After the Shock
Reform, Resilience, and Economic Transformation in MENA
ERF 32nd Annual Conference
June 14-16 | Cairo, Egypt

2026

Conflict Exposure in a Multi-Sectarian Society:

Evidence from Lebanon

Maleke Fourati
and Danielle Hayek

ECONOMIC RESEARCH FORUM
منتدى البحوث الاقتصادية

Conflict Exposure in a Multi-Sectarian Society: Evidence from Lebanon*

Maleke Fourati†
Danielle Hayek‡

June 5, 2026

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 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

*We thank Pauline Grosjean, Gabriele Gratton, Rabah Amir, and all conference participants in the internal microeconomic seminar at BUS, UNSW, and the JM MASE-2019 conference. We thank the UNSW Business School PhD Research Grant titled: "Are Muslim Immigrants Really different: Experimental Evidence from Lebanon and Australia" and the Swiss National Science Foundation (FNS CONFLICT/172814) for financial support. The following individuals provided valuable assistance in the field: Milad Melhem, Naseem Saliba, Cynthia Hidari, Ali Najjar, Lara Al Tawil, and Karim Bitar. All errors remain our own.

†South Mediterranean University, Mediterranean School of Business. L.R. MASE (LR21ES21), ESSAI, Université de Carthage. Economic Research Forum. maleke.fourati@msb.tn

‡School of Economics, UNSW Business School, d.hayek@unsw.edu.au

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. Yet a growing body of research presents a more nuanced picture: at the aggregate level, war can foster state building (Carneiro, 1970; Tilly, 2017), while at the individual level the effects on social behaviour are contested — exposure may foster cooperative and altruistic behaviour in some instances (Bauer et al., 2016; Voors et al., 2012; Gilligan et al., 2014) and undermine trust in others, depending on context.

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 from a multi-sectarian society where civilians were exposed to the same violent conflict but individual sects experienced different outcomes. Lebanon offers an ideal setting. Its population is almost evenly distributed across three major sectarian groups — Christians (mainly Maronite Catholics), Sunni Muslims, and Shia Muslims[1] — and its confessional political system distributes power proportionally across these groups. Its civil war, which lasted from 1975 to 1990, was fuelled by religious and political tensions and redistributed power across the three communities, leaving some better off politically and others worse off.

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

[1] According to the CIA World Factbook 2019: 28.7% Sunni, 28.4% Shia, 36.2% Christian.

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 as it lays the foundation of economic exchange (Guiso et al., 2006) and can explain long-run growth differences (Putnam, 1993; Bjørnskov, 2012). The adverse effects of war on trust are likely to be particularly consequential 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.[2] This association 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, we argue that the differing political resolutions of the civil conflict are most consistent with these associations: Christians lost political power while Muslims gained. The income heterogeneity analysis supports this: richer Christians, who had more to lose, show stronger negative associations between conflict exposure and out-group trust.

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]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.

2. Related Literature

Our paper builds on three related strands of the literature. The first concerns the effect of war on pro-social behaviour, on which there is little consensus. Bauer et al. (2016) survey the literature across disciplines and find that while war causes negative and lasting effects on development, individual 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 among children who fought in Uganda, and De Luca and Verpoorten (2015a) find that civic participation increases in districts in which battle events took place. On the other side of the ledger, intense fighting in Uganda has been shown to decrease generalised 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) similarly find that self-reported generalised trust and associational membership decreased during conflict in Uganda. Evidence from Bosnia is equally mixed: Whitt (2010) documents significant trust deficits across and within ethnic groups, while Whitt and Wilson (2007) finds that the incidence of out-group bias is smaller than expected in experimental games among Muslims, Croats, and Serbs.

The second strand concerns the lasting effects of early-life exposure to shocks on preferences and behaviour (Heckman et al., 2013). Giuliano and Spilimbergo (2013) show that recessions experienced during youth shape beliefs and attitudes in adulthood. While most studies on conflict exposure focus on short to medium-term effects, long-lasting consequences have also been documented: Couttenier et al. (2019) find that asylum seekers exposed to violence during childhood are more likely to commit crimes in their destination country. This intergenerational channel is further supported by Nunn and Wantchekon (2011), who 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. Lebanon provides a unique setting where political power is distributed among religious groups, and we take care throughout not to conflate the religious and political forces at play. In the context of a global increase in religious revival and conflict, understanding how trust between sects is affected after a dividing conflict matters: it speaks to whether such trust can be rebuilt across confessional lines to help mitigate 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. It ended with the Taif Agreement (1989–1990), which restructured the confessional system by transferring power away from the Maronite Christian community: parliamentary seats were redistributed to a 5:5 Christian-Muslim ratio, the Sunni Prime Minister gained greater executive authority, and all militias except Hezbollah were required to disarm.

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 Ottoman rule. In 1860, a civil war broke out between the Maronites and the Druze Muslims, prompting French intervention and fostering the pro-Western orientation that would shape Christian political identity into the 20th century (Collelo, 1989). Prior to 1975, Christians organised armed militias to protect Lebanon from the PLO, the largest of which — the Phalange party — held right-wing, pro-West and anti-Arab leanings. The civil war was triggered when Maronite militiamen opened fire on a bus of Palestinian civilians in response to an attempted assassination of a Maronite militia leader.

3.2. Sunni History in Lebanon

The Sunni population traces its presence to the Ottoman occupation, during which Sunnis were treated as the only recognised Islamic group and Shia Muslims had to go through Sunni courts to defend their rights. During the civil war, Sunni political arms and militias were predominantly Arab nationalist and sided with Palestinian forces. The Druze, a small offshoot Islamic group (5.2% of the population), were represented during the civil war by the Lebanese National Movement (LNM) — a coalition of leftist, pan-Arabist and Syrian Nationalist parties who supported the PLO. As their political interests broadly aligned with Sunni groups during the war, we group them together for the purposes of this study.

3.3. Shia History in Lebanon

Shia Muslims were largely marginalised under Ottoman rule. Under 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. The civil war prompted the formation of two Shia militias: Amal (1975), created in response to the rapid loss of territorial sovereignty in South Lebanon to the Palestinian refugees and the PLO, and the more hard-line Hezbollah (1982), backed by Iran, which resisted the Israeli occupation and was supported by those who disapproved of Amal's more moderate stances. Unlike other militias, Hezbollah was permitted to remain armed under the Taif Agreement as a "resistance force" against Israel.

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,[3] 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.[4]

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 as questions on trust. Details on the data variables are presented in section A of the appendix.

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

[4]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".

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 dependent 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 during pregnancy and before an individual is born[5]), childhood (1 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 Orthodox (13.93%), and 14 Protestants (6.97%).[6] We group all Christian groups together due

[5]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.

[6]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.

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 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. We control for district of birth fixed effects to account for any correlation between locality and conflict exposure.

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). X_i are the individual controls and 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. One of 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 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 relatively 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 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.[7] 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. However, when considering the influence of conflict exposure heterogeneously across sects (Column 2), a different picture emerges. The omitted group is Christians; the coefficient on *Civil Conflict* is positive but statistically insignificant, which likely reflects noise from pooling exposure across all life stages — the life-stage results below (Table 3) show a positive association for Christians when exposure is restricted to childhood. By contrast, the Shia $\times$ Civil Conflict interaction is -0.213 (significant at the 1% level), indicating a negative association between conflict exposure and the trust gap for Shia Muslims relative to Christians. For Sunni Muslims, the interaction is indistinguishable from zero. In Columns 3 and 4, we use out-group

[7] 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.

trust as the dependent variable, since it is the main source of variation in the trust gap. Column 4 shows that exposure to conflict is associated with greater distrust towards the out-group among Christians (−0.143, significant at 5%). Shia Muslims show higher out-group trust when conflict exposure is greater (0.216, significant at 1%). Sunni Muslims' out-group trust is not significantly associated with civil conflict exposure; the point estimate is nonetheless 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 Christian point estimate (−0.143) lies to the left of zero, the Shia interaction (0.216) to the right, and the Sunni confidence interval spans zero and is wide, consistent with the underpowered estimate.

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 interact the sect variable with civil conflict exposure at each of the four life stages one at a time. Columns 1 and 2 consider exposure during *Birth*, which includes the period prior to one's birth. Associations are in the expected directions for Christians and Shia but are not significant. Relative to Christians, Sunni Muslims' out-group trust increases significantly with conflict exposure during birth (0.732, significant at 1%). In Columns 3 and 4, we examine conflict

exposure during *Childhood*, defined as ages 0 to 12. The associations differ substantially across groups. Christians' trust gap is positively associated with childhood exposure (0.229, significant at 1%) and their out-group trust negatively (−0.313, significant at 1%). The Shia × Childhood interaction on the trust gap (−0.479, significant at 10%) is opposite in sign, indicating that higher childhood exposure narrows the trust gap for Shia Muslims relative to Christians; the out-group trust interaction (0.368, significant at 5%) confirms this directly. For Sunni Muslims, the out-group trust interaction is 0.323 (significant at 5%), while the trust gap interaction falls short of conventional significance, consistent with limited power for this subgroup. Columns 5 to 8 consider 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 early life being the critical window for preference formation (Giuliano and Spilimbergo, 2013). Figure B.2 visualises the full set of life-stage interactions: Birth and Childhood interactions for Shia and Sunni lie to the right of zero, while 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: (i) general conflict exposure, (ii) alternative district fixed effects, (iii) restricted sample, (iv) alternative conflict codings, (v) conflict type heterogeneity, (vi) proximity of exposure, and (vii) sensitivity to Druze classification. The core finding holds throughout.

General Conflict Exposure Replacing civil war exposure with all Lebanese conflicts preserves the direction of associations, but significance is lost, with magnitudes attenuated. This is

expected: general conflict pools the civil war with later episodes — the 2006 Israel-Hezbollah war and the Syrian civil war spillover — that did not produce comparable political reshuffling between sects. Results are in Tables C.5 and C.6.

Alternative district fixed effects We re-estimate the baseline using childhood, adolescence, and early adulthood district fixed effects in turn. The Shia interaction on out-group trust remains positive and significant and the Christian coefficient negative across all three alternatives. Full results are in Table C.7.

Restricted sample Our sample excludes 85 respondents (42%) who report an intention to leave Lebanon. If higher conflict exposure predicts emigration, the remaining sample may be selected. Restricting to the 116 respondents with no intention to leave reduces power substantially but preserves the direction of all associations and Shia significance. Results are in Tables C.8 and C.9.

Alternative conflict exposure coding We replicate the baseline using a binary indicator, a log-transformed measure, and a winsorised measure capped at the 95th percentile. The direction of the Shia interaction on out-group trust is preserved across all three; it reaches 5% significance for the log and winsorised measures and 10% for the binary indicator (Table C.10).

Conflict type heterogeneity We decompose civil war exposure into death, injury, displacement, and property loss, interacting each with sect dummies while controlling for the other three (Table C.11). The Shia out-group trust interaction is positive across all four types; injury and displacement reach 5% significance, while death is larger in magnitude but imprecisely estimated, as is property loss.

Exposure proximity Decomposing exposure by who experienced it — the respondent, a family member, or a friend — the Shia interactions remain positive on out-group trust across all three proximity types. Family exposure reaches 5% significance and self exposure 10% significance; friend exposure is imprecisely estimated (Table C.12).

Excluding Druze from the Sunni group Dropping the seven Druze respondents leaves all estimates virtually identical. The Sunni childhood out-group trust interaction becomes significant at 5% (Table C.13).

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

These patterns are consistent with the political resolution of the Lebanese Civil War: Christians lost political power while Muslims gained. The Taif Agreement transferred power away from the Christian President toward the Sunni Prime Minister and redistributed parliamentary seats to a 5:5 Muslim-Christian ratio. Attitudinal evidence corroborates this interpretation: Ghosn and Khoury (2011) find that regardless of religion, 85% of surveyed Lebanese agreed that Maronites incurred political losses after the civil war, while 75% believed Sunni groups made political gains.

A further mechanism linking early-life exposure to long-run trust operates through the absence of any truth and reconciliation process since 1990. Ghosn and Khoury (2011) document that with no unified history book covering the war, younger Lebanese have relied on family accounts as their primary source of wartime knowledge, inheriting the anger and distrust of those who lived through it without exposure to what their own community did to others. This intergenerational transmission of sectarian grievances is consistent with the concentration of our results in the childhood and pre-birth exposure windows.

7.2. Results across Income Groups

In an attempt to gain a better understanding of the underlying mechanisms, we examine heterogeneity in the association between conflict exposure and trust across income groups. Prior to the civil war, economic and political power was concentrated among Christians (mainly the Maronites). Sunni Muslims, particularly those living in Beirut, enjoyed some economic power while Shia Muslims had little (Tfaily et al., 2013). There were also inequalities in access to higher education, with a high proportion of educational institutions in Christian areas, leading to sectarian differences in attainment of higher posts and salaries (Traboulsi, 2007). The Taif Agreement diffused power more broadly, though still in favour of Maronite Christians and Beirut Sunnis (Tfaily et al., 2013). Lebanon is characterised by very low levels of social mobility (El Khoury and Panizza, 2005), so present-day income levels are plausibly indicative of pre-civil war socioeconomic status.

In Table 4, we interact civil conflict exposure with a low income dummy (equal to 1 if income is below the sample mean of USD 12,500) separately for each sectarian group. Given the substantially reduced sample sizes and the contemporaneous nature of income data, these results should be interpreted with caution.

Christians with above-average incomes show a stronger negative association: conflict exposure is associated with a larger trust gap (0.252, significant at 5%) and lower out-group trust (-0.232, significant at 5%). Christians with below-average incomes are mostly unaffected: the Low Income $\times$ Civil Conflict interaction (-0.250, significant at 1%) nearly offsets the baseline trust gap coefficient, leaving their net association close to zero; the corresponding out-group trust offset (0.182, significant at 10%) is smaller, leaving a modest residual negative association. For Shia and Sunni Muslims, neither income interaction reaches conventional significance. These results suggest that richer Christians — who had more to lose politically and economically — drive the negative conflict-trust association.

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 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 sectarian attitudes formed during the war having been transmitted intergenerationally — a process enabled by the absence of any truth and reconciliation process and the lack of a unified national history (Ghosn and Khoury, 2011). Policies facilitating cross-sectarian contact and shared historical narratives may be most effective when targeted at younger cohorts. Several limitations deserve acknowledgement: our sample of 198 respondents from Beirut limits generalisability; self-reported conflict exposure is subject to recall bias; and the political mechanism cannot be directly tested with available data. Fu-

ture research with larger, nationally representative samples and direct measures of political identity would help discriminate between the political and alternative channels.

References

Bauer, M., Blattman, C., Chytilová, J., Henrich, J., Miguel, E., and Mitts, T. (2016). Can war foster cooperation? *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 30(3):249–74.

Bauer, M., Cassar, A., Chytilova, J., and Henrich, J. (2014). War's enduring effects on the development of egalitarian motivations and in-group biases. *Psychological science*, 25(1):47–57.

Becchetti, L., Conzo, P., Romeo, A., et al. (2011). Violence and social capital: Evidence of a microeconomic vicious circle. *ECINEQ Society for the study of economic inequity*, pages 1–41.

Bellows, J. and Miguel, E. (2009). War and local collective action in sierra leone. *Journal of public Economics*, 93(11-12):1144–1157.

Bjørnskov, C. (2012). How does social trust affect economic growth? *Southern Economic Journal*, 78(4):1346–1368.

Blattman, C. (2009). From violence to voting: War and political participation in uganda. *American political Science review*, 103(2):231–247.

Carneiro, R. L. (1970). A theory of the origin of the state: Traditional theories of state origins are considered and rejected in favor of a new ecological hypothesis. *Science*, 169(3947):733–738.

Cassar, A., Grosjean, P., and Whitt, S. (2013). Legacies of violence: trust and market development. *Journal of Economic Growth*, 18(3):285–318.

Collelo, T. (1989). *Lebanon: A Country Study*. Federal Research Division, Library of Congress : For sale by the Supt. of Docs., U.S. G.P.O., 1989, Washington, D.C.

Conibere, R., Asher, J., Cibelli, K., Dudukovich, J., Kaplan, R., and Ball, P. (2004). Statistical appendix to the report of truth and reconciliation commission, report of sierra leone. *Human Rights Data Analysis Group, The Benetech Initiative*.

Couttenier, M., Preotu, V., Rohner, D., and Thoenig, M. (2019). The violent legacy of conflict: evidence on asylum seekers, crime, and public policy in switzerland. *American Economic Review*, 109(12):4378–4425.

De Luca, G. and Verpoorten, M. (2015a). Civil war and political participation: Evidence from uganda. *Economic Development and Cultural Change*, 64(1):113–141.

De Luca, G. and Verpoorten, M. (2015b). Civil war, social capital and resilience in uganda. *Oxford Economic Papers*, 67(3):661–686.

El Khoury, M. and Panizza, U. (2005). Social mobility and religion: Evidence from lebanon. *Research in the Social Scientific Study of Religion*, 16:133.

Ghosn, F. and Khoury, A. (2011). Lebanon after the civil war: peace or the illusion of peace? *The Middle East Journal*, 65(3):381–397.

Gilligan, M. J., Pasquale, B. J., and Samii, C. (2014). Civil war and social cohesion: Lab-in-the-field evidence from nepal. *American Journal of Political Science*, 58(3):604–619.

Giuliano, P. and Spilimbergo, A. (2013). Growing up in a recession. *Review of Economic Studies*, 81(2):787–817.

Grosjean, P. (2014). Conflict and social and political preferences: Evidence from world war ii and civil conflict in 35 european countries. *Comparative Economic Studies*, 56(3):424–451.

Guiso, L., Sapienza, P., and Zingales, L. (2006). Does culture affect economic outcomes? *Journal of Economic perspectives*, 20(2):23–48.

Heckman, J., Pinto, R., and Savelyev, P. (2013). Understanding the mechanisms through which an influential early childhood program boosted adult outcomes. *American Economic Review*, 103(6):2052–86.

Humphreys, M. and Weinstein, J. M. (2006). Handling and manhandling civilians in civil war. *American Political Science Review*, 100(3):429–447.

Korovkin, V. and Makarin, A. (2023). Conflict and intergroup trade: Evidence from the 2014 russia-ukraine crisis. *American economic review*, 113(1):34–70.

Moscona, J., Nunn, N., and Robinson, J. A. (2017). Keeping it in the family: Lineage organization and the scope of trust in sub-saharan africa. *American Economic Review*, 107(5):565–71.

Nunn, N. and Wantchekon, L. (2011). The slave trade and the origins of mistrust in africa. *American economic review*, 101(7):3221–3252.

Putnam, R. D. (1993). The prosperous community. *The american prospect*, 4(13):35–42.

Reno, W. S. (1995). Corruption and state politics in sierra leone. In *Corruption and state politics in Sierra Leone*. Cambridge University Press; African Studies Series, 83.

Rohner, D., Thoenig, M., and Zilibotti, F. (2013). Seeds of distrust: Conflict in uganda. *Journal of Economic Growth*, 18(3):217–252.

Tfaily, R., Diab, H., and Kulczycki, A. (2013). Educational disparities and conflict: Evidence from lebanon. *Research in Comparative and International Education*, 8(1):55–73.

Tilly, C. (2017). War making and state making as organized crime. In *Collective Violence, Contentious Politics, and Social Change*, pages 121–139. Routledge.

Traboulsi, F. (2007). A modern history of lebanon. *Ann Arbor, MI: Pluto Press*.

Voors, M. J., Nillesen, E. E., Verwimp, P., Bulte, E. H., Lensink, R., and Van Soest, D. P. (2012). Violent conflict and behavior: a field experiment in burundi. *American Economic Review*, 102(2):941–64.

Whitt, S. (2010). Institutions and ethnic trust: Evidence from bosnia. *Europe-Asia Studies*, 62(2):271–292.

Whitt, S. and Wilson, R. K. (2007). The dictator game, fairness and ethnicity in postwar bosnia. *American Journal of Political Science*, 51(3):655–668.

Yaylacı, Ş. (2025). Heterogeneous effects of civil wars on social trust. *Security Studies*, 34(3):527–563.

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

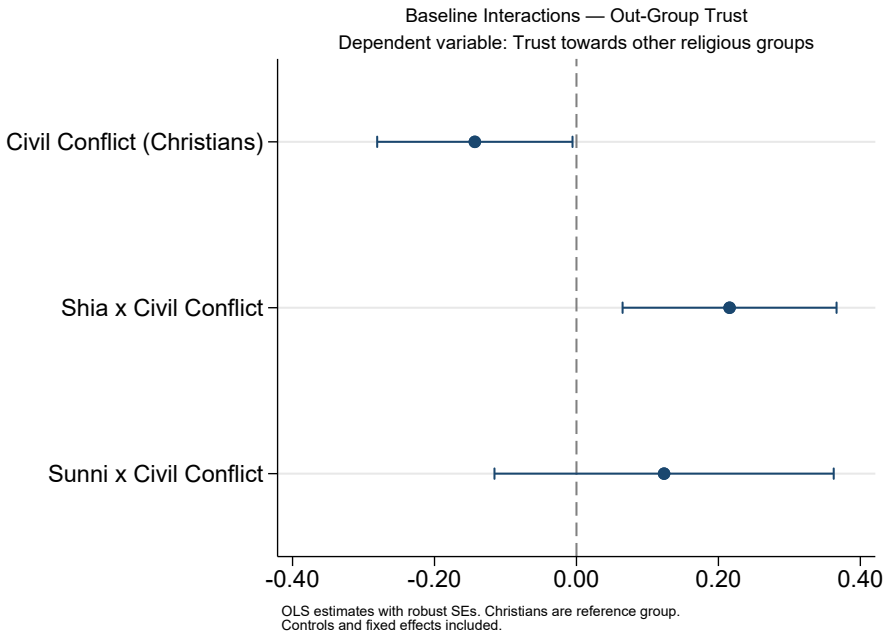

Figure B.1: Baseline Interactions — Out-Group Trust

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.

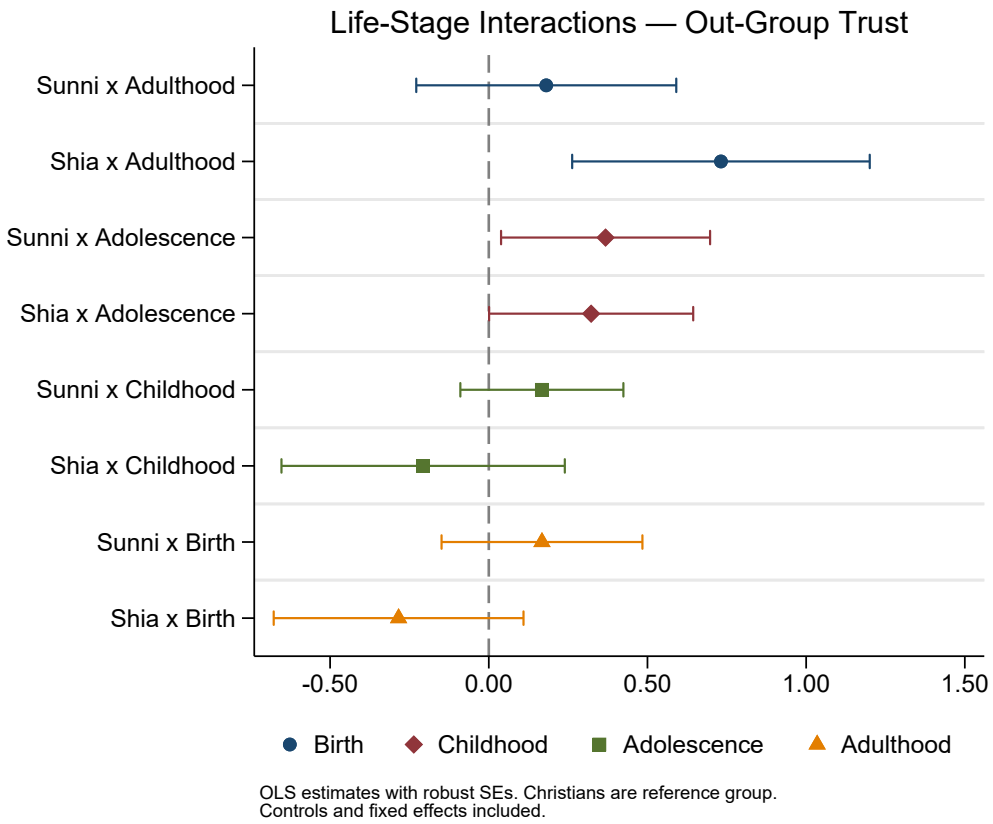

Figure B.2: Life-Stage Interactions — Out-Group Trust

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 conflict (Binary)	0.269	-0.411*				
	(0.220)	(0.221)				
Civil conflict (Log)			0.250	-0.405**		
			(0.177)	(0.173)		
Civil conflict(Winsorized)					0.110	-0.175**
					(0.078)	(0.077)
Shia	-0.106	0.287	-0.034	0.234	-0.023	0.242
	(0.312)	(0.313)	(0.309)	(0.310)	(0.306)	(0.308)
Sunni	-0.358	0.407*	-0.330	0.341	-0.331	0.338
	(0.258)	(0.238)	(0.253)	(0.234)	(0.247)	(0.228)
Shia × Civil conflict (Binary)	-0.404	0.500*				
	(0.301)	(0.292)				
Sunni × Civil conflict (Binary)	-0.233	0.187				
	(0.397)	(0.358)				
Shia × Civil conflict (Log)			-0.498**	0.510**		
			(0.246)	(0.225)		
Sunni × Civil conflict (Log)			-0.219	0.235		
			(0.314)	(0.294)		
Shia × Civil conflict (Wins.)					-0.263**	0.236**
					(0.115)	(0.100)
Sunni × Civil conflict (Wins.)					-0.096	0.104
					(0.141)	(0.133)
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)
Civil conflict: Death	-0.073	-0.006	-0.240	0.186	-0.229	0.175	-0.193	0.149
	(0.276)	(0.285)	(0.213)	(0.211)	(0.209)	(0.207)	(0.222)	(0.215)
Civil conflict: Injury	0.462***	-0.433***	0.534**	-0.617***	0.429***	-0.401***	0.464***	-0.432***
	(0.153)	(0.143)	(0.218)	(0.231)	(0.149)	(0.141)	(0.148)	(0.139)
Civil conflict: Displacement	0.128	-0.225**	0.143	-0.222**	0.402**	-0.468***	0.136	-0.234*
	(0.145)	(0.113)	(0.144)	(0.111)	(0.171)	(0.170)	(0.148)	(0.119)
Civil conflict: Property Loss	-0.349***	0.273**	-0.380***	0.300**	-0.387***	0.310***	-0.192	0.167
	(0.117)	(0.117)	(0.110)	(0.116)	(0.119)	(0.117)	(0.161)	(0.158)
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)
Civil conflict: Self	0.216	-0.172	0.002	-0.056	-0.009	-0.031
	(0.197)	(0.202)	(0.149)	(0.133)	(0.150)	(0.143)
Civil conflict: Family	0.036	-0.103	0.153	-0.272**	0.053	-0.125
	(0.083)	(0.092)	(0.111)	(0.109)	(0.089)	(0.094)
Civil conflict: Friends/Colleagues	-0.086	0.043	-0.052	0.003	-0.010	-0.019
	(0.096)	(0.103)	(0.099)	(0.097)	(0.110)	(0.123)
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)		
Civil 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[8] 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

[8]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.