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DEMOCRATIC TALK AND THE DEMOCRATIC WALK: SUPERFICIAL VERSUS SINCERE SUPPORT FOR ILLITERATE VOTING RIGHTS IN LEBANON

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ABSTRACT

Who supports illiterate voting rights? In the diverse societies of the developing world, suffrage restrictions on illiterate people can have both class and ethnic ramifications because illiteracy correlates with poverty and often with ethnic group membership. I demonstrate how examining the overlap of ethnic population distributions helps to identify individuals for whom satisfying material interests comes at the expense of identity interests and vice-versa. The salience of ethnicity in public discourse requires people to articulate identity demands that may be inconsistent with their material interests, opening up the possibility that what they say and what they think will diverge systematically. Empirically, I use an augmented list experiment in Lebanon to distinguish between superficial and sincere support for illiterate voting rights. I show that a direct question yields a sectarian answer in which Shiites are more supportive of those rights than are Sunnis or Christians, whereas an unobtrusive question produces an answer about material deprivation in which poor people are more supportive of illiterate voting than rich people.

RESUMEN

¿Quién apoya los derechos electorales de los analfabetos? En las sociedades diversas del mundo en desarrollo, las restricciones al sufragio de las personas analfabetas puede tener ramificaciones tanto de clase como étnicas porque el analfabetismo se correlaciona con la pobreza y, a menudo, con la pertenencia a grupos étnicos. Demuestro cómo el examen de la superposición de las distribuciones de población de distintos grupos étnicos ayuda a identificar a los individuos para quienes la satisfacción de intereses materiales ocurre a expensas de los intereses identitarios y viceversa. La relevancia de la etnicidad en el discurso público requiere que la gente articule demandas de identidad que pueden ser inconsistentes con sus intereses materiales, abriendo así la posibilidad de que lo que dicen y lo que piensan diverjan sistemáticamente. Empíricamente, uso un experimento de lista aumentado para distinguir entre el apoyo sincero y el apoyo superficial a los derechos electorales de los analfabetos en el Líbano. Muestro que una pregunta directa produce una respuesta sectaria en la que los chiítas ofrecen más apoyo a esos derechos que los sunitas o los cristianos, mientras que una pregunta no intrusiva produce una respuesta acerca de la privación material en la que la gente pobre da más apoyo que la gente rica al voto de los analfabetos.

INTRODUCTION

Who supports illiterate voting rights in Lebanon? The answer to this question depends on how we ask it. If we do so directly, we get a sectarian answer: Shiites, allegedly the least literate individuals in Lebanon, are more supportive of voting rights for illiterate people than are their Sunni or Christian peers. Yet if we ask the question unobtrusively, the answer we get is one of material deprivation: poor people, regardless of sect, are more supportive of illiterate voting rights than are wealthier people. This paper explains why this is so.

Substantively, this paper investigates attitudes toward the extension of the suffrage—one core element of democracy—to a marginalized and largely voiceless segment of the population: illiterate people. This is a sensitive topic. From the standpoint of normative democratic theory the issue is ambiguous. In one sense, denying voting rights to illiterates due to their illiteracy is inconsistent with basic democratic principles as they have come to be understood in the modern era of mass suffrage. And yet, in another sense, illiterate people are unlikely to constitute anything even loosely approximating the Jeffersonian ideal of a "well-informed public" to whom oversight of government may be trusted. From a more practical standpoint, voting rights for illiterate people are a potential source of social conflict because illiteracy is not randomly distributed throughout the population. In material terms, illiteracy strongly correlates with poverty. In plural societies, illiteracy may be concentrated in certain groups, or at least be perceived as such. The debate over illiterate voting rights is thus not simply a debate over democratic principles, but also potentially one of class and ethnic conflict narrated and euphemized in terms of illiteracy.

Because it is sensitive, studying attitudes toward illiteracy is not a straightforward task. Methodologically, this paper utilizes an unobtrusive measurement technique, the augmented list experiment, to help distinguish between what people are willing to *say* about illiterate voting rights, and what they *think*. Voting rights in general are normatively sensitive, and the socially desirable answer is to support them unreservedly. Problematically, however, social desirability masks individuals' actual attitudes, and

likely does so in a systematic way. Individuals who would prefer that illiterates do not vote—either because they fear the redistributional preferences of such voters, or the increased voting weight of a rival ethnic group—are more subject to social desirability pressures than are people whose attitudes align with what is socially desirable. The outcome is, potentially, a great deal more superficial support than sincere support for illiterate voting rights: people willing to talk the democratic talk, but not walk the democratic walk.

SUPERFICIAL OR SINCERE SUPPORT?

Who supports democracy sincerely, and who only superficially? There is a long-standing claim that a democratic political culture is necessary for the consolidation and perpetuation of democratic governance (Diamond 1999; Harik 1994; Inglehart 2000; Tessler 2002). Companion to this argument is an equally long-standing concern that support for democratic principles in many newly democratizing countries is only superficial: elites and their mass constituents may be willing to say all the right things about democracy, but ignore crucial elements of democratic practice when they become politically inconvenient.

The question of superficial versus sincere support for democracy is particularly prominent for two types of societies: first, those of the Muslim world, and second, plural societies, particularly those in the developing world. Ongoing strife in countries such as Iraq, Sudan, and Lebanon, plural societies in the Muslim world, has further heightened the salience of this question. There have long been contentions, vigorously contested, that a democratic political culture is absent or poorly developed in Arab and Muslim societies. If this claim is true, it implies further questions of whether or not democracy is viable without democrats, and whether or not democracy in such societies will suffer the fate of what has been alternately termed “one man, one vote, one time” and “free and fair elections, once” (Huntington 1996; Kedourie 1992; Sadowski 2006; Salamé 1994). Analogous concerns exist in plural societies, which often experience what has been described as the “elections as census, census as elections” and “ethnic headcounts” phenomena, in which demography-based voting perpetuates elites and regimes in office

(Chandra 2004; Horowitz 1985). Here, elections serve not as a means to alternate power, but rather as a means to prevent power from alternating.

Yet distinguishing between those who support democracy superficially and those who do so sincerely is by no means a straightforward task. Although we must of course be cognizant of the theoretical and conceptual terms of the questions we ask, we must also be aware of applied considerations: *how* we ask those questions, and what kinds of answers we get as a result. Questions about democracy not only have normative connotations, but also distributional and (in plural societies) ethnic implications, making these questions sensitive, perhaps extremely so. This leaves us in the unenviable position of having access to what people *say*, but not necessarily what they *think*.

Disentangling what people claim from what they believe is a crucial and nontrivial task, as suggested by a considerable body of research focused, often but not entirely, on racial politics in the United States (Berinsky 1999; Brehm 1993; Corstange 2009; Gingerich 2006; Kuklinski, Cobb, et al. 1997; Kuklinski, Sniderman, et al. 1997; Nosek et al. 2007). Berinsky, for example, finds that people systematically hide socially undesirable, anti-integrationist preferences behind "don't know" responses, while Kuklinski and colleagues find that racial prejudice is easier to detect via unobtrusive means, with normatively discomfiting implications for the strength of democratic values among at least some Americans. Racial politics in the United States, despite case-specific idiosyncracies, comprise an instance of the more general class of ethnic politics, and we may expect to confront similar sensitivity issues in plural societies elsewhere in the world.

But what would help explain superficial and sincere support for democracy, and this paper's specific focus on illiterate voting rights, in plural societies such as Lebanon? Given the marked political salience of demography in such countries, who rules is tied heavily to who votes rather than to how they vote. This is particularly important in nonconsolidated democracies, where popular conceptions of democracy may tilt heavily toward majoritarianism and populism without attendant valorization of safeguards for individual and minority rights. Under such conditions, we might expect that at least some people may eschew democracy because of the lack of protections from the oft-cited tyranny of the majority, demographic or otherwise.

Hence, voting rights in plural societies take on aspects of group competition. What motivates attitudes under these conditions? In many social psychological theories, the need for self-esteem and a positive self-evaluation—perhaps deriving from one's social identity in addition to one's own personal identity, as in social identity theory—are taken to be fundamental motivating factors behind ethnocentric behavior and in-group favoritism. Other theories, such as realistic group conflict theory and rational choice models that posit narrow rationality, suggest that the fundamental motive is a desire to satisfy needs for material resources (Huddy 2003; Monroe et al. 2000). Ethnic competition, in terms of the former explanation, focuses primarily on identity goods such as dignity, self-respect, and recognition rather than straightforward self-interest (Varshney 2003), whereas in the latter explanation it is often the personal benefits of group membership rather than group ideals that explain ethnocentric behavior (Hardin 1995).

Although these two explanations are sometimes portrayed as mutually exclusive—individuals are motivated by either self-esteem needs or material needs, but not both—there is little reason, in principle, to believe that individuals do not attempt to satisfy *both* needs. In this respect, rational choice models positing material motivations do not contradict the identity motivations posited by social psychology or vice versa, and it is relatively straightforward to incorporate both sets of motives into people's utility functions (Akerlof and Kranton 2000; Calvert 2002). Individuals, in other words, can behave instrumentally in pursuit of either identity goods or material goods, or some combination of the two (Chandra 2004). Yet this begs a crucial question: what happens when satisfying one argument comes at the expense of the other argument?

ETHNIC MOMENTS

Following Horowitz (1985: 22–36), it is now common to discuss plural societies as ranked or unranked, based on the coincidence of ethnic group membership with social class. Whereas most nonspecialists think about ethnic competition implicitly as between ranked groups—rich versus poor, politically dominant versus disenfranchised—many who study plural societies think in terms of unranked groups, with Horowitz's seminal

study focusing almost entirely on unranked ethnic systems. Both ranked and unranked plural societies exist, but the larger point I wish to make is that ranking tells only part of the story about ethnic competition. In particular, ranking tells us about group means, but nothing else: we know the first moment, but none of the higher moments (such as variance or skew) that describe additional crucial information about the population distributions to which those group means relate. To understand the dynamics of ethnic competition better, we should expand our investigations to include additional moments beyond the first in order to examine the shapes of those distributions and the degree of overlap between them.

Ranking implies a comparison of group means: how members of group *A*, *on average*, compare to members of group *B* along some dimension such as income or socioeconomic status. Understandably, much of ethnic competition focuses on exactly these broad differences between groups, and thus so do most of our studies. Yet focusing on ranking alone tells us almost nothing, for example, about group variances: the heterogeneity *within* groups. Group means, in the absence of group variances, tell us only part of what we wish to know: they tell us how similar members of *A* are to members of *B* on average, nothing about how similar members of *A* are to each other, and little about the overall similarity of *A*'s members to *B*'s members.

Thus, rather than restrict our attention to the degree of ethnic ranking in isolation, it is helpful to expand the scope of our analysis to a comparison of group *distributions*. Focusing solely on group means predisposes us to look for group differences rather than similarities, and this focus makes it difficult to say *how* different or *how* similar groups actually are. Examining the higher moments in the distributions jointly, however, tells us something that the first moment in isolation cannot: the degree of overlap between the groups. Group overlap, rather than simply between-group difference based on group means, provides us with a more nuanced indication of similarity and difference between members of different ethnic groups by providing us with a means to evaluate whether individual differences in ideal points or location on a given dimension are or are not due to differences in group memberships. One may think of the degree of overlap in two ways. First, it is the degree of uncertainty that randomly selected members of either group will indeed differ discernibly from each other on a dimension of interest such as wealth.

Analogous to hypothesis testing, p equals the overlapping area under probability density function curves $A \sim f(\mu_A, \sigma_A^2, ...)$ and $B \sim f(\mu_B, \sigma_B^2, ...)$. Alternately, one may think of overlap as the proportion of A's and B's members that match in their placement on that dimension.[1]

To illustrate, I direct attention first to a joint examination of the first two moments of the ethnic population distributions: group means and group variances. The former amounts to a measure of between-group difference, whereas the latter corresponds to within-group heterogeneity. Figure 1 provides a conceptual illustration of two groups, A and B, whose members are distributed normally over a dimension to which I will refer as socioeconomic status, although a similar logic with different labels would hold for other political dimensions. Although group means and variances are in principle both continuous variables, for ease of exposition I am simplifying them into four ideal types based on low (L) versus high (H) between-group difference and within-group heterogeneity, which produces the 2 × 2 layout of Figure 1. An (L, L) combination produces an outcome that approximates idealized egalitarianism: minimal difference between groups along with minimal difference between rich and poor within them. The (L, H) combination produces Horowitz-style unranked societies-in-miniature,[2] in which ethnic groups represent parallel small-scale societies with considerable socioeconomic diversity within them. The (H, L) combination approximates traditional caste systems, in which groups are clearly ranked, differ considerably from one another, and have relatively circumscribed within-group disparities. Finally, the (H, H) combination produces a ranked system with overlapping tails: although a ranking does exist, groups are sufficiently heterogeneous internally that overall between-group difference in terms of group means exists alongside significant between-group overlap.

I assume normal distributions for illustrative purposes as well as simplicity—their first two moments completely describe the shapes of their distributions. For dimensions such as socioeconomic status, we might anticipate skewed distributions, making the third moment relevant as well. Substantively, skew helps distinguish between populations that have a small, wealthy elite and a huge mass of poor people from those with relatively comparable blocs of poor, rich, and middle-class individuals. Figure 2 illustrates the skew effect. A poverty skew in A, represented by curve A'—which otherwise has the same

mean and variance as *A*—produces two qualitative changes. First, for sufficiently small between-group differences, it reduces the *amount* of overlap between *A* and *B*, with the light grey region represents the area lost by the skew. Second, it changes the *composition* of the overlap by replacing some of *A*'s middle-class members with its wealthy elite, represented by the dark grey region.[3] Substantively, then, a population skew of this nature skews the overlap toward *elites*.

FIGURE 1

ETHNIC MOMENTS

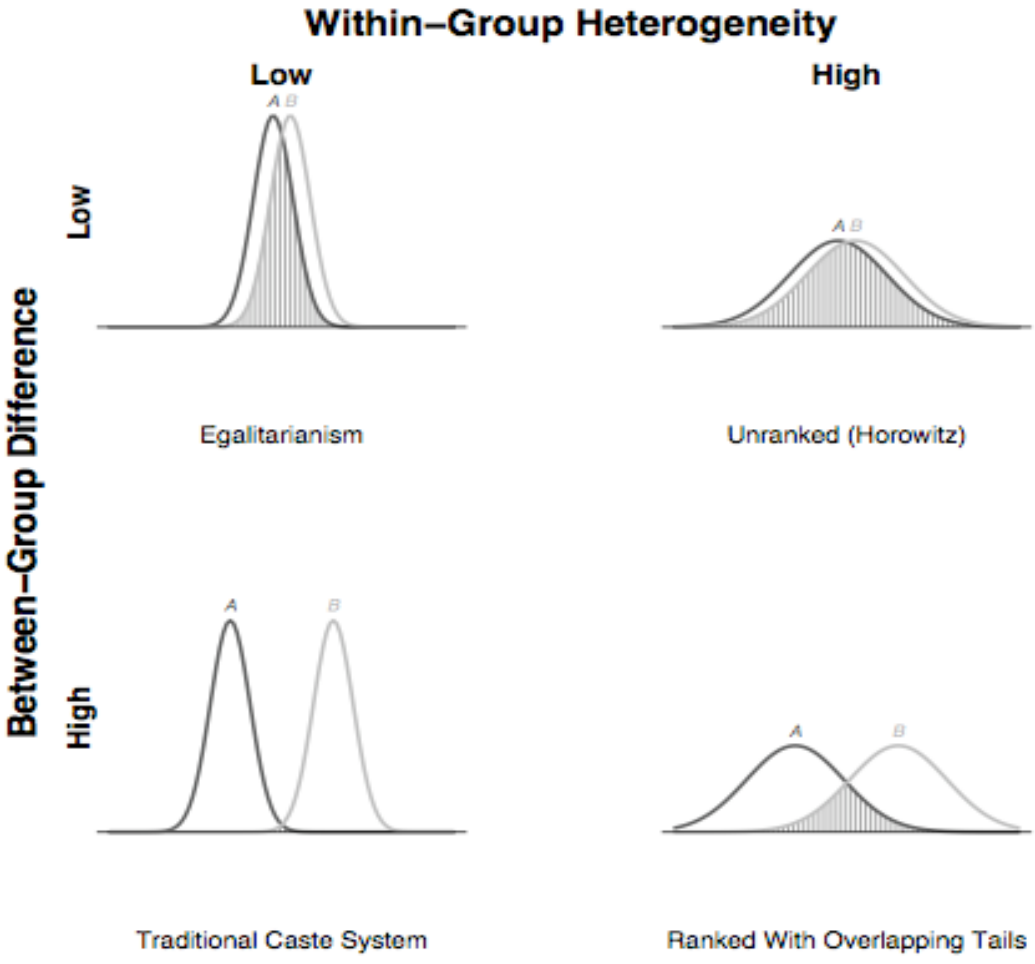
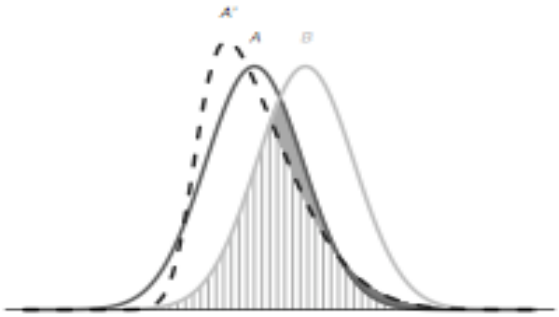
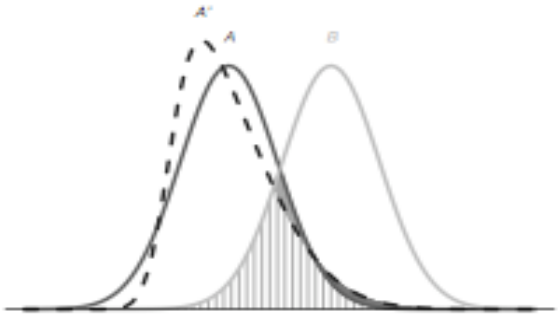


FIGURE 2:

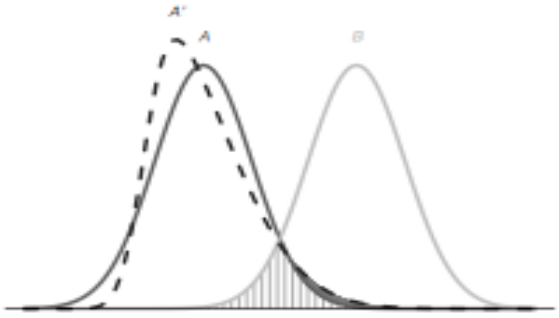
EFFECT OF POPULATION SKEW



Low Between–Group Difference



Mid Between–Group Difference



High Between–Group Difference

Now consider the loci of contestation given the simplified 2 × 2 typology. Although Horowitz (1985) has noted that ethnic conflict is both class conflict and a barrier to class conflict depending on whether the system in ranked or unranked, a complementary consideration is the degree of heterogeneity within groups, which combines with the degree of between-group difference to determine the overlap between groups. Within systems approximating egalitarianism (*L, L*)—probably empirical rarities—there are essentially no socioeconomic cleavages and consequently no conflict along this dimension. Within caste-like systems (*H, L*), cleavages are purely reinforcing: ethnic and class memberships are almost perfectly correlated. Ethnic and class conflict are observationally equivalent, with the same people lining up on either side of the debate regardless of whether it is framed in ethnic or class terms. In Horowitz-style unranked systems (*L, H*), ethnic and class cleavages are not so much cross-cutting as they are *orthogonal*: ethnic and class memberships are uncorrelated. If ethnicity is politically salient, it frames the debate over a different dimension—such as identity goods like dignity or recognition—and acts as a barrier to class conflict.

Hence, for these first three ideal types, contestation is unambiguous. Either class conflict is absent because class cleavages are absent (*L, L*), class conflict and ethnic conflict are the same conflict regardless of framing (*H, L*), or class conflict is absent because ethnicity's salience reframes the debate on a different dimension (*L, H*). In contrast, contestation is notably ambiguous within the last ideal type, ranked groups with overlapping tails (*H, H*). Here, crosscutting cleavages exist: class and ethnic memberships correlate, but not perfectly. Consequently, elements of both ethnic and class competition coexist: individuals have both class allies and ethnic allies depending on the dimension of conflict.

Yet because both ethnicity and class are salient, the framing of the conflict helps determine whether individuals in the overlapping regions are class allies or class competitors. If the point of contestation is, for example, civil service jobs of a given rank—which as jobs are privately consumed and as group recognition can also be identity goods—individuals of similar ability are competitors, and a gain for *A*'s members is a loss for *B*'s. If, however, the dimension is generalized redistribution or the provision of public goods that accrue to people regardless of group membership, then those in the

overlapping area are allies given the proximity of their ideal points for the quantity of redistribution or public good provision.

What additional theoretical leverage does a consideration of ethnic moments give us? Examining ethnic population distributions provides us with additional clarity that group means and rankings alone cannot provide. Rankings tell us about between-group differences, but not about the degree of overlap between groups. This overlap, however, produces ambiguity about the nature of the conflict, and hence examining ethnic moments provides us, ironically, with clarity about this ambiguity. Focusing only on unranked societies-in-miniature stacks the deck toward concluding that ethnic conflict is a competition over identity goods rather than material interests, whereas focusing on caste-like systems predisposes us to view ethnic conflict as epiphenomenal to class conflict. Yet many plural societies are ranked, but not severely so: group differences coexist with considerable overlap between groups, making the dimensions of contestation ambiguous. This theory clarifies how and for whom it is so.

The debate over illiterate voting rights, this paper's empirical focus, shares in the ambiguity described above: Is it an ethnic issue or a class issue? Are people in the overlapping region class allies or class competitors? Illiteracy is most likely to be relevant to redistributional rather than positional competition. Illiterates have nowhere near the necessary skill sets needed, nor the prospects of acquiring those skills in the short term, to compete for the sorts of jobs that middle- and upper-class individuals would actually want, public-sector or otherwise. Meanwhile, one of the few means that illiterate people have to "compete" economically against middle- and upper-class people is to vote themselves a portion of the latter's income. Thus, under the surface discourse of sectarianism and basic dignity is a form of class conflict, in which we might expect material interests to play a strong role in determining individuals' preferences over illiterate voting rights.

Although it is plausible that better-off individuals do *think* about illiterate voting rights in these terms, what they *say* is subject to considerable social desirability effects given the ethnic connotations. This is likely to be particularly so for richer individuals in poorer communities whose individual and group interests conflict—those for whom satisfying their utility function's material argument comes at the expense of the identity

argument, and vice-versa. Below, I present the empirical strategy I use to distinguish between what people say and what they think about illiterate voting rights, which helps to clarify whether people view those rights as an ethnic or class issue.

METHOD: AUGMENTED LIST EXPERIMENT

Discussing the implications of ethnic politics on a theoretical level is one thing, but testing these implications empirically is another. One of the major practical constraints is that ethnic politics are, in many cases, highly sensitive, and the sectarian politics found in Lebanon are no exception. The problem is particularly acute when analysts attempt to use mass attitude surveys, which produce data that are almost entirely self-reported. The problem, in other words, is one of response bias, in which respondents misrepresent their true attitudes to survey interviewers.

Response bias, if unchecked, can do serious damage to the inferences we try to draw from self-reported survey data. In particular, sensitivity introduces systematic and unmeasurable bias into coefficient estimates, the severity of which increases in the sensitivity of the question. In practical terms, this can easily lead to serious inferential mistakes. These can take the form of failure to detect real relationships between variables, as well as detecting "relationships" where none actually exist. They can even take the form of polar opposite inferences: signs can flip, leading us to infer relationships that are in the opposite direction from the ones that really exist (Corstange 2009).

One procedure with considerable potential to nullify respondents' incentives to misrepresent themselves to interviewers is the list experiment, sometimes known as the item count technique (Droitcour et al. 1991; Kane et al. 2004; Kuklinski, Cobb, et al. 1997; Kuklinski, Sniderman, et al. 1997). In its original implementation, the sample is split into two groups, with control respondents receiving a list of non-sensitive, yes/no items for which they tell the interviewer *how many* of the items they do/believe, and specifically *not* which ones. Treatment group respondents receive the same list, with the addition of one sensitive item, and receive the same instructions. Respondent anonymity is thus transparent: no one, not even the interviewer or subsequent data analysts, can know whether or not a treatment respondent included or excluded the sensitive item in his or her answer. To examine these data, analysts have used difference-in-means tests

between the treatment and control groups to infer the prevalence of the sensitive attitude/behavior, as when Kuklinski and colleagues find that white southern men are more likely than others to express anger at the idea of having a black neighbor. To make this inference, however, the analysts were forced to repeatedly split their samples to run difference-in-means tests across smaller and smaller sub-populations, and such tests are blunt instruments that make multivariate analysis highly impractical.

The list experiment, in other words, provides a very promising data *collection* procedure, but until now has been hampered by the lack of data *analysis* tools. To meet this need, Corstange (2009) has proposed an augmented list experiment procedure and derived a statistical estimator that enables multivariate analysis of list experiment–generated data. This new estimator, called *listit*, enables analysts to examine list experiments in a way analogous to running basic regression models. The intuition behind the procedure is as follows. The list as a whole has a mean probability of *yes* for each list item, which simply averages the probabilities of *yes* responses for, firstly, the sensitive item, and secondly, the non-sensitive items. Algebraic manipulation and maximum likelihood methods enable us to extract the sensitive probability from the mean probability, and to model the sensitive probability directly by relying on control group responses to model the non-sensitive probabilities.[4]

The specific issue studied empirically in this article, attitudes toward voting rights for illiterate people, is sensitive in Lebanon for three main reasons. First, given the pervasive normative hegemony of "democracy" both worldwide and in Lebanon,[5] it is very difficult to justify the exclusion of illiterates from voting rights merely due to their illiteracy. Second, there are sectarian ramifications to the question, in that "illiterate" can be seen as a euphemism or codeword for "Shiite," somewhat analogous to the use of "welfare mother" as a codeword for African-American in the United States. Third, there are redistributional implications to giving illiterates the right to vote: to the degree that illiteracy correlates with poverty and low material well-being, illiterates favor greater economic redistribution than would the median voter. Hence, we should expect attitudes about illiterate voting rights to be subject to response bias due to social desirability effects (normative), and possibly to vary by community membership (sectarianism) and material well-being (redistribution).

I use the augmented list experiment procedure to analyze Lebanese attitudes toward the extension of the suffrage to illiterate people, which enables me to differentiate between what makes people likely to talk the democratic talk—to state their support for those rights—and what makes them likely to walk the democratic walk: to actually hold a pro-suffrage preference. The data used in the analysis come from an original mass attitude survey conducted in Lebanon in the fall of 2005, which chronologically fell roughly between the pullout of the Syrian armed forces in the spring of 2005 and the summer 2006 Israel-Hizballah war. Beirut-based MADMA Co. administered the face-to-face surveys, with 1000 respondents drawn from a stratified sample of Lebanese adults across all provinces and religious communities.[6] The list experiment conducted on this survey, described in more detail in the empirical section, examines attitudes toward illiterate voting rights in the context of the contemporary debate over the electoral law and voting rights for other segments of the population, enhancing the question's unobtrusiveness.

LEBANON

Sectarianism is a pervasive component to Lebanese political discourse, and sectarian rhetoric, sometimes explicit and sometimes implicit, finds its way into discussions of many issues of public import. Sectarianism gives politics added sensitivity, leading to potentially confounding prevarication when individuals discuss these issues. This equivocation complicates the study of politics, as it makes it difficult to rely purely on what individuals are willing to self-report. On the caution one must use in inferring what people think from what they are willing to say when sectarianism enters the conversation, former Lebanese Prime Minister Salim al-Hoss has quipped, "I have never in my life seen a sectarian person who acknowledges that he is sectarian, just as I have never seen a liar who admits to lying" (Hoss 2003: 103). Similarly, one Lebanese secular activist has noted that, when using sectarian discourse, "that which [you] secretly conceal, [you] openly and clearly express its opposite" (Sayegh 2007: 28).[7] Under such circumstances, it is difficult to contest the need for unobtrusive data collection techniques such as the augmented list experiment that can help neutralize the incentives to prevaricate.

I make no attempt here to summarize Lebanon's sometimes Byzantine political history and institutions; numerous creditable studies exist for interested readers to peruse. I focus instead on two key aspects of Lebanese society. First, Lebanon's ethnic (sectarian) ranking system[8] is now much less pronounced than in past decades. Second, the Shia, who have arguably experienced the greatest relative development as a community, continue to suffer from residual stereotypes deriving from their former backwardness. This makes illiterate voting rights, already sensitive in general, particularly sensitive for this community, whose well-off members are pulled in opposite directions by their individual and group interests.

Lebanese Sectarian Moments

Lebanese society was clearly ranked as of independence in 1943. Compared to the other communities, Christians systematically held higher-status and better-paying jobs, as well as enjoyed higher rates of education. Sunnis followed in the ranking, and then finally the Shia community, whose members systematically held low-status occupations and were largely uneducated. Over the subsequent decades, however, a considerable, albeit imperfect, socioeconomic leveling occurred as the Muslim communities began to close the gap with their Christian counterparts. Illiteracy was significantly higher in the rural areas and varied sharply by religion, but with the huge increase in demand for education in the 1960s, these areas began to make the transition to general literacy that other areas had begun earlier (Hudson 1968: 75–78).[9] These changes, combined with differential emigration rates (partly induced by the civil war), have considerably leveled objective levels of education and material well-being between the communities overall.

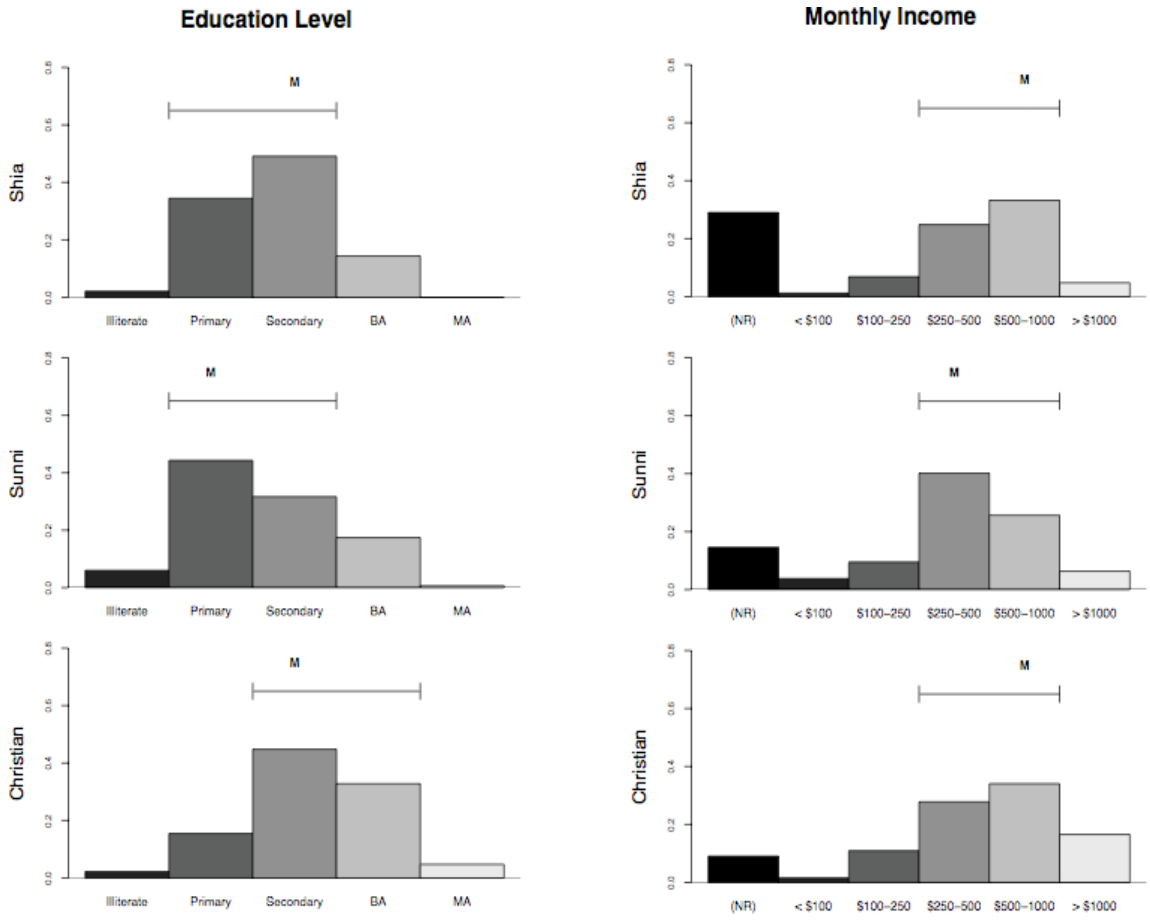
Thus, the first sectarian moment—community means—was formerly characterized by considerable between-group difference, which over time has narrowed significantly. Meanwhile, the second sectarian moment—community variances—reveals another, less commonly highlighted aspect of Lebanese society: significant within-sect socioeconomic heterogeneity. More plainly, there are, within each sect, people of low and high degrees of educational attainment along with low and high levels of material well-being. Empirically, these aspects of both the first and second moments are evident in Figure 3.

Figure 3 reports summary statistics for respondent education (left panel) and income (right panel), with *M*s indicating community medians and horizontal bars indicating the community inter-quartile range. In terms of overall differences between communities (the first moment), Christians remain somewhat better educated than either Sunnis or Shiites, and appear to enjoy somewhat higher incomes. The gap between Sunnis and Shiites has closed—in this sample, Shiites appear to be slightly better off than Sunnis, although the high rate of non-response on income questions requires us to be circumspect about this observation—and the gap between Christians and their Muslim counterparts is now relatively narrow.[10] Yet in terms of within-community variation (the second moment), Figure 3 reveals significant heterogeneity in both educational attainment and income in all three communities. Likewise, there is considerable overlap between the sects: each community's median response falls within the interquartile range of each other community's responses.

Figure 3 thus reveals two important points of note. First, in largely objective terms, the socioeconomic gaps between Christians, Sunnis, and Shiites as communities qua communities are much less stark today than in the early post-independence period. Second, each community is clearly characterized by significant within-group socioeconomic heterogeneity, which in turn implies considerable overlap between the communities. Yet this is not to suggest that *perceived* differences do not remain. This is partly the result of a lack of information due to the well-known sensitivity of official censuses or demographic studies in plural societies, even though such studies could reveal a more complex society in which "the same social differences might be observed in every communal group" (Picard 2007: 109).

FIGURE 3

SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS INDICATORS



The Shia Community

Residual stereotypes—some about Christian wealth and advancement, but particularly others about Shia poverty and backwardness—provide another source of perceived differences. As one anti-sectarianism campaigner has observed, although the Shia have developed substantially over the past thirty years, "for a long time the Sunnis looked down on them, and they were looked on as the poor, illiterate ones by the Christians, even up to the 1990s."[11] Yet as Ajami (1986: 189) notes, by the late 1970s, the Shia were no longer "as economically disadvantaged as the discourse about `disinheritance' and the stereotypes of the past made them out to be," and the Shia bid for political power drew on Shia wealth and a new middle class created by education and some prosperity, as well as on the masses of urban poor. Yet the stereotypes of poverty, ill-education, and backwardness have persisted, and are shared to some degree even by the Shia themselves. Chalabi (2006: 2, 5) observes that, even though some of the derogatory terms used to describe the Shia fell out of fashion in the 1980s with the integration of the Shia middle class and elite into a wider Lebanese society, the dismissive attitudes of better-off Shiites toward their poorer co-sectarians reveal the prejudices against the Shia in general, which she describes as attitudes "embedded, at times unconsciously, in the mental landscapes of people high and low," whether Shia, Sunni, Christian, or even outside Western observers.[12]

In objective terms, the Shia community had long been the poorest and least educated among Lebanon's sects, and was likewise marginalized in political decision making.[13] Emerging Shia leaders frequently highlighted the neglect faced by the Shia regions in terms of basic infrastructure and government services such as electricity, water, roads, and education, noting that illiteracy rates among Shiites were at least double those found in other sects (Sadr 2000: 55, 148–149, et passim). Beginning in the 1950s and accelerating in the 1960s, however, the community experienced what one such leader described as a "renaissance in education" when Shiites entered schools in droves and, little by little, developed an educated, advanced elite (Shams al-Din 2002: 34). Hence, by the 1960s, a new Shia intelligentsia—lawyers, civil servants, physicians—along with newly moneyed individuals were breaking with the Shia legacy of insularity and deprivation (Ajami 1986: 97).

The Shia political movement that emerged in the 1960s—eventually becoming today's Amal Movement—combined two very different constituencies of Shiites. One, as just described, was an emerging middle class and set of new elites, educated and no longer impoverished. The other, in contrast, was a large mass of urban and rural poor.[14] Although these two constituencies shared group interests in achieving better political representation for the Shia community, their material interests as individuals did not necessarily coincide. Many of the emerging Shia elite had, in fact, recognized this dilemma, and early on were drawn to the "progressive" secular parties. As the former vice-president of the Supreme Shia Council notes, the emerging class of wealthier, better educated Shiites tried first to improve their own positions by exiting from the sectarian trends, and "thus, the Shia elite sought out a modern life, and attempted to exit from deprivation, *not on the basis of Shiism, but on the basis of modernity*" (Shams al-Din 2002: 35, emphasis mine).

Yet political exit from one's own community has proven difficult to sustain over time, and ultimately non-credible.[15] Although the parties and political leaders invariably declare that they are nonsectarian and aspire to represent all Lebanese, constituencies are primarily single sect, with multi-sectarian coalitions forming via short-term electoral alliances rather than via institutionalized multi-sectarian parties.[16] As such, parties and movements have largely become single-sect catchalls representing their societies-in-miniature, agglomerating constituencies on a sectarian basis that might otherwise differ significantly over their ideal points on numerous political dimensions—such as poor and rich co-sectarians on the classic left-right scale of economic redistribution. One might thus expect that, under the veneer of "sectarian solidarity," there may be considerable ambivalence, especially on the part of those whose individual interests come into conflict with group interests.

Such may indeed be the case in Lebanon, particularly among the Shia. One scholar, describing the varied reactions of the Lebanese to her study on the Shiites of the south—one of the poorest regions in the country—observed that, "some of the most disapproving were well-heeled educated Lebanese [Shiites] who embraced traditional urbane Lebanese formulas and prejudices with even more francophone fervor than their Christian compatriots," which she attributes to the fact that poor, backward Shiites

"touched an unhappy chord in their own identity" (Chalabi 2006: 1). Similarly, numerous analysts and activists have noted that not all Shiites follow the Hizballah or Amal line, as when Ibrahim Shams al-Din, son of the former vice-president of the Supreme Shia Council and newly appointed minister to the July 2008 unity government, noted that the Shia are not monopolized by the parties.[17] This has produced an unaffiliated and largely silent Shia opposition, somewhere between 15 and 40 percent of Shiites, composed of "secular forces and the middle class who think this is bullshit," as one commentator said, but are prevented from speaking out.[18] The Shia, in other words, are far from monolithic. Although perhaps somewhat poorer as a community overall, they have developed their own educated and wealthy elite alongside a middle class, implying a considerable degree of within-community socioeconomic heterogeneity.

Hypotheses

What sorts of empirical relationships might we expect to see given the above dynamics? The discussion above suggests two plausible hypotheses:

> **Hypothesis 1 (Group)** Shiites are more likely to support voting rights for illiterates, and to do so because they are Shiites.
>
> **Hypothesis 2 (Individual)** Poor people are more likely to support voting rights for illiterates, and to do so because they are poor.

According to Hypothesis 1, group interests and social identity explain variation in attitudes, whereas according to Hypothesis 2, individual material interests motivate attitudes. Although not technically mutually exclusive—one may be motivated by both group and individual interests—they do nonetheless make qualitatively very different predictions about how attitudes vary. Yet given the ways in which those attitudes about voting rights for illiterate people may be filtered through the pervasive discourse of sectarianism, we must take care to distinguish between expectations about what people *claim*, and what they *believe*. Further, we might expect qualitatively different processes to influence what individuals say out loud and what they keep to themselves. Yet which hypothesis explains which outcome?

Consider Lebanon's sectarian moments: although an objective socioeconomic ranking between the sects does exist, with Christians as a community somewhat better off than their Muslim contemporaries, it is much milder today than it was in past decades. Further, each of the sectarian communities is internally heterogeneous on socioeconomic placement: each has a range of rich, poor, and middle-class members. The combination of similar group means and wide group variances implies considerable socioeconomic overlap between the communities. Given the persisting stereotypes of the poor, uneducated Shiite, however, we should expect illiterate voting rights, already sensitive, to be especially so for better-off Shiites. Although social desirability effects influence everyone, they are arguably strongest for the Shia community, making it particularly difficult for Shiites whose preferences follow their material interests to actually admit as such. Such individuals, in other words, are particularly constrained to claim attitudes consistent with group interests, regardless of their actual attitudes.

Thus, I argue that Hypothesis 1, positing group interests, better explains variation *in what people say*, whereas Hypothesis 2, positing individual interests, better explains variation *in what people think*. Put a different way, the former better explains superficial support, and the latter better explains sincere support, for illiterate voting rights. To test the credibility of these claims, I turn now to the data.

EMPIRICS

Who supports illiterate voting rights, and how would we know? One possible explanation rests on group interests: Shiites are more likely to support voting rights for illiterates because Shiites are presumed to be more likely to be illiterate. An alternate explanation rests on individual material interests: poor people are more likely to support illiterate voting rights because illiterates are likely to be poor and support similar redistributive policies. Yet given the sensitivity of the question, we can expect that what people *say* and what they *think* are not necessarily the same things. To help adjudicate between these explanations, I make use of a list experiment to examine the question unobtrusively.

List Specification

I conducted this list experiment during a period of important political transformation in Lebanon which made debates over institutions and electoral procedures—never really settled to begin with—particularly salient. In particular, these events included the February 2005 assassination of former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri, the subsequent demonstrations termed the "Indepedence Intifada" by local coordinators and the "Cedar Revolution" by the US government, the withdrawal of the Syrian armed forces from the country, and the May/June 2005 elections which gave a parliamentary majority to the anti-Syria coalition. During this period, debate over the electoral law—a near-permanent fixture of Lebanese public discourse given the post–civil war propensity of governments to issue stop-gap "one term only" laws—took on additional salience.

The primary points of contention were over district size and plurality versus proportional representation, but a subcomponent of the debate was a discussion of who should be allowed to vote at all. This ongoing debate focused on the right to vote for youths and expatriates. The director of the Carnegie Middle East Center in Beirut has noted that, despite the roles played by young adults and expatriates in rallying international support for Lebanese liberation in 2005, both groups remain deprived of the right to vote despite repeated promises to rectify the situation (Salem 2005: 352). Likewise, Lebanon's National Commission on the Electoral Law (NCEL)—which issued the Fouad Boutros draft electoral law in 2006—has endorsed voting rights for both youths and expatriates,[19] which represent two key planks in a civil-society-led campaign for electoral reform.[20] Differences of opinion exist on whether or not to grant voting rights to these groups but, as one Lebanese analyst stated, they are discussed all the time and are "not sensitive at all."[21]

Taking advantage of the ongoing nature of this debate, I embed a question about illiterate voting rights in a broader set of questions on voting rights in Lebanon. All respondents were given the following prompt:

> There has been some debate recently over who should have the right to vote in Lebanese elections. I'll read you some different groups of people: please tell me if they should be allowed to vote or not.

Respondents were then given the following list of options

- Young people between the ages of 18 to 21,
- Lebanese expatriates living abroad,
- Illiterate people,
- Palestinians without Lebanese citizenship.

The sample was split randomly into control and treatment groups on a 1:3 ratio. Control group respondents were asked to indicate, one at a time, which groups should have the right to vote. Treatment group respondents were also given the following prompt before answering: "I'm going to read you the whole list, and then I want you to tell me *how many* of the different groups you think should be allowed to vote. *Don't tell me which ones*, just tell me how many."

The first and second list items, youths and expatriates, capture part of the public debate over voting in Lebanon. As described above, these are elements of Lebanese public discourse that individuals are willing to discuss openly. Further, their inclusion on the list helps to focus respondent attention on the debate over voting rights, which reduces the novelty—and, plausibly, the obtrusiveness—of the sensitive third item on illiterate people. I designed the fourth list item to evoke *no*s from essentially everyone by providing respondents with a category of people (Palestinians *without Lebanese citizenship*) that may legitimately be excluded from voting. This meets an administrative need for a successful list experiment: minimizing the likelihood that respondents will answer *yes* (or *no*) to all of the list items, which in effect strips them of anonymity on the sensitive item.

Model Specification

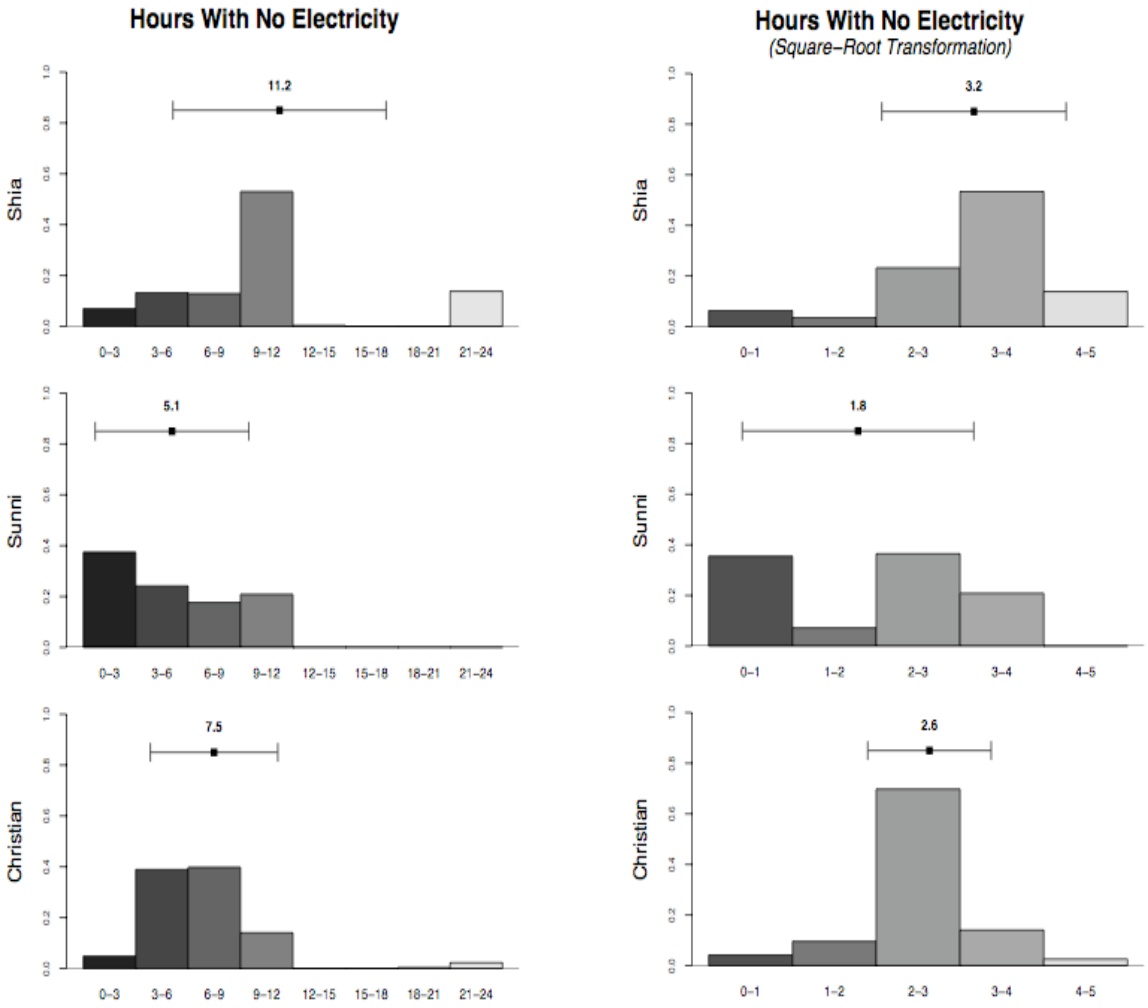
I report results from two models, using different estimation procedures, in Table 2 and Figure 5. The first, labeled as "Direct," models (via logit) control group responses to the direct question of whether or not illiterate people should have the right to vote. The second, labeled as "Unobtrusive," models (via listit) treatment group responses to the indirect, unobtrusive version of the same question asked via the list experiment. One may

think of the difference between these two models as follows: the former estimates respondent propensity to *state* support for illiterate voting rights, whereas the latter estimates respondent propensity to *actually* support illiterate voting rights—the difference between democratic talk and the democratic walk. I utilize the same set of explanatory variables in both models, which are as follows:[22]

Material Well-Being: Electricity. Rather than use a standard income question as a measure of material well-being, I employ *Electricity*, which measures the number of hours per day in which the electricity is off in respondents' homes. The rationale behind the use of this indicator is twofold. In purely practical terms, income data are essentially unavailable for estimation purposes: 17 percent of survey respondents—rising to 29 percent among Shia respondents—refused to answer the income question reported in Figure 3. In theoretical terms, *Electricity* is particularly useful because it provides an indicator of material well-being that is, at least potentially, more responsive and more directly tied to voting decisions than income would be. Electricity in Lebanon is a subsidized public utility, the spotty and variable coverage of which is provided by the much-maligned Électricité du Liban, and thus the state is directly and visibly responsible for the provision of this basic service. Some apartment buildings, usually those inhabited by wealthier individuals, do utilize private generators and thus permit better-off residents to partially exit from the system, but this is an expensive proposition unavailable to many Lebanese.[23]

FIGURE 4B:

ELECTRICITY DEPRIVATION



***Community Membership: Shia* and *Sunni*.** As indicators of community membership, I include two dummy variables, *Shia* and *Sunni*, making Christians the baseline comparison category. For simplicity and due to small subsample size, Druze and Alawi respondents are excluded from this analysis, although including them does not change the substantive results.

***Controls: Education* and *Deconfess*.** Because the question of interest asks about voting rights for illiterate people, I control for *Education*, the five-point education scale discussed in Figure 3, rescaled 0-1 for ease of interpretation. Finally, I control for predispositions toward support for democratization in a fuller, more majoritarian sense with *Deconfess*, an indicator variable taking on the value of 1 when respondents, on an open-ended question, state that "the people" (or the equivalent) benefit most from the deconfessionalization of the parliament—i.e., removing sectarian quotas on seats—and 0 otherwise.[24]

Summarized Expectations. To review, Hypothesis 1 holds that attitudes toward illiterate voting rights follow from group interests: Shiites are more supportive than their Sunni and Christian counterparts on the basis of their sectarian affiliation. In contrast, Hypothesis 2 posits that attitudes follow from individual material interests: poor people are more supportive of illiterate voting rights than are wealthier people on the logic that illiterate people are also poor and share similar redistributional preferences. Empirically, Hypothesis 1 predicts a positive estimate of the *Shia* coefficient, whereas Hypothesis 2 predicts a positive estimate of the *Electricity* coefficient, as summarized in Table 1.

TABLE 1

PREDICTED RELATIONSHIPS

	Shia	*Electricity*
Hypothesis 1	+	(0)
Hypothesis 2	(0)	+

Model Results

Estimates from the two models, summarized in Table 2, indicate that illiterate voting rights are indeed sensitive. This is particularly the case for well-off Shiites, whose difference in probability of support between the unobtrusive list format and the direct question is an estimated -0.62; comparable Sunnis and Christians are -0.47 and -0.30, but these latter estimates are not statistically significant.[25] More importantly, however, what explains these responses differs starkly between the direct model and the unobtrusive model. Put simply, if one asks the question directly, one receives a sectarian answer, but if one asks the question unobtrusively, one gets an answer about material deprivation.

TABLE 2

EXPERIMENT RESULTS

	Direct		**Unobtrusive**	
	b	***se(b)***	***b***	***se(b)***
Shia	**2.002**	**0.776***	**-0.234**	**1.043**
Sunni	0.309	0.505	-0.415	0.986
Electricity	**0.263**	**0.174**	**0.874**	**0.307***
Deconfess	0.683	0.462	1.455	1.009
Education	-1.415	0.985	-0.237	1.374
Intercept	0.914	0.837	-1.330	1.046
ln*L*	-86.109		-926.915	
N	229		696 (186)	

$p \leq 0.01$*

Figure 5 presents these results graphically as differences in the probability of supporting illiterate rights for representative individuals as sectarian community (left panel) or electricity deprivation (middle and right panels) vary.[26] In the direct model, Shiites are significantly more likely than Sunnis or Christians to support illiterate voting rights, and to do so specifically because they are Shiites. Further, there is no detectable material well-being effect: individuals who rarely have access to electricity are not discernibly more likely to support illiterate voting rights than are those who never lose electricity.

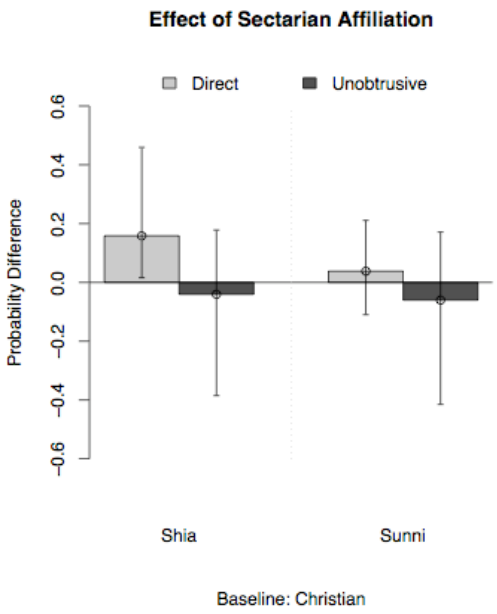
When responding to the direct question, in other words, group interests trump individual interests *in what people are willing to claim*, and what people claim supports Hypothesis 1 and not Hypothesis 2. In the unobtrusive model, however, the *polar opposite inference obtains*. Here, there is no detectable difference between the communities: Shiites, on the basis of their sect, are no more or less likely to support illiterate voting rights than are Sunnis or Christians. Instead, the material well-being effect is very strong and very significant: those who often lose electricity are much more likely to support illiterate voting than those who do not (Figure 5, right panel). When allowed to speak their minds freed of social desirability effects, in other words, attitudes follow from material interests rather than sectarian solidarity. Individual interests trump group interests *in what people think*, and what they think supports Hypothesis 2 rather than Hypothesis 1.

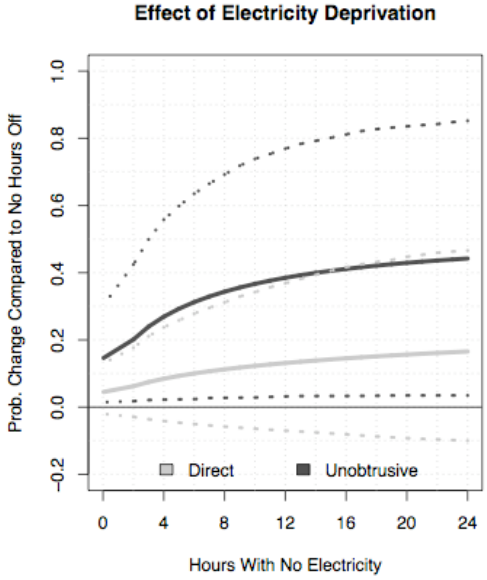
DISCUSSION: "OF COURSE IT'S POOR PEOPLE"

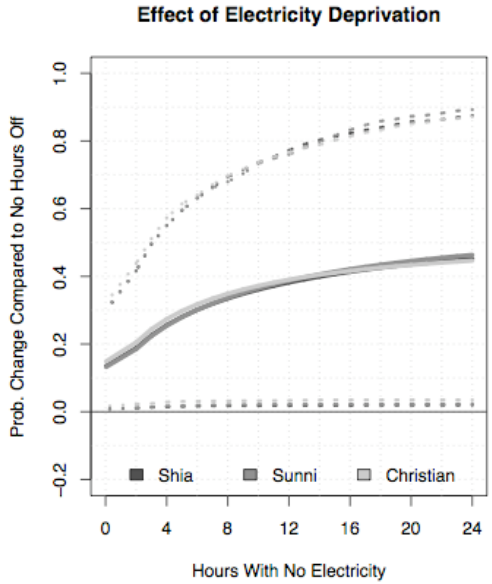
In summary, the results of the list experiment are that sectarianism drives what people *say* about illiterate voting rights, but material deprivation drives what they *think* about the issue. In Lebanese public discourse, it is common for issues not intimately linked to sectarianism nonetheless to "go sectarian" in how people talk about them. Those who study American racial politics, or ethnic politics elsewhere in the world, will likely find this a familiar phenomenon. Yet how people talk about these issues, and what they actually think about them, need not be the same thing. When I described the results of the list experiment to one Lebanese journalist and party activist, his response was to smile ruefully and exclaim, "of *course* it's poor people."[27] This outcome is, in turn, consistent with the claim, as eloquently put by one anti-sectarianism activist, that "for the poor, their belief in bread unifies them, and the few bits of scripture they know do not divide them" (Sayegh 2007: 19). This does not, however, imply that sectarianism (race, ethnicity) is epiphenomenal of class interests or anything else—as prior generations of Marxist scholars and activists argued and hoped—but rather that people respond to multiple incentives, and sect (race, ethnicity) is not always the most relevant one. Those who study ethnic politics sometimes refer to a society's "master narrative." The Lebanese may indeed narrate sectarianism to each other, but there are multiple stories unfolding simultaneously, some of which are quite orthogonal to that master narrative.

FIGURE 5

SECTARIAN VS. MATERIAL EFFECTS







Explanations for what motivates attitudes in the context of ethnic competition largely distill to arguments about identity versus material interests, with mixed empirical evidence that tends to support the former contention. Yet these findings should be treated gingerly, as social desirability effects and response bias provide plausible explanations for these empirical outcomes, especially given the sensitivity of ethnic competition and conflict. In this regard, consider the normative hegemony enjoyed by democracy, which is supposed to be about *principles* and *the public good* rather than *base material interests* and *greed*. Similarly, compare the positive, desirable values of *solidarity* and *unity* with one's group to the disdained *selling out* and *betraying* of that group. Given these connotations, should we really be surprised if people whose attitudes follow their material interests decline to say so? The findings I present in this paper suggest that some of the null results found in observational studies may be the product of social desirability effects rather than evidence of the *non*-explanatory power of material interests. In other words: we have solid reasons to believe that people respond to material incentives, but some of our empirical non-findings may be the result of their reticence to actually say so.

More broadly, the veracity of the conclusions we hope to draw from what people tell us depends crucially on us getting a straight answer. Not only does this mean we must be cautious when using surveys and self-reports to study sensitive issues, but that we must be particularly careful when utilizing purportedly comparable surveys such as those produced by the World Values Survey and (perhaps to a lesser extent) the numerous regional barometers. The great appeal of these enterprises is that they use practically the same instruments and ask practically the same questions across a range of societies. Yet the very attribute that is most appealing must also sound a jarring note of caution. Different issues are sensitive or taboo from society to society, and to different degrees, yet asking the same questions everywhere without addressing sensitivity issues can easily call into question the inferences we may attempt to make between societies. More to the point: the answers we get are a product of "the truth" and sensitivity; sensitivity varies from society to society; and inferences we wish to make about "the truth" may instead reflect varying levels of sensitivity.

Finally, note that neither in what people say nor what they think do attitudes in Lebanon support the implicit "clash of civilizations" hypothesis that Muslims are less

democratic than are Christians: either Shiites are *more* supportive of illiterate voting rights, or else there is no difference. This is not to claim that the "clash of civilizations" hypothesis is actually wrong—it is possible, for example, that Muslims may be less democratic than Christians on certain aspects or dimensions of democratic practice, but the opposite is of course also possible. Rather, it is a suggestion that such claims are unambiguously overbroad (is it all of "democracy," or just parts?), disingenuously applied (have they been tested empirically on representative samples?), and difficult to study (will people tell the truth?). Future research must pull "democracy" apart and be based on empirically defensible grounds, as a small but growing number of scholars are already doing, but must also find ways to elicit truthful answers to sensitive questions. I have demonstrated one such means in this article, and shown that what we can learn from people—and what we infer about them as a result—depends crucially on letting them speak their minds without fear of the consequences.

ENDNOTES

[1] This must be appropriately scaled, of course: it is an exact match if *A* and *B* are of exactly the same size, or else the proportion of the smaller group matched by members of the larger group if membership numbers differ.

[2] Ethnic groups, by virtue of membership criteria putatively based on ascriptive descent rather than choice, include as members individuals throughout the life cycle (young and old, male and female), a full range of occupations and educational levels, and so on, comprising what are, in effect, "societies-in-miniature" (Bates 1974; Chandra 2004; Horowitz 1985).

[3] Note also that, counterintuitively, a poverty skew can potentially *increase* overlap between communities as between-group difference increases. Compare the panels of Figure 2: although total overlap decreases as group differences increase, the skew places additional wealthy individuals—represented by the dark grey region—in the overlapping region as compared to the normal distribution. As between-group differences increase, the skew loses increasingly fewer middle-class individuals while adding the wealthy ones.

[4] See Corstange (2009) for a thorough development of the estimator.

[5] Respondents in the survey used in this article substantiate this normative hegemony. In response to a standard question on the desirability of using a democratic system, 92 percent cite it as a "very good" form of government for Lebanon, and another 6 percent cite it as "fairly good." Responses are similar across community subsamples: 96 and 2 percent for Christians, 95 and 4 percent for Sunnis, and 85 and 13 percent for Shiites.

[6] MADMA's sample frame is based on household demographic surveys conducted by the Lebanese government in the late 1990s on tens of thousands of households, which provides the most reliable sample frame available given the absence of official census data due to political sensitivity. The overall survey response rate was 70 percent, which did not vary significantly between religious communities.

[7] All translations throughout the paper are mine, with cited original Arabic texts available upon request.

[8] Here I follow Horowitz (1985) and others in using an inclusive definition of ethnicity, of which sectarian membership is one such instance.

[9] Rural illiteracy rates in the early 1960s revealed significant generational change. Although Christian rates in percentage terms for (men, women) were (23, 45) as compared to (39, 69) for Muslims, the gap had largely disappeared among youths, with Christian (boys, girls) at (22, 29) as compared to Muslims at (28, 33). See Hudson (1968:78).

[10] For education, treating the survey's five-point ordinal scale as if it were cardinal reveals no statistically significant difference-in-means between the Shia and Sunni subsamples, although one does exist between Christians and either Muslim community. Similar simplifications are less applicable (or trustworthy) for the income question given the scaling of the categories and the large number of non-responses (17 percent in the full sample, and 29 percent among Shiites). With these caveats in mind, there is no statistically significant difference between the Christian and Shia communities, although one exists between these two and the Sunnis.

[11] Interview with *05AMAM* leader, Beirut, 26 July 2008. See the group's website, www.05amam.org, for information on its prominent anti-sectarianism campaign.

[12] Considerable dark humor about the Shia exists in the form of jokes that give a "just kidding" veneer to underlying bigoted statements. A version of one such joke, for example, holds that the interior pages of the Amal Movement's party paper are blank because Amal members (i.e., Shiites) cannot read.

[13] On the Lebanese Shia, see, among numerous others, Ajami (1986), Chalabi (2006), Fadlallah (1997), Fahs (1996), Gharib (2001), Madini (1999), and Norton (1987).

[14] The exact composition of Amal's membership is difficult to determine due to the unavailability of precise statistics, but one scholar concludes that it was most likely the case that the majority were illiterate (Gharib 2001: 223).

[15] I do not take up here the discussion of whether this is a cause or product of Lebanon's consociational institutional arrangements. For the purposes of this article, *that* this is the case is more relevant than *why* this is the case.

[16] Electoral alliances, often of very short duration and contracted between extremely strange bedbellows, amount to vote-trading between sectarian leaders, who deliver the votes of their constituencies to allies on the same list in what (Hudson 1968: 213) has referred to as a "mutual coattail effect." Compare the *de facto* equilibrium described here—constituents vote for co-sectarian elites, elites patronize co-sectarian constituents—to that found in Chandra (2004).

[17] See "Shams al-Din: My appointment not a challenge, and parties do not monopolize sects," *al-Nahar*, 14 July 2008. Ironically, Shams al-Din, a majority coalition appointee to the unity government, himself fought and lost a pitched electoral battle for Beirut's Shia seat in 2005 against a Hizballah candidate supported by the Future Movement, which heads the majority coalition. For details, see Abd al-Khaliq (2006) and Gebara (2005).

[18] The director of one well-respected Beirut think tank estimates that 15–20 percent of Shiites fall into this silent opposition, whereas a Lebanese publisher, citing his own polling data, puts the

figure closer to 40 percent, comprised primarily of "middle-class, educated bourgeoisie," along with some of the traditional families. Interviews, Beirut, 25 June 2008, 1–2 July 2008.

[19] Interview with NCEL member, Beirut, 25 June 2008. *Ya Libnan* (www.yalibnan.com), "National conference held on Lebanon electoral law," 12 June 2008.

[20] See *The Civil Campaign for Electoral Reform* (in Arabic), a 2007 joint booklet of the Lebanese Transparency Association, the Lebanese Center for Policy Studies, and the Lebanese Association for Democratic Elections (LADE), along with LADE's 2006 booklets *Lowering the Voting and Candidacy Ages* and *Mechanisms for Expatriate Voting* (both in Arabic). Note that lowering the voting age to 18 would require a constitutional amendment (cf. constitutional clause 21), whereas nothing in the constitution or the electoral law forbids expatriates from voting in principle, although the government makes no facilities available for doing so. Note also that the presidential appointment of Ziad Barroud, formerly Secretary-General of LADE and a member of the NCEL, as interior minister in the new unity government has given renewed impetus to these electoral reforms, although other LADE officials worry that the cabinet will sacrifice expatriate voting to reach a compromise law, and will not have time to address youth voting before the 2009 elections. Interviews, Beirut, 2 and 21 July, 2008.

[21] Interview, Beirut, 7 July 2008.

[22] Part of the listit procedure includes modeling the non-sensitive item probabilities with data from the control group to help extract the sensitive item probabilities from treatment group data. In this context, it is useful to note that the covariate predictors of the non-sensitive items are not technically constrained to be the same predictors as those of the sensitive item (see Corstange 2009 for more details). This is helpful given that youth *no*s and Palestinian *yes*es are rare events in the control group (4 and 5 percent of responses, respectively), and thus modeling with covariates is unstable. Consequently, these two items are modeled with intercept terms only, whereas expatriates get the same covariates as the main model for illiterate voters.

[23] At the time of writing, summer 2008, Beirut experiences daily rolling blackouts of three hours' duration. Beirut's largely-Shia southern suburbs receive far less, with one resident, an official at the Council for Development and Reconstruction, claiming that "it is a happy day when we get ten hours of electricity." Interview, Beirut, 22 July 2008. Other parts of the country are worse off still, with rationing exceeding twenty hours a day. Officials claim that the actual cost of electricity should be four times the current rate, which the president of the Higher Privatization Council describes as "purely chaotic" subsidies that have "benefited rich people more than poor people." See "Tabourian: `No quick solutions' to power woes," *Daily Star*, 23 July 2008. A

personal anecdote: the blackouts turn the author's apartment in Beirut's Hamra district into a fourth-floor walkup—no small annoyance in the summer heat and humidity—and the author has been trapped in the building's elevator just as the electricity turns off.

[24] The text of the open-ended question reads: "What Lebanese group do you think benefits the most from deconfessionalization of the parliament? This could be any group, for instance, a political party, a sectarian group, the middle class, or whatever." Responses categorized as "the people" are those which include variants of that phrase, such as "the nation," "citizens," and "all Lebanese." Response summaries are as follows:

	People	Sect	Other
Shia	67.5	26.4	06.1
Sunni	91.1	05.6	03.3
Christian	67.6	24.8	07.6

[25] These estimates come from parameter simulations ($N = 10{,}000$) for covariate values of *Electricity* = 0, *Deconfess* = 0, and *Education* set to the community median—i.e., well-off individuals not particularly predisposed to majoritarian democracy. For Shiites, the estimate just misses significance at the 95-percent confidence level, and is significant at the 94-percent level (or 95-percent one-tailed). Sunnis and Christians are nowhere near significant, with 95-percent confidence intervals of (-0.87, 0.16) and (-0.77, 0.31), respectively. Note also that the intercept term in the unobtrusive model (-1.330) is substantively much lower than in the direct model (0.914)—corresponding to point estimate probabilities of support of 0.21 and 0.71, respectively, when other covariates are set to 0—but the magnitude of the standard errors obviates a claim to a statistically significant difference ($p = 0.23$, calculated as the overlapping area under the curves $\beta_0^D \sim N(0.914, 0.837^2)$ and $\beta_0^U \sim N(-1.330, 1.046^2)$.

[26] By "representative individuals," I mean that non-varying covariates are set to community means, medians, and modes, as relevant. Figure 5 draws point estimates of these probability differences and the 95-percent confidence interval around them. The left and center panels represent the effects against baseline Christian respondents, whereas the rightmost panel explicitly compares Shia, Sunni, and Christian respondents in the unobtrusive model.

[27] Interview, Beirut, 7 July 2008.

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