should, therefore, expect the same people to pick different sides of their multiple identities at different times and at different places. This view should not be equated with constructivism. Constructivism is not about the radical short-run fluidity of identities. It is about the long-run formation, and the consequent stickiness, of identities.[9]

Premised on the claim that identity evolves over long stretches of time, constructivism implies that dampening antagonistic intergroup tensions will not be a quick or easily orchestrated process. In their emphasis on elite strategic calculations, however, instrumentalist approaches seem to offer greater promise for softening or altering the structure of politically salient identities in a given polity. If elites can be incentivized to engage in more cooperative relations across group lines and to highlight shared identities rather than zero-sum communal divisions, this offers a potential pathway

towards more inclusive notions of belonging. Of course, this claim rests on the assumption that elites wield great power in shaping citizen perceptions of identity, a proposition that can be questioned on the grounds that people clearly value ethnic and religious identity and seem responsive to appeals made along these lines.[10]

In short, instrumentalist approaches are distinguished by a focus on the agency of individual actors, most notably political and cultural elites, to whip up intergroup tensions as a means of shoring up their power. However, such explanations do not explain why and how identity-based appeal seems to resonate among ordinary citizens in multiethnic countries.

Institutionalism

A final category of approaches is based on the claim that the design of formal political institutions can promote (or deter) the rise of ethnoreligious conflict and violence. Much of this research centers on debates about variants of power-sharing institutions and the optimal electoral rules for divided societies. On the one hand, Arend Lijphart famously argues in favor of consociationalism, in which the leaders from different ethnic or sectarian groups retain significant autonomy and power over decision making within their own communities and adopt national-level decisions largely by consensus, with in-built veto power aimed at checking any group from becoming dominant over the others.[11] On the other hand, political scientist David Horowitz suggests that institutions that allocate power along communal lines tend to reinforce identity-based divisions. He argues instead for integrative institutions that compel politicians to seek the support of members of other communities to gain and retain power.[12] These approaches are useful in explaining how existing institutions structure the incentives facing politicians to cultivate support beyond their own religious communities. Nonetheless, even if a clear institutional recipe for promoting more inclusive politics can be identified, politicians must first agree to adopt the prescribed electoral system or government structure—an outcome that is far from assured.

Lebanon is the example par excellence of a political system structured along explicitly sectarian lines. Prior to the outbreak of civil war in 1975, it was even lauded as an exemplary case of consociationalism.[13] The system also incorporates elements of Horowitz's integrative principles by requiring voters to cast ballots for all candidates—even those from other religious communities. However, pre-electoral bargains among political leaders and parties from different communities effectively undercut incentives to politicians to garner support from citizens from other religious communities.[14] Furthermore, the very fact of the civil war, as well as chronic political tensions and episodic political violence, demonstrate that formal institutions cannot solve all problems. One thing is certain: The allocation of political offices by sect, which makes access to power and resources contingent on communal affiliation, boosts the salience of religion in political and social life.

The Escalation of Intergroup Tensions at the Individual Level

These approaches to explaining the politicization of identity are largely pitched at the national level, but religion can become a site of friction in interactions among individuals or small communities of people. A key tenet of social identity theory, a prominent approach to intergroup relations in social psychology, holds that the group membership is an important source of pride and self-esteem and provides a sense of belonging in society.[15] People naturally divide the world into categories of "us" and "them," or "in-groups" and "out-groups," which can boost one's self-image and may entail prejudiced views against members of other groups. In the process of categorizing, people construct stereotypes that exaggerate differences across groups and amplify similarities within the in-group. In extreme cases, prejudice against out-groups can translate into racism or even violence. Intergroup competition, then, is not only about struggles over scarce resources—which certainly can enhance intergroup tensions at the individual level—but also may arise from the perception of competing identities.[16]

The hyperpoliticization of religion in the contemporary Middle East, however, raises questions about why such

social categories resonate. Surely not all group identities are equally meaningful. When, then, have sectarian categories become politically salient? Research in social psychology on threat perceptions may provide some clues: People tend to close ranks when they experience a threat to themselves as members of a group.[17] In other words, when individuals or groups of people are targeted on the basis of their identity—whether religious or otherwise—the political salience of that identity increases and potentially serves as the foundation for animosity against members of other groups.

The dynamics of the war in Syria highlight the ways in which threat perceptions based on sect may become heightened, with implications for neighboring Lebanon and the broader region. In the course of the war, combatant groups and ordinary citizens have resorted to harsh sectarian language to label their opponents. Sunni extremists refer to Alawites and Shia as "members of the Party of Satan," apostates, and other terms that are viewed as being extremely pejorative in context. Meanwhile, Alawite and Shia groups call Sunni groups "takfiris," Wahhabis, and a variety of other derogatory terms. Many of these terms are particularly charged because they involve accusations of apostasy, which is punishable by death, and serve to dehumanize their opponents.[18] Furthermore, the Assad regime routinely labels all opposition groups as Sunni extremists, cuing sectarianism as a motivation for the conflict and heightening citizen awareness of religious identity as a site of conflict. While sectarian divisions were clearly not the root cause of the conflict, they have become increasingly salient as the conflict has progressed, in part due to the language that different factions have used to describe their enemies.

If threat perceptions drive the political salience of ethnic or religious identities, what are the sources of real or perceived threats? Answering this question inevitably calls for attention to the larger political context within which members of distinct religious or ethnic groups operate and interact—bringing us back to the importance of politics at the national or regional levels. A brief overview of the rise of political sectarianism during the colonial and post-colonial periods in Lebanon underscores how the role of sectarian actors in politics and the welfare regime helps to consolidate sectarianism in everyday political and social life.

The Consolidation of Political Sectarianism in Lebanon

In its emphasis on the long-term effects of institutions and policies, often established deliberately by colonial authorities, the historiographical literature on Lebanon implicitly adopts a constructivist approach to the emergence of political sectarianism in that country. The establishment of the sectarian political system occurred through the explicit structuring of political representation along sectarian lines, both by elites and nonelites.[19]

The Roots of Political Sectarianism in Lebanon

As Makdisi argues, during the period from 1831 to 1840, sectarianism was initially "actively produced."[20] In 1842, violent conflict broke out between Druze sheikhs and Maronite peasants in Deir al-Qamar, largely reflecting class tensions. Ottoman and European policymakers subsequently sought to reestablish Mount Lebanon's "traditional" order, although in reality they established a new order based on a geographical reconfiguration along communal lines. Ottoman officials were increasingly concerned that the violence in Mount Lebanon attracted European intervention and, after further violence in 1854, the Ottoman government established "parallel governments" for Druze and Maronites, which effectively created a new sectarian system of governance.[21]

During the 1860 uprising by Christian peasants, who were protesting excessive taxation to Maronite sheikhs, the rebels reinforced the sectarian narrative by casting the Maronite elite as traitors of Christianity because of their decision to ally with Druze landholders. In Makdisi's view, the revolt introduced a new narrative of an "imagined political sectarian community" to replace loyalty to a nonsectarian, hierarchical society.[22] The establishment of the Mount Lebanon Mutasarrifate, which created religiously homogenous administrative districts and enshrined the category of sect as the defining element of political and social identity, cemented a "culture of sectarianism." In short, sectarianism was "anything but a primordial identity" but was rather jointly constructed by European colonial authorities,

religious missionaries, Ottoman reformers, and local actors pursuing their interests in the territories in question.[23]

The story of the post-independence institutionalization of political sectarianism is well known.[24] The National Pact ("al-mithaq al-watani"), an unwritten agreement between leaders of the dominant Maronite Christian and Sunni Muslim communities, forms the basis for Lebanon's post-independence political system. Established at the end of the French Mandate in 1943, the pact specified the distribution of political posts according to sectarian identity and favored Christians and, especially, Maronites in political representation. The post of president was reserved for a Maronite Christian, the position of prime minister was granted to a Sunni Muslim, and, after much delay, the speaker of the parliament was allocated to a Shia Muslim. Other government positions, including civil service and ministerial staffing positions, were divided according to a fixed quota of six to five in favor of Christians based on the 1932 census.[25] This formula was readjusted in the Taif Agreement, negotiated in Saudi Arabia in 1989 to end the Lebanese Civil War (1975–90). Among other changes, the accord modified the sectarian distribution of power to reflect the demographic shift toward a Muslim majority in Lebanon by introducing greater powers to the offices of the prime minister and speaker of the parliament, and by increasing the number of Muslim seats to parity between Christian and Muslim parliamentary representatives and civil servants. Although the pact called for the gradual elimination of sectarianism as the basis for the regime, in practice it reinforced political sectarianism by continuing the system of sect-based power-sharing.

Sectarian identity is not only enshrined in the political system but also constitutes the basis for personal status in Lebanese society. The official, state-issued identification card lists the religious identity of the bearer. For social institutions such as marriage, inheritance, and child custody, citizens are subject to the laws and courts affiliated with their official religious community, regardless of whether they practice or subscribe to the religion in question.[26]

Boundary Policing: Social Welfare and Sectarianism in Lebanon

Less formal institutions and practices also institutionalize sect in everyday life in Lebanon. In particular, sectarian actors are integral components of the welfare regime and broker access to social rights, whether those actors are parties, movements, or politicians. In this sense, welfare is another channel through which sectarianism is consolidated and helps to sustain and solidify communal boundaries. At its core, sectarianism refers to processes of constructing and maintaining the boundaries of a religious community, demarcating who belongs and who is excluded. Social welfare, too, entails processes of inclusion, shaping both the constitution and experiences of membership in a political community. Sectarian organizations' decisions about who can benefit from the social services they provide—whether based on formal or informal criteria—help constitute membership in these groups.

Through the direct provision of social services or through indirect brokerage of access to benefits provided by other public and nonstate organizations, sectarian actors effectively consolidate their control over territory and people, and present themselves as protectors and guarantors of well-being. Social welfare involves an obvious material exchange, in which the beneficiary receives assistance to meet his or her family's basic needs. The immaterial dimensions of the relationship are less obvious, but equally, if not more, important. Providing services and meeting basic needs are acts of community-building because they signal who is a member of a protected group. Social welfare provision also brings a sense of security and psychological comfort that is especially valuable to low-income beneficiaries who, by definition, lead more precarious lives. This is all the truer in polities where states fail to provide basic social safety nets. In this way, identity-based groups effectively exert control over social and political life.

In Lebanon, religious institutions are key providers of social services, and have been for centuries, particularly for those who lack insurance or sufficient means to resort to the private market. The relative absence of a state-sponsored social

safety net during much of Lebanese history and the related prevalence of nonstate providers are defining features of the Lebanese system. Sectarian actors have played an increasingly important role since the civil war. As a result, the welfare regime is highly fragmented and, in some realms, has been virtually unregulated at various key points in time. Nonstate actors—and especially sectarian political parties—with vested interests in the status quo profit from and sustain the underdevelopment of public welfare functions.

A brief overview of the Lebanese welfare regime must distinguish between different historical inflection points, notably the period from 1943 to 1975, the wartime period from 1975 to roughly 1990, and the postwar period from the early 1990s to the present. In the Ottoman and European colonial periods, clerics, religious institutions, missionaries, and foreign relief agencies were the main sources of medical advice and treatment, particularly to coreligionists, and ran important educational programs.[27] But not all religious communities had equally developed networks of social institutions, with Shia developing fewer social institutions than other groups until after independence.

Until 1958, the Lebanese government made little effort to promote socioeconomic development and largely left regional and sectarian imbalances untouched, although some steps were taken to develop basic infrastructure.[28] State penetration of areas outside of Beirut was limited, particularly in the south, the Beqaa Valley in the east, and Akkar in the north, reinforcing the control of the "zu'ama," or traditional leaders, over rural areas.[29] State development efforts accelerated markedly during the presidency of Fuad Chehab (1958–64), who launched an ambitious state-building effort and sought to undercut traditional local and communal leaders by centralizing power.[30] But government corruption, a lack of coordination and expertise to ensure that reforms were implemented on the local level, and opposition from the financial and commercial bourgeoisie as well as local clientelist leaders stymied Chehab's development push.[31] Under subsequent administrations, social development did not significantly advance, and public spending slowed, in part due to opposition both from within the government and from powerful social groups.

The civil war brought about the breakdown of public social welfare institutions established in the 1960s, weakening the already feeble state administrative capacity and enhancing the importance of nonstate social provision. In part as a response to state failure, which was deliberately precipitated by some of the warring militias, confessional groups in all of Lebanon's religious communities initiated or further developed their own social welfare programs. Some militias established welfare programs to serve militia fighters and residents in their spheres of influence.[32]

The variable development of militia social welfare programs created and exacerbated regional disparities in access to public goods and social services in wartime Lebanon. At the onset of the war in 1975 and 1976, the Christian Kataeb Party (also known as the Lebanese Phalanges Party) and Druze Progressive Socialist Party (PSP), complemented by local community initiatives, took charge of the provision of public goods in different rural areas of Mount Lebanon. Beginning in the early 1980s, Amal and Hezbollah progressively developed social welfare networks in parts of the country where the Shia population was highly concentrated. While Christian, Druze, Shia, and other militias divided up the country, Rafik Hariri, a Lebanese Sunni from Sidon, gradually came to dominate politics in the Sunni community, ultimately as the leader of the Future Movement. With the support of Riyadh as well as a large fortune made in Saudi Arabia during the 1960s, Hariri established generous social programs and funneled aid to nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) throughout Lebanon.

In the postwar period, many social welfare programs initiated by militias evolved into institutionalized welfare agencies with branch offices and networks of social centers. Organizations linked to political parties that either did not have militia wings during the war or did not emerge until the postwar period also launched their own welfare programs. Unlike the Sunni, Shia, and Druze organizations, however, the Christian militias did not immediately transform wartime social institutions into postwar party institutions and welfare agencies, in large part due to repression by Syria. After 2005, when Syrian forces withdrew from Lebanon, the Christian parties began to build or reconstitute their social programs.

My own recent research on the primary health care system in Lebanon demonstrates the continued importance of religious and sectarian organizations in the welfare regime, albeit in an evolving regulatory context in which the state exerts more authority.[33] In the past decade, the Ministry of Public Health (MOPH) has worked to establish and coordinate a network of primary health care centers, most of which are run by nonstate actors, including facilities run by the public sector, secular NGOs, religious charities, and political parties. Religious charities, sectarian political parties, and secular, nonsectarian groups each run about one quarter of the 220 or so primary health facilities in the non-profit sector. The remaining quarter of nonprofit primary health facilities are run directly by public agencies, such as the MOPH or municipalities.[34]

The primary health care network is a key pillar in the MOPH plan to offer universal health coverage to the population.[35] Participating facilities receive heavy subsidies in exchange for meeting minimum quality standards.[36] Because so many of the subsidized institutions are affiliated with sectarian parties and religious charities, the importance of religion in politics and society is further cemented. The underdevelopment of state capacity, particularly in the provision of welfare and basic social protection, ensures that low-income citizens have become reliant on religious and political organizations to meet their basic needs. More broadly, the institutionalization of sect in the political system extends into social expenditures, effectively pushing the allocation of government resources along sectarian lines.[37]

The Role of Sect-Based Identity in Political Behavior in Lebanon

To be sure, other factors beyond formal political institutions and the political economy of welfare consolidate the role of sectarianism in the lives of citizens.38 For example, field research in Lebanon indicates that threat perceptions are a driver of political support, including voting behavior, among Lebanese citizens.[39] Multiple other factors may also reinforce the role of sect in political and social affinities. Material incentives such as access to social benefits, the need for security in an unstable environment, and deliberate efforts

by politicians to cue the importance of communal identities may all shape relations between politicians and citizens.

To try to zero in on the potential importance of religion in Lebanese politics, I fielded a nationally representative survey in 2017, in collaboration with the Lebanese Center for Policy Studies and Dominika Kruszewska. Our survey showed that shared religion was the strongest predictor of the likelihood of supporting a candidate. These findings apply to distinct forms of political behavior, including voting and attending political rallies, and hold independent of other factors, including the candidate's promised distribution of material benefits, political experience, and policy positions on salient issues, among other factors.

A brief discussion of the nature of our research indicates how we arrived at these conclusions and points to new questions to further explore both the importance of sectarianism in everyday life and the prospects for fostering alternative frames for citizenship in Lebanon.[40] In October and November 2017, we fielded a survey experiment based on a nationally representative sample of approximately 2,400 Lebanese citizens. We tested our hypotheses with a conjoint experiment, in which voters were presented with short biographies of two hypothetical candidates running for national legislative seats. (Conjoint analysis is a type of survey experiment that is mainly used by market researchers to measure consumer preferences over a range of features of a given product. Social scientists have employed the technique to assess survey respondent choices over multidimensional choices—that is, when people are faced with choosing between alternatives that vary on multiple attributes.)[41]

Within each candidate's biography, we randomly varied a number of characteristics such as the candidate's sectarian identity, clientelist promises to supporters, and other factors, in order to identify the causal effect of each attribute on our outcomes of interest. Each respondent saw four pairs of profiles, presented side-by-side, with each pair of profiles on a separate screen. On the same screen as each candidate pairing, respondents were asked to choose between the two candidates, a question which resembles real-world

voter decision making, and to indicate how likely they would be to attend a rally or demonstration organized by each candidate.[42] Responses to these questions serve as our two outcomes of interest.

An important advantage of the particular experimental design that we selected—a conjoint experiment—is that it allows researchers to vary many candidate attributes simultaneously, making it possible to evaluate which aspects of a candidate's biography make him or her more likely to be elected and, by extension, to compare the relative power of distinct potential explanations, from those which focus on clientelist relationships or promises of communal protection to those highlighting the importance of shared religion, among others. Moreover, such a set-up more accurately reflects the multidimensional choices faced by citizens when they consider how to vote or how to involve themselves in other forms of political behavior.[43]

Several features of the candidate profiles related to our core hypotheses. First, a key attribute of interest referred to the candidate's sect, which includes values for Christian, Shia, and Sunni, the three major religious categories in Lebanon, in order to test the effects of candidates and voters sharing a religion. Second, we included clientelist promises of low- or high-value goods. Respondents were randomly exposed to candidates who pledged to "work hard for their district" or those who promised short-term, mobile benefits such as cash or food distributed during elections, or more continuous, higher-cost benefits such as arranging medical treatment for or providing jobs to supporters. A third attribute focused on candidate promises to ensure the protection of the community, which was compared to pledges to ensure the national security of all Lebanon. We included a range of other candidate attributes in the profiles, such as programmatic policy platforms, experience, and other factors to increase the realism of candidate profiles.

We found that the biggest predictor of support for candidates was shared religion between politicians and citizens—whether at the ballot box or on the streets. On average, respondents were about 10 percent more likely to select a candidate from their own religious community

than from another religious group and about 3 percent more likely to indicate a willingness to attend a rally organized for a coreligionist candidate. In short, for both outcomes, shared religion had the largest substantive effect—beyond the promise of material benefits and other factors.[44]

It is worth considering why shared religion appears to trump all other motivations for political support, particularly in considering ways to foster alternative frames for citizenship. Several possible factors derived from existing research on ethnic politics may account for the importance of shared identity among candidates and voters.

One possible explanation holds that the religious identities of politicians signal the potential for greater access to patronage and clientelist benefits to members of the same religious community.[45] In other words, shared identity with party elites may serve as a cue that the party will deliver more material (or even psychic) benefits.[46] A related material motivation behind the preference for coreligionist candidates—but one that is rooted in a longer time frame— may be that shared religion suggests the possibility of support in the future should the need ever arise. This understanding of the political resonance of shared identity as a potential form of risk abatement may be all the more acute in the context of weak state institutions and protracted conditions of uncertainty.

But other factors beyond material incentives might explain the importance of shared religion. The promise to protect members of the in-group community, a variant of an appeal grounded in a common communal identity, may also invite political support, particularly in the context of protracted hostilities that are ostensibly following sectarian lines.[47] Under these circumstances, voters are more apt to vote for coreligionist politicians, especially when campaign rhetoric emphasizes these threats and underscores the imperative to protect the in-group.

Another perspective holds that having the same ethnicity or religion may lead to shared policy preferences.[48] Under this logic, voters assume that an in-group member will have the interests of the group at heart. Alternatively, dense networks

within groups enable the spread of information and the formation of shared policy preferences.[49]

Finally, shared communal membership may matter in and of itself: support for politicians from the same religious community may simply reflect "in-group love."[50] Social psychologists contend that the distinction between in- versus out-groups fulfills a basic human need for belonging and facilitates social cooperation, which depends on the establishment of depersonalized trust among relatively small groups. As a result, people may naturally favor others from the same religious or ethnic groups. Furthermore, communal membership itself breeds attachment to the group, which may create positive feelings among members of the same group.[51]

Our survey results provide some evidence that suggests (though does not prove) which of these potential explanations for the appeal of shared religion among citizens is most plausible. We do not find strong support for the claim that shared religion is merely a cue for the promise of clientelist distribution, nor do we find evidence that policy preferences vary across religious communities or that promises of protection for the community resonate.[52] We also explore whether shared religion among candidates and politicians offers psychological security, a need that is perhaps more acute in the context of weak state institutions and political instability. But we find no evidence that a sense of insecurity drives preferences for coreligionist candidates.

Finally, we examine whether respondents may favor coreligionist candidates out of a sense of in-group favoritism or affinity with members of their own community. Here we find evidence that communal attachment is associated with greater support for politicians from the same religious communities. Importantly, we do not find that greater in-group favoritism is associated with increased likelihood of supporting politicians who distribute clientelist benefits, nor does it preclude national pride: while nearly 84 percent of the sample reported an affinity for their religious community, almost 91 percent of respondents stated that they see themselves as part of the Lebanese nation.

To summarize, our study underscores that, on average, the religious identity of politicians matters for citizens in Lebanon. These findings seem to accord with work on "social sectarianism" in Lebanon by the anthropologist Lara Deeb, who contends that sectarian identities are meaningful to many people, despite the fact that scholars often explain them away as artifacts of political and institutional histories:

> Perhaps acknowledging that people care about sect feels a bit like airing a family secret, or venturing into the messiness of discrimination and prejudice that we wish didn't exist, or a betrayal of activist efforts that we support. Perhaps we fear that writing about how sect matters at an interpersonal or affective level will contribute to those seemingly intransigent assumptions that sectarianism is unchanging or primordial. But much as we want to escape or deny it, the fact remains that sect matters to a lot of people in their daily lives, not only in relation to politics, networks, legal status, or the material realm but in their interpersonal interactions.[53]

If shared communal identity is important in everyday social and political life, it is important to understand what it actually means for people. Without this, it is difficult if not impossible to imagine how a more inclusive concept of citizenship might be established in Lebanon.

The Construction of a Cross-Cutting, Inclusive National Identity

In places where sectarian and ethnic cleavages are well institutionalized and are often the sites of deep social tensions, how can they be mitigated? This is a key question for Lebanon, and for neighboring countries such as Iraq and Syria, where ruling authorities and competing factions have successfully ratcheted up sectarian tensions in the course of power struggles during the colonial and postcolonial periods.

"Prejudice Reduction" at the Individual Level

The literature on ethnoreligious politics pinpoints a variety of pathways for the transformation of social identities into

the axes of intergroup violence and conflict. Derived from the social psychology literature on "prejudice reduction," a prominent approach addresses the conditions under which intergroup tensions can be reduced at the individual level. Two broad types of approach center on variants of the "contact hypothesis" and social identity theory.

The contact hypothesis is the inspiration for a large number of interventions aimed at prejudice reduction and continues to be the subject of debate to this day.[54] The key contention of this approach holds that increased contact between groups can promote tolerance and acceptance if a number of key conditions are met.[55] While most of the specified conditions refer to exchanges among individuals, the stipulation that the larger social context features the absence of institutions sanctioning intergroup contact and the presence of institutions supporting positive contact implies that propitious macro-level conditions must obtain as well, a point to which I return below.

A complementary but distinct approach to mitigating conflict is derived from social identity theory, which holds that people tend to divide the world into "us" and "them" categories and exhibit greater prejudice toward out-groups in an effort to sustain a positive image of the in-group.[56] Given the natural human tendency to engage in social categorization, then, one way to mitigate intergroup tensions is to recategorize identities around shared goals or identities. In the real world, this might be institutionalized in policies that promote cooperation around local development projects among communities with a history of intergroup tensions and conflict.

In a review of approaches aimed at reducing prejudice, Elizabeth Levy Paluck and Donald P. Green argue that some interventions that promote integration and that develop new social categories based on shared interests seem promising and have been used to bolster support for multicultural policies, such as accommodating ethnic diversity under a larger, shared national identity.[57] At a more practical level, auspicious results have been achieved with interventions that entail cooperative learning as well as media and other forms of normative communication involving group discussions and persuasion by peers.[58]

A key finding in this body of research holds that social norms play a greater role in reducing intergroup tensions than individual-level beliefs. Social pressure has a more direct effect on actual behavior toward out-groups, and may ultimately reshape beliefs through a more indirect process more effectively than efforts to shift individual attitudes. Paluck and Green build on this logic to suggest that efforts to promote prejudice reduction may want to focus on changing shared social norms. "What if interventions were instead to harness forces such as obedience and conformity, the very forces that have been implicated in some of the most notorious expressions of prejudice in world history[?]" they write. "If people can be induced to express prejudice at the behest of political leaders, can they also be induced to repudiate prejudice if instructed to do so? If social cues induce conformity to prejudiced norms, can social cues also induce conformity to tolerant norms?"[59]

The implication for Lebanon is that cultural and political elites, who likely play an important role in promoting and maintaining community norms, will be integral to any effort to reconfigure social and political identities and behaviors. But do these elites have the incentive to lead or foster more tolerance and adherence to a broader, shared identity? As the discussion of the Lebanese political system and welfare regime indicated, many politicians and communal leaders have vested interests in the status quo and therefore may be loath to try to change the foundations of political and social life. This question highlights the limitations of micro-level approaches, which attempt to promote intergroup tolerance at the individual level or in small communities, and points to the importance of macro-level processes related to building inclusive polities in states and nations.

Building Inclusive States and Nations

The construction of more inclusive identities demands an approach that examines how the larger national (or subnational) context interacts with intergroup relations at a more local level.[60] Local interventions—even aimed at shifting group norms—will achieve limited success in the face of persistent political tensions and inequalities at the national level.

Each of the categories of explanation in the body of research on ethnic politics—constructivism, instrumentalism, and institutionalism—implies different ways in which intergroup conflict may be tempered and alternative forms of identity can be established. The constructivist paradigm points to long-term processes of state and institution building, which are arguably the least amenable to policy manipulation. Perhaps the most fundamental way to promote a more inclusive sense of belonging is through inclusive state building. In a recent book on state building and development, Miguel Centeno, Atul Kohli, and Deborah J. Yashar make a similar point.[61] The authors emphasize that states rest on "the construction, maintenance, and allegiance (sometimes coerced) of a political community." In turn, the national political community is established through "the rules and institutions that define who is a member of the polity, what rights and responsibilities they possess, and if/how they will take part." Social inclusion, which they define as "the ability of the state to incorporate the entire population, to promote social wellbeing, and to establish itself as the property of no particular group or sector," is a key means of creating political community.[62] In their framework, a shared political community can be constructed through universalistic rules of membership, participation in interest intermediation and policy decision, and the inclusive provision of public goods and social programs.

The mere presence of diverse cultural communities does not impede the development of shared national belonging.[63] A variety of slow-moving, historical processes promote political alliances that crosscut ethnic categories and build national unity, including the spread of civil society organizations, linguistic assimilation, and state capacity to provide public goods. Furthermore, when formal and informal political alliances span ethnoreligious divides and when most communities are represented at the highest levels of government, the citizenry is more likely to identify with the nation and its symbols, further deepening national political integration. During his presidency, Chehab seems to have anticipated Wimmer's arguments about ethnic politics and state-building processes. In a speech delivered in November 1962, he explicitly linked his push to develop infrastructure and services across the national territory to the

goal of forging popular commitment to a national political entity. "The development project that is taking place in the economic and social sectors," he said, "is seen not only as a way to raise the standard of living of each individual but also to ground all Lebanese in a single society on which national unity is based—not as much on the basis of coexistence or the association of different parts of the population but rather to make one complete people and to remain loyal to the country."

This focus on politicians brings us back to instrumentalist explanations in the ethnic politics literature. Political elites and the leaders of cultural communities undoubtedly play a critical role in fostering a sense of shared national belonging. Furthermore, leadership may be especially important in orchestrating shifts in norms. Politicians or cultural leaders have direct influence over at least some portion of their supporters, constituents, and followers. As a result, they are well positioned to generate or shape the evolution of collective norms that promote inclusion, tolerance, and shared belonging. Elites and the organizations they represent may also exert influence over the information and messages that the population is exposed to, in turn affecting general attitudes toward out-groups and toward the national political community.

The conditions under which politicians and other elites in Lebanon, or other parts of the contemporary Middle East, develop the political will and capacity to promote inclusive state and nation building is the most fundamental question at hand—and one that is not easily answered. If we accept Wimmer's arguments about the need for alliances across cultural communities and legal guarantees for political representation of all communities, when do such conditions emerge?[64] Under what conditions, then, are social and political elites incentivized to promote cross-cutting forms of identification?[65]

Yet if the construction of inclusive national political communities also requires the active support of citizens, the prospects are somewhat more positive. In the past few years, episodes of civic engagement and political mobilization have emerged in Lebanon, premised on a

distinct vision of the polity and citizenship. These include the You Stink movement, which emerged to protest the prolonged failure to adequately address waste management in Lebanon. After the main landfill site in the country was closed due to overcapacity, the government failed to devise a new strategy to process waste, leading to a buildup of garbage in the streets of Beirut and around Mount Lebanon. The "garbage crisis" then sparked protests, with tens of thousands of protestors pouring into the streets of Beirut to demand better governance and an end to government inefficiency and corruption. The following year, a new political movement, Beirut Madinati (Beirut My City), emerged to contest the 2016 Beirut municipal elections. Beirut Madinati consisted of a volunteer-led coalition of candidates who ran on a programmatic platform aimed at improving municipal governance and undercutting the power of the established, sectarian patronage-based parties.[66] Although the movement lost the overall elections, it nonetheless won about 40 percent of the votes in Beirut as a whole and took more than half the votes in East Beirut. This electoral outcome was a major achievement in light of the fact that it ran against established politicians who control well-entrenched patronage networks and consistently win elections. The appeal of these new civic movements and political initiatives indicates that a significant portion of the Lebanese population is fed up with the political status quo.

The results of my national survey also indicate that a foundation for a shared national political community exists in Lebanon. As noted above, virtually the entire survey sample expressed pride in the Lebanese national identity. In addition, when we assessed whether sectarian rhetoric in the form of pledges to protect the politician's own community garnered political support, respondents generally preferred candidates who pledged to make national security in Lebanon the highest priority, rather than in-group protection. Thus, Lebanese citizens seem to want more from their politicians than a system premised on sectarian power-sharing that has failed to deliver.

Building Inclusive Foundations for Citizenship

Sectarianism in Lebanon is well established—both in politics and in everyday life. It structures the way citizens attempt to meet their needs and perpetuates the power of longstanding parties and politicians with sectarian affiliations. Regardless of whether or not citizens primarily identify as members of a given sect, many are effectively compelled to activate this identity in their daily lives—particularly if they are dependent on political and social networks linked to sectarian parties and religious organizations. This system is all the more entrenched because the main political players have vested interests in the status quo.

In this context, how is it possible to deemphasize the importance of sect in politics and society in favor of a more cross-cutting national identity? Based on the findings of research on state and nation building, it is neither easy nor quick to build more inclusive national political communities. The kinds of institutions, policies, and practices that promote and maintain such inclusive identities do not arise easily, and they require influential power brokers to foster their development. The key question, then, is how to incentivize politicians to pursue more inclusive economic and social policies and patterns of representation—all factors that the literature on nation building suggests can promote more inclusive foundations for citizenship.

The recent experience of Lebanon suggests that there may be hope. The established, sectarian politicians seem to have adopted more programmatic appeals and platforms in response to the threat posed by Beirut Madinati. Sustained grassroots mobilization may be too difficult for the powers that be to ignore and, if enough people feel that the status quo does not deliver for them, they may throw their support behind alternative leaders and movements.

More broadly, the rise of Beirut Madinati underscores the point that citizen mobilization is a force to be reckoned with and is the most likely potential threat to established political systems. As the Arab uprisings have shown, mass mobilization can overthrow incumbent rulers but cannot bring about sustained political change in the absence of

coherent leadership and organized institutions, such as political parties with grassroots networks. Beirut Madinati is testament to the fact that a new crop of leaders has emerged in the Arab world who are willing and able to present an alternative vision of political order and have the skills to organize in pursuit of their goals. Explicitly distinguishing themselves from the entrenched political groups, these people are young professionals and activists, and many have a technocratic background and orientation that they are using to design concrete strategies for improving governance and everyday living conditions. Their approach constitutes a sharp contrast to the patronage-based strategies of traditional politicians. These activists are shifting the narrative away from the politics of fear and sectarianism, which politicians often deploy to shore up their authority.

It is by no means assured that new political movements like Beirut Madinati will succeed in uprooting entrenched, patronage-based systems. The implementation of an alternative vision for governance will not come easily and is, in part, contingent on the decline of the very patronage networks that lock ordinary citizens into relationships of dependence. As long as the majority of citizens live in relatively precarious socioeconomic conditions, many will be reliant on politicians who dole out discretionary benefits and opportunities to their supporters. Challengers to this status quo who want to pursue a programmatic alternative are therefore playing a long game. To create a different kind of politics—one that is based more on a civil vision of political belonging—will require patient efforts to build cross-class coalitions and to establish grassroots linkages throughout society.

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Notes

1 I use "ethnicity" and "religion" interchangeably in this report.

2 Ashutosh Varshney, "Ethnicity and Ethnic Conflict," in Oxford Handbook of Comparative Politics, ed. Susan Stokes and Carles Boix (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 274–94.

3 David D. Laitin, Hegemony and Culture: Politics and Religious Change among the Yoruba (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986); Mahmood Mamdani, Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996); and Crawford Young, The Politics of Cultural Pluralism (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1976).

4 Evan S. Lieberman and Prerna Singh, "Census Enumeration and Group Conflict: A Global Analysis of the Consequences of Counting," World Politics 69, no. 1 (2017): 1–53.

5 Andreas Wimmer, "Is Diversity Detrimental? Ethnic Fractionalization, Public Goods Provision, and the Historical Legacies of Stateness," Comparative Political Studies 49, no. 11 (2016): 1407–45.

6 Varshney, "Ethnicity and Ethnic Conflict," 282.

7 Amatzia Baram, "Neo-Tribalism in Iraq: Saddam Hussein's Tribal Policies 1991–96," International Journal of Middle East Studies 29 no. 1 (1997): 1–31; Toby Dodge, Inventing Iraq: The Failure of Nation Building and a History Denied (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003); and Faleh Jabar, The Shiite Movement in Iraq (London: Saqi Books, 2003).

8 Kanchan Chandra, "Cumulative Findings in the Study of Ethnic Politics," American Political Science Assocation Comparative Politics Newletter 12, no. 1 (2001): 7–11.

9 Varshney, "Ethnicity and Ethnic Conflict," 288.

10 Rogers Brubaker, Ethnicity without Groups (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006); and Varshney, "Ethnicity and Ethnic Conflict," 288.

11 Lijphart, Democracy in Plural Societies: A Comparative Exploration (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977); and Lijphart, "The Power-Sharing Approach," in Conflict and Peacemaking in Multiethnic Societies, ed. Joseph V. Montville (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1990), 492–509.

12 Donald Horowitz, Ethnic Groups in Conflict (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1985); and Donald Horowitz, "Making Moderation Pay: The Comparative Politics of Ethnic Conflict Management," in Conflict and Peacemaking in Multiethnic Societies, ed. Joseph V. Montville (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1990), 451–475.

13 Lijphart, "Consociational Democracy," World Politics 21, no. 2 (1969): 216.

14 Bassel Salloukh, "The Limits of Electoral Engineering in Divided Societies: Elections in Postwar Lebanon," Canadian Journal of Political Science 39, no. 3 (2006): 635–55.

15 Henri Tajfel and John Turner, "An Integrative Theory of Intergroup Conflict," in The Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations, ed. William G. Austin and Stephen Worchel (Monterey, CA: Brooks/Cole, 1979), 7–24.

16 Muzafer Sherif, O. J. Harvey, B. Jack White, William R. Hood, and Carolyn W. Sherif, Intergroup Conflict and Cooperation: The Robbers Cave Experiment (Norman, OK: Oklahoma Book Exchange, 1961).

17 Leonie Huddy, Stanley Feldman, Charles Taber, and Gallya Lahav, "Threat, Anxiety, and Support of Antiterrorism Policies," American Journal of Political Science 49, no. 3 (2005): 593–608; and Leonie Huddy, "From Group Identity to Political Cohesion and Commitment," in The Oxford Handbook of Political Psychology, 2nd ed., ed. Leonie Huddy, David O. Sears, and Jack S. Levy (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 1–28.

18 See Morten Valjborn and Raymond Hinnebusch, "Playing 'the Sectarian Card' in a Sectarianized new Middle East," Babylon 16, no. 2 (2018): 42–55; and Alexandra

Siegel, "Twitter Wars: Sunni-Shia Conflict and Cooperation in the Digital Age," in Beyond Sunni and Shia: The Roots of Sectarianism in a Changing Middle East, ed. Frederic Wehrey (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 157–80.

19 For brief summaries, see Bassel F. Salloukh, "The Architecture of Sectarianization in Lebanon," in Sectarianization: Mapping the New Politics of the Middle East, ed. Nader Hashemi and Danny Postel (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 213–219 and Max Weiss, In the Shadow of Sectarianism: Law, Shi'ism, and the Making of Modern Lebanon (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), epilogue.

20 Ussama Makdisi, The Culture of Sectarianism: Community, History, and Violence in Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Lebanon (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 52.

21 Makdisi, Culture of Sectarianism, 67, 77, 85.

22 Makdisi, Culture of Sectarianism, 115.

23 Makdisi, Culture of Sectarianism, 161-65.

24 Salloukh, "The Architecture of Sectarianization in Lebanon," 218–222.

25 Michael C. Hudson, The Precarious Republic: Political Modernization in Lebanon (New York: Random House, 1968), 51–21; and Samir Khalaf, Lebanon's Predicament (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), 115–16.

26 "Lebanon: Removal of Religion from IDs Positive but Not Sufficient," Human Rights Watch, February 16, 2009, https://www.hrw.org/news/2009/02/16/lebanon-removal-religion-ids-positive-not-sufficien.

27 Leila Tarazi Fawaz, An Occasion for War: Mount Lebanon and Damascus in 1860 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994); and Jens Hanssen, Fin de Siecle Beirut: The Making of an Ottoman Provincial Capital (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 116.

28 Under the first two post-independence administrations of Bishara el-Khoury (1943–52) and Camille Chamoun (1952–58).

29 Caroline Attié, Struggle in the Levant (London: I. B. Tauris, 2004), 53; and Farid El Khazen, The Breakdown of the State in Lebanon, 1967–1976 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), 57.

30 Hudson, The Precarious Republic, 297; and Fawwaz Traboulsi, A History of Modern Lebanon (London: Pluto, 2007), 139. For Chehab, social policy was a key tool for national integration. Between 1957 and 1964, government expenditures increased across all sectors, demonstrating the marked acceleration of state-building efforts under Chehab's tenure. See Hudson, The Precarious Republic, 311–12; and Traboulsi, A History of Modern Lebanon, 140.

31 Hudson, The Precarious Republic, 316–17; Kamal Salibi, "Lebanon Under Fuad Chehab, 1958–1964," Middle Eastern Studies 2, no. 3 (1966): 213, 222; Kamal Salibi, Crossroads to a Civil War: Lebanon, 1958–1976 (Delmar, New York: Caravan, 1976), 19; and Traboulsi, A History of Modern Lebanon, 141–42.

32 During the war, four organizations—the Christian Lebanese Forces, Druze PSP, the Shia Amal Movement, and Hezbollah—were the main militias engaged in social welfare provision. Their social programs were in part an outgrowth of the social, educational, and health affairs wings that parties such as the Lebanese Forces, other Christian parties, and the PSP had established when they operated as nascent political parties in the pre-civil war period. See Judith Palmer Harik, The Public and Social Services of the Lebanese Militias (Oxford: Center for Lebanese Studies, Oxford University, 1994), 8.

33 Melani Cammett and Aytug Sasmaz, "Project on the Quality of Primary Health Care in Lebanon: Facility-Level Study (FLS)" (Pre-Analysis Plan), Evidence in Governance and Politics (EGAP), April 19, 2017, http://egap.org/registration/2467.

34 In Lebanon, coding these centers is a relatively straightforward process, as most belong to networks with clear organizational affiliations. Facilities coded as public include those run by a government agency, whether national or local. Secular NGOs refer to nonstate providers that have no religious or political affiliation and often broadcast their mission in explicitly nonsectarian terms. Religious centers are those linked to a religious community, such as the Maronite Church, a Sunni religious institution such as Dar al-Fatwa or the Makassed, or other religious denominations, but are not linked to a political party or movement. Finally, political facilities are directly run by a politician, political party, or movement that contests elections or holds public office, or by a party-linked charitable arm. In Lebanon, where virtually all of the major political parties are sectarian—that is, political parties and groups with religious affiliations—party-linked centers are associated with particular religious communities but, again, are distinct from religious charities, which are not formally linked to political organizations. Examples include the health networks of the predominantly Sunni Future Movement, the Shia Hezbollah and Amal Movement, and the Christian Kataeb Party.

35 See "Lebanon Health Resilience Project," World Bank, accessed February 11, 2019, https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/loans-credits/2017/06/26/lebanon-health-resilience-project.

36 Centers participating in the MOPH network gain access to nonfinancial resources and free or heavily subsidized medications. Some centers in the MOPH network also serve Syrian refugees, who now constitute almost one-third of the resident population of Lebanon. Centers in the network took part in an accreditation program launched in 2012, which helps to ensure that most adhere to certain minimum basic quality standards. See Fadi El-Jardali, Randa Hemadeh, Maha Jaafar, Lucie Sagherian, Ranime El-Skaff, Reem Mdeihly, Diana Jamal, and Nour Ataya, "The Impact of Accreditation of Primary Healthcare Centers: Successes, Challenges and Policy Implications as Perceived by Healthcare Providers and Directors in Lebanon," BMC Health Services Research 14, no. 1 (2014): 86.

37 Nisreen Salti and Jad Chaaban, "The Role of Sectarianism in the Allocation of Public Expenditure in Postwar Lebanon," International Journal of Middle East Studies 42, no. 3 (2010): 637–55.

38 Lebanese political leaders liberally employ sectarian discourse to mobilize their bases, sometimes aiming to position themselves as the providers of security to their respective communities in the face of real or imagined threats. By appealing to their communities' concerns and fears, political parties and politicians build support by promoting themselves as in-group guardians. This enables them to avoid having to develop programmatic policies or deliver goods and services to citizens.

These efforts have been quite effective during Lebanon's prolonged periods of instability, when the national government has been ineffective or perceived to favor some groups over others. Such conditions have been common since at least 2005, when the assassination of former prime minister Rafik Hariri ushered in a period of intense political polarization and intermittent violence. The war in neighboring Syria has periodically brought these tensions to new heights. This period has been marked by increased incidents of ostensibly sectarian political violence, massive refugee inflows, and cross-border movements of fighters. See Melani Cammett, "The Syrian Conflict's Impact on Lebanese Politics," United States Institute of Peace, Peace Brief no. 158, November 18, 2013, https://www.usip.org/publications/2013/11/syrian-conflicts-impact-lebanese-politics.

39 In a focus group conducted in 2012 by the Lebanese Center for Policy Studies, voters expressed support for political parties that were considered to be protectors of the community, even when they disagreed with their policies.

40 A more detailed account of the research design is available in Melani Cammett and Dominika Kruszewska, "Project on Fear and Politics in Divided Societies: Assessing the Foundations of Political Behavior in Lebanon," Evidence in Governance and Politics (EGAP), September 11, 2017, https://egap.org/registration/2802.

41 Jens Hainmueller and Daniel J Hopkins, "Public Attitudes toward Immigration," Annual Review of Political Science 17 (2014): 225–49.

42 The precise wording of the two outcome questions was: "If you had to make a choice without knowing more, which of the two would you vote for?" and "How likely would you be to attend a rally or demonstration organized by each candidate?" Responses ranged from "not likely at all" to "very likely" on a seven-point scale.

43 Alexander Meyer and Leah R. Rosenzweig, "Conjoint Analysis Tools for Developing Country Contexts," Political Methodologist, February 18, 2016, https://thepoliticalmethodologist.com/2016/02/18/conjoint-analysis-tools-for-developing-country-contexts/.

44 For example, in a speech during the 2009 Lebanese national elections, Nayla Tueni, a Christian politician with the March 14 Alliance, emphasized her Christian credentials and highlighted her personal connections to a respected religious authority figure: "I am proud of my Christianity, of being an Orthodox, of belonging to the Church and of being the goddaughter of Bishop Audi."

45 Kanchan Chandra, Why Ethnic Parties Succeed: Patronage and Ethnic Head Counts in India (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

46 However, the extent to which voters actually support coreligionist politicians may be contingent on a demonstrated ability to deliver better access to education, healthcare, or physical infrastructure. See Elizabeth Carlson, "Ethnic Voting and Accountability in Africa: A Choice Experiment in Uganda," World Politics 67, no. 2 (2015): 353–85.

47 Since at least 2005, when the assassination of Prime Minister Rafik Hariri ushered in a period of intense political polarization and periodic waves of violence, Lebanon has experienced intermittent instability. The civil war raging in neighboring Syria brought these tensions to new heights, at times threatening to engulf Lebanon in its own wave of full-scale violence. See Cammett, "The Syrian Conflict's Impact on Lebanese Politics."

Insecurity may compel people to support candidates who position themselves as defenders of the community in line with research in social psychology, which posits that people close ranks when they experience a threat to themselves as members of a group. See Huddy et al., "Threat, Anxiety, and Support of Antiterrorism Policies;" and Huddy, "From Group Identity to Political Cohesion and Commitment." Perceived threats to the in-group can also mobilize support during elections,

compelling citizens to support politicians who explicitly highlight these threats and pledge to offer protection. See Wendy K. Tam Cho, James G. Gimpel, and Tony Wu, "Clarifying the Role of SES in Political Participation: Policy Threat and Arab American Mobilization," Journal of Politics 68, no. 4 (2006): 977–91.

48 Evan S. Lieberman and Gwyneth H. McClendon "The Ethnicity-Policy Preference Link in Sub-Saharan Africa," Comparative Political Studies 46, no. 5 (2013): 574–02.

49 Nicholas A. Christakis and James H. Fowler, "Social Contagion Theory: Examining Dynamic Social Networks and Human Behavior," Statistics in Medicine 32, no. 4 (2013): 556–77. This view holds that ethnoreligious differences shape cognitions and preferences regarding distributional concerns, perhaps out of a sense of "linked fate." See Michael Dawson, "Behind the Mule," Race and Class in African American Politics (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994). Here I also draw on Lieberman and McClendon, "The Ethnicity–Policy Preference Link in Sub-Saharan Africa," 576–77.

50 Marilynn B. Brewer, "The Psychology of Prejudice: In-Group Love or Out-Group Hate?," Journal of Social Issues 55 (1999): 434.

51 This perspective is supported by social identity theory, which shows that people tend to divide the world into "us" and "them" categories and exhibit greater prejudice toward out-groups in an effort to sustain a positive image of the in-group. For a summary of relevant work, see Leonie Huddy, "From Social to Political Identity: A Critical Examination of Social Identity Theory," Political Psychology 22, no. 1 (2001): 136–37.

52 To be fair, we cannot adequately test the risk abatement explanation with the data at hand. Although we find that the 16 percent of respondents who report relatively smooth access to benefits from politicians (most of whom are affiliated with sectarian parties or politicians) are more likely to vote for politicians from the same sect, we cannot disentangle whether this is because citizens receive more benefits when they support a politician or the reverse.

53 Lara Deeb, "'Til Sect Do You Part?' On Sectarianism and Intermarriage in Lebanon," Jadaliyya, September 14, 2017, http://www.jadaliyya.com/Details/34552.

54 Gordon W. Allport, The Nature of Prejudice (Cambridge, MA: Perseus, 1954). For the debate, see Elizabeth Levy Paluck, Seth A. Green, and Donald P. Green, "The Contact Hypothesis Re-evaluated," Behavioural Public Policy (2018): 1–30; and Thomas F. Pettigrew and Linda R. Tropp, "A Meta-Analytic Test of Intergroup Contact Theory," Journal of Personality and Social Psychology 90 (2006): 751–83.

55 These include equal status among the parties, intergroup cooperation or situations in which individuals work together in a noncompetitive fashion, common goals in which individuals must rely on out-group members to achieve a shared goal, personal and informal interactions among out-group members enabling them to learn more about each other and develop cross-group friendships, and support by social and institutional authorities through the absence of institutions that explicitly or implicitly sanction intergroup contact and the presence of institutions that support positive contact. For example, laws enforcing segregation would violate the condition of social and institutional support.

56 Brewer, "The Psychology of Prejudice;" John F. Dovidio, Samuel L. Gaertner, and Silvia Abad-Merino, "Helping Behaviour and Subtle Discrimination," in Intergroup Helping, ed. Esther van Leeuwen and Hanna Zagefka (New York: Springer, 2017), 3–22; and Tajfel and Turner, "An Integrative Theory of Intergroup Conflict."

57 Paluck and Green, "Prejudice Reduction: What Works? A Review and Assessment of Research and Practice," Annual Review of Psychology 60, no. 1 (2009): 358.

58 Paluck and Green, "Prejudice Reduction," 347.

59 Paluck and Green, "Prejudice Reduction," 357, 360.

60 In a recent review of work in social psychology and political science on mitigating conflict, Ruth K. Ditlmann, Cyrus Samii, and Thomas Zeitzoff echo this call for attention to the interaction between macro- and micro-level explanations, calling for more serious consideration of how contextual factors, such as political institutions or group resources and capacities, might hinder conflict mitigation. See Ditlmann, Samii, and Zeitzoff, "Addressing Violent Intergroup Conflict from the Bottom Up?" Social Issues and Policy Review 11, no. 1 (2017): 71.

61 Miguel Centeno, Atul Kohli, and Deborah J. Yashar, eds. States in the Developing World (New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 20–21.

62 Centeno, Kohli, and Yashar, States, 21.

63 Wimmer underscores this point, tackling the question of why some countries with diverse ethnoreligious populations achieve national integration while others do not. See Wimmer, Nation Building: Why Some Countries Come Together While Others Fall Apart (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018).

64 Wimmer, Nation Building.

65 Institutionalist approaches are most amenable to generating short-term policy prescriptions aimed at promoting intergroup cooperation. The literature on institutional design for divided societies points to a variety of ways in which different formal institutions, such as electoral rules or government structure, incentivize elites to reach out across group lines to garner support or require politicians and parties to form alliances or collaborate on policy-making. See Horowitz, "Making Moderation Pay;" Lijphart, "The Power-Sharing Approach;" and Benjamin Reilly, Democracy in Divided Societies: Electoral Engineering for Conflict Management (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001). Institutionalist arguments, then, can provide at least proximate answers to the question of when politicians are incentivized to promote cross-cutting forms of identification among citizens from diverse ethnoreligious communities. However, such proximate explanations are not sufficient because they beg the question of where such institutions come from in the first place. Institutions do not magically appear to solve problems, but rather are the contingent product of struggles among political actors with various endowments of power and influence. See Thomas Pepinsky, "The Institutional Turn in Comparative Authoritarianism," British Journal of Political Science 44, no. 3 (2014): 631–53.

66 Carmen Geha, "Politics of a Garbage Crisis: Social Networks, Narratives, and Frames of Lebanon's 2015 Protests and Their Aftermath," Social Movement Studies 18, no. 1 (2019): 78–92; and Salloukh, "The Architecture of Sectarianization in Lebanon," 234. See also Thanassis Cambanis, "People Power and Its Limits," in Arab Politics Beyond the Uprisings: Experiments in an Era of Resurgent Authoritarianism, ed. Thanassis Cambanis and Michael Wahid Hanna (New York: The Century Foundation, 2017), 105–33.