

# ICGC COLLOQUIUM SERIES

## From development miracle to development disaster? A comparative study of the role of two elite American universities in the national development of Lebanon

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537 Heller Hall (ICGC)

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Are elite, American-identifying higher education institutions in Lebanon instruments of national development as popularly imagined, or are they anti-development machines? In this study, I investigate the role of elite American flagship universities in Lebanon, particularly the American University of Beirut (AUB) and the Lebanese American University (LAU), in the context of national development. While it is widely believed that higher education plays a key role in driving “development,” specifically economic development, I question the universality of this relationship, particularly in the face of historical and political complexities. Drawing on Lebanon's sociopolitical history since independence in 1943 and its current state of development decline, I conduct a comparative case study to examine the contributions of AUB and LAU to Lebanon's sociopolitical landscape. Through this analysis, I aim to explore the nuances of (inter)national development processes and the potential limitations of human capital theory in understanding the role of education in national development.



*No program is more important to future of Lebanon than its efforts in field of education. On shoulders of today's children will fall responsibility of government; their proper training is a major responsibility. Point 4 is helping.*

Photo credit: U.S. Technical Cooperation Service for Lebanon (1953). Point  
Four in Lebanon. International Cooperation Administration.

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