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Evidence from Lebanon

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Abstract

This study examines how conflict exposure shapes trust in a multi-sectarian society where all groups experienced the same violent conflict but were affected differently. Using survey data collected from 198 Lebanese citizens in Beirut, we find that conflict is associated with trust heterogeneously across Christians, Sunni Muslims, and Shia Muslims. Conflict exposure during the Lebanese Civil War is associated with greater distrust among Christians towards other sects, while the opposite pattern holds for Shia Muslims. For Sunni Muslims, trust is positive but statistically imprecise. These associations are most pronounced when exposure occurs before birth or during childhood, highlighting the enduring influence of war. The differing results are likely linked to the nature of victimization and political outcomes of the conflict: Christians lost political power, while Sunni and Shia Muslims gained it. This provides insight into how shifts in political power and victimization shape intergroup trust after conflict.

JEL Classification: C90, D74, N4, Z12

Keywords: Persistence of Violence, Civil Conflict, Religion, Politics, Fieldwork

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1. Introduction

Development researchers have often described war as "development in reverse" (Bauer et al., 2014) due to the detrimental and destructive effects it has on a nation's physical, human and social capital. However more recent research has painted a different perspective on the effects of war. At the aggregate level, war can foster state building by facilitating the transition from chiefdoms to states (Carneiro, 1970; Tilly, 2017). At the individual level, war can cause people to behave more cooperatively and altruistically (Bauer et al., 2016; Voors et al., 2012; Bauer et al., 2014; Gilligan et al., 2014) and tends to increase social participation among those exposed as well as making them more likely to take up leadership roles (Bauer et al., 2016).

Much of the existing research on the effects of war and conflict exposure focuses on the general impacts of civil war or international conflict for the population of a nation as a whole. Less is known about how specific sectarian groups within multi-sectarian societies have responded to exposure to the same violent conflict and whether such responses are shaped by differing political outcomes. There is also little research conducted on the long run effects of conflict exposure with most studies only focusing on the short to medium effects. Our paper aims to shed more light on the heterogeneous associations between conflict exposure and intergroup trust across religious denominations in such settings. In particular, we are interested in answering the following questions: (1) How does exposure to conflict influence in-group vs. out-group trust in a multi-sectarian society? (2) How does exposure to conflict between sects at different life-stages affect in-group vs. out-group trust? (3) How does the effect of conflict vary as a function of political resolution and reallocation of power between sects?

To answer these questions, we rely on data collected from a multi-sectarian society where civilians were exposed to the same violent conflict, but individual sects experienced different outcomes. Modern day Lebanon offers a prone setting. First, Lebanon is one of the most religiously diverse countries in the world. The Lebanese population is almost evenly distributed across three major sectarian groups, Christians (which mainly comprise of Maronite Catholics), Sunni Muslims and Shia Muslims. While a national census has not been taken since 1932, recent survey data suggests that none of these three groups form a clear majority.[1] Lebanon has a confessional government

[1]According the CIA World Factbook 2019, the religious breakdown of Lebanon is as follows: 28.7% of the population is Sunni Muslim, 28.4% is Shia Muslim and 36.2% is Christian (the largest Christian group is the Maronite Catholics).

where there is proportional representation of the three main sects. Its modern history is characterised by several episodes of conflict, the largest of which is its own civil war which lasted from 1975 to 1990 (fifteen years) and was fueled by religious and political tensions. The Lebanese civil war and its effects will be the focus of this paper. The civil war redistributed power across the three main sectarian groups leaving some better off politically, and others worse off.

The main contribution of this paper is to provide suggestive evidence that the direction of conflict's association with intergroup trust may depend on the political outcome of the conflict — specifically, which groups gain and which lose political power as a result of the war. Prior work has examined the average association between conflict and trust (Grosjean, 2014), the economic consequences of trust destruction (Korovkin and Makarin, 2023), and the heterogeneity of trust responses by conflict type (Yaylacı, 2025). We complement these contributions by exploiting within-country variation across three sectarian groups exposed to the same civil war but with different political outcomes. This allows us to ask whether conflict erodes or builds intergroup trust, and for whom, without the confounds that arise when comparing across different wars or institutional contexts.

Trust is an important outcome to consider at as it lays the foundation of economic exchange (Guiso et al., 2006). Social capital, and social trust in particular, could also explain long run growth differences (Putnam, 1993). This notion has been supported empirically where it has been shown that countries with high levels of social trust have grown faster than comparable countries with lower levels of social trust (Bjørnskov, 2012). On a more micro-economic level, research on trust and conflict by Grosjean (2014); Collier et al. (2003); Collier and Hoeffler (2004) finds evidence of a conflict trap model. Korovkin and Makarin (2023) further show that this erosion of intergroup trust has tangible economic consequences: the 2014 Russia-Ukraine conflict reduced trade between Ukrainian firms and Russia, with the decline explained by the destruction of intergroup social capital. As a result, political and social trust diminish. These adverse effects of war are likely to be particularly important for a country such as Lebanon, where political power is distributed between sects and religion is a prominent social marker. Furthermore, as societies become more diverse ethnically, religiously and culturally, trust between groups is likely to be more salient in other settings as well.

We find that conflict exposure during the Lebanese civil war is associated with greater distrust

towards the out-group among Christians. Both Sunni and Shia Muslims show higher out-group trust when exposed to conflict, though this association is statistically imprecise for Sunni Muslims. This effect is strongest when conflict exposure occurs during very early years of life (i.e., childhood) and in some cases before birth (i.e., through older relatives) highlighting the enduring influence of early life shocks on long-run preferences.

Although data restrictions prohibit us from directly testing the underlying mechanism of this relationship, facts and research from the existing literature lead us to argue that it is the differing political resolutions brought about by the civil conflict that are most consistent with these associations. Christians lost political power following the civil war while Muslims (both Sunni and Shia) gained. This reshuffling of power may be associated with greater hostility and distrust among those who lost, while being correlated with more favourable out-group trust among those who gained. To support this claim, we consider the impact of conflict exposure across different income groups and find that richer Christians show stronger associations between conflict exposure and distrust than poorer ones, while income differences show no significant role for Sunni and Shia Muslims.

We note that results for Sunni Muslims are positive in direction but statistically imprecise throughout. Post-hoc power calculations indicate that our design has only 17% power to detect the Sunni interaction at conventional significance levels; the null result should therefore be interpreted as inconclusive rather than as evidence of no relationship.

The paper is organized as follows. Section 2 provides a literature review, Section 3 presents the institutional setting, Section 4 outlines the data and the methodology, Section 5 presents the results. Section 6 subjects these findings to a battery of robustness checks. Section 7 discusses possible interpretations of the results and Section 8 concludes.

2. Related Literature

Our paper builds on several, albeit related, strands of the literature. The first strand is the effect of war on pro-social behaviour. The current literature provides little consensus on the direction of this relationship. Bauer et al. (2016) investigate the link between war and cooperation by conducting a survey of the literature from various disciplines and find that while war causes negative and lasting effects on development or "development in reverse" as it has also been penned (Collier et al., 2003), on an individual level, exposure may foster altruistic and risk-seeking behaviours in some

instances (Voors et al., 2012) and weaken trust and cooperative behaviour in others (Cassar et al., 2013; Rohner et al., 2013). More specifically, Bellows and Miguel (2009) find that individuals more affected by war in Sierra Leone display higher levels of collective action. Blattman (2009) report higher voting and political participation in children who fought in Uganda and in the same vein, using nationally representative data from Uganda, De Luca and Verpoorten (2015a) find that civic participation increases in districts in which battle events took place. While there is ample evidence of pro-social behaviour emerging after violence, there is also evidence that suggests the contrary. In the case of Uganda, intense fighting has been shown to decrease generalized trust and increase ethnic identity (Rohner et al., 2013). Becchetti et al. (2011) report lower trustworthiness among individuals most affected by conflict in Kenya. Cassar et al. (2013) show how conflict exposure in post-war Tajikistan undermines trust within local communities, decreases the willingness to engage in impersonal exchange, and reinforces kinship-based norms of morality. De Luca and Verpoorten (2015b) also find that self-reported generalized trust and associational membership decreased during the conflict in districts in which violent events took place in Uganda. Whitt (2010) finds significant trust issues both across and within different ethnic groups in post civil war Bosnia. However, in another study from Bosnia, Whitt and Wilson (2007) finds that the incidence and magnitude of out-group bias is much less than expected based on a experiment conducted with Muslims, Croats, and Serbs.

The second strand of literature this study relates to is the lasting effects of early life exposure to a given shock on preferences and behaviour (Heckman et al., 2013). For instance, Giuliano and Spilimbergo (2013) use various cross-sectional surveys and find that when recessions are experienced during one's youth, it goes on to shape beliefs and attitudes in adulthood. In particular, cohorts affected by recessions are more likely to believe that success in life depends more on luck than effort, to support more government redistribution, and are more inclined to vote for left-wing parties as adults. While most studies on conflict exposure deal with the short to medium term effects, this concept of long lasting effects has been shown to exist in a few studies. Couttenier et al. (2019) find that cohorts of asylum seekers who have higher levels of exposure to violence (civil conflicts/mass killing) during their childhood are more likely to commit crimes than those with lower levels, in their destination country of Switzerland. This study complements the literature by providing more evidence on this long-run dimension. This intergenerational channel has been documented in

other settings: Nunn and Wantchekon (2011) show that historical exposure to the slave trade in Africa reduced trust across generations through cultural transmission within families, a mechanism analogous to our pre-birth exposure results.

Less is known about the association between conflict outcome and trust, and more specifically, whether the direction of the association differs for winners and losers. Grosjean (2014) investigates the legacy of victimization across 35 countries. She considers the effects of exposure to conflict during World War II (WWII) and civil wars in the former Yugoslavia, Central Asia and in the North Caucasus. She finds that, regardless of the type of conflict (i.e., intra- or inter-conflict), victims of conflict trust central institutions less. She also considers the effect of conflict among countries who were losers or winners in WWII and finds that even among countries that were victorious in WWII, personal experiences of victimization have a non-positive effect on trust and legitimacy of institutions. Whilst her unit of analysis is the individual, the winner/loser distinction operates at the country level. Yaylacı (2025) argues that civil wars undermine different types of trust depending on whether the conflict is geographically or identity-bounded, drawing on comparative evidence across many conflicts. Korovkin and Makarin (2023) show that the 2014 Russia-Ukraine conflict eroded intergroup social capital and reduced trade between Ukrainian and Russian firms, demonstrating that trust destruction has measurable economic consequences. Less is known about the impact of political outcomes within a single civil war, where the same conflict produces different political winners and losers across groups residing in the same country.

In line with the existing literature, this paper investigates the long-lasting associations between conflict exposure at different life stages and in-group versus out-group trust. Its contribution relative to existing work is that it relies on data from a multi-sectarian society where the same violent conflict produced different political outcomes for each group. Unlike Grosjean (2014), who examines winners and losers at the country level across different wars, and Yaylacı (2025), who documents heterogeneity across conflict types, we exploit within-country variation in political outcomes across groups exposed to the identical conflict. Korovkin and Makarin (2023) take the direction of conflict's association with trust as given — conflict destroys it — and ask what that costs economically. We ask a different question: does conflict always destroy intergroup trust, or can it build it? Our answer is that the direction depends on the political outcome of the conflict. We acknowledge the correlation between religious and political spheres in our setting

and take caution in our analysis so as to not conflate them. Kuran (2004, 2013, 2014) argues that Islam has independently delayed modernisation and democratisation through its traditional economic institutions, which limited the formation of civil society and organised opposition. Work by Auriol and Platteau (2017), Platteau (2011) and Platteau (2009) suggests that religion is merely instrumentalised by autocratic rulers who are concerned with the stability of their power. Even when religion and politics are merged, religion is the handmaiden rather than the master of politics. Lebanon is not an Islamic country as such, but it provides a unique setting where political power is distributed among religious groups, and we take caution in our analysis not to conflate the two forces. Furthermore, in the context of a global increase in religious revival and conflict, we believe it to be important to shed light on how trust between sects is affected after a dividing conflict. This can allow us to discern whether such trust can be rebuilt across different confessional lines to help in mitigating associated hostilities.

3. Institutional Background

Lebanon is one of the most religiously diverse countries in the world. It is a confessional state where political power and executive posts are distributed among the different religious groups. Its modern history is characterised by series of conflicts that have been driven by political, ethnic and religious tensions. These include the Mount Lebanon civil war in 1860, the Arab-Israeli wars of 1948 and 1967, Lebanon's own civil war which lasted from 1975 to 1990, the Israel-Hezbollah war in 2006 and, the hostilities driven by the spillover of the ongoing Syrian civil war.

The current state of Lebanon gained independence from the French Mandate in 1943. The country France left behind was religiously divided with the three largest communities being the Maronite Christians, the Sunni Muslims and the Shia Muslims. Following negotiations between religious leaders, the National Pact of 1943 was agreed upon and laid the foundation of Lebanon as a multi-confessional state. Under the National Pact, Muslim leadership agreed to stop trying to incorporate Lebanon into a single Arab or Syrian state while Christian leadership agreed to stop seeking external military assistance or protection from France and other Western nations. The Pact outlined the confessional distribution of parliamentary seats based on the 1932 census which favoured the Christians to Muslims by a 6:5 ratio. The presidency was reserved for the Maronite Christians, the Prime Minister for the Sunni Muslims and the Parliament speaker for the Shia

Muslims. This distribution of power as well as other external events that took place in the Middle East prior to 1975 contributed to the unraveling of this agreement.

During the Arab-Israeli conflict of 1948, Lebanon took in over 100,000 Palestinian refugees, the majority of which were Muslims. This exacerbated the existing religious tension in the country which was further aggravated by the expulsion of Palestinians from Jordan after the Black September war in 1970. The increased presence of Palestinians in Lebanon contributed to internal unrest and shifted the demographic distribution in favour of the already growing Muslim population. A civil war broke out in 1975 when a right-wing Maronite militia attacked a bus of Palestinians resulting in 27 casualties. The war involved leftist, pan-Arabist Sunni groups who generally sided with Palestinians, right-wing Christian militias, the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO), Shia militias who predominately fought against Israel and Syria. Syria invaded Lebanon in 1976 (and did not leave until 2005 with the assassination of Sunni Prime Minister Rafic Hariri) and Israel invaded in 1982 which led to the deployment of a United Nation peacekeeping force.

The civil war lasted 15 years and left 200,000 civilians dead and 17,000 missing. The war ended with the Taif Agreement, signed in October 1989 in Taif, Saudi Arabia and implemented in 1990, which formed the principle of "mutual co-existence" between sects and their political representation. It restructured the National Pact political system in Lebanon by transferring power away from the Maronite Christian community who were privileged under French rule. Parliament seats were portioned between Christian and Muslim sects by a 5:5 ratio. The Sunni Prime Minister was awarded more power. Prior to Taif, the Prime Minister was appointed by and responsible to the Maronite President. After the Taif Agreement was signed, he was responsible to the legislature as in a typical parliamentary system. The agreement also called for the disarmament of all militias except Hezbollah, who were a Shia militia and allowed to stay armed in capacity as a "resistance force" against Israel.

3.1. Christian History in Lebanon

Maronite history in Lebanon dates back to the 7th Century when early followers fled to Mount Lebanon to avoid persecutions from other Christian groups (Collelo, 1989). They largely lived in seclusion during the Ottoman rule (from 1516 until the end of World War I in 1918). In 1860, a civil war broke out between the Maronites and the Druze Muslims as a result of an Ottoman

plan to divide Lebanon into two separate Druze and Maronite regions. France, sympathetic to the slaughter of Christians, invaded and this fostered the pro-Western mentality that the Maronites would eventually take at the turn of the 20th Century. This would eventually cause tension between Christians and Muslims in later years (Collelo, 1989).

Prior to the outbreak of Lebanon's civil war in 1975, Christians set up armed militias to protect Lebanon from the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO). The civil war started when Maronites opened fire on a bus of Palestinian civilians in response to an attempted assassination of a Maronite militia leader.

Most of the Christian political arms, the largest of which is the Phalange party, are right-wing groups with pro-West and anti-Arab leanings.

3.2. Sunni History in Lebanon

The Sunni population in Lebanon derives from the Ottoman occupation. During this time, the Sunni Muslims were treated as the only Islamic group and the Shia Muslims had to go through Sunni courts to defend their rights.

During the civil war, there were many Sunni political arms and militias. The majority of them were Arab nationalists and sided with Palestinians, fighting alongside them against the Israelis during the Israeli occupation of 1982.

The Druze Muslims are an offshoot Islamic group. They are small in numbers, constituting 5.2 per cent of the total population of Lebanon, and during the civil war were represented by a front named the Lebanese National Movement (LNM). This was a coalition of leftist, pan-Arabist and Syrian Nationalist parties who supported the PLO and worked with them in their attacks against the Phalange party, Israelis and Shia groups. As many of their political interests aligned with the Sunni Muslim groups, during the civil war at least, we group them together for the purposes of this study.

3.3. Shia History in Lebanon

There is no consensus among historians as to the exact period of Shia inoculation into Lebanon, however most agree it was around 7th century AD.

During the rule of the Ottoman Empire, Shia Muslims were largely marginalised. Under the

the French Mandate, they were granted their own jurisdiction and became recognised as a separate religious sect but remained left out of development due to their smaller population size and lack of political maturity. However, in response to conflict during the civil war, two Shia militias were formed. The first, Amal, was created in 1975 as a response to the rapid loss of territorial sovereignty in South Lebanon to the Palestinian refugees and the PLO. Seven years after the formation of Amal, Hezbollah was formed. This was a more hard line, Iran backed and inspired group which began resisting the Israeli occupation of Lebanon and was backed by those who disapproved of Amal's more moderate stances.

4. Data and Methodology

4.1. Survey Questionnaire

The study took place in various suburbs of Beirut and was conducted between the months of April and June 2018. In total, we collected data on 201, of whom 198 are included in the analysis,[2] Lebanese individuals. Since no official census has been taken in Lebanon since 1932, it is difficult to gauge whether our sample reflects a true representation of the Lebanese population. Despite this obvious limitation, we sought to have a sample of individuals of different ages, an equal share of females and males, and a substantial representation of the three major religious affiliations. The motivation behind conducting this survey in Beirut only was twofold. First, Beirut is the most religiously diverse city in Lebanon — the only setting where all three groups coexist in comparable numbers without any single denomination forming an overwhelming majority. Second, while the fighting during the civil war occurred across the entire country, Beirut bore the largest share of the conflict's violence and is the most politically representative urban setting in the country.

The study was conducted by four trained Lebanese enumerators, two females and two males who recruited 50 subjects each through word of mouth. These subjects were recruited individually and hence the survey questionnaires were conducted one-on-one with the survey enumerator.[3]

Each participant answers a questionnaire addressing socio-demographic characteristics and preferences, exposure to violence during different life-stages (from birth to mature adulthood) as well

[2]Three respondents did not provide their religious affiliations.

[3]We have a companion but independent paper using the same sample including experimental games entitled: "Are Muslim immigrants really different? Experimental Evidence from Lebanon and Australia".

as questions on trust. Details on the data variables are presented in section A of the appendix. Table 1 reports the summary statistics for the entire sample.

Dependent variables: Trust. The survey questionnaire asks participants to state how much they trust members of each of the following groups: family, neighbourhood, circle of friends, people of others religious affiliations and people of non-Lebanese backgrounds. Based on standard questions from attitudinal surveys, we coded participants' responses on a scale of 1 to 4, where 1 implies "not at all" and 4 implies "completely." In the same vein as Moscona et al. (2017), we compute a trust gap index by taking the difference of trust between in-group and out-group i.e., in-group trust minus out-group trust. In our case, one's in-group is their family and their out-group is those of a different religious affiliation. Hence, in some specifications, the dependant variable represents the trust gap between in-group and out-group, and in others, the trust towards the out-group.

Independent variables: Conflict. We classify four types of conflict exposure: death, injury, loss of property and displacement. For each one of these exposures, we record whether it was experienced by one's self, a family member, a friend and/or colleague. We also record the date when each of these exposures occurred. With this detailed information, we generate indexes of exposure to conflict. First, the civil conflict exposure variable is the number of instances an individual was exposed to conflict during the years 1975 and 1990 (i.e., Lebanon's civil war). Second, the civil conflict exposure during life stage variable is the number of instances an individual was exposed to conflict during the civil conflict in the following life stages : birth (this includes exposure before an individual is born[4]), childhood (0 to 12 years old), adolescence (13 to 20 years old) and adulthood (from 21 years old onward).

Independent variables: Sect. Based on responses to the question "What is your religious denomination?" we classify three main religious groups: Christians, Sunni Muslims, and Shia Muslims. 98 respondents are categorised as Christians (49.49% of the total sample). Among them, 2 respondents reported to be Armenian (1%), 1 Evangelical (0.05%), 53 Maronite (26.37%), 28

[4]Exposure during this period therefore refers to the exposure of older family members or friends, constituting an intergenerational transmission channel whereby parental conflict experience shapes children's long-run preferences.

Orthodox (13.93%), and 14 Protestants (6.97%).[5] We group all Christian groups together due to sample size restrictions as well as the fact that their political interests are generally aligned with the Maronite Christians, who form a clear majority and have the most political power and representation in parliament. 45 respondents are categorised as Sunni, which include 38 Sunni (18.91%) and 7 Druze (3.48%). 55 respondents reported to be Shia (27.78%). 3 respondents refused to say and were therefore excluded from the analysis. Throughout our empirical analysis, the omitted group is the Christians, hence the comparison is made with respect to this group. Tables C.1, C.3, and C.2 in the appendix reports the summary statistics by the three sects: Christians, Sunni Muslims, and Shia Muslims, respectively.

Controls Variables. The survey questionnaire also gathers information on individual socio-demographic characteristics. Table C.4 in the appendix regresses various covariates on the three religious denominations: Christians, Shia and Sunni. Christians is the omitted category. Results reveal that both Sunni and Shia Muslims tend to have lower levels of personal income (in 000s) than Christians, Sunni Muslims tend to be less educated than Christians, and Shia Muslims tend to speak more Arabic at home than Christians do. The remaining covariates such as gender, age and marital status appear well balanced across the religious denominations. More importantly, results show that the three denominations were similarly exposed to conflict and civil conflict, with no statistical differences between them. Hence, our control variables include personal income, higher education, language spoken at home, and age, as these are the individual-level variables that are not balanced across the religious denominations. We additionally control for an indicator equal to one if the respondent was born in a district where their sect is not the majority religious group. We control for district of birth fixed effects to account for any correlation between locality and conflict exposure. We also include a control that accounts for whether an individual is born in a district where they are not a part of the largest religious group in that district. We use information from the codebook of the 1996 Lebanese national parliamentary election to assign each district to one of the main religious groups (Christians, Shia Muslims and Sunni Muslims). This is important as being a local minority/majority can be correlated with conflict exposure and also affect trust responses.

[5]This data was also used for our companion paper where we required a cutoff of 50% Christians, hence Christians are over-represented in our sample compared to the Lebanese population.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

Categorical Variables			
		N	%
Religious denomination		198	
	Christian	98	49.5
	Sunni	45	22.7
	Shia	55	27.8
Female		102	50.8
Married		101	50.3
Higher Education		102	50.8
Language Spoken at Home		201	
	English	5	2.5
	Arabic	169	84.1
	Both	21	10.5
	Other	6	3.0
Intention to Leave Lebanon		85	42.3

Continuous Variables					
	N	Mean	Std. Dev	Min	Max
Exposure to Conflict	201	1.77	1.93	0	10
Exposure to Civil Conflict	201	1.23	1.79	0	10
Life Stage Expsoure to Civil Conflict					
Birth	201	0.17	0.60	0	4
Child	201	0.37	0.97	0	6
Teen	201	0.31	1.04	0	7
Adult	201	0.37	1.05	0	6
Life Stage Expsoure to General Conflict					
Birth	201	0.32	0.79	0	4
Child	201	0.46	1.02	0	6
Teen	201	0.38	1.09	0	7
Adult	201	0.57	1.40	0	8
Trust					
Family (in-group)	201	3.81	0.48	1	4
Neighbours	201	2.31	0.91	1	4
Friends	201	3.01	0.88	1	4
Other Religion (out-group)	200	2.52	0.89	1	4
Foreigner	200	2.28	0.93	1	4
Trust gap	200	1.29	0.96	-2	3
Age	201	42.70	16.75	17	85
Income (in 000s)	201	12.55	15.69	0	100

General Conflict refers to any of the conflicts that Lebanon has been involved in. The exposure to conflict variables are equal to the number of instances a respondent ever experienced violence at a given life stage: birth, childhood, adolescence and adulthood.
Trust is measured by asking individuals: How much do you trust members of the following groups? 1 = Do not trust at all, 2 = Do not trust very much, 3 = Trust somewhat, 4 = Trust completely. Trust gap is the difference between Family Trust and Other religion Trust.

4.2. Econometric Specification

We estimate the following baseline expression by considering exposure to civil conflict at any age:

$$Y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 CivilConflict_i + \beta_2(CivilConflict_i \times Sect_i) + \beta_3 X_i + \beta_4 Z_e + \beta_5 D_i + \epsilon_i \quad (1)$$

We then estimate the following expression by considering exposure to civil conflict at given life-stages:

$$Y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 CivilConflictLifeStage_{ij} + \beta_2(CivilConflictLifeStage_{ij} \times Sect_i) + \beta_3 X_i + \beta_4 Z_e + \beta_5 D_i + \epsilon_i \quad (2)$$

where i represents the individual, j represents the life stage (i.e., birth, childhood, adolescence, adulthood). Z_e represents enumerator fixed effects. D_i is a vector of district of birth fixed effects which accounts for unobserved heterogeneity in socioeconomic characteristics or attitudinal preferences across districts of birth that may be correlated with both exposure to violence and trust. Standards errors are corrected for potential heteroscedasticity in all regressions.

Threats to Identification. There are several concerns when estimating the association between conflict exposure and social preferences, most of which stem from endogeneity. We address each in turn.

First, individuals may have inherent qualities that make them more willing to engage in conflict or to reside in conflict-prone areas, and these same qualities may shape their social preferences. We address this in three ways. Our main dependent variable is the trust gap, the difference between in-group and out-group trust, which nets out individual fixed characteristics correlated with both conflict exposure and trust levels. We also examine exposure during childhood and before birth, periods when individual characteristics are not yet formed and cannot plausibly drive conflict exposure. Finally, we include district of birth fixed effects, which absorb unobserved heterogeneity across localities and isolate variation in conflict experienced within the same neighbourhood.

Second, religion may be correlated with conflict exposure, confounding our interaction estimates. As discussed in Section 3, all three denominations were politically active and involved in the civil war, so no group can be considered untreated. The balance of covariate analysis in Table C.4 shows that the three sects report statistically similar levels of civil war exposure in our sample.

Third, self-reported conflict exposure may be measured with error, and more problematically, this error may differ across sects. Table C.4 shows that reported exposure levels are similar across denominations, mitigating differential measurement error. We also follow the wording of the Life in Transition Survey (LITS), used by Grosjean (2014) among others, to ensure comparability with the established literature. Fourth, selective migration may bias the sample: respondents with higher

conflict exposure may be more likely to have emigrated, leaving a selected sample of stayers. We cannot observe those who have already left, but we address this concern in Section 6 using stated intention to leave Lebanon as a proxy for the propensity to migrate.

5. Results

Table 2 presents the estimation results of regression 1, the baseline results. Table 3 presents the estimation results of regression 2, the life-stage approach results.

Prior to considering the regression estimates, we find that the mean of the trust gap (which is presented in Table 2) is always positive, suggesting that on average individuals are more trusting of their family members than they are of those of different sects. Furthermore, the average of Out Group Trust is 2.52 (where 1 implies "do not trust at all" and 4 implies "trust completely") which is seemingly high. We compare this to data collected for Wave 6 of the World Value Survey between the years 2010 and 2014 from Lebanon and neighbouring countries. World Value Survey data confirms that on average, Lebanese individuals are the most trusting of other religious groups when compared to observations from Iraq, Kuwait, Libya, Qatar, Tunisia, Turkey and Egypt: 59.6% of interviewed Lebanese respondents claimed to completely trust people of another religion, compared to 3.0% in Iraq and 1.8% in Tunisia.[6] Our sample is therefore not selected for unusually low intergroup trust, and the civil war effects we document operate against this relatively high baseline.

Estimates in Column 1 of Table 2 suggest that civil conflict exposure shows little to no association with an individual's trust gap as the coefficient is close to zero and imprecisely estimated. However, when considering the influence of conflict exposure heterogeneously across sects (i.e., Column 2 of Table 2), a different picture emerges. The omitted group is Christians and hence when considering the coefficient on *Civil Conflict*, higher levels of conflict exposure are associated with a larger trust gap for Christians. The coefficient however is statistically insignificant. This seemingly imprecise association for Christians in the aggregate likely reflects noise from pooling exposure across all life stages. The life-stage results in Table 3 below show a positive association for Christians when exposure is restricted to childhood. By contrast, we find a negative association between

[6] 38.8% of Lebanese respondents claimed to somewhat trust people of another religion, compared to 29.8% in Iraq and 8.5% in Tunisia. The Lebanese sample also had the smallest share claiming to not trust people of another religion at all.

conflict exposure and the trust gap for Shia Muslims. This is captured by Shia × Civil Conflict interaction (−0.213, significant at the 1% level). For Sunni Muslims, the negative coefficient on the interaction between *Civil Conflict* and *Sunni* is indistinguishable from zero. In Columns 3 and 4 of Table 2, we decompose the trust gap dependent variable to consider the conflict exposure on *Out Group Trust* (i.e., those of other religious affiliations) as this is the component driving a lot of the variation in the trust gap. When considering *Civil Conflict* in Column 3, the coefficient is insignificant. However, when we take the interaction between *Civil Conflict* and sects in Column 4, we find that exposure to conflict is associated with greater distrust towards the out-group among Christians. When compared to Christians, Shia Muslims show higher out-group trust when conflict exposure is greater. These effects are significant at the 5% and 1% level respectively. Sunni Muslims' *Out Group Trust* appears to not be significantly associated with civil conflict exposure. Importantly, the point estimate is positive and of comparable magnitude to the Shia interaction, suggesting the null reflects insufficient precision rather than an absence of association. With N=45 Sunni respondents, post-hoc power calculations indicate only 17% power to detect this interaction at conventional significance levels. Figure B.1 visualises these baseline interactions for out-group trust. The three coefficients: civil war exposure for Christians and the Shia and Sunni interactions, are plotted with 95% confidence intervals. The figure depicts the core asymmetry of the paper at a glance: the Christian point estimate (−0.143) lies to the left of zero, indicating a negative association between conflict exposure and out-group trust, while the Shia interaction (0.216) lies to the right, indicating the opposite correlation. The Sunni confidence interval spans zero and is wide, consistent with the underpowered estimate discussed above.

Table 2: Baseline Results

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Dependent Variable	Trust Gap		Out Group Trust	
Civil Conflict	-0.009	0.086	-0.048	-0.143**
	(0.054)	(0.070)	(0.059)	(0.070)
Shia		-0.044		0.239
		(0.301)		(0.303)
Sunni		-0.320		0.319
		(0.242)		(0.226)
Shia × Civil Conflict		-0.213***		0.216***
		(0.081)		(0.076)
Sunni × Civil Conflict		-0.107		0.123
		(0.120)		(0.121)
Mean of dep. var.	1.29	1.29	2.52	2.52
N	200	197	200	197
R^2	0.1643	0.2193	0.1143	0.1799

Robust SEs in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1. Christians are the omitted group in columns (2) and (4). Controls: age, language, personal income, higher education, local minority dummy. All specifications include enumerator and birth district fixed effects.

In Table 3, we present the Life Stage results. In these regressions, we interact the sect variable with civil conflict exposure at each of the four life stages one at a time. Columns 1 and 2 consider the heterogeneous treatment effect of conflict exposure during *Birth*. For our purposes, *Birth* includes the period of time prior to one's birth. We find that while conflict exposure during *Birth* is positive for Christians' trust gap and is negative on their trust of the out group, results are not significant. Results, while in the opposite direction, are also insignificant for Shia Muslims. Relative to Christians, Sunni Muslims' trust for those of other religious affiliations increases with conflict exposure during *Birth*.

In Columns 3 and 4, we examine conflict exposure during *Childhood*. defined as ages 1 to 12. The associations with trust differ substantially across the three religious groups during this impressionable period. Christians' trust gap is positively associated with conflict exposure (0.229, significant at the 1% level) and their out-group trust negatively (-0.313, significant at the 1% level). In Column 3, the *Civil Conflict Childhood x Shia* interaction (-0.479, significant at the 10% level) is opposite in sign to the Christians' baseline (0.229): higher childhood exposure is associated with a narrower trust gap for Shia Muslims and a wider one for Christians. The out-group trust interaction (0.368, significant at the 5% level) in column 4, confirms this pattern directly. For Sunni Muslims,

the out-group trust interaction is 0.323 (significant at the 5% level), while the trust gap interaction (-0.241) is in the same direction but falls short of conventional significance levels, consistent with the limited power for this subgroup. Columns 5 to 8 consider conflict exposure during adolescence and adulthood. None of the Shia or Sunni interactions are statistically significant and the point estimates are small and inconsistent in sign, suggesting no robust association between later-life conflict exposure and intergroup trust. This likely reflects a combination of lower statistical power — adolescence and adulthood exposure variables have less variation — and the finding that early life is the critical window for preference formation (Giuliano and Spilimbergo, 2013). Figure B.2 visualises the full set of life-stage interactions for out-group trust. The pattern is clear: the Birth and Childhood interactions for both Shia and Sunni Muslims lie to the right of zero, while the Adolescence and Adulthood interactions cluster around zero with wide confidence intervals.

Table 3: Life-Stage Results

	Birth		Childhood		Adolescence		Adulthood	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Civil Conflict: Birth	0.282	-0.148	-0.009	0.064	-0.011	0.095	-0.010	0.088
	(0.192)	(0.185)	(0.172)	(0.151)	(0.165)	(0.158)	(0.165)	(0.153)
Shia × Birth	-0.162	0.181						
	(0.227)	(0.207)						
Sunni × Birth	-0.948***	0.732***						
	(0.237)	(0.237)						
Civil Conflict: Childhood	0.133	-0.201***	0.229***	-0.313***	0.067	-0.167**	0.072	-0.157**
	(0.086)	(0.066)	(0.079)	(0.084)	(0.099)	(0.076)	(0.095)	(0.075)
Shia × Childhood			-0.479*	0.368**				
			(0.275)	(0.167)				
Sunni × Childhood			-0.241	0.323**				
			(0.195)	(0.163)				
Civil Conflict: Adolescence	-0.049	-0.002	-0.036	-0.009	-0.083	-0.021	-0.059	0.005
	(0.058)	(0.076)	(0.055)	(0.063)	(0.055)	(0.070)	(0.055)	(0.072)
Shia × Adolescence					-0.017	0.167		
					(0.128)	(0.130)		
Sunni × Adolescence					0.348	-0.207		
					(0.243)	(0.226)		
Civil Conflict: Adulthood	0.006	-0.111	0.006	-0.116	-0.013	-0.104	0.027	-0.112
	(0.111)	(0.106)	(0.115)	(0.108)	(0.113)	(0.107)	(0.144)	(0.144)
Shia × Adulthood							-0.212	0.168
							(0.179)	(0.160)
Sunni × Adulthood							0.190	-0.284
							(0.270)	(0.199)
Shia	-0.182	0.391	-0.101	0.291	-0.280	0.427	-0.212	0.411
	(0.271)	(0.267)	(0.275)	(0.269)	(0.282)	(0.272)	(0.282)	(0.272)
Sunni	-0.257	0.323*	-0.390*	0.361*	-0.541**	0.517**	-0.533**	0.575***
	(0.211)	(0.194)	(0.230)	(0.204)	(0.224)	(0.201)	(0.218)	(0.196)
N	197	197	197	197	197	197	197	197
R^2	0.2635	0.2145	0.2320	0.2011	0.2113	0.1830	0.2201	0.1945

Robust SEs in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1. Odd columns: Trust Gap. Even columns: Out-Group Trust. All specifications control for exposure at all life stages, include enumerator and birth district fixed effects, and standard controls.

6. Robustness

We subject our main findings to a battery of robustness checks, organised as follows: (i) general conflict exposure, (ii) alternative district fixed effects, (iii) restricted sample to respondents with no intention to leave Lebanon, (iv)alternative codings of civil war exposure; (v) conflict type heterogeneity; (vi) proximity of exposure; and (vii) sensitivity to the inclusion of Druze respondents in the Sunni category. Overall, the core finding holds: civil war exposure is associated with greater distrust towards the out-group for Christians and higher out-group trust for Shia Muslims.

General Conflict Exposure We replicate all our specifications using general conflict exposure — encompassing all Lebanese conflicts rather than the civil war alone. . Results are reported in Tables C.5 and C.6. The direction of all associations is preserved: Christians show a negative association between conflict exposure and out-group trust, while Shia Muslims show a positive one. However, the magnitudes are attenuated and statistical significance is weaker. The attenuation is somehow to be expected: general conflict pools the civil war with other episodes, such as the 2006 Israel-Hezbollah war and the Syrian civil war spillover, that did not produce comparable political reshuffling between the three sects, and which may therefore carry weaker or different associations with intergroup trust.

Alternative district fixed effects Our baseline controls for district of birth fixed effects to absorb unobserved heterogeneity in conflict exposure and social preferences across localities. Since individuals may have moved between districts over their lifetime, the district that is most relevant for confounding may differ from the birth district. We re-estimate the baseline specification using childhood district, adolescence district, and early adulthood district fixed effects in turn. The Shia interaction on out-group trust remains positive and significant across all three alternatives, and the Christian baseline coefficient remains negative, though standard errors widen slightly given the reduced within-district variation. Point estimates and directions are unchanged. Full results are reported in Table C.7.

Restricted sample to people with no intention to migrate outside Lebanon Our sample includes 85 respondents (42%) who report an intention to leave Lebanon either temporarily or permanently. If those with higher conflict exposure are more likely to want to leave, the remaining sample may be selected in a way that biases our estimates. We address this by restricting the sample to the 116 respondents who have no intention to leave Lebanon. The sample drops substantially, from 197 to 113, which reduces power, particularly for the life-stage specification. Nonetheless, the direction of all associations is preserved and the Shia interaction on out-group trust remains significant. The baseline restricted results are reported in Table C.8 and the life-stage restricted results in Table C.9. Given the drastic reduction in sample size, we interpret these results as suggestive that selective migration is not the primary driver of our findings.

Alternative conflict exposure coding. Our baseline measures civil war exposure as the count of instances of conflict during 1975–1990. We replicate our baseline using three alternatives: a binary indicator for any exposure, a log-transformed measure $\log(cw\_exposure + 1)$ compressing the right tail of the skewed count distribution, and a winsorised measure capped at the 95th percentile (equal to five in our data), which caps outliers. Table C.10 reports the results. Across all three measures, the direction and significance of the main interactions are preserved.

Conflict type heterogeneity. We decompose civil war exposure into death, injury, displacement, and property loss, and interact each type separately with the sect dummies while controlling for the other three in Table C.11. Given the limited sample size, these results should be interpreted as suggestive rather than definitive. With that caveat, the pattern that emerges is broadly consistent with the main findings. The Shia interactions on out-group trust are positive across all four types. Injury and displacement reach the 5% significance level, while death is larger in magnitude but imprecisely estimated and property loss is the smallest and insignificant.

Exposure proximity. Table C.12 decomposes civil war exposure by who experienced it: the respondent personally, a family member, or a friend. The Shia interactions are positive on out-group trust and negative on the trust gap across all three proximity types, consistent with the main finding. Self and family exposure reach conventional significance levels while friend exposure is imprecisely estimated. Given the small sample, we do not draw strong conclusions from the comparison across proximity types.

Excluding Druze from the Sunni group. Seven Druze respondents are grouped with Sunni Muslims on the grounds that their political interests aligned with Sunni groups during the civil war. Excluding these seven respondents and re-estimating our baseline and childhood specifications on a sample of 190 observations leaves all estimates virtually identical, as shown in Table C.13. Christians and Shia interactions are unchanged in magnitude and significance. The Sunni childhood out-group trust interaction becomes significant at the 5% level when Druze are excluded.

7. The Political Legacy of Conflict as a Possible Mechanism

In this section, we argue that the political legacy of the Lebanese Civil War is the most plausible explanation for the patterns we document. We use qualitative evidence from the literature and then consider heterogeneous associations across income groups. We also present, in Appendix D, a suggestive comparison to Sierra Leone, a country which like Lebanon is religiously diverse and endured a civil war from 1991 to 2002. Unlike Lebanon, the Sierra Leonean civil war did not result in a reshuffle of power between sectarian groups. Given the substantial differences in contexts, determinants of war, geography and timing, we interpret this comparison with great caution and do not draw strong conclusions from it.

7.1. Qualitative Evidence from Lebanon

Results reveal that civil conflict exposure is associated with greater distrust towards the out-group among Christians, whereas Shia Muslims show higher out-group trust when exposed to violence. Sunni Muslims show results in the same direction as Shia Muslims but they are insignificant. This effect is strongest when conflict exposure occurs during very early years of life (i.e., childhood) and in some cases before birth (i.e., through older relatives). These patterns are consistent with the outcome of the civil conflict: Christians lost political power as a result of the civil war while Muslims (both Sunni and Shia) gained political power. We acknowledge that our data cannot directly investigate this mechanism but we nonetheless discuss both the facts regarding the outcome of the civil conflict and attitudinal evidence from the literature.

When considering the facts, at the end of the civil war, the Taif Agreement transferred power away from the Christian President and toward the Sunni Prime Minister. Furthermore, parliamentary seats were redistributed in a 5:5 ratio in favour of Muslims. With respect to attitudinal evidence, in a survey conducted in May 2009, Ghosn and Khoury (2011), the authors find that regardless of religion, 85% of those interviewed agreed that Maronites incurred political losses after civil war while 75% believed Sunni groups made political gains.

The Taif agreement prioritised order and stability over reconciliation and justice. Up to date, there has been no investigation into the crimes committed during the war. As a consequence, there is still no unified version of the civil war. As stated by Ghosn and Khoury (2011) "[t]he history books taught in school conveniently end with Lebanon gaining its independence in 1943. Since there

is no unified history book about the war, for most Lebanese, especially the younger generation, all of their information has been passed to them by their parents, grandparents, and relatives (or other survivors) who lived through the war. As a result, the new generation, which is either too young to remember or was not born until after the war's end, is being raised on the anger, fear, and lack of trust that their parents and relatives still have and that have not been dealt with since the end of the civil war. Moreover, this generation only knows what has been done to its community/sect, but is fairly ignorant of what its community/sect did to others." This particular interpretation is consistent with the associations we find for Christians and is supported by the Life-Stage results whereby the most prominent results are found when exposure occurs before an individual is born (i.e., through effects on older relatives) and during childhood.

7.2. Results across Income Groups

In an attempt to gain a better understanding of the underlying mechanisms of our results, we examine heterogeneity in the association between conflict exposure and trust across different income groups. Prior to the civil war, economic and political power was concentrated among the Christians (mainly the Maronites). Sunni Muslims, particularly those living in Beirut, enjoyed some economic power while Shia Muslims had very little power (Tfaily et al., 2013). There were also inequalities in access to higher education with a high portion of educational institutions existing in Christian areas, leading to sectarian differences in attainment of higher posts and salaries (Traboulsi, 2007). The civil war, and more specifically the Taif Agreement that ended it, led to economic and political power becoming more diffused among the three main religious groups (Tfaily et al., 2013), albeit still in favour of Maronite Christians and Sunni Muslims residing in Beirut.

In Table 4, we interact civil conflict exposure with a low income dummy variable separately for each of the three sectarian groups. This low income dummy variable is equal to 1 if an observation reports an income level below 12,500 USD - the average income level of our entire sample. We interpret these results with caution and note that we have a selected sample of individuals who for whatever reason, did not leave Lebanon after the civil war, and because the sample size is drastically reduced. The income levels we have and use in this analysis are contemporaneous with the time of data collection and while they may not necessarily reflect the socioeconomic status of these individuals or their older relatives before or during the civil war, Lebanon is characterised by

very low levels of social mobility, comparable to the least socially mobile Latin American countries (El Khoury and Panizza, 2005) and so present day income levels may be somewhat indicative of pre-civil war access to salaries and posts.

We find that Christians with above average salaries show a stronger positive association: conflict exposure is associated with a larger trust gap (0.252, significant at the 5% level) and lower out-group trust (−0.232, significant at the 5% level), as shown in columns 1 and 2 of Table 4. Christians with below average incomes are mostly unaffected: the Low Income × Civil Conflict interaction (−0.250, significant at the 1% level) nearly offsets the baseline trust gap coefficient, leaving their net association close to zero; the corresponding out-group trust offset (0.182, significant at the 10% level) is smaller, leaving a modest residual negative association. For Shia and Sunni Muslims, neither the income interaction nor the income level reaches conventional significance

While these results are interpreted with caution, they provide suggestive evidence supporting the notion that Christians, and more specifically richer Christians, had more to lose during the civil war, both politically and economically. This is consistent with the negative association between conflict exposure and out-group trust that they exhibit.

Table 4: Treatment Effects across Income Groups

	Christians		Shia Muslims		Sunni Muslims	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Civil Conflict	0.252**	-0.232**	-0.060	0.022	0.625	-0.667
	(0.103)	(0.103)	(0.080)	(0.061)	(0.511)	(0.466)
Low Income	-0.147	-0.024	0.650	-0.813*	1.711	-2.093*
	(0.299)	(0.296)	(0.556)	(0.422)	(1.257)	(1.182)
Low Income × Civil Conflict	-0.250***	0.182*	-0.028	-0.024	-0.769	0.747
	(0.093)	(0.099)	(0.177)	(0.128)	(0.550)	(0.503)
N	97	97	55	55	45	45
R^2	0.4660	0.3220	0.2599	0.3936	0.3701	0.2971

Notes: Robust SEs in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1. Low Income = 1 if personal income below sample mean of USD 12,500. Controls and fixed effects as in Table 2.

8. Conclusion

We find that civil war exposure is associated with lower out-group trust among Christians and higher out-group trust among Shia Muslims. Results for Sunni Muslims are positive in direction

but statistically imprecise throughout, a pattern we attribute to limited statistical power for this subgroup (N=45) rather than a genuine absence of association. These associations are most pronounced when exposure occurs before birth and during childhood. We interpret these patterns as consistent with the political resolution of the Lebanese Civil War — Christians lost political and economic power while Sunni and Shia Muslims gained — though we cannot directly test this mechanism. The attitudinal evidence from the literature and the income heterogeneity analysis are consistent with the interpretation that richer Christians, who had more to lose, show lower out-group trust when conflict exposure is higher. A suggestive, though inconclusive, comparison to Sierra Leone is presented in Appendix D. These findings carry implications for post-conflict reconciliation policy. The concentration of associations in childhood and pre-birth exposure is consistent with the interpretation that attitudes formed during and immediately after the civil war may have been transmitted to generations that did not directly experience the fighting — a process documented by Ghosn and Khoury (2011) through the absence of a unified national history and the reliance on family accounts as the primary source of wartime knowledge. This pattern suggests that the absence of any truth and reconciliation process since 1990 may have allowed sectarian grievances and mistrust to persist across generations. Policies that facilitate cross-sectarian contact, shared historical narratives, and intergroup economic exchange may be most effective if targeted at younger cohorts whose attitudes are still forming. Several limitations of this study deserve acknowledgement. First, our sample of 198 respondents, collected in Beirut only, limits generalisability to other regions of Lebanon and to multi-sectarian settings beyond the Lebanese context. Second, self-reported retrospective conflict exposure is subject to recall and reporting bias; while the balance of covariate analysis suggests this does not differ systematically across sects, the possibility of differential misreporting cannot be fully ruled out. Third, the political mechanism we propose cannot be directly tested with available data; the evidence we present is qualitative and indirect, and future research with larger, nationally representative samples and direct measures of political identity would help to discriminate between the political and alternative channels.

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Appendices

A. Survey Data Variables

A.1. Trust

Could you tell me how much you trust people from each of these groups:

a) Your family
- ☐ Trust completely
- ☐ Trust somewhat
- ☐ Do not trust very much
- ☐ Do not trust at all

b) Your neighbourhood
- ☐ Trust completely
- ☐ Trust somewhat
- ☐ Do not trust very much
- ☐ Do not trust at all

c) Your circle of friends
- ☐ Trust completely
- ☐ Trust somewhat
- ☐ Do not trust very much
- ☐ Do not trust at all

d) People of another religion
- ☐ Trust completely
- ☐ Trust somewhat
- ☐ Do not trust very much
- ☐ Do not trust at all

e) People of non-Lebanese background
- ☐ Trust completely
- ☐ Trust somewhat
- ☐ Do not trust very much
- ☐ Do not trust at all

A.2. Exposure to Conflict

Lebanon has a long history of civil conflict. Listed below are a number of difficult or stressful things that happen to people as a result of conflict. For each event, please inform us whether it happened to (a) you personally; (b) a direct family member; (c) an extended family member; (d) a friend and/or (e) a work colleague. Please also tell us your approximate age when the event took place (indicate 'not born' if it occured before your birth).

Physical injury as a result of combat or war exposure.

- ☐ Happened to me. When:
- ☐ Happened to a direct family member. When:
- ☐ Happened to an extended family member. When:
- ☐ Happened to a friend. When:
- ☐ Happened to a work colleague. When:
- ☐ Doesn't apply

Death as a result of combat or war exposure.

- ☐ Happened to me. When:
- ☐ Happened to a direct family member. When:
- ☐ Happened to an extended family member. When:
- ☐ Happened to a friend. When:
- ☐ Happened to a work colleague. When:
- ☐ Doesn't apply

Having to move as a result of conflict or war exposure.

- ☐ Happened to me. When:
- ☐ Happened to a direct family member. When:
- ☐ Happened to an extended family member. When:
- ☐ Happened to a friend. When:
- ☐ Happened to a work colleague. When:
- ☐ Doesn't apply

Property loss as a result of conflict or war exposure.

- ☐ Happened to me. When:
- ☐ Happened to a direct family member. When:
- ☐ Happened to an extended family member. When:
- ☐ Happened to a friend. When:
- ☐ Happened to a work colleague. When:
- ☐ Doesn't apply

B. Figures

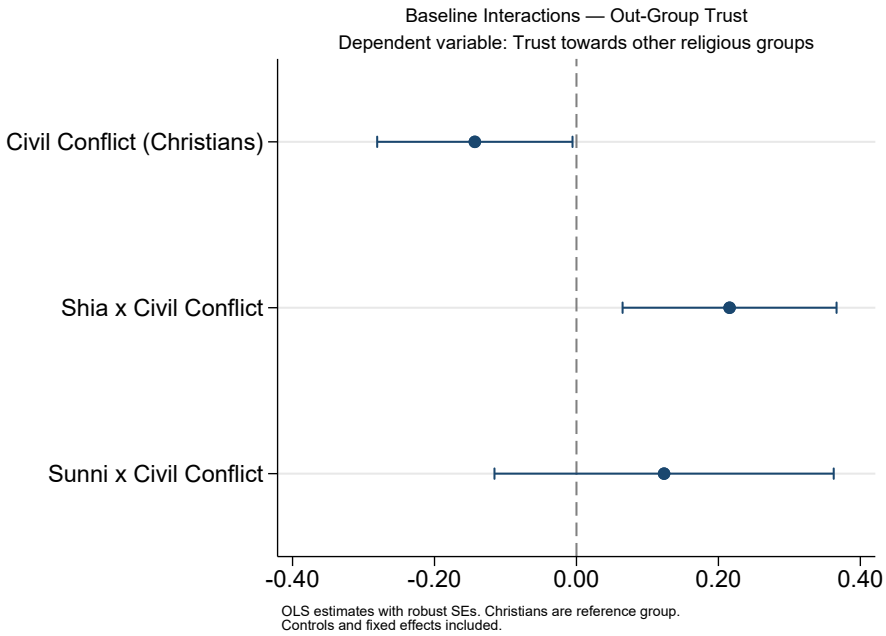

Figure B.1: Baseline Interactions — Out-Group Trust

Note: OLS estimates with 95% confidence intervals. The figure plots the civil war exposure coefficient for Christians (baseline) and the interaction coefficients for Shia and Sunni Muslims relative to Christians. Christians are the reference group. Controls and fixed effects as in Table 2. Robust standard errors.

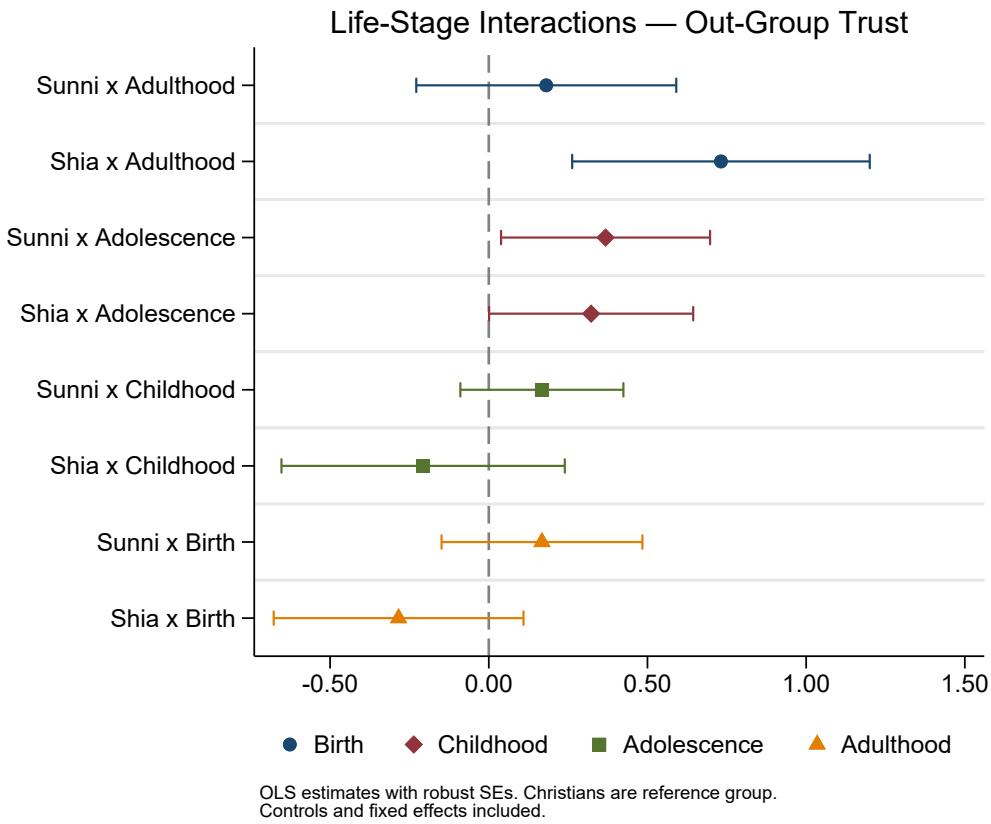

Figure B.2: Life-Stage Interactions — Out-Group Trust

Note: OLS estimates with 95% confidence intervals. Christians are the reference group. Controls and fixed effects as in Table 3. Robust SEs.

C. Tables

Table C.1: Descriptive statistics - Christians only

Categorical variables					
	N	%			
Female	47	48.0			
Married	46	46.9			
Higher Education	54	55.1			
Language Spoken at Home	98				
English	4	4.08			
Arabic	74	76.5			
Both	14	14.3			
Other	5	5.1			
Intention to Leave Lebanon	41	41.8			
Continuous variables					
	N	Mean	Std. Dev	Min	Max
Exposure to Conflict	98	1.66	1.85	0	8
Exposure to Civil War	98	1.38	1.84	0	8
Life Stage Expsoure to Civil War Conflict					
Birth	98	0.15	0.62	0	4
Child	98	0.38	1.03	0	6
Teen	98	0.44	1.26	0	7
Adult	98	0.40	1.11	0	5
Life Stage Expsoure to General Conflict					
Birth	98	0.35	0.85	0	4
Child	98	0.39	1.03	0	6
Teen	98	0.47	1.26	0	7
Adult	98	0.44	1.17	0	5
Trust					
Family (in-group)	98	3.80	0.43	2	4
Neighbours	98	2.20	0.92	1	4
Friends	98	3.11	0.94	1	4
Other Religion (out-group)	97	2.37	0.95	1	4
Foreigner	97	2.22	0.94	1	4
Trust gap	97	1.42	1.00	-1	3
Age	98	44.79	17.22	17	85
Income (in 000s)	98	15.55	19.20	0	100

Notes: See Table 1.

Table C.2: Descriptive statistics - Sunni only

Categorical variables		
	N	%
Female	22	48.9
Married	27	60.0
Higher Education	18	40.0
Language Spoken at Home	45	
English	1	2.2
Arabic	39	86.7
Both	4	8.9
Other	1	2.2
Intention to Leave Lebanon	25	55.6

Continuous variables					
	N	Mean	Std. Dev	Min	Max
Exposure to Conflict	45	1.76	1.93	0	8
Exposure to Civil War	45	1.13	1.66	0	7
Life Stage Expsoure to Civil War Conflict					
Birth	45	0.24	0.68	0	3
Child	45	0.44	1.10	0	4
Teen	45	0.15	0.52	0	3
Adult	45	0.29	0.76	0	3
Life Stage Expsoure to General Conflict					
Birth	45	0.36	0.83	0	3
Child	45	0.49	1.10	0	4
Teen	45	0.26	0.69	0	3
Adult	45	0.60	1.39	0	7
Trust					
Family (in-group)	45	3.78	0.60	1	4
Neighbours	45	2.38	1.03	1	4
Friends	45	2.98	0.92	1	4
Other Religion (out-group)	45	2.69	0.90	1	4
Foreigner	45	2.49	1.01	1	4
Trust gap	45	1.09	1.04	-1	3
Age	45	40.87	16.11	18	81
Income (in 000s)	45	9.09	10.67	0	50

Notes: See Table 1.

Table C.3: Descriptive statistics - Shia only

Categorical variables		
	N	%
Female	30	54.5
Married	25	45.5
Higher Education	28	50.9
Language Spoken at Home	55	
English		0.0
Arabic	52	94.6
Both	3	5.5
Other		0.0
Intention to Leave Lebanon	19	34.5

Continuous variables					
	N	Mean	Std. Dev	Min	Max
Exposure to Conflict	55	2.02	2.09	0	10
Exposure to Civil War	55	1.11	1.82	0	10
Life Stage Expsoure to Civil War Conflict					
Birth	55	0.16	0.54	0	3
Child	55	0.29	0.78	0	3
Teen	55	0.23	0.94	0	6
Adult	55	0.42	1.18	0	6
Life Stage Expsoure to General Conflict					
Birth	55	0.22	0.57	0	3
Child	55	0.56	0.96	0	3
Teen	55	0.36	1.07	0	6
Adult	55	0.82	1.76	0	8
Trust					
Family (in-group)	55	3.85	0.49	1	4
Neighbours	55	2.42	0.81	1	4
Friends	55	2.84	0.74	1	4
Other Religion (out-group)	55	2.62	0.73	1	4
Foreigner	55	2.20	0.85	1	4
Trust gap	55	1.24	0.84	-2	3
Age	55	40.35	16.25	19	78
Income (in 000s)	55	9.85	10.54	0	50

Notes: See Table 1.

Table C.4: Balance of Covariates across Religion

Covariate	Female	Age	Marital Status	Higher Education	Income (in 000s)	Language spoken at home	Intention to leave Lebanon	Exposure to Conflict	Exposure to Civil Conflict
Shia	0.066	-4.440	-0.015	-0.042	-5.700**	0.119*	-0.073	0.373	-0.268
	(0.085)	(2.797)	(0.085)	(0.085)	(2.407)	(0.066)	(0.082)	(0.260)	(0.308)
Sunni	0.009	-3.919	0.131	-0.151*	-6.452**	0.062	0.137	0.096	-0.244
	(0.091)	(2.960)	(0.089)	(0.089)	(2.509)	(0.087)	(0.090)	(0.252)	(0.309)
Constant	0.480***	44.786***	0.469***	0.551***	15.546***	2.827***	0.418***	1.082***	1.378***
	(0.051)	(1.743)	(0.051)	(0.051)	(1.945)	(0.058)	(0.050)	(0.138)	(0.187)
N	198	198	198	198	198	198	198	198	198
R^2	0.0032	0.0160	0.0131	0.0142	0.0374	0.0117	0.0230	0.0118	0.0052

Each covariate regressed on Shia and Sunni dummies; Christians omitted. Robust SEs.

C.1. Robustness Checks

Table C.5: Baseline Results - General Conflict

	Trust Gap		Out-Group Trust	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
General Conflict	-0.093	0.018	0.041	-0.063
	(0.060)	(0.089)	(0.063)	(0.089)
Shia		0.017		0.247
		(0.323)		(0.325)
Sunni		-0.290		0.275
		(0.255)		(0.234)
Shia × General Conflict		-0.189*		0.148
		(0.110)		(0.111)
Sunni × General Conflict		-0.150		0.188
		(0.119)		(0.118)
N	200	197	200	197
R^2	0.1762	0.2192	0.1111	0.1620

Robust SEs in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1. Christians omitted. Controls and fixed effects as in Table 2.

Table C.6: Life-Stage Results - General Conflict

	Birth		Childhood		Adolescence		Adulthood	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Gen. Conflict: Birth	0.133	-0.081	-0.044	0.068	-0.030	0.068	-0.031	0.069
	(0.179)	(0.153)	(0.141)	(0.119)	(0.131)	(0.119)	(0.132)	(0.118)
Shia × Birth	-0.162	0.188						
	(0.226)	(0.185)						
Sunni × Birth	-0.471*	0.404*						
	(0.243)	(0.210)						
Gen. Conflict: Childhood	0.069	-0.128*	0.226***	-0.295***	0.031	-0.100	0.031	-0.097
	(0.082)	(0.068)	(0.077)	(0.083)	(0.087)	(0.075)	(0.085)	(0.075)
Shia × Childhood			-0.494***	0.448***				
			(0.187)	(0.137)				
Sunni × Childhood			-0.273	0.330**				
			(0.181)	(0.157)				
Gen. Conflict: Adolescence	-0.071	0.014	-0.074	0.018	-0.099*	0.010	-0.087*	0.026
	(0.053)	(0.068)	(0.048)	(0.057)	(0.056)	(0.071)	(0.051)	(0.066)
Shia × Adolescence					0.016	0.050		
					(0.109)	(0.139)		
Sunni × Adolescence					0.094	0.018		
					(0.257)	(0.240)		
Gen. Conflict: Adulthood	0.011	-0.064	-0.003	-0.052	-0.004	-0.052	-0.005	-0.060
	(0.089)	(0.091)	(0.093)	(0.095)	(0.092)	(0.094)	(0.142)	(0.142)
Shia × Adulthood							-0.018	0.009
							(0.168)	(0.151)
Sunni × Adulthood							0.015	0.019
							(0.181)	(0.185)
Shia	-0.198	0.428	-0.046	0.272	-0.298	0.504*	-0.280	0.515*
	(0.270)	(0.266)	(0.269)	(0.260)	(0.277)	(0.268)	(0.308)	(0.296)
Sunni	-0.304	0.366*	-0.406*	0.405*	-0.517**	0.525**	-0.504**	0.522**
	(0.228)	(0.213)	(0.232)	(0.212)	(0.225)	(0.202)	(0.226)	(0.206)
N	197	197	197	197	197	197	197	197
R^2	0.2269	0.1802	0.2438	0.2034	0.2059	0.1614	0.2055	0.1608

Robust SEs in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1. See Table 3. General conflict refers to any Lebanese conflict.

Table C.7: Baseline Results - Using Different District Fixed Effects

	Childhood FE		Adolescence FE		Early Adulthood FE	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Civil Conflict	0.105	-0.152**	0.104	-0.140*	0.078	-0.121*
	(0.075)	(0.076)	(0.070)	(0.071)	(0.074)	(0.071)
Shia	0.057	0.089	0.043	0.100	0.081	0.084
	(0.263)	(0.261)	(0.235)	(0.231)	(0.263)	(0.257)
Sunni	-0.277	0.291	-0.168	0.160	-0.195	0.205
	(0.250)	(0.227)	(0.243)	(0.228)	(0.242)	(0.230)
Shia × Civil Conflict	-0.246***	0.225***	-0.265***	0.228***	-0.201**	0.165**
	(0.084)	(0.081)	(0.081)	(0.075)	(0.079)	(0.083)
Sunni × Civil Conflict	-0.101	0.056	-0.155	0.149	-0.131	0.129
	(0.146)	(0.122)	(0.118)	(0.118)	(0.121)	(0.120)
N	197	197	197	197	192	192
R^2	0.2059	0.1878	0.2027	0.1736	0.1934	0.1674
District FE	Childhood	Childhood	Adolescence	Adolescence	Early Adulthood	Early Adulthood

Robust SEs in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1. Columns alternate Trust Gap and Out-Group Trust by district FE . Christians omitted. Controls and fixed effects as in Table 2.

Table C.8: Baseline Results - Restricted Sample

	Trust Gap		Out-Group Trust	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Civil Conflict	-0.017	0.158	-0.059	-0.245**
	(0.063)	(0.103)	(0.070)	(0.112)
Shia		0.124		-0.003
		(0.343)		(0.351)
Sunni		-0.190		0.053
		(0.329)		(0.321)
Shia × Civil Conflict		-0.259**		0.298***
		(0.107)		(0.113)
Sunni × Civil Conflict		-0.233		0.207
		(0.183)		(0.163)
N	116	113	116	113
R^2	0.2394	0.3169	0.2003	0.2727

Restricted to respondents with no intention to leave Lebanon. Robust SEs. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1. Controls and fixed effects as in Table 2.

Table C.9: Life-Stage Results - Restricted Sample

	Birth		Childhood		Adolescence		Adulthood	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Civil Conflict: Birth	-0.372**	0.406***	-0.411***	0.420***	-0.500***	0.492***	-0.488***	0.465***
	(0.175)	(0.142)	(0.154)	(0.143)	(0.173)	(0.136)	(0.169)	(0.132)
Shia × Birth	0.433	-0.456						
	(0.330)	(0.316)						
Sunni × Birth	-0.554	0.400						
	(0.366)	(0.242)						
Civil Conflict: Childhood	0.227*	-0.279**	0.457***	-0.545***	0.202	-0.282**	0.175	-0.241*
	(0.119)	(0.126)	(0.114)	(0.128)	(0.129)	(0.122)	(0.130)	(0.125)
Shia × Childhood			-0.557**	0.674***				
			(0.230)	(0.248)				
Sunni × Childhood			-0.476*	0.424**				
			(0.243)	(0.194)				
Civil Conflict: Adolescence	-0.050	-0.035	-0.007	-0.089	-0.017	-0.155	-0.030	-0.048
	(0.110)	(0.141)	(0.087)	(0.108)	(0.100)	(0.165)	(0.108)	(0.140)
Shia × Adolescence					-0.156	0.330		
					(0.168)	(0.224)		
Sunni × Adolescence					0.343	-0.174		
					(0.303)	(0.296)		
Civil Conflict: Adulthood	-0.000	-0.089	0.017	-0.107	0.007	-0.109	0.101	-0.152
	(0.122)	(0.114)	(0.124)	(0.113)	(0.123)	(0.111)	(0.153)	(0.149)
Shia × Adulthood							-0.270	0.204
							(0.180)	(0.169)
Sunni × Adulthood							-0.068	-0.081
							(0.378)	(0.271)
Shia	-0.070	0.246	0.139	-0.009	-0.020	0.131	-0.010	0.213
	(0.297)	(0.302)	(0.279)	(0.272)	(0.288)	(0.283)	(0.301)	(0.308)
Sunni	-0.288	0.144	-0.307	0.152	-0.482	0.262	-0.383	0.290
	(0.308)	(0.272)	(0.295)	(0.261)	(0.299)	(0.262)	(0.285)	(0.266)
N	113	113	113	113	113	113	113	113
R^2	0.3538	0.3033	0.3757	0.3464	0.3509	0.3199	0.3542	0.3038

Restricted to respondents with no intention to leave Lebanon. Robust SEs. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1. Controls and fixed effects as in Table 2.

Table C.10: Alternative Civil War Exposure Coding

	Binary		Log		Winsorized	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Dep. Var.	Trust Gap	Out Group Trust	Trust Gap	Out Group Trust	Trust Gap	Out Group Trust
Civil War	0.102*	−0.113*	0.059*	−0.079*	0.098*	−0.107**
Shia × Civil War	−0.193**	0.201**	−0.157**	0.178**	−0.201**	0.210***
Sunni × Civil War	−0.087	0.104	−0.063	0.091	−0.090	0.108
N	197	197	197	197	197	197
R^2	0.2045	0.1661	0.2137	0.1807	0.2195	0.1843

Christians omitted category. Robust SEs. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1. Controls and fixed effects as in Table 2.

Table C.11: Conflict Type Heterogeneity

	Death		Injury		Displacement		Property Loss	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Shia	-0.245	0.436	-0.272	0.406	-0.133	0.368	-0.213	0.453
	(0.288)	(0.284)	(0.277)	(0.275)	(0.276)	(0.279)	(0.279)	(0.280)
Sunni	-0.349	0.403*	-0.517**	0.465**	-0.350	0.356*	-0.369*	0.394**
	(0.230)	(0.220)	(0.227)	(0.206)	(0.221)	(0.202)	(0.216)	(0.197)
Shia × Death	-0.258	0.534						
	(0.378)	(0.337)						
Sunni × Death	-0.416	0.264						
	(0.468)	(0.408)						
Shia × Injury			-0.372	0.593**				
			(0.277)	(0.280)				
Sunni × Injury			0.217	0.005				
			(0.326)	(0.310)				
Shia × Displacement					-0.598**	0.505**		
					(0.233)	(0.208)		
Sunni × Displacement					-0.218	0.267		
					(0.290)	(0.277)		
Shia × Property Loss							-0.347	0.230
							(0.230)	(0.225)
Sunni × Property Loss							-0.287	0.267
							(0.256)	(0.271)
N	197	197	197	197	197	197	197	197
R^2	0.2653	0.2239	0.2711	0.2346	0.2888	0.2385	0.2690	0.2200

Each pair of columns interacts one conflict type with sect, controlling for the other three types. Odd: Trust Gap. Even: Out-Group Trust. Christians omitted. Robust SEs. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1. Controls and fixed effects as in Table 2.

Table C.12: Exposure Proximity (Self, Family, Friends)

	Self		Family		Friends	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Shia	-0.104	0.374	-0.107	0.233	-0.225	0.437
	(0.282)	(0.283)	(0.294)	(0.294)	(0.289)	(0.280)
Sunni	-0.455**	0.494**	-0.359	0.283	-0.434*	0.501**
	(0.230)	(0.207)	(0.236)	(0.220)	(0.224)	(0.208)
Shia × Self	-0.697**	0.452*				
	(0.270)	(0.235)				
Sunni × Self	-0.130	0.075				
	(0.373)	(0.390)				
Shia × Family			-0.277*	0.353**		
			(0.160)	(0.149)		
Sunni × Family			-0.193	0.337		
			(0.200)	(0.206)		
Shia × Friends					-0.230	0.311
					(0.223)	(0.203)
Sunni × Friends					-0.197	-0.016
					(0.280)	(0.238)
N	197	197	197	197	197	197
R^2	0.2304	0.1721	0.2128	0.1883	0.2060	0.1676

Each pair of columns interacts one proximity type with sect, controlling for the other two. Odd: Trust Gap. Even: Out-Group Trust. Christians omitted. Robust SEs. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1. Controls and fixed effects as in Table 2.

Table C.13: Excluding Druze from Sunni Group (N=190)

	Baseline		Childhood	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Civil Conflict	0.081	-0.143**		
	(0.070)	(0.069)		
Shia	-0.003	0.203	-0.083	0.276
	(0.302)	(0.303)	(0.279)	(0.271)
Sunni (excl. Druze)	-0.290	0.283	-0.371	0.350
	(0.267)	(0.248)	(0.253)	(0.223)
Shia × Civil Conflict	-0.218***	0.221***		
	(0.081)	(0.077)		
Sunni × Civil Conflict	-0.119	0.149		
	(0.120)	(0.121)		
CW Conflict: Childhood			0.228***	-0.312***
			(0.081)	(0.086)
Shia × Childhood			-0.457	0.357**
			(0.278)	(0.168)
Sunni × Childhood			-0.256	0.332**
			(0.194)	(0.163)
N	190	190	190	190
R^2	0.2182	0.1743	0.2321	0.1957

Notes: Druze (N=7) excluded; Sunni N drops from 45 to 38. Christians omitted. Robust SEs. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1. Controls and fixed effects as in Table 2.

D. Comparison to Sierra Leone

In an attempt to disentangle the role of religion from politics, we rely on a secondary data set from Sierra Leone. Like Lebanon, Sierra Leone is religiously diverse[7] and endured a civil war from 1991 to 2002. However, the civil war did not result in a reshuffle of power between sects nor ethnic groups and hence, comparing the association between conflict exposure and trust between these two nations is consistent with whether religion or political resolution is associated with the patterns

[7]According to 2010 estimates by the Pew Research Center, 78% of Sierra Leone's population are Muslims (mostly Sunni), 20.9% are Christians (mostly Protestants) and 1% belong to a traditional African religion or other beliefs. See `http://www.globalreligiousfutures.org/countries/sierra-leone#/?affiliations_religion_id=0&affiliations_year=2010&region_name=All%20Countries&restrictions_year=2015` for more details.

we document in our Lebanese sample.

We employ data from the 2007 National Public Services Survey from Sierra Leone. The survey contains information on conflict exposure during the civil war and trust questions, namely on whether respondents trust people from outside their neighbourhood or town. We note an important methodological difference between the two datasets: the Lebanese trust measure is a four-point ordinal scale, while the Sierra Leonean measure is binary. We therefore treat the cross-country comparison as qualitative rather than quantitative, focusing on the presence or absence of a significant religion-conflict interaction rather than on coefficient magnitudes. We use this information, as well as the religion of respondents, to replicate the analysis we conducted with our Lebanese sample. The results are presented in Table D.1. The results suggest there is no differential association between conflict exposure and trust based on religion: the Muslim interaction is small and insignificant, suggesting Muslims and Christians do not differ in their conflict-trust association in this context. There are also 16 different ethnic groups in Sierra Leone, the two largest of which are the Mende and Temne. We include ethnicity fixed effects in our analysis to deal with potential confounding effects on religion.

The two decades before the Sierra Leonean civil war saw ruling dictators enrich themselves with illegal deals involving diamonds and do very little to provide required services such as health care and education (Reno, 1995). The war commenced when the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), a small group of rebels who had entered the country from Liberia in 1991, successfully recruited disenfranchised youth and attempted to overthrow the Joseph Momoh government. The RUF rebels targeted people from every ethnic and religious group and analysis of documented human rights violations reveal that no ethnic nor religious group was disproportionately represented among the RUF victims (Conibere et al., 2004). There is also no evidence to suggest that levels of civilian abuse were correlated with the ethnicities of particular armed factions or communities (Humphreys and Weinstein, 2006). After 11 years of bloody combat and external intervention, namely from Guinea, Britain and the UN, the RUF was defeated in 2002 and President Kabbah declared the war to be over. Unlike in Lebanon, the outcome of the Sierra Leonean civil war did not involve a redistribution of power along ethnic, religious or sectarian lines. When we compare the results from the two countries, the absence of a differential trust association by religion in Sierra Leone — where no political reshuffling occurred — is consistent with the interpretation that political resolution,

rather than religion per se, is associated with the patterns we document in Lebanon. We interpret this comparison as suggestive and inconclusive given the substantial differences in context between the two countries.

Table D.1: Sierra Leone Results

Dependent Variable	Trust Person Outside Own Town
Muslim	-0.032
	(0.02)
Civil Conflict	0.025***
	(0.01)
Muslim × Civil Conflict	0.013
	(0.01)
Constant	0.43*
	(0.24)
N	6077
R^2	0.0294

Notes: Robust SEs in parentheses. *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1. In this regression, we control for gender, marital status, ethnicity and income. Christians are the omitted group. The dependent variable is binary, equal to 1 if a respondent trusts people from outside their own town or neighbourhood and 0 otherwise.