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Responses to and impact of the Covid-19 pandemic in Lebanon

Producing a podcast is often perceived as easy compared to writing an essay. However, that was definitely not the case for us. It was a radically new experience during which we learnt new research methods and technical skills.

The novelty of this experience means that we encountered many obstacles along the way. Despite the fact that we enjoyed the experience, we also found it challenging. Choosing the right case study and analyzing it through the theoretical lens of biopolitics was initially confusing. The concept of biopolitics was new to us but helped us move away from mainstream stereotypical discussions on the impact of and response to the Covid19 pandemic. The case of Lebanon enabled us to make connections between the biopolitical government of populations in pandemic times and the broader issues of revolutionary upheavals and financial crises. We also learnt how to write a podcast script - a text to be spoken instead of read - which forced us to think carefully about a structure and format radically different from a standard academic essay.

When choosing the interviewees, we also learned new lessons. When we decided to interview a Member of Parliament, we were probably too optimistic about what he was going to say. We imagined he would give us a more balanced perspective on the Lebanese Government's response to the Covid-19 pandemic. We realized that our podcast could not simply reproduce the government's point of view and had to look for more interviewees so as to get a more nuanced picture of the situation. We understood the importance of carefully choosing interviewees, keeping in mind the overarching message we want to pass.

After conducting the interviews, we also struggled with organizing our ideas and the responses of our interviewees. Trying to fit all our material in a 20-minute podcast was a big challenge, as we had collected over 80 minutes of interviews. Selecting the best parts while ensuring smooth transitions between the different sections required a lot of thinking. The recording of our analysis took us much longer than we had initially anticipated it would. Nonetheless, we believe that we succeeded in keeping the time limit while preserving the most meaningful segments of the material we collected.

We gained a lot from this experience. We particularly appreciated the fact that we were given a space to reflect on what we learned in class, to develop our personal perspectives while examining the lived experiences of others.