Understanding Outbound Student Mobility in Lebanon’s Sectarian Environment
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Research Question: How does exiting a society divided by sub-national groupings influence students’ perceptions of their national identities?

INTRODUCTION
Lebanon’s confessional government grants each sect relative autonomy to dictate its own affairs, which:
1) Allows sects to establish separate school systems and insert divergent nationalist views in schools.
2) Limits the interaction between students from different sects from adolescence onward.
This study examines how exiting Lebanon to pursue higher education abroad impacts students’ perceptions of sectarianism.

METHODOLOGY
+ Survey 66 students who are studying in the U.S.
+ Recruited through outreach to Lebanese Student Associations nationwide

DEMOGRAPHICS
GENDER
47% Female, 53% Male

STUDENT ENROLLMENT
42% Undergraduate
24% Masters
26% PhD
8% No Response

RESULTS

VIEWPOINTS ON SECTARIANISM, BROKEN DOWN BY SECT.

‘Interacting with other religions and cultures has changed the way I see sectarianism in Lebanon.’

MY ATTACHMENT TO MY NATIONAL IDENTITY IS STRONGER SINCE STUDYING IN THE UNITED STATES (%).

ANALYSIS & CONCLUSION
• Participants from Christian sects noted more of a change in viewpoint on sectarianism once they left Lebanon.
• Despite the majority of participants citing negative views of sectarianism, they still feel more attached to their Lebanese national identity once they leave.
• Conclusion: While participants are aware of the negative impact of sectarianism at a macro level, they do not recognize its direct impact on their viewpoints of Lebanon’s society.