

# 15 Questions for the Lebanese Shia Community

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July 2015

[www.hayyabina.org](http://www.hayyabina.org)

### Lending an Ear to the Lebanese Shia Community

In contrast to Lebanon's many other communities, the image held typically of the members of its Shia community is unique. On one hand, it may be viewed as an electrified crowd gathered in a stadium waving flags and saluting its beloved leader. On the other, it may conjure images of a morose procession trailing a coffin draped with a yellow flag as Kalashnikovs are fired wildly into the air. In either case, however, the crowd is *mobilized* and exhibits extreme fervor. These images of Lebanon's Shia community are widespread among Lebanese and non-Lebanese alike. Nevertheless, while they may well be representative self-images held by members of the community, they are neither wholly accurate nor inaccurate. In fact, despite the relative veracity of these impressions, most people have difficulty understanding that such images are little more than *dated snapshots*. Stated otherwise, these images, formed over time, are not the outcome of a natural process. Instead, they result from the convergence

of various domestic, regional, religious, social and other factors.

When the Lebanese civil war ended officially, Israel continued to occupy South Lebanon. Concurrently, Hezbollah (which had established itself several years earlier as the primary shareholder of political and popular representation for the Lebanese Shia community—at the expense of the Amal Movement, left-wing and nationalist parties) seized the opportunity to monopolize resistance to that occupation thanks to generous political and military support from Iran. As a result, Hezbollah, over time, infused the Shia community with a high degree of *militarization*—literally and metaphorically. And while the nuanced term “militarization” has often been used to describe the hierarchical relationship between the “leading party” (Hezbollah) and the Shia community, the concept itself should be examined from a more social perspective.

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The Lebanese Shia community has never had the opportunity to enjoy true peace, despite the 1990 “conclusion” of the civil war, Israel’s withdrawal from South Lebanon in 2000 or the end of “Syrian tutelage” in Lebanon in 2005. As a result, Hezbollah inserted itself into virtually every aspect of daily life in the Shia community, eventually making it little more than a “closed society.” In fact, Hezbollah’s involvement in Syria (in a seemingly endless war of attrition) has simply compounded the strife that has long since been a constant feature in that community.

Given this “alternate reality,” highlighting issues related to *private life* in that community is tantamount to unclocking its existence as a “secret defense force.” Reflective of that identity, its residential areas have become huge compounds governed by a prescribed code of conduct. Evidence of that change was demonstrated following the July 2006 war, which caused widespread destruction in some Shia areas, including Dahiyeh (Beirut’s southern suburb). To tout its “victimization,” Hezbollah opened Dahiyeh

and other parts of Lebanon’s “Shiiland” to Lebanese and other curious visitors. However, that “welcome mat” was quickly removed. Soon after the “gates” had been thrown open, the entrances to “Shiiland” slammed closed once again.

In view of that closure and Hezbollah’s overwhelming presence in all facets of Lebanese life, gathering the opinions of Lebanese Shia seemed entirely unnecessary to many domestic actors and foreign observers. After all, Hezbollah and the Lebanese Shia community had apparently become synonymous. Yet while the ability to take such measurements gained (and lost) importance during certain critical points in Lebanon’s recent history, the most effective means were guesstimates of the extent to which the Lebanese Shia community was supporting the choices Hezbollah was making. After all, hard data was virtually unavailable.

In reality, the opinions of those in Lebanon’s Shia community are no less quantifiable than are

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those of any other group. Moreover, Hezbollah's assimilation of that community created challenging impediments to producing any comprehensive understanding of Lebanese sociopolitical dynamics—a priority that has always remained at the top of Hayya Bina's agenda.

In 2013, Hayya Bina oversaw the first objective public opinion poll to focus on Lebanese Shia. That initial survey was conducted in Dahiyeh, home to the largest conglomeration of Shia in Lebanon, whose members hail from various regions throughout the country and represent the entire spectrum of social classes. In 2014, Hayya Bina conducted a second poll in Dahiyeh.<sup>(\*)</sup>

Hayya Bina shared the findings from each of those polls in the hope that they would stimulate open debate. Interestingly, these data have been used widely among Lebanese notables, to include Hezbollah's own Secretary General.

During a televised interview with al-Mayadeen, Sayyed Nasrallah was asked, "Do you think your community supports Hezbollah's involvement in Syria?" In response, Nasrallah referred to the data collected by Hayya Bina during its "2014 Polling Dahiyeh" initiative. The response to that specific question was that 95.3% of respondents supported Hezbollah's actions in Syria. But Nasrallah failed to mention that the nearly unanimous response did not reflect broader community sentiment. In that poll, 59% of the respondents indicated that Lebanon was heading in the "wrong direction," 74% disclosed that their financial situation was worse than it was the year before, 75% indicated that they knew someone who had been killed fighting in Syria and 52.8% (of that 75%) who expressed trust in a specific leader answered that Hassan Nasrallah was the leader they trusted most. Clearly, an opinion expressed about a single issue cannot be extrapolated conveniently to be representative of other issues. After all, a snapshot can never be an adequate substitute for reality.

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(\*) Results from the 2013 and 2014 polls are available on [www.ShiaWatch.com](http://www.ShiaWatch.com)

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To advance our efforts toward helping produce an open and quantitative understanding of Lebanon's Shia community, Hayya Bina decided to broaden the scope of its 2015 poll. Regardless of its outcome, that poll represents an effort to "lend a close ear" to the various trends within that community, and it is essential to obtaining a real-time understanding of the prevailing Lebanese situation. Rather than remain tethered to Dahiyeh, this latest research effort includes the far broader expanse of Lebanon's "Shialand." Sample size obviously had to be adjusted, and the range of questions asked needed to be broader than in the previous polls to reflect new domestic and regional developments. Aside from summarizing the detailed findings gleaned from answers to representative questions and arranging them according to income, age, region and gender (when we thought doing so would be particularly informative), the presentation that follows

suggests several "reading hints" by cross-comparing some of the results and drawing attention to parallel responses. Obviously, these suggestions are not intended as anything more than suggestions for the open debate mentioned previously.

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Finally, we would not have mentioned Nasrallah's use of this Hayya Bina product were it not for the campaign Hezbollah orchestrated against its Lebanese Shia opponents—the lion's share of which was directed against Hayya Bina and its team. And while the most recent barrage was certainly not the first of its kind, our open response to the successive waves of attacks leveled against us (beginning in early 2008) was to reserve comment and stay the course of our actions—whether field-based or research oriented.

### Methodology

- The survey was overseen by Hayya Bina, which also provided the analysis and presentation
- Fieldwork was conducted by a regional research company and administered by 26 field workers
- The survey was conducted from February 25 to March 11, 2015
- The sample size was 1000 men and women (50/50) over the age of 18
- There were 1000 respondents, 59.3% of which were from the South, 14.5% from Beirut/Mt Lebanon and 26.2% from Bekaa
- The sample was drawn using the Probability Proportional to Size (PPS) sampling technique
- Interviews were conducted face-to-face
- Statistical data analysis was conducted using SPSS 21
- Calculated margin of error: +/-3.1
- Response rate for this survey was 42% (compared to a national average of 65%)
- Figures in charts or tables may not add up to exactly 100% due to rounding

### Selective Timeline

December 2014 - mid-March 2015

#### December

**3** Lebanon's future interior minister concedes that no security plan exists per se for Dahiyeh, since any such plan is already part of Lebanon's "defense strategy."

**4** An-Nusra Front announces that it murdered one of the Lebanese prisoners of war it held (a Shia from Bekaa north). News of the killing raises tensions in the area and came after a number of "Islamists," including women, are arrested by operatives from the intelligence branch of the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF).

**8** Authorities in Bahrain announce that the bomb that killed a policeman several days before was fabricated by the "terrorist group Hezbollah."

**15** Ali Akbar Velayati, Iran's foreign minister in 1994 and current foreign affairs adviser to the country's supreme leader, says that Iranian influence "stretches from Yemen to Lebanon."

**16** Hezbollah refuses to comment on rumors that it discovered a Mossad infiltrator.

**23** The first dialogue session between Hezbollah and the Future Movement (FM) is moderated by Speaker Nabih Berri. The meeting took place following weeks of discussions between the Shia and Sunni camps, which were led jointly by Berri and Druze

leader Walid Jumblatt. In addition to attempts by Hezbollah and the FM to attract satellite Christian parties, talks between the Lebanese Forces and the FPM were being explored.

**27** First anniversary of the assassination of Mohammad Chatah, a former minister and counselor to Saad Hariri.

**29** Hezbollah condemns the arrest by Bahrain authorities of Sheikh Ali as-Salman, Secretary General of al-Wifak Movement—the leading Shia opposition organization in Bahrain.

#### January

**2** The UN secretary general renews for three more years the mandate for the Special Tribunal for Lebanon.

**3** The director general of Lebanon's General Security organization announces that Sunni Islamist fighters are trying to take control of several villages in the Lebanese-Syrian border area and that ISIS is attempting to wrest full control of al-Qalamoun.

**4** An-Nusra Front attacks a Hezbollah position near Flita (Qalamoun) and posts a related video.

**5** In an effort to staunch the flow of refugees, Lebanon begins

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implementing severe regulatory measures that apply to Syrians seeking access to Lebanon.

**7** The offices of Charlie Hebdo are attacked in Paris, and al-Qaeda soon claims responsibility.

**10** A double suicide bombing targets a coffee shop in the Alawi stronghold of Jabal Mohsen (North).

**11** Bahrain protests to the Lebanese consular delegation statements made recently by Hezbollah's secretary general.

**12** Lebanese police raid the central portion of Roumieh Prison, which houses Sunni Islamists. The interior minister notes that the Jabal Mohsen bombing was masterminded and coordinated from within that building.

**15** Hezbollah Secretary General Hassan Nasrallah gives a lengthy and somewhat euphoric interview to al-Mayadeen TV. Nasrallah refers to Hayya Bina's "2014 Polling Dahiyeh" initiative in order to demonstrate Hezbollah's popularity within the Shia community.

Following its investigation into the double bombing in Tripoli, the LAF announces that it has foiled a series of additional suicide attacks.

The LAF announces that it located and disposed of a booby-trapped car near Orsal.

**18** Israel attacks a joint Hezbollah-Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) patrol in Quneitra (Syria). The casualties

include a high-ranking Iranian officer and Jihad Mughniyeh, son of the late Imad Mughniyeh.

The Lebanese cabinet takes another symbolic step toward accepting the presidential vacancy that has persisted since May 2014. New ambassadors will be "approved" by the cabinet rather than requiring them submit their credentials to the president of the republic.

**19** Jihad Mughniyeh is buried beside his father in Dahiyeh.

**22** The LAF announces that it located and disposed of a booby-trapped car near Orsal.

**23** Five Lebanese soldiers are killed in clashes with rebels in Orsal. | King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia dies at age 90.

**28** Hezbollah responds to the recent Israeli attack with an operation in the contested tri-border area of Shebaa Farms. Two Israeli service members are killed and several others injured.

**29** IRCG General Qassem Suleimani, commander of the Quds Force, visits Beirut after taking ownership of Hezbollah's operation in the Shebaa Farms.

Also visiting Lebanon was Alaeddin Boroujerdi, chairman of the Iranian Parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Committee.

**30** In a speech on recent developments, Hezbollah Secretary General Hassan Nasrallah says, "We don't want a new war but we don't fear it if it happens."

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**31** The Washington Post leaks information about a CIA role in the assassination of Imad Mughniyeh on February 12, 2008.

### February

**1** An-Nusra Front claims responsibility for a bomb attack in Damascus. Six people were killed and 22 injured when the bus that was transporting Lebanese Shia visitors to Shia shrines in Syria was attacked.

IRCG General Jaafari reasserts that Iran will continue to support its allies in the region to preserve its “national security.”

**3** Fifth dialogue session between Hezbollah and the FM, moderated again by Speaker Nabih Berri.

**5** Dialogue between Hezbollah and the FM produces an agreement to remove all political posters/propaganda from the streets in all major cities.

**7** Commencement of the “Southern Syria Offensive” in which the Syrian Army, Hezbollah and militia elements from Iran and Afghanistan attempt to retake Daraa province from FSA.

**8** The attempt to remove an Islamic sign in Tripoli (per the agreement reached in the fifth round of dialogue between Hezbollah and the FM) creates tension between citizens and security forces.

The same day, Hezbollah permits Christians in the southern village of Jbaa’ to ring the church bell for the first time since 1977.

**12** The rapid advancement of Syrian forces south of Damascus is halted by snowstorm.

LAF and ISF initiate their security plan for the (Shia) Bekaa to arrest criminals.

**14** Impromptu visit to Beirut by Saad Hariri to mark the 10th anniversary of his father’s assassination. The speech he gave reiterated some common principles and advised that the dialogue with Hezbollah be continued.

**15** To commemorate the 36th anniversary of the Iranian revolution, Iran’s ambassador to Beirut participated in the opening of several new Iranian-funded roads.

**16** Hezbollah Secretary General Hassan Nasrallah gives a speech to mark the annual commemoration of “martyred Leaders.” Nasrallah reveals for the first time that Hezbollah is fighting in Iraq and urges Hariri to join him in the fight against “terrorism” there, since doing so is tantamount to fighting Israeli occupation.

**26** The LAF takes control of several areas adjacent to the Christian village of Ras Baalbek along the Lebanese-Syrian border.

### March

**9** Prime Minister T. Salam rules out security coordination between Lebanese and Syrian armies or governments in warding off militants based in Syria.

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**13** Lebanon's ministry of foreign affairs receives official notification from the UAE regarding its decision to expel dozens of (primarily Shia) Lebanese for security reasons.

**14** Modest commemoration of the 10th anniversary of the March 14 Alliance (2005).

### Also during this period:

» Clashes in Qalamoun continue between Hezbollah elements and Syrian rebels. The battle included support by Syrian Army helicopters and LAF artillery.

» The Ain al-Hilweh Palestinian refugee camp is scrutinized closely when it is disclosed that several senior Islamist elements (originally from Tripoli) were being sheltered there.

» The debate over Syrian refugees continues.

» No resolution regarding the Lebanese POWs taken by an-Nusra Front and ISIL (Daesh) on August 2, 2014 during the Orsal battle.

» The paralysis related to Lebanon's presidential vacancy (since May 2014) continues.

### Main Findings

> **Where is Lebanon heading?**

81.3% of the Shia in Lebanon think things are moving in the wrong direction.

> **Lebanese Shia religious practices**

43% consider themselves observant, among whom, 33% follow Khamenei's religious views (including *Wilayat al-Faqih*) and others follow religious pundits (*Marja'*) who do not believe in that political-theological theory (Fadlallah).

> **How do Lebanese Shia see themselves?**

While 60.9% consider that their Lebanese citizenship gives them the greatest sense of pride, and while 24.4% consider that it's their Shia identity which gives them this sense, only 0.4% of the Shia take pride in their political identity.

> **Finances on the home front**

66% say that their financial situation is worse than it was last year.

> **The Lebanese economy**

86% consider the country's economic situation worse than it was last year.

> **Inter-confessional relations**

52.6% believe the relationship between Lebanon's various communities is worse than it was last year.

> **Is Taif still valid?**

52.8% think the Taif Agreement is no longer relevant to Lebanon.

> **What is the most important threat?"**

57.2% consider the *takfiri* threat the most important issue facing the community.

> **What is the most secure location in "Shialand"?**

55.6% think the South is safer than Dahiyeh or the Bekaa.

> **Armed non-State entities?**

70.3% consider it permissible for groups and parties outside the government to maintain arms.

> **"Martyrs" courtesy of Syria**

53.2% know someone from their neighborhood/village/family who was killed in Syria.

> **Hezbollah in Syria**

78.7% support Hezbollah's involvement in Syria.

> **How secure do you feel?**

79.9% think Hezbollah's actions in Syria make them feel more secure.

> **Hezbollah's involvement in Syria and its impacts on inter-Lebanese relations**

50% believe Hezbollah's involvement in Syria has been detrimental to relations between the Shia and other Lebanese communities.

> **Which leader do you trust most?**

61.5% say they trust a specific leader to provide a better future for their family; the top two are Hassan Nasrallah (69.9%) and Nabih Berri (17.2%).

> **Hezbollah and the LAF**

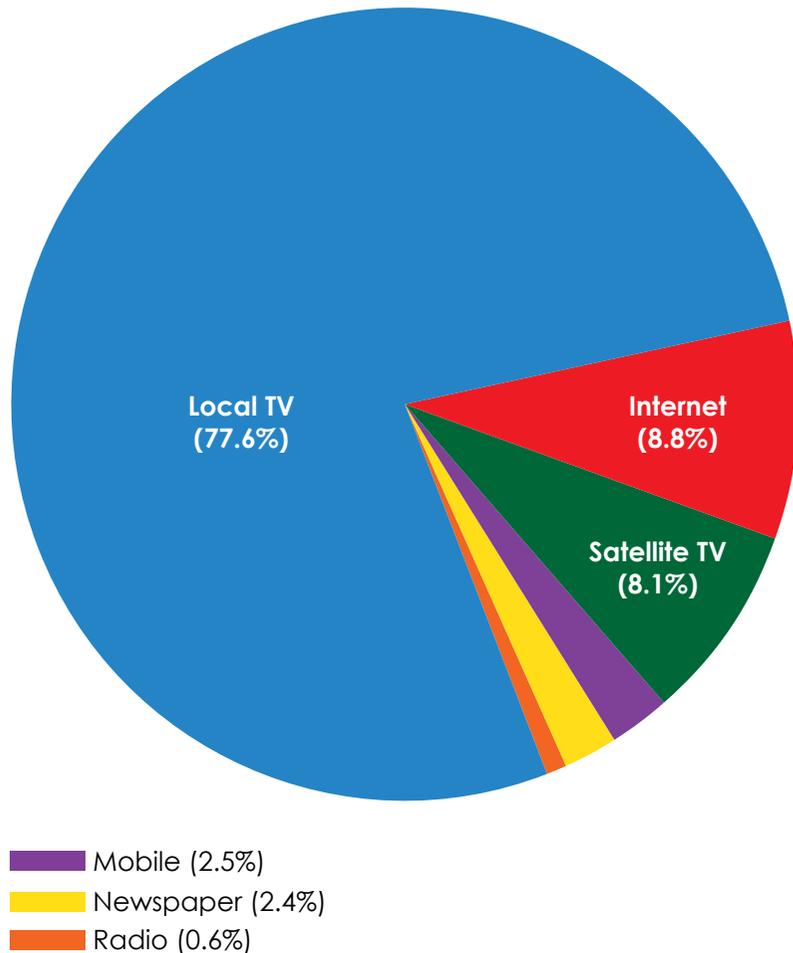
95.6% think there should be more cooperation between the Lebanese Army and Hezbollah.

> **Alawi, Houthi, Shia...all fight the same war**

61.9% believe the Alawites in Syria, the Shia in Iraq and the Houthi in Yemen are fighting for the same cause.

# How Do you Become Informed?

### [1.1] On which news source do you rely the most?



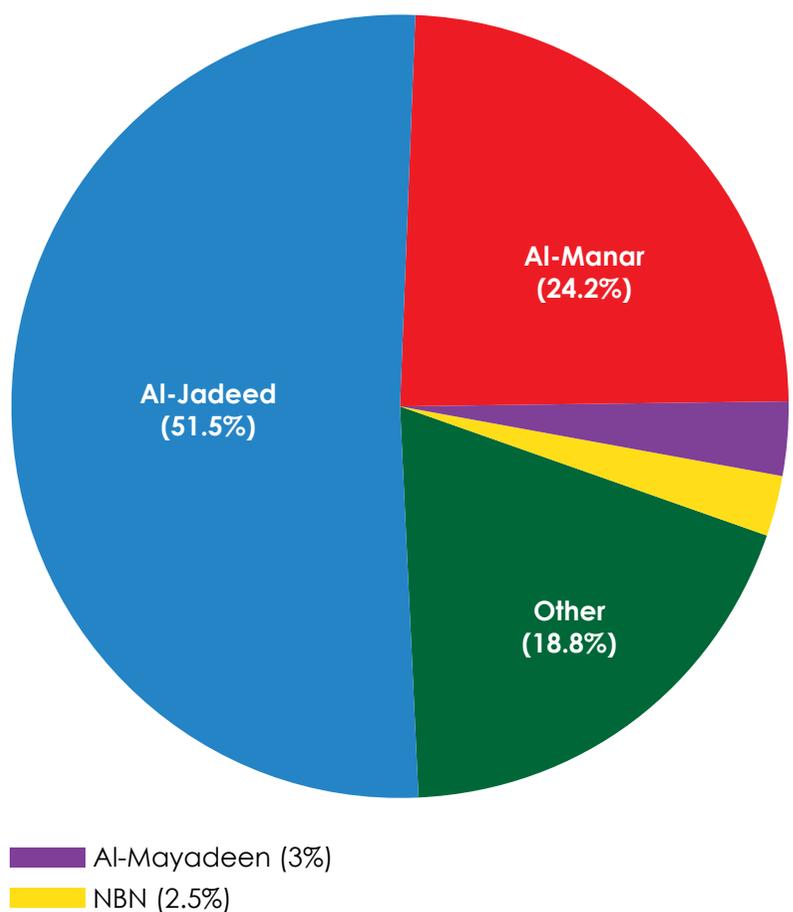
Local and satellite television channels remain the main source of information.

Internet use is far more common among younger individuals (14.3% of respondents under 39 compared to 5.3% of those between 40 and 59 and 0% of those 60 and above) as are mobile devices (3.3%, 2.5% and 0%).

Beirutis are more likely to use Internet news conduits (20%).

Women are somewhat more likely to watch local television (81.1%) than men (71.9%), who are slightly more likely to obtain their news from the Internet (10.6% of men compared to 7.6% of women), newspapers (3.9% of men compared to 1.5% of women) and satellite TV (9.9% of men and 7% of women).

### [1.2] What is your favorite news outlet?



Al-Jadeed remains by far the favorite “Shia” TV station. The network takes a generally “pro-

resistance” editorial line but does not hesitate to take “politically incorrect” approaches (when doing so suits its interests) to issues that concern citizens, such as corruption and nepotism. Although Al-Jadeed is followed in popularity by Hezbollah’s official al-Manar channel, the gap between the two stations is substantial.

- Interestingly, older respondents seem to favor al-Manar (37% of those 60 and above watch it compared with only 20% of 18 – 39 year olds and 25% of 40 – 59 year olds).
- Al-Jadeed is more popular in the South (58.3%) and Bekaa (46.6%) than in Beirut/Mt. Lebanon (32.4%). In contrast, Al-Manar is more popular in the Bekaa (29%) than in Beirut (22.1%) or the South (22.6%).

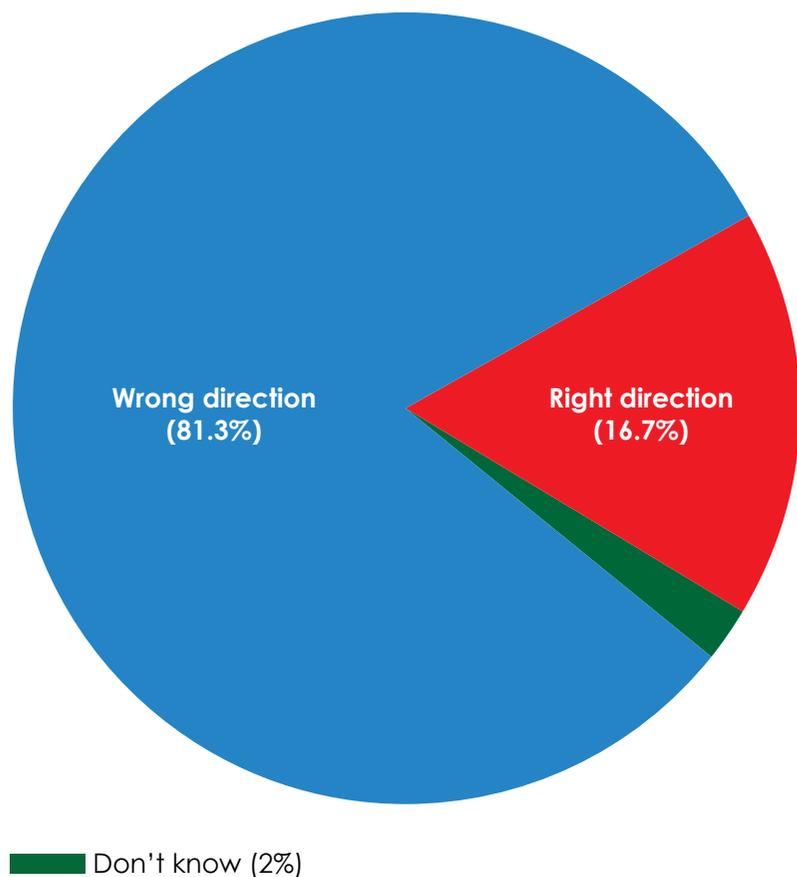
*It should be noted that polling occurred before commencement of an anti-al-Jadeed campaign following its critical coverage of Nasrallah’s March 27 speech in which he commented on Saudi military action in Yemen.*

More information about this “media quarrel” can be found at [www.ShiaWatch.com](http://www.ShiaWatch.com) in Quo Vadis Hezbollah?

# **Political and Economic Landmarks**

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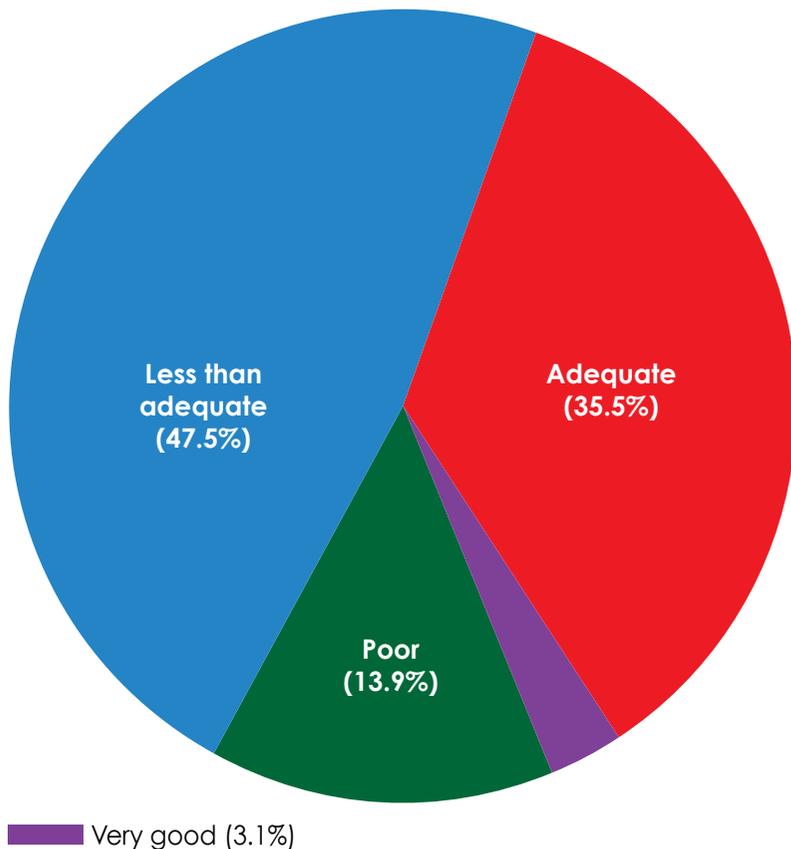
### [2.1] In general, would you say that things in Lebanon are moving in the right or wrong direction?



The overwhelming majority of respondents in every group believe the country is headed in the “wrong direction.” This demonstrably pessimistic opinion is corroborated by the answers given for question #2.4: “Is the country’s economic situation better or worse than last year?” In that case, 86% of the respondents say “worse.” Nonetheless, several interesting, albeit minor variations are evident.

- Those in the lower-middle income bracket (salary between \$501 – \$1,000/month) are slightly more optimistic (19.4%) about the country’s direction than are the poorest (less than \$500/month), 12.5% of whom think the country is heading in the right direction or the wealthiest (more than \$3,500/month) at 14.7%.
- Respondents from the South are also significantly more pessimistic (84.8% wrong direction) than respondents in Beirut (75.2%) or the Bekaa (76.7%).
- Middle-aged (40 – 59 years old) respondents are also slightly more pessimistic (84.6%) than the youngest (79.8%) or oldest (78.6%).

### [2.2] How would you describe your personal/household financial situation?



Overall, younger people and those living in the Bekaa indicate that they are enjoying the best financial circumstances.

- Unsurprisingly, wealthier respondents are more likely to report being in an “adequate” financial situation; 50% of those making more than \$3,500/month say their situation is adequate compared with only 43.9% of those making \$2,001 – \$3,500/month, 37.2% of those making \$1,001 – \$2,000/month, 30.5% of those making \$501 – \$1,000/month and 21.4% of those making less than \$500/month.
- Those who report that their situation is “less than adequate” are nearly constant across the three lowest brackets of 48.2%, 50.8% and 48.7%, respectively. This figure dropped to 41.7% of those making \$2,001 – \$3,500/month and 23.5% of people making more than \$3,500/month.
- People in the South (50.1%) and Beirut (49%) are considerably more likely to respond “less than adequate” than respondents in the Bekaa (40.8%). Older respondents are the most likely to report their situation as being “less than adequate” with 51.5% of 40 – 59 year olds and 50.3% of those 60 and above. This last group is considerably more likely to answer “poor” (20.1%) than are the youngest respondents (9.1%).
- The youngest respondents are more likely to

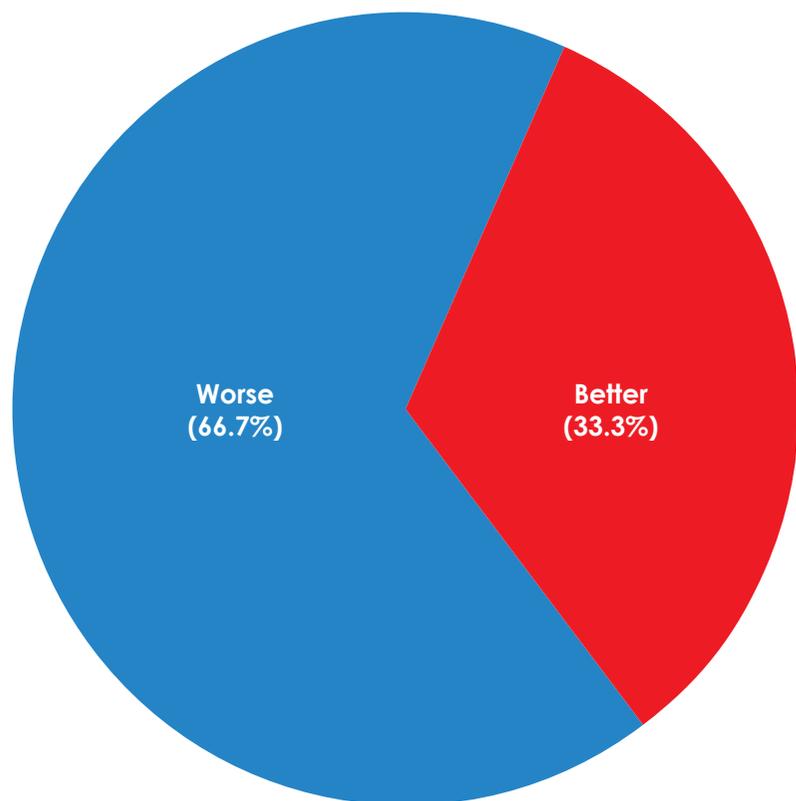
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report “very good” or “adequate” (4.3% and 43%, respectively) than those aged 40 – 59 (1.7%, 29.1%) and 60 and above (2.5%, 27%).

- People in the Bekaa are more likely to report “very

good” or “adequate” (4.2%, 45%) than those in Beirut (2.1%, 31.7%) or the South (2.9%, 32.2%). Beirutis are more likely to indicate “poor” (17.2%) than respondents in the South (14.8%) or Bekaa (9.8%).

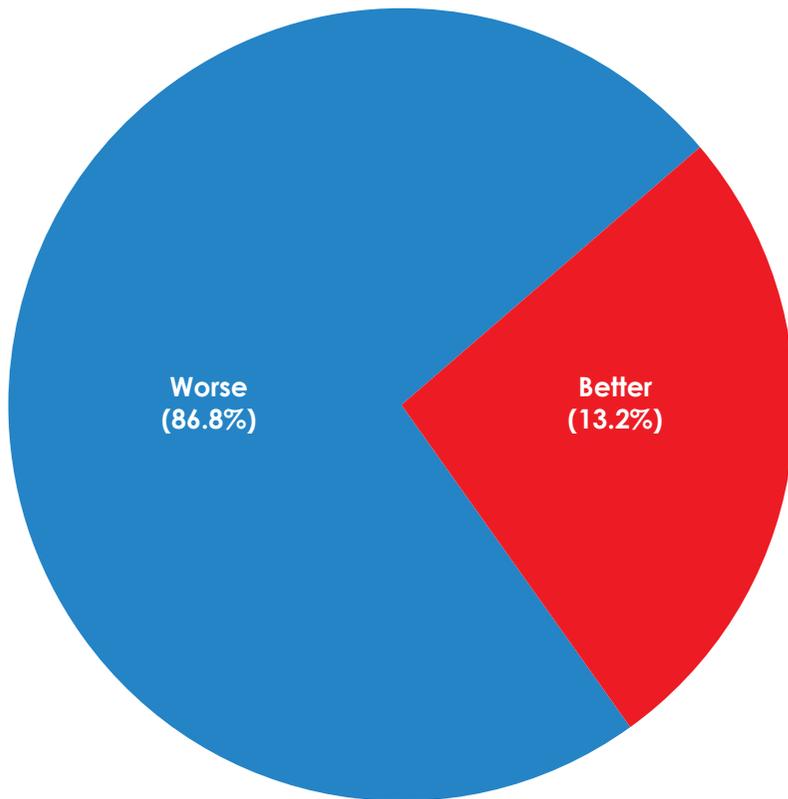
### [2.3] Is your financial situation better or worse than last year?



Again, unsurprisingly, younger, urban and wealthier respondents are more likely to report being better off than last year compared with their older, poorer and more rural counterparts.

- 64.7% of those in the wealthiest bracket (more than \$3,500/month) report being better off compared to 25% of those in the poorest (less than \$500/month)
- 43.4% of those aged 18 – 39 say they are better off than last year compared with only 21.4% of those 60 and above
- Respondents from the South acknowledge being measurably worse off (70.3%) than those from Beirut (59.3%) or the Bekaa (62.6%).

### [2.4] Is the country's economic situation better or worse than last year?



These results correspond strongly with the view expressed by 81.3% of all respondents that Lebanon is heading in the wrong direction (question #2.1) and the 81.3% who indicate that the relationship between

Lebanon's communities is the same or worse than last year (question #4.1). As tensions were extremely high in 2014, a vote for the "same" is not an indication of rosy relations. Younger, urban and wealthier respondents are more likely to report that the country's economic situation is better than last year.

- Though all respondents are pessimistic, the wealthiest and poorest are slightly more likely to report that the country's situation is better than last year compared with their counterparts in between (\$500 – \$3,500/month). Those in the middle-income bracket (\$1,001 – \$2,000/month) are the most pessimistic of all (90.1%), while those in the poorest bracket are the most optimistic (21.4% of respondents making less than \$500/month indicate that the country is better off compared to only 9.9% of those making \$1,000 – \$2,000/month).
- The youngest respondents are the most likely to answer "better than last year" (18%) compared with respondents aged 60 and above (6.9%).
- Respondents from the South are considerably more likely to indicate "worse" (92.4%) than are Beirutis (77.9%) or respondents from the Bekaa (79%).

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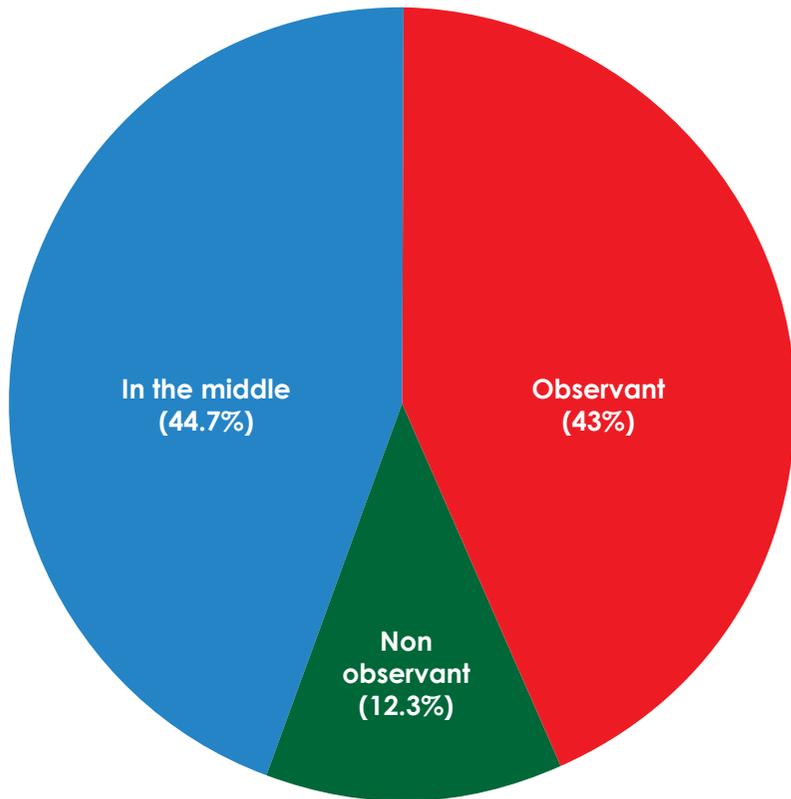
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**Identity**

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### [3.1] Do you consider yourself religiously observant?



As evident in the chart above, the “observant” and “in the middle” categories are remarkably close. While observant may be easier to

understand since it entails following a defined set of permissible and non-permissible actions,” the “in the middle” category remains the most difficult to define since certain religious practices may be loaded with more “sectarianism”/pride in identity than religiosity.

- Respondents in the lower-middle (\$501 – \$1,000/month) and middle (\$1,001 – \$2,000/month) income brackets are the most likely to answer “observant” (46.5% and 45.3%) while the wealthiest are the least likely (26.5%). Respondents in the poorest (16.1%) and wealthiest (17.6%) groups are slightly more likely to answer “not observant.”
- Older respondents are more likely to report being “observant” (59.7%) than are younger (34.5%) or middle-aged (47.1%) people, while younger respondents are more likely to report being “in the middle” (50.4%) or “non-observant” (15.1%) than middle-aged (41.2% and 11.8%) and older (35.2% and 5%) respondents.
- Women are considerably more observant (48.9%)

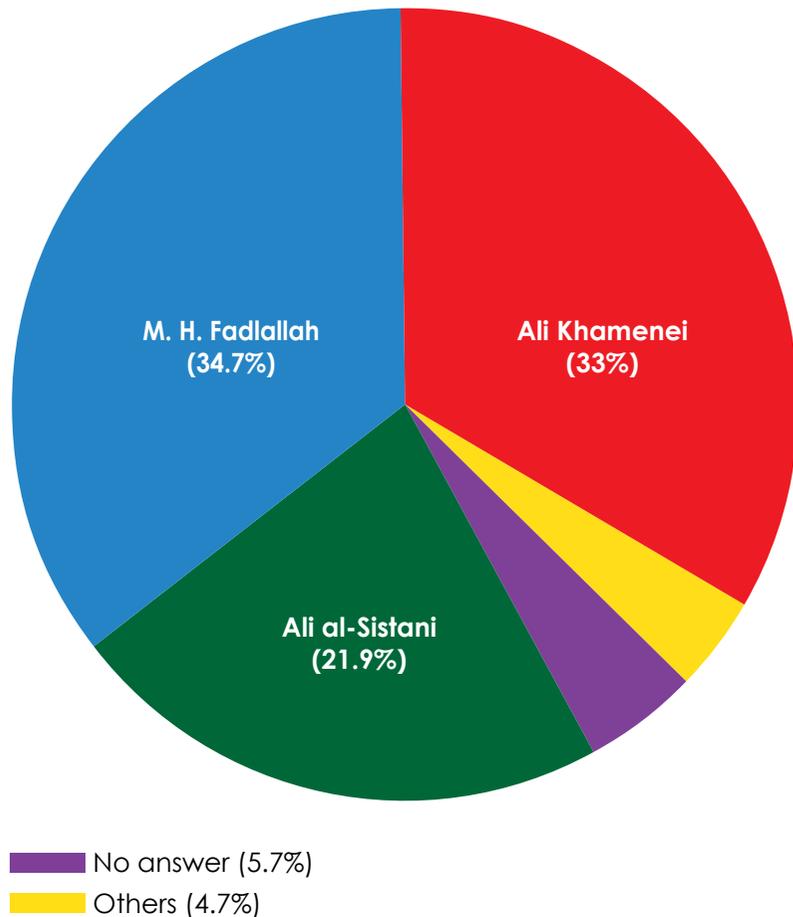
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than are men (33.5%). Further, compared with 17.4% of men, only 9.1% of women say they are not observant.

- Respondents from the South are considerably more likely to select “observant” (49.2%) than respondents from Beirut/Mt. Lebanon (28.3%) or the Bekaa (37%).

Those from Beirut are more likely to report being “in the middle” (51%) than people from the South (43%) or the Bekaa (45%). Respondents from Beirut (20.7%) and the Bekaa (17.9%) are also considerably more likely to choose “non-observant” than are their counterparts in the South (7.8%).

### [3.2] If observant, who is your source of imitation (*Marja'*)?



Clearly, Fadlallah and Khamenei compete for those who define themselves as “observant.” The two major features of this competition are whether one believes in *Wilayat al-Faqih* and which “source of imitation” an observant respondent will entrust with his or her religious tax (*khoms*). It should be borne in mind that diehard Hezbollah adherents have no choice but to follow Khamenei.

- Those in the wealthiest (44.4%) and poorest (45.5%) groups of respondents are the most likely to support Khamenei, with the former three times as likely to choose Khamenei (44.4%) than Fadlallah (11.1%). However, those in the middle-income brackets (\$500 – \$3,500/month) prefer Fadlallah much more (36.4% of those making \$500 – \$1,000/month; 36.6% of \$1,000 – \$2,000 and 26.1% in the \$2,000 – \$3,500/month bracket). The wealthiest group is also twice as likely to respond “no answer.”

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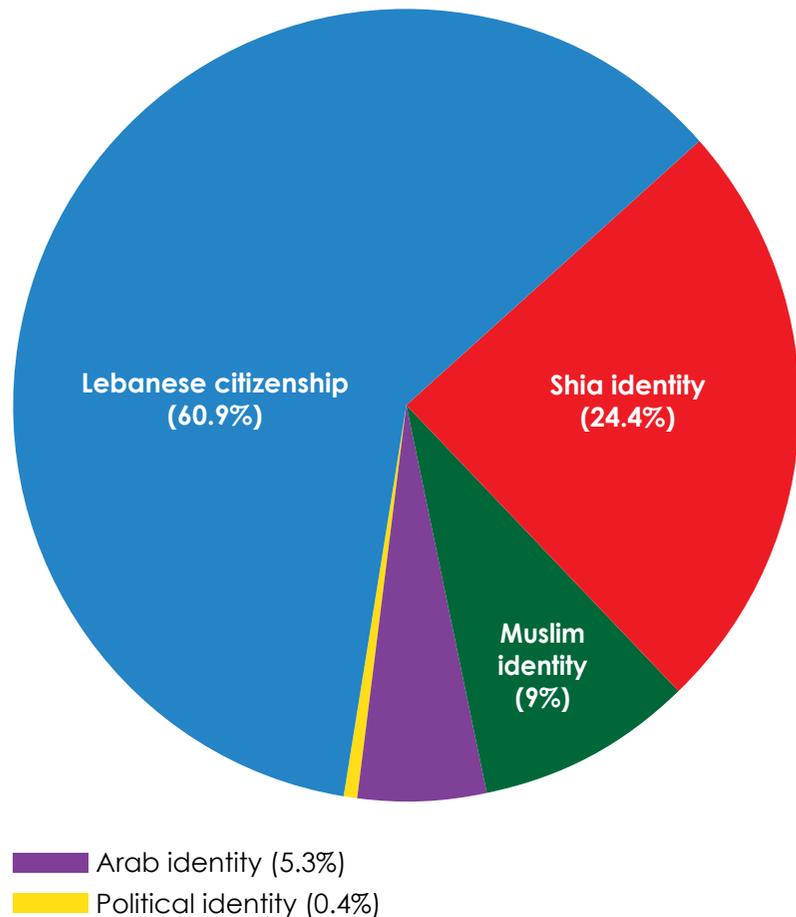
- Fadlallah is more popular among older respondents (44.2%) than among younger (26.9%) and middle-aged (36.9%) people, while Khamenei is more popular among younger respondents (49.1%) than those in the middle-aged (22.6%) and older (23.2%) categories.
- Women choose Fadlallah at much higher rates (38.5%) than men (25.6%), but trail men (slightly) in supporting Khamenei and Sistani.
- While Fadlallah is considerably more popular in Beirut (36.6%) and the South (38%) than Bekaa (23.7%),

Khamenei is far more popular in Bekaa (66%) than Beirut (41.5%) or the South (20.9%).

- In addition to being far more popular in the South (28.8%) than Beirut (14.6%) or Bekaa (4.1%), Al-Sistani is more popular among middle-aged (28%) than among younger (16.8%) and older (20%) respondents.

*As Sistani (like Fadlallah) rejects the Wilayat al-Faqih theory, it is interesting to note that combined, those who follow Fadlallah and Sistani represent 56.6% of observant Shia in Lebanon.*

### [3.3] Which of the following gives you the greatest sense of personal pride?



Based on the breakdown by income, age and geography, it is interesting to note that Shia identity is a low-income, young, urban trend. The more confessionally singular the region (Shia), the less often respondents tend to identify with being Shia. Beirut is the only place where “political identity” is even mentioned (0.4%). Finally, women are more likely to identify with their Shia identity than men.

- The poorest respondents are most likely to say “Shia” (30.4%) while wealthier the respondents are less likely to choose that identify. The three middle-income groups (those making between \$501 – \$1,000/month, \$1,001 – \$2,000/month and \$2,001 – \$3,500/month) select “Shia” in descending order: 28.3%, 25.8% and 12.2%. Only 8.8% of the wealthiest respondents (more than \$3,500/month) choose “Shia.”
- Interestingly, women are more likely to identify with being Shia (26.8%) than men (20.5%). Nearly the same in every other category, however, men are more likely to identify with being “Arab” (7.5%) than women (3.9%).
- Compared to 67.6% of the wealthiest cohort, the poorest respondents are the only group among which

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A Hayya Bina Project

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fewer than half choose “Lebanese” (48.2%). Younger respondents are more likely to assert pride in their Shia identity, with 29% of 18 – 39-year olds identifying as Shia compared with 22% of 40 – 59 year olds and only 17% of those 60 and above.

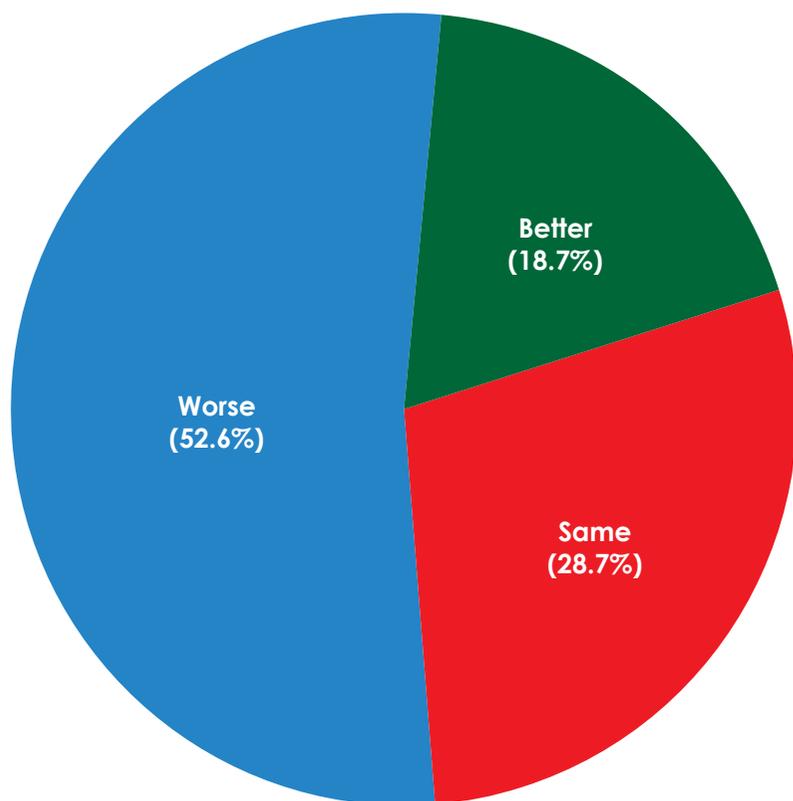
Older respondents are more likely to choose “Lebanese citizenship” (ranging from 53.9% among the youngest

to 66.4% and 69.9% among the oldest). Beirutis are far more likely to choose “Shia” (40.7%) than respondents from the South (21.1%) or Bekaa (22.9%) and “Muslim” (17.2%) than others (6.9% South and 9.2% Bekaa). Similarly, Beirutis are far less likely to say “Lebanese” (37.2%) than are respondents from the South (67.8%) and Bekaa (58.4%).

**“Us” vs. “Them”**

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### [4.1] Do you think the relationship between Lebanon's various communities is better or worse than last year?

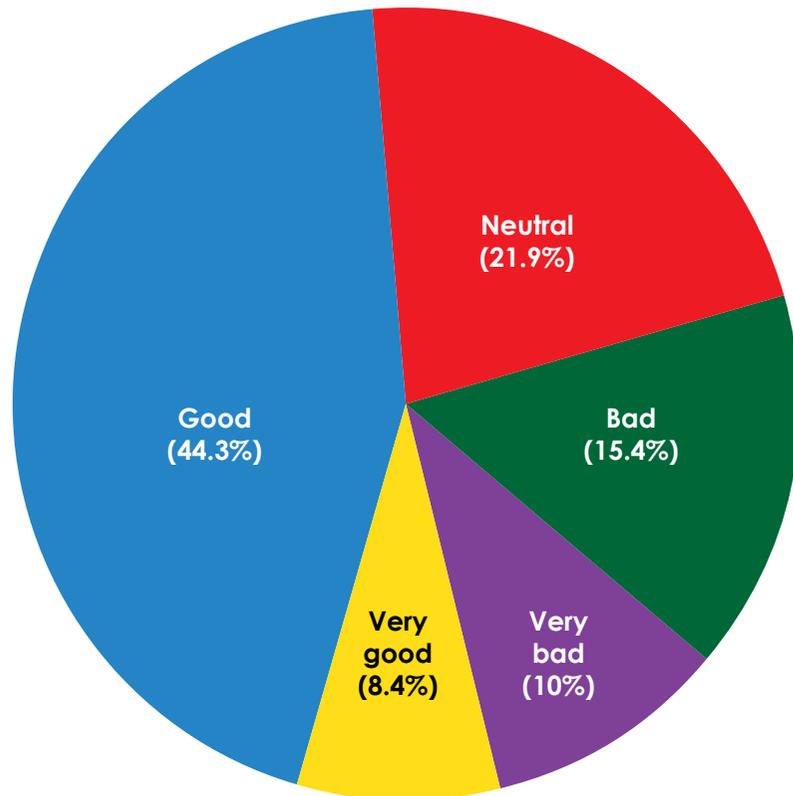


Obviously, the state of relations last year between Lebanon's various communities is no source of pride for any Lebanese. Consequently, the number of

respondents who indicate that those relations are either the same or worse implies that a large majority of Lebanese Shia have a negative assessment of the situation.

- Poorer respondents are less likely to answer "better" and more likely to answer "worse." Those closest to the middle-income bracket are more likely to report it being "the same" (39.4% of those making \$1,001 – \$2,000/month choose "same" compared with 6.6% of the poorest and 5.2% of the wealthiest).
- Respondents from the South are more likely to report "worse" (55.8%) than are Beirutis (47.6%) or those from the Bekaa (48.1%). This may be explained by the military development that occurred during February: tensions increased following the Israeli attack on a joint Hezbollah-IRGC patrol in Quneitra (Syria). Hezbollah launched a relatively restrained response from a non-Shia region in South Lebanon (Shebaa Farms).
- Respondents 18 – 39 are considerably less likely to say inter-communal relations are "better" (6.2%) compared with those 40 – 59 (19.9%) and 60 and above (22.9%).

### [4.2] How do you view the relationship between your community and the Sunnis?



As in much of this poll, tensions appear highest among young, urban and poor respondents when it comes to Sunni-Shia relations in Lebanon. This can

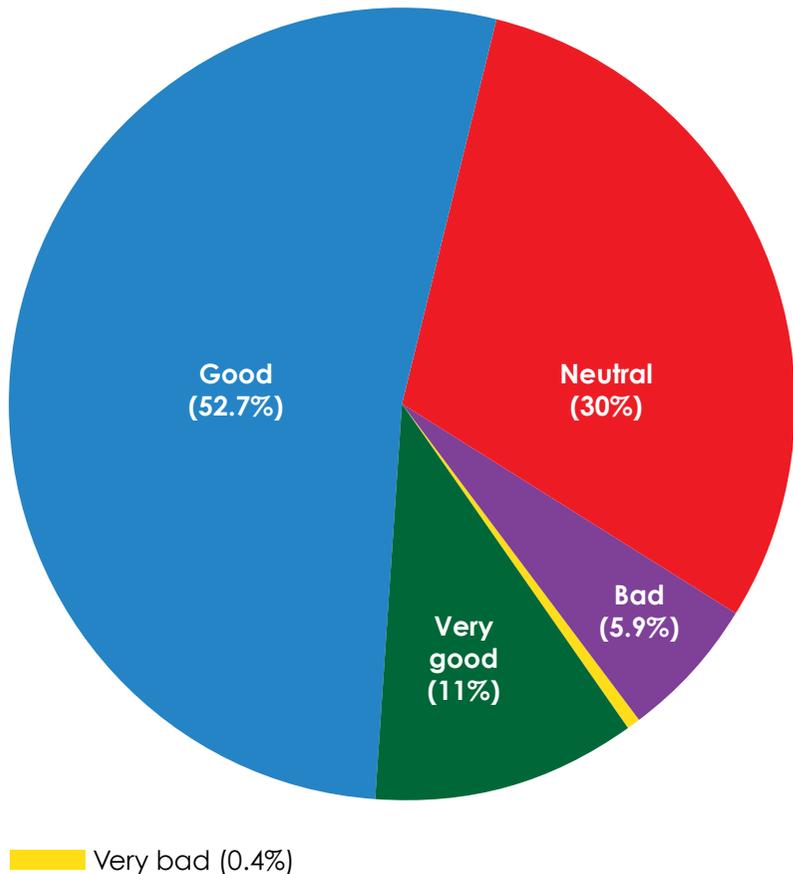
be compared with the fact that young, poor and urban respondents are also considerably more likely to identify as being "Shia" than being "Lebanese" (see question #3.3). As it reveals some of the most divided results of any question in the poll, this question reflects the particularly conflicting nature of relations between these two communities, such that the very real tensions and the will to live in peace among fellow compatriots are demonstrated clearly by each demographic interviewed.

- In all groups considered (Sunni, Druze, Alawite and Christian), parity is remarkable across gender, the slight exception being that women are less likely (6.8%) than men (15.1%) to report that relations with Sunnis are "very bad."
- The wealthiest respondents are the least likely to answer "very bad" and the most likely to answer "very good."
- The youngest respondents are more than twice as likely to characterize relations with Sunnis as "very bad" (13.6%) compared with 7.3% and 5.0% of the older respondents.

## 15 Questions for the Lebanese Shia Community

- The oldest respondents are considerably more likely to indicate that relations are “good” (59.1%) compared with 40.1% of those in the 18 – 39 bracket and 43.3% of those in the 40 – 59 bracket.
- Middle-aged respondents are slightly more likely to report “very good” (10.6%) compared with 7% of the youngest and 7.5% of the oldest.
- Beirutis are far more likely to report relations as “bad” or “very bad” (41.4%) than respondents from the South (19.2%) or the Bekaa (30.6%).

### [4.3] How do you view the relationship between your community and the Druze?

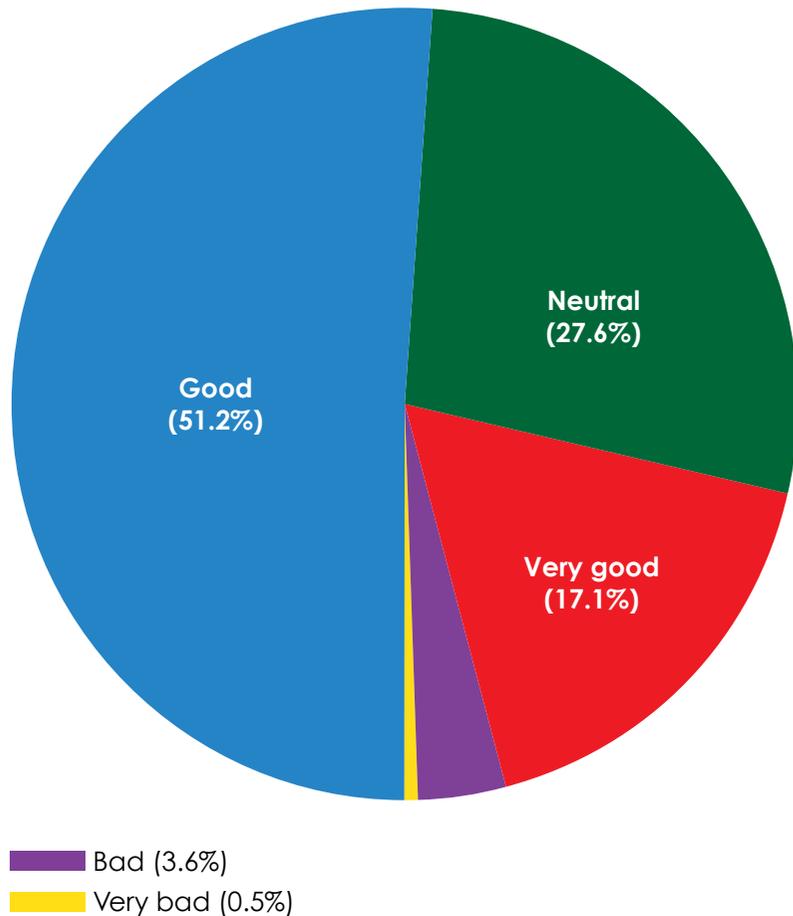


Again, younger, poorer and more urban respondents seem less likely than their older and wealthier

counterparts to characterize relations with the Druze as good.

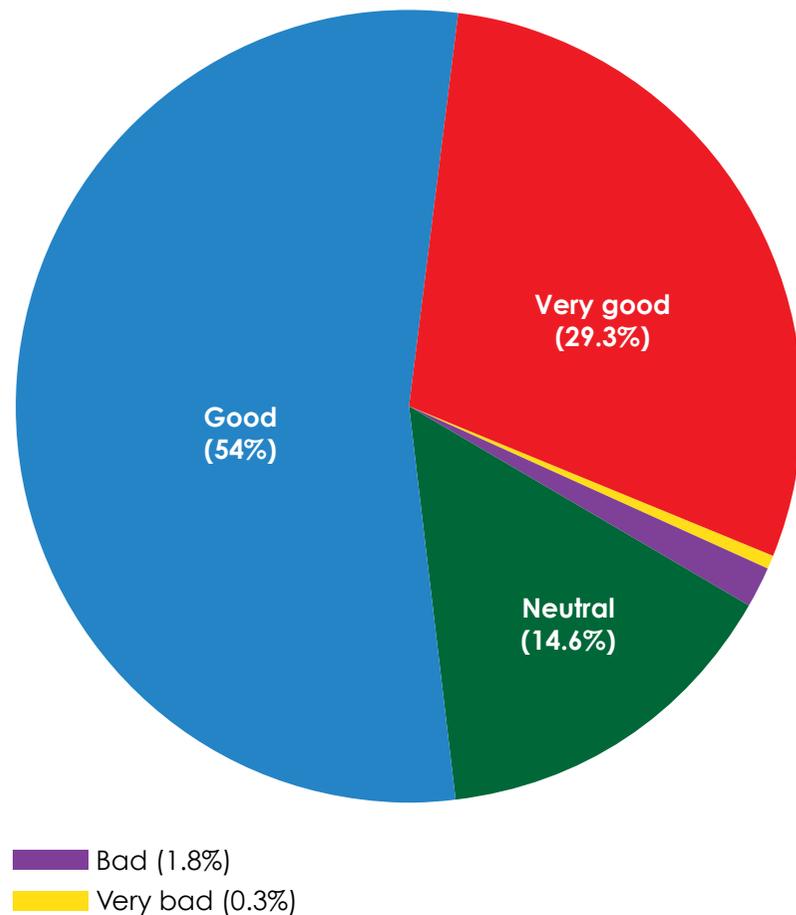
- Wealthier respondents are the least likely to characterize relations with the Druze as being “bad” (10.7% of the poorest and 2.9% of the wealthiest).
- That likelihood increases with income level (3.6% of the poorest respondents report “very good” compared with 20.6% of the wealthiest).
- Younger respondents are more likely to choose “neutral” (34.7%) than those 60 and over (13.8%), while respondents in the latter group are more likely to indicate “good” or “very good” (67.3%, 12.6%) than respondents 18 – 39 (49%, 9.9%) and 40 – 59 (51.3%, 11.8%).
- Respondents from the Bekaa are more likely to report “bad” or “very bad” (9.6%) than their counterparts from Beirut (4.8) or the South (5.3). In contrast, those from the South are considerably more likely to indicate “good” or “very good” (69.6%) than Beirutis (50.4%) or respondents from the Bekaa (57.7%).
- Beirutis are far more likely to indicate “neutral” (44.8%) than are respondents from the South (25.1%) or the Bekaa (32.8%).

### [4.4] How do you view the relationship between your community and the Alawis?



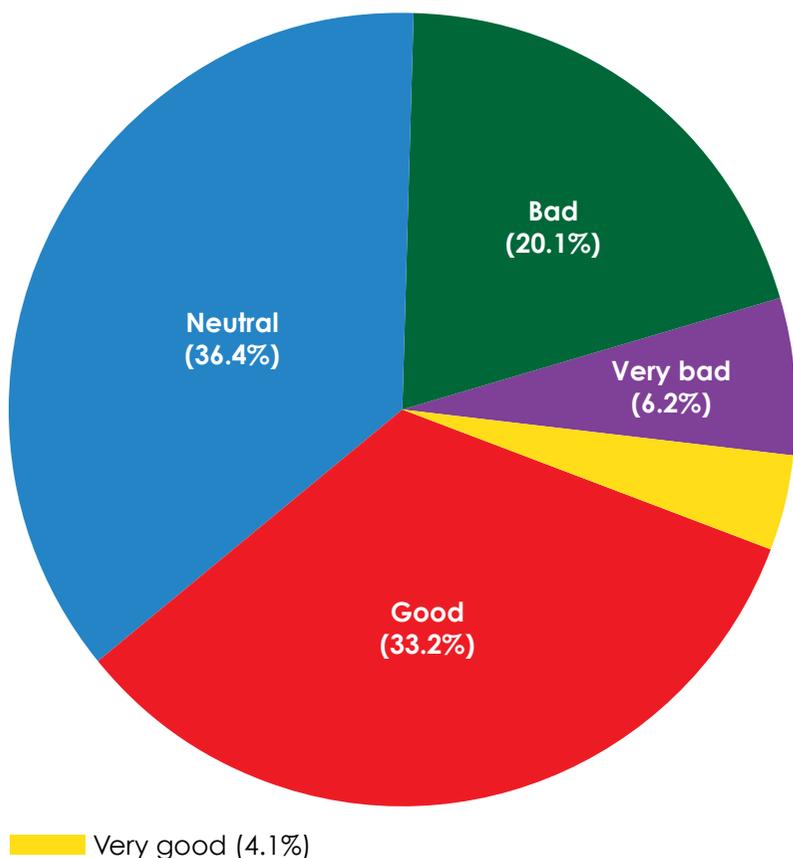
Interestingly, *only* 17.1% of respondents state that relations with the Alawis are “very good.” This does not match the “journalistic shorthand equation,” which tends to consider that Alawi and Shia are if not symbiotic, then likely to be fighting for similar causes. Responses of “good” compared with “very good” and “neutral” may be interpreted as indicative of the relationship between Lebanese Shia and Alawis having no special or preferential characteristics. Of note, there are no mixed Alawi-Shia confessional areas in Lebanon.

### [4.5] How do you view the relationship between your community and the Christians?



These results, largely positive, should be compared to those that describe relations with the Sunni community. Clearly, tensions between Shia and Christians are not as likely as between Shia and Sunni.

### [4.6] How do you view the relationship between your community and the Palestinian refugees?

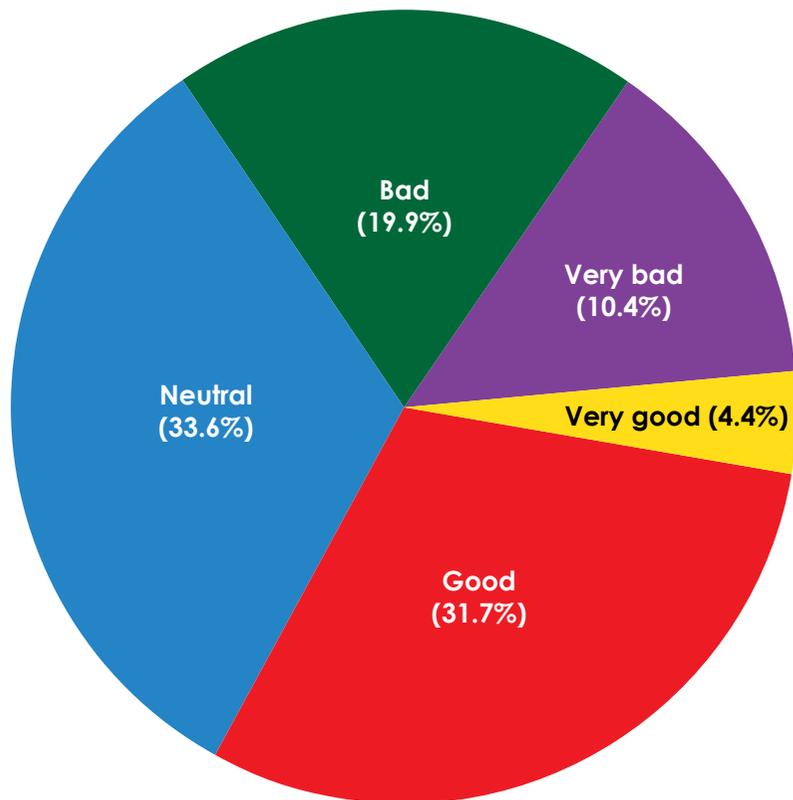


These mixed answers reflect the ambiguous relationship Lebanese Shia have with this community,

regardless of whether it is considered a “Sunni demographic” or is viewed simply as additional manpower for the labor market.

- The poorest respondents are the most likely to indicate “very bad” (10.7%) while the wealthiest are the least likely (0%).
- The wealthiest respondents are far more likely to report “very good” (20.6%) compared with any other group. Younger respondents are far more likely to indicate “bad” or “very bad” (24.8%, 8.9%) than are respondents aged 60 and above (14.5%, 1.9%).
- Older respondents are more likely to answer “good” (42.1%) than the youngest (28.7%).
- Respondents from Beirut (33.8%) and the Bekaa (32.4%) are more likely to choose “bad” or “very bad” than those from the South (21.8%); however, Southerners are more likely to report “good” or “very good” (43.1%) compared with Beirutis (26.8%) or respondents from the Bekaa (29.8%).
- The choice of “very good” appears very seldom among respondents (e.g., Christians, where 14.5%, 31.2% and 33.2% of respondents say relations are “very good”).

### [4.7] How do you view the relationship between your community and the Syrian refugees?

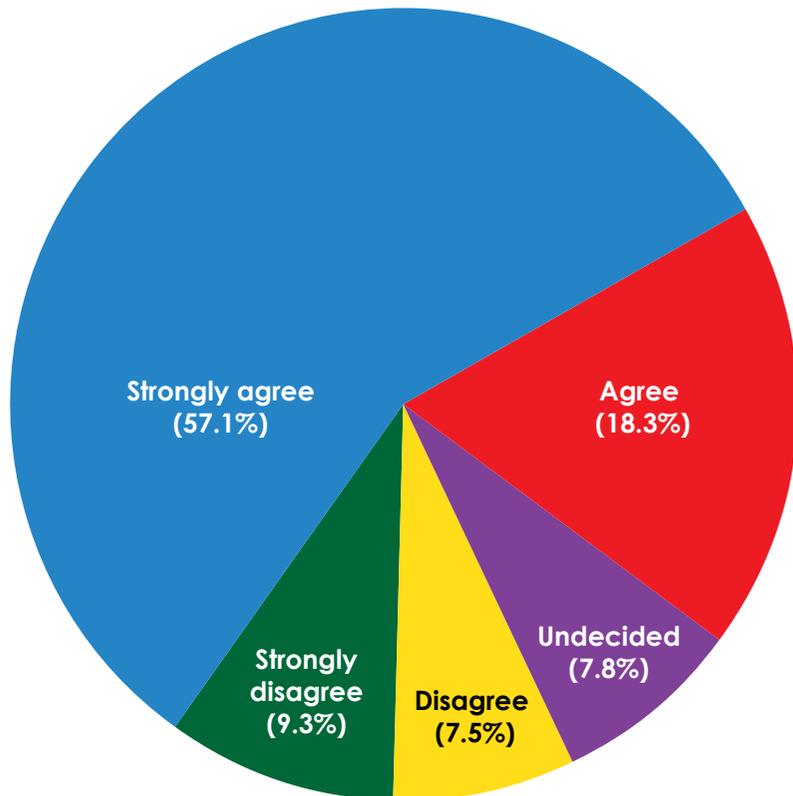


Once again, the poor, young and urban report markedly worse relations with Syrian refugees—a strong trend throughout this poll.

- The poorest respondents are more likely to report “very bad” (14.3%) than the wealthiest (5.9%). Inversely, however, the wealthiest respondents are much more likely to report “very good” (14.7%) than the poorest (3.6%).
- Younger respondents are more likely to choose “bad” or “very bad” (21.1%, 13.2%) than those 60 and above (17%, 5%). Remarkably, 33% of these two groups report “neutral” relations with Syrian refugees, while older respondents are more likely to answer “good” (40.3%) than respondents 18 – 39 (28.3%).
- Beirutis are most likely to indicate “bad”/“very bad” (37.2%) compared with respondents from the South (28.2%) and the Bekaa (31.3%).

# Do Elections Matter?

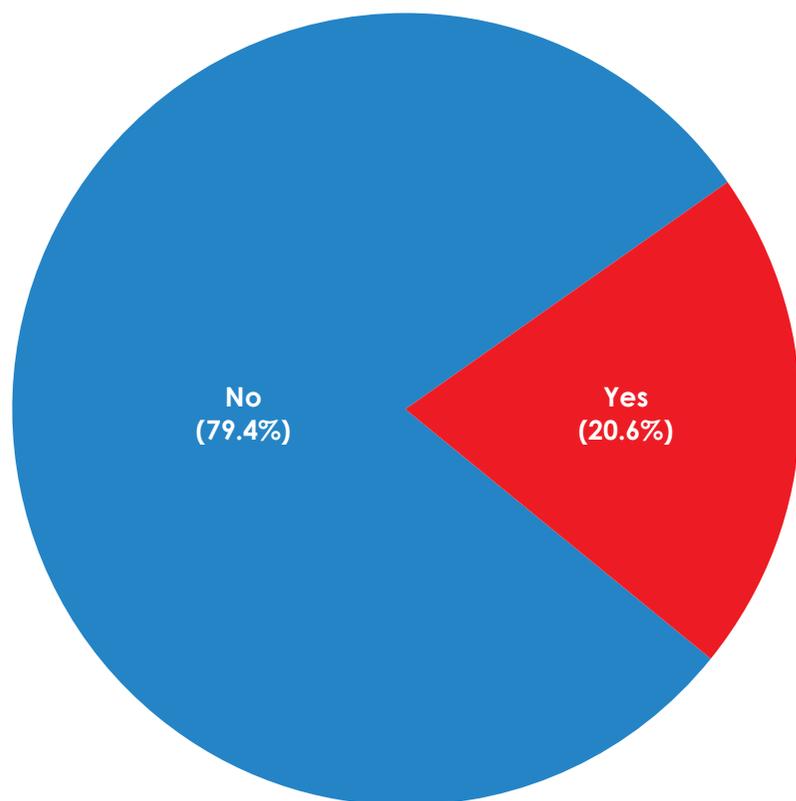
### [5.1] The Lebanese parliament's failure to elect a new president is detrimental to Lebanon's stability. Do you agree?



The overwhelming majority of those polled (75.4%) agree that parliament's inability to elect a new president is detrimental to the country's stability. Despite that pervasive opinion, what is not clear is that most of the Shia who say they are disappointed with the persistent political gridlock have that opinion based on a dispassionate, theoretical perspective. Further, this statistic does not explain the disillusion they began to feel when the "Shia" presidential candidate, General Michel Aoun, was not elected. Moreover, a number of significantly different opinions cross the lines between respondents' class, age, income and geography.

- Of the wealthiest respondents, 30.6% did not view parliament's failure to elect a president as detrimental compared with just 12.5% of the poorest.
- Respondents 60 and above are more likely to "strongly agree" (71.7%) than are those 39 and below (50.6%).
- Beirutis are more likely to disagree (22.8%) or remain undecided (20.7%) than are respondents from the South (18.3%, 4.6%) and the Bekaa (8%, 8%).

### [5.2] In your opinion, is the postponement of parliamentary elections justified?

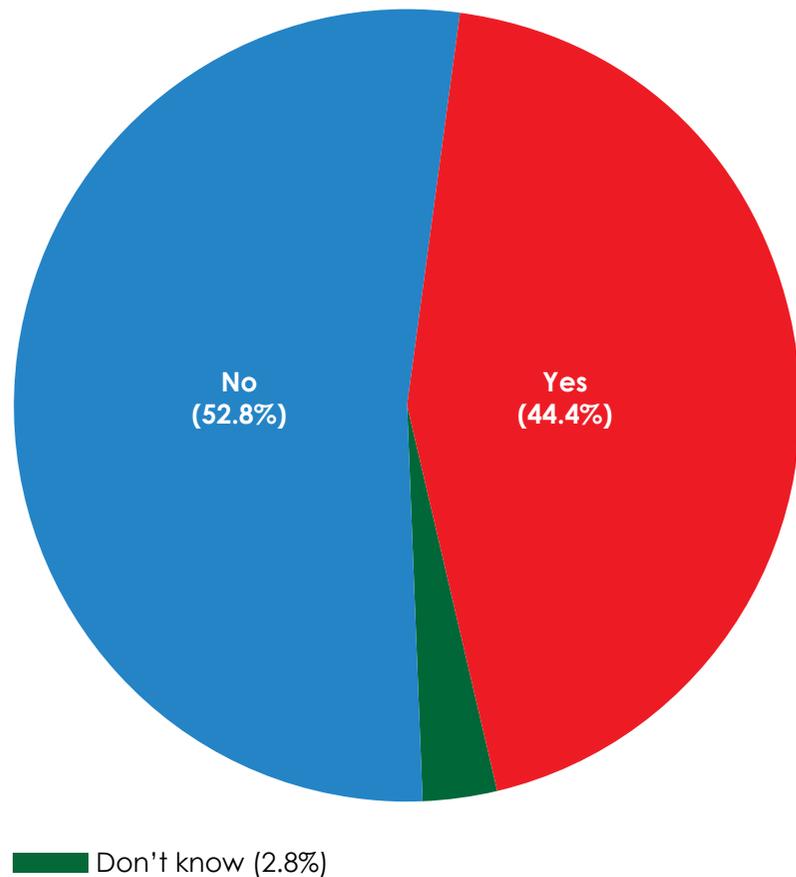


Had elections been held in 2013 or 2014, experts opined that they would not have prompted any substantial change in the Shia balance of power within parliament. Despite that, 79.4% of respondents disagree with the parliamentary elections having been postponed twice. This statistic should be viewed in conjunction with the 81.3% of respondents who think the “country is heading in the wrong direction.”

- The poorest (28.6%) and wealthiest (35.3%) respondents are most likely to consider the postponements justifiable. Those in the middle-income brackets are most likely to view it as unjustified (80%, 80% and 83%) compared with 71.4% and 61.7%, respectively, among the poorest and wealthiest.
- Younger respondents are more likely to indicate that the postponements are justifiable (23.8% of the youngest compared with 10.7% of the oldest).
- Respondents from the South are slightly more likely to say the postponements cannot be justified (81.6%) than are Beirutis (75.9%) or those from the Bekaa (76.3%).

**Is Taif Still Viable?**

### [6.1] Considering today's conditions, do you think the Taif Agreement is still a relevant solution for Lebanon?



As it has become steadily easier to dispel the growing rift between Shia and Sunni by using a few well-chosen metaphors and euphemisms, the debate over Taif has gained transparency over time. From a Shia perspective, the issue surrounding Taif is the role accorded the Sunni prime minister rather than that of the Christian Maronite president of the republic.

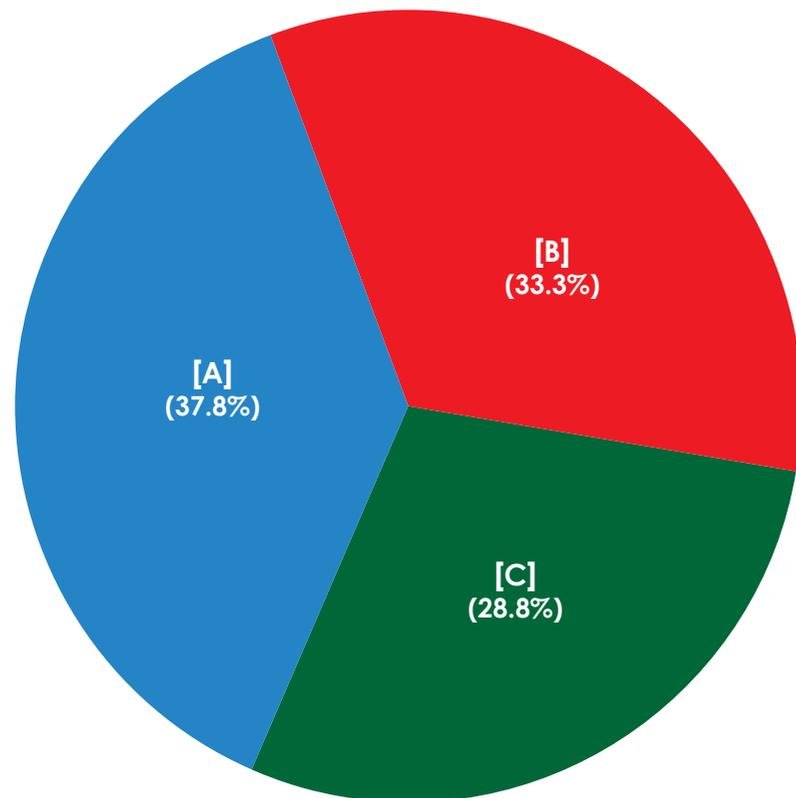
- Wealthier respondents are far less likely to believe that Taif remains relevant (32.4%) than are the poorest (53.6%).
- Younger respondents are more likely to think that Taif remains relevant (49.4%) than those aged 60 and above (39.6%).
- Respondents aged 40 – 59 are considerably more likely to oppose Taif (59.1%) than their younger (47.3%) and older counterparts (55.3%).
- The oldest respondents are most likely to choose “don't know” (5%).
- Respondents from the South are considerably less likely to say Taif is relevant (40%) than are those from Beirut (51.7%) and the Bekaa (50.4%). Southerners are also the most likely to report that Taif is no longer relevant (56%).

### [6.2] In case you consider the Taif Agreement still relevant, why?

[A] It preserves stability

[B] It Maintains the confessional balance

[C] Nothing better is possible



The dramatic differences in these findings reveal the precarious nature of Lebanon's political infrastructure. Yet these results also reinforce the growing sectarianism among poorer, younger Shia, as they are more likely to think the Taif Agreement "maintains the confessional balance" compared with their older, wealthier and more rural counterparts. The most vulnerable communities—the oldest and the poorest—are more concerned with "preserving stability."

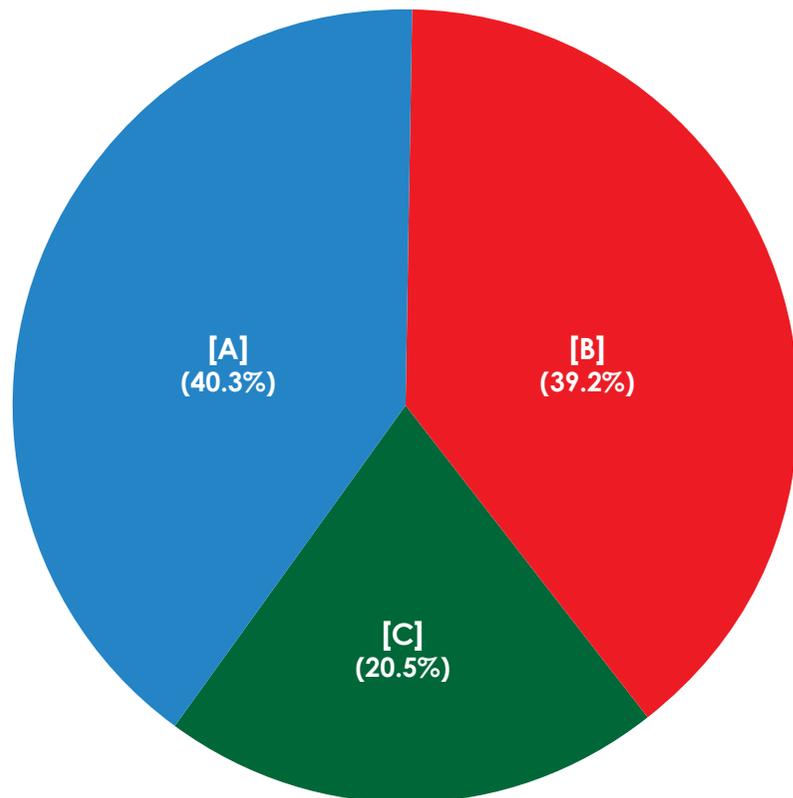
- The poorest respondents are considerably more likely to say Taif "preserves stability" (46.7%) than are the wealthiest (36.4%).
- The wealthiest respondents are more likely to select "nothing better is possible" (45.5%) than those in the poorest (30%), the lower-middle (those making \$500 – \$1,000/month) (25.9%), the middle (\$1,001 – \$2,000/month) (30.8%) and the upper-middle (\$2,001 – \$3,500/month) (25.5%) income brackets.
- Respondents in the lower-middle, middle and upper-middle groups are far more likely to select "maintains

## 15 Questions for the Lebanese Shia Community

- the confessional balance” (38%, 31.3% and 36.2%) than are the poorest (23.3%) or wealthiest (18.2%).
- Older respondents are more likely to select “preserves stability” (44.4%) than the youngest (36%), while the youngest are more concerned with “maintaining the confessional balance” (38.1%) than older respondents (28.6%). Middle-aged respondents are most likely to state “nothing better is possible” (34.5%) than younger (25.9%) and older (27%) respondents.
  - Respondents from Beirut (42.7%) and the South (40.1%) are more concerned with “preserving stability” than their counterparts from the Bekaa (31.1%), while Bekaa respondents are considerably more concerned with “maintaining the confessional balance” (41.7%) than are Beirutis (32%) or Southerners (29.1).
  - Respondents from the South are more likely to select “nothing better is possible” (30.8%) than are Beirutis (25.3%) or respondents from the Bekaa (27.3%).

### [6.3] In case you consider the Taif Agreement no longer relevant, why not?

- [A] It was not a good agreement to begin with
- [B] It was never fully implemented
- [C] The balance of power has changed



Differences in how people interpret the perceived irrelevance of Taif are also revealing. While wealthy respondents agree overwhelmingly that it “was not a good agreement to begin with,” younger and more urban respondents are more convinced that the “balance of power” has changed—evidence of growing sectarianism among the urban youth. Older respondents, as if patiently waiting, are more likely to select “it was never fully implemented.”

- The wealthiest respondents are far more likely to select “It was not a good agreement to begin with” than are respondents in the poorest (36%), the lower-middle (27.2%), middle (37.1%) and upper-middle (64.4%) income groups.
- While older respondents are more likely (48.9%) than those 18 – 39 (35.4%) to choose “It was never fully implemented,” the latter are more likely to report “the balance of power has changed” (26.2%) than are the former (11.4%).
- Respondents from the South and the Bekaa are far more

## 15 Questions for the Lebanese Shia Community

likely to say “It was never fully implemented” (41.6% and 42.2%) than are Beirutis (22.1%).

- Respondents from Beirut are more likely to indicate that the “balance of power has changed” (27.9%) than those

from the South (17.2%) or the Bekaa (25%). Beirutis are also far more likely to say “It was not a good agreement when made” (50%) than respondents from the South (41.3%) or the Bekaa (32.8%).

# Security Concerns vs. Security Responses

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### [7.1] In your opinion, what is the most important issue facing Lebanon's Shia community today?

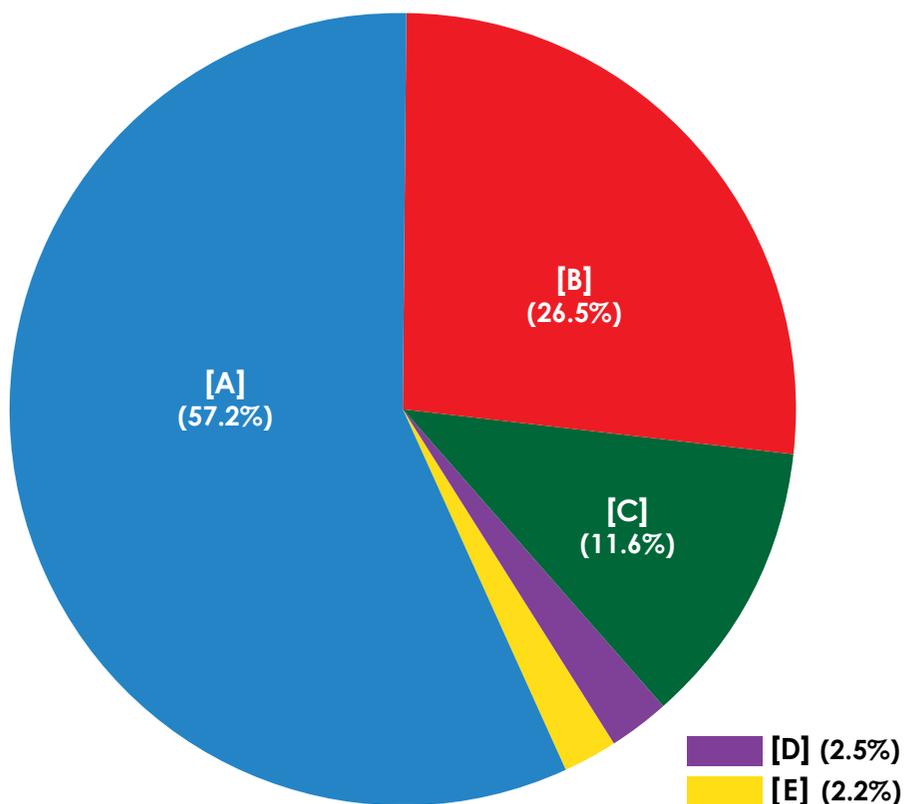
[A] The Takfiri threat

[B] Potential for renewed conflict with Israeli

[C] Potential for sectarian strife in Lebanon

[D] Syrian refugee crisis

[E] Involvement by Lebanese groups and individuals in the Syrian civil war



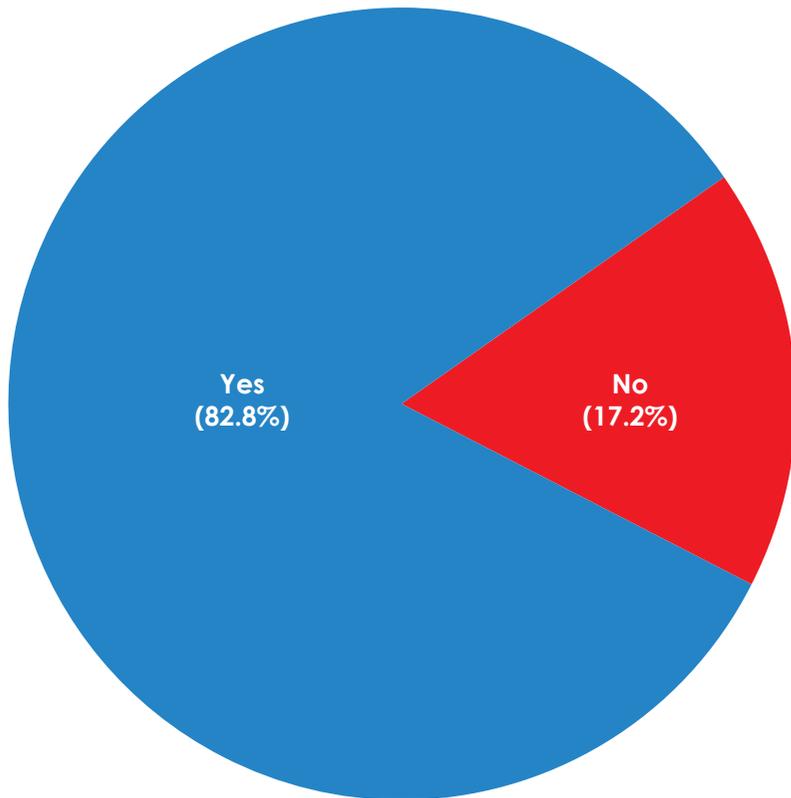
Two years of ceaseless promotion of the “*Takfiri* threat” (parallel to a situation of quasi-calm or calculated exchanges of violence on the Lebanese-Israeli border) help explain that the *Takfiri* threat accounts for more than half of responses compared with the potential for renewed conflict with Israel. Further, women are more likely to fear the *Takfiri* threat (60.7%) than are men (51.7%), whereas men are more likely to fear the potential for renewed conflict with Israel (30.6%) than are women (23.9%).

- Poorer respondents are more likely to choose “renewed conflict with Israel” (28.6%) compared with only 17.6% of the wealthiest.
- Wealthier respondents are more likely to choose “*Takfiri* threat” (64.7%) compared with only 53.6% of the poorest.
- Middle-income groups appear to scale up according to income level, with the wealthiest respondents more likely to be concerned with

## 15 Questions for the Lebanese Shia Community

- sectarian strife (14.7%) than the poorest respondents (8.9%).
- The poorest respondents are also most likely to view Syrian refugees as the most important issue (5.4%). The wealthier the respondents, the less concerned they are about Syrian refugees.
  - Younger respondents are more likely to select “renewed conflict with Israel” (29.1%) than their older counterparts (23.3%), while older respondents are more likely to indicate “*Takfiri* threat” (64.2%) than those under 40 (50.8%).
  - Younger respondents are slightly more likely to choose “potential for sectarian strife” (13%) than respondents 40 – 59 (10%) and 60 and above (10%).
  - Respondents from Beirut are considerably more likely to choose “Israel” (38.6%) than their counterparts from the South (23.6%) or the Bekaa (26.3%). Ironically, those who live in the South appear the least likely to see war with Israel as a threat.).
  - Respondents from the South (62.4%) and the Bekaa (59.5%) believe the *Takfiri* threat is much higher in their areas than do Beirutis (31.7%).
  - Beirutis are more likely to choose “sectarian strife” (14.5%) and “involvement in Syria” (5.5%) than are respondents from the South (10.8% and 1.7%) or Bekaa (11.8% and 1.5%).
  - Beirutis are also more likely to indicate “Syrian refugees” (9.7%) than are respondents from the South (1.5%) or the Bekaa (0.8%).

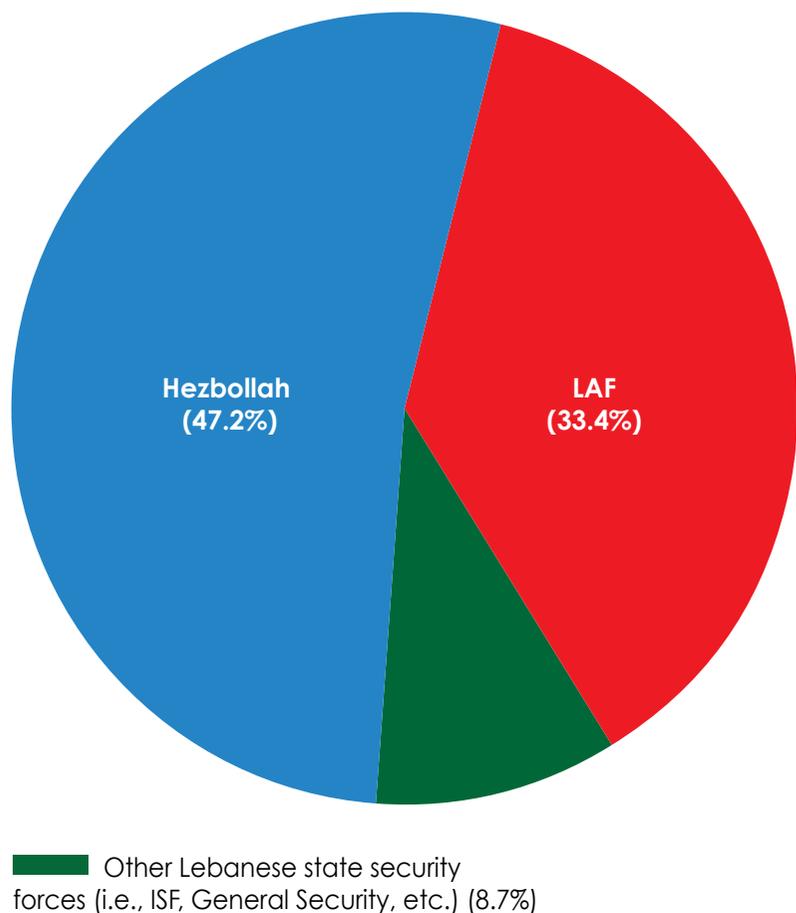
### [7.2] Do you feel secure in your area?



Younger and less affluent respondents are more likely to highlight their concerns with security. Because of its proximity to the war in Syria and the repeated clashes that struck the area during 2014 (which involved the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) and/or Hezbollah), the Bekaa is considered less safe than Beirut.

- The two poorest groups of respondents (19.6% and 20.3%) are most likely and more than twice as likely, respectively, to feel unsafe compared with the wealthiest respondents (8.8%).
- Older respondents felt slightly safer (91.2%) compared with 80.8% and 81.8% of the younger and middle-aged groups.
- Respondents from the Bekaa feel considerably less safe (70.6%) than do those in Beirut (88.3%) or the South (86.8%).

### [7.3] Who provides security in your area?



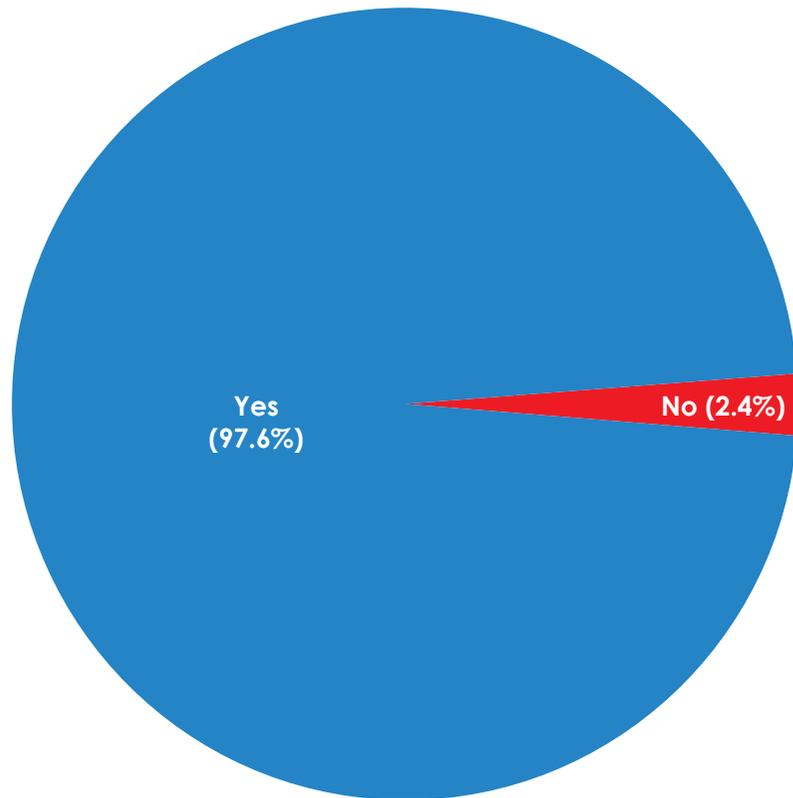
Respondents were asked to pick a security provider from one of the following options: “Hezbollah,” “the LAF,” “Lebanese state security services,” “family,” “no one” and “other.” To one extent or another, no Shia area is free from the presence of some combination of state security/military/Hezbollah. As such, this question is not designed to learn *whether* people had security, but rather *who they perceived* to be providing that security.

- The proportion of respondents who believe they are receiving security from Hezbollah is distributed very evenly across income (48% of the poorest and 44% of the wealthiest).
- Women are more likely (50.1%) than men (42.6%) to indicate that Hezbollah provides their security.
- The wealthiest respondents (44%) are considerably more likely to identify the LAF as providing security than are the poorest (32%).
- The poorest respondents are more likely than any other group to believe their security is being provided by

## 15 Questions for the Lebanese Shia Community

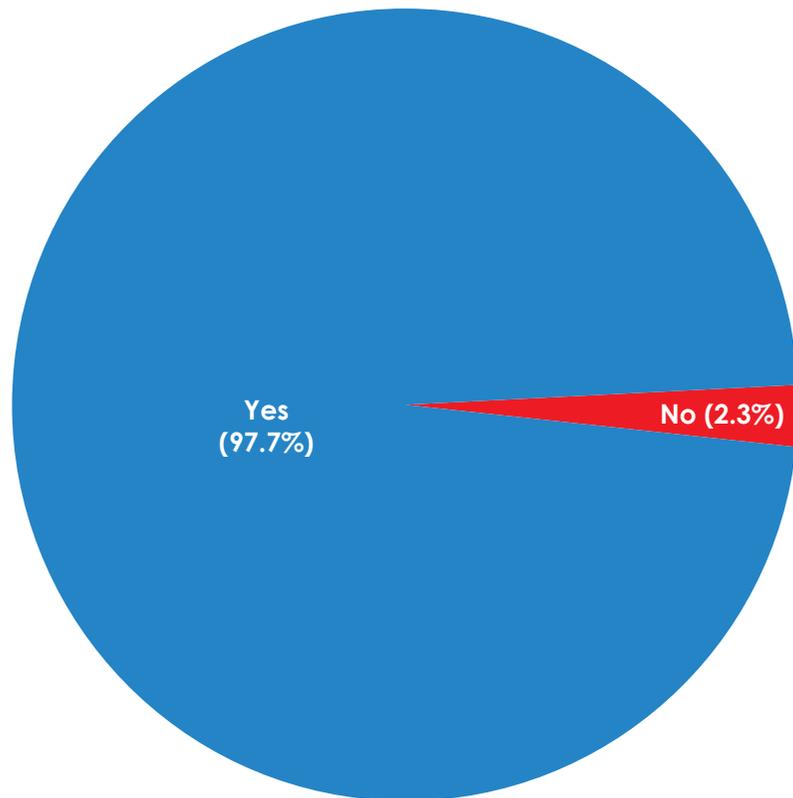
- “family” (5.4%) or “no one” (7.1%) (the two categories in which the wealthiest are not represented (0%)).
- While the three middle-income groups are more likely than the wealthiest and poorest groups to believe that their security is being provided by Lebanon’s “state security services,” the wealthiest are the most likely (2.9%) to observe that Amal (an organization not identified (0%) by the poorest respondents) provides security for them.
  - Neither the wealthiest nor the poorest respondents report receiving security from the community; however, the three middle-income groups did.
  - Younger respondents are more likely to conclude that Hezbollah provides protection (52%) than are 40 – 59 year olds (42%) and those 60 and above (42%). Older respondents are more likely (39.6%) to choose the LAF than those under 40 (26.4%) and 40 – 59 (40.1%).
  - Whereas respondents in the Bekaa report receiving protection more often from Hezbollah (51.5%) than respondents in Beirut (42.1%) or the South (46.5%), LAF-provided security seems more prevalent in the South (36.8%) than in Beirut (26.9%) or the Bekaa (29.4%).
  - While Beirutis select “family” more often (5.5%) than respondents from the South (1.2%) or the Bekaa (2.3%), respondents in the Bekaa choose “state security forces” (11.1%) more often than Beirutis (7.6%) or respondents from the South (7.9%).
  - Selections of “no one” and “Amal” are much higher in Beirut (9.7%, 6.9%) than in the South (2.4%, 1.2%) or the Bekaa (3.4%, 0.4%).

### [7.4] Are you satisfied with the performance of the institution you identified above?



The poorest respondents are the most satisfied (100%) while the wealthiest are the least satisfied (93.7%); in other words, satisfaction decreases as income increases. Otherwise, satisfaction is generally consistent across age brackets (96% among the oldest and 97% among the youngest). Regionally, people are generally satisfied with security, although the proportion is slightly higher in the Bekaa (98.8%) due to the restive nature of that region.

**[7.5] For those who cited it, are you satisfied with the security provided by Hezbollah?**



Income:

No significant variance according to income.

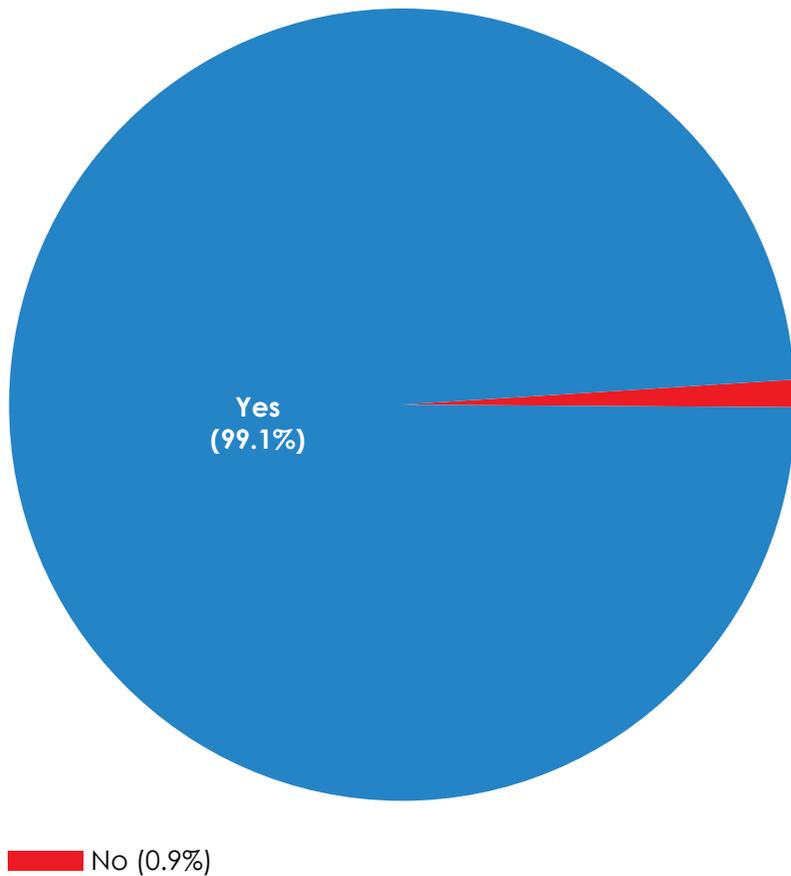
Age:

No significant variance according to age.

Region:

Everyone satisfied; slightly more so in the Bekaa (98.5%).

**[7.6] For those who cited it, are you satisfied with the security provided by the LAF?**



Income:

No significant variance according to income.

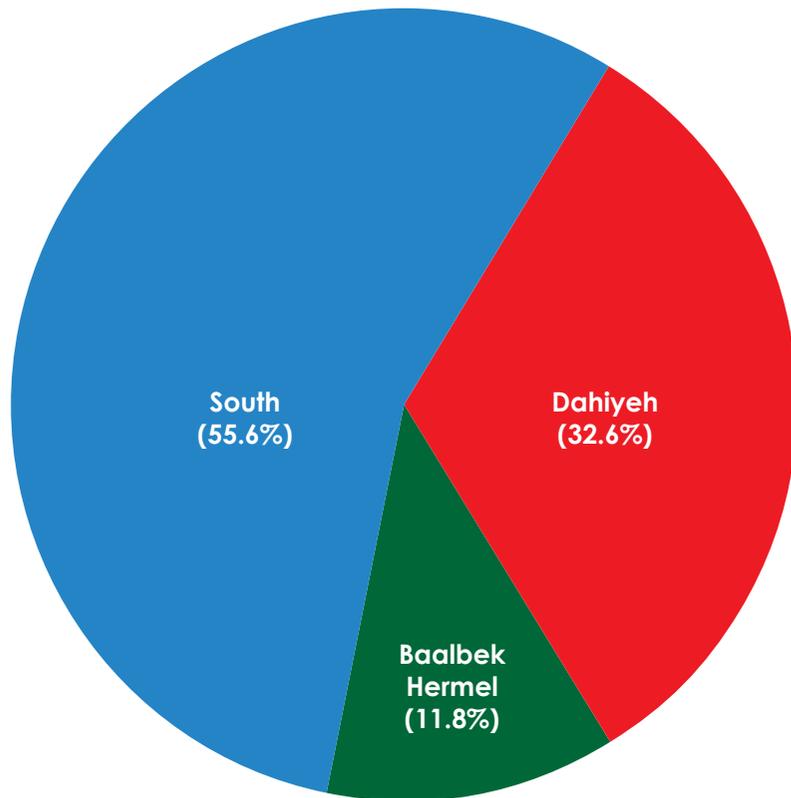
Age:

No significant variance according to age.

Region:

100% in Beirut and the Bekaa, 98.6% in the South

### [7.7] Of the South, Dahiyeh and Baalbek-Hermel, which region do you consider the most secure?



The order in which respondents ranked area security generally appears to reflect the extent of the “*Takfiri* challenge” in each area as opposed to any other

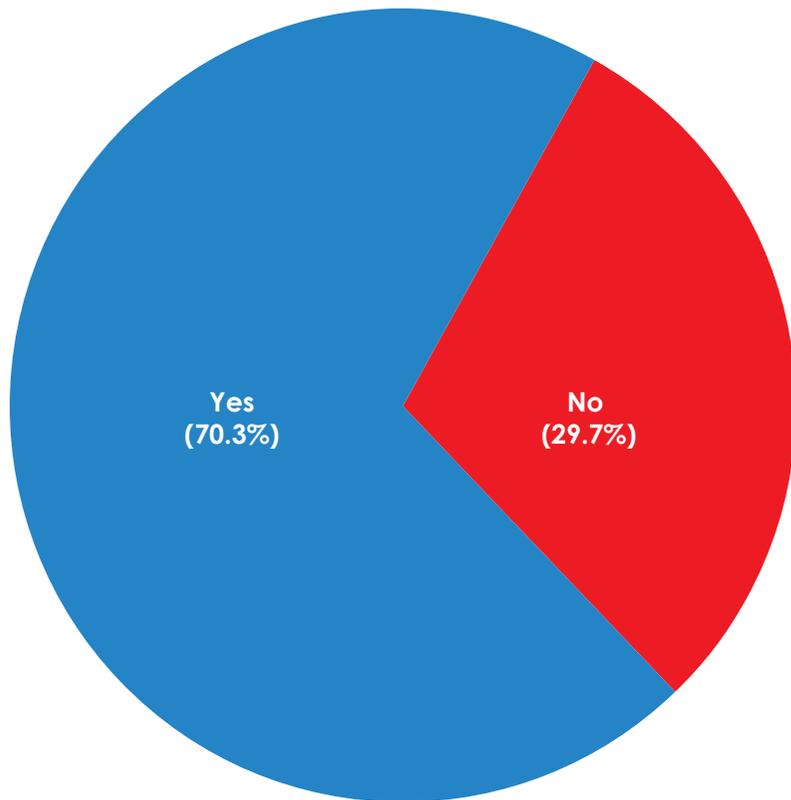
security challenge. While the South has been spared *Takfiri* attacks and the Lebanese-Israeli border has not experienced any extraordinary events, Dahiyeh residents (who have not suffered from any more attacks in recent months) are reminded daily by the tight security measures being enforced by the LAF, Hezbollah and other state security agencies that they are living in the “line of fire.” Where the Bekaa is concerned, its proximity to the war in Syria (in which Hezbollah is heavily involved), persistent tensions between its Sunni and Shia residents and the attacks it has already endured have made it seem like a war zone.

- The poorest respondents are the most likely to consider Baalbek the safest (17.9%) while the wealthiest respondents consider it the least secure (2.9%).
- Wealthier respondents are far more likely to choose the South as the safest region (82.4%) compared with 44.6% of the poorest.
- Likewise, wealthier respondents are considerably less

## 15 Questions for the Lebanese Shia Community

- likely (14.7%) to consider Dahiyeh the safest area than the poorest (37.5%).
- Younger respondents are more likely to list Baalbek-Hermel as the most secure (16.9%) than those 60 and above (5%). In contrast, those 60 and above are far more likely to consider the South the most secure area (72.3%) than 47.1% of younger respondents.
  - Younger respondents are also more likely to select Dahiyeh as the most secure (36%) compared with middle-aged respondents (32.5%) or those over 60 (22.6%).
  - Among Beirutis respondents, 44.1% considered Dahiyeh to be the safest area overall compared with 25.6% of those from the South and 42% of those from the Bekaa. The South is considered the safest by 37.2% of Beirutis, 73.2% of those from the South and 26% of those from the Bekaa. Finally, Baalbek-Hermel is considered the safest area by just 18.6% of Beirutis, 1.2% of those from the South and 32.1% of those from the Bekaa. Unsurprisingly, each group considers its own region to be safer than estimates given by respondents from other areas.

### [7.8] In general, do you think it is permissible for any group or party outside the government to maintain arms?



As with question #8.1 (“In your opinion, what are the main functions of Hezbollah’s arms?”), which 57.4% of the respondents answered, “Defending Lebanon and its borders,” the responses given to this question seem to reveal the extent to which Lebanese Shia now endorse Hezbollah’s legitimacy as a partner of the Lebanese state. That condition is leading steadily to a de facto “dual-but-single monopoly of force.”

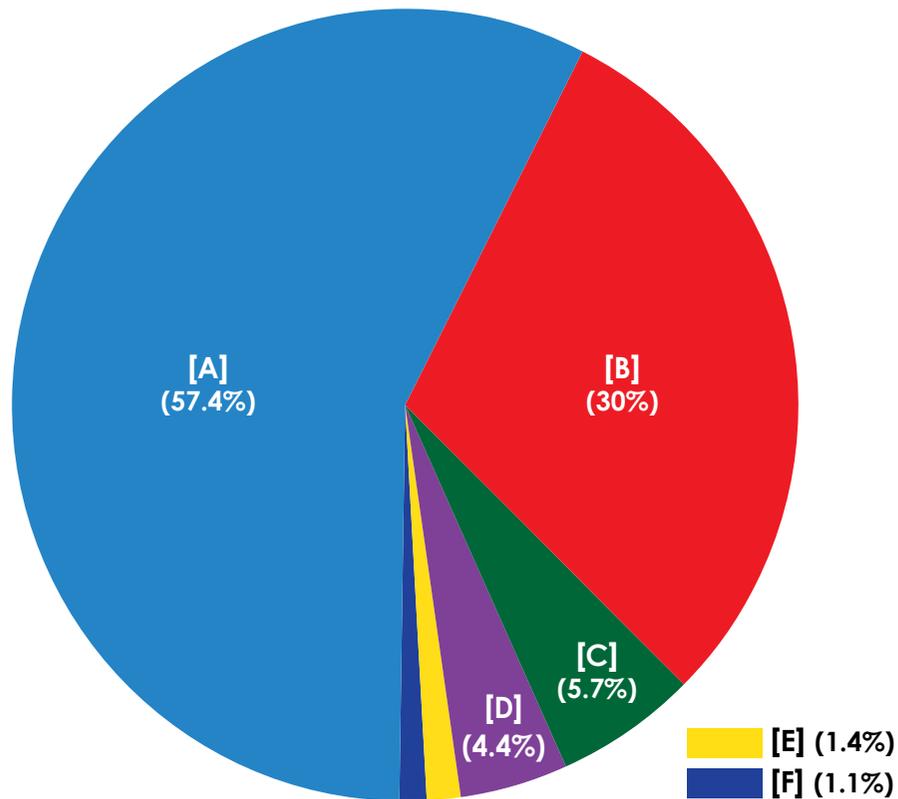
- The wealthiest respondents are more likely to consent to arms being maintained by an extra-governmental group/party (79.4%) than the poorest (67.9%).
- Middle-aged respondents (72.3%) are slightly more likely to agree than younger (69.6%) and older (67.9%) respondents.
- Those in the South are slightly more likely to agree (72.7%) than Beirutis (69%) and respondents from the Bekaa (65.6%).

# **The Community and Hezbollah's Arms**

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## [8.1] In your opinion, what are the main functions of Hezbollah's arms?

- [A] Defending Lebanon and its borders
- [B] Fighting Israel and Liberating Palestine
- [C] Defending the Assad regime
- [D] Protecting the Shia community
- [E] Defending Iran's interests
- [F] Serving internal political aims

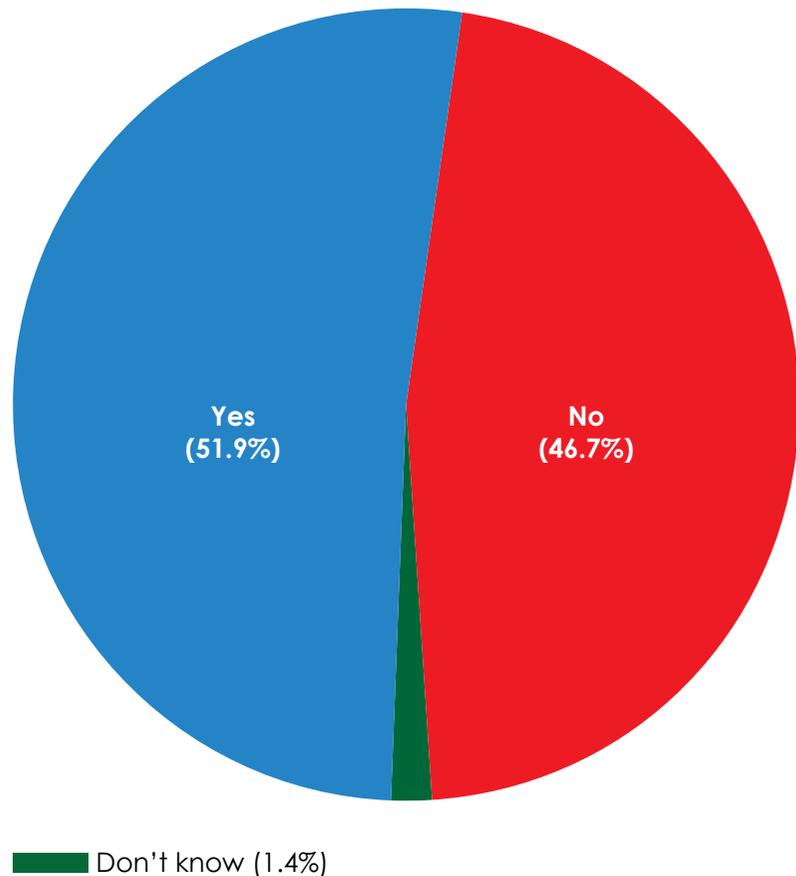


These results reveal precisely the same sentiment expressed for question #6.1, in which 57.2% of the respondents indicate that the “*Takfiri* threat” is the most pressing issue facing the Lebanon’s Shia (insofar as “defending Lebanon” has become virtually synonymous with “defending Shia from the *Takfiri* threat”). It also brings us back to question #7.8, in which 70.3% of the respondents agree with Hezbollah’s right to bear arms in order to meet these “threats” on the country’s behalf. Equally interesting is that Lebanon’s Shia no longer perceive the threat as coming from Israel but from the *Takfiris*. Moreover, that threat is apparently being equated with protecting the borders, “nationalizing” the *Takfiri* threat and tacitly enabling Hezbollah to act on behalf of Lebanon. Of course, divisions are evident according to respondents’ class, geography and age.

## 15 Questions for the Lebanese Shia Community

- The wealthiest respondents are more likely to choose “liberating Palestine” (35.3%) than the poorest (17.9%).
- The poorest are more likely to say “defending Lebanon’s borders” (66.1%) than are the wealthiest respondents (44.1%).
- The wealthiest respondents are more likely to select “defending Assad” (11.8%) than are the poorest (3.6%).
- The poorest are most likely to choose “defending Iran’s interests” (3.6%), while the poorest and wealthiest are also more likely to indicate “protecting the Shia” (8.9%, 8.8%) compared with the three middle-income groups (4%, 4.3% and 2.9%).
- Older respondents are slightly more likely to select “fighting Israel” (34%) than are their younger (30%) or middle-aged (28.3%) counterparts.
- Middle-aged respondents are slightly more likely to choose “defend the Assad regime” (7.3%) than are the young (5.2%) or middle aged (3.8%).
- Younger respondents are more likely to choose “protecting Shia” (6.4%) than are middle-aged (2.8%) or older (1.9%) respondents.
- While “Fighting Israel” is slightly more popular in the Bekaa (33.2%) than in Beirut (27.6%) or the South (29.2%), those from the South are most likely to identify “defending Lebanon’s borders” (59.9%) than are Beirutis (49.7%) or those from the Bekaa (56.1%).
- Beirutis are far more likely (17.2%) to select “protecting Shia” than are respondents from the South (2.2%) or the Bekaa (2.3%).

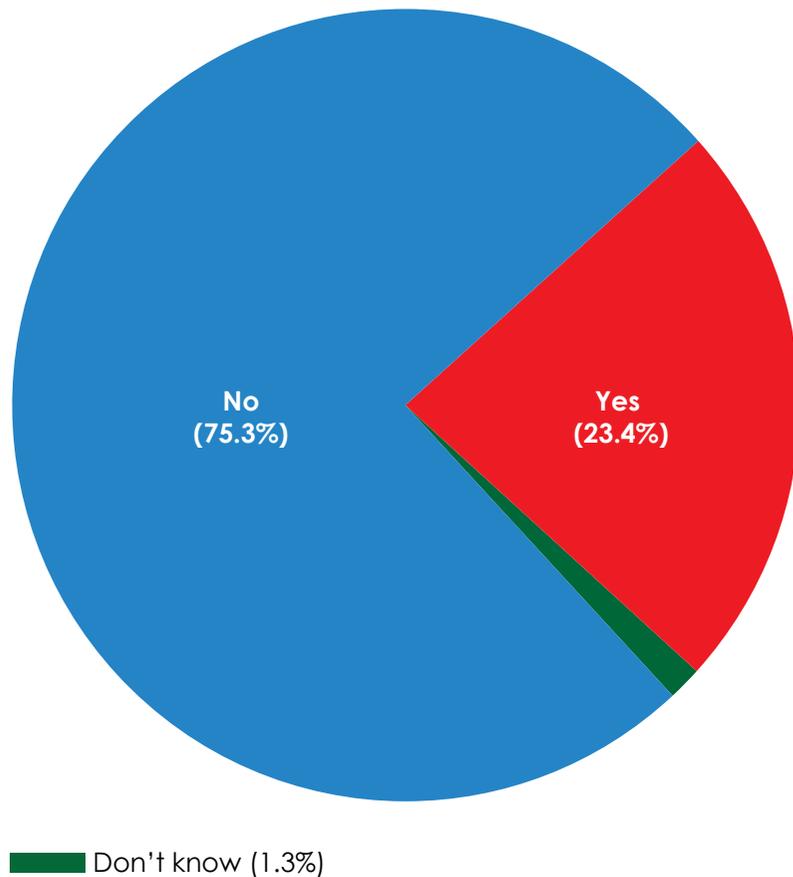
### [8.2] Do you think efforts to return the Shebaa Farms to Lebanese sovereignty should be a priority right now?



It is curious that nearly half of all respondents believe the recapture of the Shebaa Farms should no longer be a priority. By extension, those who still consider it important to retake the area likely believe so because of social obligations. More than anything else, these results illustrate the significant transformation that has occurred in recent years; i.e., Israel fading into the background of the “*Takfiri* threat” and the war in Syria.

- Wealthy respondents are most likely to consider Shebaa a priority (70.6%) than are the bottom four income groups (all those making less than \$3,500/month), only half of which consider it a priority.
- Older respondents are more likely to consider it a priority (57.2%) than are younger (47.7%) and middle-aged (55.2%) respondents.
- Beirutis (58.6%) and respondents from the South (58.2%) are far more likely than are those from the Bekaa (34%) to consider the Shebaa Farms a priority.

### [8.3] In your opinion, is it permissible for a group or organization other than the government to regulate what can be sold (i.e., alcohol) or advertised (i.e., underwear)?



Similar to some other locations in Lebanon, Dahiyeh is a “dry” area. More precisely, it is an area where people cannot purchase drinks—at least overtly. The unofficial prohibition of alcohol in Dahiyeh is just one of several other features of the area’s “Islamic” character, including the chaste nature of advertisements that adorn walls and billboards in the area. The fact that “commercial actors” have not tried to challenge that status quo speaks volumes about the various roles being played by non-state actors with respect to imposing that lifestyle. In view of this explanation, how should these results be interpreted? It is likely that respondents objected to the regulation of commercial life by a non-state actor to distinguish themselves from the Sunni. In the last several years, after all, the Sunni steadily gained notoriety for their straitlaced, everyday life, a reputation that can easily be adapted to extremist perspectives. Rather

## 15 Questions for the Lebanese Shia Community

than indicating tolerance and the sanctity of state sovereignty, these results reveal more about the respondents' desire to distinguish their community from a cultural foe.

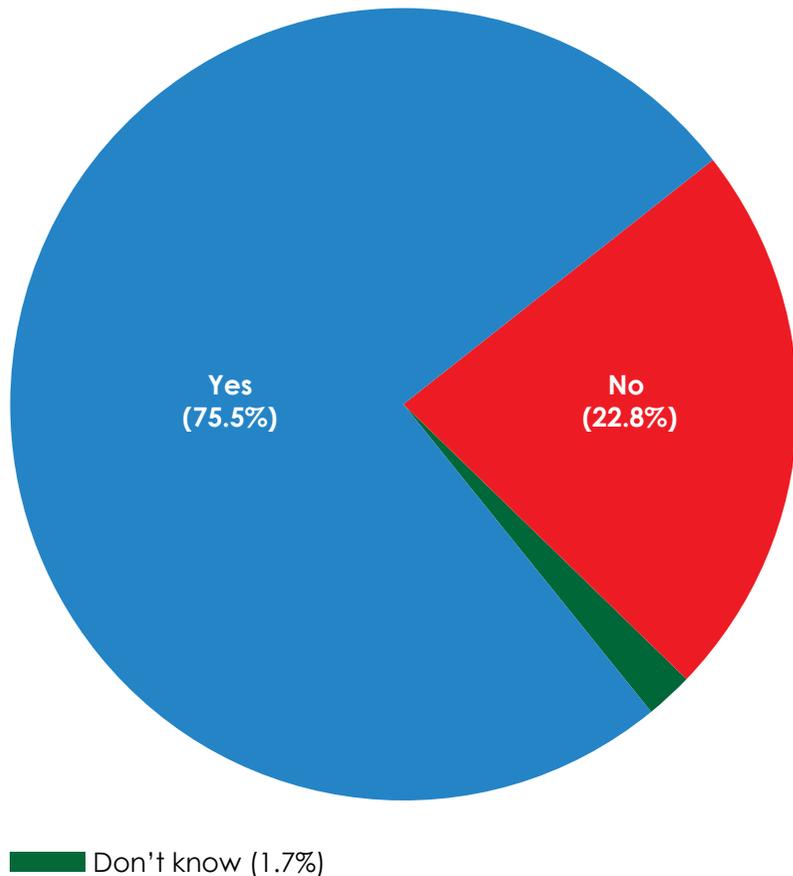
As expected, the young, urban, rich and poor are more likely to resist this authority than are the older, rural and middle class.

- Middle-income respondents (26.8% of those making \$500 – \$1,000/month and 24% of those making \$1,001

– \$2,000/month) are the most likely to approve of a non-governmental body regulating commercial life.

- The poorest (19.6%) and wealthiest (8.8%) respondents are the least likely.
- Older respondents are slightly more likely to approve of non-governmental regulation of commercial life (25.3% of those 60 and above; 23.2% of those 40 – 50 and 22.9% of those 18 – 39).
- Similarly, people in Beirut are less likely to approve of this regulation (20.7%) than are people in the South (25%) or the Bekaa (21.4%).

### [8.4] Do you think Hezbollah's military apparatus should one day be incorporated into the Lebanese Armed Forces?



When Shia respondents indicate “yes” to incorporating Hezbollah into the LAF, it must be realized that it is not because they believe doing so will make much of a difference. From their perspective, incorporating Hezbollah into the army is not the same as stripping away its arms. Rather, it simply shifts those arms from one entity to another.

In the last two years, there has been a growing perception among the Sunni that the LAF is not their friend. For Shia, however, the LAF is indeed an ally. Today, for instance, the Shia behave toward the LAF as the Christians did on the eve of the Civil War: that the LAF is *their* institutional militia. Thus, they have their *public militia* (LAF) on one side and their *private militia* (Hezbollah) on the other.

Should Hezbollah be incorporated into the LAF, such an act still would not enable the state to exercise a

## 15 Questions for the Lebanese Shia Community

“monopoly of violence.” In keeping with the general trend of this poll, older, wealthier and rural residents are more likely to want Hezbollah to be subsumed into the LAF.

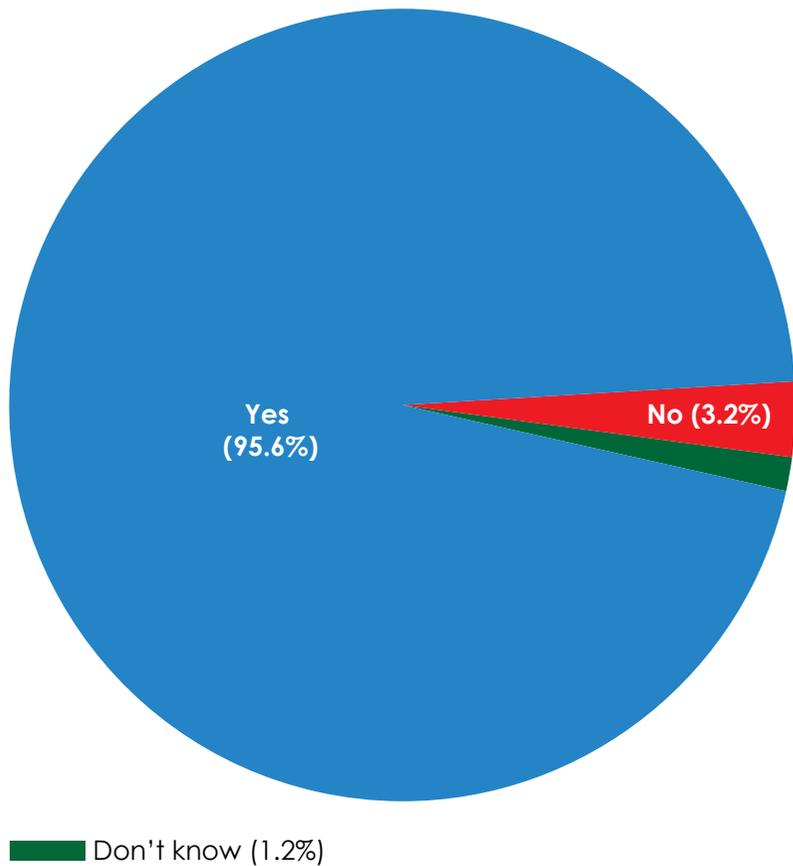
- Women (78.7%) are slightly more likely than are men (70.4%) to favor Hezbollah's incorporation into the LAF.
- The top two income brackets (82% of those making

\$3,500 and above/month and 79.4% of those making \$2,001 – \$3,500/month) are more likely to agree than the lower two (71.4% and 70.5%).

- Older respondents are more likely to agree (83%) than are younger (71.1%) or middle-aged (78.2%) respondents.
- Respondents from the South are likely to prefer Hezbollah's incorporation into the LAF (79.1%) than are Beirutis (70.3%) or respondents from the Bekaa (70.2%).

# The Community and the LAF

### [9.1] Do you think there should be more cooperation between the Lebanese Army and Hezbollah?

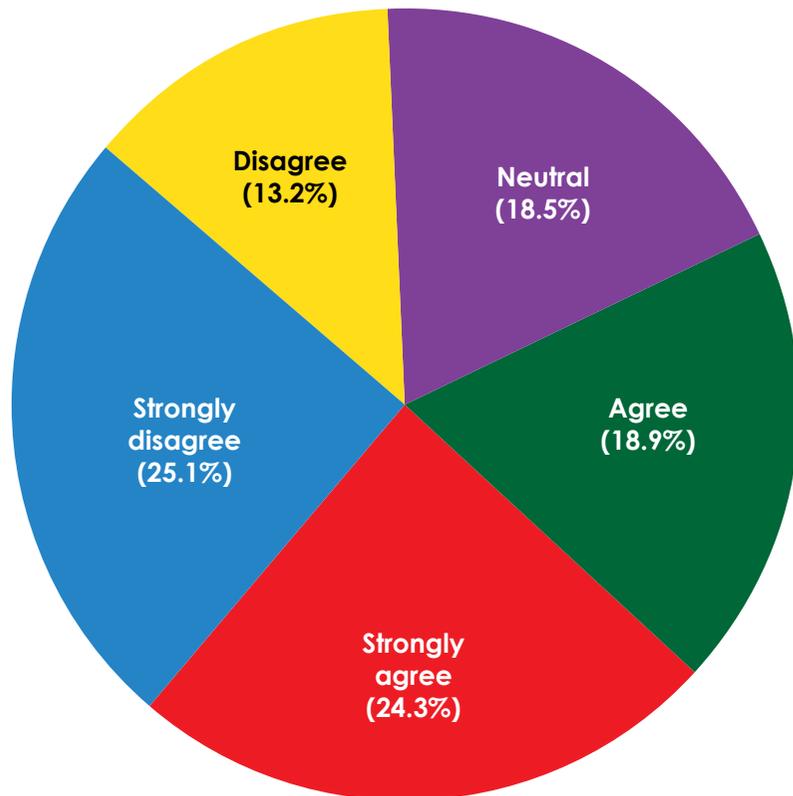


The desire for further cooperation corresponds to the feeling of ownership a great many Shia have regarding

the LAF. The responses to this question should be compared with those for questions in which people either express a desire to see Hezbollah incorporated into the LAF or simply support Hezbollah's right to bear arms. In this poll, the most support for greater cooperation comes from the middle-income groups, while the most dissent can be found among Beirutis.

- The greatest amount of support is expressed by the three middle-income brackets, though the difference is essentially insignificant (the wealthiest and poorest respondents are in the high 80th percentile, while the middle three are in the mid- to high 90th percentiles).
- Interestingly, the poorest respondents are the most likely to say "no" (12.5%) compared with only 8.8% of the wealthiest. The middle-income groups only say "no" 2.2%, 3.1% and 0.7% of the time.
- Results are very consistent across age, such that between 95 – 96% of each group select "yes."
- Beirutis are slightly more likely to oppose further cooperation (6.2%) than are respondents from the South (2.2%) or the Bekaa (3.8%).

### [9.2] U.S. support for the Lebanese Army should continue. Do you agree?



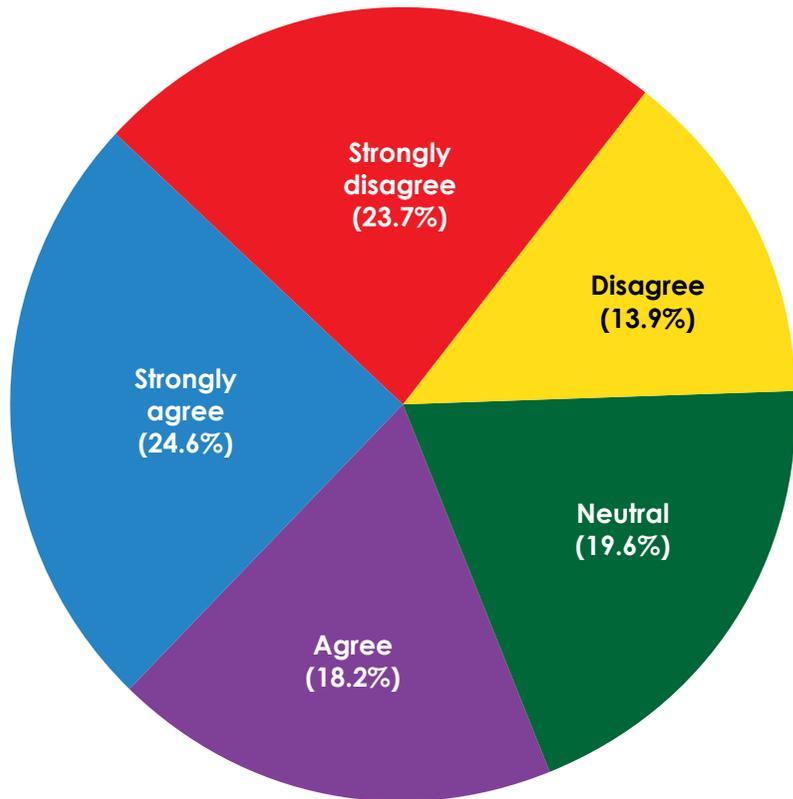
These findings reveal enormous “intellectual diversity” within the Shia community regarding its views on the (former?) “Great Satan.” Indeed, 38.3% disagree with additional military support while 43.2% agree—essentially an even split. Some trends persisted, however, such as the young, poor and urban being far more likely to oppose or remain neutral to cooperating with the U.S. compared with respondents that are wealthy, older and more rural.

- Men are slightly more likely (46.5%) than women (41.5%) to support continued military cooperation with the U.S. or be neutral, and women are considerably more likely to oppose U.S. support (41%) than men (34.1%).
- Poorer respondents are far more likely to be “neutral” (32.1%) than the wealthiest respondents (8.8%).
- Those who answer “disagree” and “strongly disagree” are relatively constant across income; however, poorer respondents are slightly more likely to

## 15 Questions for the Lebanese Shia Community

- “disagree.” The wealthiest respondents are far more likely to “agree” or “strongly agree” (55.9%) than are the poorest (30.3%).
- The wealthiest respondents are also twice as likely (44.1%) to say they “strongly agree” than are the poorest respondents (21.4%).
  - Younger respondents are more likely to disagree or remain neutral (42.9%, 21.7%) than are middle-aged (34.4%, 17.1%) or older (32.7%, 11.9%) respondents.
  - Older respondents are far more likely to support U.S. assistance (55.3%) than are the younger (35.4%) and middle aged (48.5%).
  - Respondents from the South (48.4%) and the Bekaa (40.5%) are considerably more likely to agree with American support than are Beirutis (26.9%). Of those who actively disagree, Beirutis do so at a higher rate (40.3%) than do respondents from the South (36.1%) or the Bekaa (36.7%).

### [9.3] Saudi support for the Lebanese Army should continue. Do you agree?

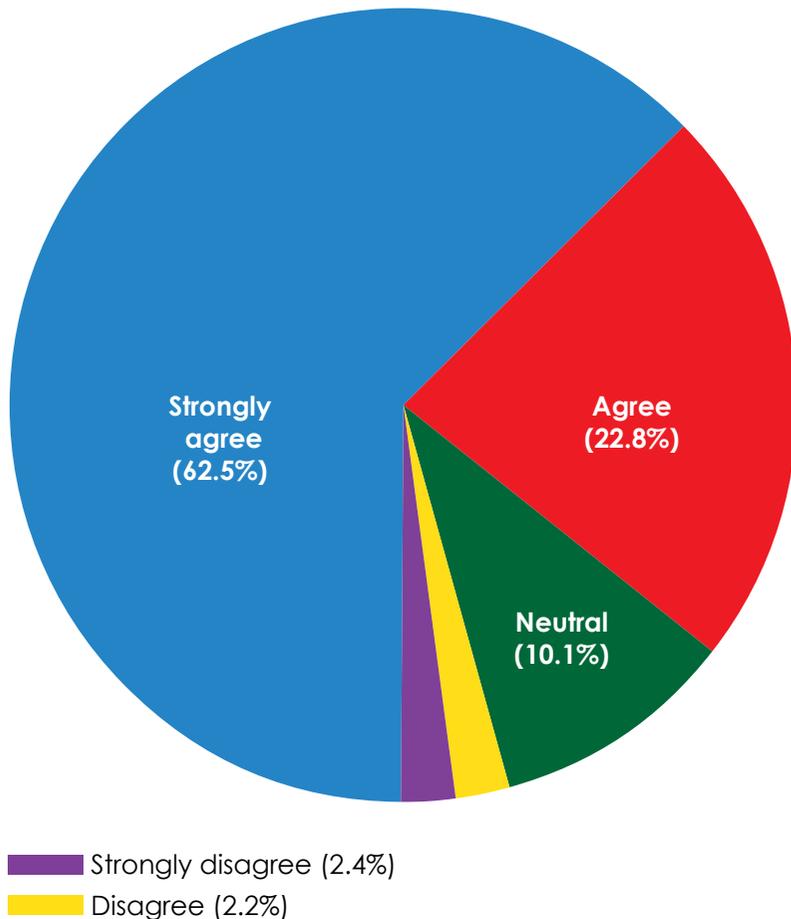


Cooperation with the Saudis evokes precisely the same divisions among respondents as does the question related to the Americans. Since both Saudi Arabia and the U.S. are considered (in one way or

another) historic foes or (less decisively) simply allies of regional enemies, Saudi support for the LAF remains a contentious issue that the young, poor and urban are more likely to oppose than wealthier, older and more rural respondents.

- The poorer the respondent, the less likely he or she is to agree with Saudi support, with only 42.8% of the poorest compared with 29.4% of the wealthiest disagreeing (descending in that order according to income level).
- The wealthiest respondents are far more likely to favor Saudi support (64.7%) than are the poorest (25%) (ascending in that order according to income).
- Younger respondents are more likely to disagree with or remain neutral about Saudi support (41.9%, 23.3%) than are their middle-aged (35%, 17.9%) or older (30.2%, 11.9%) counterparts.
- Older respondents are far more likely to approve of Saudi backing (57.8%) than are young (34.7%) or middle-aged (47.1%) respondents.
- Beirutis are the most likely to disagree (45.6%), while respondents from the South are most likely to agree (46.7%).

### [9.4] The Lebanese government should accept military aid from Iran. Do you agree?

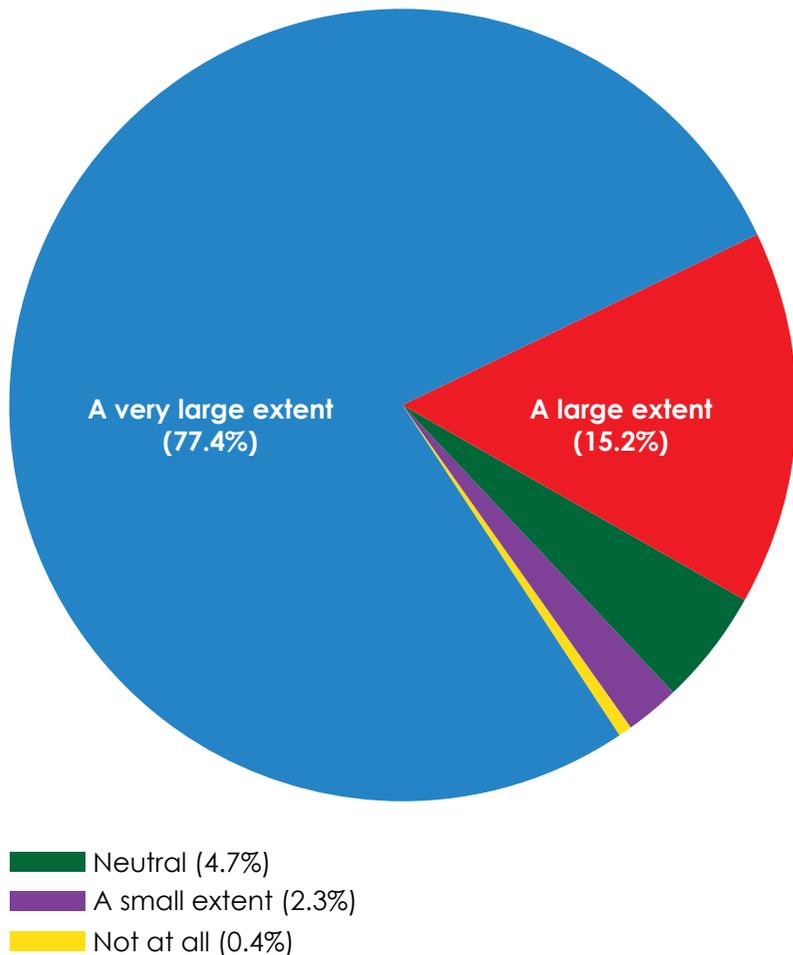


While it is unsurprising that most respondents favor military support from Iran (considered the community's regional "ally"), it is noteworthy that this resounding "yes" does not seem to represent an aggressive stand towards other possible benefactors, including "yes to getting arms from Iran."

- The lower-middle and middle-income brackets are more likely to remain neutral (14.2% and 9.9%, respectively).
- All income levels express significant support for Iran, though the wealthiest respondents are more likely to "strongly agree" (75.4%) than are the poorest (53.6%) (respondents in the middle-income groups fall somewhere between these extremes according to their income).
- While the oldest respondents are slightly more likely to disapprove of Iranian support (6.3%), younger respondents are more inclined to remain neutral (11.4%) than are middle-aged (9.5%) or older (7.5%) respondents.
- Respondents from the South are slightly more likely to disagree with Iranian support (6%) than 3.5% of Beirutis and 1.9% of those from the Bekaa.

# (In)Visible Hands

### [10.1] To what extent do you think foreign governments influence Lebanon's internal affairs?



One must bear in mind that the Arabic word for "influence" (*taatheer*) has a largely negative connotation (e.g., "meddling" or "interference"). Thus, nations considered historically "hostile" to Lebanese Shia (e.g., the U.S. and Israel) are considered to exercise substantial "influence," while "friendly" nations or historic "allies" (e.g., Iran and Russia) do not. In question #9.2, for example, the U.S. and Israel are perceived as exercising for more "influence" within Lebanon than more traditional (and arguably more influential) countries such as Iran or Syria.

- The poorest respondents are the only ones who believe foreign governments exert either no (5.4%) or very little (10.7%) influence compared with 0% of the wealthiest respondents (in both conditions).
- The wealthiest respondents are far more inclined to believe that foreign governments are involved to a "very large extent" (82.3%) in Lebanese affairs than are the poorest (62.5%).
- Older respondents are considerably more likely to choose "very great extent" (89.9% among those 60

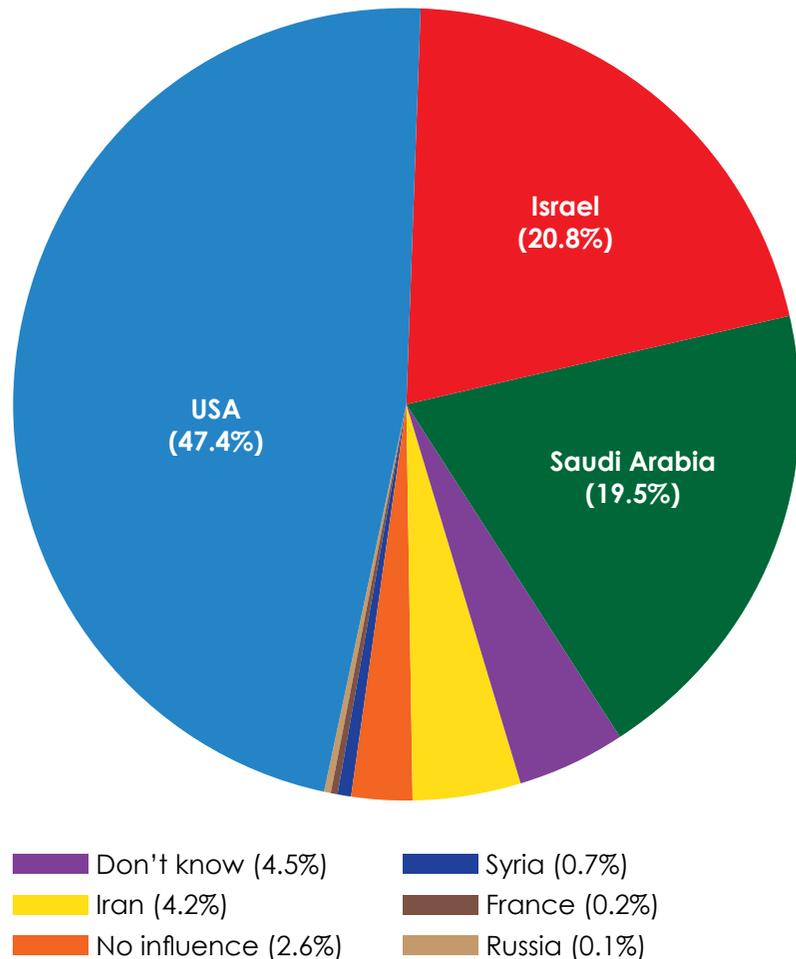
## 15 Questions for the Lebanese Shia Community

and above and 85.7% of those 40 – 59) than those 18 – 39 (67.1%).

- While Beirutis (9%) are more likely to choose “neutral” than are respondents from the South (3%) and the

Bekaa (6.1%), Respondents from the South are far more likely to say “a very large extent” (86.5%) than are Beirutis (59.3%) or those from the Bekaa (66.8%).

### [10.2] Which of the following countries has the greatest influence on Lebanese affairs?



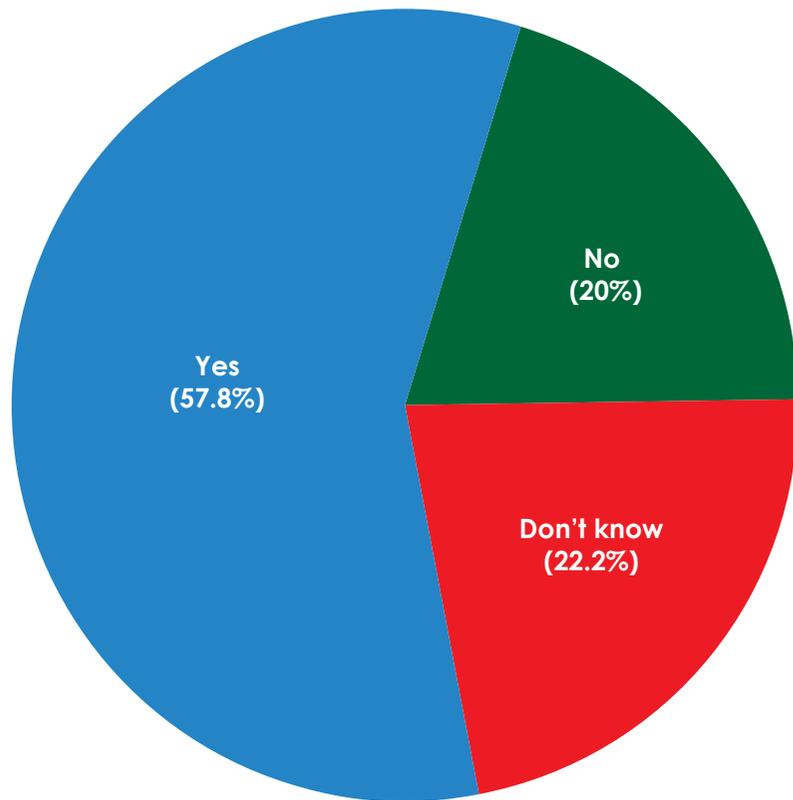
While these extremely interesting results reveal a great deal about popular perceptions of regional and global affairs, they also expose a number of important demographic discrepancies. Where poor, young and urban respondents see the hand of Israel, older, wealthier and rural respondents see that of the United States. While the middle-income groups are comparatively more likely to see Saudi influence, the poorest are most likely to identify Iran or Syria (albeit in small numbers).

- While poorer respondents are more likely to select Israel (26.8%) than are the wealthiest (11.8%), the three middle-income groups hover around 20%. The wealthiest are far more likely to identify the USA (58.8%) than are the poorest (39.3%), while the latter are more likely to select Iran (7.1%) than are the former (2.9%).

## 15 Questions for the Lebanese Shia Community

- Respondents with incomes closer to the middle are more likely to choose Saudi Arabia (middle-income bracket at 22.2%, the poorest at 10.7% and the wealthiest at 14.7%), while respondents in the lower (\$501 – \$1,000/month) and upper-middle (\$2,001 – \$3,500/month) income brackets fall somewhere between these extremes.
- Poorer respondents are more likely to identify Syria (1.8%) than the wealthiest (0%).
- About 21% of each age group chooses Israel while older respondents are more likely to select the USA (54.1%) than are young (42.4%) or middle-aged (51.3%) respondents.
- The youngest respondents are slightly more likely to identify Saudi Arabia (22.1%) than those 40 – 59 (16.2%) or 60 and above (18.9%). Younger respondents are also more likely to say “no influence” (4.1%) than are those within the two older brackets (1.1% and 1.3%).
- Beirutis are far more likely to identify Israel (38.6%) than are respondents from the South (17.4%) or the Bekaa (18.7%). In contrast, Southerners (52.3%) and those from the Bekaa (45.8%) are more likely to identify USA than are Beirutis (30.3%).
- Beirutis are less likely to identify Iran (2.8%) than are respondents from the South (4.4%) or the Bekaa (4.6%). Those from the South are slightly more likely to identify Saudi Arabia (20.6%) than Beirutis (15.9%) or those from the Bekaa (19.1%).

### [10.3] Do you think the Lebanese Shia community benefits from Iranian-U.S. dialogue?



Though seemingly divided on the benefits of U.S.-Iran talks, it is highly likely that those who choose “don’t know” actually mean something closer to a “soft yes.” In other words, four out of five Shias in Lebanon are likely to favor some form of dialogue. Then why answer, “Don’t know?” Like the Marranos’ secret practice of Judaism in Inquisitorial Spain, Shia throughout the centuries have been subjected to varying degrees of persecution as a minority faith in hostile Sunni lands. As such, they developed a clerical dispensation that permits them to cloak their true beliefs (*Taqiyya*). Hence, when significant numbers of people respond with “don’t know” to a rather clear-cut question, the answer is most likely reflective of political *Taqiyya*, which spared them from being forced to abandon decades of theatrical U.S. “hatred.”

- The wealthier the respondent, the more likely they are to agree that dialogue is beneficial (from the

## 15 Questions for the Lebanese Shia Community

wealthiest (67.6%) to the poorest (50%) and decreasing accordingly).

- The poorest respondents are far more likely to select “don’t know” (33.9%) than are the wealthiest (11.8%).
- As older respondents are more likely to answer “yes” (66.7%) than younger (51.4%) or middle-aged (62.5%) individuals, younger respondents are more likely to choose “no” or “don’t know” (24.4%, 24.2%) than

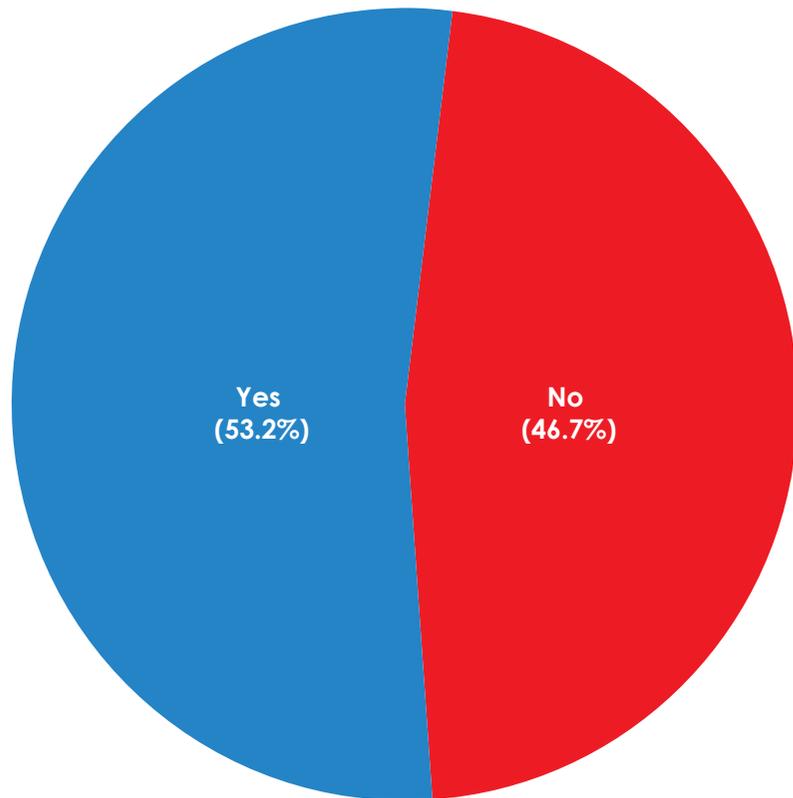
their middle-aged (16.5%, 21%) or older counterparts (14.5%, 18.9%).

- Respondents from the South are far more likely to indicate “yes” (61.4%) than are Beirutis (46.2%) or those from the Bekaa (56.1%). Respondents from Beirut are much more likely (31.7%) to choose “don’t know” than are respondents from the South (19.1%) or the Bekaa (20.4%).

# Hezbollah in Syria and the Syrian Conflict

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### [11.1] Do you know anyone from your neighborhood, village or family who has been killed in Syria?

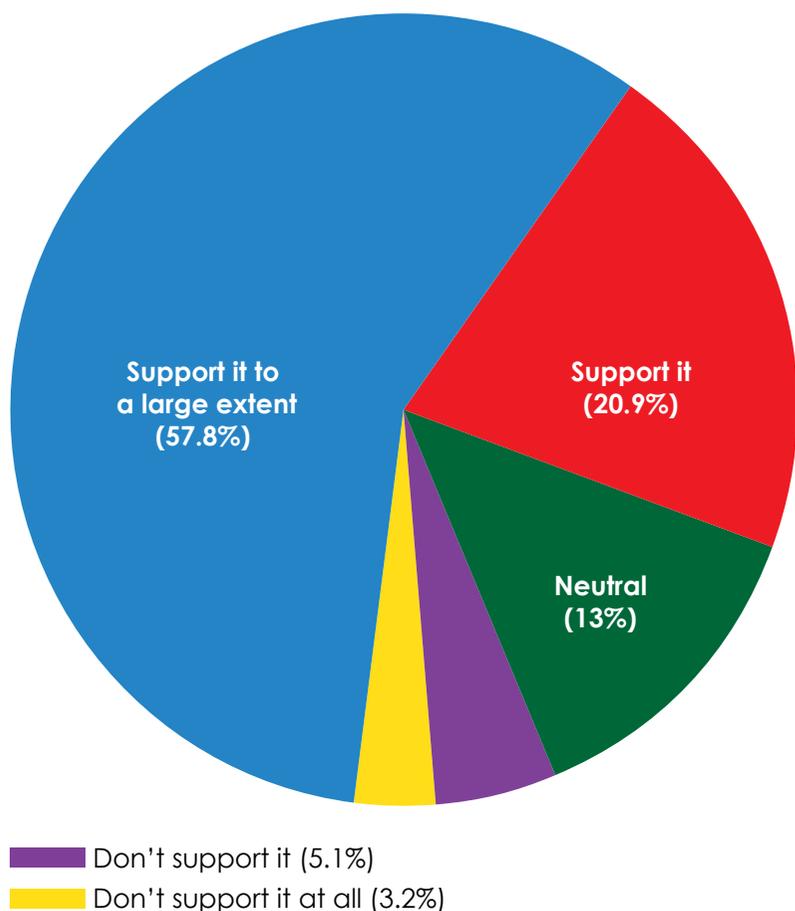


When comparing regional variations on the number of people familiar with someone killed in Syria, it is worth noting that Beirut has far more residents of “fighting

age” than the South or the Bekaa. Further, since Beirut is an amalgam of people from the South and the Bekaa, the likelihood of a Beiruti knowing someone who died in Syria is far greater than someone who remains at anchor in his or her home village. Unsurprisingly, young, poor and urban respondents are more likely to know someone killed in Syria. Our 2014 Polling Dahiyeh report disclosed that 75.3% of those polled knew someone who died fighting in Syria. In the current poll, the figure for Beirut/Mt. Lebanon increases to 78.6%.

- Men are more likely (59%) to know someone killed in Syria than are women (49.6%).
- Poorer respondents are more likely to know someone who died in Syria (60.7% of the poorest compared with 38.2% of the wealthiest respondents).
- Younger respondents are considerably more likely to know someone who died in Syria (60.1%) than are middle aged (49.6%) and those 60 and above (40.3%).
- People from Beirut are far likelier (78.6%) to know someone who died under such conditions than are those from the South (44.2%) or the Bekaa (59.5%).

## [11.2] Do you support Hezbollah's involvement in Syria?



These results convey two important and overlapping messages. First, there is no overwhelming consensus

about Hezbollah's involvement in Syria since only 57.8% of respondents indicate that they "strongly support" it. Second, the combination of lukewarm support, neutrality and disapproval of that involvement strike an intriguing figure: 42.2% of Lebanese Shia do not "strongly support" Hezbollah's involvement in Syria.

- The wealthier the respondent, the more likely he/she is to actively disapprove of Hezbollah's involvement in Syria (the 14.7% of the wealthiest who oppose the "war effort" dwindled to just 5.6% of the poorest).
- The two wealthiest groups of respondents are the least likely to express "lukewarm" support but considerably more likely to express strong support (68.3% and 64.7%) than are the two poorest groups (58.9% and 49.5%).
- Middle-aged respondents are slightly more likely to be unsupportive of the war (10.7%) than younger (7.7%) or older (5%) respondents.
- Younger respondents are more likely to profess tacit support (26.8%) than middle-aged (18.5%) or older (18.2%) respondents, while older respondents are more likely to "strongly support" such involvement (61.6%) than young (55.4%) or middle-aged (59.4%) respondents.

### [11.3] Why is Hezbollah fighting in Syria?

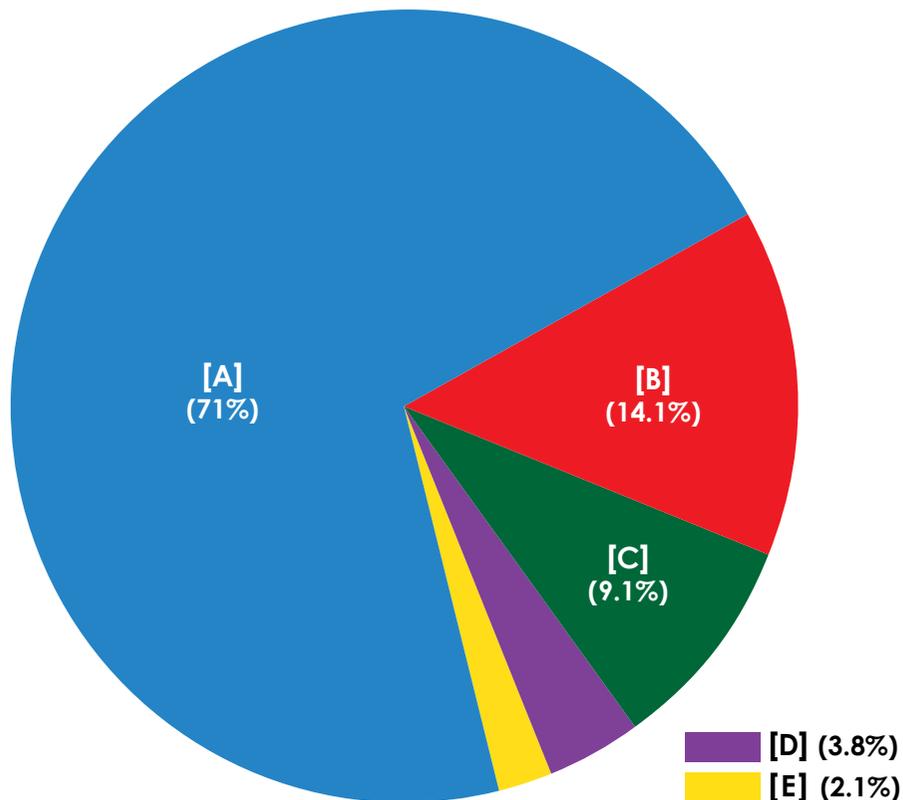
[A] To protect Lebanon

[B] To prevent Takfiris from taking over Syria

[C] To protect the Shia community

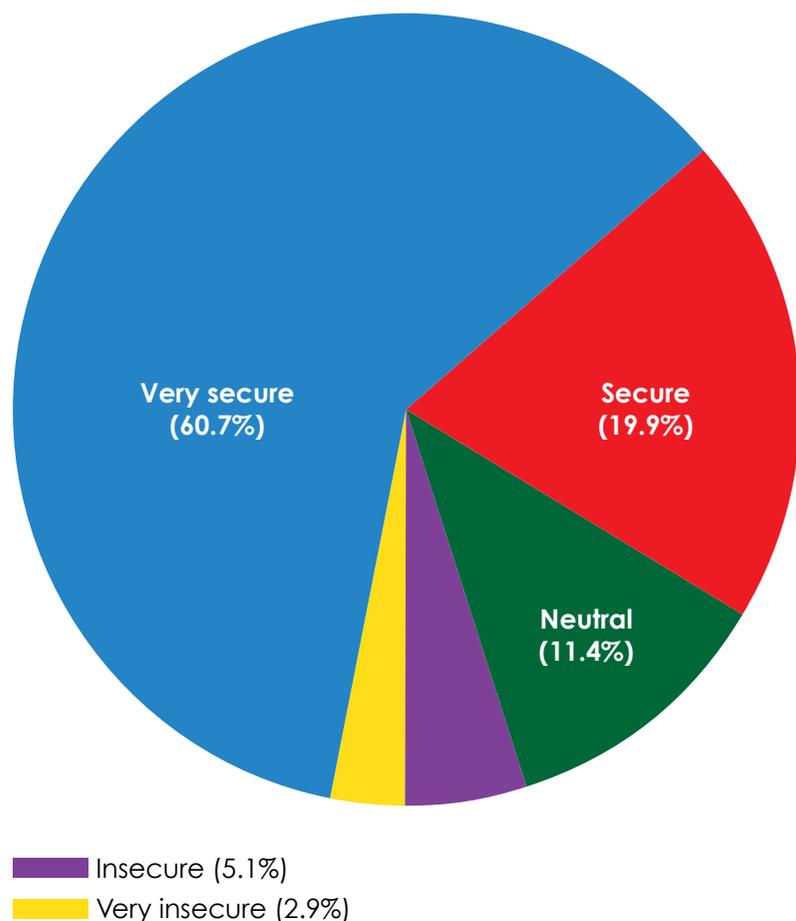
[D] To support the Assad regime

[E] To follow orders issued by Iran



The very intriguing responses to this question correspond precisely with those for questions #7.1 (What is the most important issue facing Lebanon's Shia community today?) and #8.1 (What are the main functions of Hezbollah's arms?). In short, when 71% of respondents say that Hezbollah is fighting in Syria to protect Lebanon, it means that an overwhelming number of Shia now equate Hezbollah's political and strategic objectives with those of the entire country. In short, Shia have taken ownership of the "idea of Lebanon," a trend born out in the causes they have come to share with Christians in recent years.

### [11.4] Has Hezbollah's involvement in Syria made you feel more or less secure?



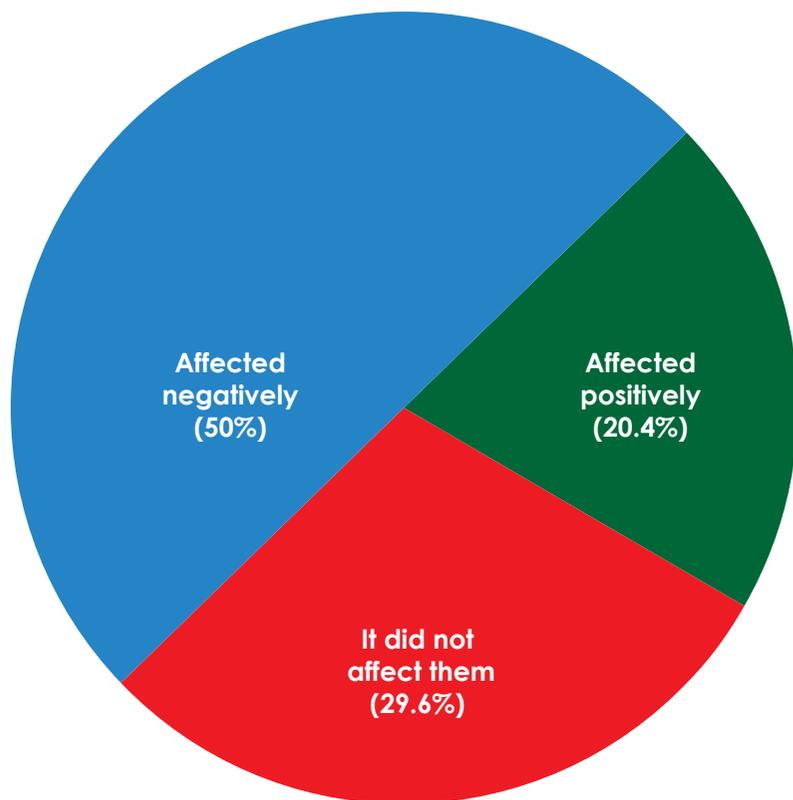
Compared to the responses to question #11.2 that indicate 77.8% of respondents supporting various levels Hezbollah involvement in Syria, the responses given for this question indicate that 79.9% feel more or less secure because of Hezbollah's involvement in Syria. Consequently, it is safe to assume that the need to feel secure is the primary driver behind supporting that involvement.

- By a small margin, the poorest (10.7%) and wealthiest (11.8%) groups of respondents are most likely to say that Hezbollah's involvement in Syria makes them feel "insecure" or "very insecure."
- Poorer respondents are more likely to feel "neutral" while wealthier respondents are more likely to feel "more secure" (89.9% and 82.4% in the two wealthiest groups of respondents) compared with the two poorest (76.8% and 75.7%).

## 15 Questions for the Lebanese Shia Community

- The two wealthiest groups are far more likely to indicate “very secure” (75.5% and 70.6%) than are the two poorest groups (48.2% and 54.2%).
- Middle-aged respondents consider themselves “much more insecure” (4.5%) than young (1.9%) or older people (2.5%).
- Though younger respondents say they are “more secure” (22.7%) at a higher rate than did middle-aged (17.4%) or older people (17%), older respondents expressed feeling “much more secure” (66%) at a measurably higher rate than young (57.4%) and middle-aged (62.7%) respondents.

### [11.5] In your opinion, has Hezbollah's involvement in Syria affected relations between the Shia and other Lebanese communities?



The results for this question correspond almost exactly with those given for #4.1 (in which 52% of the respondents indicate that relations between Lebanon's various

communities are worse than last year). Relative to question #4.1 in which 28.7% of respondents indicate that the relationship between Lebanon's various communities remains the same, 29.6% of those polled indicate that Hezbollah's involvement in Syria has not affected them. Clearly, whether good or bad, the war in Syria makes it clear that changes in inter-Lebanese relations must be considered a constant rather than a short-term variable.

- The poorest respondents are more likely (33.9%) to feel that Hezbollah's involvement has not affected relations compared with the wealthiest respondents (20.6%).
- The wealthiest respondents are most likely to say "yes, positive" (44.1%) than those making \$501 – \$1,000/month (15.1%) and \$1,001 – \$2,000/month (17.5%).
- The poorest (37.5%) and wealthiest (35.3%) groups of respondents are considerably less likely to say "yes, negative" than their lower-middle (54.8%) and middle-income (52.2%) counterparts.
- Older respondents are slightly more optimistic about

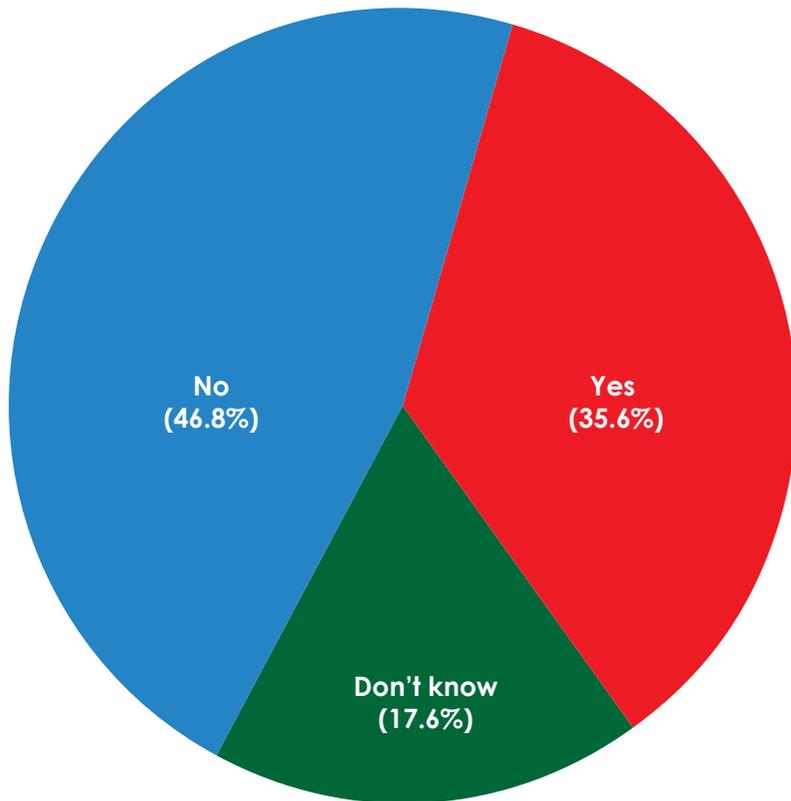
## 15 Questions for the Lebanese Shia Community

the effects of the war, with 33% saying that it had not altered relations (compared with 29% of youth and 28% of middle-aged respondents), 22.6% saying the war had improved relations (compared to 20% of youth and 19.9% of middle-aged respondents) and only 44% saying the effects exacerbated relations (compared

with 50.8% of young people and 51.5% of middle-aged respondents).

- Despite broad similarities across regions, those responding “yes, positively” are slightly higher in Beirut while those who indicate “yes, negatively” are slightly higher in the South.

### [11.6] Do you think the conflict in Syria will end soon?



Regardless of how these results are interpreted, there is little if any optimism in evidence. In August 2014, 56% of Dahiyeh respondents thought the war

would end soon.<sup>(\*)</sup> In the current poll, just 39.2% of the respondents in Beirut/Mt. Lebanon think the same. The number of respondents who answered, “Don’t know” remains high, and not appreciably less than the 22.2% who responded to question #10.3 (regarding U.S.-Iranian dialogue) with “don’t know.” Is this another example of *Taqiyya* in which people would rather plead ignorance than sound like alarmists? In addition, strong discrepancies are apparent across income and geography, and older, wealthier and rural respondents are far more pessimistic about the prospects for ending the war.

- Women are considerably more likely (39.7%) than men (29.1%) to think the war will end soon.

(\*) Polling Dahiyeh 2014.

## 15 Questions for the Lebanese Shia Community

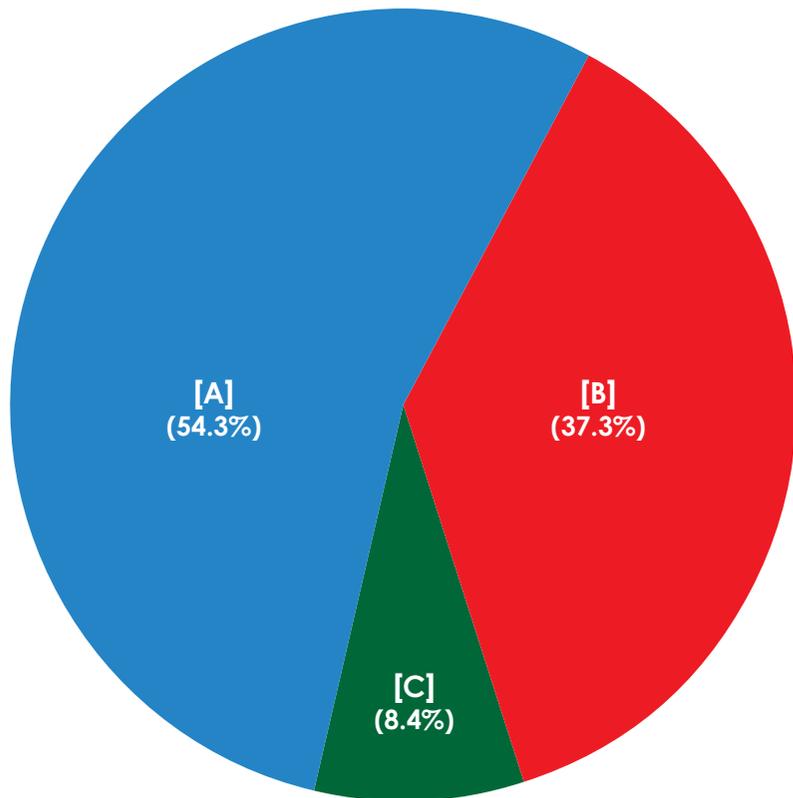
- The poorest respondents are more likely to select “yes, the war will end soon” (41.1%) are than the wealthiest (20.6%). At every level, pessimism about when the war might end increases according to income level.
- Wealthier respondents are far more likely to say “no” (76.5%) than are the poorest (23.2%).
- The poorer the respondent, the more likely he or she is to select “don’t know” (35.7% among the poorest and 2.9% among the wealthiest, scaling in that order).
- Middle-aged respondents, slightly more pessimistic, answer “yes” at slightly lower rates (33.6%) than the young (36.2%) or the old (38.4%) and “no” at considerably higher rates (51.8%) than the young (41.9%).
- The young are far more likely to select “don’t know” (21.9%) than are middle-aged (14.6%) or older (11.3%) respondents. *These statics beg the question: is this timidity, ignorance or an unwillingness to recognize the long, grim fight that lies ahead?*
- Beirutis are more optimistic (39.3%) than are Southerners (37.3%) and respondents from the Bekaa (29.8%) that the war will end soon, while respondents from the South are far more pessimistic (52.1%) than their Beirutis (32.4%) or Bekaa (42.7%) counterparts.

### [11.7] Regarding the crisis in Syria, what outcome would you prefer?

[A] The Assad regime survives

[B] A unity government is formed between Assad and the opposition

[C] Assad steps down and democratic elections take place



Anytime a particularly vicious and intractable civil war is brought to a “peaceful” end when neither combatant has been able to vanquish the opponent, some form of “unity government” seems reasonable. Thus, it is remarkable that only 37.3% appear to support such an arrangement! But that does not necessarily mean that the voice of reason is absent. Alternatively, it is equally remarkable that 37.3% of those who represent one of the warring factions already support such a solution. Nevertheless, tremendous differences of opinion are still apparent across class and geography. Again, the young, poor and urban either support Assad or call for his removal in slightly greater numbers than their wealthier, older and more rural counterparts, who lean in larger numbers toward a unity government.

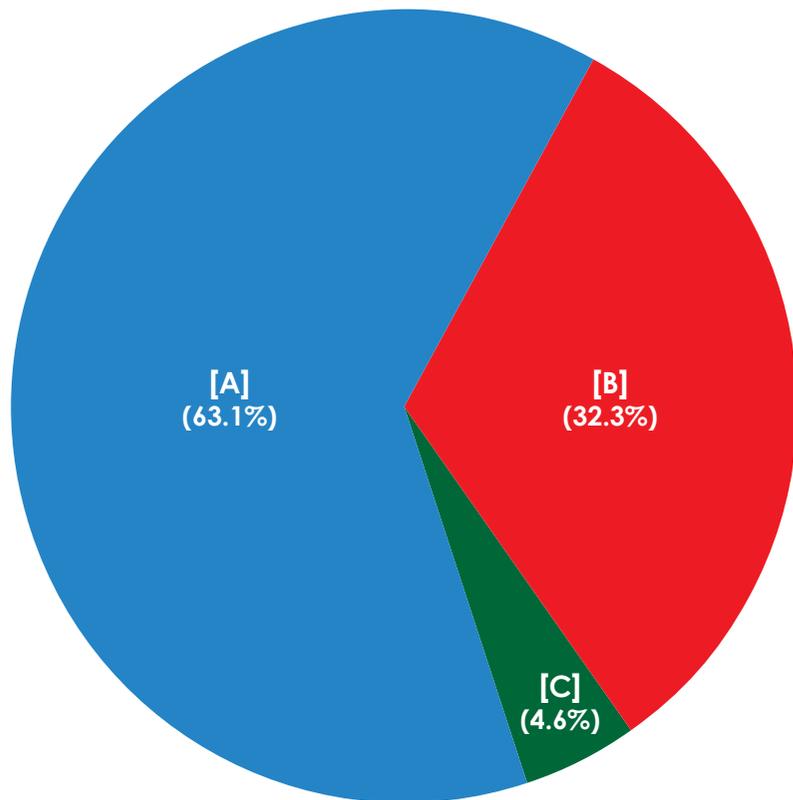
- The poorest respondents are more likely to prefer the survival of the Assad regime (60.7%) than are the wealthiest (50%).
- The wealthiest respondents are more likely to support a unity government (44.1%) than are the poorest (30.4%).

## 15 Questions for the Lebanese Shia Community

- The three lowest income groups are more likely to favor Assad stepping down and elections being held (8.9% of those making less than \$500/month, 8.3% of those making \$501 – \$1,000/month and 9.4% of those making \$1,001 – \$2,000/month) than are the two wealthiest groups (5.8% of those making \$2,000 – \$3,500/month and 5.9% of those with \$3,500/month).
- Very little difference is apparent according to age for those who support the Assad regime (54.1% among youth, 54.9% among the middle aged and 53.5% among the old), but older respondents are more likely to support a “unity government” (42.1%) than are the young (34.5%) or middle aged (38.9%). Younger respondents are more likely to favor Assad stepping down (11.4%) than are middle-aged respondents (6.2%) or those over 60 (4.4%).
- Though respondents from the South (37.9%) and the Bekaa (41.2%) are more likely to favor “unity government” than Beirutis do (27.6%), far more Beirutis want Assad to step down (15.9%) than do respondents from the South (7.4%) or the Bekaa (6.5%).

### [11.8] In your opinion, which is the most acceptable outcome for Syria?

- [A] Assad retains power even if it means the continued presence of a Syrian community in Lebanon  
[B] Assad leaves and the Syrian refugees return to Syria  
[C] Don't know



As a matter that delves deep into popular perceptions, the responses provided to this question raise some of the most confusing paradoxes of the entire conflict. On one hand, people report that the overwhelming reason Hezbollah is fighting in Syria is to protect Lebanon. On the other hand, they think relations with Syrian refugees could be much better. Therefore, why would they prefer to see Assad remain in power even if it means that the 1.5 million Syrian refugees in Lebanon (the vast majority of whom are Sunni) would remain? After all, no one wants an ally to lose the war, especially when a tremendous amount of blood continues to be shed in its behalf. Hence, the issue of ideology, pride and stubbornness looms large. In insisting upon Assad's victory at the expense of Lebanon's domestic stability, are they acting in an "unpatriotic" manner by fighting to the proverbial death or at least dismembering Lebanon's "delicate balance?"

- Men are more likely (68.1%) than women (60%) to choose "Assad retains power."

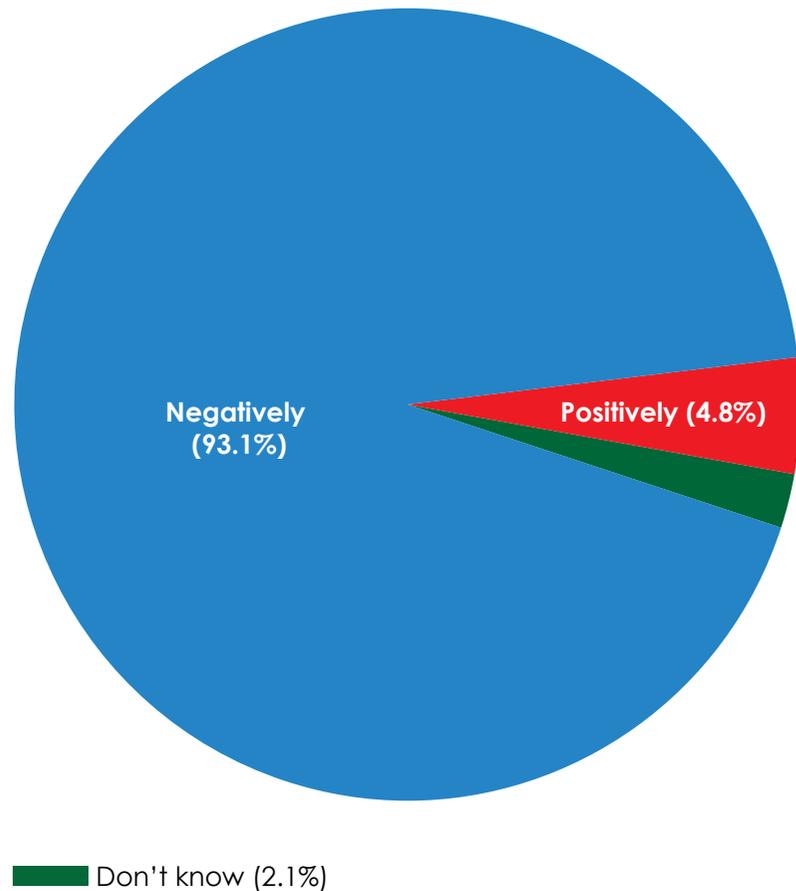
## 15 Questions for the Lebanese Shia Community

- Interestingly, the wealthiest (73.5%) and poorest (67.9%) are the most likely to choose “Assad retains power,” while the middle-income groups are most likely to select “Assad leaves and Syrian refugees return to Syria.”
- The middle and upper-middle income brackets are most likely to choose “don’t know.”
- Younger respondents are slightly more inclined to agree that Assad should retain power (64.5% compared with 63.3% of 40 – 59 year olds and 58.5% of those 60 and above), while the oldest respondents think Assad *and* the Syrian refugees should leave (36.5%) compared with 31.8% of younger and 31.1% of middle-aged respondents.
- In a very interesting turn, respondents from the Bekaa—the area affected the most by the massive presence of Syrian refugees—are more likely to say “retains power and refugees stay” (71.8%) than are Beirutis (64.8%) or respondents from the South (58.9%). Respondents from the South are more likely to choose “Assad leaves” (35.1%) than are Beirutis (31.7%) or respondents from the Bekaa (26.3%).

**How do “They” Perceive “Us”?**

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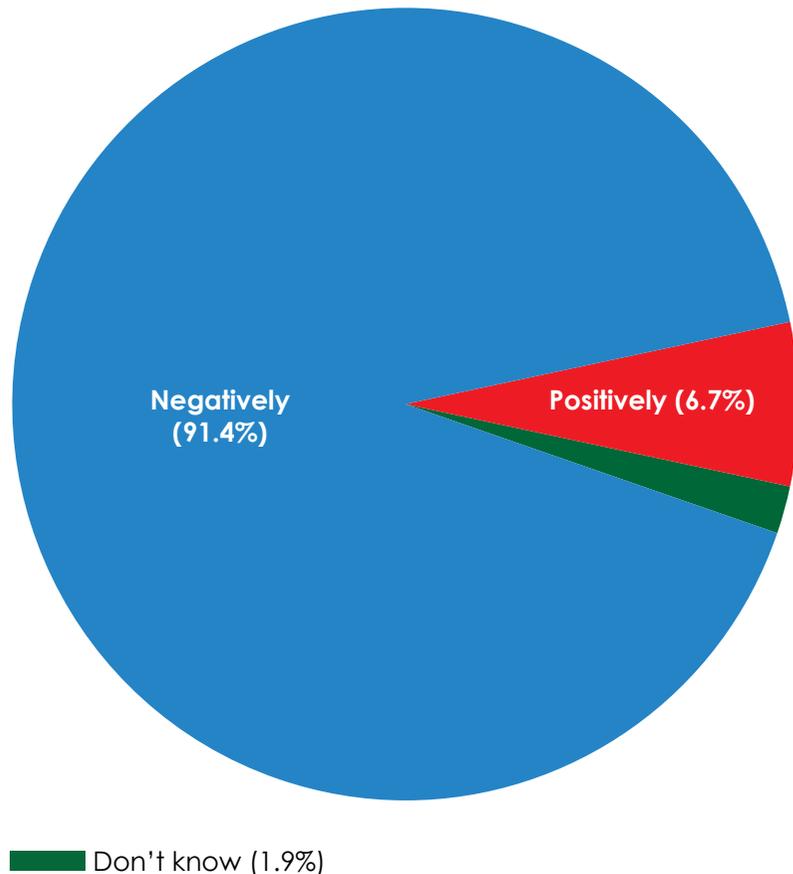
### [12.1] In your opinion, how does the U.S. perceive Lebanon's Shia community?



Responses to this question relate closely to perceptions of “pernicious” American influence in Lebanon and the assumption that the U.S. does not have the best interests of Lebanon's Shia at heart. Interestingly, while there are minor discrepancies according to income, age and geography, the wealthiest are as pessimistic as the poorest about how they are viewed by the U.S. (the three middle-income brackets are slightly more “optimistic”).

- The three middle-income brackets are slightly more likely to believe that the U.S. has a favorable opinion of Lebanese Shia than are the wealthiest and poorest.
- Younger respondents are slightly more likely to believe that the U.S. has an unfavorable opinion of Lebanese Shia (94.4%, 92.2% and 91.2%). Older respondents are slightly more likely to select “don't know.”
- Respondents from the South are slightly less inclined to think that Americans have a negative view of Lebanese Shia.

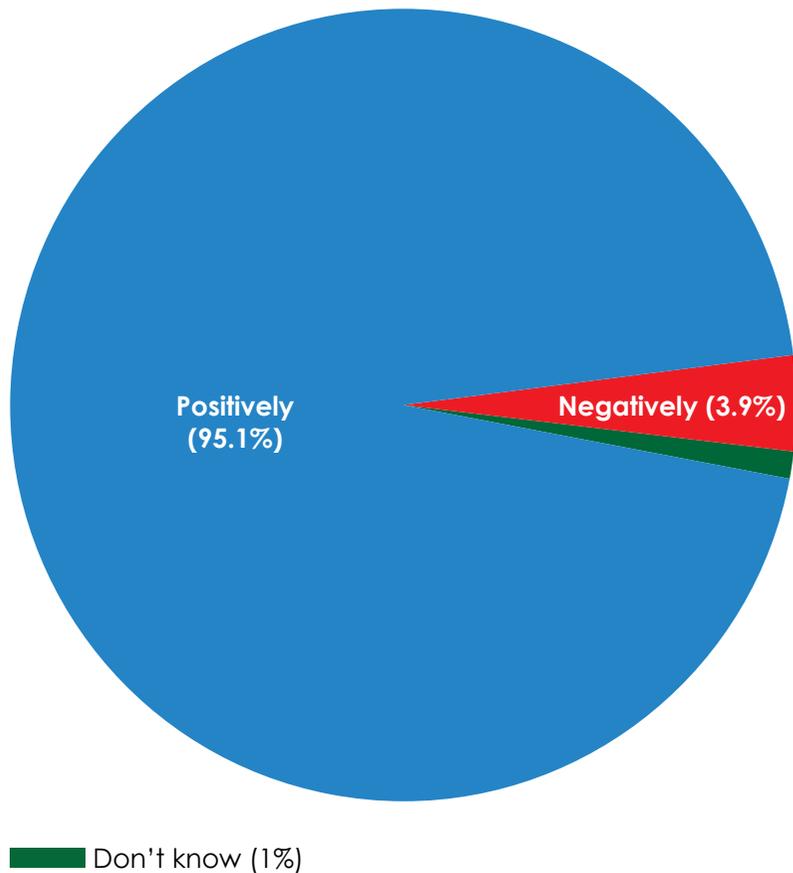
### [12.2] In your opinion, how does Saudi Arabia perceive Lebanon's Shia community?



Perceptions of how Saudis view the Lebanese Shia mirror those of the U.S., with the slight exception that the poorest, youngest and those in the Bekaa are the least likely to believe the Saudis think poorly of them.

- The poorest respondents are far more likely to say the Saudis have a favorable opinion of Lebanese Shia (19.6%) than are other groups (6.5%, 5.2%, 6.5% and 8.8% from the lowest to the highest income bracket).
- Those in the middle-income bracket are the most likely to answer "negative," while the wealthiest respondents are the most likely (5.9%) to choose "don't know."
- Men are slightly more likely to think the Saudis have a positive image of Lebanese Shia (9.9%) than are women (4.7%).
- Younger respondents are only slightly more likely to believe the Saudis have a positive image of Lebanese Shia (7.6%, 6.2% and 5%).
- Older respondents are more likely to say they "don't know" (0.6%, 3.1% and 3.1%).
- Respondents from the Bekaa are most likely to choose "positively" (13%) than are Beirutis (1.4%) or respondents from the South (5.2%).

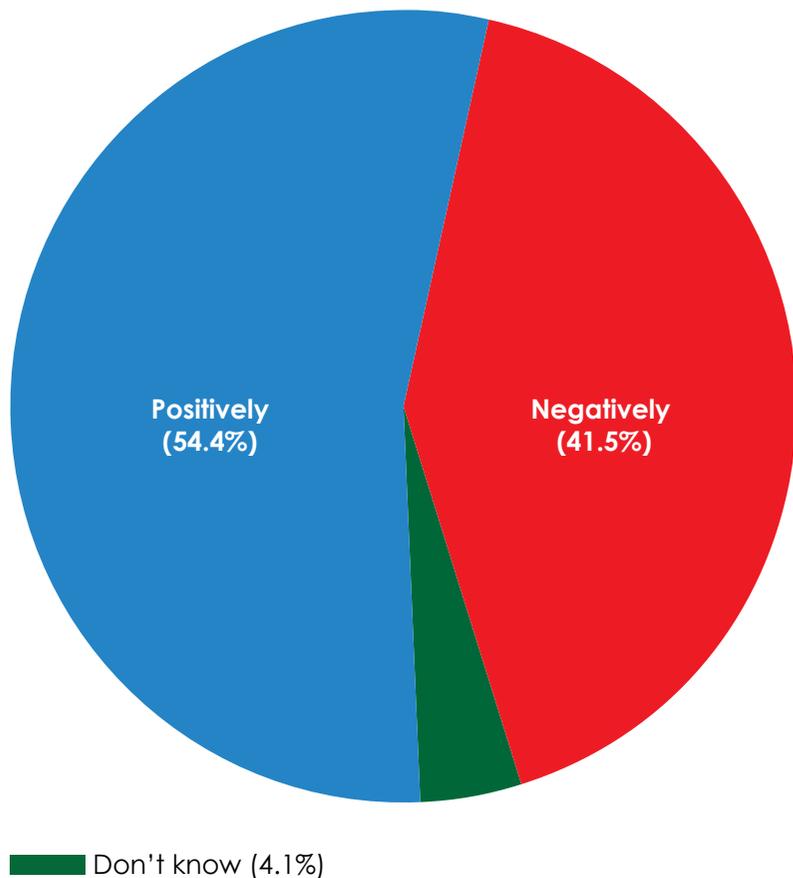
### [12.3] In your opinion, how does Iran perceive Lebanon's Shia community?



In another bizarre twist, young and poor respondents (those who otherwise display the most sectarian tendencies) tend to think the Iranians have a slightly more negative view of them than do their older and wealthier counterparts. However, this could be more of a reflection of their general insecurity vis-à-vis neighboring countries due to their “station” in life.

- The poorest respondents are most likely to answer “negative” (7.1%) compared with 2.9% of the wealthiest respondents.
- Younger respondents are slightly more likely to choose “positive.”
- Respondents from the South are slightly more likely to choose “negative.”

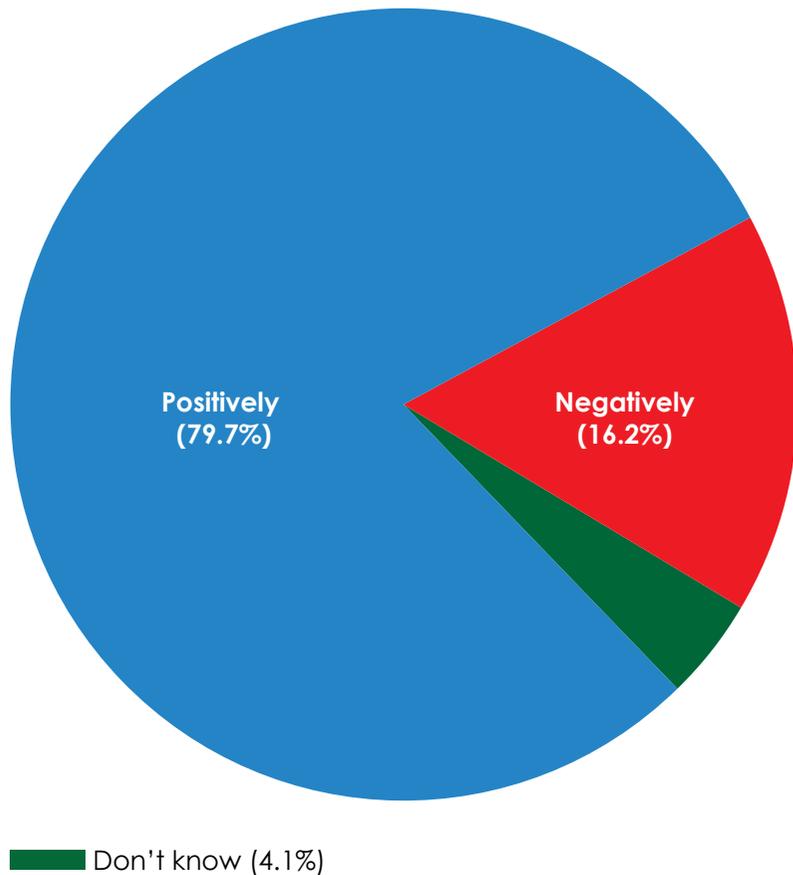
### [12.4] In your opinion, how does the Lebanese Sunni Community perceive Lebanon's Shia community?



These results are a strong reflection of the perceptions evident in question #4.2 in which relations with Sunnis are considered more tenuous among younger, poorer and more urban inhabitants.

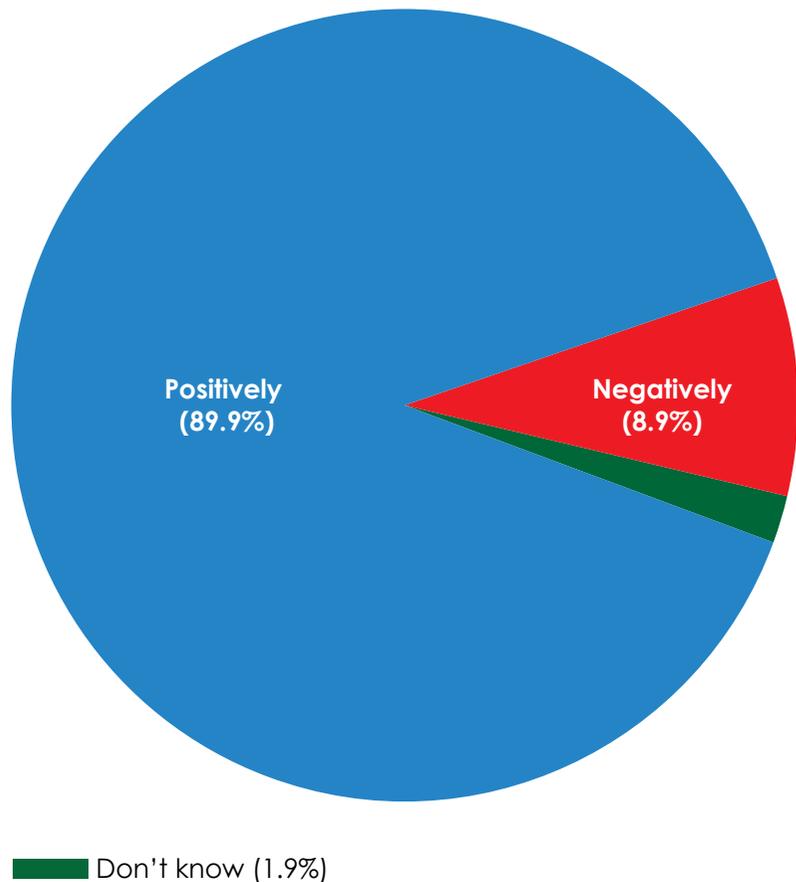
- Respondents in the upper-middle income bracket are most likely to answer "positive" (69.8%) compared with 52% of the respondents in the middle and 52.9% in the wealthiest groups.
- The wealthiest respondents are more likely to choose "don't know" (11.8%) than are respondents in other income brackets (0% of the poorest, 2.5% of lower middle, 5.6% of middle and 2.9% of upper middle).
- Younger respondents are far less likely to answer "positive" (47.3%) than are their middle-aged (59.1%) and older (65.4%) counterparts.
- Respondents from the South are far more likely to choose "positive" (62.6%) than are Beirutis (26.9%) or respondents from the Bekaa (51.1%).

### [12.5] In your opinion, how does the Lebanese Druze Community perceive Lebanon's Shia community?



- Poorer respondents are more likely to answer "negative" (25% of the poorest compared with just 11.8% of the wealthiest respondents, trending downward in that order).
- Again, the wealthiest respondents are the most likely to select "don't know" (11.8%).
- Younger respondents are slightly more likely to think the Druze view the Shia negatively (19.4%, 13.2% and 13.2%).
- Older respondents are slightly more likely to choose "don't know," thus reflecting a "positive" response at roughly the same rate (78.1%, 81.2% and 81.1%).
- Beirutis are more likely to select "negative" (28.3%) compared with respondents from the South (13%) and the Bekaa (16.8%).

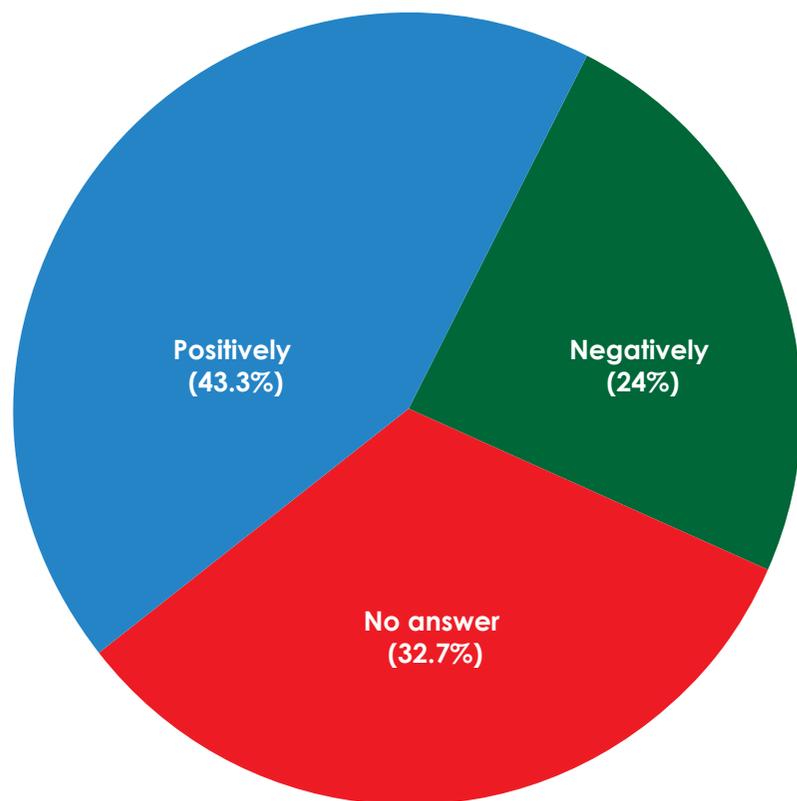
### [12.6] In your opinion, how do Lebanon's Christian Communities perceive Lebanon's Shia community?



- The three middle-income brackets are the most likely to choose "positively" (89.5%, 89.2% and 92.8%) compared with the poorest (83.9%) and wealthiest groups of respondents (79.4%).
- Older respondents are more likely to choose "positive" (86.6%, 91.3% and 92.5%) while younger respondents lean toward choosing "negatively" (12%, 5.9% and 6.3%).
- Respondents from the South are considerably more likely to choose "positive" (96.2%) than are Beirutis (75.2%) or respondents from the Bekaa (89.3%).

# The Community and Its “Brethren”

### [13.1] In 2014, several Iranian officials stated that Iran's influence stretches from Yemen to Lebanon. How do you view that statement?

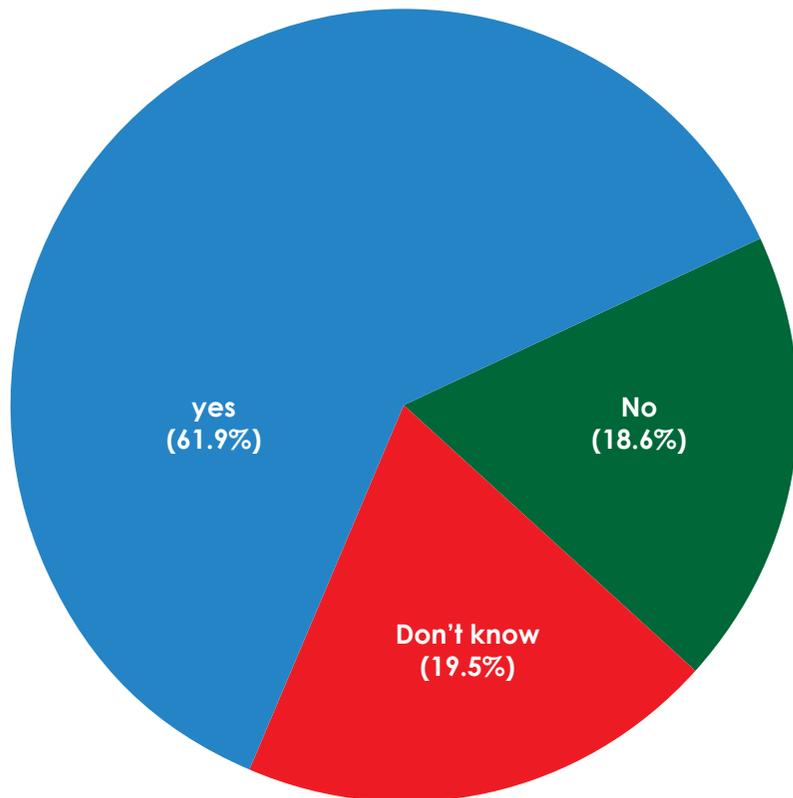


This question reveals a number of very interesting popular perceptions, namely that the wealthier, older and more rural respondents have a less favorable view

of Iranian “expansionism” than do their younger and poorer counterparts in Beirut and the Bekaa.

- Men are considerably more likely to agree with this statement (50.4%) than women (38.9%). Moreover, women choose “no answer” (38.4%) more frequently than men (23.6%).
- The wealthiest are the most likely to view the statement as negative (35.3%) while the poorest respondents are the least likely (17.9%) (trending downward among the middle-income brackets).
- The lowest three income groups are considerably more likely to choose “no answer” (39.3%, 39.7% and 31.8%) than are the wealthiest two groups (18% and 26.5%).
- Younger respondents are more likely to answer “positively” (48.8%, 40.3% and 33.3%—a considerable margin). “No answer” also appears frequently among all three age groups: 31.8% of the young, 32.5% of middle-aged and 35.8% of older respondents.
- Respondents from the South are less likely to choose “positive” (36.3%) than are Beirutis (48.3%) and those from the Bekaa (56.5%). Thus, Southerners are slightly more likely to choose “negative” or select “no answer.”

### [13.2] Do you believe the Alawi in Syria, the Shia in Iraq and the Houthi in Yemen are fighting for the same cause?



The poll disclosed that 62% of Lebanese Shia feel some cultural, religious or even political-ideological kinship to the communities noted, as they consider

them being preyed upon to the same extent as their own community. That finding is remarkable given the vast theological differences between Shia, Alawi and Houthis. Notably, the Alawi were not (officially) considered “Shia” until the 1970s (and still are not by many today), while the Houthis have more in common with Sunni practices than with Shia at all. Nevertheless, the fact that a very recognizable communal identity has been forged between the three groups acknowledges that a remarkable ideological association has been established in the course of several decades, a few years or even in recent months (in the case of the Houthis), largely because of Iranian efforts. Still, that identity is recognized with varying degrees of acceptance according to class, age and geography...

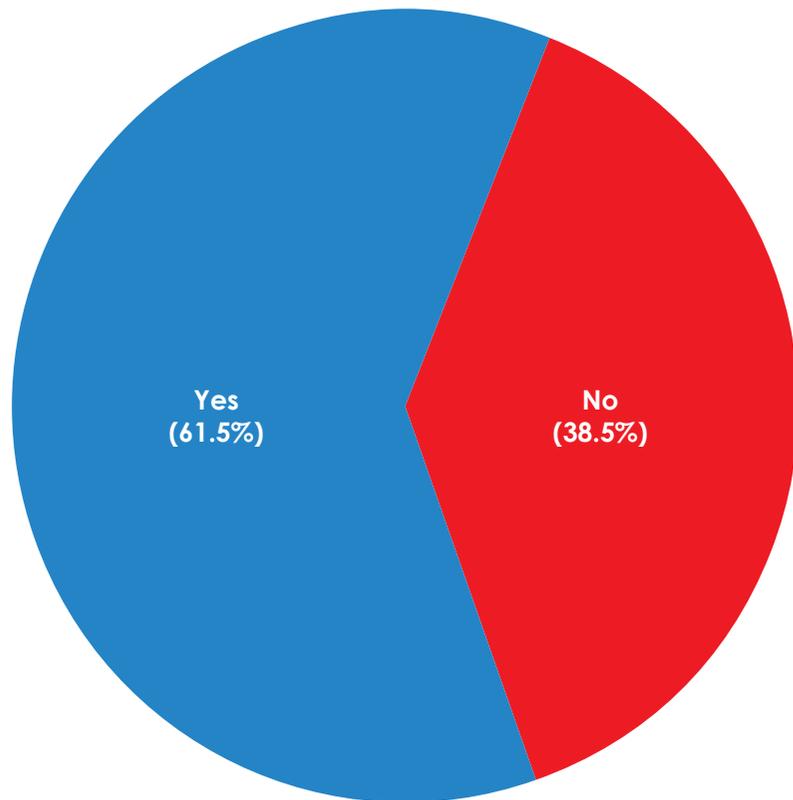
- Respondents in the upper-middle income bracket are the most likely to select “yes” (69.8%) while those in the lower-middle bracket are the least likely (57.5%).

## 15 Questions for the Lebanese Shia Community

- Wealthier respondents are far more likely to indicate “no” (35.3%) than the poorest (12.5%).
- Men are slightly more likely to choose “no” (22.1%) than women (16.4%), while women choose “don’t know” at a higher rate (22.1%) than men (15.3%).
- The poorer the respondent, the more likely he or she is to choose “don’t know” (25% of the poorest compared with 5.9% of the wealthiest, trending downward according to income).
- Younger respondents are far more inclined to select “yes” (68%) than are middle-aged (57.7%) and older respondents (52.8%). They are also less likely to say “no” (15.1%, 20.7% and 24.5%).
- Beirutis are far more likely to select “yes” (74.5%) than are respondents from the South (58.7%) or the Bekaa (62.2%). Southerners are also the most likely to select “don’t know” (21.2%) compared with Beirutis (15.9%) or respondents from the Bekaa (17.6%).

# The Community and Its Leadership

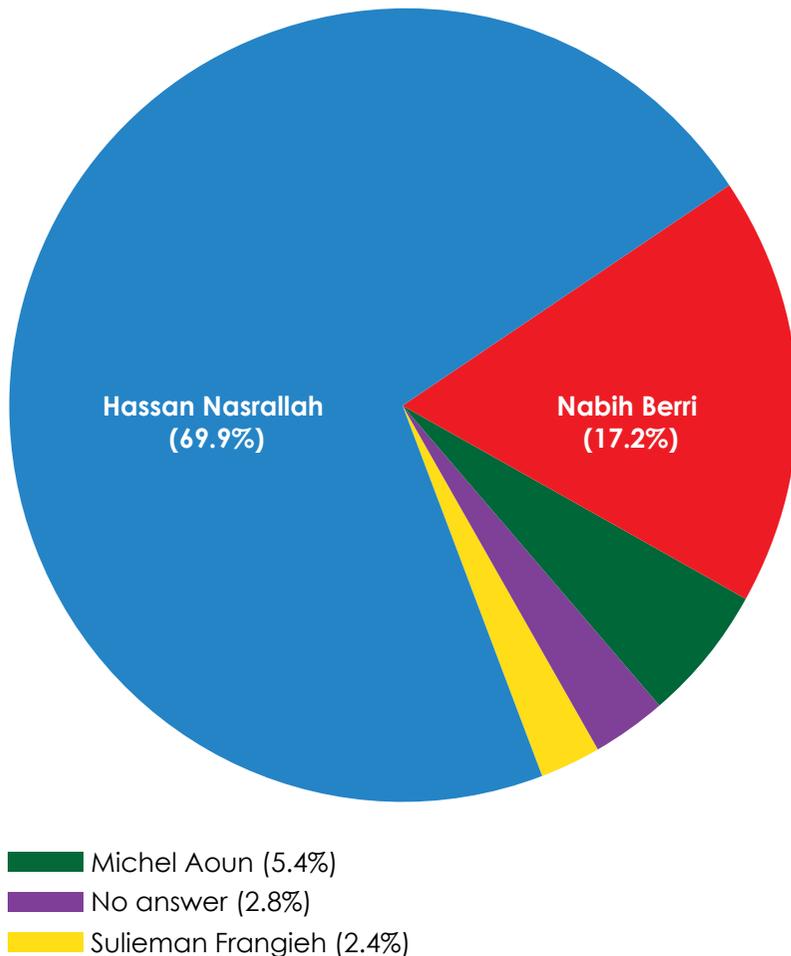
### [14.1] Is there a specific leader you trust to provide a better future for your family?



Interestingly, wealthier and more rural respondents are considerably more likely to place their trust in a specific leader to improve their future. Older respondents have less faith in a leader's ability to make things better than the young.

- Women are slightly more likely to trust a specific leader (63.9%) than men (57.7%).
- The wealthiest respondents are more likely to trust a specific leader to generate improvements (67.6%) than are the poorest (57.1%).
- Older respondents are slightly less willing to trust a specific leader (54.1%) than are the youngest (63.2%).
- Respondents from the Bekaa are far more likely to trust a specific leader (69.8%) than are Beirutis (52.4%) or Southerners (60%).

### [14.2] If you trust someone, who is he?



These results are both extremely revealing and reflect the trend evident in this poll. Though Nasrallah is the most popular leader by far, he enjoys far less support than one may expect.

- Women are more likely to trust Nasrallah (72.3%) than men (65.8%), while men have a slightly better opinion of Berri and Aoun (21.2%, 7.2%) than women (15%, 4.3%).
- The poorer the respondent, the more likely he or she is to trust Nasrallah (from 84.4% of the poorest to 56.5% of the wealthiest and scaling down in that order).
- Berri, whose popularity increases according to income, is chosen by only 6.3% of the poorest but 21.7% of the wealthiest respondents.
- Aoun is more popular among those making \$2,000 – \$3,500/month than any other group.
- The wealthiest respondents are much more likely not to specify (13%) than the poorest (0%).
- While younger respondents are slightly more likely to choose Nasrallah (72.5%) than their middle-aged (67.7%) or older (66.3%) counterparts, middle-aged respondents

## 15 Questions for the Lebanese Shia Community

are more likely to opt for Berri (20.2%) than are the young (16%) or old (14%). In addition, older respondents choose Aoun at slightly higher rates (4.6%, 5.4% and 8.1%).

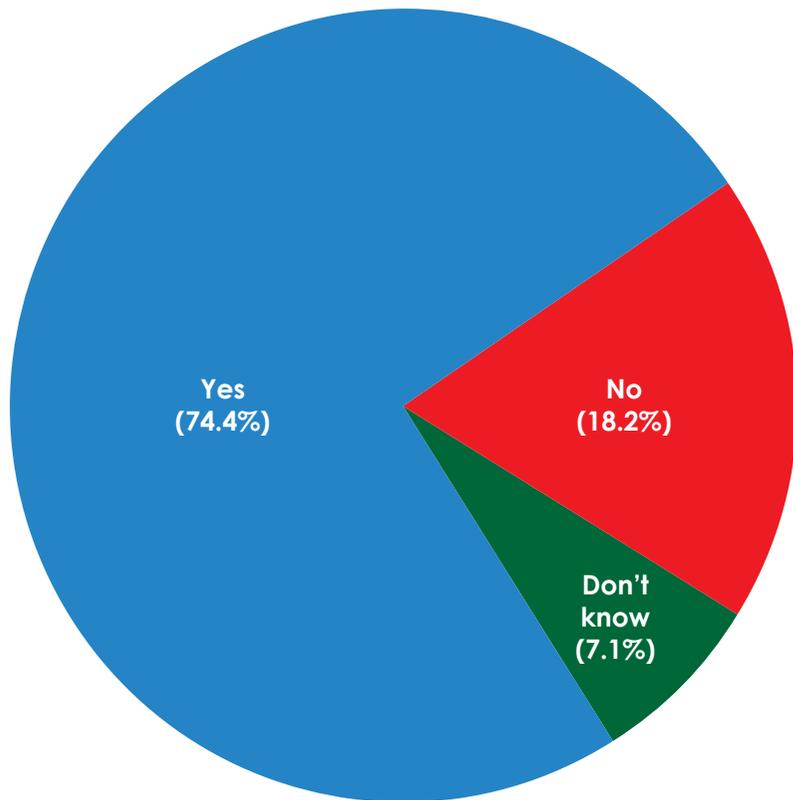
- Frangieh is also fractionally more popular among the eldest respondents (3.5% compared with 2.6% of the youngest and 1.8% of the middle aged).
- Nasrallah is considerably more popular in Beirut (75%)

and the Bekaa (89.6%) than in the South (58.7%).

- Berri is somewhat popular in Beirut (22.4%) and in the South (24.2%) but seems to have very little influence in the Bekaa (1.6%).
- Aoun also has some draw in South (6.2%) and the Bekaa (5.5%) but scarcely any in Beirut (1.3%). Frangieh also has some support in the South (3.7%).

**Perspective 2025**

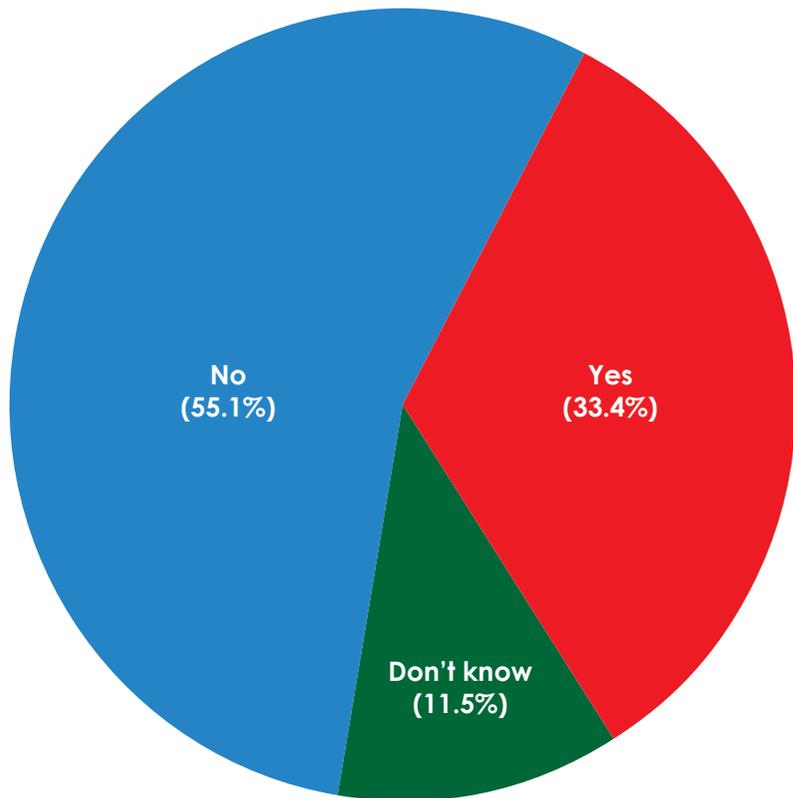
### [15.1] Would you like to see Lebanon's confessional system abolished by 2025?



In a troublesome trend, the question of abandoning the confessional system is also heavily divided across income, age and geography. Wealthier, older and more rural respondents are significantly more likely to favor ending Lebanon's confessional system.

- Wealthier respondents are more likely to favor the abolishment of confessionalism (55.4% among the poorest and 85.3% among the wealthiest respondents).
- Poorer respondents are more likely to select "no" and "don't know."
- Younger respondents are less likely to favor the abolishment of confessionalism (68.2% of the young, 77.9% of middle-aged and 87.4% of older respondents), and they are twice as likely as older respondents to choose "don't know" (9.9%, 4.5% and 4.4%).
- Respondents from the South are more in favor of the end of confessionalism (80.4%), while Beirutis are the least likely (56.6%) and respondents from the Bekaa are in between the two (71.8%).

### [15.2] Would you like to see a Shia president of the republic by 2025?

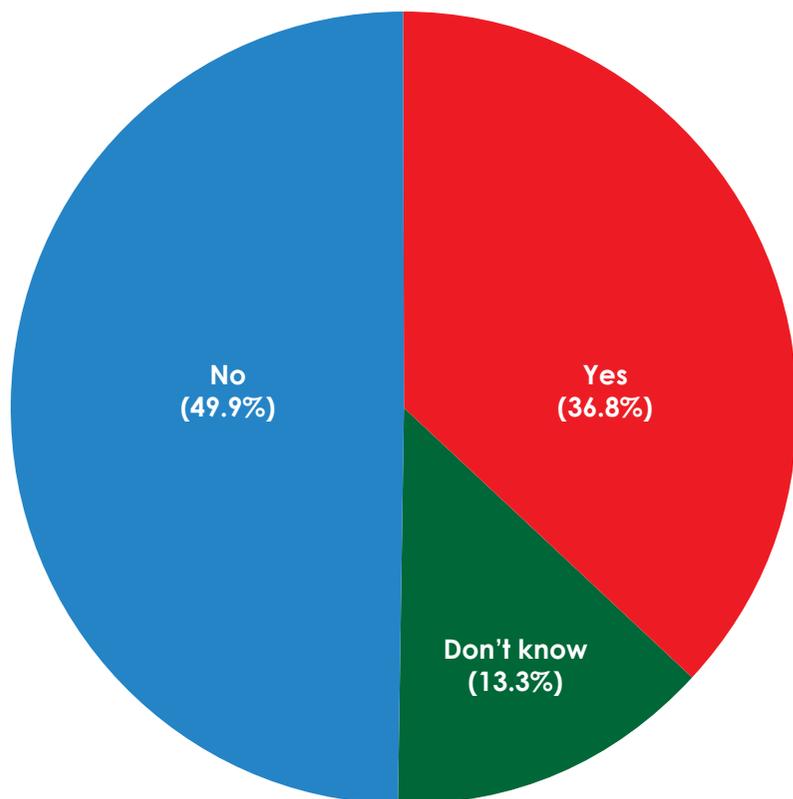


Despite the fact that most Lebanese Shia would like to see the end of the confessional system by 2025, this does not translate into a majority that would also

prefer a Shia president by that same year. If nothing else, this reflects the close rapprochement the Shia have made with Christians in recent years (particularly Aoun's Free Patriotic Movement) and their sensibility about destabilizing this relationship. In that regard, the wealthy, older and more rural respondents are—again unsurprisingly—the biggest opponents of a Shia president. The younger, poorer and more urbanized are the most likely to want a Shia president.

- Women are more likely (35.1%) than men (30.6%) to want a Shia president.
- All responses trend in the 30 – 35% range for “yes,” though the wealthiest respondents are slightly more likely to select “no” (61.8%).
- The poorest respondents answer “no” at 51.8%, but they are also more likely to choose “don't know” (16.1%) than are the wealthiest respondents (2.9%).
- Younger respondents are more likely to desire a Shia president (38.6%) than are middle-aged (28.9%) or older respondents (27.7%). They are also less likely to choose “no” and more likely to select “don't know.”

### [15.3] Would you like to see Hezbollah become a purely political party by 2025?

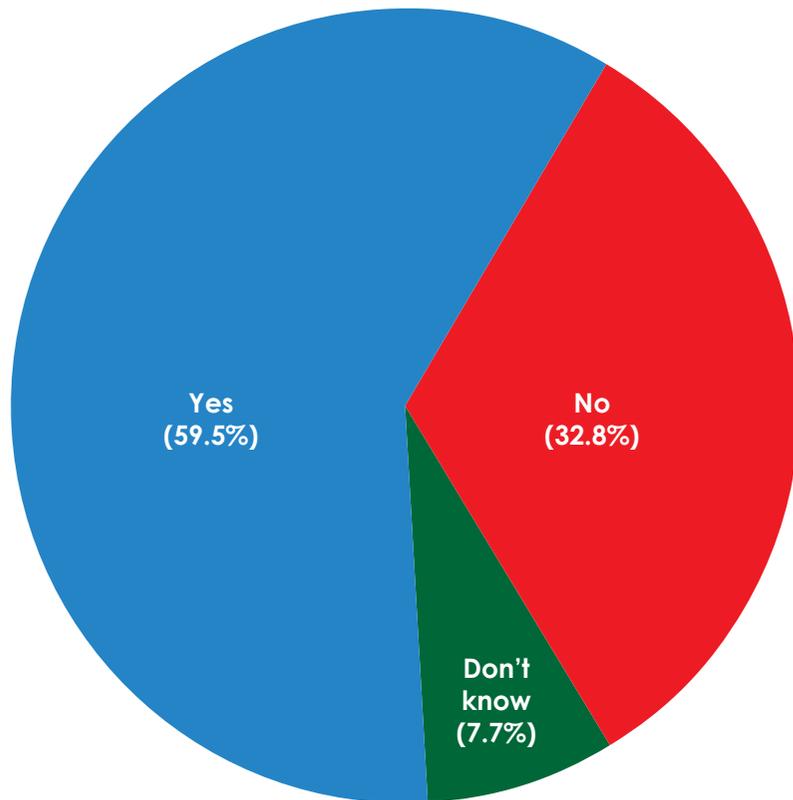


Questions about Hezbollah's political future and/or legitimacy again reflect deep divisions within the Lebanese Shia according to class, age and

geography. In keeping with the "trend" apparent in this poll, the young, poor and urban are the least likely to want Hezbollah to become a "mere" political party. Nevertheless, the diversity of the answers demonstrate degrees of independent thought and opinion that should be noticed.

- Men are more likely (41.3%) than women (34%) to want Hezbollah to become a strictly political party.
- Wealthier respondents are far more likely to choose "yes" (55.9%) than the poorest (23.2%) (the other three income groups trend downwards in that order).
- The poorest are also more likely to select "don't know" (19.6%) than are the wealthiest respondents (5.9%).
- Younger respondents are more likely to choose "no" and "don't know" (58.1%, 16.9%) than their middle-aged (41.5%, 11.2%) and older (44%, 6.9%) counterparts.
- Interestingly, respondents from the South are far more likely to want Hezbollah reduced to a political party (44.7%) than are Beirutis (22.1%) or respondents from the Bekaa (27.1%).

### [15.4] Would you like the LAF to be the only organization that possesses arms by 2025?



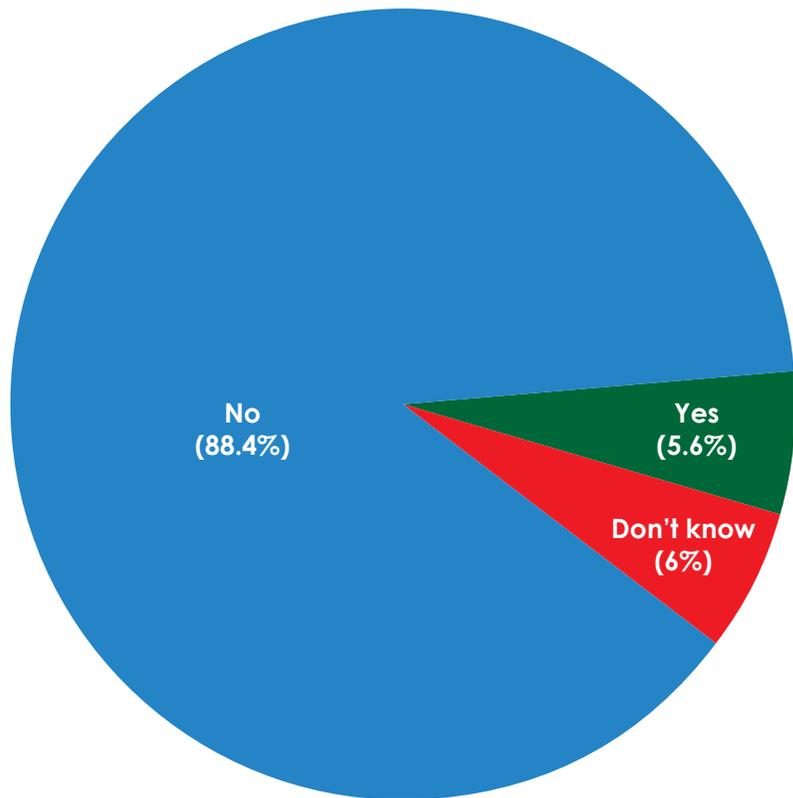
Though most respondents already agreed that non-state actors (i.e., Hezbollah) should be allowed to bear arms (see question #7.8), it is interesting that well over half of those polled no longer want that outcome by 2025. Again, the wealthier, older and more rural respondents are tend to agree with the LAF's future monopoly of force. Alternatively, the 32.8% who disagree represent probably Hezbollah's hardcore loyalists. Most interesting, perhaps, is the fact that people in the South—Hezbollah's most traditional seat of power and influence—are much more in favor of disarming Hezbollah than those in Beirut or the Bekaa.

- The wealthiest respondents are more likely to choose “yes” (76.5%) than the poorest (35.7%).
- Poorer respondents are more likely to select “don't know.”
- Younger respondents are more likely not to agree (40.4%) than are their middle-aged (70.9%) or older counterparts (81.1%).

## 15 Questions for the Lebanese Shia Community

- Younger respondents are more likely to select “don’t know” (11.2%, 5.9% and 1.3%, in that order according to age).
- Respondents from the South are far more likely to support the LAF's exclusive possession of arms (75%) than are Beirutis (35.2%) and respondents from the Bekaa (37.8%).
- Southerners are also far less “undecided,” as only 3% choose “don’t know” compared with 19.3% of Beirutis and 11.8% of respondents from the Bekaa.

### [15.5] Would you like to see Lebanon at peace with Israel by 2025?



- Poorer respondents are more likely to want peace with Israel (7.1% among the poorest and 2.9% among the wealthiest groups).
- Poorer respondents are more likely to select “don’t know” (14.3% among poorest and 0% among the wealthiest).
- While the results are remarkably similar, the oldest respondents are slightly more likely to say “yes” (5%, 5.3% and 8.2%), while the youngest are more likely to choose “don’t know” (7.6%, 5.3% and 2.5%).
- Beirutis are the most inclined to want peace with Israel (9%) compared with respondents from the South (4.9%) and the Bekaa (5.3%).