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Episode name: What Gazans Think Before and After October 7th

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Transcript

(Auto-generated with Microsoft Word online)

Ladies and gentlemen, it's my great pleasure to welcome you all to the 46th George Antonio's Memorial Lecture. Starting back in 1976, when the Great George Macdissi delivered the inaugural lecture on the Origin and development of the College in Islam and the West, the Antonio's lecture has served as the culminating event of the academic year for the Middle East Centre community. It's a family gathering of centred fellows of our students, of our staff. Of our alumni. And of the broader friends and family in Oxford and in London and the near abroad that gathers once a year. Like 70 migratory birds for the entire section. We've come together for such inspirational lectures as that given by Alberoni, who was our second speaker.

And Alfalfa ourself, our 4th Maggie Lamba our 6th. The great art historian Oleg Grabar. Oppressive Palestinian intellectuals like Edward Saeed. Or Rashid hani? Architect Zaha Hadid, whose hall we sit now, she too, was in Antonius. And recently, Noam Chomsky. Only region wide turmoil during the 2011 Arab uprisings. Or the lockdowns of COVID-19 were to break the rhythm of the annual gathering of the Antonius Lecture. That we missed out on Jeremy Bowen's lecture in 2011. We missed out on the batter cats lecture. With COVID-19. Other than that, it's been a pretty continuous we're getting very near our 50th. Anniversary of Antonio's. Now the current academic year has in many ways been one of the hardest and most divisive. In recent memory. The academic year began on the 9th of October, two days after the October 7th attacks. And the Gaza war has cast a long shadow over our community for the whole year. The year ends tomorrow. We will have the entire year. Under the impact of the Gaza War.

A war of unprecedented length and violence, and the whole history of the Arab Israeli conflict. The violence has had a profound and divisive impact on Oxford, as it has on

universities across Europe and North America. Free speech, free assembly and the right to protest have come to head to head with concerns about the rise of anti-Semitism on our campuses and the resulting divisions have threatened the foundations of our university communities among students. Between students and faculty, between faculty and the administration. As a senator, we have tried to preserve the space for discussion to preserve the bonds of community. To press the university to engage with the. Students to find common ground. And I'd actually like to break with tradition to take a moment to thank colleagues who have made a difference this year. I would like to single out. The amazing work. Of our Emeritus colleague Avishai. Who has responded to every request for a teaching for a seminar, for an interview, and who has been a beacon of reason in the. Fog of war. We salute you, Bobby. I would also like to recognise the amazing work of Walter Armbrust, who has been at the forefront of dialogue with our students and the encampments and in its meetings between faculty and university officials and trying to bring reason to the unreasonable. And being a rock that everyone can rely on. And for demonstrating, I think to our student community the commitment of their faculty back at them, I think Walter has been amazing this year. I'd like. Take a moment to commend our graduate. And our students. Who I feel have really applied themselves to combat a dreadful war in the way that one would expect our students to do so in upholding the values. That the university aspires to me. And I'd like to thank our GCR President Shiraz, assuming for the amazing job that she has done and providing leadership and in helping to guide students and faculty and the college as a whole towards.

Well.

Towards better solutions, even if we haven't achieved. And no one has been more receptive to student concerns or welfare than our acting warden. Nothing good to who I think in her messaging has demonstrated. To the university as a whole, what ahead of house can do to make a difference in trying to get the messaging right with their students the way that she's interacted, I think is in her role model. To the better as. The house and I am proud that she has been leading our college this year. She has done so with distinction in the area in her desk. Through. The Middle East Centre has continued with its mission to provide a space. For meeting and thought and dialogue through our seminars and through our lectures and through our conversations in Hall and over coffees in the gallery here. Our very first event this year was with Nathan Thrall and added Solano, who spoke just three days after that. Did you discuss Nathan's new book, which we were delighted to see was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for nonfiction this year?

Picture.

We didn't know how the audience, still traumatised by the. Shock of seven October would respond. We got a sense of where our community was going when they received what was one of the longest ovations I can remember in this all in response to the very sensitive, personal and human way they engaged with the situation in Israel and Palestine. So we would then move to try and use the states to bring together people across the Palestine Israel divide to consider what the political options might be at a point where we optimistically thought we would be after. The Gaza conflict. We had, I think, meetings in this hole that were. Informative to all of us. You heard things you agreed with. You heard things you didn't agree with, but it created a meeting space that I think was valuable and that I think we fulfilled our purpose. And as the Winter seminar drew to a close, we began to think about what we would do to use the opportunity of the Antonius Lecture. To take stock of what has been, as I said, one of the most difficult years the senator has faced in recent memory. When the fellows came together to think of whom to invite, our unanimous first choice was the management. The Dean and the Princeton School of Public and International Affairs and Edward Stanford. Professor of politics at Princeton. Doctor Janelle Scholarship covers the politics of the Middle East and North Africa, which covers mass and political behaviour, political development and democratisation, inequality and economic segregation, Muslim immigration, gender, race, religion and class.

So.

But it's for the work that she has been doing in terms of public opinion polling across the Arab world with the the Arab Wellness Art project, and specifically the work that she has done examining what people are thinking in Palestine itself. In this year of deafness, the importance of listening has been proven. More important than anything, and for that reason, knowing of her word, we felt that no one could better crown this year with meaningful content of value to our understanding of where we are. Since before the 7th. At present and from that. Hopefully where we might be heading. I would ask. You all to join me in welcoming 46, George Antonius, neuronal lecturer.

Yeah.

Dean and manager.

Thank you. Thank you so much, Eugene, for that wonderful introduction. Thank you all of you, for coming out this evening. It's such an honour and delight to be here this evening. I see many familiar faces. It's a true pleasure and joy to be here. And it's a tremendous honour to be delivering this lecture with such esteemed colleagues. I I was almost blushing while I was sitting there listening to the name. So it's really such an honour to be here. Thank you all. So I I'm presenting some findings from the Air Barometer survey for those of

you who don't know, I for the for the last 15 years or so, my colleagues and I have run the air barometer project, which we think is one of the most and we applaud ourselves that it's one more rigorous and scientifically based. Sources of public opinion data on the Arab world for the longest time, this public opinion data set did not exist. For those of you who were students many years ago, over two decades ago like. Myself, it would be very common to sit in PhD seminars and people will show data on public opinion in Latin America, public opinion in Africa. And then there would be this like big sort of glaring gap on the Middle East. Well, everybody knows what the Middle East thinks and believes or this is all part of the Muslim world. So it's always like this discrediting or discounting what, what, what the Arab world thought and believed. And it was often portrayed as this very hegemonic monolithic, you know, you know. Almost stereotypical, overwhelming, stereotypical sort of depictions of what Arabs and Muslims fought in, in terms of the Arab world. So we were keen on developing an instrument and a source of data that will reliably captured public opinion data from across the region. So we've been in existence since 2006. The results. They are part of our more recent Wave 8 results and it so happens I'll just sort of give. I'll go over all of this, but it just so happens that. We were in the field conducting wave 8 surveys across numerous Arab countries, but we were in Palestine starting but at the end of September. Typically, our surveys are in the field for approximately 2 weeks, so we were in the field in Palestine end of September all the way up to October 8th. So when the unfortunate attacks. Happened on October 7th. We were wrapping up our surveys so we have accurate data for all the talk about what Gazans think, what Gazans believe, what Palestinians think, what Palestinians believe we have accurate data depicting what was actually going on on the ground. In the in the few days right before October 7th, which is extremely important because a lot of what we're seeing right now in Gaza today in terms of the ongoing war has been predicated on this assumption, well, this, this Gazan sort of voted Hamas into power back in 2006. And therefore they are all supporters of Hamas. So we have some data there. I can talk more about that particular point again, the fact that 50% of Gaza was not born. And yeah, you know, in, in, in in 2006, it also is a very important point to keep in mind, but really quickly the air barometer, it's a nonpartisan research network that provides insights into the social, political and economic attitudes and values of ordinary citizens across the Arab world and. That the air barometer is the longest standing and largest repository of publicly available data. Our data is publicly available. You can download it from our website. It's not-for-profit. You don't have to pay any hidden fees or anything like that. And our mission is to track attitudes and behaviour, build institutional capacity in the.

So.

Religion and disseminate knowledge about ordinary citizens living in the Middle East and North Africa. Today we've conducted over. More than 125,000 personal interviews, 89 nationally representative surveys 8 waves across 16 countries providing trend data on how views have changed over time. Disaggregated data allows for growth intra intra country comparisons and the data are open source and publicly available at arbiter.org we have an English website. On an Arabic website we also have a simplified portal that allows. You. To conduct some. You know, sort of bivariate analysis, cross tabs and whatnot. You can also get this group of statistics off that website and we have country and topical reports, including the one that has findings discussed today. Everything is available on our website. This just gives you a sense of the dates of when we were in the region this year. Palestine, September 28 October eight. This includes West Bank and Gaza, but we were also in Tunisia during the the the the time period. So we have data before and after October 7th and then every other country we were in the field after October 7. So our Palestine data consists of 1100 and 11189 Palestinians living in the West Bank and Gaza. We all our surveys are face to face. We don't rely on on, on, on on self responses like through any other medium. We base our sampling based on area probability. Sampling complex survey design stratified by governor and and level of urbanity. And we feel that from September 28th through October 8th, 2023 our partners, the Palestine Centre for Policy and Survey research, Doctor Cocky who I'm sure you you all know who's who's in here as well. So the Israeli Palestinian conflict when we sort. Of just start. Out and we ask people in the region, are you in favour of the normalisation projects going on in the region or normalisation between Arab States and Israel? What you see here is that for all Palestinians. There's just a lot of opposition to normalisation, vast majority, upwards of almost 90% opposed or strongly opposed. But what's interesting here is when we disaggregate the data by West Bank and Gaza. There's a lot more opposition to normalisation in the West Bank than in Gaza, and the way we sort of describe this is that that, you know, the West Bank, Mahmoud Abbas, has felt that the PA would be threatened most by normalisation, whereas Hamas, because it has its close ties to Qatar, might see itself benefiting from stronger normalisation in the long run nevertheless. What we find is that there's a lot of opposition, but the opposition is far greater in the West Bank than. Gaza what is the preferred solution for the Palestinian Israeli conflict right there? What is this outcome? So in our survey we asked about do you sorry basically do you support A2 state solution, do you support A1 state solution, a confederation or something else? Basically the something else typically. Is other and people can write in the response. Most of the responses that are written in are armed conflict, right? So war. But you'll see that the vast majority of Palestinians will cite A2 state solution despite the failure of Oslo. Despite the fact that Oslo has filled for over 2 decades, the vast majority of Palestinians still support A2 state solution over any other option. The one state solution, in my opinion, has far more support in the West among

diaspora communities than among the Palestinians. When we break this down by West Bank and Gaza, you'll see that even in Gaza. There's slightly even more support for acoustic solution than there is among West bankers. So this is this is this is Gaza before October 7, even armed conflict, there's greater support for armed conflict in the West Bank than there than there is in Gaza. It's one in five. So I'm not saying that's a small number, but nevertheless, the momentum is for two states for two state solution. When we ask, this is an important point in terms of like kind of like US standing on the Middle East and this particular conflict. Do you believe the US versus China is better equipped to address the Israeli Palestinian conflict across the board? Increasingly, Palestinians believe China would be better. And it and this is right at the eve of October 7th, since this has grown. So on this issue, only 13% think America is better, 26% believe China is better, 16% believe they're equally good, 37% equally bad. But here you go here. In in, in, in Gaza, at least 15% believe the American policy would be better, 19% China. A good one in four. Still believe both might be good for the solution, knowing full well that you know outside forces will need to play an important role in any sort of future solution between Palestinians and Israelis. This is also to give you a sense about what happened in the country, like Tunisia, where we were in the field before and after. October 7 views of normalisation took a hit in Tunisia. What we saw was that there was already low support, about 12% of Tunisians supported normalisation after October 7th, that fell to one. 1% and every other country we didn't we we didn't. We weren't in the field during October seven, but we rely on the previous wave Wave 7 what you'll see is that support for normalisation was a lot higher in our WAVE 72000 and two 2022 versus where. It is now. So again. Normalisation with Israel is going to be very contingent upon what's going on in this conflict and for all those that say, basically try to argue that Arab and Palestinian and Muslim attitudes towards Israel static, our data has shown repeatedly that it will fluctuate with what's going on in the moment. In the political moment. Uh. Again, preference for two state solution also in Tunisia took a hit. It went down from 66% to 50% but in many other Arab countries even after October 7th, you'll see that support for the two state solution even went up. This is Mauritania, this is Jordan and this is Morocco. Only in Tunisia it went down. So again, this idea that there is no path towards a two state solution or reconciliation with Israel in the long run is not supporting our public opinion data. Not only do we see it among the Palestinians, but among citizens across the Arab region, and in fact, people are keeping their eye on the future of normalisation and whether that's going to be beneficial to to many countries, especially with the security sort of agreements happening and the issue of Iran, that that we can talk about that more in the Q&A. So Biden's top priority and manage should be the Palestinian question what we see. Across the Arab world, despite all the other problems in the Arab world, whether it's economic right now, whether it's, you know, the rising unemployment inflation, there aren't there, there are no shortages of problems that Arab

citizens and states have to deal with across the region. The vast majority of of citizens believe that the Biden administration's top priority should be the Palestine question, and this has increased in Tunisia from 24% to 59%. In air, every Arab country we see, we're seeing that this is, you know, moving up upwards and really. Major major leaps and bounds, so again about 43% in Mauritania, 42% in Jordan, 27% there in Morocco and 21% in Tunis. So again, this is a a big issue for citizens in the region. We've seen the demonstrations across the region and other. And many other countries as well. When we ask citizens how they describe what's going on in Gaza, you'll see that there is variation, but nevertheless Jordan, which is has a significant Palestinian population, the vast majority see what's happening. Gaza as a genocide, about 44% there or plurality, 28%, believe it's a massacre. Uh. 9% say ethnic cleansing, 9% say mass killing, whereas in Morocco you'll see the vest. The the plurality believes it's a massacre. They don't call it a genocide. So again, there is sort of, you know, different ways of characterising what's going on in Gaza. We believe we have a, a, a reason why we believe that Morocco might diverge from many Arab countries. In terms of. What's going on, or at least how they see what's going on in the region? So when we ask, well, what are the US commitments towards defending Israeli rights versus Palestinian rights in every single Arab country here, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Morocco, Mauritania, the vast majority believe that the United States defends Israeli rights 81% and Jordan, 73, and Kuwait 72 and Lebanon 6060. In Morocco, Mauritania, when we ask whether the United States will defend Palestinian rights, basically that has does not check at all with Arab citizens. This is where the the United States tends to lose credibility with Arab populations. You know, Kuwait still, despite Kuwait having a very some of the most favourable opinions about the US since the the 1991 Gulf War. You see that they also don't believe the United States is doing much to defend Palestinian rights. OK, so that's just giving you a sense. Of how Palestinians themselves see the conflict, let's just look at what were the economic conditions in Gaza and the West Bank before October 7. We asked Palestinians how would you describe describe the current economic situation in your country so life. Can I get questions about, well, why did Hamas do this? Why would Hamas choose October? So I really have no good answer. But these data might give us a little glimpse into what was going on on the Palestinian street or was in the Palestinian. Street before October 7. Current economic situation in your country percent saying it's very good, good, bad, very bad. The vast majority of Palestinians believe their economic situations are very bad. You know, we've had, like, skyrocketing inflation, cost of living donor aid is down. Salaries. The PA is not able to pay its own. You know, it's public sector sector employees. Hamas is also similarly struggling to pay its public sector employees in Gaza. So situation in in in the West Bank and Gaza is not necessarily a rosy 1 economically before October 7th by all accounts. Since October 7th things have even become worse. I mean, you know, Gaza's and devastation right now, the West Bank is, is, is similarly

struggling. But look here when we break it down by West Bank and Gaza. Very bad. 55% of Gazans states that concentration is very bad. 38 say say it's bad, so only only only 6% of Gazans could say that the economic situation is good. You talk about 94% of the population saying that their economic situation. Was bad or very bad when we think about the the the long term effects of an economic blockade or economic siege on Gaza, what that means for the daily everyday life of citizens in that region. You we need to be mindful of these data here now similarly. We'll talk about the PA also on the West Bank. It's not like things are great on the West Bank either. This has been the dilemma and we can talk more. About. That also moving forward, current economic situation in the country, just looking across time from 2016. Both in the West Bank and Gaza, the percent saying that the situation in the country is good or very good, it's been on the decline and the West Bank it's been it's down 33 to 28 across the last nine years. But in Gaza, look at it's been from 20 to 6%. So you're seeing a staggering decline. It was never there. They never really were great to begin with, but they've been on the decline. The economic situation in the country will improve in the coming years, like kind of like are you have aspirations that things will get better in the future. Again what we see is that the vast majority believe it will be much worse or somewhat worse, but it it's pretty comparable across the West Bank and Gaza with even people in Gaza. Being slightly more optimistic than the people in the West Bank, so again the economic situation, the economic outlook of citizens in the region is very dire. When we ask people what is the most important challenge facing the country, you'll see that most Palestinians will say economic situation. Then they'll cite instability. Then they'll cite corruption. When we look at Gaza here, 41% will cite the economic situation. Then the Gazans will rank instability and then corruption. But basically, these are the top issues here in the West Bank. We have also concerns of settler terrorism. This has been a growing problem in terms of what's happening on the West Bank, as has been being picked up with some of the media, but more or less the economic situation has been the Palestinian story and the Palestinians. Struggle on top of that corruption in the state institutions, these are the state institutions of the Palestinian Authority under Mahmoud Abbas and Hamas LED government in Gaza. Sorry, 54% believe that corruption is what sorry corruption is making this right. Corruption is widespread to that. 54 to a large extent, 31 to a million. That's like 85% believe that corruption is widespread in the ranks of the government. If you're in the West Bank interviewing anybody, they'll also say that tell you a similar story. It's a much larger problem in the West Bank, at least, but nevertheless, on the eve of October 7th, 72% of Gazans believe corruption was a widespread problem. And just looking at this across time in, in the West Bank, perceptions of corruption have gone up by 10 percentage points in the last nine years despite it being at 72% right before October seven. It's gone down in Gaza. So at least perceptions of corruption, it's it's it it you've seen a 10 point improvement. Government is cracking down on corruption. Just to give you a sense of

whether citizens believe their governments are doing anything to a small extent, not at all. It's where the majority sentiment is more W bankers are frustrated with the corruption situation than than in Gaza. But nevertheless, Gaza still is within. 57 percentage points of people believing that more needs to be done on corruption. OK, so. We have a series of questions that get at food insecurity. So the first question we sort of asked is do you were you worried? Were you worried that there wouldn't be enough food to feed your family within the last month? That's the first question. What we found is that about 68% of Palestinians said yes. They did worry that they wouldn't be able to feed their family within the next 30 days. This is a far more far bigger problem in Gaza than it is in the West Bank. In in Gaza, it almost reaches 78%. So you're talking about like 3 fourths, 3/4 of the citizens of Gaza reporting before October 7th that they worried about feeding their families when we asked them. Quick can you afford? Food. You'll see again a very similar story. Here's about 78% of Palestinians saying to a great extent or medium extent they think it's it was a it was a problem. The affordability of food is a problem. Again, when you think about Gazans, that number is closer to 75%. Again, 3/4 of the population. But on the West Bank, it's quite large as well. It's almost hitting 80% in the West. Yeah. Finally, when we asked the question, in actuality the food that we bought did not last and we did not have enough money to buy more food right in the last 30 days, you'll see that often true, sometimes true. That's that's about 58%. But again, it was far more true in Gaza. Far more likely to be sometimes true in Gaza. That's close to 75%. Again, 3/4 of the population mentioning that they really can't even have access or afford food. So so. So there's serious economic problems in Gaza at the eve of October 7. And and you'll see that across time from 2021, from the last wave, from Wave 7 from 2, two or three years, like the cost of food prices and inflation, that in a place like Gaza, it jumped from 51 to 75% from half the population to 3/4 of the population saying they couldn't afford food, but similarly. And and and the West Bank, it doubled from 24 to 47%. So the, the, the, the, the ongoing problems in the West Bank and Gaza economically are really severe. And they they're only worse now. So the political conditions. I'm good on time, right? You're great. Perfect. OK. So oftentimes people say, well, what, where is Palestinian sentiment on governance, especially on Hamas or the Palestinian Authority? Well, we ask people, do you, how much trust do you have in the government in the West Bank, the government in the West Bank, of course, is my best is. PA how much trust you have in the government in Gaza, which is basically the Hamas LED government, what we find that by October 8th? 57% of the wealthy say they have no trust at all in the West Bank government, 19% said not a lot of trust. About 18% less less than one in five. Say a great deal of trust or quite a lot of trust on the Hamas side, we have a similar story, slightly more trust in the Hamas government, but that's at 29 percent, one and three 2/3 basically saying they have a little or not a lot of trust in the Hamas LED government on the eve of October. 7. And So what we see that in both the West Bank and

Gaza across time over the last nine years, support for the Hamas LED government has been on the decline, you know, six percentage points. The bigger decline of course, is on the West Bank where it's gone down from 29 to 17%. But here, when we look at support for the PA or the Hamas. Of government, we're not seeing a lot of great support. One in three, right. And you know, if you factor in the number of public sector workers working for each of the governments, you know, those people are going to be more likely to report that they support their governments. So. For all the talk about citizens of Gaza being basically Hamas waving supporters and die hard supporters and nothing in our data, it substantiates that claim. So we can come back to that in Q&A responsiveness. I mean, these are citizens, 50% of Gaza was born after 2006 in a Hamas LED government, and there's been no elections since responsiveness of government. The percent saying that. The The government is very responsive or largely responsive. The vast majority of Palestinians believe their government is not responsive, not very responsive or not responsive at all. That is like again 79%. And when we break this down by Gaza West Bank, we see some slight variations. Maybe the PA is considered. Less responsive than Hamas, Hamas appears to be slightly more responsive, but still the the trends are speak for themselves. So these governments are not necessarily responsive to citizen demand. Now, if we had officials from the PA here, they would probably say well, you know, we're a policing authority. We're leading trying to build a nation. We don't have a partner for peace. There's all, you know, I want to make sure that we we we pay attention to that argument as well, because those are arguments that. Have been made, but nevertheless the story is that you know when when I do interviews in Palestine, citizens will often say to me we used to be occupied by one people by 1 force and now we're occupied by two. Now it's like the Israel and the Palestinian governments. Right. So it's like this dual layer of oppression on the people. Do you trust Hamas? So when we ask Palestinians in general. The 52% say they buy October 8th. Do not trust Hamas at all, 20% said. Not a lot of trust, so together that's 72%. What we find is that there was 23% support, almost one in four support for Hamas. When we break that by the West Bank and Gaza. You'll see that there's a slight more trust in in in in Gaza than there is on the West Bank, but even there, 12 plus 7/20/29 percent one and three again trust Hamas about 2/3 do not. Trust in the president. This is this is even gets sadder because there is no trust in the Mahmoud Abbas LED government. And so when we were there, why is this a problem? Because when we start talking about the day after, if we ever get to the day after, everybody's thinking about, well, what legitimate force will come in to govern, right? And if the the PA does not have a lot of also sort of legitimacy among the Palestinian people in Gaza or the West Bank, this also poses a dilemma. So 5th about about about only. 2022% have a great deal of trust or lack of trust in President Mahmoud Abbas. Of course, that trust is in in the West Bank. There's less even trust for for Mahmoud Abbas than than in the in Gaza. So there is a crisis of leadership right now,

not in the way it's often portrayed in the media, but a crisis of leadership. That these governments have been imposed and have not been able to deliver on sort of the core issues. Yes, corruption is a problem. But remember these governments, especially the Palestinian National Authority, was created to deliver a Palestinian state. And for 20 years, that has not happened. So that has eroded confidence of the among the Palestinians towards towards the government really quickly. When we ask about party affiliation, you'll see that still is the more dominant party, 22% say no party, 14% refused to answer. So there's a lot of sort of like, you know, weeding out here. But of the people who did respond, 30% say they support 21%. They said they support Hamas. And if we break it down here, West Bank and Gaza, you'll see that support for Hamas was larger in Gaza than the West Bank, although some recent point we've seen shows that Hamas is gaining support in the West Bank and maybe it's being challenged right now in Gaza. And I'm happy to talk more about that in the Q. Again, the political situation was not a rosy one. Citizens in Palestine, under both the Hamas government and the PA, were reporting that their freedom to express their opinions was being hindered by those governments, not by these really occupation. We're talking not to say that these really occupation is not a problem. I'm just talking about tapping domestically. The freedom to express. Was not guaranteed at all, or to a limited extent that was 67%, and you'll see that in the West Bank there was a sense that the freedoms were being curbed even further. Further, uh, but there was also curbing of freedoms in Gaza, right? So that it increasingly became the case that you talked to friends and family or colleagues who said, like, you have to watch what you say. You can't say things on the street you if you call Mahmoud that best corrupt, you know, palsy and vehicle police vehicle will pick you up and take you into detention. That there was a lot of self. Censoring emerging on the West Bank as well, freedom to express opinions across time, what you see is that in the West Bank across time. Fewer people believe they could express their opinions freely and fairly. That's about a decline of 10 percentage points. Again, globally, we're also seeing a lot of this democratic backsliding, so that's like hitting the trend as well. But also in Gaza, you're seeing that it's slightly on the decline. Again, the right, the similar story about the rights to protest. And the right to freedoms of for the press that across time, a lot of these freedoms are being limited. So again, this idea that, you know, Palestinians are able to exercise their democratic rights, at least we're not necessarily being protected by the existing governments with the PA. Actually faring worse than Hamas in most of these. Places so views on foreign powers just to go back there, favorability of the United States. No surprise. Very unfavourable. Even before October 7th. So it's only gotten worse. And again for everybody who says that you know, the Middle East will always be inherently anti American. I just want you to see from 2021 to 2023. With with Biden's policy slightly maybe improving, coming off of Donald Trump, we saw some tick upwards. So we do see the fluctuations. Kuwait does not resemble other Arab countries.

Remember the Morocco, as you'll see, does not resemble other Arab countries. So there is variation that we have to leverage. This is not a region that is dogmatically opposed to the West or to the United States, American President Joseph Biden's foreign policy towards the region. A majority believes that it's bad or very bad. There's very little change there. Percentages saying that they have a favourable or favourable view of the US, this is a very good example. Again looking at before and after October seven, you'll see that there was a decrease of from 40% to 10% after October 7th. So that the US perception is largely shaped by what's happening in the region and in this Gaza. War right now, Biden's policies towards the region are very good. Or or or. Or good. You'll see there's a decrease from 29 to 6% in Tunisia, remember. He's just like it is a lovely country. I love to go to Tunisia, but it's like not in in, in, embroiled in any of the, you know, the, the, the, the immediate conflict, but nevertheless very much influenced by what's happening. Favorability. Oh, here's also just breaking down favourably the United States by country. Morocco tends to be very favourable to the US. A lot of people will say that we've seen this uptick, especially after the United States announced that. It was going to support Morocco's stance on the Western Sahara. So talks about favourable policies, but Mauritania, Jordan, Lebanon, Kuwait, even Kuwait, this is the one that you know, they have streets named after George Bush, right. Right. Right. So. So this is interesting. In every country other than Morocco compared to the earlier wave, you'll see that favorability scores with the United States are down. China is benefiting from this. China has been acting. We just had a piece out in Foreign Affairs 2 days ago that talks about how China is reaping the benefits of what is going on in the region. China is far more favourable these days than the United States. 42% of Arabs now believe that they have favourable or somewhat favourable opinions of China. So in terms of thinking that soft power influence in the region, the US is losing it, China is gaining, you know and again thinking about soft power sort of, I can go on and on about this, something that we really pay attention when we teach about authoritarianism. But this authoritarian model that you can bring up the middle class, you can live the good life, but. It has to be authoritarian. This is gaining traction, right? We're seeing a lot. You know, a lot, you know, not to name many different countries, but that this idea of taking a critically assessing the benefits of what liberal democracy can bring. Is certainly presented by this model that can challenge sort of the you know the US or Western sort of commitments to democracy worldwide. So China is benefiting across time. They have risen from 34% to 43%. The Chinese president also has been gaining. These become much more popular in the region across time as well, and his foreign policy is is more favourable. And when we look at whether October 7th. Shifted opinion in favour of China. We see a slight shift in Tunisia from 70 to 75% towards China favorability and we look at these policies, we see that there was a wasn't really a big shift and if anything it sort of didn't. It didn't operate in the same direction that it operated. Here but so I guess I guess

what we can say is that the jury is still out on whether it's going to really push citizens towards China, but at least a lot of the trend data that we're seeing seems to indicate that this is happening. The China image in May that post October 7th, what we see. That. In at least Morocco and Jordan after October, sorry, when we compare the Wave 7 to Wave 8, China's image is on the rise in a positive way. It's static, somewhat static. In Tunisia, 6 percentage points. More tenant. It does not sort of reflect what's going on and that could be more reasonably, you know, determined. OK. So we think that US versus China policy is better for the Israel Palestine conflict. I think I showed you this just earlier, but this is just a few more countries in the mix here. You'll see that the vast majority of Arab countries believe China is better on the Arab Israeli conflict than the United States. So the United States is losing out in terms of its role as a fair arbiter, the United Kingdom. At one point was much more favourable in terms of favorability. the United Kingdom, at least among Jordanian Moroccans, this is 2000, the 7th wave versus the 8th wave. You'll see that it's these have taken huge hits on the decline, France. So it's not only a US story, but it's basically a Western story. The Arab world. Is losing faith in in Western countries. Across the board and again, you know, thinking about where the orientation is, the Middle East has been oriented W the Arab world has oriented itself West, but now there's China on the horizon. Favorability of Russia, Russia, we we see is is sort of static. We haven't seen a big boon towards Russia, not in the way that we've seen it towards China, but nevertheless China, Russia still remains more popular than the United States in the region right now. And we'll get Putin's policies. You'll see that more or less, we see a lot of a lot of static sort of support here, but nevertheless about one one in four believe that the the policies towards may not are very. We don't see any significant shift in Tunisia when we we sort of use our regression discontinuity design here. There's no significant shift in support of Russia, not in the way that we see it. In support of. China. Saudi Arabia seems to be benefiting as well. So again, if we're thinking about. What's happening in the region, about 38% believe that they have a favourable opinion towards Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia today announced that it was not going to renew its Petro agreement with the United States. So there does appear maybe you know this might take even be more favourable to where Saudi Arabia stands. Umm. So this is something to keep. We will keep our eye on and then you look at the foreign policy of Mohammed bin Salman, you'll see that the support is on the rise. It's almost doubled over the last from wave 7 to to wave 8. Iran favorability has not necessarily taken a surge, a lot of people thought that this was going to play. In the brilliant hands of Iran that you know, the Arab citizens are like in this, like, you know, future alliance with with the Iranian regime, we're not necessarily seeing that here's wave 7 in terms of favorability of Iran versus wave 8. It's about 30 to 28%. The you know there's Alex Khanani's foreign policy towards MENA. Was it very popular again, we're not seeing very major shifts here from 16 to 21%, that's five percentage points. Again not not these huge gains. What

we do see though in Tunisia is that. It did rise after October 7th, from 29% to 41%. So there is that potential in in a country like Tunisia, but we're not seeing in other Arab countries just yet. Turkey did not benefit from anything happening in the region. If anything, Turkey's popularity, Erdogan's popularity is on the decline. And do people want stronger economic ties with Turkey? This has been a story that's been on the decline. We see a huge decline between 2021 and 2023. I'm going a little bit quicker now because we have a lot of foreign policy and the guns popularity is also on the decline. So I'd be happy to come back to these, but nevertheless, it's not the story that ohh Iran. Turkey, Russia that access is gaining momentum. The real story is China and that the West is losing its soft power sort of credibility in the region. Qatar is definitely benefiting from what's happening like Saudi Arabia. So again, like looking towards the Gulf countries, about 60% believe that they have a very favourable view of the Qatar government. And that view is stronger in Gaza than the West Bank. And Mohammed bin Zayed's foreign policy about one in five, believe that it's very good and it's very strong. It's sort of equal across the West Bank and Gaza. Qatar seems to have a lot more favorability than than than what's going on in the UAE. So really quickly changes are driven by views of the war in Gaza rather than an immediate reaction to the October 7th attacks on Israel. So what's going on right now? How the world is responding? Western soft power has declined in mana and likely beyond. China has been a clear beneficiary from US policies towards Gaza, US and Western decline. Support is not inevitable, but depends on their policy choices. Views of regional powers have not shifted overly in response to Gaza, maybe, but except in Saudi Arabia and in Qatar, I would say and regionally support for the two state solution remains the preferred option. And I'm look forward to taking your questions and and and and having a discussion. Thank you so much.