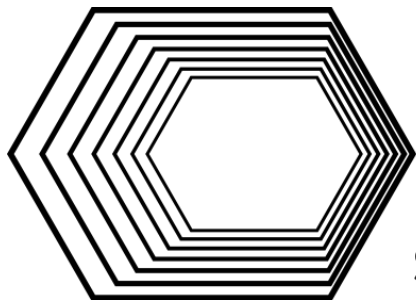


But, What Do They Want?

How Simulation-Based Trainings Can Teach Us
About Security, Humanitarianism, and
Understanding in Urban Refugee Response



LESSONS LEARNED
Simulations and Training

13th NATO OR&A Conference:
“Challenges for NATO OR&A in a Changing
Global Security Environment”
7-9 October 2019
Ottawa, Canada

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Who am I?



What is the problem?

- My problem: **Humanitarian organizations do not typically “red team” their operations**
 - And thus we make avoidable mistakes
- Our problem: **Existing wargame methods often (not always) fail to capture civilian “green cell” actors with any useful resolution**
 - Not always, but often!
 - Random event systems are not enough



The current state of affairs

- Most wargames do a very good job of modeling combatants
- Some wargames do a good job of modeling UN and INGO systems (“yellow cells”)
- Non-combatants (or humanitarian “beneficiaries”) tend to be reduced to a piece of the furniture
 - When they do show up: most often modeled via a random event system (card flips, die rolls, automated injects...)
 - At best, we occasionally get a briefing + role play
 - This does not allow for insight on civilian/refugee/”beneficiary” decision-making



Why do we care?

- Humanitarian and military operations are increasingly entwined
- From refugees to insurgents, the behaviour of conflict-affected populations should be our concern



What is the problem - redux?

- How do we model “green cell” behaviour accurately and usefully?
 - We are very good at modeling military actors (operational, tactical, and strategic levels)
 - We are good at modeling political actors
 - We are increasingly good at modeling humanitarian actors
- We don't really have a good framework for building models of civilian behaviour

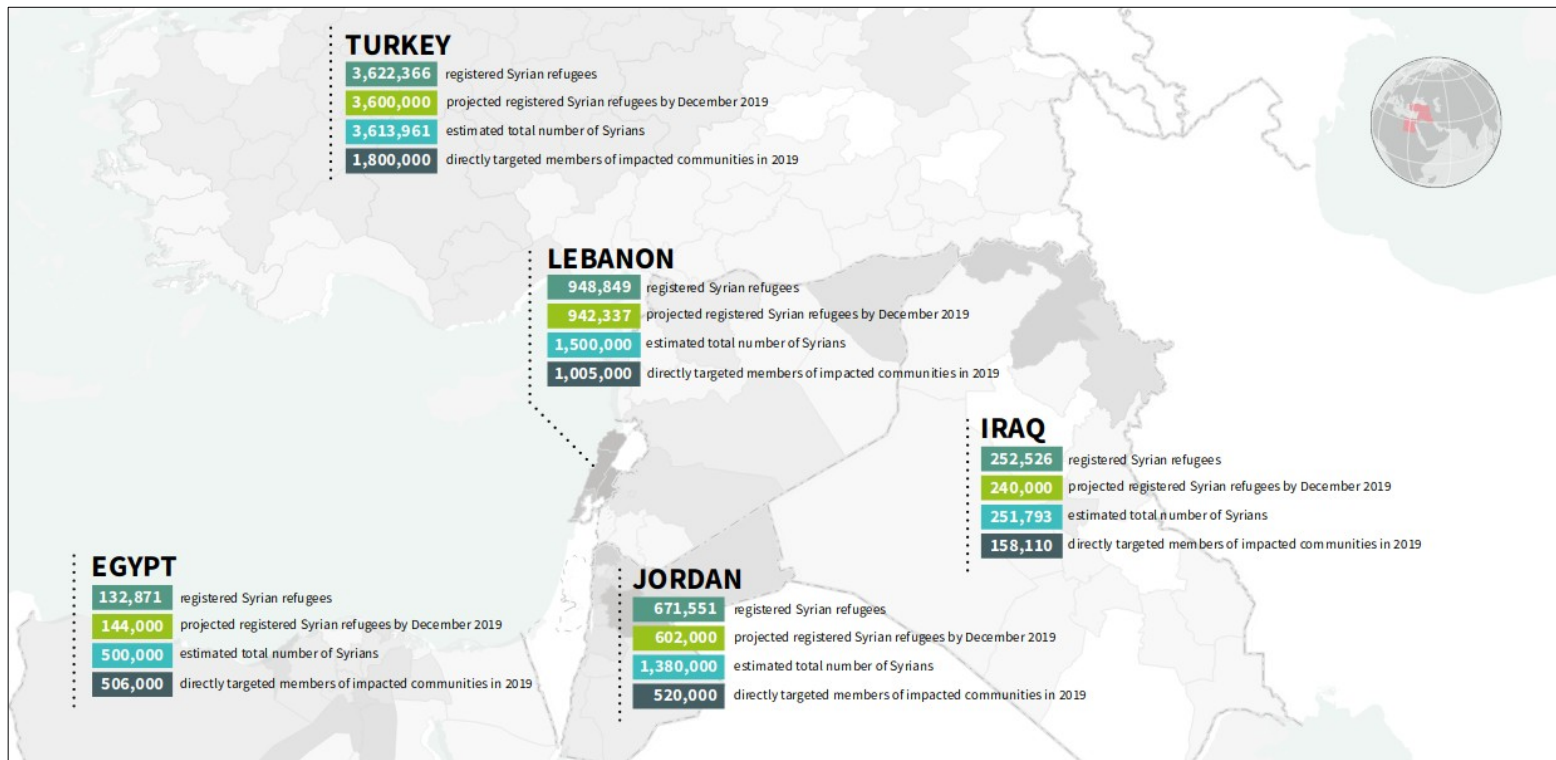


How to model civilian behaviour

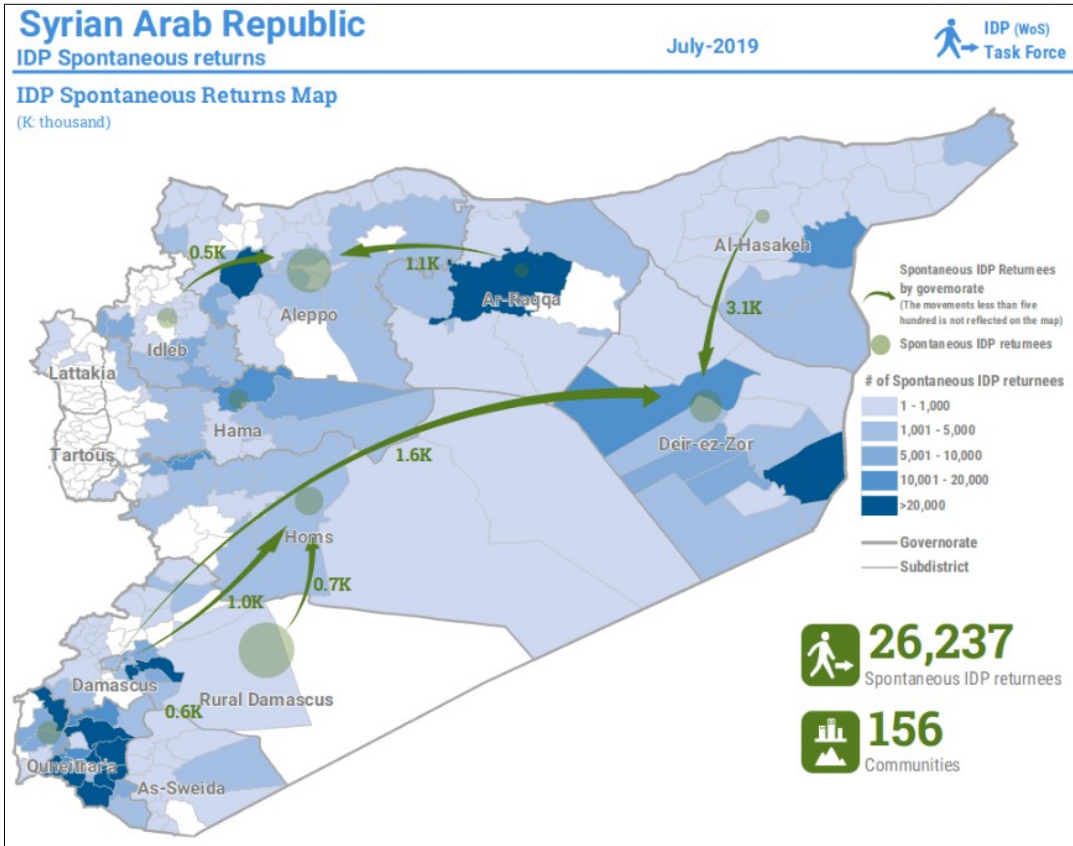
- Step 1: What are the **lessons** we want to learn?
- Step 2: Who are the **stakeholders** we need to model to learn those lessons?
- Step 3: What are the **goals and motivations** of those stakeholders?
- Step 4: What **decisions** do stakeholders make in achieving their goals and pursuing their motivations?
- Step 5: What are the **systems** that shape and restrain the decisions they make?
- Step 6: How can we **model** those systems?

Case study: Syrian Return

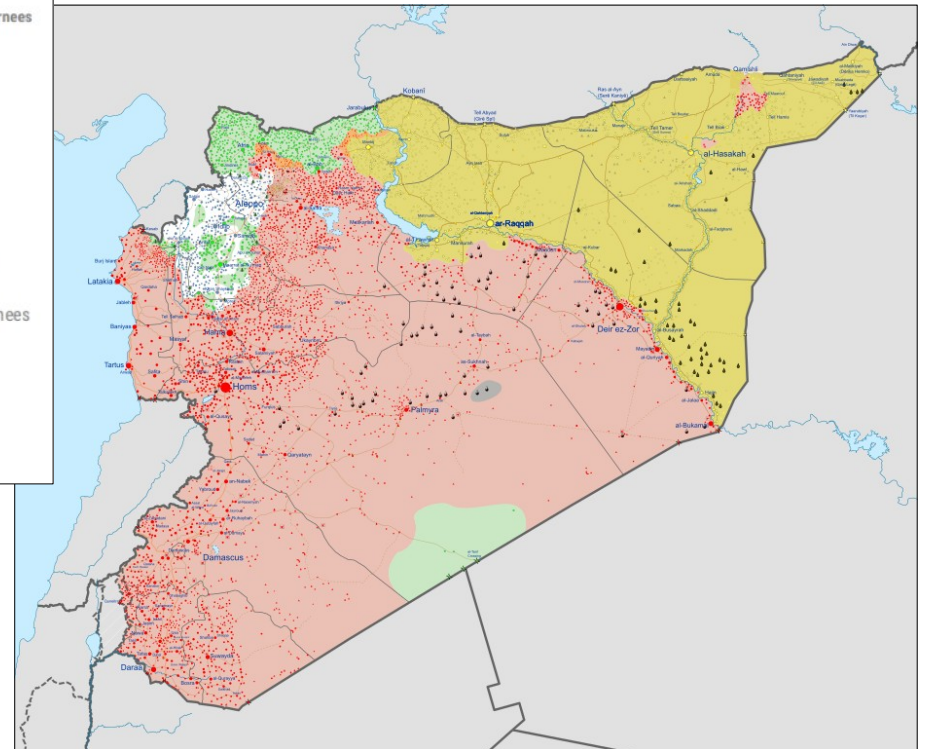
- The conclusion of the Syrian Civil War seems near and the outcome seems inevitable
- Humanitarian and state actors are beginning to speak of Syrian refugee return



Case study: Syrian Return



Territorial Control
 (Wikimedia Commons)



Migration of Internally Displaced
 (OCHA)

Case study: Syrian Return

- Matrix game with extended mechanics
- Approximately six participants
- Primarily training and strategic insight
 - not a robust analytical product



Step 1: What are the lessons we want to learn?

In this case study:

- Under what circumstances will refugees return to Syria?
- How can a safe state for return be fostered?
- Which actors might undermine this goal, and how?



Step 2: Who are the stakeholders we need to model to learn those lessons?

| | | | |
|---|---|--|---|
| Refugees (Sunni / Shi'a? Rebel or Gov't sympathies?) | Internally Displaced People | Local civilians (Kurds?) | |
| Government of Syria (Hezbollah?) | Extremist Rebel groups | Moderate Rebel groups (Kurds?) | |
| Neighbouring Governments (Lebanon, Turkey, Jordan?) | International Regime (EU, USA, Russia...) | Humanitarian System (UN, INGOs, local NGOs) | Other extra- territorial actors? (Hezbollah? ISIS?) |

Recall: Each stakeholder group can *always* contain sub-groups



Step 2: Who are the stakeholders we need to model to learn those lessons?

| | | | |
|--|--|--------------------------------|---|
| Refugees (mechanically represent multiple groups / merge with IDPs) | Internally Displaced People | Local civilians | |
| Government of Syria (capable of controlling Hezbollah + Russian units?) | Extremist Rebel groups | Moderate Rebel groups (Kurds?) | |
| Neighbouring Governments (Lebanon, Turkey, Jordan?) | International Regime (merge) | Humanitarian System (merge) | Other extra-territorial actors? (merge with other actors) |

Who can we eliminate or conglomerate as less relevant to our learning goals?



Step 2: Who are the stakeholders we need to model to learn those lessons?

| | | | |
|---|--|---------------------------------------|---|
| Refugees (mechanically represent multiple groups / merge with IDPs) | Internally Displaced People | Local civilians | |
| Government of Syria (capable of controlling Hezbollah + Russian units?) | Extremist Rebel groups | Moderate Rebel groups (Kurds) | |
| Lebanese Government (Turkey, Jordan) | International Regime (merge) | Humanitarian System (merge) | Other extra-territorial actors (merge with other actors) |

Can we restrict geographical area to limit actors?

- In this case, we can restrain our map to Western Syria and Lebanon



Step 3: What are the overall issues and specific goals and motivations of those stakeholders?

Refugees / IDPs

Government of Syria

Extremist Rebel groups

Moderate Rebel groups

Lebanese Government

International Regime

Humanitarian System

Step 3: What are the overall issues and specific goals and motivations of those stakeholders?

Refugees / IDPs

- Access to stable livelihoods
- Maintenance of land claims
- Safety and security
- Settlement with like social/political peers
- Desire to return

Government of Syria

- Encourage return for reasons of control & legitimacy
- Control territory
- International legitimacy

Extremist Rebel groups

- Retain control of territory
- Limit military losses
- Maintain ideological purity
- End the conflict with a power-sharing agreement & control of territory

Moderate Rebel groups

- Retain control of territory
- Limit civilian and military losses
- Legitimacy via politics
- End the conflict with a power-sharing agreement & control of territory

Lebanese Government

- Encourage returns
- International funding
- International legitimacy

International Regime

- “Not in my backyard”: keep refugees out of Europe
- Establish Syria as a safe space ASAP (with aim of returning people)
- Limit spending of donor dollars

Humanitarian System

- Safety and security
- Reputation
- Funding

Step 4: What decisions do stakeholders make in achieving their goals and pursuing their motivations?

Refugees / IDPs

Government of Syria

Extremist Rebel groups

Moderate Rebel groups

Lebanese Government

International Regime

Humanitarian System

Step 4: What decisions do stakeholders make in achieving their goals and pursuing their motivations?

Refugees / IDPs

- Is return safe?
- Will return improve my quality of life?
- Will I lose ownership of land in Syria?

Government of Syria

- Continue the conduct of the war or make concessions for peace?
- Prosecute or welcome refugees?

Extremist Rebel groups

- Continue the conduct of the war or push for peace?
- Prosecute or welcome refugees?
- Maintain ideological purity?

Moderate Rebel groups

- Continue the conduct of the war or push for peace?
- Prosecute or welcome refugees?
- Compete for international legitimacy?

Lebanese Government

- Deport refugees?
- Place limits on humanitarian actions?

International Regime

- Put pressure on peace process?
- Guarantee protections of refugees?
- Continue funding the humanitarian response?
- Intervene?

Humanitarian System

- Enter Syria?
- Design projects within scope of Lebanese gov't demands?
- Speak out against forced movements of refugees?

Step 5: What are the systems that shape and restrain the decisions they make?

Refugees / IDPs

Government of Syria

Extremist Rebel groups

Moderate Rebel groups

Lebanese Government

International Regime

Humanitarian System

Step 5: What are the systems that shape and restrain the decisions they make?

Refugees / IDPs

- Information flow on situation in Syria
- Quality of Life
- Threats in home territories

Government of Syria

- Control of territory
- International Legitimacy
- Available resources/funds

Extremist Rebel groups

- Control of territory
- Ideological Legitimacy
- Available resources/funds

Moderate Rebel groups

- Control of territory
- International Legitimacy
- Available resources/funds

Lebanese Government

- Size of refugee communities in their territories
- Available resources/funds
- Local unrest

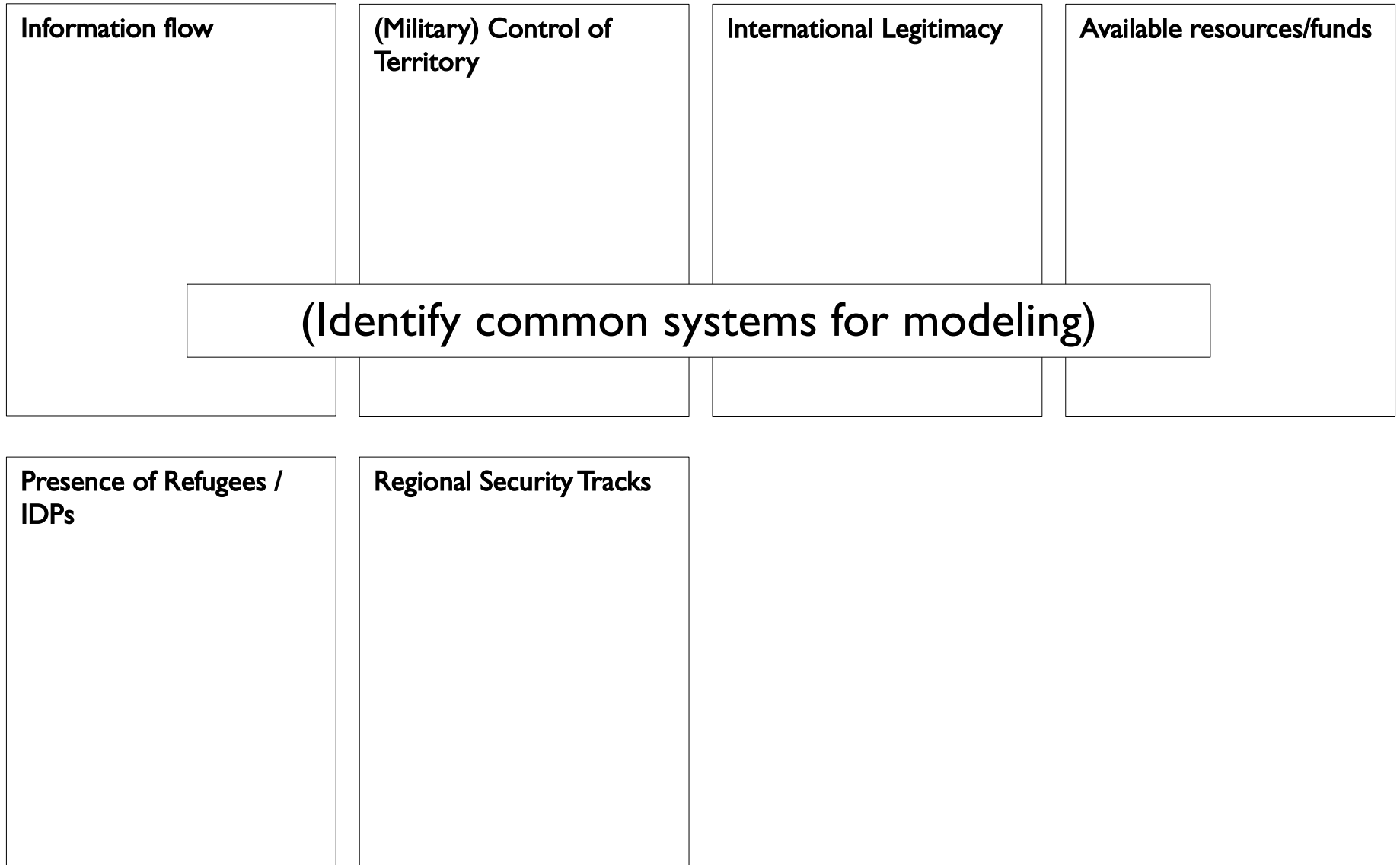
International Regime

- Limiting humanitarian budget
- Public support (tied to migration control)

Humanitarian System

- International Legitimacy
- Available resources/funds

Step 5: What are the systems that shape and restrain the decisions they make?



Step 6: How can we model those systems?

Information flow

- Secret tokens (face up/ face down)
- Scouting mechanism (visiting a map area reveals security rating)

(Military) Control of Territory

- Map with area control
- Simplified military tokens

International Legitimacy

- Legitimacy scores (affected by military action, refugee hosting, assessment of international actor participant, etc)

Available resources/funds

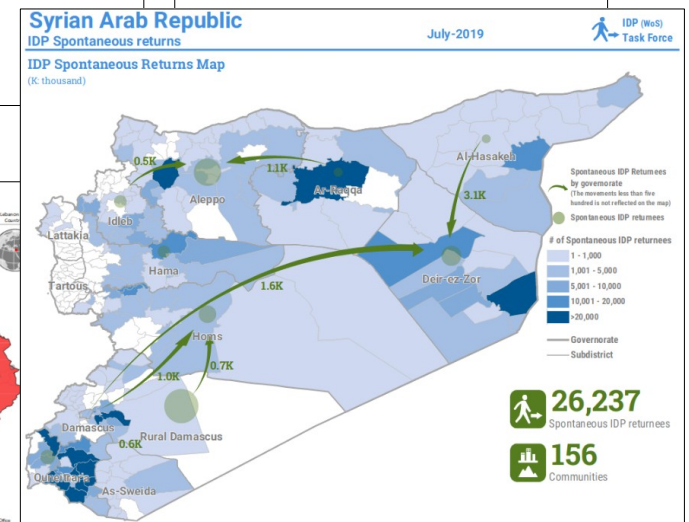
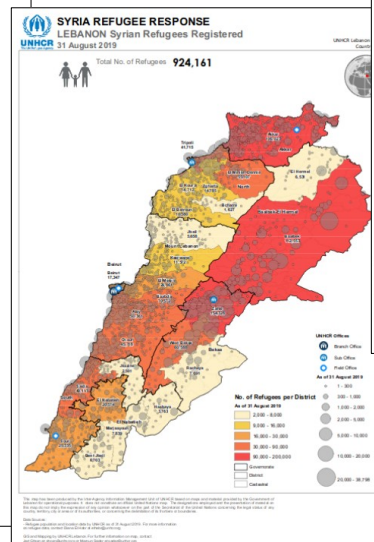
- Universal cash/resource currency

Presence of Refugees / IDPs

- Tokens on map
 - Represent different political / social sympathies
- Migration mechanics, including closed borders
- Distinction between IDPs and refugees

Regional Security Tracks

- Hidden ranking
- Affected by:
 - Conflict
 - Political / social affiliation
 - Security actions



Review - How to model non-military behaviour

- Step 1: What are the **lessons** we want to learn?
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Example: “The Day My Life Froze”

15-30 participants, 3-4 hours including briefings / debriefings

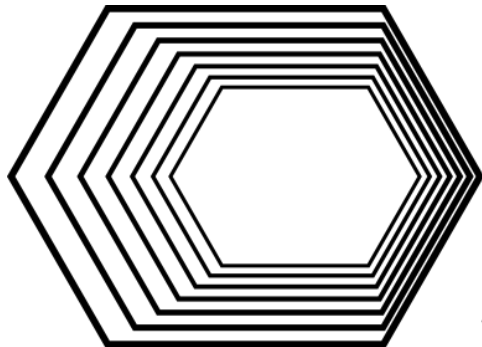
- Refugee households
- Humanitarian workers
- Donor reps
- Host state ministers



...Any questions?

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