

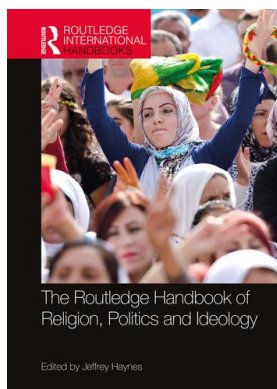
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On: 24 Mar 2023

Access details: *subscription number*

Publisher: *Routledge*

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The Routledge Handbook of Religion, Politics and Ideology

Jeffrey Haynes

Religious fundamentalism, liberal nationalism, and sectarian solidarity among Lebanese

Publication details

<https://test.routledgehandbooks.com/doi/10.4324/9780367816230-24>

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Published online on: 15 Aug 2021

How to cite :- Mansoor Moaddel, Jean Kors, Johan Gärde. 15 Aug 2021, *Religious fundamentalism, liberal nationalism, and sectarian solidarity among Lebanese from: The Routledge Handbook of Religion, Politics and Ideology* Routledge

Accessed on: 24 Mar 2023

<https://test.routledgehandbooks.com/doi/10.4324/9780367816230-24>

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RELIGIOUS FUNDAMENTALISM, LIBERAL NATIONALISM, AND SECTARIAN SOLIDARITY AMONG LEBANESE

Mansoor Moaddel, Jean Kors, and Johan Gärde¹

The upsurge of Islamic fundamentalism in the late 1970s indicated the decline of secular politics, reassertion of male supremacy in different domains of social life, the rise of constraining sartorial practices and Islamic hijab for women, and the escalation of Shia–Sunni sectarian rivalries in the Middle East. This impact was quite strong in Lebanon, where its religion-based fragmented social structure was particularly vulnerable to the fundamentalist pressures. The formation of Hezbollah by the Iranian Islamic regime in the early 1980s strengthened Shia fundamentalism, which in turn prompted the Saudis to support the Sunnis in the country. However, there has been little systematic analysis of how fundamentalism and foreign rivalries, on the one hand, and liberal ideology, on the other, contributed to sectarian solidarity among Lebanese. This chapter assesses the linkages of religious fundamentalism, foreign intervention, and liberal nationalism with sectarianism by analyzing data from a nationally representative sample of 3,039 Lebanese collected in 2008.

Religious fundamentalism and sectarianism

Despite their diversity, the fundamentalist movements exhibited a similar set of core orientations. These core orientations consisted of a distinctive set of beliefs about and attitudes toward whatever religious beliefs one has (Altemeyer and Hunsberger 2004). For example, the belief in God is a religious belief. The belief in the oneness of God and the Prophecy of Muhammad is Islamic, while the belief in the Trinitarian notion of God as Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit is Christian. But the beliefs that one's religion is closer to God than other religions, that only the followers of one's religion will go to heaven, or that the Quran or Bible is literally true are fundamentalist beliefs because they display distinctive religious orientations rather than asserting specific tenets of either faith. Fundamentalists tend to have a disciplinarian conception of the deity, consider the scriptures literally true, and are religious exclusivists and intolerant (Moaddel and Karabenick 2008, 2013, 2018).

Such attitudes were expressed by different fundamentalist movements in Islam. For example, as the first instance of fundamentalism in the modern period, the movements that originated

from the teachings of Muhammad Ibn Abdul Wahhab (1703–1792) in Arabia and Shah Waliullah (1703–1762) in India advocated returning to the fundamentals of the faith that were practiced by the first generation of Muslims in order to purify their religious community from the influence of other cultures, which for Shah Waliullah meant the rejection of the folkways and mores of the Hindus, and the Wahhabis of the Ottomans and the Shia Islam (Ahmad 1967; Hourani 1983).

Although the movements that sprang from the teachings of both Muslim theologians were defeated in the 19th century, the Wahhabis by Egyptian ruler Mohammad Ali and the other, the British, they resurfaced in the 20th century as *jamaati Islami* in India and then Pakistan, an anti-nationalist and illiberal movement led by Abul Ala Maududi, and the Wahhabi-Saud alliance. The latter succeeded in establishing the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in 1932. Facing challenges successively from pan-Arab nationalism and revolutionary Shiism, the Kingdom launched a program of proselytizing Sunni Islam, a policy that strengthened political Islam and Sunni sectarianism (Ahmad 1967; Dekmejian 1994; Okruhlik 2002; Moaddel 2006). Adding to the diversity of fundamentalism—but exhibiting similar literalist, exclusivist, intolerant orientations—was the Society of the Muslim Brothers established in Egypt in 1928. For its founder Hasan al-Banna (1906–1949), “Islam is a faith and a ritual, a nation... and a nationality, a religion and a state, spirit and deed, holy text and sword” (Mitchell 1969: 232). His followers were mobilized to repel what they considered an assault on Islam by secular intellectuals and Christian missionaries (al-Banna 1978).

Among the Shia, *Fedayeen-e Islam*, formed in 1944, was the first expression of fundamentalism, which called for a strict application of the sharia: prohibitions of alcohol, films, gambling, and wearing of foreign clothing; enforcement of amputation of hands of thieves and veiling for women; eliminating non-Islamic subjects from school curricula; restricting the activities of religious minorities (Kazemi 2012). Another was the *Hojjatieh* Society, formed in 1953 to combat the spread of the Bahai faith (Sadri 2012). After the Iranian Revolution, the fundamentalists were closely associated with the belief in clerical absolutism. Similar to the Saudis, the Islamic regime launched a large-scale program of proselytizing Shi’ism abroad, particularly in Bahrain, Iraq, Lebanon, and Yemen, where there was a sizable Shia population. It was most successful in Lebanon, where it established the Hezbollah, which grew to become a most-powerful religious and military organization in the country.

The sectarian system

Considerable historical and anecdotal evidence shows how fundamentalism, liberal nationalism, and foreign interventions affected sectarianism in Lebanon, where 17 confessions are officially recognized. Each has its own family and religious courts, the major confessions being Maronite, Greek Catholic, and Orthodox Christians, and Shia, Sunni, and Druze Muslims. Constitutionally, the presidency goes to the Maronites, premiership to the Sunnis, speaker of the parliament to the Shia, and the deputy prime minister and the deputy speaker of the parliament to the Orthodox Christians. The parliamentary seats are equally divided between Christians and Muslims, proportionally between the 17 denominations.

Since the 18th century, four major changes have occurred in the pattern of confessional relations: (a) the solidification of the Druze-led Maronite–Druze alliance at the expense of the Shia in the 18th century, (b) the decline of the Druze and the rise of the Maronites in the second half of the 19th century, (c) the rise of the Sunnis at the expense of the Maronites in the post-1975–1990 civil war period, and (d) the rise of the Shia and the relative decline of the Sunnis in the late 20th century. Associated with this cyclical pattern of historical change were changes in

regional power relations; the rise of Maronite Christians in the 19th century was linked to the decline of the Ottomans and the rise of the French; the decline of the Maronites and the rise of the Sunnis in the post-World-War-II period to the decline of the French influence, and the outbreak of Sunni–Shia rivalries to the decline of Western influence and reassertion of Muslim power in the late 20th century. In contrast to the unified Ottoman hegemony, this new Muslim power rested on Iran–Saudi rivalries, which in Lebanon was reflected in the Saudis supporting the Sunnis, while the Iranian regime supported the Shia (Hitti 1966; Zamir 1978; Moosa 1986; Salibi 1988; Spagnolo 1977; Phares 1995; Nassar 1995; Yapp 1996; Makdisi 2000; Firo 2003; Cleveland and Bunton 2009; Weiss 2009; Agoston and Masters 2009; Winter 2010; Abisaab and Abisaab 2014).

Each cycle of change came as a result of armed confrontations between warring confessions. The most gruesome were the civil wars of 1860 and 1975–1990, during which tens of thousands of lives were lost and extensive properties destroyed, conjuring up the image of the animality and wrathfulness of human nature that Ibn Khaldun (1967) described in analyzing dynastic change in historical Islam. Elite rivalries, economic interests, and foreign interventions were also important in either heightening sectarianism or contributing to intra-confessional discord (Salibi 1988; Phares, 1995; Makdisi 2000). Christians were divided between landed interests and the Church that pushed for Greater Lebanon, on the one hand, and those who were happy with smaller Lebanon where they enjoyed the absolute majority, on the other. Christian disunity also contributed to the formation of a Muslim–Christian alliance that defeated Christian nationalists in the 1943 elections (Phares 1995; Entelis 1979). In the midst of the civil war, there were instances of devastating in-group clashes between armed Maronites in 1978 and 1980 (Phares 1995) and Shia Amal and Hezbollah in 1988–1989 (Norton 2007). Recently, the Sunnis were divided between those supporting moderate politics and those adhering to fundamentalism, as were the Maronites who opted to ally with the Hezbollah and those who coalesced with the Sunnis (Fattah 2007).

Explaining sectarian solidarity

Social scientists widely agree that ethnicity matters and have examined the link between ethnic relations and such phenomena as “violence, democratic stability, institutional design, economic growth, individual well-being, and so on” (Chandra 2006: 398). Many of these studies, however, have been criticized for mismatching the classification and definition of ethnicity and for failure to show the importance of ethnicity “in explaining most outcomes” (Chandra 2006: 397), including the link between ethnic identity and politics (Lee 2008). We argue that a key explanatory problem in the study of ethnic politics is inadequate attention paid to the phenomenon of ethnic solidarity.

In explaining the relations of ethnicity with varied political outcomes, for example, many consider ethnic diversity as a key concept (Morrison and Stevenson 1972; Barrows 1976), but this diversity is measured almost exclusively in terms of such objective criteria as ethnic fractionalization (Taylor and Jodice 1972; Reynal-Querol 2002; Fearon 2003; Campos and Kuzeyev 2007), “ethnic dominance” (Collier 2001), “civil-war feasibility” (Collier et al. 2009), the size of the largest ethnic or minority group, the number of ethnic groups (Ellingsen 2000), and the distance between languages as a measure of cultural distance (Fearon 2003). Even Wimmer et al. (2009), who have gone beyond the ethnic-diversity thesis, still focus on structural arrangements (i.e., states characterized by certain ethnopolitical configurations of power) in explaining ethnic violence. The implicit assumption is that variation in the structure of ethnic diversity or ethnopolitical configurations reflects varying degrees of ethnic

solidarity. Without this assumption, it would be hard to explain why members of an ethnic group opt to participate in violence against another or the ruling regime. Sectarian solidarity is thus presumed either as given—individuals act for ethnic goals where certain structural conditions prevail—or as a derivative property of the structure of ethnic relations of the countries experiencing conflict.

The scholars who theorized about ethnic solidarity, however, tend to conceptualize this solidarity at the group level: as the strength of ethnic norms (Geertz 1973), kinship ties and genetic relatedness (van den Berghe 1978), a common language or a set of shared symbols that would facilitate in-group communication (Gellner 1964), the extent to which members of an ethnic group are visible to one another and their political representatives (Chandra 2006) and the nature of the historical event commonly experienced by the members of an ethnic group (Anderson 1983; Brass 1991; Eriksen 1993; Eller and Coughlan 1993). This conceptualization may be useful for a comparative analysis across groups. At the same time, the emphasis on such group properties may reinforce what Brubaker (2002: 164) criticizes as the tendency to treat ethnicity “as if they were internally homogeneous, externally bounded groups, even unitary collective actors.” To overcome this weakness and allow for groupness (Brubaker et al. 2004) or group consciousness (Lee 2008), we conceptualize ethnic solidarity on the micro-level. A micro-analytic approach is important because it not only allows for variability in ethnic solidarity across groups and through time but also makes it possible to assess this variability in terms of individuals’ subjective judgment and ideological orientations.

Ideology, religious fundamentalism, and sectarianism

The historical changes in sectarian power relations were linked to such changes in ideological relations as liberal nationalism, pan-Arab nationalism, and fundamentalism between the nineteenth and late twentieth centuries.

The Maronite Christians and liberal nationalism

The outbreak of the Maronite–Druze conflict in 1860 and the subsequent rise of the Maronites paralleled the rise of liberal nationalism. Resting on the principles of the equality of all religions, the right of a people to a political community, the organization of such a community in nationalist terms rather than religion, and a conception of history that went far beyond the Islamic period, liberal nationalism united Christian and Muslim Arabs in a struggle against the Ottomans’ authoritarian rule. By relaxing the norms of religious inequality hitherto practiced under their rule, the Ottomans also contributed to the rise of this vision. The *Tanzimat* instituted in 1837–1876, including the 1839 *Hatt-i Sherif* (Noble Rescript) of Gülhane, recognized the right to life, property, and honor, and the equality of all religious groups before the law and the 1856 *Hatt-i Humayun* (Imperial Rescript) guaranteed the right of non-Muslims to serve in the army. These and the 1870 *Mejelle* (civil code) changed the very concept of Ottoman society and challenged Muslim supremacy (Lapidus 2002; Ma’oz 1968).

Setting the stage for the rise of liberal ideology and Maronite political supremacy were such large-scale historical processes as the incorporation of the Ottoman Empire into the world economy, the development of capitalism, changes in class relations, the interventions of the European powers into Middle Eastern affairs, 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. One consequence of these changes was the accumu-

lation of wealth by the Christian community. In Mount Lebanon in 1914, Christians enjoyed a numerical majority, comprising 80% of Mount Lebanon's estimated population of 400,000, while the rest were Muslims. Wealth and demography brought resources and power to the Christian community (Issawi 1966; Petran 1972; Yapp 1996).

Pan-Arab Nationalism and the rise of Sunni power

The liberal idea of the equality of all political voices was one of the key demands of the diverse Lebanese groups that opposed the Ottomans. Nonetheless, the historical process that inspired the drive toward equality also created the sectarian barriers that blocked its realization. Some of the forerunners of this movement were among the same Christians who erected the sectarian system. However, the Maronites managed to dominate politics because they were at the forefront of the struggle against foreign rule; their political supremacy and the movement for independence went hand in hand. But with the rise of pan-Arab nationalism after World War II, there was a growing perception that these Maronites were too cozy with the Western powers and Israel. During the civil war, those who were fighting the Christians probably did not view them as fellow Lebanese so much as collaborators with the “imperialists” and “Zionist enemy”—a view that was advocated by Palestinians and the former Soviet Union. This view was also supported by the Sunnis, who felt that they were being marginalized as a result of the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon (Traboulsi 2007).

Pan-Arab nationalism, coming from both Egypt and Syria, played a significant role in galvanizing support for the Sunni contention for power, leading to the outbreak of the devastating 1975–1990 conflict. The 1989 Taif Accord ended the civil war, produced the Second Republic, and reduced the power of the Maronite-controlled presidency in favor of the Sunni-controlled Cabinet and premiership (Norton 1991; Fakhoury 2009).

Religious fundamentalism and the rise of Shia power

In the last decade of the 20th century, the fourth major shift in inter-confessional relations transpired—the rise of Shia power. From the solidification of the Druze–Maronite alliance in the 18th century, to the decline of the Druze and the rise of the Maronites in the late nineteenth, to the relative decline of the Maronites and the rise of the Sunnis in the twentieth, and finally to the relative decline of the Sunnis and the rise of the Shia, Lebanon appeared to have experienced a full rotation in the cycle of confessional power relations.

The Shia power was far below the level commensurate with their numerical superiority, having limited access to the positions of leadership and a proper share of parliamentary representation. The size of the Sunni ruling elite was much larger than the Shia, and even the much smaller Druze had a representation larger than their share in the population (Saseen 1990). The Shia weakness was partly a consequence of their political fragmentation between the Baathists, the Communists, and the Nasserites. In 1974, Shi'i cleric Imam Musa Sadr founded the Movement of the Dispossessed. As a man of peace, Sadr established a political forum to communicate his community's concerns to the state. He also tried to build dialog between Muslims and Christians and to promote a unity government (Ajami 1986). The Shia had good reasons to be supportive of peace; the civil war was harmful to their daily lives.

The intensification of the civil war, on the one hand, and the disappearance of Imam Musa Sadr in Libya in 1978, on the other, appeared to have promoted the militant idea of fighting foreign intrusion and defending the Shia community. The turn to militancy was reinforced by the Iranian Revolution, which had replaced the pro-Israeli Shah with the staunchly anti-Zionist

Khomeini, who was too eager to provide logistical and financial supports to his followers among the Lebanese Shia. With his assistance, Hezbollah was born in the early 1980s and began to launch guerrilla attacks against the Israeli forces. These attacks were effective enough to force Israeli troops out of southern Lebanon in 2000, ending 22 years of military occupation and enhancing Hezbollah's prestige in the region.

Assessing sectarianism among Lebanese: data and methods

These examples show the significance of ideology in shaping confessional solidarity. The availability of survey data makes it possible to evaluate this relationship among Lebanese. The data is from a survey of a nationally representative sample of 3,039 adults (aged 18+). The face-to-face interviews, conducted in the respondents' residences in Lebanon in 2008, took about 50 minutes to complete (86% response rate) and was carried out by the International Center for Organizational Development, a non-profit organization based in Beirut, Lebanon.

The variables of the study and measurement

The dependent variable: sectarian solidarity

The construct is conceptualized as inter-group prejudice, whereby individuals display more favorable attitudes toward the members of their own group than they do toward other groups. Sectarian individuals are those who give a greater preference to their own confession than they do to their nationality: "do you strongly agree (0), agree (1), disagree (2), or strongly disagree (3) that Lebanon will be a better place if people treat one another as Lebanese rather than on the basis of their confession." Sectarian individuals also express greater trust in the members of their own confession than they do in the members of other confessions. The difference between intra- and inter-confessional trust is another indicator of sectarian solidarity: "could you tell me how much trust, in general, you have in the following groups? Is it a great deal of trust (4), some trust (3), not very much trust (2), or none at all (1) in (a) Shia, (b) Sunnis, (c) Druze, (d) Maronites, (e) Catholics, or (f) Orthodox?"

Trust differential for individual i in confession j , (j varies between 1 and 6) = Trust in his/her confession _{j_1} – average (trust in confession _{j_2} , confession _{j_3} , confession _{j_4} , confession _{j_5} , and confession _{j_6})

The average of the two measures makes an index of sectarian solidarity, reflecting a greater preference for one's confession than other confessions or one's nation.

Independent variables: fundamentalism, liberal nationalism, and foreign patron intervention

Fundamentalism is measured by four questions: "do you strongly agree (4), agree (3), disagree (2), or strongly disagree (1) that:

- I. Only good Muslims/Christians will go to heaven; non-Muslims/non-Christians will not, no matter how good they are.
- II. The religion of Islam/Christianity is closer to God than other religions.
- III. Non-Muslim/non-Christian religions have a lot of weird beliefs and pagan ways.
- IV. Whenever there is a conflict between science and religion, religion is probably right.
- V. Islam/Christianity should be the only religion taught in our public schools."

These five items make a single fundamentalism factor (Eigenvalue = 2.25, Cronbach's alpha = 0.69). For a better description, we have used the average of the five indicators in the analysis. This index is constructed if data on at least three of the five indicators were available.

To control the effect of religiously, a religiosity index is constructed as the average of two variables: "(a) church or mosque attendance: apart from funerals, about how often do you go to a mosque (church [for Christian respondents]) these days: more than once a week (5), once a week (4), once a month (3), only on special holy days (2), once a year (1), or rarely? (b) prayer: how often do you pray; five times a day (5), every day (4), once or twice a week (3), once or twice a month (2), or never (1)?"

The *liberal nationalism index* is constructed by averaging indices of gender equality, secular politics, secular politicians, and national identity. The *gender-equality index* is the average of three questions: "do you strongly agree (1), agree (2), disagree (3), or strongly disagree (4) that (i) a wife must always obey her husband, (ii) men make better political leaders, and (iii) when jobs are scarce, men should have more rights to a job than women?" The *secular-politician index* averages four indicators: "do you strongly agree (1), agree (2), neither agree or disagree (3), disagree (4), or strongly disagree (5) that (i) politicians who do not believe in God are unfit to work for government in high offices; (ii) it would be better for Lebanon if more people with strong religious beliefs held public office; (iii) and religious leaders should not interfere in politics?" The answers to the third item were recoded so that higher values indicate a stronger agreement that religious leaders should not interfere in politics. The fourth indicator asks respondents whether they consider it very important (1), important (2), somewhat important (3), least important (4), or not at all important (5) for a good government to implement only the sharia law or only the laws inspired by Christian values. The *secular-politics index* averages responses to two questions: "(a) do you strongly agree (4), agree (3), disagree (2), or strongly disagree (1) that Lebanon would be a better place if religion and politics were separated, and (b) would it be very good (1), fairly good (2), fairly bad (3), or very bad (4) for Lebanon to have a religious government where religious authorities have absolute power?"

National identity. To measure identity, respondents were asked, "which of the following best describes you: above all, I am a Lebanese (1), above all, I am a Muslim (Christian [for Christian respondent]) (2), Above all, I am an Arab (3), or other (4)?" We created a dummy variable—national identity—where (1) is for those who said they were Lebanese, above all, and (0) for those who said Christian or Muslim, above all.

We constructed a liberal nationalism index by averaging these four indices (exploratory factor analysis shows that the four indices make a factor with an Eigenvalue of 1.90 and Cronbach's reliability alpha of 0.6). In order to retain as many cases as possible, this index is constructed given that valid data on at least three of these four measures were available.

Foreign patron intervention. Scholars of Lebanon have linked sectarianism to foreign intervention (Salibi 1988; Makdisi 2000). On the micro-level, we posit that when such interventions are conducted in support of one confession against others, it tips the balance of forces in favour of that confession, enhancing its capacity to extract concessions from its rivals. This in turn contributes to boosting master-client relationships between the foreign country and the patronized confession, inter-confessional mistrust, and sectarian solidarity. Foreign interventions, however, mean different things to different religious confessions.

Given that Lebanese Shia are supported by Iran and Syria, Sunnis by Saudi Arabia, Christians by France and the US, and the Druze sometimes relied on Iran and Syria, and sometimes on Saudi Arabia, we constructed a series of survey questions that tap into how the respondents from each confession view the role of these countries in Lebanon: "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? One means very negative and 5 means very positive: Iran, Syria, Saudi Arabia, U.S., and France.” We have constructed a new variable that reflects the attitudes of the members of each of the confessions toward their respective patrons such that for the Shia, it indicates variation in attitudes toward Iran or Syria, for the Sunnis toward Saudi Arabia, for the Druze toward Iran, Syria, or Saudi Arabia, and for Christians toward the US or France:

Foreign patron intervention = mean rating of Iran and Syria’s role if respondents are Shia; rating of Saudi’s roles, if Sunnis; mean rating of Iran, Syria, and Saudi’s roles, if Druze; mean rating of US and France’s role, if Christians

Control Variables

To remove the spurious effect of other variables on sectarianism, we statistically control for variables that may correlate with both the independent and dependent variables and thus confound the results. These are as follows.

Trust in people of other nations or religion. Social scientists widely agree that trust facilitates social interactions in different settings—family, business, religion, and politics. Trust is said to reduce transaction costs, contribute to economic growth, help to solve collective-action problems, promote an inclusive society, foster societal happiness and a general feeling of well-being, facilitate civic engagement, and create better government (La Porta et al. 1997, McAllister 1995; Freitag and Bühlmann 2009; You, 2012). We created an index by averaging two interrelated measures of respondents’ levels of trust in (a) people of another religion and (b) people of another nationality. They were asked whether they completely (4), somewhat (3), not very much (2), or not at all trust (1) these people.

Xenophobia. Intolerance of or fear of outsiders contributes to sectarian solidarity. A composite measure is constructed. The first measures the preference of having members of one’s confession as neighbors and the mean preferences of having members of the other confessions as neighbors:

For individual i in confession j_1 (j varies between 1 and 4) = Preference for members of his/her confession as a neighbor – mean preferences in having members of other confessions (j_2, j_3, j_4) as a neighbor.

The other measure is based on whether respondents would like to have people from other countries as neighbors: “On this list are various groups of people. Could you please sort out any that you would like (1) or not like (2) to have as neighbors: French, Saudis, Jews, Iranians, Syrians, Palestinians, Americans?” Xenophobia is the average of the two composite measures.

Engagement in oppositional politics. Engagement in political protest may undermine sectarianism. We propose that those who engage in such protest tend to value self-reliance and stress personal efforts in realizing their goals (McAdam 1982; Schwartz 1973; Pierce and Converse 1989). To construct a measure of oppositional activities, respondents were asked whether they have done any of the following things (3), might do it (2), or would never under any circumstances do it (1): (a) signing a petition, (b) joining in boycotts, and (c) attending peaceful demonstrations. These three items make a factor with an Eigenvalue of 2.16 and Cronbach’s reliability alpha of 0.83. The average of these items is used in the analysis.

Demographics and confessions. First and foremost, confessional identity relates to sectarian solidarity. Next, it has been argued that the sectarian system works to the benefit of the

dominant classes and powerful families of the elite who are at the helm of confession-based patrimonial political systems (Makdisi 2000; Cleveland and Bunton 2009). One's class position, social mobility, or access to a better-paying job would depend on one's connections in confessional hierarchy. Low socioeconomic status may also be sectarian prone. People with low education are less likely to overcome the cognitive barriers to enlightenment (Dewey 2004 [2016]; Barber 1984) and thus less capable of developing or adopting an alternative non-sectarian vision of social order, and that the economic insecurity associated with low-paying jobs is linked to prejudice toward members of outgroups (Burns and Gimpel 2000).

We constructed a *socioeconomic status index* as an average of self-assigned class membership, income, and education. The first is measured by respondents' self-rating themselves as members of the upper class (5), the upper-middle class (4), the lower-middle class (3), the working class (2), or the lower class (1). Income is measured in terms of annual household income coded in deciles with (1) as the lowest and (10) the highest. Education consisted of nine categories, ranging from no formal education (1) to college education (9). Since social class includes five categories, to constructing a single index, income and education variables are recoded into five categories. For income: 1 = 1 + 2, 2 = 3 + 4, 3 = 5 + 6, 4 = 7 + 8, and 5 = 9 + 10. For education: 1 = no formal education to incomplete primary school, 2 = complete primary to incomplete secondary and vocational, 3 = complete secondary and vocational to university preparatory, 4 = complete secondary to some college, and 5 = college degree.

To assess the proposed U-shaped relationship between socioeconomic status and sectarianism, a square of this index in a deviation unit is included in the analysis. The respondents' age is a linear variable. Gender is coded as 1 for male and 0 for female. To assess the effect of living in Beirut, a dummy variable is created for the respondents' residence, where it is coded as 1 for Beirut and 0 otherwise. Finally, in order to assess variation in sectarianism by confession, a series of dummy variables are constructed, and Greek Catholics, whose levels of sectarianism are lowest among all the six groups are used as the reference category.

Hypotheses

In sum, we propose that sectarian solidarity is linked, among the independent variables:

- I. *Positively to fundamentalism,*
- II. *Negatively to liberal nationalism, and*
- III. *Positively to attitudes toward foreign patron intervention;* and among the control variables:
- IV. *Positively to confessional identity,*
- V. *Negatively to trust in people of other religions or nations,*
- VI. *Positively to xenophobia,*
- VII. *Negatively to political engagement,*
- VIII. *Positively to residing in Beirut, and*
- IX. *In a U-shape relationship to socioeconomic status.*

The analysis presented below should be considered with the caveat that with cross-sectional data, it may not be possible to advance a causal explanation. We do not rule out reciprocal relationships between some of the independent variables and sectarianism or that, in some cases, causality runs in the opposite of the directions presented in this chapter. We thus consider the hypothesized relationships between the independent variables and sectarianism as only one interpretation of the empirical pattern that the data support.

Analysis and findings

Table 20.1 shows the descriptive statistics for sectarianism index and other variables.

According to the correlation matrix shown in Table 20.2, all the independent variables have significant correlation coefficients with the sectarianism index and are in the expected direction. The sectarianism index is positively correlated with the fundamentalism index ($r = 0.378$), religiosity ($r = 0.115$), and foreign patron intervention ($r = 0.206$) and negatively with liberal nationalism index ($r = -0.369$). With control variables, it is negatively linked to the index of trust in other religions or nations ($r = -0.203$), political engagement ($r = -0.093$), and socioeconomic status ($r = -0.087$), and positively with xenophobia ($r = 0.194$). Those who live in Beirut tend to be more sectarian than those living in the rest of the country ($r = 0.281$). Furthermore, reinforcing the internal consistency of the measures—the extent to which they are consistently associated in predictable ways with other variables—is that the indices of liberal nationalism and fundamentalism, for example, are negatively correlated ($r = -0.450$) and have opposite relationships with other variables: religiosity ($r = -0.449$ vs. 0.195), the index of trust in other religions or nations ($r = 0.161$ vs. -0.200), xenophobia ($r = -0.297$ vs. 0.101), and foreign patron intervention ($r = -0.287$ vs. 0.291), respectively.

To evaluate the hypotheses, the parameters of a regression model are estimated, and the results are reported in Table 20.3. The analysis of variance shows a strong main effect of all the independent variables on sectarianism, with an F value of 74.09 and adjusted r^2 of 0.34, indicating that 34% of the variation in the sectarianism index is explained by these variables.

Table 20.1 Descriptive statistics for the sectarianism index and other variables

Dependent variable: sectarianism index by confessions Independent variables: predictors of sectarianism (List-wise: N = 2,245)

	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Dependent variable: sectarianism index					
Shia	764	-1.00	3.00	0.915	0.729
Sunni	619	-1.10	2.20	0.579	0.476
Druze	136	-0.30	2.60	0.629	0.513
Maronite	533	-0.50	1.80	0.438	0.425
Orthodox	271	-0.60	1.80	0.427	0.532
Greek Catholic	140	-0.50	1.60	0.308	0.397
Sectarian index: all confessions	2,463	-1.10	3.00	0.623	0.599
Independent variables:					
Fundamentalism index	2,851	1.00	4.00	2.520	0.606
Religiosity index	3,032	1.00	5.00	3.076	1.313
Liberalism index	2,981	.50	4.00	2.329	0.506
Foreign patron intervention	2,965	1.00	5.00	2.848	1.382
Control variables					
Trust in other religions or nations	3,000	1.00	4.00	2.325	0.828
Xenophobia	2,900	0.00	1.50	.832	0.278
Political engagement	3,000	1.00	3.00	2.063	0.670
Socioeconomic status	3,016	1.00	5.00	3.13	0.831
Male	3,038	0.00	1.00	.558	0.497
Age	3,039	18.0	80.0	33.00	12.976

Table 20.2 Correlation coefficients between sectarianism index and its predictors

<i>(List-wise: N = 2,245)</i>	
Trust in other religions/nations	-0.203 ^c
Xenophobia	0.194 ^c
Liberalism index	-0.369 ^c
Fundamentalism index	0.378 ^c
Religiosity index	0.115 ^c
Foreign patron	0.206 ^c
Political engagement	-0.093 ^c
Male	0.020
Age	-0.021
Socioeconomic status	-0.087 ^b
Beirut resident	0.281 ^c
	-0.238 ^c
	0.161 ^c
	-0.297 ^c
	0.101 ^c
	-0.450
	-0.449 ^c
	0.195 ^c
	0.291 ^c
	0.128 ^c
	0.083 ^c
	0.091 ^c
	0.006
	0.082 ^c
	-0.069 ^a
	0.043 ^a
	0.089
	-0.028
	-0.190 ^b
	0.034
	0.012
	0.051 ^a
	0.260 ^c
	-0.043 ^a
	-0.075 ^b
	-0.132 ^c
	0.392 ^c
	-0.128 ^c
	0.215 ^c
	-0.149 ^c
	0.080 ^c
	-0.084 ^b
	0.215 ^c
	-0.138 ^c
	-0.12

^a $P < 0.05$; ^b $P < 0.01$; ^c $P < 0.001$

Table 20.3 Predictors of sectarianism

Predictors	Standardized coefficients
Independent variables	
Fundamentalism index	0.088 ^a
Religiosity index	-0.001
Liberalism index	-0.247 ^a
Foreign patrons	0.049 ^b
Control variables	
Perception and political Engagement	
Trust in other religions or nations	-0.091 ^a
Xenophobia	0.141 ^a
Political engagement	-0.075 ^a
Confession	
Maronite	0.051
Orthodox	0.049
Shia	0.298 ^a
Sunni	-0.036
Druze	0.055 ^b
Demographics	
Socioeconomic status index (SES)	0.038 ^b
(SES - Mean) ²	0.047 ^c
Male	-0.002
Age	-0.050 ^c
Beirut	0.272 ^a
F _{v1,v2}	74.09 ^a
Degree of freedom for F _{v1,v2}	16,2228
N	2,244
R ²	0.35
Adjusted R ²	0.34

^a $P < 0.01$; ^b $P < 0.001$; ^c $P < 0.05$

Confessions and sectarian solidarity. As shown in Table 20.1, the sectarianism index varies considerably across the confessions. The Shia with a mean index value of 0.915 are most sectarian, and Greek Catholics with a mean index value of 0.308, the least sectarian. The analysis of variance across the six religious confessions shows a strong main effect of confession on sectarianism ($F_{5,2457} = 69.06$ at $P < 0.0001$). The Scheffé test of multiple comparisons of the means show that the Shia are significantly more sectarian than all the other confessions ($P < 0.0001$); there is no significant difference between the Sunnis and the Druze, but both are more sectarian than the three Christian confessions ($P < 0.05$), and there is no significant difference in sectarianism between the Maronites, the Orthodox, and the Greek Catholics. From high to low sectarianism, our findings thus show that:

Shia > Druze and Sunnis > Maronites, Orthodox, Greek Catholics

The much higher level of sectarian solidarity among the Shia may indicate a heightened Shia pride at Hezbollah's success in pushing Israelis out of southern Lebanon, which had increased the popularity and prestige of the militant group among anti-Israeli Arabs in the country and beyond.

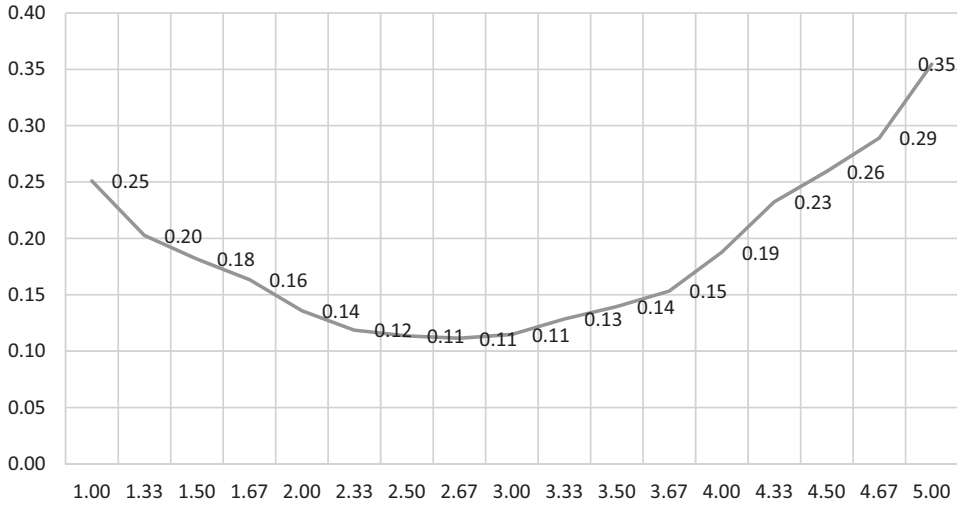


Figure 20.1 The Relations of Socioeconomic Status with Sectarianism

Independent variables. All the independent variables are significantly linked to sectarianism and in the expected direction. Fundamentalism and attitude toward foreign patron intervention are positively, but liberal nationalism is negatively connected to sectarianism ($\beta = 0.088, 0.049,$ and -0.247 , respectively).

Control variables. The index of trust in other religions or nations is negatively linked ($\beta = -0.091$), but xenophobia is positively linked ($\beta = 0.149$) to sectarianism. These findings show that inter-communal trust causes a decline in sectarian solidarity, while the fear of outsiders enhances this solidarity.

Demographics. The socioeconomic status index and its mean square deviation are both significantly linked to the sectarianism index ($\beta = 0.038$ and 0.047 , respectively). These estimates support a U-shaped relationship between the socioeconomic status index and sectarianism. As shown in Figure 20.1, people with lower socioeconomic status are more sectarian than those who fall around the middle of the distribution. The estimated sectarianism index drops from 0.25 to 0.11 as the socioeconomic status (SES) index score increases from 1 to 3 (mean SES score). People of higher socioeconomic status are even more strongly sectarian: an increase in the SES index from 3.00 to 5.00 is linked to an increase in the sectarianism index from 0.11 to 0.35.

Gender has no significant effect, but age is negatively linked to sectarianism ($\beta = -0.050$), indicating that younger individuals are more sectarian. We speculate that the older Lebanese, having gone through the horrific episodes of the 1975–1990 civil war, might have developed a deeper appreciation of the significance of inter-confessional harmony for peace. Finally, people residing in Beirut are significantly more sectarian than the rest of the population ($\beta = 0.272$), and political engagement is negatively connected to the sectarianism ($\beta = -0.075$).

Conclusions

We began this chapter by discussing the significance of religious fundamentalism in promoting attitudes that are unfavorable to secular politics, gender equality, and generally liberal values. We also addressed the relations of different ideological discourses with the movements for

national sovereignty, on the one hand, and with sectarian politics and the outbreak of a historical sequence of inter-confessional conflicts that brought into relief the current sectarian system in Lebanon, on the other.

In trying to explain sectarian solidarity among Lebanese, however, we noted the obscurity of the status of ethnic solidarity in the literature on ethnic politics. Ethnic solidarity was either presumed as given or conceptualized in terms of such group properties as group norms, kinship ties, common language, shared symbols, ethnic visibility, or a collective experience of major historical events. We argued that an over-emphasis on group properties might face the potential pitfall of “groupism,” where groups are thought of as unitary actors with rigid boundaries (Brubaker 2009: 28). To allow for sectarian solidarity to vary within groups, we formulated a micro conception of the term as an individual preferential treatment of his/her own group vis-à-vis other groups and the nation as a whole. Because this preferential treatment varies across individuals, our conceptualization made it possible to link it to a host of sociological and social psychological factors operating at the micro-level.

Drawing on contemporary history, we focused on religious fundamentalism, liberal nationalism, and foreign patron intervention to develop measures of these constructs and assess their relationship with sectarian solidarity. As our analysis showed, religious fundamentalism and favorable attitudes toward the intervention of foreign patrons—which for the Shia were Iran and Syria; for the Sunni, Saudi Arabia; for the Druze, a combination of both; and for Christians, France and the US—are both significantly linked to sectarianism. Liberal nationalism, on the other hand, was negatively connected to sectarian solidarity.

In addition, there were other factors that were connected to sectarian solidarity. Some of these factors appeared to have been operative within the Lebanese context. The first and foremost was the link between confessional identity and sectarian solidarity among Lebanese. This identity may not necessarily prompt individuals to be ethnically sectarian. However, in the context where it is associated with historical memories of sectarian warfare and the presence of a sectarian political system, identity may be linked to sectarianism. This context is significant because we may not expect Protestants or Catholics in the US, for example, to exhibit sectarian solidarity, but we may expect otherwise in Northern Ireland, where there have been recurrent conflicts between the followers of the two religious sects in recent memory. Besides confessional identity, socioeconomic status, residing in Beirut, and engagement in oppositional politics were linked to sectarian solidarity. Again, these factors’ connections to sectarianism are outcomes of Lebanon’s sectarian history. That is, for different reasons, the members of the lower and upper classes were more sectarian than the middle classes. We reasoned that people of lower socioeconomic status were less likely to overcome the cognitive barriers to enlightenment because of low education and more likely to experience economic insecurity. Therefore, they tend to develop a stronger sectarian outlook. On the other hand, since the sectarian system was believed to have benefited the rich and the powerful, there was the positive effect of socioeconomic status on sectarian solidarity; the capital city has been the scene of major inter-confessional warfare, therefore residing in Beirut was positively linked to sectarianism. Different confessions had ties to different foreign governments; therefore, favorable attitudes toward discriminating foreign patrons were linked to sectarianism. Oppositional political engagements must be indicative of stronger disapproval of the sectarian system; therefore, they tend to weaken sectarian solidarity. Under a similar historical context, we expect that identity, socioeconomic status, residence in the capital city, foreign patrons, and oppositional politics to be connected to sectarian solidarity.

The other factors are drawn from more general sociological and social psychological perspectives. We argue that higher feelings of insecurity are associated with a lower socioeconomic status, the religious centric, exclusivist, and intolerant orientations of fundamentalism, and the

anti-otherness and national-chauvinism of xenophobic individuals. We also argue that all the above are compatible with sectarian solidarity, which is also group-centric and exclusivist. On the other hand, people who have greater trust in other religions or nations or adhere to liberal values of gender equality and secular politics are more strongly egalitarians than otherwise. These people are therefore less sectarian. We propose that these linkages are generalizable to cases of sectarian solidarity in different national contexts.

Our findings demonstrated the utility of conceptualizing sectarianism as a relational construct that captures a hierarchical and group-centric view of inter-confessional affairs. It is strengthened or weakened, depending on whether the social domains in which individuals are involved have correspondingly similar or contrary properties (i.e., hierarchical or egalitarian, respectively). Thus, the individual immersion in class hierarchy and adherence to a hierarchical and group-centric view of religious fundamentalism, nation (xenophobia), or country's foreign affairs (i.e., favorable attitudes toward foreign patrons) all reinforce sectarianism. Equalitarianism in these domains, on the other hand, weakens sectarianism. Based on these findings, we suggest that Lebanese would be much less sectarian if the size of the middle class expands, a much higher proportion of the population more strongly adheres to the liberal values of gender equality, secular politics, and national identity than they do today, display as much trust in other religions or nations as they do in their own religion or nation, abandon the religious-centric, intolerant, exclusivist view of Christian and Islamic fundamentalism, and reject foreign interventions.

Note

- 1 Comments by Julie de Jong and Stuart Karabenick are gratefully acknowledged.

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