

JUSTIN: Thank you so much, everybody, for being here. We're really excited to have Lama Mourad hear from her several postdocs, which I'll explain in a second to talk to us about the experience of Syrian refugees and, especially, local government responses to the influx of Syrian refugees to Lebanon. So we're really excited to have her here at MIT today to talk about her research.

Lama did her PhD at the University of Toronto in political science and then did a postdoc at the Middle East Initiative at Harvard and is now doing another combination of postdocs at Perry World House at Penn and a SSHRC-Postdoc that's combined between Harvard and Penn. So welcome. Thank you so much for coming. And we're looking forward to your talk.

LAMA MOURAD: Thank you so much, Justin. As Justin, I think, quite succinctly put it, my research looks at understanding the politics of local refugee response to the influx of Syrians in Lebanon post 2011. And what I'll be doing today is giving you kind of a bit of a sense of the broad project, of the book project as a whole, but also kind of zeroing in on a couple of the core chapters. And what I hope you can take away from this project as a whole is that we really can't understand these kind of large scale dislocations of people and of spaces without also understanding, deeply, kind of the local dynamics that they set in motion for local communities, but also for migrants themselves.

Before going too deeply into Lebanon-- and this might be something that most people in this room know quite well, but I thought it was important to kind of take a step back and look at global displacement and global force displacement patterns and kind of key trends. And the first is that-- for my work that's really relevant-- is that the vast majority of the world's forcibly displaced remain in the global south. And the drivers of displacement-- even though, of course, without denying kind of the intertwining of conflict and environmental degradation and all kinds of issues-- the main drivers of displacement remain protracted conflict. So we see here the three main countries that produce refugees worldwide are countries that face protracted conflict. And on the flip side, the top refugee hosting countries are often those neighboring those countries of conflict. And so these three trends, I think, kind of summarize why I think it's really important that we look at force displacement from the global south to the global south and to understand how those dynamics are particularly important.

And the other important, I think, trend that we see globally is that despite the ubiquity of images like this, of Zaatari Refugee Camp, and the focus on camps as a site of refugee governance, the vast majority of forcibly displaced are actually in non camp urban or peri-urban settings, right? So 60% of refugees by UNHCR's figures, but we all know that this is an understatement of the dynamics and 80% of IDPs.

So these broad empirical trends only further highlight the gaps in the existing literature. And I say particularly in political science, but I think it's still true in broadly speaking. So overwhelmingly, as Salehyan notes, sending and receiving countries form the units of analysis in the study of large-scale displacement. So there are some notable exceptions-- including some people in this room-- that look particularly in urban settings, and geography, and sociology on the effect of displacement on either at a sort of subnational level or a non central state focus. But even these notable exceptions do focus primarily on the global north.

And I think this stems from a number of different kind of theoretical assumptions about what we can expect from states in the global south in terms of capacity and in terms of governance ability. But also I think it's driven in part by a bifurcation that continues to be seen in the study of displacement between migration studies on the one hand-- so immigration politics and issues of local incorporation, accommodation-- and refugee studies on the other-- which is much more interested in issues of security, in issues of large-scale camps settlements. And so I think that these two literatures really need to speak to each other in much more intimately and in a powerful way come together in the study of local responses to refugee displacement.

So why Lebanon? So some of the reasons why I think Lebanon is a particularly potent case study for bringing together these trends is that as a result of the displacement of Syrians post 2011, Lebanon became the largest per capita refugee host in the world. And because of the central policy of inaction from 2011 to early 2015, Syrians largely self-settled across Lebanon's 1,100 municipalities. And because no central decision was made to build refugee camps, municipalities were really the front-line actors in responding to this influx. So Syrians went into localities themselves, had to find housing, had to figure out where they were going to live and how they were going to do that. And municipalities really became the central actors in governing that entry.

So this really leads me to my central question which is trying to understand how municipalities respond to this influx and why that's the case. So to give you a bit of a sense of this, this is from a survey conducted by UNICEF and OCHA in 2015 over the course of a little less than a

year. And what they found is that in a sample of 536 localities across the country, which were really focused on localities that were considered most vulnerable. That is municipalities that have low infrastructural capacity and high demographic pressure from the influx of Syrians.

What they found-- which I think one of the things that they found that's pretty remarkable is that over 40% of municipalities did nothing. They didn't really govern the entry of Syrians in any particular way. They didn't put in place restrictions, but they also didn't adopt any kind of accommodations policies.

And then the other major thing I think that bears noting in this is that of the 53% or so that did adopt policies, the overwhelming majority adopt curfews. And I think there are a number of important reasons why these other policies-- namely municipal ID, residency restrictions, employment restrictions-- are not adopted because some of them for capacity reasons. For instance municipal IDs are quite costly. They require a certain amount of capacity on the part of local governments.

But also employment restrictions have greater costs and different groups within the locality. So for instance, if you are an employer of Syrians within a local community, you may not want employment restrictions put in place. Right? So they have a more complicated set of costs and benefits for localities.

But the reason why the overwhelming reliance on curfews as a mode of response is really a central part of my research. So to come back to what I said was the central question, what explains variation in subnational migration policy in Lebanon, I really hone in on how the choice of municipal curfews was driven not by their function as effectively controlling the movement of Syrians, but, actually, by their performative power as signals of governing order within localities themselves. So I find that localities where local authorities face a greater degree of competition for their authority, curfews serve as a strong and relatively low-cost tool to project that authority.

So I think in order to understand this well, it's really important to kind of materially see what curfews look like in practice. Because when I talk about curfews, oftentimes, particularly in North America, what people imagine when I say a curfew is a sort of blanket curfew on the locality. That a certain city could put in place if in times of crisis and that would apply to everyone within that city.

But in Lebanon these curfews take a different form. So this is one example from the

municipality of Hoch Moussa-Anjar, which is one of my main case studies. And as you'll see in the translation, for those of you who can't read Arabic-- and even if you can, it's a bit hard to read probably from where you're sitting-- but the curfew effectively forbids Syrians from traveling between 9:00 PM and 6:00 AM under threat of legal prosecution by the municipality. But what I want to argue is that even though Syrians are in some ways, the most visibly targeted in the language of these curfews, they're not the main targets of the practice itself. And by that I mean that local residents themselves, local citizen residents are the primary audience that these curfews are targeting.

By the time I took that photo in 2016, curfews were relatively widespread throughout the country. And it became not an altogether unfamiliar sight to see at the entrance of localities or in the central squares banners like these that told Syrians what times they were allowed to move within the locality. And while the exact wording of the curfews varied to a certain degree from locality to locality-- and I'll come back to some of that variance later on-- the core instruction was effectively the same.

So now that I've given you a little bit off the setup and the empirical framing for this research, I just want to kind of give you a brief outline of the rest of the talk. I'll go over some of my methodological decisions and the way in which I conducted this research. As you can imagine, this was kind of a deeply qualitative research that was inductively driven, but I also do some empirical quantitative tests to test some of the intuitions that the qualitative findings allow me to discover. And again, I'll go over some of the more fine-grained elements of the argument, go through one of my case studies and findings, and then kind of anchor this within the broader book project so that you have a sense of the broader research questions. And finally, I'll outline some of the implications that I think this work brings out for the study of forced displacement, but also for local governance and the politics of borders.

So methodology-wise, this relies on 13 months of ethnographic fieldwork across Lebanon. And unlike a lot of the work, particularly in urban studies on Lebanon, I really set out to study communities outside of the capital. There's a lot of really rich work in urban studies on Lebanon, but it's primarily focused on Beirut, which is, I think, a quite common reality in the global south where we focus for the company these megacities, capital cities. But my work looks at peri-urban and kind of non central cities and towns.

And the core data that I rely on is over 120 interviews that I conducted in Arabic, French, and English with a wide array of actors. Almost 50% of those interviews are with municipal actors

themselves, whether they be municipal council people or mayors. And I chose four in-depth municipal case studies where I tried to trace the decision to adopt curfews but also how they played out alongside other types of policies in those localities.

And finally, I think some of the really interesting insights that I gathered and came from this kind of shadowing of projects that I did throughout-- shadowing of projects and workshops that I did throughout my fieldwork. So this is an example of a handout that was given to UN and partner organizations at a social stability meeting for partner organizations working in municipalities in Lebanon. And what you see here is actually-- so for instance, you see Oxfam, UNDP, ACS, NRC and the names of the localities would be here that I blocked out. And what you see here is the UN Coordinating Committee has asked partners to put an x on the issues that they believe are causing tensions between host communities and refugees. And part of this process of monitoring tensions ends up ultimately focusing on curfews as a proxy for tensions within localities. I can talk a little bit more about how I believe that plays out over time in explaining how curfews spread throughout the country.

Another kind of important site was also the shadowing of projects that some of these organizations would have within localities. So one of my main case studies is in [INAUDIBLE], which is a locality in the west [INAUDIBLE] that has 20,000 Syrians for a local population of around 20,000 Lebanese. So it's a high demographic pressure, but that also doesn't have a curfew.

And this is from one of the major protests that civil society groups in Lebanon mounted against these discriminatory policies and what they saw as sort of human rights violations against refugees in the country. So what you see here is a sign that says [ARABIC] which [ARABIC] is a curfew. And so [ARABIC] is curfews are forbidden. In Arabic, it has a bit more of alliteration, but that's the meaning of it.

And so even though I see the core part of my argument as being driven by the qualitative work, what I tried to do is to also test some of the implications of my theory and my argument on a wider set of cases throughout the country. And so using a unique data set that I compiled incidences of curfews-- so I document 135 curfews throughout the country-- I tried to understand what are the conditions that make localities more likely to have a curfew and not using a set of administrative, electoral, demographic, and spatial data on municipalities. I'm happy to talk about this more in the Q&A.

So to come back to the whittled down research question that I'm really trying to answer in one of the chapters is why do some municipalities adopt curfews while others do not. And what I argue, again, is that these discriminatory municipal curfews targeting Syrians across many of Lebanon's localities were driven not by their function as regulations of Syrian presence or Syrian movement but rather by their performative power as signals of governing order within localities. So

The core element of what makes curfews so effective are signals of governing order is their highly visible and public nature. And in localities where leaders face competition for that authority, these serve as sort of effective ways to alleviate fears and concerns on the part of local populations, citizen populations that are concerned about the influx. And that over time, once in place, these curfews themselves have an effect on the likelihood of other municipalities adopting curfews as well.

I don't have very fine-grained data on timing in Lebanon. So it's really hard to get to a really good assessment of diffusion effects. But what I heard in interviews time and again was mayors talking to me about the pressure they faced from residents saying so-and-so adopted, has done something, what are you doing. We saw this curfew in Village x, how are you not doing anything? What are we doing as a municipality to address this? And as I mentioned briefly when I showed that table of UN partner agencies looking at monitoring curfews among other practices, there's also a story of signaling out to international aid providers that this municipality x is in need of support and that a curfew is a very effective way to do that.

So the that I try to conceptualize this is to think of curfews as multivocal. And by that, I mean that they have a number of different messages that are, at times, contradictory but that live in a space where every message is directed at a different audience and the contradictions are brought together in the curfew itself. So as I mentioned, the main explanation that I see, particularly in early movers, in the municipalities that move to adopt curfews early is this signaling in towards local citizen residents providing them a sense of governing and stability within the locality. And this last rule that I mentioned of signaling out to international aid actors is really something that comes out later in the process in mid 2015 when international aid organizations really start to focus on curfews as these kind of proxies for attention.

And then there's, of course, the way in which these signals, even if Syrians are not the target of them, in the minds of mayors and municipal actors, they are nonetheless affected by these curfews in the ways that they live in these localities and they see these measures adopted. So

they have an effect on Syrians even though they're not the primary target.

And finally I can talk a little bit about that sort of last quadrant, which I agree is kind of the least significant, but nonetheless an important role, which is to signal to central government actors that local authorities are sovereign on their territory. This comes up, in particular, when the Minister of Interior at the time tries to-- in a news media report-- says that curfews are illegal and that they fall outside of the bounds of the jurisdictions of local authorities. And even local authorities that had previously rejected the idea of curfews talked to me about how this was a clearly an overreach in the minister's power and that localities and municipalities have the right to govern on that territory. So I'll be focusing primarily on these two today, but, again, happy to talk more about the rest in the Q&A.

So I've been using this term performance. And I think there's a really large literature on perform activity and on performance that I think I can't do justice to and that sometimes has contradictory definitions. But I anchor my work really in the work of Lisa Wedeen who is a political scientist who looks at politics as performance. And I see that politics is performative when the utterance is the act itself. So that rather than looking at the effects-- so I'm not arguing that curfew's effectively make places safer or that they actually provide order, but that the act of performing that curfew is aimed at producing that and trying to kind of tie in the observable political effects but also with the logics that the actors that put them in place aim to play out.

So in order to come to thinking about curfews in this particular way, one of the things that came back to me time and time again in fieldwork was when I asked to describe the early days of the Syrian influx. A term that appeared time and time again was [ARABIC] or chaos. So municipalities would tell me no one knew how many Syrians were coming, whether it would stop tomorrow, who was dealing with it. And it was a state of chaos.

And in one case, so in contrast to [ARABIC], what I heard time and time again was this concept of [ARABIC] or [ARABIC]. And that the concept of [ARABIC]-- which you'll see here both here [ARABIC] and [ARABIC] or [ARABIC] here. This is a term that has a much more complicated meaning in Arabic than the translation of "order" conveys. But it can mean something like a like a regime, or a rule, or a set of structures, or even disciplining.

But in the ways that municipalities and local actors were using this term, they really referred often to this sense of order. So for instance in this case, a municipal council member told me

that in this case they did not have a curfew. And when I asked him why they hadn't adopted a curfew, he responded if there was order, we wouldn't be here today. And this implication that a curfew implied order in response to that question was one of the many cases that this concept became tied in my mind.

And in another case, a mayor who had adopted a curfew said instead of continuing to face calls everyday from residents or having residents try to enforce order themselves. And there he recalled a story of young men beating up Syrians as a way of enforcing order within the locality. We decided as a local authority, we would organize it [ARABIC] ourselves.

So this role in governing political order also came head to head in some municipalities with a desire to also have a sense of social order. So it was not just about whether Syrians were disrupting the dynamics of political life in the locality, because, ultimately, Syrians can't vote in Lebanon. They don't have any effective political and civic rights. But their mere presence in their locality is families as opposed to migrant domestic workers-- oh, sorry, migrant workers as they had previously been in Lebanon, disrupted the sense of social order in many localities.

So this was someone actually who was running for municipal council in one of these localities. So elections were in May 2016. So this was in the run-up to the election. One of the candidates for municipal council who ended up winning talked to me about the fact that the biggest threat-- this is a locality, actually, that bears mentioning that is right near the border with Syria and had actually faced a great deal of security issues with regards to fighting in its boundaries. And they had a curfew.

And yet the major threat that this municipal council member kept referring to was not the possibility of bombings, which had actually happened, it was rather that Syrians would feel like they belonged there and that they would feel like they could set up a life in a place like his locality. And when I asked them very explicitly, so it's not about these incidents of violence? It's not about the security. She said that's not for us to deal with as a locality. We leave that to the armed forces. We leave that to Hezbollah to a certain extent in this area. Our concern as a locality is what happens within kind of our jurisdiction or our territory is the way that was referred to. [ARABIC] was a term that I heard over and over again.

And this social ordering also had repercussions on Syrians themselves. And I think this is the main way, actually, that curfews affected Syrians. This man from Dhour el-Choueir, which is a town in Mount Lebanon, who had been in the locality on and off for 20 years, recalled that

really the thing that frustrated him the most about the curfew was not the curfew itself, but it was the fact that it used the term foreigners to refer to Syrians. And he said what I care about is Dhour el-Choueir. I don't care about what happens everywhere else-- because I was also asking him about how do policies happening all across Lebanon, what does it mean to you?

He said, "What I care about is Dhour el-Choueir. This is my village. It's people are like my family [ARABIC]. We, Syrians, have now become like the [ARABIC] or the Sri Lankans.

And here there's also a politics of race that intertwines with this story in the politics of identity of how Syrians see themselves as a different type of migrant than-- in this case, the term [ARABIC] in Arabic refers to Ethiopians and Sri Lankans. Right? So we're not like them. We're not like those other migrants that are truly foreign. We're a part of this locality. And there was this sort of signaling as of non-belonging that really struck Syrians that I spoke to the most.

And so I've been kind of giving you a bit of a bird's eye view through different localities, but I really wanted to delve a little bit more deeply into one of my main case studies. And the reason I chose this image, even though-- actually, this is a photo I found online and not one that I took myself. I don't have a camera this nice. And I sadly don't take that many photos during fieldwork-- is that first of all Bcharre is not what we imagine as a site of a kind of large-scale refugee displacement. Right? So again, breaking a bit our assumptions about what refugee places look like and what.

So this is actually like a beautiful, picturesque location. It's a major tourist site in the country. And it's a place that's full of snow, and this kind of magical almost what many have called when they see images like this kind of like a Switzerland vibe. And although it is picturesque, and an important tourist site, and a really beautiful place to visit, it's also not a very hospitable location for people who are trying to find work, for instance, because the work is very seasonal within this locality. And if you're not used to the harsh winters, Bcharre's climate, which is that 1,500 meters of elevation is pretty harsh in the winters.

And so unlike other villages, particularly like [INAUDIBLE] that I mentioned earlier that has 20,000 Syrians for a local population 20,000, Bcharre actually had a relatively small proportion of Syrians in its locality. It had around 1,500 Syrians when I visit in 2016 for a local population 20,000. That's still a lot by American locality standards. But by the relative order of Lebanon, it's a relatively small proportion.

And Bcharre as you can see is-- even though, again, Lebanon is very, very small. So it's really

hard to get a sense of dimensions and scale but the arrow points to the curfew that designates Bcharre. And even though it looks quite close to the coastline, it takes quite a bit to get to Bcharre, again, because it's quite a mountainous road. And it's really off the main coastal line, which is where you would find most of the major cities and the work opportunities.

So as the mayor told me when I met him in March 2016, Syrians who are here are here intentionally. You don't just find yourself in Bcharre. And by that he meant that some localities that along the major arteries of the country, some Syrians really just settled there because it was the first place that they found that they could find a job. But Syrians who were in Bcharre often had pre-existing ties to that community. They knew to seek it out.

And this is one of the reasons that when I was speaking to a staff person at the governorate level and told him that I was visiting Bcharre, he said, what? You are working on refugees. There are no refugees in Bcharre. And because of the way that he understood was refugees was one primarily as people who were displaced that had no previous ties to the places that they ended up, but also a small proportion of Syrian refugees in Lebanon live in informal tented settlements. But those are mostly along the coastal lines and the main arteries.

And Syrians in Bcharre lived among the community. They rented homes. They rented garages, which is actually what the vast majority of Syrians in Lebanon do. And the historical presence of Syrians within the locality meant that those who settled were people who often had ties to the apple picking industry in that locality and either brought their families or their extended families with them once they left Syria in a more permanent way.

And it's important to kind of situate the politics of Bcharre, right? So Bcharre is actually a very strong stronghold, I guess, is the term, a religious stronghold of a major Christian Lebanese Party, the Lebanese forces. And it's sort of considered one of the seats of power because it's actually the hometown of the leader of the party.

But at a local level, political competition is quite fierce. And it's primarily centered around these core families. It's primarily the [INAUDIBLE] and [INAUDIBLE] family and to a lesser extent, actually [INAUDIBLE] and [INAUDIBLE]. So this political competition at a local level is not kind of along ideological or partisan lines with regard to the Syrian presence in the country, for example, or the Syrian war, but actually much more about sort of the politics of the place and the competition among families themselves. And because of, in part, the ideological-- and I can talk about this more in the Q&A-- but the ideological leanings of this party and the

historical relationship of Bcharre to the Syrian occupation of Lebanon, Syrians faced regulation in Bcharre very early on.

So they were one of the first localities, for instance, to have a survey conducted of all the Syrians within the localities. They had documentation on where every Syrian was working within the locality really from early 2012. And this politics of governance was very relatively smooth sailing until issues of the Syrian presence became heightened in 2014. And the politics at the local level became disrupted and fears about Syrians' presence in the long term became an issue of national conversation. And that's when, Bcharre, in 2014, adopted a curfew.

And when I spoke to the mayor about this who actually, previously was, in the Civil War in Lebanon, was a human rights activist and a kind of a civil society activist, so someone who was very disturbed by this idea that the curfew made Bcharre seem like a xenophobic place. Right? But what he recalled to me was that if he didn't do this, and if some young man in the locality would harass Syrians, at least the curfew would show that he was quote "clearly doing something." It allowed him to sort of have this anchor that he could refer to. Even though he had all of these other regulations that were just not visible in many ways to local residents, this curfew provided that anchor point to say that he was clearly doing something in the face of the Syrian presence.

And in thinking through some of this material, the work of Peter Andreas on the US-Mexico border kind of came back to me as providing a really good analogy. So Andreas here says that "Failing and flawed policies can nevertheless be successful from a political and psychological perspective. The border appears more orderly at those crossing points that are most visible to the public and the media's eye." And importantly for Andreas-- and I think the same is true for me in thinking through curfews-- he does not see the success or, in this case, visible border walls or border checkpoints, as an epiphenomenal or merely a psychological ploy for short-term political gain but rather as an integral and often ignored role of border control as such. And so to quote Andreas again, "The deterrence function of borders has always been as much about image as reality-- a political fiction providing an appearance of control that helps reproduce and reinforce state legitimacy." And so my argument is that the claim to order brought forth by curfews at the municipal level, it similarly calls for and reinforces municipal power and legitimacy.

And similarly, the municipal curfew in Bcharre was not strictly enforced in the way that we

would think about it, right? So this is a Syrian man in the locality that I spoke to and I told him how was the curfew affecting his life? And he sat there and said, "it's not that I can't go around if I need To the other day, I went and got medicine from the pharmacy and it wasn't an issue. But why can't I just go outside with my wife and my kids at night? It's as if I'm not human." And there it wasn't really about the curfew as a limitation on his movement if needed, but it was about how it made him feel as a part of that locality, right?

And so to kind of bring this all back to the broad systematic level of at the national level, what I tried to tease out in my main quantitative analysis was what is the effect of electoral competition? Which I don't see as a perfect measure of political plurality in localities, but as a fairly good proxy and I think the closest one that we have quantitatively. And what I find is that electoral competition matters. It's not the only thing that matters, but it has a really significant effect. And I can have some more of the data if people would like more detail on that. But effectively, what we see is that municipalities that have a higher competitive electoral landscape are more likely to have curfews. And this is controlling for all kinds of budgetary, demographic, and other controls.

And what I find is, also, a really significant effect of the policies of neighboring municipalities. Now, what I think is really interesting on this level is that it's primarily about those localities within the proximate neighborhood. So the effect of this really falls off after the five kilometer radius. And I think that this provides some really important support for the idea that this is about those places where local citizen residents are sending their kids to school, where they're getting their groceries. It's really about where they're seeing policies in their everyday life and not about policies at a national level.

And I can talk about this more in the Q&A, demographic material pressures are important, but they're not determinative. And sectarian politics, again, is important. It tells us part of the story, but it's also not determinative. And what I find is that even in municipalities where the local host community is of the same identity background as Syrian refugees, local politics matters even more.

So again, to give you a brief sense of how this all fits into a broader book project, what I've shown you today is primarily focused in Chapter 2, Chapter 4 which are about kind of performing order at the local level, and social ordering, and naming Syrians. And in that chapter, not only do I look at the role of providing social order at the local level, but I delve into the different tomes that curfews use to designate Syrians-- so from foreigner, to class-based

markers that refer to motorcycles, for instance, or workers-- to try to understand what these different terms mean about the Syrian presence in the country and what kind of historical and political relationship that that instantiates.

And the first chapter is really about kind of situating this in a broader national policy of inaction that allows municipalities, that were previously very weak actors in the Lebanese system, to take on this really important governance row. And the third chapter is on this performing of tension that I've alluded to at a few references. And finally, the kind of wrapping up chapter is about bringing curfews into conversation with national level policies post 2015 when the national state really starts to take on a much more important role in the governance of Syrians. And the specter or possibility of deportation becomes much more of a possibility. And what I argue in that chapter is that these policies together effectively serve to shift the border in and limit the rights of Syrians in the same way that, say, denying asylum would, but this time within the territory itself.

And again, to kind of give a sense of what I see as the major implications of this work, both for the study of migration and refugee politics, but also for the broader literature on borders and urban studies is that-- again, this is at the Department of Urban Studies, so no shock to this audience-- but I think for political scientists, it really reinforces the importance of a multiscale analysis, not thinking through these issues solely on either the international and national level but thinking through how those scales actually sometimes collapse and are grounded within the local, but also how they kind of co-constitute policies and all of these things.

And of course, I think a term that you've heard me use now over and over, but the importance of performative politics. So trying to understand politics not just in their effects, but also their effect as kind of materially in the lives of people, but also in the ways that their performance has an effect on either the politics of the place, but also on people's sense of belonging.

And finally, on issues of boundary-making and internal border control, the study of refugee politics has really moved beyond this idea of borders being only those that separate nation states from one another or that they're necessarily even cartographically marked. But most of that literature, particularly in refugee studies, that's focused on pushing on how countries and states push the border out, how they externalize border regimes, for instance, through camps in Nauru in Australia or this kind of EU border policy that we imagine. But I want to bring light to the possibility of bringing the border in and how states can actually put in place measures that limit the rights of migrants through internal border making.

And finally, I think this is a particularly important contribution to political science which has this obsession with categorization of states as weak and strong, high capacity, low capacity. But I think what's really important in the study of Lebanon is that Lebanon is, in some ways, a weak state par excellence. It's the one of the weakest governance capacity states in the world. It has a long protracted conflict. It's still reeling from a lot of those kind of post-conflict issues. And yet it's able to endure this major shock and major influx through a strategic delegation of power and a kind of an inaction as policy. And so I think it tells us a lot about the politics of governance in weak states.

So thank you so much. And thank you for attending.

[APPLAUSE]

Thank you so much.

AUDIENCE:

Thanks so much, Lama, for the great presentation. I wonder if you could talk a little bit about what you think the scope conditions of your theory are? Namely, it's a curfew as a governance signal is a politics of performance, at what point is like the show up? And what point does it not work anymore? And does that set limitations on what you see like negative signals like curfews versus positive signals like actually trying to improve the situation or pressures caused by Syrian refugees.

LAMA MOURAD:

So I think that's a really interesting question. And I think there's a couple of ways I think that this matters. So the first is that I do see a ratcheting up. So even in the time that I'm doing my fieldwork up until the end of 2016, there does seem to be reaching a saturation point. You see this even with the UN talking about, OK, well, we're mapping on-- and I will show you. I'll pull this up in the slides here.

So you see that this is the formalization of the tensions map that I was talking about earlier. The previous one was in March 2016. This was sort of the rudimentary beginnings of it. This was the first meeting where social tensions were being mapped. And this is October 2016 that's already kind of formalized into this seemingly more scientific approach. We could talk about a lot of the performance of science in this kind of measuring in and of itself. But what we're seeing already-- and it's sad that I don't have the other map. But only a couple of months later, what you see is that there's this same map but they're overlapping curfews on to

it.

And already what you're seeing is that they are kind of scratching their heads and saying, well, it's weird. We're mapping all these tensions, but also curfews are this other layer that doesn't even seem to map on to the tensions even that we're monitoring. So they're kind of starting to think about how this might not be a perfect proxy and that too many municipalities have curfews to help all of those that have them anyway. So it starts being not so effective as a measure.

And actually, what you start seeing is a ratcheting up. So you have a mayor in the north of Lebanon who threatens to evict Syrians in his locality, right? And I see that as sort of like trying to move beyond the curfew to say, this is not just about curfews, but I'm actually going to evict all of these Syrians out. And he goes on state media, talks about this. And the UN does nothing. Because when I talk to UNHCR, the threat of eviction is almost too high for us to kind of negotiate with municipalities. But what we'll do is try to relocate those families from the locality itself because clearly this is a place that is really not hospitable to refugees.

And what you see is the mayor goes on news media again the day of his ultimatum. He's like no one has called me. This is really disturbing. Why has no one called me? Like I really want to hear from the UN about this. He's kind of in this panic where he's realizing that he tried to kind of raise the stakes and he didn't get a response. And actually, the Syrians were not evicted from that locality. So there's this kind of really interesting way in which the curfew itself starts to not be enough even in the minds of localities. But once it moves past that, it also doesn't have that same effect.

Now, whether there's a kind of a scope condition with regards to the type of state or the type of Federalist structure, for instance-- so I view these as particularly effective and possible in Lebanon because municipalities in Lebanon have a wide purview of responsibilities. So the municipal act gives mayors and local authorities really wide scope of action, but very limited resources to actually do much with that.

And so that's why I think curfews are particularly useful in Lebanese localities where they might not be as much of a go to in other places. But I think that the notion of performative politics can translate, I think, in different places. I'm going to go here. Sorry.

AUDIENCE:

Thank you very much for this amazing presentation. This is an amazing work. And it was a pleasure to listen to. Building on the asked question, I want to ask about more like the positive

actions, too. Currently, I'm also working on like municipal service provisions in Turkey for Syrian refugees, but I'm looking at positive action as to why they afford them. And having that in the back of my mind, I'm thinking, I know in Lebanon the situation is different, like municipalities are small-scale operations that are just much more limited and everything. But I'm thinking maybe like one indicator for a positive action could be some cooperative behavior that international organizations working in the field.

Like last summer, I had the chance to interview like tens of UN and WFP employees, field workers in Lebanon. And one of the things they were saying, they were seeing way more cooperative behavior in the north than the south, for obviously reasons. This actually changes the way they operate, so it eventually changes the way also refugees have access to services and their livelihoods as well. So I wondered what you think about them, like what factors play out in order to explain that?

And also I've got some small questions about the quantitative bit, too.

LAMA MOURAD: Do you mind giving me your name, too?

AUDIENCE: Zayna.

LAMA MOURAD: Zayna?

AUDIENCE: So about high and low electoral competition, I wonder how do you measure that?

LAMA MOURAD: Yeah.

AUDIENCE: Like the specifics of it, and also about the spillover effect. I'm kind of familiar with the Lebanon, but not much, obviously, compared to your expertise. I wondered if the boundaries of municipalities are thick. So when we're talking about the spillover effect, is it like more porous or are we talking about more like thick sounds where municipalities do-- people know under which municipalities' jurisdiction they are or is it more like is it a small scale town?

LAMA MOURAD: Yeah, I understand what you're saying. So these are all amazing questions. So, one, it's great to meet you. It sounds like a really interesting kind of compare there. So in terms of positive actions, I think that's a gap that-- part of it is the way in which municipalities were acting in Lebanon, part of it's [INAUDIBLE], but part of it is also that-- because as you said-- actual municipal capacity in Lebanon is relatively limited, so individual municipal action was limited, right? So you're right that I think cooperative action with international organizations could be a

measure of a positive, but it also could not be.

So I think it has a complicated story there. And that's why I can't rely on it too much, because many municipalities were kind of positively-- for instance, in [INAUDIBLE], the one that I showed earlier where the USAID is a locality that had a great deal of collaboration and coordination with international aid organizations, but tensions-- and it's not a place that had a curfew, but tensions in that locality were very, very high. Gonna pull that one up. Here.

And what was happening was that because it was a place that had such major demographic pressure and it was already a place of really low capacity, they were very keen to get support from international aid organizations, but they were very clear, for instance, that aid distribution had to happen within the locality. And there was a pretty significant and pretty obvious siphoning of aid that was happening. So it's not a very clear proxy of like good policy, if we were to anchor good versus bad policy. It wasn't necessarily a sign of them being particularly hospitable to Syrians, it was just that they faced a certain reality and that they saw that they could directly benefit from that through cooperation with international aid.

So for instance, one of the projects that was done by UNDP in this locality was a soccer field for the locality, which is definitely kind of a positive thing that, in principle, the UN sold as a project that would allow Syrian kids and Lebanese kids, but Syrian kids were not allowed to play on that field once it was implemented. So it was just a hard thing to measure in Lebanon, I think. And I have seen really good work on Turkey in that.

But on the question of measurement of kind of high, low, so I have two major measurements. So I don't know how much you know about the electoral competition, electoral politics in Lebanon, but mayors are not elected directly by constituents. They elect a municipal council that then elects a mayor. And municipal councils vary in size depending on the size of the locality, obviously.

So let's say you have a municipality, it has 12 seats. I use two proxy measures. The first is the number of candidates running for by the number of seats, so kind of a ratio of candidates to seats. And the second is because of the widespread use of informal lists in these local elections, what you often have-- it's not perfect-- is a big breaking point between the 12th and the 13th. And so that margin between the smallest winner and the biggest loser often tells you a lot about the stiffness of competition in that local race. So you'll often have two slates of-- if you have competition at all, there will actually be slates of candidates. And so you often get a

better measure by looking at that. And both of those work in the same direction.

And then on the question of spillover effects, it is a very tight kind of geographical landscape, but the borders are pretty well defined. I mean it was pretty remarkable to me that there was, for instance, a project in the south that had a lot of spillover-- seems like a pun, because it was a water project. But it was essentially a locality had gotten money to set up this water infrastructure, but it refused to do one meter into the other person's locality. And the wastewater was just dumping into the other locality. And this led UN-Habitat, in particular, to think of doing these things, particularly kind of infrastructure, it's surprising that it took that long to figure that out, but to do them on a cluster basis, to try to do them at the municipal union level because it didn't make sense to have a water waste management system that then is just going to create waste management issues on the site. So the borders are pretty well defined. But we can talk a little bit more about how I measure that as well. I'll go in the back there.

AUDIENCE: Thanks the interesting presentation.

LAMA MOURAD: Sorry, what's your name as well?

AUDIENCE: [INAUDIBLE].

LAMA MOURAD: [INAUDIBLE].

AUDIENCE: Yeah. Really interesting presentation. I just want to ask more about your last point about the weak states and EU. Are you saying that in a weak state that local municipalities are the ones that are bearing the brunt of the refugees and doing more about that? And I will probably contrast that with Jordan where they set up this large camp on the border with over 100,000 people which was a national effort. Is this why Lebanon, this hasn't happened? Like what is your interpretations.

LAMA MOURAD: Yeah. So [INAUDIBLE] here is an expert on Jordan, so I would feel like-- but one of the things that I think is important, a couple of things, in that question. The first is that actually even though Jordan did build, not just [INAUDIBLE], but also-- I think it's what-- three camps, three major camps, now? But I think five total or something-- but the vast majority of Syrians in Jordan are also living outside of camps. So whether the Jordanians wish they were all in camps perhaps, but it's not the case.

But I think what makes Jordan and Lebanon different is not so much about kind of weak or strong states but about the level of central control over localities. So Jordan just has a much

more centralized system of governance with regard to localities. Localities are independent in Lebanon in a way that they are not or they're much less independent in Jordan. And their budgets are much more tied to the central state.

But I think the broader point is that it's not necessarily that weak states will always-- it's not all that we always need to look at localities to understand weak states but that we often look at metrics at the national level to understand state strength or weakness when really there is a whole other set of politics that's happening below that national level that we need to think about when defining what is or is not a weak state.

AUDIENCE: Thank you.

LAMA MOURAD: [INAUDIBLE].

AUDIENCE: Yeah, thanks. This is great. I think it's maybe the second or third time seeing this and it just keeps getting more interesting. So one of the things that I was now thinking about, and it kind of relates to [INAUDIBLE]'s question a little bit which is the cases in which electoral competition wasn't really present and you have still some curfews, have you like drilled down into that? I guess the reason I'm asking that is I'm wondering, a, what other forms of political competition might not look like elections? And then, b, if there is, I guess-- you've ruled out a couple other alternative explanations, but I'm just wondering if political salience of the Syrians could just be used for the next whether it's to bring in funds from the central government or something along those lines. I'm thinking of cases in wars presidents or people running for election office say, oh, we're in the midst of a war, don't change parties or whatever it is. And so I'm wondering if there's anything like that that you've seen?

LAMA MOURAD: Yeah. I think that's a really important question. I think it's true. So I think that it's true on both ends. It's true that not every place that's competitive electorally has a curfew either. And I think one of the ways in which I think that comes out in my fieldwork is that electoral competition gets at some of the kind of plurality of politics, but it doesn't necessarily mean that the issue of Syrians is an issue that's seen as both an electoral game, but also as one that is destabilizing in different ways. And so this is why I think the notion of order is so important.

So for instance, in the south, in [INAUDIBLE], which is another one of my cases, they do adopt a curfew but they adopt it much later on in 2016. And I think the impetus for it is much more about that sort of last signaling out to the UN about tension. But the reason why they didn't

adopt a curfew, even though it's a very electoral competitive place, is that the issue of the governance of Syrians in that locality is so firmly located within the political parties that are powerful. And in that locality, it's Hezbollah and Amal. And the municipal council people that were in the previous council are the same ones in this current council, even though almost everyone else has changed.

And they are the Committee on Syrian Issues, right? So anything related to Syrians in that locality, there was a very clear sense of authority. Even when I wanted to do fieldwork there, even though I'm originally from a village very close to there and they knew my family, it was very clear who I needed to get authority from. And the mayor was not that person. And so this is why I think political authority is much more plural than just electoral competition. It's just that our ways of measuring that are not particularly-- yeah-- they're not as easy to measure.

And then in places where electoral competition might not be as high, but that curfews come about, I see those primarily explained through those other functions that curfews play. Again, so they do have a role in governing order, but it's actually like, for instance, again, like the case of [INAUDIBLE], which is another one of my case studies, which is a Christian Armenian locality right on the border with Syria. And that place is run like a well-oiled machine. I mean, it is incredible. There's actually no elections. The Municipal Council is appointed by the Tashnag, which is an international Armenian political party. And they are told the day of the election who in the locality is going to be the new mayor. And it's like a very, very-- and yet they adopt a curfew in 2016.

And there was so much about getting international aid. It's a very, very well governed place in the neutral sense of that, right? Everything is run very, very effectively, very centrally. But the current mayor that was in place and was not given a repeat appointment in May 2016 refused to engage in the game with international actors. And that was one of the main reasons why he was kind of pushed out. And very quickly after the election, a curfew was put in place. And it was a very, very clear that that was a way to draw in international funds for this locality because it was a place that relied really heavily on Syrian tourism, because it's really just five kilometers from the border. And so the tourism funds had dwindled so much that they really needed international funds to supplant that.

So many questions. I just want to be aware of time, just because I don't have a--

JUSTIN: You've got another five, 10 minutes.

LAMA MOURAD: OK. Should I collect questions?

JUSTIN: Yeah, maybe take all the questions.

LAMA MOURAD: Yeah. OK. I'll take all of them.

AUDIENCE: Thank you, amazing work. My name's [INAUDIBLE]. And I want to ask you about the social effect of the curfews that you mentioned and [INAUDIBLE] how students sees themselves [INAUDIBLE].

LAMA MOURAD: Yeah, definitely, I'll talk more about that. And [INAUDIBLE].

AUDIENCE: Hi, Lama.

LAMA MOURAD: Hi.

AUDIENCE: Really good.

LAMA MOURAD: Thank you for coming.

AUDIENCE: Thanks for this presentation. Just a quick question on the performative politics and the historical. I thought of that with the Jordan question. How, if at all, is the treatment of Palestinian refugees affecting the treatment of Syrian refugees, particularly when it comes to performative politics?

LAMA MOURAD: It's a great question.

AUDIENCE: And I'm a non-specialist and it's the first time I hear about the curfews. My experience comes from living in Palestine and then the Israelis implementing curfews. But my question is how is this bridge happening between the language that they're using on those signs on the streets? Like brothers and sisters, Syrian brothers and sisters, you are under a curfew.

[LAUGHTER]

And this gap between such a exclusionary racist, I don't know about racist, because they're the same race. Except I guess there's a sense of like Switzerland of the east, so maybe it is racist in a way? And this kind of loving language at the same time.

And also lastly, again I'm a non-specialist, so please--

LAMA MOURAD: No, no. These are great questions. Please. Sorry, can you also give me your name, just cause I like to--

AUDIENCE: [INAUDIBLE]. I'm here at Sloan. This thing about the racist aspect of it or discriminatory racist of it that doesn't come out in the signaling model that you have, and whether kind of unwelcoming is a signal that also [INAUDIBLE].

LAMA MOURAD: OK. Did you have any questions? Yeah.

AUDIENCE: Yeah. I'm [INAUDIBLE]. I actually work for an international development agency. In Lebanon, we actually do resettlement work.

LAMA MOURAD: Oh, interesting.

AUDIENCE: But we have sites elsewhere that does humanitarian assistance and liability programming. But just on the point of singling out to aid agencies to get that funding. Aid agencies turn back around and they do their assessments. And at least in our case, like we are asking the supposed beneficiaries of the programming, how is it going? Even towns like the youth, you talked about the youth building a soccer field but then Syrian youth weren't able to even use it. We do talk to our youth that we're giving programming for. And they're honest.

And we see that we make the decisions of, well, this current model can't carry on as is. So I'm curious about, in these cases, of signaling out the aid money comes in. There's an assessment. Are you then seeing another form of signaling out? Maybe they're changing their tactics or maybe it's not happening? And in your perspective, what is that next forum?

LAMA MOURAD: That's really great. So I guess I'll start with yours and then kind of work back. I don't know which organization you work for, but there's a wide array of types of the ways in which international organizations operate in. And so I think, actually, some of the ways in which you're talking about doing assessments for these kind of social issues are just really hard to measure, right? And this attempt even though it looks very rudimentary-- I'm trying to pull this back up, the tensions map-- I think that was actually genuinely an attempt to try to do some of this assessment work.

And actually part of the issue and why curfews start to become this other proxy is because they realize that they're having a sampling bias, right? Because they're only looking at assessing those places that they already work. And they're, like, well, that's not really good. So we need to look at these kind of external measures that don't rely on us having people on the

ground. Because there are 1,100 localities in the country. And so it's impossible to be working in all of them. And certain places, you're going to have more access than others in the way that Zayna brought up.

So they were actually kind of effectively trying to get a good assessment, right? So I don't think it's-- I want to be very clear that I don't think it's deliberate missed attempts to do it. So I think these actually can come from a technical desire to want to get at these things, but these are things that are actually, ultimately, very hard to measure in these ways. And although I'm sure that's the case in your organizations, I saw some of these assessments kind of talking back and kind of assessing a few months into the project, how it's going, in practice. And in many instances, what that entailed was getting the locality to call a number of Syrians in to the locality, to the municipal office, to have a meeting with them in the municipal office, and to get their sense of how things were going within the locality.

So there are some gaps. in actually getting out what Syrians actually want. But also-- and this is a problem that many have talked about in Lebanon-- is it's a very, very-- because of the nature of self-settlement, the way in which Syrians are dispersed in different housing situations, it's very hard to know who to speak to as a central voice of Syrians within localities, right? So different Syrians are actually experiences all of these policies in different ways.

So for instance-- and so this ties really well into the questions here-- if you're a middle class Syrian that drives a car that lives in a rented home, your experience of curfews, but also all kinds of other municipal policy actions will be really different than if you're a working class Syrian who rides a motorcycle, which a lot of the curfews refer to motorcycles in particular, because they're a cost base marker in Lebanon. And so it's not necessarily international aid organizations aren't trying, it's just that measuring these things is difficult. And then having one kind of assessment of what it means for that locality.

But the story of the soccer field is by no means an exception. This is something that I saw time and time again. In another case, it was a public park that Syrians did start using. They did. But then Lebanese wouldn't go to it anymore, because it was became the Syrian park, right? And so it's not to say that the intentions are there, but I think the kind of implementation-- not for lack of trying-- can often lead to have these perverse outcomes.

But I think to come to the kind of social and discriminatory ways in which these curfews also add, so in one of the chapters, I talk about social ordering. And for sure, I think the way that

one of the candidate for municipal council in one of those localities talked about one of the signals is definitely to tell Syrians that they don't belong. I just argue that it's not the main purpose, right? It's like the cherry on top for a lot of these localities. Like that's good. They want that function, but that's not what's really the motivating driver behind a lot of these things, because Syrians are made to feel like they don't belong in lots of different ways.

And Syrians themselves, when you talk to them about curfews, this is the main way that they experience them. It's not as limits on their movement. It has signals. But it's also the discrimination they get on the bus. And it's also the way in which they're dealt with at checkpoints. So there's all kinds of ways in which that sense of non-belonging is conveyed through policies. So it's not to say that it doesn't serve that purpose, it does. But it's just not what I see as the main driver of it.

But I tried to sort of put some order into some of the images that you saw. And those of you who read Arabic quickly picked up on all the different sometimes complicated language that's involved in these curfews. So one of them-- as you pointed out-- is this kind of combination of saying our dear brethren, Syrians, you're not allowed to go out at night.

At first, it was mind blowing to me. I remember, actually, I was volunteering with a Syrian NGO running summer camps for children. This was a one-week thing that I was doing at one of the localities. And this was a place that was allowing these camps to run out. And then there was a big banner. And it had this complicated wording about how based on the edict of the Minister of Interior, our dear brethren-- it was almost apologetic. There was no circular that came from Ministry of Interior.

And again, I think these are localities where it is primarily about signaling out. And it's also about a complicated kind of sense of maintaining a sense of social solidarity with the Syrian political struggle. So a lot of these localities that use these terms are also Sunni localities whose local population feels a strong affinity with the Syrian refugee population in their resistance against Assad. We see this in kind of a broader-- and this, again, comes back to kind of the collapsing of scales. I think the geopolitics and the regional politics sometimes are played out in these really intimate, really small ways in local politics, right? So in these cases, they're almost trying to undo that belonging signal that is often implied in these curfew.

And then walking back to [? Maura's ?] question about the way in which the Palestinian experience structures a lot of this. So obviously, I think there is no Lebanese response to a

large-scale displacement that is not historically anchored in the Palestinian experience. I think there's a number of big ways in which that happens. The first is the decision to not put in place refugee camps was very clearly tied, in the minds of policymakers with the Palestinian experience, right? So much of the narrative, I think a faulty narrative in the national political landscape in Lebanon, is that the violence and the civil war began in the camps and was a product of the camps themselves. That if Palestinians were allowed to be independent in these places, it's what allowed them to mobilize. And I think it's actually something that we see reproduced in the political science literature around refugee camps and the role of refugee camps as kind of places of radicalization and mobilization, but that's a different question. But that decision to not put in place refugee camps was directly related to the Palestinian refugee experience.

The other important way is this notion of [ARABIC]. So this term that's heard over and over again and you hear in national political discourse which is-- the translation from Arabic, the simplest one would be kind of naturalization. But it doesn't convey the political force of that term which is to make national I think is a better way of translating it.

And this idea that we see this now with the Kushner Plan, the idea that ultimately the plan is always to allow Palestinians to gain Lebanese citizenship, that this has always been a part of the broad, grand strategy of someone, somewhere. And this idea of [ARABIC] came back time and time again.

Localities would say, we've seen this before. We know what's going to happen. Syrians are going to stay here. And we're going to be asked to take in another population. And Palestinians have not been given citizenship in Lebanon, partly for complex reasons. One of which is a kind of a fear of the demographic shift in Lebanon, because the Palestinian refugees that remain in the country are overwhelmingly-- and those who have not been already given citizenship, because some Palestinians have been given citizenship are Sunni Muslim.

So and the same thing is true for Syrian refugees in Lebanon. 96%, 97% by our best measure are Sunni in the Lebanese case. So again, this idea of [ARABIC], of another Sunni influx that's going to shift the demographic balance in the country is something that, at a national level, is really, really important to understanding the politics. But also you hear it, particularly within Christian localities in Lebanon.

I hope I've answered it. I think I have to wrap it up now. But thank you so much for all your time.

[APPLAUSE]