Client Project

(Apr 5, 2024 - 9:30am)

(00:00:03 - 00:01:54)

**Deb:** Job is to ask questions, encourage discussion, and ultimately to keep us on time also. So I'm gonna ask you lots of questions. Answer them as fully as you feel comfortable doing so. And if I do need to move us along for the sake of time, let me worry about that. But, you know, you you just share your stories and perceptions. Today's focus group is facilitated by College Pulse, which I think you already know is a research firm. Sorry. I just realized my mic was far away. Is a a research firm that specializes in understanding the opinions and experiences of college students in the US. And this particular conversation today focuses on perceptions and experiences around the conflict in Israel and Gaza. It's being conducted with College Pulse and a researcher who's very interested in education experiences here in the US as well. So let's see. What else do I want to tell you? Oh, I am proposing three guidelines for our conversation today. So I'm gonna go through those and then ask you for for thumbs up, if you if you feel that these are good. The first one is that there are no wrong or right answers. So please share as fully as you can with nuance and specificity so I can really understand what it is you're thinking and feeling. Number two, what is said here stays here so that we honor each other's confidentiality, privacy, and really creating that space where people can share openly. And then the third ground rule that I'm proposing is keep in mind that your experiences are likely different from other people's in the room so that we engage with each other with respect and that we speak one at a time and that we, be curious about those differences. So if those feel good, can I get a a thumbs.

(00:01:55 - 00:02:27)

**Deb:** Up? Okay. Rocking. Really appreciate it. Before we get started, I do wanna remind you that this conversation is being recorded. It's used for research purposes only. And like I mentioned before, absolutely honors your confidentiality, by participating, your what sorry. I just skipped around there. Oh, just just to say that if at any point you choose not to you you no longer wanna be recorded, that you can either turn your camera off or exit the room, whatever you, need to do to feel feel good about this. Okay?

(00:02:28 - 00:02:31)

**Deb:** K. Are there any questions before we jump in?

(00:02:33 - 00:02:50)

**Deb:** Okay. I should say too that, if you choose to share what school you're at or something like that, you're welcome to, but I won't be sharing that information. And, also, if you wanna engage each other or ask questions of each other, feel free to do that. We'll just try to make this a real a real conversation.

(00:02:53 - 00:02:55)

**Deb:** So this first item, I'm gonna ask everybody.

**[Q1] How do you obtain information about Israel and the conflict in Israel and Gaza? To what extent do you actively seek out information vs. passively receive information? Are there particular sources you turn to? What sources do you find most trustworthy? [Mary: Drop prompts into chat]** (00:02:56 - 00:09:40)

**Deb:** To to share their thoughts. And, Participant 1, I'm gonna ask you to go first simply because you're on the top left corner of my screen. And the question is this, how do you obtain information about Israel and the conflict in Israel and Gaza? And here I am particularly interested in to what extent are you actively searching for information versus passively receiving it. So Participant 1,

**Participant 1:** Yeah.

**Deb:** Would you mind.

**Participant 1:** I.

**Deb:** Going first?

**Participant 1:** I don't I wouldn't say I actively switch out material, but, like, whenever I'm looking at the news or whatever, there's news articles about it, of course, I see that. And then on my social media pages as well, I've seen it come up not actively searching for it, but, yes, from people I follow, posting.

**Deb:** Are.

**Participant 1:** About.

**Deb:** There.

**Participant 1:** It.

**Deb:** Particular feeds or accounts or thought leaders on your social that you find particularly trustworthy?

**Participant 1:** Not really because, I mean, I'm not I don't follow people who are, like, folios on the conflict, so it's just, like, people whose main interest is not in here, but post about it anyways. So I wouldn't say so.

**Deb:** Okay. And how about, news sources that you turn to?

**Participant 1:** Yeah. I mean, there's certain news sources that I would trust more to is, like, say, like, BBC or something like that.

**Deb:** Okay. K. And, Participant 2, you're next on my screen. Would you mind going next?

**Participant 2:** Yeah. I think for social media wise, of, like I get it a lot passively via social media. A lot of the time, there's, like, a lot of student organizations on my campus that are really active about and, like, releasing, like, full posts of, like, information and stuff. So, like, I'll often, like, swipe through those, that I'll, like, passively receive.

**Participant 2:** I think news wise, I have the New York Times, notifications on my phone. So if there's a notification, I'll read about it. But I'm not usually, like, searching up on the New York Times about it.

**Deb:** Okay.

**Participant 2:** I also got I'm gonna be honest. I get some some information from TikTok. I got them on my for you page.

**Deb:** No no judgment. Thank you for sharing it. Yeah. Are there particular feeds on TikTok that you're noticing or liking?

**Participant 2:** On TikTok, no.

**Deb:** Okay.

**Participant 2:** I just like, anything that comes going for you page, I'll watch it, but nothing specific there.

**Deb:** Okay. And then on Insta, you mentioned that there are some student groups that you follow and kinda swipe through if they're posting. Would you mind sharing what those are?

**Participant 2:** Yeah. Yeah. So I'm Filipino, so I follow, like, the Filipino American Student Association, them, and then there's the, like, Arab students. I see a lot of from them, as well as we have one. Like, we have a specific, like, student coalition right now that's for, like, for, like, Palestine Palestinian students. So it's like a coalition of, like, a bunch of students that support, like, Palestine.

**Deb:** Okay.

**Deb:** Great. Thank you. And, Participant 3, how about you?

**Participant 3:** Yeah. I think similar to what other students have shared today, I also receive, like, a lot of news more so passively, like, just via stories of, like, friends and other college students who I follow on social media, like Instagram. And then also, like, if I get a notification on, like, my phone with, like, a headline related to, like, the conflict, sometimes I'll go into, like, read those articles, but it's not so much, like, an actively searching for this information. It's more so if I see something that, like, piques my interest, I might take a few minutes and explore it a little bit further. But for the most part, it's really more of a passive process, I would say.

**Deb:** Yeah. Has I'm wondering if that's changed over the since the October seventh. Have you noticed a change in your information consumption?

**Participant 3:** I think at this point, like, a lot more people are aware of what's going on, and so perhaps it's like I see, like, more, I think, exposure to individuals having, like, opinions at this point because they've had time to gather information about it and kind of come to a conclusion on kind of where they stand on the issue and maybe feel a little bit more confident to share, like, what they think. But I think on the flip side of that, there's also just been, like, it's always kind of in the news, like, always in the headlines. So I think there's also, like, that element of people are now kind of more desensitized to it perhaps, or, like, they've just seen, like, headlines about this so often that it's not as, I guess, striking to them at this point.

**Deb:** Is that true of you?

**Participant 3:** Maybe to, like, a a little bit of an extent.

**Deb:** Yeah.

**Participant 3:** I think it's something that I've kind of gotten used to seeing in the headlines. So maybe, like, before I would have clicked on it, like, a lot more, but now it's just like, if it's something different, then I might read it, but, otherwise, I might not.

**Deb:** Great. Thank you. And, Participant 4, how about you?

**Participant 4:** Yeah. So similar to what, everybody else has said, I would say I get most of my updates from social media as well as online.

**Participant 4:** But I will say I do watch CNN a lot. So they do a lot of coverage on the.

**Participant 4:** The, conflict.

**Participant 4:** So that's that's a a lot.

**Participant 4:** But in regards for social media, I think, I would say that my campus or the university that I'm currently attending is definitely more proactive about using social media. We have a very large coalition of student organizations that have partnered together, protesting the university's, partnership with investors that indirectly or directly contribute to, the to the the conflict.

**Participant 4:** And so, therefore, there's a lot of protests on my campus as well as a lot of activity on social media.

**Deb:** And that sounds, like, pretty well organized.

**Participant 4:** Very well organized.

**Deb:** Also.

**Participant 4:** Yeah.

**Deb:** Okay.

**Participant 4:** Yeah.

**Deb:** And just making sure on the CNN, you said that you're watching it as opposed to reading it. Is that right?

**Participant 4:** Yeah. Watching it. I watch it through YouTube, because it's.

**Deb:** Okay.

**Participant 4:** Free, and I don't have cable.

**Deb:** Makes.

**Participant 4:** So.

**Deb:** Good sense. Yeah.

**Participant 4:** Yeah. Mhmm.

**Deb:** Great. Thank you.

**Deb:** Oh, and I can't hear you.

**Deb:** I still can't hear you. You know what? Could you do me a favor and click the help button? And Bruno will come back in and give you some support, and then I'm gonna ask you, your thoughts when you get back. K?

**Deb:** Okay. So let's, I'm gonna go ahead and move us on while Participant 5, fixes her sound and and.

**[Q2] How has the conflict in Israel and Gaza affected your experience on campus, if at all?** (00:09:40 - 00:20:56)

**Deb:** Ask how has the conflict in Israel and Gaza affected your experience on campus, if at all?

**Deb:** Just whoever feels moved to to go first, please come on in.

**Participant 2:** I think on my campus, we see a lot of, like, student protests.

**Participant 2:** Sorry. We see a lot of student protests. So on campus, so, like, a lot of times, like, we'll walk through, like, our diag or our quad and stuff, and you'll see a lot of, like, students organizing, passing out flyers, as well as also just, like, students, like, talking to each other. Like, I hear it a lot, like, from, like, students that I'm close with, but also, like, just in passing of, like sometimes you're having, like, casual conversation that comes up with, like, people in your classes.

**Participant 2:** Yeah. I think most especially is just, like, seeing all of these, like, protests and stuff arise. And then on my campus, our administration has just started this, like, new, like, rule bill, like, suggest or, like, they're, like, promoting this, like, bill that they're about to pass or trying to pass, of what counts as student protests and, like, what's allowed and, like, trying to, like, punish student protesters on campus. So a big thing right now is, like, lots of talk about that, and lots of, like, emails from our administration, and, like, flyers and posters and.

**Deb:** And.

**Participant 2:** Stuff.

**Deb:** On the you mentioned conversations are kinda popping up. And what spaces do you notice this conversation? So is it classroom or living spaces or common spaces?

**Participant 2:** I'd say classrooms and, like, common spaces. Like, when you meet up with your friends to study at the library. A lot of time we'll be sitting in there and just, like, chatting about the world, and it'll come up.

**Deb:** Yeah. Yeah. And I'm also hearing, kind of the the all around the surround sound of it, like the emails and the common spaces and the protest.

**Participant 2:** Yeah.

**Deb:** Thank you.

**Deb:** Participant 5, welcome back.

**Participant 5:** Is it working now?

**Deb:** It is. Thank you so.

**Participant 5:** Oh.

**Deb:** Much.

**Participant 5:** My god.

**Deb:** For.

**Participant 5:** Yay.

**Deb:** Grabbing that. Yeah. So do you wanna just tell us really quick about your information consumption around the conflict? And then the the second question, which I don't know if you heard, and you're welcome to start talking about this too, is how has the conflict in Israel and Gaza affected your experience on campus?

**Participant 5:** Okay. Yeah. I think just to, like, mirror what everyone else has said, I think social media is, like, a really big source of information these days. But I also think, like, I don't know. I get my information there passively, but I kind of take it with a grain of salt sometimes because there's so much misinformation happening. And I think, like, personally, at my university, the student body is, like, very divided on this topic since we do have a big, like, Muslim population, but also a big Jewish population. So, like, the information I get from social media isn't really, like, one-sided anymore. It's very much like people posting different, like, on their stories about, like, the different sides of the argument.

**Participant 5:** And I also think I'm in, like, a civic scholar class. And in that class, we just spend, like, once a week just discussing current issues and having, like, civic discourse over these topics. So I think through that, I also learn a lot about the conflict and, like, different especially when it comes to, like, what our university has been, like, investing in and, like, supporting different investors that might support, like, Israel, for example.

**Participant 5:** So, So, yeah, that's kind of where I get my information from. And then I think to answer the second question, was it how it has, like, influenced my experience or something?

**Deb:** Yeah. Yeah. And you started to mention one already about the civics, course, and, like, you're actually spending time talking about current events, and I'm wondering if there are other examples.

**Participant 5:** Yeah. I think it's just because, like, I feel like most of for other, like, conflicts or, like, more, like, political arguments, my friends have always, like we've always kind of agreed. We all we are I feel like our universities mainly, like, we lean to the left. So I feel like it hasn't been a ton of, like, different perspectives within those conversations since we all tend to agree on the same topics. But I think this is, like, the first one where I've seen, like, people actively, like, disagreeing with each other. And I've seen this also through social media. Honestly, probably more through social media since I think it's easier for people to, like, have conflict when it's not in person. So I think just, like, being mindful of our different perspectives and not being wanna have, like, conversations where, like, everyone will agree with each other is just something that I've noticed.

**Deb:** How has that felt for you?

**Participant 5:** I think it's a good experience. It's definitely, like, a new one. So just trying to navigate how to, like, you know, hold myself during those conversations, especially if someone is actively disagreeing with my viewpoint, and being able to recognize that, like, they have their own viewpoints and there's two sides to the topic and be able to just engage in, like, a more, like, thoughtful and intentional way.

**Deb:** Thank you.

**Deb:** How about for others? How has your campus experience been influenced by the conflict?

**Participant 4:** I can chime in.

**Deb:** Thanks, Participant 4.

**Participant 4:** Yeah. Of course. I would say that it hasn't directly affected my my experience too much, because I I'm not really somebody who goes out of my way, to, like, directly engage.

**Participant 4:** I'm usually just the kinda guy who just goes to class and then goes home and studies.

**Participant 4:** But I will say that I do notice that there are there are a lot of, you know, activities for engaging in discussion, such as protests in very large common spaces, protests in, university led events as well. For example, I think it was two weeks ago, we had, like, an honors convocation where the president spoke, and it was interrupted by, like, a really big protest, for example. And that's something that, our campus is currently, addressing right now, as, you know, the administration views it as a disruption, etcetera, etcetera, yada yada. But, you know, the student body is very opposed to how they addressed it. And I would say, like, going back to your first question, right, like, the consumption of social media kind of reflects, people's reactions as well. I also get it in emails, like, from the school, and other university affiliated organizations.

**Participant 4:** So I will say, indirectly, I'm affected because of what I see, in online.

**Deb:** And a couple of you have mentioned the administration piece. So we might be able to to go into that a little bit more too because I'm interested in hearing more of your thoughts on that. K. And, Participant 1, how about you?

**Participant 1:** Yeah. So, similar to Participant 4, I, I just kind of go to class and come home, and I live off campus, so I don't spend a ton of time on campus. So, I mean, I've kind of noticed, like, flyers and that stuff up about groups involved in, this conflict. But again, because I don't really participate in the social scene that much at my university, I can't say I've been affected by it too much.

**Deb:** Okay.

**Deb:** And Participant 3.

**Participant 3:** Yeah. I can also share. I would say similar to Participant 4 and Participant 1 that it's more, like, in the periphery for me that I definitely, like, can see the influence that it has on campus through, like, flyers and protests protests and just hearing about the ways in which, like, the university has been, like, putting out, I think dialogues and just trying to engage in, like, figuring out what is, you know, the policy on, like, free speech and what what is an appropriate form of protest, etcetera, for student groups to have on campus. And just trying to make sure that people can share their opinions, but then also still feel safe in these spaces. And so I do, like, notice that as I'm going through, like, my day to day experiences.

**Participant 3:** But I'm also kind of in a similar boat where I live off campus. I don't spend, like, a ton of time on campus. And even when I am, I'm not, like, super heavily, like, in the middle of, like, all of this. Or actively seek out, like, those environments per se. And so it's more just kinda, like, in the periphery of my experience.

**Participant 3:** So far.

**Deb:** Yeah. So I'm curious. How many of you, just show of hands, would say that for you this it's been in the periphery? That's such a a interesting phrase for you. And how many of you would just say, oh, I'm all of you. Okay. So what's your sense so some of what you're saying is this is what you're observing out there versus this is what you're experiencing personally. Who are the students because you've also all said there were protests. So who are the students who seem.

**Deb:** More immediately proximally engaged with this issue?

**Deb:** So it's not you, but you're seeing it. So who are they?

**Participant 2:** I think on my campus, it's very much, like, very much Jewish students and then Muslim students are, like, the most dialed in. But then there's also other people that are, like, a part of it, a part of, like we have, like, the young socialist group on campus. Like, they're really dialed into it. But I think mostly it's based off, like, religion, like, religious identity.

**Participant 4:** Similar.

**Deb:** Thank.

**Participant 4:** To Participant 2,

**Deb:** You.

**Participant 4:** Like, I would say there's, on one side, Jewish students, But then I would say on the other, which is, I would say, more organized and also more populous is, like, the, the Arab students as well as Muslim organizations, but also other, cultural groups as well, like people of color, for example. I I was just in, like, the the diag the other day, and a huge coalition of student groups were, like, listing out the different clubs that were in this coalition. And it was, like, a hundred and fifty names. And it was just, like, kinda crazy, but just the amount of organizations and each organization has at least ten people. Right? So it it kinda gives you a perspective as to, like, which side is being voiced more and which side is not, at least on my campus.

**Deb:** Okay.

**Deb:** It's really interesting. I'm gonna move us on to the next question, which is a long one. And if you want me to repeat it, just say the word because I know there are a lot of words.

**[Q3] Data from our research suggests that nearly one-third of non-Jewish students say they would not want to be friends with someone who supports the existence of Israel as a Jewish state. Why do you think they might believe this? To what extent do you think the opinion is a function of this specific issue vs. a general challenge with being friends with people who see the world differently?** (00:20:56 - 00:33:39)

**Deb:** Here. Data from our research suggests that nearly one third of non Jewish students say they would not wanna be friends with someone who supports the existence of Israel as a Jewish state.

**Deb:** Why do you think they might believe this?

**Deb:** Should I read the stat again?

**Deb:** It's a lot. Okay. Nearly one third of non Jewish students say they would not wanna be friends with someone who supports the existence of Israel as a Jewish state.

**Deb:** Why do you think they might believe this?

**Participant 1:** I wonder if part of it has to do with, like, they think of someone, believes that is Israel should be a its independent state that they.

**Participant 1:** Believe that the Palestinian people there should be, like, forcefully evacuated or, are also in support of the Israeli side on, killing Palestinian civilians and so because I know like a lot of people from around my age are more on the Palestinian side of things more than the Israel side. So that is just what I would think.

**Deb:** And so you were saying so if you believe this, you must also believe these other things.

**Participant 1:** Yeah. That's what I would assume.

**Deb:** And connect for me then what that would mean for the the friendship and, like, I don't wanna be friends with you.

**Participant 1:** I mean, you know, like, some people have strong beliefs and they don't want to support people who have ideas that they think are antithetical to say something like.

**Participant 1:** Promoting peace.

**Deb:** So the idea would be if if I'm friends with you and you believe that thing, then that doesn't feel right.

**Participant 1:** I mean, I feel like, for example, like, I feel like a lot of Democrats say, I don't wanna be friends with the Republicans, and a lot of Republicans say, I don't wanna be friends with the Democrat. But I feel like it's kind of the same thing.

**Deb:** Yeah. I was gonna ask if you think this is a particular issue with the conflict in Israel and Gaza or if this is a function of different world views, and we see it in other spaces too. So you started to mention, like, Democrat, Republican.

**Participant 1:** Yeah. I feel like, especially recently, that people have become more polarized, and they're like, oh, if you have a friend who believes this, you should cut them out of your life. So I feel like that is more of a domineering viewpoint.

**Participant 1:** Now than ever.

**Deb:** Okay.

**Deb:** Thank you. What do others make of this statistic?

**Participant 5:** I.

**Participant 1:** I.

**Participant 5:** Can.

**Participant 4:** Would say.

**Participant 5:** Share.

**Participant 4:** That oh, sorry. Go ahead.

**Participant 5:** Oh,

**Participant 4:** Go.

**Participant 5:** Sorry.

**Participant 4:** Ahead.

**Participant 5:** No. You can go first.

**Participant 4:** Sure. Please go ahead.

**Deb:** Let's.

**Participant 5:** Okay.

**Deb:** Go.

**Participant 5:** I was just.

**Deb:** Participant 5.

**Participant 5:** Gonna.

**Deb:** And.

**Participant 5:** Say.

**Deb:** Then Participant 4. Thank you.

**Participant 5:** Okay. Yeah. I was just gonna say I feel like kind of going along, especially with this topic being so, like, talked about these days. I feel like it's understandable for people to not wanna be friends with others who don't share their same belief because it's just uncomfortable to have those conversations.

**Participant 5:** And, like, not saying that it's, like, that's, like, the right thing to do or anything like that, but I just think that I feel like we tend to surround ourselves with people that make us feel more comfortable and, like, more able to be ourselves. So I feel like when you have, like going back to kind of, like, the Democrat Republican example, like, if you're friends with a Republican and you have Democratic beliefs, it's just, like, sometimes makes people to feel more, like, uncomfortable to share their thoughts because they know that they're gonna get, like, pushback when they bring up, like, an opinion about something. So it's just easier to be friends with people who affirm your beliefs. I don't know. That's just what I was thinking.

**Deb:** Yeah. I'm wondering if you can connect that for me to what you were sharing earlier about your course where you are needing to have these conversations across differences. And how do you think about the kind of the perspective value there of the comfort versus the discourse?

**Participant 5:** I think it's just sometimes when we're having, like, a debate about a topic, what we learned is, like, you have to boil it down to, like, the values, and that's kind of, like most of the time, it's like a commonality between the two sides. Like, you're both trying to achieve, like, I don't know, like, world peace or, like, helping humanity or something like that just through different approaches. But I think, like, sometimes it's hard to think about that, especially when it's such, like, a controversial topic such as, like, the Israel Palestine topic. So I think that it's just easier, I guess, to have conversations with people who share your beliefs because you'll get that, like, sense of affirmation. You don't have to, like, always be trying to, like, defend yourself or stuff like that.

**Deb:** Yeah. Yeah. Participant 4, what comes up for you here?

**Participant 4:** Oh, I was just gonna say that, I was a bit surprised that about the statistic.

**Participant 4:** I think, like.

**Participant 4:** Okay. I'm not the most informed on the conflict, but I think to say that, like, Israel or the existence of Israel as a state, like.

**Participant 4:** Or saying that that Israel should not be a state, I think, is a bit, like, extreme.

**Participant 4:** And I feel like.

**Participant 4:** A lot of this, can be reinforced by maybe, like, a disproportionate consumption of social media on one perspective.

**Participant 4:** For I think what comes to mind what really comes to mind is I was talking to a friend, and I was watching him, like, repost, like, a Palestinian flag.

**Participant 4:** On Instagram. And I was like, oh, so, like, are you involved in, like, student org? And he said, no. I don't even know what's going on. I'm just doing it. I was like, Like, you know, it it's it's like one thing to just, like, hop. There's just one thing to, like, repost it to spread awareness, but at that point, you're not really aware. Right? You're just basically hopping on a bandwagon. I'm not I'm not saying, like, reposting a Palestinian flag is bad. Right? But I think there should be, like, a level of awareness when you're making a decision, on both sides.

**Deb:** So you mentioned that that statistic surprised you. I'm curious surprised in in what direction?

**Participant 4:** Yeah. Sorry. I I got a little bit lost in that.

**Deb:** No.

**Participant 4:** But,

**Deb:** That's okay.

**Participant 4:** Surprised in the size, I think one third of non Jewish students. That's a lot.

**Participant 4:** And, I mean, going back to what Participant 1 said about polarization, I think yeah. Sure. If you do one third of non Jewish students, maybe what what percentage.

**Participant 4:** Of non Jewish students are Arab or Muslim? Is it one third, or is it probably maybe around one third? So I think, like, I think that.

**Participant 4:** My reaction could also, like, differ if the statistics were more, specific.

**Deb:** Yeah. And that would probably vary by campus too.

**Participant 4:** For sure. For sure. Yeah.

**Deb:** Yeah. And then you're also pulling out this thread about, like, the endorsement of an idea versus the degree of information one has about that idea. And I'm wondering if you'd like to say anything else about that.

**Participant 4:** Not not too much. I think the only other thing was that I think Gen z and younger generations are more active online, and, therefore, you know, they're more they're more constantly interacting with social media and, therefore, might be more susceptible.

**Participant 4:** To just hopping on an idea rather than understanding it.

**Participant 4:** But, yeah, that's that's about it.

**Deb:** Okay. Thank you. And let's see. Participant 3 or Participant 2?

**Participant 3:** Yeah. I can chime in too. I was thinking about, like, what you mentioned with, like, the friendship, part of that statistic about, like, individuals not wanting to be friends with others who had different viewpoints than themselves, especially when it comes to such a hot button topic. And I think kind of echoing what was said before, there's definitely, like, a little bit of psychology with that with, I think, just, like, the polarization and that idea of it is just, like, easier to surround yourself with those who also agree with the same beliefs that you agree with. And so it's it feels more comfortable, and it feels like maybe you're able to foster, like, a deeper connection because a lot of times you'll have, like, mutually, like, I guess, just compatible opinions with each other. Although it also makes me wonder, though, like, with some, like, friendships, it seems like having to agree on every single thing isn't always, like, an essential part of, like, having a friendship and, like, having a diversity of opinions can be, like, just really healthy. And so, like, how come when it comes to these specific topics, is it, like, the thing that would make someone say I wouldn't wanna be friends with someone else? And I think it comes down to just, like, the fact that for a lot of people, some topics in particular are just so personal that, like, if someone doesn't share that belief, it's almost like it goes from being, like, a topic and a belief to then they kind of expand that and make, like, a character judgment about that individual based on, like, what side they would support or how they identify. And so I think when it comes to, like, this conflict and that statistic, that might be a little part of, like, what's going on.

**Deb:** And then I'm wondering about what, you know, what we were talking about where.

**Deb:** For a lot of students, it's not personally relevant, and there is kind of that apathy, but.

**Participant 3:** Mhmm.

**Deb:** Yet they're probably figuring into that statistic too. So would you make up the possibility that someone could both be this is not really my issue? And, you know, I I I couldn't be friends with someone who believed that thing.

**Participant 3:** Yeah. Like, I find that to be also interesting, and I wonder if that's also just I know sometimes it's not necessarily that, like, you know so much about it that because you know so much about it, now you're, like, kind of compelled to not wanna have those, like, really in-depth and maybe hard conversations with other people who don't agree with you. But maybe just more from, like, a standpoint of, like, ignorance almost, where maybe it's not even, like, super relevant to you, but you've kind of had this, like, construct of, well, I think I would be, like, here on this issue, and I believe these things about someone else who has, like, this viewpoint on, like, an issue. And so without really getting to know, like, further information or understand more about, like, what they're actually thinking or what the other side, like, their argument is. You just kinda make these snap judgments about, like, people who believe this must kinda be like this, and maybe I wouldn't be compatible with those types of people.

**Deb:** Yeah. Kinda filling in some blanks maybe.

**Participant 3:** Mhmm.

**Deb:** Okay. And, Participant 2, what would you like to share here?

**Participant 2:** I thought the proportion was gonna be a lot smaller as well. I, obviously, I see a lot of, like, activism on campus, but I still kinda felt like there was a smaller amount of students that are, like, really dialed into this conflict. I.

**Participant 2:** I think it'd be hard to say, like, if I was given the survey, I'm not sure I would say I wouldn't be friends with someone.

**Participant 2:** And, like, I like, just because it is kind of on the periphery for me, I thought more students would be that way where they it's just on their periphery, and they don't feel that strongly about it.

**Participant 2:** So I just thought more I thought it'd be much smaller proportion because I thought more students. It was just peripheral for them. I realized it was that it was big enough to say you would stop being friends with someone, for that many students or that larger.

**Deb:** Yeah.

**Participant 2:** Proportion of students.

**Deb:** Okay. Yeah. It'd be interesting to look at kind of the centrality of the issue to see if that varies along this question too.

**Deb:** Okay.

**[Q4] How do your views about Israel or the conflict in Israel and Gaza compare to those of your friends? How closely aligned are your and your friends' views about Israel or the conflict? How has the conflict affected your relationships with your friends, if at all?**  (00:33:40 - 00:45:55)

**Deb:** So we're gonna talk now about your your friend group. How do your views about Israel or the conflict in Israel and Gaza compare to those of your friends? So how closely aligned are your and your friends' views? And then, also, how has the conflict affected your relationships, if at all?

**Participant 2:** I can go.

**Deb:** Thank you.

**Participant 2:** For me, I think, friend wise, most of my friends are pretty similar, like, to me where, like, it is peripheral, but they do still have a take. Like, they have some encyclopedic knowledge on the topic.

**Participant 2:** And, like, have to, like, agree.

**Participant 2:** But, also, it's not something that, like, is personal to that. It's not like they don't have a personal tie to the conflict itself, but still have, like, a a fairly, like, strong opinion on it, where I don't think they'd be, like, easily swayed, which is, like, very similar to myself. I think relationship wise, I have a couple people in my life who, like, are, like, very much identify with their Jewish identity, very much, like, on the Israel side. And I think for me, like, I am still very good friends with them, but also it's like you do kinda feel that, like, tension or space for, like, we walk. We completely, like, tiptoe around the topic. Like, if we see a con if, like, we see, like, a protest on campus or we're together, like, we just pretend we don't see it, so that we don't have to talk about it.

**Participant 2:** So yeah.

**Deb:** Why do you think that is?

**Participant 2:** I just wanted things where, like, for them, it's I think it's difficult because it's not a personal issue for me. Like, it's not like, I don't have I'm neither Muslim nor Jewish. And for them, they are Jewish. And, like, because we have opposing points here, like, we I think it'd be difficult because neither of us are likely to be swayed. And I think if we had that talk and we were to discreet, I think it'd be more difficult for them to experience that, and, like, explicitly know that I disagree with them.

**Participant 2:** So we just avoid talking about it at all. So it's never, like, benefit of the doubt situation. Like, I mean, I never explicitly said my point to her.

**Deb:** Yeah.

**Participant 2:** She knows it. But if you don't.

**Deb:** Yeah.

**Participant 2:** Explicitly say it, then we don't have to talk about it.

**Deb:** Then I'm curious too. So you said that some of your friends have truly encyclopedic knowledge of this, and it's not personally relevant to them. What's your sense of what motivates their engagement? Like, to go get encyclopedic knowledge is that it takes effort. What do you think has.

**Participant 2:** Yeah.

**Deb:** Pulled them in?

**Participant 2:** I think I'm friends with a lot of, like, civically active people. So I think it just kinda feels like a civic duty to them. Like, if there's.

**Deb:** Yeah.

**Participant 2:** Conflict in the world happening, like, we can't live in ignorance. So I think it's, like, a civic responsibility for them, the guy I feel, as well as an ethical responsibility of, like, knowing about these. Like, the biggest thing for, like, conflicts like this is that, like, a lot of people are, like, dialed into it. Like, a lot of people care, even if it doesn't personally affect them because there's also, like, this idea of, like, it could be your own heritage of, like, people. Like, it's not happening in the Philippines, but it could. So dial in.

**Deb:** Yeah. That's helpful. Thank you.

**Deb:** How about for others? How what have you noticed about how similar your views are with your friends, or how have your relationships been affected?

**Participant 4:** I think similar to Participant 2, it's important to be delicate.

**Participant 4:** About the about discussions like that, especially when, you have friends with maybe even, like, relatives who are in Israel or, maybe Arab countries as well. Like, for example, I have a friend who's Jewish, and I think his sister lives in Tel Aviv. And so when he talks to me about, you know, the conflict, it's more so about, like, just safety and well-being as opposed to, like, the overall conflict.

**Participant 4:** And with my, Muslim friends, it's, maybe less about that, and it's more about the political scene or what's going on in the news.

**Participant 4:** But yeah.

**Deb:** Yeah. I'm, struck by the word delicate.

**Deb:** And the kind of the importance of being delicate in the friendships, because I'm hearing from some of the other groups because because we're having lots of conversations with lots of students this week, some other groups saying that, like, really indelicate things are coming up in the protest, like really strong hateful words. And so I'm wondering what do you make of in which spaces do you think it's important to be delicate versus not?

**Participant 4:** I think this kinda goes back to, what Participant 3, I think, said, about being open to having those conversations.

**Participant 4:** Right? If if your objective is to have, like, a genuine conversation, then I think it's important to be empathetic to the people that you're engaging with and considering their perspectives, their experiences.

**Participant 4:** I feel like in a lot of the more public scenes, where those harsh things are being said, I think in those in those settings, it's not really open to conversation. It's more about, listen to me. Listen to me. Listen to me.

**Participant 4:** So that's that's, my perspective on that,

**Deb:** Yeah. That.

**Participant 4:** Which.

**Deb:** Makes.

**Participant 4:** Is.

**Deb:** Sense. Like,

**Participant 4:** Why I would say I don't, like, I don't usually go out of my way to actively engage in that because I think it's it's very it becomes very one-sided.

**Deb:** Thank you.

**Participant 5:** I think for me, I have a lot of friends who are very into activism especially on campus and they, like, facilitate some of, like, these protests especially, like, against university administration.

**Participant 5:** So I think with those relationships, I tend to get a lot of information from them as they seem to, like, plan a protest. You need to, like, do your research on the topic and look at specific, like, university funding and also just, like, keeping up with current events in the news. So I feel like with those relationships, I tend to get a lot of information from them, which is why I think our viewpoints kind of align, more. And I think it's also, like, I feel like a lot of my, like, a big portion of my viewpoint comes from, like, my different friends' experiences.

**Participant 5:** I'm really close with a friend who's Muslim, and she's goes to a university where there was, like, a threat like, a death threat for a Muslim student by her roommate. So I think just hearing about that and then having her be scared for her own safety since there was a lot of Islamophobia happening, at her university informed me a lot about my viewpoint. So I think I get swayed by a lot of, like, my friends' experiences and also, like, the information that they tell me, to kind of craft my own view on this topic.

**Deb:** Yeah. I'm wondering on the information piece, just so I'm clear on what you were saying. Is it that everyone's looking at information, meaning all of their friends and coming to their own view and those views are converging? Or is it that in the friend group, certain pieces of information come up and it's kind of already on the same conclusion? So are the views converge because everyone did their own research or because everyone's looking at the same thing?

**Participant 5:** I think it's kind of a mix. I think, for me, personally, I, like, get all these bits of information and then, like, tend to, like, synthesize my own opinion on the topic based on what's, like, being told to me. But I think for others, they tend to, like, do their own research first and then just end up kind of, like, sharing the same, like, opinion on the topic.

**Deb:** Yeah. Okay. Thank you. Let's see. Participant 3 or Participant 1, do you wanna jump in on these?

**Participant 3:** Yeah.

**Participant 1:** Yeah. It should. So, I feel like my the trends I have also, like, they don't feel terribly strongly about this point of view, about these issues.

**Participant 1:** I do feel like a lot of them are, like, more extreme than me, but we still have, like, the same viewpoint, so we don't argue that much. I feel like it's not that we're necessarily looking at the same pieces of news, but it's just like we all independently.

**Participant 1:** Came to that conclusion on a so for my friend group, though, it's not, like, something we discuss a whole lot, so it doesn't, like, come up that much.

**Deb:** Okay. How how certain are you that you don't disagree that much? Because if you don't talk about it, how do you kinda.

**Participant 1:** I mean,

**Deb:** Know.

**Participant 1:** That.

**Deb:** Where.

**Participant 1:** That's.

**Deb:** People.

**Participant 1:** That's true. I guess I guess see, like, on the Instagram or something, like, I see, like so I'm like, oh, we kind of agree, like, based on that.

**Deb:** Yeah. That makes sense that there's this, like, public display of position.

**Deb:** Thank you. And Participant 3.

**Participant 3:** Yeah. For me, I would say that the majority of my frame group, like, this issue is more peripheral, and so I don't think it's affected, like, our interactions or the strength of, like, our relationship, like, as much. But I do notice, like, I think it's interesting that for some of my friends who are more, like they have more of a personal, I think, connection to, like, the the topic just out of, like, their identity, whether they're, like, Jewish or Muslim themselves or they have family members who are. And just, like, seeing how that plays out in, like, their relationships with others or other, like, student organizations and groups on campus, I find that to be interesting because I have a suite mate who identifies as Jewish, and I remember her sharing about how a lot of times she would go and join in on, like, the, like, Jewish, like, student organization, like, their community, like, events that they would put on. And because she's, like, not fully, like, hundred percent, like, on the side of, like, Israel, but is also sympathetic to, like, the Palestinian side of the conflict, that she actually feels, like, alienated when she goes to, like, those spaces because it's almost like she feels like she's not Jewish enough and kind of, like, conforming to the strong beliefs that that group tends to have more so. And so I think it's kind of led to, like, some internal conflict for, like, individuals who maybe are a little bit more split on the issue where they see, like, arguments to both sides or sympathetic maybe to both sides of the cause, but yet identify as, like, either Jewish or Muslim, and then how do they reconcile like that and their identity?

**Deb:** Yeah. That sense of variability within any group because I suspect there might be I don't I'm curious if you have any Muslim or Arab Arab friends who.

**Participant 3:** I don't.

**Deb:** Also.

**Participant 3:** Have.

**Deb:** Have.

**Participant 3:** Yeah. I would say not as many, like, close friends that I know who identify as, like, Muslim or Arab, but the majority of, like, my friends who are, like, close and who I spend the majority of time with, have shared that they do identify as Jewish. So maybe it's more so skewed towards, like, that side of things. Like, I hear their experiences more so than, those of, like, Muslim or Arab students.

**Deb:** Yeah. That's really interesting. Okay. So here's our last official question, and I have other follow-up questions if we have time at the end. So.

**[Q5] Best case scenario, how should the conflict in Israel and Gaza be resolved?**  (00:45:55 - 00:58:42)

**Deb:** Best case scenario, how do you think the conflict in Israel and Gaza should be resolved?

**Deb:** It's a big one. Right?

**Participant 2:** I would say, like, in my personal opinion, allowing a Palestinian government to exist, and be, like, leaders of the state.

**Participant 2:** With lesser.

**Participant 2:** Or no I mean, best case scenario, no violence, like, with no conflict of it.

**Participant 2:** I think realistically, that's impossible. But, you know, best case scenario, there's no violence to end that change of power.

**Deb:** What do you see as the the barriers to change of power?

**Participant 2:** And change of power? I think just, like, the power norm right now is that Israel already has, like, these already like, their institutions already exist, and are already very strong and well funded. They have a military.

**Participant 2:** Really, the Palestinian people don't have military power. They don't have, like, formal institutions, that are, like, holding a very strong position at this time. So I think for there to be that such a power, there have to be, like, a big change of, like, sacrifice of powers, and also a big, like, development of the Palestinian.

**Participant 2:** Institutions as a whole.

**Deb:** What do others think?

**Participant 5:** I feel like the first thing would be to, like, have a ceasefire.

**Participant 5:** And then hold Israel accountable, I think, to, like because they damage so much of, like, the infrastructure and, like, cause so many people to lose their homes. I think they should be held accountable to kind of rebuild that. And then.

**Participant 5:** Not really sure what the next step would be, but I think definitely, like, a shift in power to make sure, like, a conflict that this doesn't happen again. And I think, like, yeah, like Participant 2 was saying, best case, like, no more violence, and that the people living in Gaza are able to, like, rebuild their lives and, like, have it return back to the way it used to be, yeah, which I think will take a long time for that to happen. But yeah.

**Deb:** And when you say back to the way it used to be, kinda what what time frame are you thinking? Which piece of history?

**Participant 5:** I think that would just depend on, like, the shift of power. I do think that there should be a Palestinian government, to oversee those people. So I guess, like, back when there was a Palestinian government.

**Deb:** And are we talking, like, Palestinian authority or some other.

**Deb:** Government?

**Participant 5:** Or I guess, like, maybe they could have, like, a joint government where there's, like, a mixture of leaders that, like, kind of oversee the region in general, but I do think that'll that's not super feasible given that there's so much, like, conflict already between the two, like, Palestine and Israel But yeah.

**Deb:** Yeah. I'm curious if you have any intuitions around Hamas.

**Deb:** As a like, in terms of resolution.

**Participant 5:** Yeah. I think Hamas also should be held accountable for what they did, with the, like, the bombing of the concert. But I think that for me personally, like, in my opinion, it's.

**Participant 5:** More, like, Israel's fault, I guess. We're not, like, fault. Just I think that they've done more damage than was necessary to kind of counter because I think it all started because they were trying to, like, counter what Hamas did, which I agree, like, shouldn't have happened because that's also, like, an act of terrorism, but I think it, like, just got way overplayed, and now there's, like, even more people that are dying and stuff. So I think that Hamas should be held accountable for their actions even though it was, like, an act of resistance against Israel. But, like, yeah, I think Israel should have stopped way before everything happened.

**Deb:** Yeah. I'm hearing high high accountability theme there.

**Deb:** How about for others?

**Deb:** Think about it as, like, you can wave your magic wand, Participant 4.

**Participant 4:** I I don't think I'm the most educated, so I don't have, like, a solid concrete answer. But I think what Participant 2 and Participant 5 have said, like, there there should be some voice that, like, the Palestinian people can have that can be heard by, you know, on a global stage. Right? The UN. Right? No basically, nobody recognizes Palestine or Palestine as, like, a a legitimate country or region autonomous region. Right? There needs to be some sort of voice that allows them to have a say in these discussions. I think that's a big reason why Hamas grew to such popularity because they had more radical takes and were able to spread their message through more radical means. And that was a result of them feeling powerless. That's my understanding at least.

**Participant 4:** And back to what Participant 2 and Participant 5 also said, there needs to be some sort of accountability held for acting on October seventh, the hostages, right, as well as for Israel's retaliation of that. But, ultimately, I think that having a voice would be able to at least spark some discussion, even though I know it's a it's a much greater issue than that.

**Deb:** Yeah. That theme of voice is very strong there.

**Deb:** See Participant 3 or Participant 1.

**Participant 3:** Yeah. I'm also of, like, the same mindset where I don't know if I am personally, like, informed enough to have, like, a specific, like, tangible, like, this is what I would actually, like, hope for. But I think in terms of just, like, a general idea of what I see would be, like, more ideal for, like, an outcome, I think reflecting things that we've talked about already, the rep like, having that sense of representation and that, like, whatever form that ends up taking, whether it's, like I think maybe it would be nice to have, like, a creation of, like, a government or some sort of structure, specifically for, like, Palestine so that they can be recognized, and they can, like, voice their opinions and be heard on, like, a global level, in a way that other countries can do that as well would be one step. And then the accountability piece, I do believe that it has to be two sided. So it's not just Israel that needs to be held accountable, but also Hamas. And so I think there needs to be a balance there as well for, just what both sides of those countries have kind of done over, like, the course of these last, you know, couple months and everything.

**Participant 3:** And then I know there's also been, like, a lot of talk about a ceasefire, and I would say that I would support a ceasefire. I think that there's well, you know, just stopping, fighting, and leaving it at that is not going to resolve the underlying issues. There needs to be a continuous, like, dialogue and, like, I guess, a conversation about, like, what happens now. How are we going to, like, make sure this doesn't happen in the future? How are we going to address, like, all the build up to, like, this entire, like, conflict in the first place? I think that's, like, the aftermath is gonna be very important. But just like the the fact that civilians are, like, being killed and, like, all this bloodshed, I don't think it's necessary to have those types of conversations. I think those would ideally be had in a more civil way that doesn't have to result in, like, war and violence and, ideally, like, individuals, like, losing their lives because of this inability to see, like, eye to eye on these issues.

**Deb:** And that sanctity of life piece pops up. And, Participant 1, final words here?

**Participant 1:** Yeah. No. I don't I don't have, much different to say than what everybody else has so eloquently said. But just, like, a structured place where Palestine and Israeli authorities can, like, have those conversations. So because I feel like one of the main reasons that this occurred is because, like, Palestine, they felt like they didn't have a way to make their voice heard on a global scale, and this was, like, their way to do it. Not that it was right in any sort of way, but so just, like, allow rectifying that so it doesn't happen in the future, I think, would involve, like, getting the UN support and just, like, giving everybody a voice so that they can be heard and, of course, what everybody else said as well.

**Deb:** Okay. So that voice theme. Okay. So we have two minutes left. I'm wondering if I can hear more from you about what's happening with the your the administrations on campus and kinda what you're how you're experiencing that. So there was some mention about, free speech and not free speech and like, constraining protests versus encouraging them. Just can you fill me in a little bit on what's happening?

**Participant 4:** I can go first. So our university has a pretty big endowment that's.

**Participant 4:** Largely funded by a lot of, American companies that either indirectly or directly also, have partnerships with the Israeli government, at least as my knowledge. So, like, defense companies, manufacturing companies, etcetera.

**Participant 4:** And, obviously, the university needs that money.

**Participant 4:** And, but on the other side, right, a lot of the student organizations feel that that does support by by taking those funding by taking that funding, they are indirectly supporting, the of the Israel side of the conflict.

**Participant 4:** And so as a result of that sort of tension, the administration has not, like, put out a very strong message on either side.

**Participant 4:** But they have put out a strong message, against, protests. And, largely, those protests are more on the, Palestinian side.

**Deb:** Okay.

**Participant 4:** So people take it as a in different ways.

**Deb:** Okay. That's helpful. And I'm realizing now we are out of time. So if anyone wants to hang out for a couple minutes afterward and share other perspectives, I would welcome them. But first, let me just say thank you so much. I promise that what you've shared and how you've shared it will absolutely inform these researchers' understanding of how students are thinking about and experiencing the conflict in Gaza and Israel. So so much gratitude there. Within about twenty four hours, you're gonna receive an email from College Pulse, and that email will include how to activate your incentive. It'll also have an open ended question. So if anything if there was something you wanted to say and you didn't have a a chance to, or if there's a particularly salient moment that you wanted to reflect on, please feel free to do that. And then third, if this conversation kicked up, any thoughts or feelings that you would like to to dig deeper on and get some support with, that there'll be resource numbers there too. So I'm gonna hang out for a minute. So if you have any questions for me or would like to share some additional thoughts, I'm all ears. Other than that, have a fantastic weekend.

**Deb:** Nice.

**Participant 4:** Thank.

**Deb:** To meet.

**Participant 4:** You.

**Deb:** You all. Thank you so much.

**Participant 1:** Thank.

**Participant 3:** Thank you.

**Participant 1:** You.

**Participant 2:** Speaking.

**Hi everyone, welcome and thank you for participating today. This focus group is facilitated by College Pulse, a research firm that studies the opinions of college students across the United States. My name is Dr. Deb Mashek; I will be the primary moderator. I will be asking questions, facilitating discussion, and managing our time. The purpose of our conversation today is to learn more about how college students think about the conflict in Israel and Gaza.This focus group is part of a study being conducted by College Pulse in partnership with a research team that studies education.Our call today will last 60 minutes. Due to the time constraint I may need to move us along to the next question at various points, however there will be time for additional comments and questions at the end. We ask that during this focus group you abide by the following ground rules: First, there are no wrong answers to any of the questions, so please share openly about your opinions and experiences.Second, what is said here, stays here. It is critical that we all honor each other’s privacy by holding in confidence everything that is said here today.Finally, please keep in mind that your experiences and perspectives are likely different from those of others. Please be respectful, speak one at a time, and be curious about our differences.If you agree to these three ground rules, please give me a thumbs up. Excellent. Thank you all so much. Before we get started, we would like to remind you that we will be recording this focus group session. By participating, you are consenting to being recorded and for the recordings, including your responses, to be used for research purposes. Your identity will remain confidential, however, if at any time you wish to no longer be recorded, you may leave the focus group by exiting the call. Any questions before we get started? OK, let’s begin! If you’d like me to repeat a question at any point, just let me know.**  (Not answered)

**OK, everyone. That concludes today’s focus group. What questions do you have for me? Thank you so much for your time today. The insights you shared here will really help us understand the views of students on campus. My colleagues and I appreciate your participation. In the next 24 hours, you will receive an email with follow up information, including instructions on how to receive your incentive, a quick followup questionnaire, and contact information if today’s conversation brought up any thoughts or feelings you would like to share with College Pulse. Again, thank you for your participation. You may now exit the call.**  (Not answered)