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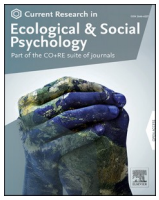

The proximal distant: How does remote acculturation affect wellbeing in the multicultural context of Lebanon?

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ABSTRACT

As a multicultural context, Lebanon has been subjected to complex cultural influences across history and has no clear cultural delineations. Lebanese currently choose to maintain or abandon a combination of four local cultural identities (sectarian, religious, national, and supranational). They may also choose to adopt postcolonial French culture and/or remotely acculturate to American culture. In this unique Middle Eastern context, we specifically examined Americanization in relation to well-being. Using a cross-sectional design, we analyzed data from 741 participants aged 18–40. We identified several cultural clusters from measures of identity and behavioral orientations towards one's self-ascribed sectarian, Arab, religious, national, postcolonial French, and American cultural indicators. Cluster analysis indicated the existence of three clusters within the sample: a national multicultural Americanized cluster (23%), a religious multicultural Americanized cluster (40%), and a religious multicultural traditional cluster (37%). The clusters' composition and characteristics potentially reflect historical and current events related to the political and social fabric of the country and the region (e.g., the Arab Nationalist Movement, the recent national uprising). In addition, we compared psychological well-being across clusters; the analyses demonstrated significant differences. Universally, our results highlight the importance of maintaining a positive attitude towards one's local culture(s) to protect one's well-being and indicate that Americanization extends beyond adolescence and the emerging adulthood periods into adulthood. At the societal level, the emergence of a cluster prioritizing national identity encourages efforts to promote a superordinate national identity and could be indicative of a significant shift within the Lebanese social and political fabric.

1. Introduction

It is typical to hear the phrase "Hi! *Kifak? Ça va?*" (the English greeting followed by "How are you?" in both Lebanese Arabic and French) in Lebanon, whether as an actual greeting or as a quote highlighting the country's multiculturalism. This small and diverse nation is gaining an extra layer of diversity with its remote exposure to worldwide cultures, including but not limited to American (U.S.) culture. We propose that this exposure makes the Lebanese population, especially the youth, prone to remote acculturation—a recent phenomenon involving cultural changes at the levels of values, attitudes, and behaviors of individuals that occur mainly via modern trade, media, and technology (Ferguson et al., 2017a). The various choices between maintaining the local or traditional culture and adopting the remote culture have been shown to have differential effects on acculturating individuals' psychological well-being and adaptation (Ferguson et al., 2017a; Sam and Berry, 2010). The increased complexity of cultural identities is expected to negatively affect the individuals' mental health if it causes identity confusion (Ferguson et al., 2017a, 2017c). The increase in globalization forces and cross-cultural contact in a postcolonial, multicultural setting such as Lebanon (Traboulsi, 2007) makes the country a compelling context for investigating a relatively recent phenomenon like remote acculturation and its potential relationship with key psychological functions such as identity development and well-being. Therefore, this study sought to answer the following research question: What are the acculturation clusters that have emerged in the Lebanese multicultural

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society among adults aged 18 to 40 as a function of exposure to the French postcolonial and American cultures, and how do these emerging clusters inform psychological wellbeing?

While remote acculturation has been studied mainly among adolescents (Ferguson and Adams, 2016), this study contributes to the literature by considering it among youth aged 18 to 40 years, thus including both emerging adults (aged 18 to 25; (Arnett, 2000); i.e., those born after 1997) and millennials (born between 1981 and 1996; (Cambridge University Press, 2023)). Emerging adults are known to undergo experiences of extensive identity exploration, self-exploration, mobility, and instability, and are highly exposed to acculturation vehicles (e.g., media, trade, and tourism) and modern technologies (e.g., social media) (Arnett, 2000; Coyne et al., 2013). These characteristics make this developmental period between adolescence and adulthood a sensitive period and one that is likely to be impacted by the phenomenon of remote acculturation; yet it is still understudied (Ferguson and Adams, 2016). Millennials, in contrast, have witnessed globalization and the emergence of the internet within their lifetime, unlike emerging adults born into a globalized world with modern technologies (Francis and Hoefel, 2018). The fact that they have generally settled more into their values and identity structures also allows us to examine whether there might be distinct differences between this group and emerging adults (Harb, 2010).

Additionally, this study examined the relationships and differences in a novel context—a Middle Eastern Arab nation. The majority of previous studies have focused mainly on Western (e.g., Jamaica; (Ferguson and Bornstein, 2012, 2015; Ferguson et al., 2018; Ferguson and Dimitrova, 2019, 2019), African (e.g., Zambia; (Ferguson et al., 2017c); Malawi; (Ferguson et al., 2017b); South Africa; (Ferguson and Adams, 2016)), or East and South Asian contexts (e.g., Hong Kong; (Chen et al., 2008); Ladakh; (Ozer and Schwartz, 2016)). Multiple factors make Lebanese individuals sensitive to remote acculturation (Rarrbo, 2009), the country has been subjected to complex cultural influences across history with no clear delineations. Lebanese society encompasses several different cultures, given that the population is heterogeneous and diverse (Ellis, 2002; Rarrbo, 2009; Traboulsi, 2007). This multiculturalism poses a challenge, especially to the youth, since moving between religious (e.g., Christian), sectarian (e.g., Maronite Christian), national (e.g., Lebanese), and supranational (e.g., Arab) identities, sometimes in conflict, generates contradictory feelings about one's sense of self (Issa, 2015; Rarrbo, 2009). Balancing these cultures and traditions is complicated further by the pro-Western orientation of this postcolonial country (Addis, 2011), owing to coloniality that has been sustained well beyond the conclusion of the French mandate (Reddy and Amer, 2023) and Americanization promoting American cultural hegemony through mass media (Ranjan and Umayanganie, 2018).

1.1. Globalization: cultural exchange?

Globalization is a complex process that has existed for centuries. It has peaked in the past decades due to technological advancement and the free-market economy, and has caused accelerating cultural changes described as "culture shedding" (Arnett, 2002). However, these adjustments do not necessarily imply abandoning one's local culture, but rather, selectively incorporating its elements with elements of the global culture to create a hybrid identity with multilingual and multicultural features (Arnett, 2002; Chen et al., 2008).

Although globalization is a universal process that applies to Western and non-Western contexts with a worldwide impact, its effects and experiences appear to be age specific, culture specific and varying across different locations (Jensen et al., 2011; Ozer and Schwartz, 2016). These differential outcomes could be explained by the fact that one major feature of globalization is the flow of cultural elements and values from the West to the rest of the world (Jensen et al., 2011; Ozer and Schwartz, 2016). In addition, the phase of identity development in adolescents and emerging adults makes them prone to being affected by this process than others (Jensen et al., 2011).

The abovementioned expectations are supported in the literature, in which it is apparent that urban areas in the majority of the world (i.e., developing countries) are those mostly affected by globalization (Ferguson et al., 2018). In these locales, adolescents and emerging adults exposed to very distant cultures are experiencing changes spanning a wide variety of domains, including social norms and values, numerous aspects of identity formation, nutritional choices, language, beliefs, worldviews, media preferences, and family structures and dynamics (Arnett, 2002; Berry, 2008; Chen et al., 2008; Ferguson et al., 2017a, 2019; Jensen et al., 2011).

1.2. Lebanon: a crisis of identity

The Republic of Lebanon, the smallest country in continental Asia, with a size of 10,452 km^2 (Central Intelligence Agency, 2019) (Central Intelligence Agency, 2019), is located on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea and bordered by Syria and occupied Palestine. The situation that results from its position has been described as unique, since the Lebanese mountains indirectly encourage communication with the West by blocking it from surrounding areas (Hitti, 1965) and making it a bridge between the East and West (Bacha and Bahous, 2011; Ellis, 2002). Lebanon is an independent country that is Arab in its identity and affiliation (Tabbarah, 1997) yet has a known pro-Western orientation (Addis, 2011). Its democratic political system is based on a confessional distribution of power (Traboulsi, 2007), with a free-market economy (KfW Development Bank, 2020).

Lebanon's diverse population is the most heterogeneous of all Arab countries. Multiple ethnicities co-exist in Lebanon, including Arabs, Armenians, and Kurds (Rarrbo, 2009). Lebanon's two main religions are Islam (57.7%) and Christianity (36.2%) (Central Intelligence Agency, 2019), but unlike all other Middle Eastern countries, there is no official state religion. Communalism remains a fundamental feature in the country's social composition (Traboulsi, 2007), as there are 18 officially recognized religious sects in the country (Harb, 2010),[1] and communities are segregated across the Lebanese territory, as well as through institutionalized courts and social and economic organizations (Central Intelligence Agency, 2019; Rarrbo, 2009). Accordingly, in Lebanon, sect and religion play a nontraditional role that goes beyond spirituality or devotion, to acting as a base for social identity and cultural worldviews (Ayyash-Abdo, 2001). This sectarian cultural orientation in a pluralistic society (i.e., with two or more distinct groupings recognizable by cultural, racial, or other socially distinctive features) like Lebanon is thought to conflict with the national cultural orientation. It may even surpass national cultural orientation, as many Lebanese identify with their families and sects more strongly than their country (Berry, 1974; Chaaban, 2016; Harb, 2010). The national cultural orientation is also threatened by the influence of external factors including global media (a vehicle for Americanization), Western perception (coloniality), and regional and domestic pressures (Larkin, 2012).

The end of the 18-yearlong French mandate in 1943 was not necessarily an end to Western hegemony and influence. Coloniality refers to the maintenance of power structures, at the social, economic, political, and cultural levels, that extend beyond the physical presence of a colonizer in a colonized society. This has been described as a form of mental colonization in which colonized individuals internalize the power differential imposed by the colonizer, most often of European descent, and hold whiteness to a higher standard than their own native culture (Reddy and Amer, 2023). In postcolonial Lebanon, bilateral

[1] Religious sects in Lebanon are divided as follows: four Muslim sects (Sunnis, Shias, Alawites, Ismailis), the Druze sect, 12 Christian sects (Maronite Catholics, Greek Orthodox, Greek Catholic, Armenian Orthodox, Armenian Catholics, Syriac Orthodox, Syriac Catholics, Assyrians, Chaldeans, Copts, evangelicals, Latins) and a minority Jewish sect (CIA , 2019).

relations between the two countries are maintained politically, economically, and culturally (Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs, 2020). Coloniality can be observed, for instance, in a large portion of Lebanese, specifically Christian elites, having adopted French as a primary language in an effort to maintain some closeness to the West (Bourhis, 1982). Regarding institutions of higher education, 49 schools are authorized to teach the French Baccalaureate, which is a foreign curriculum. Of those, 20 schools are registered as *écoles homologues*, meaning that they are recognized by the French Ministry of Education and follow a French curriculum (Lebanese Ministry of Education and Higher Education, 2023). It is also important to note that these are among 572 private schools in Lebanon at which the main language of instruction is either English or French. They are separate from the 363 semiprivate schools and 256 public schools (USAID, n.d.).

Lebanon has significant ties with other countries besides France, including the United States of America. While political and commercial relations have existed for some time, economic and military assistance has recently increased (Addis, 2011; U.S. Department of State, 2018). America's interest in Lebanon is mainly because of its position in the region, its border with occupied Palestine, the democratic character, and pro-Western orientation (Addis, 2011; Orr and Annous, 2018). In addition, there is an institutionalized American cultural presence, mainly through various educational systems (i.e., schools and universities). For example, the American University of Beirut (AUB), founded by Americans in 1866, kept receiving funds from the U.S. (Addis, 2011). The united states agency for international development (USAID) is also active in Lebanon across many fields, including educational and academic opportunities (U.S. Department of State, 2018). The American accreditation of foreign universities, for instance, has been described as academic colonialism, imposing U.S.-based standards on international institutions that may depart largely from Lebanese cultural values and practices (Altbach, 2003). This is relevant not only to the academic context but also to the health domain, with numerous Lebanese hospitals seeking foreign, most often U.S., accreditation for their institutions. For instance, four are currently accredited by the joint commission international (JCI).

Americanization is also perpetuated through exposure to mass media. In Lebanon, there are nine terrestrial private and public broadcast television stations, with a reach of at least 97% of the adult Lebanese audience. However, they broadcast content that is predominantly foreign in orientation and barely relevant to the needs of the Lebanese society or Arab world. There are also at least five digital cable television companies, more than 30 radio stations, and numerous international broadcasters (Central Intelligence Agency, 2019). In 2016, more than 4.5 million internet users (approximately 75.9% of the population) were documented in Lebanon. Regarding social media, WhatsApp and Facebook have the highest penetration, reaching more than 50% of the population. These services are used predominantly in English, with one study reporting that 78% of Facebook posts from Lebanese accounts were written in English (Trombetta and Pinto, 2018).

Another manifestation of the foreign influence in Lebanon is language. Although Arabic is the official and native language, Lebanon is considered a multilingual society. French and English are widely spoken, especially in urban areas, and code-switching is a common practice, also in urban areas in particular (Ellis, 2002; Harb, 2010; Larkin, 2012; Shaaban and Ghaith, 2002). In addition, French and English are second languages that are the media of instruction for most school subjects (Bacha and Bahous, 2011).

Both individualistic and collectivistic features can be seen within the cultural experiences of Lebanese individuals. Traditions of freedom of speech and freedom of expression are significantly present in the country, and women in the workforce constitute the highest percentage in the Arab world (Ellis, 2002). However, Lebanon retains its common language, history, and culture with other Arab states. One aspect of this culture is the family, seen as the nucleus of the society by most Lebanese and characterized by close ties, interdependence, and loyalty (Harb, 2010; Issa, 2015).

1.3. Remote acculturation: distant yet influential

For a long time, acculturation has been attributed to the continuous first-hand contact between individuals from different cultures in a migration context (Ozer and Schwartz, 2016). However, with globalization, a new type of acculturation has emerged, known as "remote acculturation," indicating cultural changes occurring in relation to a distant culture that has been contacted via various vehicles, including technology, media, trade, and tourism (Ferguson and Bornstein, 2012).

This novel concept provides a framework for understanding a prevailing social and psychological process that is unique and specific in multiple ways. First, contrary to cultural diffusion, which refers to changes occurring at the cultural level as a result of intercultural contact and affecting most individuals similarly, remote acculturation captures the differential changes occurring at the psychological level of individuals (Ferguson et al., 2017a; Sam and Berry, 2016). Second, the context of remote acculturation is more focused, as it requires contact with a specific separate culture (Ferguson et al., 2017a; Sam and Berry, 2016). Third, compared to traditional acculturation, the main source of remote acculturation is cultural globalization, and the local culture is the heritage culture itself (Ferguson et al., 2017c). Thus, remote acculturation presents an opportunity to examine how individuals living in their homeland adopt features of a culture in which they have never lived (Ferguson et al., 2017c; Giray and Ferguson, 2018). It is important to note, however, that one major feature of globalization is the flow of cultural elements and values from the West to the rest of the world (Jensen et al., 2011; Ozer and Schwartz, 2016) and, for the most part, and as highlighted in the case of Lebanon, this takes on the form of Americanization and cultural homogenization (see Edih et al., 2021). That said, remote acculturation holds principles consistent with the polycultural psychology paradigm and traditional acculturation theory, including dimensionality, partiality, and plurality (Ferguson et al., 2017a, 2018; Ferguson and Dimitrova, 2019). Based on the dimensionality principle, acculturation takes place independently in two dimensions: maintaining the original heritage culture and adopting the foreign culture (Ferguson et al., 2018). According to the plurality and partiality principles, this acculturation could be multicultural (i.e., involving multiple cultural affiliations simultaneously) and selective in that "individuals typically adopt some, but not all, elements of a given culture" (Ferguson et al., 2019).

1.3.1. Acculturation strategies and domains

Acculturation strategies may be described as the direct result of the interaction between two independent dimensions: maintaining the original heritage culture and adopting the foreign culture. This leads to four possible preferences: assimilation, integration, marginalization, and separation (Berry, 2008). In the context of remote acculturation, the assimilation and marginalization strategies have not yet been supported (Ferguson et al., 2012, 2017c; Ferguson and Bornstein, 2015). Conversely, observed separation and integration strategies could be expected to be preferences for individuals living in cultures affected by globalization yet still choosing to adopt the local culture without the remote one—possibly due to a perceived incompatibility—and by individuals developing a hybrid blended identity by selectively combining aspects from both local and remote cultures (Jensen et al., 2011; Schwartz et al., 2010).

However, the adopted acculturation strategy does not necessarily apply uniformly across and within different acculturation components (e.g., identifications, values, behaviors) and situations (e.g., private vs. public) (Ozer and Schwartz, 2016). This could be explained by the fact that acculturation is an ongoing process, and that psychological and cultural experiences deepen as one moves from behaviors to values to identifications (Giray and Ferguson, 2018; Schwartz et al., 2010). Consequently, to capture possible variations and accurately represent

the whole acculturation process, it would be necessary for a model to take into account the different levels and domains (Schwartz et al., 2010). In addition, studying acculturation in a multicultural society requires adopting a multicultural acculturation model to account for the complexity of the individuals' cultural identities (Ferguson and Adams, 2016; Jensen et al., 2011; Ozer and Schwartz, 2016). Fig. 1 represents the variation of acculturation strategies across levels, situations, and cultures.

1.3.2. Acculturation orientations and identity clusters

Given the psychological need to belong to a stable social group and the presence of a multitude of pan-cultural universals (e.g., sex, religion, sect, language, ethnicity, region, nation) varying in size, distinctiveness, structure, function, and purpose (Berry, 1974; van Lange et al., 2011), it follows—as posited by social categorization theory—that multiple group allegiances are possible. Individuals can belong simultaneously to multiple nested social groups or categories with crosscutting criteria (Ellemers et al., 2002). The complexity of such a multilayered social identity leads to the development of a hierarchy of centrality, importance, and salience of identity elements over others, which could change based on contextual and situational factors (Ellemers et al., 2002).

Considering the foregoing, it is important to highlight that there is a difference between one's ascribed identity, which is based on others' perception, and one's own identity (Phinney et al., 2001). The latter involves multiple aspects, including self-identification, affirmation through a sense of belonging and pride, shared values and attitudes, knowledge of history and traditions, meaning exploration and resolution, and the commitment to the group (Phinney et al., 2001; Schwartz et al., 2010; Smith and Silva, 2011).

Given that the conceptualization of the remote acculturation phenomenon is recent, the available body of literature on the topic is relatively limited but growing steadily (Ferguson et al., 2017a). Studies have been conducted in various countries, including Zambia (Ferguson et al., 2017c), Malawi (Ferguson et al., 2017b), South Africa (Ferguson and Adams, 2016), Turkey (Giray and Ferguson, 2018), Mexico (Lorenzo--Blanco et al., 2019), and Jamaica (Ferguson and Bornstein, 2012, 2015; Ferguson et al., 2018, 2019; Ferguson and Dimitrova, 2019). These support the existence of this phenomenon and, furthermore, differential multidimensional and multicultural manifestations of it. Cluster analyses generally identified integrated groups identifying with both remote culture(s) and traditional local cultures, and separated groups identifying only with traditional local cultures.

The majority of studies on remote acculturation have focused on the acculturation of adolescents (Ferguson and Bornstein, 2015; Ferguson et al., 2017b, 2017c; Lorenzo-Blanco et al., 2019), with many including parents by using a dyad study form (Ferguson and Bornstein, 2012,

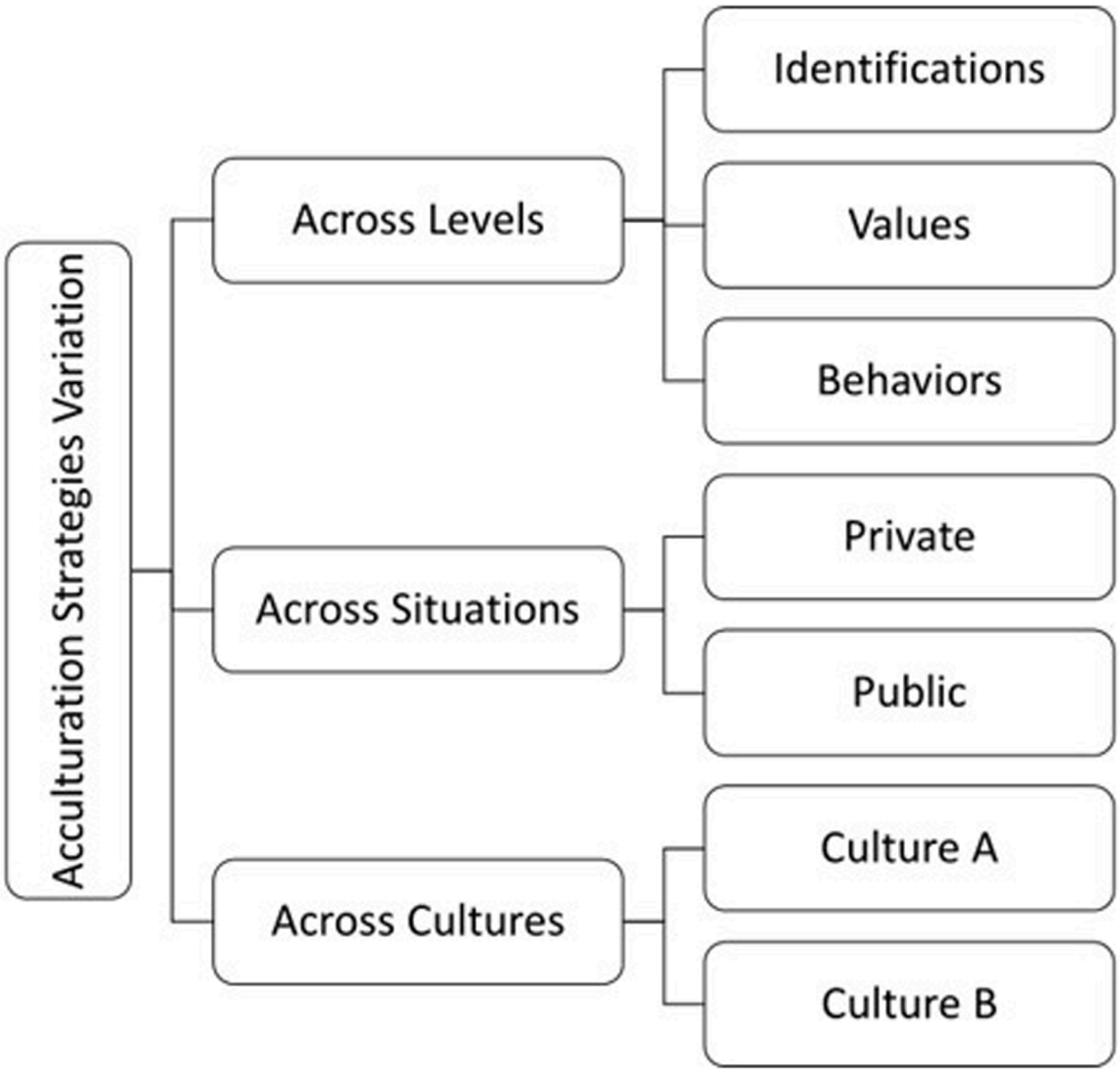

Fig. 1. Acculturation strategies can vary across levels, situations, and cultures.

2015; Ferguson and Dimitrova, 2019; Ferguson et al., 2018; Giray and Ferguson, 2018). Findings suggest that U.S. goods, food, and media are potential vehicles for intercultural contact that predict higher levels of remote acculturation (Ferguson and Adams, 2016; Ferguson and Bornstein, 2015; Ferguson and Dimitrova, 2019; Ferguson et al., 2018; Lorenzo-Blanco et al., 2019), which, in turn, have been shown to have various behavioral, psychological, and sociocultural adjustment outcomes, including effects on life satisfaction, unhealthy eating and smoking-related attitudes, academic adjustment, and conflict with parents (Ferguson et al., 2017a; Ferguson and Dimitrova, 2019; Lorenzo-Blanco et al., 2019).

In the current study, traditional cultural orientation is defined as the extent to which individuals identify with and behave according to the four levels of local cultures: Arab ethnic culture, Lebanese national culture, religious culture, and sectarian culture.

1.4. Psychological well-being

Psychological adaptation, defined as the overall psychological well-being and satisfaction of individuals, is one of the main outcomes studied within the acculturation framework, as it is thought to reflect the person's ability to adjust to this complex process (Sam and Berry, 2010). Various yet specific variables are used to reflect adaptation, including mental health or disorders (e.g., depression, anxiety) and subjective well-being (i.e., levels of positive and negative affect and perceived life satisfaction) (Berry et al., 2006; Sam and Berry, 2010).

The increased complexity of cultural identities is expected to negatively affect the individuals' mental health if it causes identity confusion (Ferguson et al., 2017a, 2017c). However, the latter depends on the degree of compatibility between the local and remote cultures; the higher the actual or perceived similarity between cultures, the easier it is to integrate them (Schwartz et al., 2010). In contrast, acculturative stress and identity confusion would increase in the case of cultural inconsistencies or clashes in values, norms, and practices (Chen et al., 2008; Ferguson et al., 2017c; Jensen et al., 2011).

In the case of remote acculturation, three studies investigated psychological well-being as an outcome by measuring life satisfaction and psychological problems or positive and negative affect (Ferguson and Adams, 2016; Ferguson et al., 2017b, 2017c). On the one hand, remote acculturation seems to influence life satisfaction. Westernized adolescents appear to be less satisfied than traditional adolescents, with assimilated youth showing poorer well-being than integrated youth (Ferguson et al., 2017b, 2017c). On the other hand, this compromise in subjective well-being and life satisfaction could be due to the unrealistic, exaggerated lifestyle disseminated through the remote culture's media, which increases the gap between the person's ideal expectations, their current life, and what they can achieve, leading to greater disappointment, especially if the local environment has limited multicultural richness (Chen et al., 2008; Ferguson et al., 2017a, 2017c).

Some remotely acculturated emerging adults had higher life satisfaction than their traditional peers, and no association was found between remote acculturation and psychological problems. This indicates that the impact on well-being might not be as severe as expected and that the outcome of psychological well-being appears to be context dependent on the specific remote (sub)culture, the local setting, and the motivation for acculturation (Ferguson et al., 2017b, 2017c). This is further supported by studies suggesting remote biculturalism as a potentially protective factor against psychological problems (Chen et al., 2008; Ferguson et al., 2017a).

2. Methods

2.1. Research design and procedure

A quantitative cross-sectional survey design was employed. Convenience and snowball sampling were used to reach potential participants on social media platforms (WhatsApp and Facebook) through an advertisement calling for participation. Online data collection was carried out using Qualtrics over one week, between October 24 and October 30, 2020. People could follow the progress of the data collection on a website that was specially created for the study (nourathesisnews.wordpress.com), and, as a small incentive, the respondents could enter an optional draw to be one of two to win $20 cash for their participation. Participants were given the choice to fill out the survey in Arabic (47.5%) or English (52.5%). Survey language was added as a covariate to control for language effects (Ryder et al., 2000).

2.2. Ethical considerations

The present study received ethical approval from the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Social and Behavioral Sciences at Haigazian University (TS.8.20, September 30, 2020). Participation in the present research study was voluntary, and an information letter and consent form were provided to potential participants. The consent form included the purpose of the study, foreseeable risks and potential benefits to the participant, confidentiality, the researchers' contact information for questions regarding the study, and a note on the right to refuse to participate or withdraw at any point without penalty. Participants were prompted to indicate their consent by clicking a button marked "I, therefore, choose to voluntarily participate in this research study."

2.3. Participants

A total of 1407 participants took part in the study. However, 601 were excluded for not meeting the inclusion criteria (being Lebanese, born to Arab parents, aged between 18 and 40, and having resided in Lebanon for at least half of their lives). A further 65 were removed because at least one scale was missing and more than 10% of data were missing from their responses. Of the included 741 participants, the distribution across age groups was fairly even: those aged 18–25 made up 53.5% of the sample, and the 26–40 group comprised 46.5%. However, given that the data collection was non-random, using convenience and snowball sampling, the sample was homogeneous with regard to religious and sectarian distribution, with Sunni Muslims comprising the vast majority (66%).

2.4. Instruments

2.4.1. Psychometric properties of the scales

Internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha) for all scales was assessed separately for the English and Arabic versions and for both combined. An acceptable to excellent reliability ($0.660 \leq \alpha \leq 0.924$) was obtained for all scales when combined. Table 1 displays the detailed values for

Table 1
Reliability coefficients of the scales.

	N of items	Cronbach's α (combined)	Cronbach's α (Arabic)	Cronbach's α (English)
Sectarian IOS	3	.884	.841	.888
Sectarian BOS	8	.924	.877	.933
Arab IOS	4	.845	.785	.855
Arab BOS	14	.873	.827	.884
Religion IOS	3	.827	.766	.822
Religion BOS	8	.911	.874	.921
National IOS	3	.749	.734	.764
National BOS	10	.861	.858	.864
French IOS	3	.731	.733	.728
French BOS	14	.906	.899	.913
American IOS	3	.660	.604	.676
American BOS	14	.910	.877	.876
Psychological Well-Being	18	.731	.695	.759

Note. IOS = identity orientation score, BOS = behavior orientation score.

each scale.

2.4.2. Acculturation orientations

Following the recommendations of Schwartz et al. (2010) and Giray and Ferguson (2018), acculturation to each of the American culture, the French culture, and that of the native cultures of participants was measured separately across the "shallow" behavioral domain and the "deep" identity domain.

2.4.2.1. Identity domain. An adapted version of the multigroup ethnic identity measure – revised (MEIM-R) (Phinney and Ong, 2007) was used to assess each traditional identity level. Three items were used to assess each level in terms of self-categorization and belonging (e.g., "I see myself as an Arab"), commitment (e.g., "The fact that I am an Arab is an important part of my identity"), and in-group identification (e.g., "I would stand up to people who say bad things about Arabs"). Because the MEIM-R scale does not include items explicitly assessing positive attitudes, an additional item measuring Arab pride was added, since it is of relevance to the context of the study that includes understanding individuals' feelings towards local and foreign cultures. Self-categorization to traditional social groups was also first verified using an open-ended question. Finally, items were rated on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from "*strongly disagree*" to "*strongly agree*," in addition to an "I do not know" option for all scale items. Items were used to generate an identity orientation score (IOS) across the American, French, and native cultures. Across all cultural orientations, high identification indicates that one perceives the given social category as central to the self-concept and an important source of collective self-worth. It is, however, important to distinguish identification with religion from religiosity or religiousness. The latter refers to group membership in addition to participation in religious events and rites (Arweck & Nesbitt, 2010). In this study, we were not concerned with measuring people's belief systems and the extent to which they adhere to those belief systems behaviorally or spiritually (Sholihin et al., 2022); rather, we wished to evaluate self-ascribed membership into a given religious group and its importance with a few behavioral items that do not tap into specific religious beliefs or rites (e.g., attending church/mosque, prayer).

2.4.2.2. Behavioral domain. An adapted version of the Vancouver Index of Acculturation (VIA) (Ryder et al., 2000; Testa et al., 2019) and language items from the Acculturation Rating Scale for Jamaican Americans (ARSJA) (Ferguson and Bornstein, 2015) were used to assess behavioral acculturation. The VIA is a 10-item instrument covering several public and private domains shown to be relevant to the acculturation process, including social relationships (e.g., "I enjoy activities with American people"), media enjoyment (e.g., "I enjoy American media such as movies and music"), and adherence to cultural norms (e.g., "I often participate in my native cultural traditions"). Four additional items were adopted to measure language use in different contexts (i.e., at home, outside the home, on social media, and in thinking).

Behavioral acculturation to each native culture (sectarian, ethnic, religious, Lebanese), as well as to French and American cultures, were assessed in parallel, and items were rated by endorsement on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from "*strongly disagree*" to "*strongly agree*," in addition to an "I do not know" option for all scale items. These were used to calculate a behavioral orientation score (BOS) across the American, French, and local cultures. A combined behavioral and identity score, total orientation score (TOS), was also calculated for each culture.

2.4.3. Psychological well-being

A short version of Ryff's psychological well-being (PWB) Scale (Ryff and Keyes, 1995; Ryff et al., 2010) was used. The scale consists of 18 items with six subscales related to positive functioning: autonomy (e.g., "I have confidence in my opinions, even if they are contrary to the consensus"), environmental mastery (e.g., "In general, I feel I am in charge of the situation in which I live"), personal growth (e.g., "I think it is important to have new experiences that challenge how you think about yourself and the world"), positive relations with others (e.g., "People would describe me as a giving person, willing to share my time with others"), purpose in life (e.g., "Some people wander aimlessly through life, but I am not one of them"), and self-acceptance (e.g., "When I look at the story of my life, I am pleased with how things have turned out"). Items were rated on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from "*strongly disagree*" to "*strongly agree*."

2.4.4. Demographics

Participants were asked to provide their (1) age, (2) sex, (3) nationality, (4) parents' nationalities, (5) country of birth, (6) duration of residency in Lebanon, (7) current area of residency, (8) marital status, (9) education level, (10) second language at school, (11) language proficiency, (12) language ranking, (13) main language at home, (14) the number of visits to the U.S., and (15) Green Card status.

2.4.5. Translation and piloting

All instruments were translated into and adapted to Arabic. A combined forward translation procedure and a committee approach (van de Vijver and Hambleton, 1996; van de Vijver and Tanzer, 1997) were adopted in the current study. Following translation, the survey was piloted through one round of cognitive interviewing (He and van de Vijver, 2012; Hibben and Jong, 2020; Peterson et al., 2017; van de Vijver and Leung, 2000), with a total of 10 participants divided equally between the translated Arabic version and the English version.

3. Results

3.1. Descriptive statistics

Tables 2 and 3 detail the sociodemographic distribution of the sample. The majority of the sample (63.7%, $n = 472$), were English educated, versus 35% ($n = 259$) who were French educated. While the sample was largely bilingual and trilingual, the self-reported most important language was Arabic (75.8%, $n = 518$), followed by English (19.7%, $n = 135$) and French (1.6%, $n = 11$). Similarly, the main language spoken at home was Arabic for most of the sample (95.3%, $n = 706$), followed by English (1.3%, $n = 10$) and French (0.7%, $n = 5$). Over half of the sample (52.8%) stated that their ethnicity was Arab, followed by Lebanese (13%) and small percentages of Mediterranean (3.4%) and Phoenician (2.3%).

3.1.1. Scale descriptives

The means of scales measuring acculturation to local traditional cultures were all above the midpoint score of 4 out of 7. The highest score was for Religion IOS ($M = 6.23$, $SD = 1.33$), and the lowest was for Sectarian IOS ($M = 4.83$, $SD = 2.03$), indicating that, overall, participants seemed to be highly acculturated to local traditional cultures. On the contrary, the means of scales measuring acculturation to French postcolonial and remote American culture were below the midpoint score, with the highest score being for American BOS ($M = 3.70$, $SD = 1.36$) and the lowest for French IOS ($M = 1.99$, $SD = 1.28$). Overall, this indicates that participants were not highly acculturated to these two cultures. Lastly, the vast majority of participants (85.8%) scored high on Psychological Well-Being.

3.1.2. Correlations

Significant correlation coefficients ranged from $r = .078$ to $r = .636$. Most variables were intercorrelated, except for Psychological Well-Being and French TOS (See Table 4).

Table 2
Distribution of participants: Demographic information.

Demographics	Categories	*n*	%
Gender	Male	191	25.8
	Female	544	73.4
	Do not wish to disclose	6	0.9
Age	18–25	395	53.5
	26–40	343	46.5
	Missing	3	–
Country of birth	Lebanon	689	93.0
	Saudi Arabia	16	2.2
	U.S.	6	0.8
	France	6	0.8
	U.A.E.	5	0.7
	Canada	3	0.4
	Other	10	2.1
	Missing	6	–
Highest educational level	9th, 10th or 11th grade	3	0.4
	12th grade, no diploma	6	0.8
	High school graduate - high school diploma or the equivalent	37	5.1
	Some university, but less than 1 year	19	2.6
	One or more years of university, no degree	111	15.2
	Bachelor's degree (e.g., BA, BS)	275	37.6
	Master's degree (e.g., MA, MS, MEng, MBA)	220	30.1
	Professional degree (e.g., MD)	32	4.4
	Doctorate degree (e.g., PhD)	28	3.8
	Missing	10	–
Second language at school	French	259	35.0
	English	472	63.7
	Missing	10	–
Spoken languages	Arabic	714	96.3
	French	328	44.3
	English	682	92.0
	Other	84	11.3
Most important language	Arabic	518	75.8
	French	11	1.6
	English	135	19.7
	Other	19	2.9
	Missing	58	–
Main language at home	Arabic	706	95.3
	French	5	0.7
	English	10	1.3
	Armenian	18	2.4
	Missing	2	–
Number of visits to U.S.	None	648	88.4
	Once	44	6.0
	Twice	15	2.0
	Three times or more	26	3.6
	Missing	8	–

Note. $N = 741$.

3.2. Main analysis

3.2.1. Cluster analysis

A hierarchical cluster analysis was performed using Ward's procedure and squared Euclidean distances to inform the selection of the best-fitting solution. The input variables for the cluster analysis were Sect TOS, Arab TOS, Religion TOS, National TOS, French TOS, and American TOS. Based on average distances and inspection of dendrograms, five-, four, three-, and two-cluster solutions were plausible.

Plausible solutions were inspected by repeating the hierarchical cluster analysis using Ward's procedure and squared Euclidean distances for cluster solutions ranging from two to five. Examining dot graphs generated from cluster membership for each solution showed that in the five-cluster solution, there was an overlap between two clusters in the Sectarian TOS and Religion TOS, as well as an overlap between three clusters in the American TOS. Two clusters were also remarkably close to each other in the Arab TOS and National TOS. In the four-cluster solution, there was also an overlap between two clusters in the Sectarian TOS and Religion TOS and an overlap between two clusters in the American TOS. Two clusters were also remarkably close to each other in the Arab TOS and French TOS.

Table 3
Distribution of participants: Self-ascribed sectarian, ethnic, and religious belonging.

	Categories	*n*	Valid%
Sect	Sunni Muslim	367	66%
	Shia Muslim	54	7.3%
	Unspecified Muslim	40	12.2%
	Druze	8	1.4%
	Christian Sects[a]	30	5.4%
	None	57	7.7%
	Missing	185	–
Ethnicity	Arab	391	52.8%
	Lebanese	96	13%
	Mediterranean	25	3.4%
	Phoenician	17	2.3%
	Other	57	7.7%
	Missing	155	–
Religion	Muslim	568	88.1%
	Christian	37	5.7%
	Druze	7	1.1%
	Atheist	7	1.1%
	Agnostic	6	0.9%
	None	20	3.1%
	Missing	96	–

Note. $N = 741$.
[a] Christian Sects = Armenian Orthodox ($n = 4$), Catholic ($n = 1$), Orthodox ($n = 6$), Maronite ($n = 8$), Protestant ($n = 3$), Other ($n = 8$).

There was no overlap between clusters at any acculturation level in the three- and two-cluster solutions. Therefore, the three-cluster solution was the best fit, since there was no overlap across cultural orientations. Furthermore, unlike the two-cluster solution, there was a higher variation in the American TOS across clusters, allowing for better interpretability.

The centroids computed by this best-fit hierarchical cluster analysis were then used to run a *k*-means cluster analysis replicating the three-cluster solution (see Fig. 2). The stability of this cluster solution was checked using split-half multivariate analyses of covariance (MANCOVAs). First, two random halves were created from the original dataset. Then a MANCOVA was run with all acculturation TOSs as dependent variables and the split-half variable as the fixed factor. Results were organized per cluster. The main model was not significant, $F(6, 155) = 0.965$, $p = .136$, meaning that there were no significant differences in any acculturation indicator (TOS) across the two sample halves, which confirms the stability of the three-cluster solution.

Each cluster was subsequently labeled based on the relative distribution of cultural orientations within and between clusters (see Table 5). Table 6 shows the sectarian, ethnic, and religious distribution of participants per cluster.

Across the three clusters, French orientation was quite low, with scores falling significantly below the midpoint of 4 (see Table 5 for means and standard deviations per cluster). Given the low endorsement, we cannot conclude a solid French orientation within this sample. Of the three clusters identified, two were relatively Americanized clusters constituting 63% of the sample: 23% were from the national multicultural Americanized (NMA) cluster composed of integrated individuals having the highest American TOS among clusters, and 40% were from the religious multicultural Americanized (RMA) cluster, which is considered Americanized relative to the remaining 37% of the sample that constituted the religious multicultural traditional (RMT) cluster with an American TOS that was below the mean (see Table 7). It is important to note that the label "religious" here does not refer to religiousness or religiosity—where one as self identifies as a member of a

Table 4
Intercorrelations between major study variables.

Measure Names	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Sect TOS	–						
2. Arab TOS	.454**	–					
3. Religion TOS	.636**	.533**	–				
4. National TOS	.180**	.447**	.149**	–			
5. French TOS	−.218**	−.151**	−.285**	.138**	–		
6. American TOS	−.365**	−.352**	−.368**	.078*	.399**	–	
7. Psychological Well-being	.110**	.186**	.137**	.161**	−.027	−.116**	–

Note. TOS = total orientation score.
* $p < .05$. ** $p < .001$.

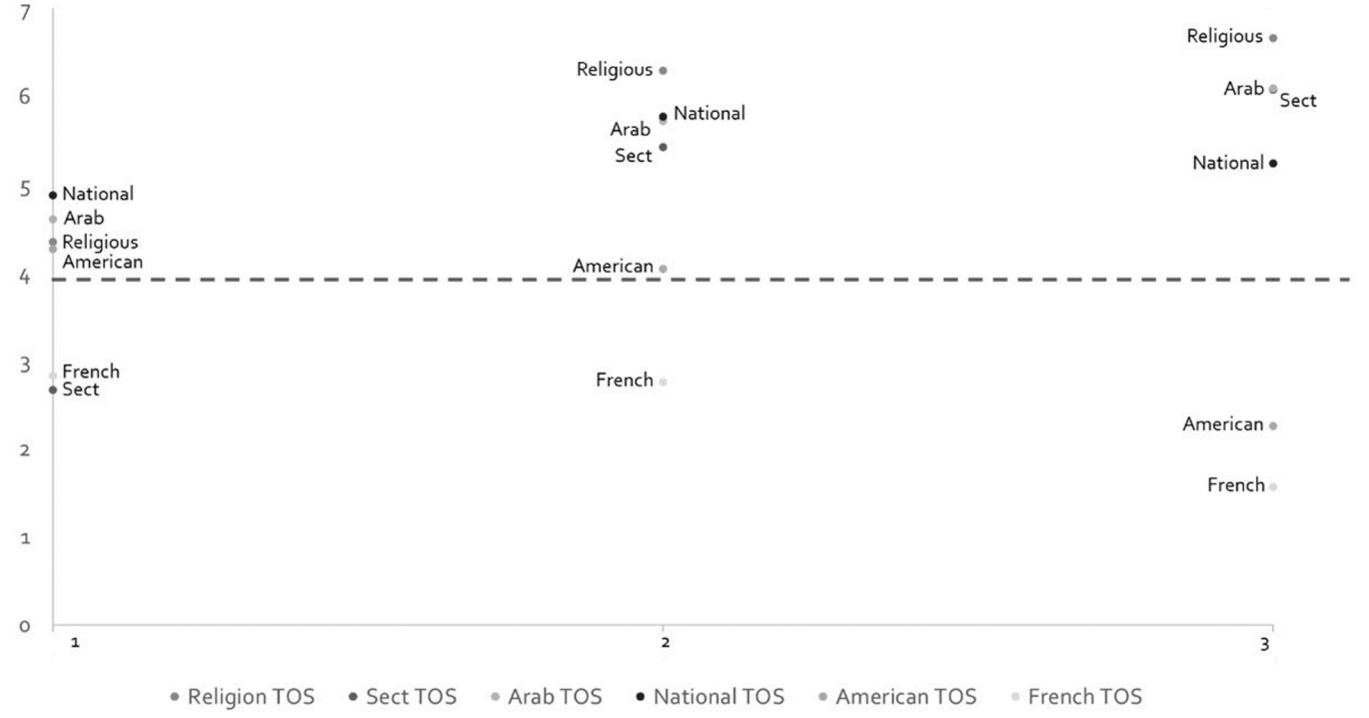

Fig. 2. Cultural orientations of acculturation clusters that emerged from our sample.

Table 5
Cluster labels and rankings of relative cultural orientations within clusters.

Cluster	Label	Rankings of relative cultural orientations
1	National multicultural Americanized (NMA)	National > Arab > Religion > American > French > Sect
2	Religious multicultural Americanized (RMA)	Religion > National ≈ Arab > Sect > American > French
3	Religious multicultural traditional (RMT)	Religion > Arab ≈ Sect > National > American > French

religious group and accordingly adheres to a belief system behaviorally and spiritually—but instead reflects self-ascribed memberships to religious groups. It is also important to note that the RMA cluster (of 281 participants, 18 had self-identified as Christian, two as Druze, one as Agnostic and one as Atheist) and RMT cluster (of 263 participants, only one had self-identified as Christian and one as Druze) were both composed of a large majority of Muslims.

MANCOVAs with Bonferroni corrections were conducted to assess whether clusters were significantly different on acculturation indicators (TOS), while controlling for survey language, dual nationality, country of birth, and the number of visits to the U.S. First, the Box's test assessed the equality of covariance matrices. The results indicated that equality of covariance matrices was not assumed: $F(42, 992{,}292.64) = 16.84$, $p = .000$. That said, it is worth noting that in large samples—as is the case in the current study—smaller alpha levels may be more suitable to assess potential deviations (e.g., $p < .001$), as Box's M is overly sensitive, often resulting in false positives (Hahs-Vaughn, 2016). Therefore, simple bootstrapping was performed for a more robust analysis with a sample of 1000 and a confidence interval of 95%.

The covariate Survey Language had a significant main effect on the Arab TOS ($b = -.267$, $p = .000$), French TOS ($b = -.329$, $p = .000$), and American TOS ($b = 0.604$, $p = .000$), indicating that those who took the survey in English exhibited a lower Arab and French TOS and higher English TOS than those who took the survey in Arabic. The covariate Nationality had a significant main effect on the French TOS ($b = .511$, $p = .000$), indicating that those with dual nationality showed a higher French TOS than those with only Lebanese nationality.

The main model indicated a significant difference between clusters: Wilks's $\lambda = 0.179$, $F(12, 1382) = 156.7$, $p = .000$. Pairwise comparisons indicated that the means for all traditional cultures' TOSs were significantly different between all three clusters (see Table 7). The means of all traditional TOSs (i.e., Sect, Arab, Religion, and National) were significantly lower in the NMA cluster than the RMA and RMT clusters. Comparing RMA and RMT clusters, the means of the Sectarian, Arab, and Religion TOSs were significantly lower in the RMA cluster than the

Table 6
Sectarian, ethnic, and religious distribution of participants per cluster.

		National multicultural Americanized (n = 167, 23%)		Religious multicultural Americanized (n = 281, 40%)		Religious multicultural Traditional (n = 263, 37%)	
	Categories	n	%	n	%	n	%
Sect	Muslim Sunni	36	21.6	138	49.1	174	66.2
	Muslim Shia	11	6.6	20	7.1	21	8.0
	Druze	4	2.4	3	1.1	1	0.4
	Christian Sects[a]	13	7.8	16	5.9	1	0.4
	None	46	27.5	10	3.6	–	–
	Missing	57	32.9	80	28.5	66	25.1
Ethnicity	Arab	65	38.9	149	53	157	59.7
	Lebanese	30	18	41	14.6	24	9.1
	Mediterranean	14	8.4	8	2.8	2	0.8
	Phoenician	11	6.6	5	1.8	–	–
	Other	24	14.3	25	8.9	21	8
Religion	Muslim	84	50.3	214	76.2	244	92.8
	Christian	18	10.8	18	6.4	1	0.4
	Druze	4	2.4	2	0.7	1	0.4
	Atheist	6	3.6	1	0.4	–	–
	Agnostic	5	3.0	1	0.4	–	–
	None	19	11.4	1	0.4	–	–
	Missing	31	18.6	44	15.7	17	6.5

[a] Christian Sects = Armenian Orthodox, Catholic, Orthodox, Maronite, and Protestant.

RMT cluster. However, the mean for National TOS was significantly higher in the RMA cluster than the RMT cluster.

The means for the French and American TOSs were not significantly different between the Americanized clusters (i.e., NMA and RMA). However, they were significantly higher in these two clusters than the RMT cluster. These results indicate that individuals in the RMT cluster endorsed the highest means in all traditional cultural orientations except for the national culture, and the lowest levels of postcolonial and remote cultural orientations compared to the NMA and RMA clusters. Conversely, individuals in the NMA cluster had the lowest averages in all traditional cultural orientations and the highest means in both American and French cultural orientations.

3.2.2. Acculturation clusters and demographic variables

To assess whether the Americanized cluster(s) were composed of a greater number of individuals from the lower age group and whether there was a difference in sex composition across clusters, a chi-square of independence was computed. A significant interaction was found for both: $\chi^2(4) = 10.56$, $p = .025$, Cramér's $V = 0.086$; and $\chi^2(2) = 19.97$, $p = .000044$, Cramér's $V = 0.168$, respectively (see Table 8). The RMT cluster contained the highest percentages of females (77.2%) and individuals aged between 26 and 40 (56.1%). In comparison, the NMA cluster contained the highest percentages of males (34.1%) and individuals aged between 18 and 25 (64.7%). Differences in age-group distribution across clusters align with the hypothesis that Americanized clusters were expected to be composed of lower age groups.

3.2.3. Psychological well-being as an acculturation outcome

To assess whether Americanization affects psychological well-being, a one-way analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was conducted while controlling for survey language, dual nationality, country of birth, number of visits to the U.S., age and gender (see Table 9). First, homogeneity of variance was assessed through the Levene statistic. The results indicated that homogeneity of variance was not assumed: $F(694, 2) = 6.30$, $p = .02$. That said, it is worth noting that in large samples—as is the case in the current study—the test can be significant, even for small and unimportant effects (Field, 2014). Therefore, simple bootstrapping was performed for a more robust analysis with a sample of 1000 and a confidence interval of 95%.

None of the covariates had a significant main effect on Psychological Well-Being. However, the main model indicated a significant difference between groups: $F(2, 688) = 6.48$, $p = .002$, with an effect size of $\eta^2 = 0.018$. Pairwise comparisons with Bonferroni correction indicated that the mean of Psychological Well-Being was significantly lower for the NMA cluster ($M = 5.13$, $SD = 0.06$) than the means for both the RMA cluster ($M = 5.31$, $SD = 0.04$) and the RMT cluster ($M = 5.40$, $SD = 0.04$). However, no significant differences emerged between the RMA and RMT clusters.

3.3. Exploratory analysis

Given that the vast majority of our sample was composed of Muslims (88.1%), we examined whether the clusters that emerged, as presented above, were driven by the remaining 11% of the sample, of which 5.7% were Christian, 1.1% Druze, and the remainder had identified as atheist, agnostic, or none. For this reason, an exploratory cluster analysis was conducted by excluding the non-Muslim participants and then following the same steps of the main cluster analysis as detailed above. In this instance, the three-cluster solution was likewise the best fit (see Table 10), and its stability was confirmed by conducting a split-half

Table 8
Descriptives and chi-square across clusters by sex and age group.

	National multicultural Americanized (n = 167, 23%)		Religious multicultural Americanized (n = 279, 40%)		Religious multicultural traditional (n = 262, 37%)	
Variable	n	%	n	%	n	%
Sex: Male	57^{a}	34.1	$69^{a,b}$	24.6	60^{b}	22.8
Sex: Female	108^{a}	64.7	$210^{a,b}$	74.7	203^{b}	77.2
Age: 18–25	108^{a}	64.7	161^{a}	57.7	115^{b}	43.9
Age: 26–40	59^{a}	35.3	118^{a}	42.3	147^{b}	56.1

Note. Each subscript letter denotes a subset of cluster number of case categories whose column proportions do not differ significantly from each other at the 0.05 level.

Table 7
Descriptives and MANCOVA across clusters for cultural orientation variables.

	National multicultural Americanized (n = 167, 23%)		Religious multicultural Americanized (n = 281, 40%)		Religious multicultural traditional (n = 263, 37%)		MANCOVA across clusters	Effect size
Variable	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	F	η^2
Sect TOS	2.67^{a}	1.20	5.42^{b}	0.98	6.07^{c}	0.94	477.29**	.578
Arab TOS	4.62^{a}	1.14	5.72^{b}	0.84	6.10^{c}	0.71	99.56**	.222
Religion TOS	4.35^{a}	1.48	6.29^{b}	0.65	6.67^{c}	0.45	247.82**	.486
National TOS	4.89^{a}	1.26	5.78^{b}	0.91	5.24^{c}	1.16	44.38**	.096
French TOS	2.83^{a}	1.28	2.76^{a}	1.19	1.56^{b}	0.58	123.01**	.254
American TOS	4.27^{a}	1.07	4.04^{a}	0.87	2.25^{b}	0.73	237.70**	.406

Note. TOS = total orientation score (scale = 1–7). Significant differences across clusters are indicated with superscripts of differing letters.
** $p < .001$.

Table 9
Descriptives and ANCOVA across clusters for acculturation vehicle and outcome.

	National multicultural Americanized (n = 167, 23%)		Religious multicultural Americanized (n = 281, 40%)		Religious multicultural traditional (n = 263, 37%)		ANCOVA across clusters	Effect size
Variable	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*F*	η^2
Psychological Well-Being	5.13[a]	0.06	5.31[b]	0.04	5.40[b]	0.04	6.48**	.018

Note. All scales = 1–7. Significant differences across clusters are indicated with superscripts of differing letters.
** $p < .005$.

Table 10
Clusters labels and rankings of relative cultural orientations within clusters.

Cluster	Rankings of relative cultural orientations
1	Religion ≈ Arab ≈ National > American > Sect > French
2	Religion > Arab > Sect ≈ National > American > French
3	Religion > Sect > Arab > National > American > French

MANCOVA.

All three clusters shared a high religious orientation and relatively low American and French orientations (see Table 11). Cluster 1 seems to reflect a population that is multicultural with regard to local cultures but which is also Americanized; however, unlike Cluster 2, there is a clear abandonment of the sectarian orientation. Cluster 3 seems to reflect a conservative population that is high on local cultural orientations and very low on Americanization. Although Americanization was situated the lowest relative to the remaining cultural orientations in Cluster 2, its mean was still higher than that of Cluster 3. The pattern seen here is similar to what was observed in the main analysis, with clusters ranging from most to least Americanized.

4. Discussion

Driven by globalization, Americanization is a recent remote acculturation phenomenon that has been explored in multiple countries at various geographical distances from the U.S., including Jamaica, Mexico, South Africa, Zambia, Malawi, and Turkey (Ferguson et al., 2017a; Giray and Ferguson, 2018; Lorenzo-Blanco et al., 2019). Therefore, the first aim of our study in Lebanon was to explore the cultural orientations of Lebanese individuals at three levels: the multicultural local traditional level, the postcolonial French level, and the remote American level. Thereafter, we further explored the remote Americanization phenomenon within the Lebanese context by focusing on one outcome (psychological well-being) while controlling for six confounding variables (country of birth, dual nationality, number of visits to the U.S., survey language, age, and sex). Our results contribute novel findings to the available literature demonstrating that Americanization extends beyond the adolescence and emerging adulthood periods to adulthood and influences psychological well-being.

4.1. Cluster composition and cultural orientations

Given that our sample was largely homogeneous in religion, we assessed the clusters emerging from the overall sample (88% Muslim) and for Muslims alone. The pattern of findings across both were rather similar, with three clusters emerging. These clusters that ranged from high to low in terms of Americanization, although this never ranked as the primary orientation. Across all clusters from the main analysis and subsequent exploratory analysis including only Muslims, the French orientation was lowest and significantly below the scale midpoint, indicating a rather low relevance and penetration within our sample.

Table 11
Mean values of cultural orientations of each cluster.

Cluster	Sect TOS	Arab TOS	Religion TOS	National TOS	French TOS	American TOS
1	2.85	4.91	5.06	4.76	2.26	3.90
2	5.69	5.92	6.45	5.53	2.34	3.55
3	6.43	6.17	6.80	5.34	1.39	1.74

Results indicated the existence of three distinct clusters within the study sample, two of which were relatively Americanized (63%): a national multicultural Americanized cluster (23%), a religious multicultural Americanized cluster (40%), and a religious multicultural traditional cluster (37%). Each cluster had a different composition in all cultural orientations and was associated differently with psychological well-being.

The presence of two distinct relatively Americanized clusters forming more than half of the sample is in line with the available literature in many regards. First, it indicates, as has been the case in other studies, that generally bicultural integrated individuals do not form a homogeneous group (Huynh et al., 2011); second, that the phenomenon of remote acculturation is more complex in a local multicultural setting (Ferguson and Adams, 2016); and third, that Lebanese youth are sensitive to Western culture (Rarrbo, 2009) and that the Lebanese population is indeed a heterogeneous population with different multiculturally orientated groups. These are sometimes challenging to reconcile or even to predict the possible multicultural combinations present across the country, given the high contextual dependence and the existence of both diversity and contradiction (Harb, 2010; Larkin, 2012). The heterogeneity is even more poignant in the current study, as it emerged in a sample that, to a large extent, is homogeneous with regard to religious sect. However, different outlooks on identity and the integration of local and remote identifications emerged (NMA, RMA, and RMT), pointing to the need to consider intragroup variations when characterizing sects, especially within the political domain in Lebanon.

The presence of a religious multicultural traditional cluster indicates that, despite the historical Westernization of Lebanon and the current globalization, some individuals still adhere to their traditional heritage cultures without integrating any postcolonial or remote culture into their cultural identification or behavior. In addition, knowing that this cluster consists mainly of Muslims, and considering the historical and relatively recent events between the United States and Muslims inside and outside the country, this further explains the rejection of the American culture, according to social identity theory and the rejection–identification model (Branscombe et al., 1999; Tafjel and Turner, 1986). For instance, the Afghanistan and Iraq wars (Peace Action New York State, 2020), support for the Israeli occupation of Palestine that has escalated recently with the "deal of the century" (Bowen, 2020), Trump's anti-Muslim rhetoric and policies (Cherkaoui, 2016), and hate crimes and Islamophobia in the U.S. (Underwood, 2018) are all expected to increase in-group cohesion, group identification, and out-group rejection among Muslims.

The NMA cluster exhibited the lowest levels of all traditional cultural orientations and the highest levels of Americanization and French orientation (albeit rather low) among the three clusters. It was also characterized by a superordinate national cultural orientation and a denouncement of sectarian cultural orientation that was notably the lowest within this cluster and across clusters, and the only one below the mean among the traditional cultural orientations of this cluster.

The dominance of national cultural orientation is promising and may signal the possibility of forging a unified national Lebanese identity.

Although speculative, this could be attributed to the presence of some unifying national events in the memory of the younger generation. The most recent and significant event could be the uprising of October 17, 2019, considered the largest national movement so far, uniting Lebanese inside and outside the country (Qiblawi, 2020), albeit only for a short while. This was also seen in our exploratory analysis, in which the religious, Arab, and national identity orientations did not differ significantly and were ranked almost the same relative to the sectarian orientation, which was not prioritized and was ranked below Americanization.

However, with the sectarian identity having three facets by itself (religious, social, and political) and the observation that 41.4% of individuals within this cluster clearly stated that they considered themselves as not belonging to any sect makes interpreting this orientation more complex. Although sects historically emerged as subgroups within religions, sectarian belonging in Lebanon has been an essential part of the social fabric throughout history: It is the most basic level of cultural and community belonging after one's family and stands as a "signature" among the other traditional cultural orientations that could be identified from one's name, surname, area of origin, or area of residency. Similarly, it serves as a base of the political power-sharing arrangement, legal system, and distribution of economic interests, and the trigger of countless armed and bloody conflicts throughout Lebanon's history (Chaaban, 2016; Harb, 2010; Larkin, 2012; Traboulsi, 2007). As such, the rejection of the sectarian identity could be a rejection of its politicization within the Lebanese context (Karam, 2020; Majzoub and Jeannerod, 2020) and not necessarily a rejection of its religious component.

The RMA cluster was characterized by having the highest level of national cultural orientation across clusters, a superordinate religious and cultural orientation, and adoption of the American culture. The high levels of religious and cultural orientations are in line with previous research in Lebanon and the Arab world, which have shown that 67% of Lebanese youth and 68% of Arab youth consider religion to be an important part of their personal identity (Harb, 2010; Khouri et al., 2011). The maintenance of a high level of the Arab and sectarian orientations, despite the dominance of the national orientation, could be due to their great intersection with the superordinate religious and cultural orientations (Ayyash-Abdo, 2001; Sidani and Thornberry, 2010). The profile of this cluster indicates that it could be representative of individuals who come from a conservative background yet are open to other cultures.

The RMT cluster was characterized by a superordinate religious and cultural orientation, a subordinate national cultural orientation, and no adoption of the American culture. It is also noteworthy that a similar cluster also emerged when exploring clusters excluding all non-Muslims. This cluster was essentially predominantly comprising Sunni Muslims and had the highest number of individuals from the older generation (26- to 40-year-olds).

4.2. French postcolonial acculturation cluster

Contrary to our speculations, a French acculturated cluster did not emerge in the current sample. We explain this in reference to recent history and the composition of the sample itself. French coloniality was and continues to be predominantly observed within the Christian community (Traboulsi, 2007). Our sample was quite homogeneous with regard to religious sect, with an overwhelming majority of Sunni Muslim individuals. Despite the fact that 44.3% reported speaking French and 35% were French educated, the language was considered the least important when compared with Arabic and English. Therefore, language knowledge in this case does not seem to have translated into use. Moreover, given the tension between Muslims and France (Tidey, 2020; Walt, 2020) following the French president's speech against Islamic separatism calling for an "Islam of enlightenment" (Tidey, 2020; Wright et al., 2011), the absence of a dominant French orientation is not surprising.

4.3. Age groups and gender composition

From an examination of the demographic differences across the clusters, significant gender and age group differences emerged between the NMA cluster, composed predominantly of male emerging adults, and the RMT cluster, composed predominantly of female millennials. Remote acculturation is suggested to be observed to a greater degree in the younger generation, who are still exploring and shaping their identities and are more exposed to the vehicles of acculturation than the older generation (Ferguson and Bornstein, 2012). This may explain why these age differences emerged across the two clusters.

Regarding gender, Lebanese, Arab, and Muslim communities generally allow men to have more independence than females (Khouri et al., 2011). More specifically, restricting women's freedom in acculturation choices could be attributed to the possibility of challenging traditional cultural norms and gender roles (e.g., seeking a job, making friendships with men) when acculturating to a Western culture (Stevens et al., 2007).

4.4. Remote acculturation and well-being

Our study findings indicated that the RMT cluster had the highest level of psychological well-being, followed by the RMA cluster and the NMA cluster. These results could be explained by the interaction of anticipated differential risk and protective factors affecting the well-being of individuals in each cluster.

Four protective factors are suggested to contribute to the improvement of the psychological well-being of individuals within both the RMT and RMA clusters, compared to their counterparts in the NMA cluster: an objectively high level of religious cultural orientation, a relatively high sectarian and traditional cultural orientation; and a high level of national cultural orientation, with the RMA cluster scoring the highest in this regard.

Religious orientation is positively related to well-being when the motive is intrinsic (i.e., based on conviction rather than a habit); contributes to one's sense of meaning in life; motivates them to perform private and public religious practices, serving as a coping technique against life's stressors; leads to a sense of shared identity; and provides a social support system (Ibrahim, 2016). High sectarian cultural orientation, specifically, and traditional cultural orientations, generally, are perceived to be a protective factor in this cluster since they provide a sense of belonging and support at the social level, as well as a sense of self-knowledge, self-acceptance, strength, and competence at the personal level (Smith and Silva, 2011). This identification could also act as a cognitive buffer against negative events such as discrimination by maintaining and enhancing self-esteem (Kennedy and Cummins, 2007).

As for national identification, although one might argue that Lebanese individuals are rarely unified due to geographical and historical confessional and sectarian divisions, according to Khan et al. (2020), findings in the literature indicate that the positive contribution of social group belonging to the individual's well-being is mainly dependent on their mere identification. This is regardless of the presence or nature of behavioral interaction within their social group. In addition, according to social-categorization theory, unifying individuals under a common purpose and shared identity positively relates to their well-being via primary and secondary mechanisms (Turner and Reynolds, 2011). Individuals with a higher national identification have a shared social identity with other Lebanese, making them more likely to interact with them with a greater sense of trust and support, to overlook what divides them, and focus on what unites them, which contributes positively towards their well-being.

The three clusters are subject to a common risk factor: being multicultural at the local level. For example, the Lebanese culture includes four polemical components: the sectarian component, the religious

component, the national component, and the supranational component, which could be conflicting or overlapping among them, within each component, or across different social groups (Issa, 2015; Liu et al., 2002). Consequently, identifying with more than one local culture means balancing these different cultures and traditions, which could lead to poorer well-being due to identity confusion (Rarrbo, 2009).

Envisioning the cultural components of Arab culture is another challenge at three levels. First, within the Arab culture itself, some individuals might perceive a great difference between the traditional emic values (e.g., honor and hospitality) and values that are associated with Arabs nowadays (e.g., unprofessionalism) (Harb, 2010; Sidani and Thornberry, 2010). Second, another source of confusion could be the overlap between the Arab and Islamic cultures due to their great interconnection throughout history (Sidani and Thornberry, 2010). Third, across religious groups, Christians are more likely than Muslims to hold a negative perception of Arab identity and to adopt the media's (mis) representation of the Arab culture as equivalent to backwardness and primitiveness, in opposition to the progressive and educated West (Larkin, 2012; Traboulsi, 2007).

As for the Lebanese national culture, the Lebanese cannot form a clear and unified image of Lebanese identity, history, customs, and traditions. Lebanon does not hold a rich legacy of unifying national memories nor a consensual national identity. Throughout history, different religious and sectarian groups have viewed Lebanon in opposing ways. For instance, Maronites might view the country as an extension of Phoenician history—part of the Mediterranean region but not the Arab world. Sunnis might view it as part of the Arab world, and Greek Orthodox might view it as part of Greater Syria. Shiʿites might view it as part of the Muslim world (Larkin, 2012). There is no common historical discourse, not even in the academic context of schools, regarding Lebanon's modern birth, the civil war, and national recovery (Larkin, 2012). Despite a common national culture, each sectarian community still strives to maintain and prioritizes preserving its unique traditions, customs, and history (Ellis, 2002). However, this does not mean that there is no Lebanese sentiment and culture, but rather that it is unconventionally fluid, dynamic, and context dependent. Lebanese patriotism is not always salient, but it emerges in times of need, encompassing within it all the contradictory and hybrid sub-identities, and mainly arises when outside of Lebanon (Larkin, 2012). Two recent examples in which national identity has been salient are the uprising movements that started on October 17, 2019, when "tens of thousands of peaceful protesters took to the streets across the country calling for their social and economic rights, for accountability, an end to corruption, and the resignation of all political representatives" (Maalouf, 2020), and the protests that followed "the massive 4th of August explosion in the Port of Beirut that killed 202 people, injured 6500 others and left some 300,000 capital residents homeless" (Jabois, 2020). A young Lebanese activist described the 2019 uprising movement: "I do believe that we destabilized (the ruling elite's) presence in a way they would have never imagined. There was a Berlin Wall before separating people in this country between sects and political parties. What happened on the 17th of October is we broke a wall" (Qiblawi, 2020).

Individuals in the NMA cluster are affected by multiple risk factors. This cluster mostly comprised emerging adults aged 18 to 25 years (64.7%), who are already considered to be in a sensitive period of extensive identity exploration, self-exploration, mobility, and instability (Arnett, 2002). In addition, having an exceptionally low level of sectarian cultural orientation is suggested to be linked to being in a state of frustration with and denouncement of the current corrupt Lebanese political system, which could act as an additional significant risk factor negatively affecting the well-being of individuals in several ways. Sectarianism is an essential component of the country's social composition that impacts many aspects of one's life, such as residential and socialization patterns, social welfare, marriage, education, and economic opportunities. As such, denouncing this component creates a gap between the youth's aspirations of changing the leading sectarian political parties along with the whole confessional system of governance and their ability to achieve that. Given that this cluster was a minority within our sample—and potentially within the Lebanese population—this could indicate a disidentification with the local community that is high on sectarian cultural orientation.

Adding an American cultural orientation in an already complex multicultural context increases the complexity of one's cultural identity. It makes it more challenging to combine different components into one coherent sense of self that is consistent across settings varying in cultural prevalence (e.g., private vs. public domains, family vs. friends, social life vs. education and work institutions), especially since English is a predominant language in educational and business settings in Lebanon (Bacha and Bahous, 2011). In addition, adopting the American culture while still being physically present in the native culture could create a gap between the individuals' aspirations that are partially based on the remote culture standards and their ability to achieve them within the local setting (Ferguson et al., 2017a; Larkin, 2012), especially with the severe political, economic, and health crisis that has unfolded over the past years and continues to unfold in Lebanon (KfW Development Bank, 2020; World Bank, 2020).

4.5. Implications

This study provides important insights that could be further investigated at the cultural-specific and cultural-universal levels, especially in similar multicultural contexts where subnational cultures potentially weaken national identification. Universally, our results indicate the possibility of adopting a remote culture even in adulthood after one's identity has been crystallized and highlights the importance of maintaining a positive attitude towards one's local culture(s) regardless of remote acculturation to protect one's well-being. The mixture of attitudes (negative vs. positive) towards the United States and the American culture and its effect on Americanization is a finding that is worth attempting to replicate in other contexts.

At the practical social level, the emergence of a nonsectarian cluster within a relatively homogeneous population could indicate a significant shift within the Lebanese social fabric. The 2022 elections provided a glimpse of this, with the largest ever number of independent, nonpartisan candidates earning a parliamentary seat. The high endorsement of national culture across all clusters, despite differences in Americanization levels, should be invested via techniques derived from social categorization theory and intergroup contact theory to promote a superordinate national identity that can help in breaking down barriers between the different sectarian groups, and changing the social situation with which Lebanese people are living, while also contributing positively to their well-being.

4.6. Limitations and future direction

The current study employed a cross-sectional design that does not allow for causal interpretation. It focused on achieving validity within the unique Lebanese context, and given that non-random sampling was used and that our sample was homogeneous in terms of sectarian belonging, the results are not generalizable to different sectarian groups within Lebanon. It is therefore recommended that the study be replicated among a more diverse Lebanese sample, preferably using random sampling, while still accounting for inter- and intragroup variations. Future work may also add a qualitative element, in which open-ended questions could contribute to a better understanding of identity content and meaning for the local cultures endorsed, specifically if a diverse sample is reached. For instance, a high endorsement of the Lebanese identity may very well emerge across sects within Lebanon, but it is important to understand what that identity actually means in terms of content and to what extent there is overlap in that meaning. Such qualitative data may then inform a more accurate interpretation of emerging clusters.

We did not assess family income in the current study. This is a limitation, since individuals who come from wealthier families would have had more access to private education institutions in Lebanon, which are, for the most part, either French or American institutions espousing those values (e.g., *écoles homologues*).

Ethical considerations

The present study received ethical approval from the Ethics committee of the Faculty of Social and Behavioral Sciences at Haigazian University (TS.8.20, September 30,2020). Participation in the present research study was voluntary and an information letter and consent form were provided. a written consent form was used. It included the purpose of the study, foreseeable risks and potential benefits to the participant, confidentiality, contact information for questions regarding the study, and a note on the right to refuse to participate or withdraw at any point without penalty. Participants were prompted to indicate their consent by clicking on "I, therefore, choose to voluntarily participate in this research study".

CRediT authorship contribution statement

Noura Soubra: Conceptualization, Formal analysis, Investigation, Writing – original draft, Visualization. **Lucy Tavitian-Elmadjian:** Conceptualization, Methodology, Resources, Writing – review & editing, Supervision. **Byron Adams:** Conceptualization, Writing – review & editing.

Declaration of competing interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

Data availability

Data will be made available on request.

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Appendix A. Psychological well-being scale

Strongly disagree						Strongly agree
1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I like most parts of my personality							
When I look at the story of my life, I am pleased with how things have turned out so far							
Some people wander aimlessly through life, but I am not one of them							
The demands of everyday life often get me down							
In many ways I feel disappointed about my achievements in life							
Maintaining close relationships has been difficult and frustrating for me							
I live life one day at a time and don't really think about the future							
In general, I feel I am in charge of the situation in which I live							
I am good at managing the responsibilities of daily life							
I sometimes feel as if I've done all there is to do in life							
For me, life has been a continuous process of learning, changing, and growth							
I think it is important to have new experiences that challenge how I think about myself and the world							
People would describe me as a giving person, willing to share my time with others							
I gave up trying to make big improvements or changes in my life a long time ago							
I tend to be influenced by people with strong opinions							
I have not experienced many warm and trusting relationships with others							
I have confidence in my own opinions, even if they are different from the way most other people think							
I judge myself by what I think is important, not by the values of what others think is important							

Appendix B. Acculturation Cultural Orientations Scales (Sectarian identification and behaviors)

Which sect (if any) do you identify with? _____

Strongly disagree						Strongly agree
1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I feel that I belong to my sectarian group							
I know what my sectarian group membership means to me							
I like to do things that people from my sectarian group like to do							

(*continued on next page*)

(*continued*)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I often participate in my sectarian group social traditions							
I would be willing to marry a person from my sectarian group							
I enjoy social activities with people from the same sectarian group as myself							
I am comfortable working with people of the same sectarian group as myself							
I often behave in ways that are typical of my sectarian group							
It is important for me to maintain or develop the cultural practices of my sectarian group							
I believe in the values of my sectarian group							
I am interested in having friends from my sectarian group							

Appendix C. Acculturation Cultural Orientations Scales (Arab identification and behaviors)

What do you consider your (ethnic) ancestry/origin to be? _____

Strongly disagree						Strongly agree
1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I see myself as an Arab							
I take pride in being an Arab							
I would stand up to people who say bad things about the Arab world and its people							
The fact that I am an Arab is an important part of my identity							
I often participate in my native Arabic group traditions							
I would be willing to marry an Arab person							
I enjoy social activities with Arab people							
I am comfortable working with Arab people							
I enjoy Arabic movies, series, and TV entertainment shows							
I enjoy Arabic music							
I often behave in ways that are typical of Arabs (ex. way of greeting, speech and expression, lifestyle…)							
It is important for me to maintain or develop Arabic cultural practices (ex. language, literature, cuisine, raising kids, architecture…)							
I believe in native Arab values							
I am interested in having Arab friends							
I speak Arabic at home							
I speak Arabic outside of home							
I speak/write in Arabic on social media							
I think in Arabic							

Appendix D. Acculturation Cultural Orientations Scales (Religious identification and behaviors)

Which religion (if any) do you identify with? _____

Strongly disagree						Strongly agree
1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I am proud to belong to my religion							
I have a clear view of how my religion influences my lifestyle							
I participate in religious celebrations							
I often participate in my religion's rituals							
I would be willing to marry a person from my religion							
I enjoy social activities with people from the same religion as myself							
I am comfortable working with people of the same religion as myself							
I often behave in ways that are typical of my religion							
It is important for me to maintain the practices of my religion as a society							
I believe in the values of my religion							
I am interested in having friends from my religion							

Appendix E. Acculturation Cultural Orientations Scales (National identification and behaviors)

Strongly disagree						Strongly agree
1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I see myself as a Lebanese							
I feel a strong sense of connection to other Lebanese							
I participate in Lebanese national events & celebrations							
I often participate in Lebanese traditions							
I would be willing to marry a Lebanese person							
I enjoy social activities with Lebanese people							
I am comfortable working with Lebanese people							
I enjoy Lebanese movies, series, and TV entertainment shows							
I enjoy Lebanese music							
I often behave in ways that are typical of Lebanese (ex. way of greeting, speech and expression, lifestyle…)							
It is important for me to maintain or develop Lebanese cultural practices (ex. language, literature, cuisine, way of raising kids, architecture…)							
I believe in Lebanese values							
I am interested in having Lebanese friends							

Appendix F. Acculturation Cultural Orientations Scales (French identification and behaviors)

Strongly disagree						Strongly agree
1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I see myself as a French							
I feel a strong sense of connection to other French							
I would stand up to people who say bad things about France and its people							
I often participate in French traditions							
I would be willing to marry a French person							
I enjoy social activities with French people							
I am comfortable working with French people							
I enjoy French movies, series, and TV entertainment shows							
I enjoy French music							
I often behave in ways that are typical of French (ex. way of greeting, speech and expression, lifestyle…)							
It is important for me to maintain or develop French cultural practices (ex. language, literature, cuisine, way of raising kids, architecture…)							
I believe in French values							
I am interested in having French friends							
I speak French at home							
I speak French outside of home							
I speak/write in French on social media							
I think in French							

Appendix G. Acculturation Cultural Orientations Scales (American identification and behaviors)

Strongly disagree						Strongly agree
1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I see myself as an American							
I feel a strong sense of connection to other Americans							
I would stand up to people who say bad things about the U.S.A. and its people							
I often participate in American traditions							
I would be willing to marry an American person							
I enjoy social activities with American people							
I am comfortable working with American people							
I enjoy American movies, series, and TV entertainment shows							
I enjoy American music							
I often behave in ways that are typical of American (ex. way of greeting, speech and expression, lifestyle…)							
It is important for me to maintain or develop American cultural practices (ex. language, literature, cuisine, way of raising kids, architecture…)							
I believe in American values							

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(*continued*)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I am interested in having American friends							
I speak English at home							
I speak English outside of home							
I speak/write in English on social media							
I think in English							

Appendix H. Socio-demographics

How old are you (in years)?_____
What is your gender?
__ Male
__ Female
__ Do not wish to disclose
What is your nationality (please select all that apply)?
__ Lebanese
Other, please specify: ____
What is your father's nationality (please select all that apply)?
__ Lebanese
__ Syrian
__ Palestinian
Other, please specify: _____
What is your mother's nationality (please select all that apply)?
__ Lebanese
__ Syrian
__ Palestinian
Other, please specify: _____
In which country were you born?
__ Lebanon
Other, specify: _____
For how long have you lived in Lebanon?
__ All my life
__ More than half my life
__ Less than half my life
What is your current area of residency in the past year? You can choose more than one option if you move between two areas regularly.
__ Beirut
__ Mount Lebanon
__ North Lebanon
__ Beqaa'
__ South Lebanon
__ Nabatiyeh
What is your marital status?
__ Single
__ Engaged
__ Married
__ Separated
__ Divorced
__ Widowed

__ No schooling completed	__ 1 or more years of university, no degree
__ Nursery school to 8th grade	__ Bachelor's degree (for example: BA, BS)
__ 9th, 10th or 11th grade	__ Master's degree (for example: MA, MS, MEng, MBA)
__ 12th grade, no diploma	__ Professional degree (for example: MD)
__ High school graduate	__ Doctorate degree (for example: PhD)
__ Some university, but less than 1 year	

What is the highest education level you have achieved?
What was your second language at school besides Arabic?
__ French
__ English
Which language(s) do you speak? (You can check more than one)
__ Arabic

__ Armenian
__ English
__ French
Other: please specify_____

Please write the languages you specified above by order of importance to you. Start by writing the most important language to you followed by the second most important and so on. Do NOT include languages which you don't speak. For example, if you only speak Arabic and French from the above language, rate only these two languages based on their importance to you.

1. _____3. _____5. _____
2. _____4. _____6. _____

What is the main language spoken at home?
__ Arabic
__ Armenian
__ English
__ French
Other: please specify_____

How many times in your life have you visited the U.S.?
__ None
__ Once
__ Twice
__ Three times
__ More than three times

Do you have a Green Card?
__ Yes
__ No

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