SATELLITES, CITIZENS AND THE INTERNET: THE EFFECT OF NEW MEDIA ON THE POLICIES OF THE PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY

By

Creede Newton

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Supervisor: Miklós Haraszti

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I, the undersigned……Creede Newton…………..……………….hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. To the best of my knowledge this thesis contains no material previously published by any other person except where the due acknowledgment has been made. This thesis contains no material which has been accepted as part of the requirements of any other academic degree or non-degree program, in English or in any other language. This is a true copy of the thesis, including final revisions.

Date: …………9 June 2014……………………………………………….

Name (printed letters): …....Creede Newton...............……………………….

Signature: ……… ………Creede Newton…………………………….........

Abstract

The effect of New Media in the wave of protests that swept the Arab World in 2011-2012 has generated a large body of scholarly work due to the widespread calls for democratization in a region that had been entirely under the control of authoritarian leaders for decades. However, in the wake of these protest there has been little research into what effect New Media had those countries which did not experience regime change. This paper will examine the impact of New Media on the policies of the Palestinian Authority. It will show that New Media has the potential for an increase in democratic characteristics, i.e. steps towards a more transparent government that listens to the people, even in the absence of successful democratization.

Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction

Since the beginning of the 20th century, mass media has been intrinsically tied to the fate of the Palestinian people. In the years leading up to the creation of the state of Israel, newspapers and radio broadcasts allowed for public discussion on the issues surrounding the first World War and fall of the Ottoman Empire, the beginning of the British mandate and Zionist immigration to historic Palestine. These same means of communication gave voice to two nationalist movements—one Arab, one Jewish—that planted the seeds of division which still bear fruit today.

For decades, the question of Palestine has served to united and divide millions of people from all over the world. The conflict has started the careers of many politicians, activists, academics and journalists. It also was used to galvanize support for many Arab regimes without democratic accountability. Previous to the death of Yasser Arafat, the Palestinian diaspora was largely united by the aspiration of the creation of a sovereign Palestinian state. However, this unity began to unravel in the early part of the 21[st]century, due in large part to increasing reports on the failed administration and corrupt dealings of the Palestinian Authority (PA) (Pina 2009). At this time, the last substantial Palestinian upheaval, known as the Second Intifada, was taking place. Though violent and largely unsuccessful, the Second Intifada had serious repercussions for all actors in the issue.

Though these repercussions were, for the most part, negative for Palestinians and Israelis alike, there was a positive effect on one important player: the media. Many independent journalists, bloggers, and even satellite channels. Many claim that Al Jazeera shot to prominence on the global scale by its reporting of the Second Intifada, particularly the broadcasting of the video of Mohamed Al-Dura dying in his father's arms. (Seib 2008: 27). This and other reporting presented the conflict in a new way to millions of viewers the world

over, and it was made possible by new developments in world media including the internet and satellite broadcasting.

The Palestinian issue helped give rise and attribute importance to this New Media, which in turn led to the fall of many repressive regimes who had used it to mobilize support. In any serious academic study of the importance of New Media in governmental policies in the Arab World, especially relating to the fall of Arab dictatorships or the opening of these regimes to democratic reforms, the importance of Palestine is addressed. However, the importance of this New Media in the policies of the Palestinian Authority has been ignored by the academic community, in spite of the potential for transferring the findings to similar cases in the Arab World.

Research Question and Methodology

How have New Media effected the policies of the Palestinian Authority? This thesis will attempt to fill a portion of that gap by answering the aforementioned research question. The methods used will be a review of relevant works. To begin with, theoretical literature on Arab media and the potential New Media has for influencing policymakers will be reviewed in order to construct a theoretical framework. Then, reports composed by relevant Nongovernmental Organizations (NGOS), Internationals Press Freedom organizations, and journalistic sources will be used to provide an empirical assessment of the effect New Media has had on the policies of the PA. Elite and expert interviews of journalists with New Media experience in relation to Palestine and policymakers from the PA that provide an insider perspective of the Palestinian government will also be included in the empirical assessment as well as the discussion of findings and conclusion. All of these interviews were semi-structured. The reasoning behind this was to allow for respondents to elaborate on their experience to a great degree. For a detailed table concerning the respondents, see Appendix A.

Chapter 2: Theoretical framework

2.1 Foundations of Media Studies and Government Policy: The CNN Effect on Foreign Policy

Over the past decade, the proliferation of internet access across the planet has led to upheavals, changes in the world economy through business practices which are increasingly looking to the internet to sell products (OECD 2012), government-electorate relations through the implementation of e-governance by the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in most aspect of civil life (Dawes 2008), the delivery and consumption of news via online outlets (Allen 2006) and social interaction through social networks such as Facebook and Twitter (Cheung et al. 2011). All of these modern forms of information dissemination and social interaction have come to be known as "New Media." Scholarship on New Media dates back decades, but this paper will use the first work which comprehensively acknowledged the importance of New Media in the Arab world: *The Al Jazeera Effect* by Philip Seib, as a pillar of the theoretical framework. In this seminal work on the emergence of media which distinctly featured an Arab point of view, Seib discusses the possible effects of satellite television networks, internet communities, the blogosphere and citizen journalism would be on the foreign policy of Arab states, relations between Arab governments and their electorates as well as Arab nations and the West.

It builds on the theory of the "CNN Effect." This was the idea that the introduction of 24 hour news channels could shape the foreign policy of nations such as the United States by broadcasting live images of humanitarian crises. In turn, the combination of images and editorialist commentary provided by pundits would place broadcast news in the policy cycle in three separate (but not exclusive) ways: "(1) *a policy agenda-setting agent* (2) *an impediment to the achievement of desired policy goals,* and (3) *an accelerant to policy decision-making*."

Accelerant	Media shortens decision-making response time. Television diplomacy evident. During time of war, live, global television offer potential security-intelligence risks. But media may also be a force multiplier, method of sending signals. Evident in most foreign policy issues to receive media attention
Impediment	Two types: 1. Emotional, grisly coverage may undermine morale. Government attempts to sanitize war (emphasis on video game war), limit access to the battlefield. 2. Global, real-time media constitute a threat to operational security.
Agenda Setting Agency	Emotional, compelling coverage of atrocities or humanitarian Agency crises reorder foreign policy priorities. Somalia, Bosnia and Haiti said to be examples.

Figure 1: Conceptual Variation of CNN Effect (Livingston 1997)

Particularly, the CNN Effect was applied to US intervention in Somalia, Iraq, Kosovo, Bosnia, and Somalia. All of which were harrowing human rights issues that had little to do with the interests of the United States. According to former US Secretary of State James Baker III, In Iraq, Bosnia, Somalia, Rwanda, and Chechnya, among others, the real-time coverage of conflict by the electronic media has served to create a powerful new imperative for prompt action that was not present in less frenetic [times]," (cited in Gilboa, 2005: 329). Through the dissemination of information on these crises, according to Livingston, the CNN Effect acquired the agency of agenda setting for the policymakers of the United States, and also that of accelerant in reference to Bosnia, Iraq and Kosovo. However, Robinson asserts that there is ample evidence of media becoming "submissive when governments and elites are clearly decided on a course…" and that "….there is little evidence to date of a media0driven policy U-turn whereby news media coverage has forced unified officials to alter course…" (2011: 6).

2.2 Faults with the CNN Effect, and Typology of Rugh

Though a long discussion of the merits of the CNN Effect has brought to light certain concerns and adaptions, (See Jakobsen 2000, Robins 2011, Livingston 2011) there is an inherent bias to the CNN Effect that leaves a large portion of the world out of the range of the

theory: it assumes that change only comes from within governments with liberal democracies, such as the US or the United Kingdom (UK). Within these political systems, the average voter has the right air grievances through democratic channels such as voting or direct contact with elected officials. This is how the power of the CNN Effect is made manifest in the policy process. This is not applicable to most of the Arab regimes since the CNN Effect began to be discussed in the 1980s, few of which had any serious measure of democracy or government openness to an electorate (exceptions being Lebanon, Kuwait, Morocco and Yemen to varying degrees. See Rugh 2004: 88-89). To better understand the importance of political regime in reference to media and its potential to change policy, the studies of Rugh are the most thorough and comprehensive. His thesis was that "the most important variable influence the political role of media channels in the Arab world is the national political system in which they operate," (2007). Rugh proposes three media categories in relation to the political regimes of the Arab world for his typology: mobilization, loyalist and diverse types.

The mobilization type occurs when a regime is controlled by a "…small, aggressive group…" which holds a monopoly on power and will not allow for the press to criticize political leaders…the regime exercises strong controls over all media, whether direct or indirect." Though the media appears nationalized, there are often magazines and newspapers left in private hands. However, there is usually a national news agency which guides reporting. They also control media by appointing officials to regulatory bodies and committees. Although censorship prior to publication is not common, due to the repressive political environment, self-censorship occurs often. This is because editors and journalists both follow two "guidance channels." The first is public announcements and statements delivered by government officials which outline the official narrative of events or policies. The second is the national news service "…which is used as an important source of policy guidance…"

(Rugh 2004: 40).In light of this tight control, mobilization regimes often use the media for overt propaganda campaigns and view the press as an important tool for mobilization of support for their policies, hence the name (31).

The regimes of the loyalist type feature many of the same characteristics of those of the mobilization type, but take a more passive stance towards media. The regime leaves media ownership in the hands of private owners but these owners remain faithful to the leaders and policies of the government. Due to this, the media is known as loyalist. Content in newspapers retains some of the characteristics of the mobilization typology, it does not attack the central policies of the ruling government, nor any officials in important positions. Loyalist press also offers the occasional criticism of certain government services or specific officials, though it is light criticism that does not directly challenge the ruling class in any significant way. The loyalist press "…avoids some critical issues, it is slower to react editorially to events.... [t]thorough and independent reporting is rare," (65). Therefore, there is little real diversity in the media landscape. According to Rugh, the reasons for press loyalty in this typology is a combination of "legal authority" and "financial benefits" (70-71). The legal authority from which this press loyalty springs is usually a law or set of laws that allow for a measure of freedom of expression. In the case of the PA, for example, the Palestinian Press Law of 1995, which will be discussed later, allows for freedom of expression but limits it in the case of "public rights and duties." This language is too vague to substantially set limits on the limits of free expression. As such, the law does not provide an adequate safeguard against repression of speech (74-75).

The *diverse* typology features a media landscape that features outlets which are "…clearly different from each other in content and apparent political tendency as well as in style," (87). These regimes feature political pluralism. This means that there are easily identifiable groups with platforms and philosophies towards public policy that are readily distinguishable. Rugh

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states that this "…pluralism may manifest itself in organized politicalparties or other forms…" and that options must be discernable to the public (88). As there is a large degree of patronization[1] of media in Arab society, this plurality stems often stems from a wide array of legitimate political options within the political process.

Typology	Characteristics	Examples
Mobilization	--Use of media as tool to foster government support --Regime controlled by small group, few privately owned outlets, --Overt propaganda campaigns	Libya, pre-2003 Iraq, Syria, The Sudan
Loyalist	--Privately owned outlets which are loyal to the regime --Non-democratic regimes --Regime has legal basis for press control, Lack of real diversity in media content	Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, Oman, Palestine
Diverse	--Patronization of media by political parties leads to diversity --Plurality of outlets reflecting diverse approaches to policy --Wide array of choices in government	Lebanon; Yemen, Morocco, Kuwait (all with exceptions)

Figure 2: Typology of Arab Press Regimes (Rugh 2004)

Lebanon is heralded as the premiere example of the diverse typology, but Morocco, Kuwait Yemen also exhibit characteristics of the *diverse* typology. Lebanon has the longest history of printed media in the Arab World, as the first Arab daily began in Beirut in 1873. The nation is comprised of various religions and sects within those religions, and the National Covenant made in 1943 between Christians and Muslims allowed for an allotment of high political offices based on faction membership (93). According to the Covenant, the President of the Republic is to be Christian, the Prime Minister is to be Sunni, and the President of the

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[1] Media outlets being supportive of a particular political party, as outlined in the loyalist portion of thetypology

Parliament is to be Shia (Faruki 1974: 28). Since the government depends on coalitions that often mirror sectarian interests, the media landscape developed accordingly, and though it is often critical of the government the ruling coalition does not take steps to silence dissent.

2.3 New Media, the Al Jazeera Effect and the Rugh Typology

The discussion of the potential effect of New Media on society started with publication of Manuel Castells' *The Rise of the Network Society* (1996), a work he expanded upon in his book *Communication Power* (2009). Since then, there has been ample scholarly debate concerning the use of New Media as a form of democratization. Certain scholars have addressed the severe limitations of democratization through the media (Barnett 1997), while others have addressed the concerns with measured optimism concerning the role of New Media in the democratization process (Howard 2010).

The Al Jazeera Effect, according to author Philip Seib, speaks about this effect as the logical continuation of the previously discussed CNN Effect. "[T]he theory that news coverage…was influencing foreign policy throughout the world…the 'Al Jazeera effect' takes that a significant step farther…[it] encompasses the use of new media as tools in every aspect of global affairs, ranging from democratization to terrorism…" (2008: x).

In his thesis, Rugh defines Arab mass media as "…newspapers, radio, and television…" (2007: 2) and his typology was largely limited to a discussion of the printed press. Herein lies a weakness with his theory, it largely discounts the ever growing means of communication. The Al Jazeera Effect embraces these new forms of communication as important tools for social advancement. According to Seib, "…the Al Jazeera effect can help governments become more transparent and more responsive… [m]ore grandly, the Internet and other new communication mechanisms can be splendid tools of democratization, adding new dimensions to freedom of expression and political action." (2008: 48). Certain aspects of this thesis have been supported by the wave of demonstrations that came to be known as the

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"Arab Spring," which had varying degrees of success in terms of democratization. The inclusion of New Media is important, as it has an indelible place in modern society. However, the original thesis of Rugh remains pertinent, New Media is affected by, and in turn affects, the national political systems in which they operate.

2.3.1 The Types of Media Included in the Theory of the Al Jazeera Effect

There is no exhaustive list of what media is considered part of the theory provided in the original book on the Al Jazeera Effect. Before the theory of the Al Jazeera Effect can be applied to any case, a comprehensive definition of what media is included in the theory must be given. Satellite stations such as Al Jazeera and its main competitor Al Arabiya are included. Given their tendencies to tack taboos not usually discussed by state-owned or loyalist media, news portals such as the *Electronic Intifada* and *Middle East Monitor* are included. Social media is also indispensable, as many civil society organizations such as the Popular Struggle Coordination Committee and various NGOs use Facebook to organize demonstrations and disseminate news and information which the patronized media of the Palestinian Authority ignores. The importance of these media in social movements has been discussed by authors such as Mourtada and Salem (2011), Hame and Salem (2012) and Zarb (2011). Citizen journalism and, by extension, blogs, must also be included. Gillmor discusses at length the importance of blogs, saying that they "…work in something close to real time and capture—in the best sense of the word—the multitude of ideas and realities each of us can offer…" (2004: 237).

2.3.2 The Al Jazeera Effect on the policies of the Arab World

Two of these innovations, online news and social media along with satellite television networks have contributed to political upheaval previously unseen in the Arab world.

The widespread social protests (and in the cases of Libya and Syria, armed conflict) against authoritarian regimes that became known as the "Arab Spring" reared their heads, with

varying success, in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Yemen, Morocco, Jordan, Mauritania, and Bahrain.

Some have claimed that these new media were a "necessary and sufficient" cause of the revolutions and that without them, the Arab Spring would have been impossible. Beginning in Tunisia with the self-immolation of Mohamed Bouazizi on December 17, 2010, the Arab Spring was a circular relationship of new media. Zarb, who readily challenges the effectiveness of satellite broadcasts in his work, simultaneously reinforces the thesis of Rugh by saying that the "…Arab media world is not free of the political and economic influence of its governments…or the various political parties struggling for control…" (2011). However, he contends that Al Jazeera "…became a disseminating tool for user-generated content. A call for Arab citizens to send their footage of unfolding events to the Al-Jazeera website for it to re-broadcast on its TV screens was a key factor in the dissemination of what was happening…" in the Tunisian and Egyptian revolutions (ibid). This is the culmination of Seib's thesis, which contended that the Al Jazeera Effect would change the domestic political reality for Arab and Islamic nations while reshaping international relations on a global scale. In an absolute sense, it has also made governments more accountable to the people. In nations that experienced regime change, the populace is experience true democracy for the first time in their histories. Furthermore, this thesis will show that even in nations that did not experience regime change, New Media has increased the democratic character of Arab regimes.

2.4 Construction of the Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework that will be applied to the case of the media policies of the Palestinian Authority will be drawn from the previously discussed theories. From the CNN Effect, the notion that news media can have an impact on important policies. This notion will be expanded upon by its logical extension, the Al Jazeera effect, which entails that new

media would lead to a democratization. Seib's book predates the emergence of social media as a serious disseminator of information, so the inclusion of Twitter and Facebook as viable means of information dissemination be based on the work of Mourtada and Salem and Hame and Salem.

To package this construction, the typology of Rugh will be utilized. Palestine was classified as a loyalist press regime under the typology. The inherent lack of plurality of options, opinion and coverage of events in loyalist press regimes necessitates the creation of a new "public sphere" for genuine dissemination and discussion of events. This refers back to the Al Jazeera Effect, which provided a new outlet for discussion in the limited media landscapes of loyalist regimes.

2.4.A Limits on the Policy Making of the PA

In order to understand the effect that media can have on the policies of the PA, one must first understand the scope of the PA's power in determining and implementing policy. Regardless of its recognition by the United Nations General Assembly Palestine is not an independent state and as such, it does not have full say in a number of policy areas (Turner 2009).

For example, in 2012 the PA experienced a huge budgetary shortfall of US $1.3 billion (Reuters 2012). The PA economy is largely dependent on aid from donors, and in this year many Arab donor nations had not delivered on their promises. In an attempt to avoid disaster, Israel asked the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to lend it US $1 billion to be given to the PA. The IMF declined on the basis that it did not want to set a precedence of "bridge loans;" loaning funds to states which would then be given to non-state actors (ibid). This touches upon another limitation of the PA, the strings attached to aid and donations. For example, beginning in 2013, the US gives approximately $440 million to the PA in aid, down from $500 million due to the US Congress expressing concern that funds were being diverted to aid groups designated as terrorist organizations. Due to these concerns, the aid money is

subject to various restrictions and vetting procedures (Zanotti 2013: 2). Aid money is sometimes held and released to the PA to influence its decision making, as exhibited when President Obama released aid to the PA with certain requests, such as the PA's recognition of Israel as the Jewish State and the PA refusing to take Israel to the International Criminal Court (Miller 2013). Relative to this, US funding to international organizations (IOs) is contingent on these organizations not recognizing Palestine as a full member state (Rubin 2013). This shows that donor nations can have an impact not only on the states to which they give funds, but also the organizations surrounding said states. This also demonstrates the importance of donor countries in swaying policies of the nations to which they give. This aspect will be discussed later.

Though the PA is dependent on foreign aid for the overwhelming majority of government funds[2], this does not mean that it is entirely unable to craft policy, especially in regard to how these funds are allocated, which constitutes budgetary policy, and the budgetary decision makers. Appointments of officials are an important area in which New Media can impact PA policy, as will be shown.

Chapter 3: Empirical Section

The empirical section of the thesis will be divided into two parts. The first will outline the historical development Palestinian media, beginning in the early 20th century as modern means of communication became readily available in the Levant region, following through the establishment of the state of Israel, the beginning of the occupation of the West Bank by Israel in 1967, the democratization of the Palestinian territories after the Oslo accords, and

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[2] One of the exceptions are PA taxes which are collected by Israel and can be withheld should the Israeli government choose to do so, as was the case after the PA statehood bid at the UN (Horowitz 2012). This further demonstrates the importance of foreign policies and opinion in relation to PA policies

then the 2006 Hamas victory in parliamentary elections. Then, the legal framework concerning media freedoms will be outlined.

The next section will offer a discussion of changes in policy that have been enacted by forms of new media, and what the overall reaction on the part of the PA to the introduction of New Media in the Palestinian territories. This will largely detail oppression and censorship, but through the inclusion of information garnered through expert and elite interviews, it will discuss certain actions by the PA which make it appear is if certain elements of the government are open to using New Media as an element of agenda setting in the policy process.

3.1 Historical Background and Legal Framework

Contrary to popular belief concerning the desire of freedom of speech in Arab nations, the desire of uninhibited self-expression has long existed in the Arab world. In Palestine, the development of mass communication largely mirrors the process of the rest of the world. First came the printing press, then the radio, then television, then the internet. The notable exception is that of the telegraph, which never featured prominently in the Levantine region of the Ottoman Empire.

In 1908, when the Levant was still part of the Ottoman Empire, the window to free speech opened. The rebellion of the Committee of Union and Progress, commonly known as the Young Turks, reestablished the Ottoman constitution of 1876. This lead to "sweeping away the sultan's autocracy and replacing it…by resounding pluralism," (Ayalon 1999: 65). The effect was an explosion of private press throughout the Arab world, especially in Damascus, Sidon, Beirut and Jerusalem. The ensuing proliferation had an auxiliary motivator in the land of historic Palestine: Zionist settlements. European and American Zionist migrants brought with them a strong history of printed press. However, as time continued, the surge of papers after the transition from a repressive regime to that of freedom "…created a state of

'journalistic anarchy'" (67). This phase was not unlike that of the current blogosphere phenomena. It birthed a wide array of low quality journalism. During this time, three newspapers, all published by Christians, became the leading voices in the land. These were *al-Quds* (Jerusalem) which began publication in 1908, *al-Karmil,* which began in Haifa in the same year, and *Filastin* (Palestine), in 1911. However, by the outbreak of World War I, wartime censorship returned to Ottoman holdings (ibid).

After the conclusion and dissolution of the Ottoman Empire after WWI, Palestine fell under the control of the British. During this time, the Palestine Broadcasting Service (PBS) was established. It was, unsurprisingly, modeled after the British Broadcasting Service (BBC). The reasoning behind its establishment was the recognition by the British (and European governments at large) of the power of radio to shape public opinion. The PBS produced programming in Arabic, Hebrew and English. It followed the BBC model of public funding, a combination of state subsidies and licensing fees for radio receivers. The station lasted until 1948, the year the state of Israel was established (Stanton 2012).

Between 1948 and 1967, the West Bank was occupied by Jordanian forces. During this time, a penal code was introduced. Articles 189 gives a definition for libel and article 191 allows for up to two years of jail time for slandering public officials (Human Rights Watch 2012). These articles would provide a future foundation for oppression of free speech in the Palestinian Territories. In spite of this legal justification, there was little censorship during the Jordanian occupation of the West Bank. In fact, the modern iteration of *al-Quds* was founded in this era (Abu Sada).

In 1967, the Six Day War was fought. Israeli forces bested the armies of Jordan, Syria and Egypt and occupied large swaths of land, including the West Bank. During this time, Palestinian media was funded, sponsored and censored by various factions of the Palestinian

Liberation Organization (PLO), Jordan, Israel and the then-powerful Israeli Communist party that sought a binational solution to the Palestinian Question (Nossek and Rinnawi 2003: 186). Another aspect of this time period was a media focus on resistance to the Israeli occupation. This turned the eye of the public outward, leaving internal Palestinian issues and events relatively undiscussed (187). For decades Palestinian media continued in this fashion.

In 1993, after the events of the First Intifada (for a detailed study of the relationship between social movements and the media during this time, see Alimi 2007) Israel and the PLO signed the Oslo Accords, allowing for the creation of the Palestinian Authority and the framework for a Palestinian state by the year 2000. Many had hoped that this agreement would lead to the creation of an independent, democratic and sovereign Palestinian state with a normal media landscape. For example, the Palestinian Broadcasting Company was established to provide public television and radio to the Palestinian territories. Previously, under the Israeli occupation, this was forbidden. In spite of the freedom awarded to Palestinian media in 1993, an open and expressive media landscape has not been established. This is due to a number of causes, one of which is the conflicting legislation and policies adopted by the PA that will be detailed later.

At this time, a huge percentage of the populace supported general elections (77 percent) and two-thirds supported freedom of the press (Shikaki 1993: 12). Elections for president and the Palestinian parliament were held for the first time in 1996, during which then-leader of the PLO Yasser Arafat won over 88 percent of the popular vote and Fatah won 55 of 88 seats in the Palestinian parliament. Optimism was high due to the Israeli-Palestinian peace agreements of the preceding years and voter turnout was high, roughly 71 percent (PNA 1996). Over the next decade, national aspirations among Palestinians gave way to dissatisfaction with PA rule. The consequences of suspected corruption that had become endemic to the Fatah administration of the Palestinian territories reared its head in the 2006

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election, when opposition party Hamas won a sweeping victory in the Gaza Strip. Corruption, along with many other failings of the PA including ineffective security services and the impending collapse of the Palestinian economy led to a rupture in the Palestinian populace that shook Fatah, the political party headed by Yasser Arafat until his death in 2004 (Pina 2009). The victory of Hamas in the Gaza strip was not recognized by the PA, Israel, or a large portion of Western governments. At this point, Abbas decided to suspend elections in the Palestinian territories until an agreement between the combatant factions controlling the West Bank and the Gaza strip could be reached (Beaumont and Lewis 2014). This meant that for nearly a decade the Palestinian people have been left without democratic institutions and the politicians of both Palestinian governments were no longer subject to democratic accountability.

This rupture in the Palestinian leadership must be considered a turning point for the Palestinian people and government. It presented a new threat to the PA administration that had not been present under longtime leadership of Yasser Arafat. For the first time in decades, Fatah administration was seen as vulnerable to the opinion of the Palestinian public, which had hitherto been united under the banner of aspirations to statehood and led by Arafat. For decades, they had been united in a common goal with Arafat and Fatah as leaders. The division of Palestinian leadership which reportedly came to an end in April 2014, caused a tightening of dissent in the West Bank (ibid). Largely because of the charge of "threatening national unity" being levied against journalists and activists critical of the PA. In order to understand how this tightening has occurred legally, as is the case with loyalist media regimes in the Rugh typology, Palestinian legislation concerning media freedom will be discussed.

3.1.C The Palestinian and the Press and Publication Law of 1995 and the Basic Law of 1997

Basic Law

Before one examines the Palestinian Press and Publication Law of 1995, the Palestinian Basic Law must first be considered. The Basic Law was drafted in 1995, passed by the Palestinian Legislative Council in 1997 and ratified by the President, Yasser Arafat, in 2002. The law serves as a temporary constitution until the establishment of an independent Palestinian state (LaRue 2012). The Basic Law adheres to most international standards concerning civil rights such as the freedom of press. For example, Article 19 states that "freedom of opinion may not be prejudiced. Every person shall have the right to express his opinion and to circulate it orally, in writing or any form of expression or art, with due consideration to the provisions of the law." (Article 27 goes on to guarantee the establishment that the "[e]stablishment of newspapers and all media means is a right for all," guaranteed by the Basic Law, (PA Basic Law 2003). Within the law, there is little that can be interpreted as providing for the censorship of the media.

Press and Publication Law of 1995

On the other hand, the Press and Publication Law of 1995 allows for much greater censorship. According to LaRue, the original intent of this law was to provide guidance to the media and further enforce the basic rights of freedom of access to information and expression of opinion (2012). However, there are provisions which restrict these rights; thereby directly contravening the Palestinian Basic Law. Included in these restrictions are "excessive Government control over the media, including licensing of print media and censorship of publication, and broad restrictions on the content of what may be published, many of which are vague. For instance, publication materials that contradict principles of freedom, national responsibility, or are 'inconsistent with morals' or which may 'shake belief in the national currency,'" (12). These are vaguely worded restrictions which allow ample room for interpretation. The inclusion of terminology that puts forth intangible ideas without nationally

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agreed upon definitions such as "principles of freedom," "national responsibility" and inconsistency with "morals" is in line with restrictive censorship regimes throughout the world. This leads to a climate of self-censorship, which is common among journalists working in traditional media formats such as newspapers, radio and television throughout the Arab world, especially in nations that fit within the loyalist designation of the Rugh typology. According to Amin, journalists "…in the Arab world are aware that national media policies always reinforce cultural and national traditions and values and therefore prohibit content that criticizes these principles and traditions or creates social confusion… is tolerated and even expected as a form of civic responsibility," (2010: 129). Thus, through the combination of "cultural and d national traditions" and overt oppression, self-censorship is prevalent throughout Palestine and the rest of the Arab World.

The Jordanian Penal Code

During the Jordanian occupation of the West Bank that lasted from 1948-1967, there was a penal code introduced that barred "extending one's tongue" against the governing body. (Abu Toameh 2012). This penal code is still available to lawmakers in the West Bank, and it has been used several time by the PA under the guidance of President Abbas. The law is even more vaguely worded than the Press and Publication law. The phrase "extending one's tongue" leaves the metaphorical door open to a liberal interpretation of what constitutes inflammatory speech. As will be discussed later, the PA has used this law to criminalize journalism on several occasions.

3.2 Traditional Media in Palestine

In order to attain a better understanding of the degree of government intervention in Palestine's loyalist media landscape prior to the proliferation of satellite broadcasts and internet access, a discussion of traditional media will be included below. It will aim to demonstrate the need for New Media in attaining any semblance of pluralism of views.

3.2.1 Newspapers

In the West Bank, there are three daily newspapers which comprise the majority of circulation. These are *al-Quds,* which has a long history in Palestine and the largest readership. The newspaper is privately owned. From time to time it has attempted to publish articles critical of the PA, but it has regularly been censored (Nossek and Rinnawi 2003: 183). Then there is *al-Ayyam,* the editor of which used to be a Fatah official, and *al-Hayat al-Jadidah,* which is a national paper affiliated with the PA (Abu Sada).

In keeping with the loyalist designation, two of the three main sources of daily news and information for the people of Palestine are closely linked to the ruling party, Fatah. The only newspaper which is not, *al-Quds,* has a long history of the PA monitoring and censoring its content. Another facet of the relationship between *al-Quds* and the PA is that the newspaper is not strictly independent, it relies on small donations from the PA to continue operations (Nossek and Rinnawi 2003: 188).

3.2.2 Radio

One of the bright spots of the media landscape of the West Bank is the selection of radio stations. There is one station that is linked to the PA directly, The Voice of Palestine, is remains a part of the PBC to this day, despite an attack during the Second Intifada, during which the Israeli Defense Forces used explosives to destroy the main broadcasting tower of the station, claiming that it promoted violence during the Second Intifada (BBC 2002). Beyond this, there are stations such as Ajyaal, Raya, Sama andAmwaj which are independently owned and can be heard everywhere in the West Bank. Furthermore, there are more than 70 small, private radio stations registered in various towns and villages (ibid). An example of these stations would be Radio Bethlehem 20003, which offers news on cultural

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[3] See http://www.rb2000.ps/ for an overview of their news coverage

news and cultural events to the diverse population of the biblical city, which is comprised of both Christians and Muslims. The station even went as far as to publicly discuss the "first gay marriage in the Arab world," (Radio Bethlehem 2000 2014).

While there is a considerable amount of privately owned stations which reflect a myriad of views and provide local news and entertainment programming, as exhibited by the progressive coverage of the "first gay marriage in the Arab world," most of these privately owned stations are dependent on commercials for revenue. Due to this, the stations tend to shy away from overtly political coverage, in order to distinguish themselves from tendentious PA-linked stations (Nossek and Rinnawi2003: 196). Also, when correspondents venture into the political, there are often repercussions from the PA, as was the case with Radio Bethlehem 2000 reporter George Canawati. In November 2013, he had been arrested four times by the PA. Once for criticisms of a local Fatah-linked police commander, another for criticisms of a PA administered hospital in Bethlehem, reporting on internal division within Fatah, and the final time merely for slander and insults. This arrest, Canawati claims, was "barbaric" (Strickland 2014)

3.2.3 Television
There are approximately 31 private television stations registered with the Palestinian Ministry of Information, which oversees traditional means of communication in the West Bank. These range from entertainment to news, and again, they are mostly affiliated with the PA (Abu Sada). As Alaa Tartir, program direct at Al Shabaka claimed, "Television is controlled by the [PA], you will not plurality of views in any true sense of the word…" This

Aside from these domestic public and private broadcasters, satellite television plays an important role, and serves, in a sense, as the bridge between traditional media and New Media. Before there was widespread internet access, Roughly 53.4 of Palestinians used Al Jazeera as their primary source of news. Palestine TV, funded by the PA, came in a distant

second at 12.8 percent. Al Arabiya came in third at 10 percent (Bonsey and Koogler 2010).

Several respondents suggested that the large percentage of Palestinians who use Al Jazeera as a primary source of news comes from the lack of plurality in domestic media. This large viewership gives the channel a greater power to influence public discourse.

3.3 New Media in Palestine

Having discussed that the domestic media landscape in the Palestinian territories, a detailed study of New Media will now be discussed. The study will be concerned with internet access and social media usage as the penetration of satellite broadcasts has already been discussed. Then the effect of the most prevalent form of New Media, Al Jazeera, will be discussed. Finally, the PA response to this new form of communication will be detailed.

3.3.1 Access and Social Media usage

An important factor in the proliferation of New Media consumption and usage is, of course, internet penetration within society. For years, Palestinian internet usage was low, in part because of the occupation but also due to cultural reasons. However, from 2010 to 2012, internet usage in the Palestinian territories skyrocketed from 14.2 percent of the population to 57.7 percent (see figure 3). During this same time, the number of Facebook users was also increasing rapidly. As of mid-2011, Palestine had 124,720 Facebook users. As a percent of population, Facebook users in Palestine comprised 13.10 percent in 2011, and placed them at eleventh in the Arab World in terms of Facebook penetration, according to a Dubai School of

Year	Users (approx.)	Population	Percentage of Population
2000	35,000	3,15,056	1.1%
2003	145,000	3,647,875	4.0%
2005	160,000	3,259,363	4.9%
2009*	355,500	2,461,267	14.4%
2010	356,000	2,514,845	14.2
2012	1,512,273	2,622,544	57.7%

Figure 3: Internet penetration in Palestine (Internet World Stats 2012)
*Starting in 2009, the Gaza strip is no longer included in the survey

Government report on social media in the Arab world (Mourtada and Salem 2011). An interesting facet of Facebook usage is the huge divide between the young and the old. 81 percent of Facebook users were between the ages of 15 and 29, meaning that only 19 percent of users were 30 or above. This percentage means that Palestine had the largest group of young Facebook users in the entire Arab world. Relative to this, Palestine the difference in male to female users was 62 percent to 38 percent respectively. The country with the most gender balanced Facebook population was Lebanon (55 percent male to 45 percent female), with Bahrain, Tunisia and Jordan trailing closely (13). Also, in terms of language preference for Facebook users, 66.9 percent of Palestinians use an Arabic interface and 31.97 use English. According to Mourtada and Salem, this is an important indicator of *who* exactly is using Facebook, as Palestine has a huge international population due to its large concentration of NGOs and journalists. In Tunisia, on the other hand, only 1.56 percent of Facebook users have an Arabic interface, with a huge 94.6 using French, the other official language of the country (14). The large number of Arabic speaking youths with access to the internet who are regularly using Facebook shows that the premiere demographic for demonstrators and activists is wired and active.

3.3.2 Twitter usage

According to respondents, Twitter is not an important form of New Media in Palestine. One respondent, professor at Harvard Law School and a former negotiator in peace talks for the PLO, Diana Buttu, attributed this to the fact that Palestinians do not have access to 3G networks, due to the Israeli occupation, that make live-tweeting possible. Whatever the reason is, the research of Mourtada and Salem support this notion. In Palestine, Twitter is only used by 0.25 percent of the populace, with only 11,369 active users in 2011 (17). Bearing these facts in mind, Twitter can be discounted as a major supplier of news or as a mobilizer of protestors.

3.4 Al Jazeera and its effect on the PA

Al Jazeera itself has been one of the most critical outlets concerning the policies and actions of the PA, as well as the scandals surrounding it. With such high viewership in the Palestinian territories and readership there and abroad, it is a driving force in guiding the discussion of policies enacted, whether de jure or de facto, in Palestine. As such, pertinent examples of Al Jazeera reporting on public affairs will be discussed below. This list is not exhaustive, and in the discussion there will be no separation of the Al Jazeera television or websites, English or Arabic, due to the fact that these outlets gave corresponding amounts of coverage to the issues.

3.4.1 The Goldstone Report

An example of Al Jazeera's ability to influence public discussion and the actions of the PA is that of the Goldstone Report. A UN panel headed by a South African judge Richard Goldstone investigated charges that the Israeli army was guilty of war crimes in the 2009 conflict with in the Gaza Strip. The panel found Israel guilty of many violations, raising "...hopes across the Arab world that Israeli leaders would finally be held accountable under international law," (Bonsey and Koogler 2010: 1). However, the Obama administration tried its best to block the report and put pressure on PA president Abbas not to endorse it or any other measures, which he did in order to gain credibility with the newly elected US administration (Lynch 2009). This politically capitulation would cost Abbas greatly after Al Jazeera reported extensively on this subject, making it "…a primary focus of its news coverage for several days, quickly turning the decision into the biggest story in the Arab world…" (Bonsey and Koogler 2010: 1). In the wake of the ensuing fallout, the credibility of Abbas fell to a new low with Palestinians and the Arab world in general (ibid). Even members of Abbas' party Fatah condemned his actions, some of which (including Bassem al-Khoury, the economics minister at the time) resigned in protest (Lynch 2010).

3.4.2 The Palestine Papers

In early 2011, Al Jazeera and The Guardian began to release a leak 1,684 documents concerning the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. These documents, which included emails, internal memos, maps, the minutes of private meetings, date from 1999 to 2010. According to Al Jazeera, they were not meant to cause harm, but to "…inform, not harm, to spark debate and reflection – not dampen it," (AJE-"Palestine Papers" 2011). According to one of the main leakers, a lawyer and advisor during the Annapolis negotiations Ziyad Clot, his reasoning behind revealing the papers was that the peace process had resulted in "…an inequitable and destructive political process which had been based on the assumption that the [Palestinian leadership] could in effect negotiate their rights and achieve self-determination while enduring the hardship of the Israeli occupation (2011).

The leak of these documents revealed a great deal about the peace process and on what issues exactly the PA was willing to compromise. For example, the Right of Return of Palestinian refugees displaced in 1948 to their pre-1948 homes is a major issue with the Palestinian public and was guaranteed in international law by UN resolution 194 (UNGA 1948). However, documents show that the head Palestinian negotiator Erekat and the Israeli negotiator at the time, Tzipi Livni, agreed that only 10,000 of the refugees would be allowed to return (Black and Milne 2011). In relation to this, mutual land swaps which would forcefully relocate a large percentage of the Arab population of Israel into a future Palestinian state were also agreed to, without the consent of the Arab-Israelis who had no wish to be under the administration of the state of Palestine (Milne and Black 2011). The leaks also show a distrust of Al Jazeera by the PA, US, and Israel, especially after the revelations surrounding the Goldstone report (Carlstrom 2011).

The Palestine Papers revealed a litany of acquiescence on the part of the PA that would have serious consequences. One of the most serious effects would be the resignation of the

Palestinian negotiator at the time, Saeb Erekat. Erekat said that that he bared all responsibility for the leaks. However, before his resignation, Erekat said that the documents had purposefully tampered with in order to misrepresent the efforts of the PA negotiations and accused Al Jazeera of a campaign to overthrow the PA (AJE"Erekat Quits…" 2011). This was later proven to be untrue, as officials from the negotiations confirmed the veracity of the documents.

In a move that revealed the policy towards dissenting news coverage that is being adopted by the PA, a crowd of Fatah supporters stormed the headquarters of Al Jazeera in the administrative capital of the PA, Ramallah, chanting that Al Jazeera were "traitors" (Horowitz 2011) This was on the first day of the publication on an English-language news source, suggesting further a degree of affiliation with the PA.

This deployment of followers to the Ramallah offices of Al Jazeera showed a worrying tendency towards the *mobilization* branch of the Rugh typology, and exhibits an overall shift in the PA stance towards press freedom. Respondents also stated that the Palestine Papers had an adverse effect for the credibility of Al Jazeera in the eyes of Palestinians. This was due to the poor depiction of PA officials by anchors and guests during the time when the satellite channel was heavily featuring coverage of the leaks. It also shows an attempt to penalize an organization for an attempt at increasing the transparency of the PA.

3.5 The PA Response to Criticism: Intimidation through legal proceedings, censorship, monitoring and threats as de facto media policy

As outlined above, the Palestinian Basic Law and the Press and Publication Law of 1995 serve as the de jure Palestinian media policy. Findings show that in spite of the perceived guarantee of freedom of the press outlined in this legislation, the de facto policy is one of intimidation through legal proceedings, outright censorship, monitoring of social media and threats towards any opinion that offers a dissenting view from the loyalist media. There is a

large amount of research conducted by the several IOs and NGOs that document the difficulties faced by Palestinian journalists. A report produced by the Palestinian Center for Development & Media Freedoms recorded 28 violations of press freedom committed by the PA in 2013, which was a decline (see figure 4).

Year	Israeli violations	Palestinian Violations (West Bank)	Total
2008	*147*	*66*	*213*
2009	*97*	*49*	*146*
2010	*139*	*46*	*185*
2011	*100*	*44*	*144*
2012	*164*	*37*	*201*
2013	*151*	*28*	*179*
Total	*798*	*270*	*1,068*

Figure 4: Press Freedom Violations compared: Israeli and the Palestinian Authority (MADA 2014)

3.5.1 Internet censorship and its repercussions

As exhibited in Figure 4, attacks on the press by the PA have dwindled in recent years. There are many possible explanations for this, but the two most discussed are an increase in publicity surrounding the media policies, namely oppression, of the PA which then affects donor support. Another is an increase in self-censorship among Palestinian journalists, which will be discussed later in the findings section.

In reference to the first explanation, several respondents noted that the PA had become more aware of foreign media attention, citing the case of Mashhour Abudaka, the former Palestinian Minister of Telecommunications and Information Technology, who resigned in 2012 in protest of the decision to block eight opposition sites in the West Bank. This, coupled

with the arrest of a Palestinian journalist who wrote an article exposing corruption in the Palestinian diplomatic mission to France, increased attention on journalistic oppression perpetrated by the PA (CPJ April 24, 2012). These actions caused the ire of the US government and the EU, two major donors to the PA. This international pressure caused President Abbas to issue a public statement calling for the sites to be unblocked (Odgaard 2012). Abudaka commented on this during his interview, in which he said that "This event caused the world to watch the actions of the Palestinian Authority, and they noticed." During interviews, the notion that the PA was more accountable to donor nations that to its own people was raised by several respondents. In reference to the Abudaka affair, Diana Buttu remarked that "…donor countries have their own agendas, they will make sure websites are unblocked. They don't want to seem as if they're funding China."

3.5.1.1 Defamation Suits

The interplay between donor funds and the PA reverberates through the issue in another way. Due to the large amount of foreign aid delivered to the PA and the lacking levels of oversight, allegations of corruption are commonly hurled in the Palestinian political landscape. In 2002, in the midst of the Second Intifada, large crowds began to protest corrupt PA practices. In a move to placate protests, Arafat appointed Salaam Fayyad, a pro-Western former official of the World Bank, as the Finance Minister of the PA who then ordered an investigation into the wealth Arafat had amassed through years of handling aid money (McDermott 2003).One of former president Arafat's closest advisors, Mohammed Rachid, was placed under investigation for embezzling millions of dollars of public funds (Schanzer 2012).

In recent times, the Abbas family has been under more scrutiny for alleged corruption from outside sources. A salient case is that of Jonathon Schanzer, an American journalist and scholar who specializes in the Israel-Palestine issue, wrote an article for US based news site Foreign Policy which alleged that Abbas and his two sons Yasser and Tarek were amassing

huge fortunes by taking advantage of the political connections of their family and channeling US aid money to their respective business holdings. One such example listed by Schanzer was that of Sky Advertising, a company ran by Tarek Abbas which received a million dollar grant from USAID to improve Palestinian public opinion concerning the US. This was one of many examples of the Abbas sons companies receiving large amounts of aid money for construction and other endeavors in the Palestinian territories (Schanzer 2012). In response to the article, the Abbas brothers brought at $10 million against Foreign Policy Group LLC for libel in American courts in 2012 (Tillman 2012). This case was dismissed in 2013, but it exhibits a growing tendency on the part of the PA to sue journalists critical of their administration for exorbitant amounts, even when these articles are published outside of Palestine, as was the case with Yousef al-Shayeb. Al-Shayeb faced a defamation suit of US $6 million for writing an article in a Jordanian newspaper in 2012 alleging corruption and spying by the PA diplomatic mission to France (CPJ April 4, 2012).

3.5.1.2 Monitoring of Facebook dissent
As the internet and Facebook have become more readily available to the Palestinian populace, the possibility of open discussion about PA administration also became known. This new public platform, social media, began to be used in a serious way in 2010, when internet access became affordable. Journalists, activists and citizens began airing their grievances on Facebook. The PA took notice, and by 2012 it had begun to seriously monitor the website.

One of the first examples of this took place in January 2012, when Rami Samara, an editor of one of the official PA-linked Palestinian news agencies, Wafa, was detained for hours at the PA headquarters in Ramallah. During Samara's questioning, police officers showed him "…hundreds of pages of comments I made on Facebook, mostly criticizing the Palestinian Authority…" (The Guardian 2012). Another journalist, Asm Abed Al-Khaleq, was arrested

on 28 March and charged in connection with comments she posted on Facebook which allegedly endangered "national unity" for the Palestinian people. At the onset of her detention, Khaleq was denied bail and ordered to remain in solitary confinement for 15 days. In relation to this event, another journalist, Tariq Khamis was detained for posting comments on Facebook supporting Khaleq. Khamis was detained and questioned for hours concerning his journalistic endeavors and activity on the social networking site (RSF 2012).

The PA's attempts to hinder discussion of corruption and their monitoring of social media also converge. Jamal Abu Rihan, a prominent Palestinian blogger, was arrested for creating a Facebook page entitled "The People Want an End to Corruption." Abu Rihan had been working for the PA's Attorney-General's office before he was suspended and then arrested for creating the page. At the time of his arrest, the page had 6,000 followers. Abu Rihan was initially ordered to spend 15 days in custody before being charged using the Jordanian penal code discussed previously. In total, he spent 36 days in jail (Abu Toameh 2012). This was the first recorded uses of this legal framework to intimidate a Palestinian blogger, but the penal code had been used often in a serious crackdown on critical journalists and activists in the West Bank during 2012. According to the director of Palestinian human rights group Al-Haq, the PA Attorney General at that time, Ahmad Al-Maghni, was abusing this penal code and that the law was outdated. According to respondent Patrick O. Strickland, a freelance journalist living in the West Bank for the past 3 years who has worked on reports critical of the PA, journalists agreed with this sentiment. "The Palestinian journalists I've spoken to referred to the system of laws in the West Bank as "decaying." I would agree. These laws were more or less forgotten until dissenting opinions began to be openly discussed online. It also has a negative effect on journalists and activists based solely on self-censorship."

Chapter 4: Findings and Conclusion

4.1 Findings

The review of literature and reports on Arab media and the policies of the PA, as well as the interviews with experts and elites, has resulted in unexpected conclusions. New Media, especially social media such as Facebook, has an effect on the policies of the PA, but not in a similar way as it has had in other parts of the Arab World. This can be attributed to the political reality in the West Bank. As previously discussed, the PA is beholden to many actors in reference to policy making—namely donor countries and institutions—but it also bears in mind critique which stems from the Palestinian populace. This consideration of dissent is often squelched through authoritarian means, but according to certain respondents, it is also considered by the PA. The following section will address the pertinent issues and findings which have come from the original research question of "How does New Media effect the policies of the Palestinian Authority?" The first of these will be the issue of self-censorship as a result of the repressive policies of the PA, the second will deal specifically with the effects and limits of New Media on the policies of the PA, the third will discuss the importance and monitoring of social media. This section will present both negative and positive findings for an increase in democracy in Palestine. The final section will offer conclusive remarks.

4.1.1 Self-Censorship: the conduct of journalists as a result of PA oppression

As shown above (see figure 4), there has been a substantial decrease in PA violations of press freedom in recent years, but the issue of self-censorship has been cited as a cause. According to West Bank journalist Samer Khuwyrah, "[t]he violations committed against journalists over the past years have led to the existence of self-censorship among journalists, and therefore it is natural to see a decline in violations…" (MADA 2014: 24). This sentiment was by most respondents. On the issue of self-censorship, the majority of the respondents confirmed that it was rampant among Palestinian journalists. Self-censorship fits in well with

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the Rugh typology, as private, loyalist media would look to the government-owned media for the official story to report. According to Strickland, this was the case for foreign journalists, too. This was because of a fear of being identified with the Israeli agenda, according to Abudaka. However, the foreign journalists interviewed said this fear was eroding. "After living here so many years, witnessing the problems faced by the Palestinians—especially journalists—which are a result of the Palestinian Authority's administration, it doesn't make sense not to expose it…" Strickland said. As exhibited by the lawsuit against Foreign Policy and, by extension, Schanzer, discussed above, the highest level of the PA administration pay attention to what is printed about them in international media. The ability of independent, foreign journalists to write critical arguments without reprisal by the PA (for fear of condemnation by donor countries and further bad press), allows coverage political coverage of PA policies to be truthful and transparent. As foreign aid money directly effects the policies of the PA, English-language news was regarded by respondents as a serious influencer of diplomats and decision makers who decide how aid money is allotted. In this sense, foreign journalists have circumvented the traditional loyalist characteristic of self-censorship.

4.1.2 The Effects of New Media on the Policies of the Palestinian Authority

In the realm of New Media, it would seem that the Qatari titan of Middle East News, Al Jazeera, is by far the most effective. As previously discussed, their coverage of issues such as the Palestine Papers and the Goldstone Report have had direct effects on the policies of the PA. However, respondents agreed that there was a limit to this. "The changes that [Al Jazeera] reporting has caused have been positive, but there are drawbacks…" Strickland said. Buttu and Alaa Tartir, program director of the Palestinian Policy Network Al-Shabaka expressed doubt about an overwhelming importance of New Media—not only Al Jazeera but also the Electronic Intifada, said that mapping how much effect Al Jazeera has had on PA

policies is difficult due to the lack of transparency. Buttu said that in her experience, New Media had very little effect on the decisions of diplomats and others involved in the peace process. She also said that in Palestine, Al Jazeera had experienced a backlash after the publication of the Palestine Papers. She commented that many in the West Bank were suspicious of the poor depiction of PA officials and began to mistrust the aims of "the Qataris" in editorializing the findings. However, several respondents agreed that satellite broadcasts, specifically Al Arabiya and Al Jazeera, helped introduce items into public debate which, under previously loyalist media regimes, would not have been discussed. In regards to blogs and other, smaller websites such as Electronic Intifada and Middle East Monitor, respondents commented that these websites were important for covering issues in real time on the ground so that they could be picked up by larger outlets. Buttu said that these new forms of media were important because they "allowed people to become sources of information" on a level not previously possible.

4.1.3 The PA and its policies regarding Social Media: can "virtual freedom" translate to democratization?

This dissemination of information is important, and judging by the monitoring and repression of social media, the PA notices the importance of these new forms of communication for spreading dissent towards its rule. According to several respondents, social media is akin to the Parliament of the Palestinian Authority. Abudaka said that "[i]n democratic societies, issues and criticisms are usually discussed in the parliament where the government gathers. The only criticism comes from social media, and it travels very wide and to everybody…the Authority is very sensitive to this. There is a large amount of criticism on Facebook, especially. Virtual Freedom, this is what we have." However, as previously discussed, social media is monitored and dissent is often met with harsh repercussions. Certain respondents, namely Abudaka and Ehab El-Shafi, a student opposition organizer at Birzeit University in the West Bank, said that this was not always the case.

Abudaka spoke from experience in this issue, saying that "[t]he Palestinian Authority monitors social media strenuously..." but Abudaka stressed that repression is not the sole cause for PA surveillance: "…having worked there, I can say that it's not all for censorship. The government watches what people say, it's like an opinion poll in Western democracies." El-Shafi, who has also been detained by PA security forces for posts on Facebook, said that he had seen results from online movements and civil society actions aimed at changing aspects of PA policies. The forum that social media allows the Palestinian populace is one of the ways the non-democratic PA listens to its constituents. Abudaka confirmed that social media is essential to changes in policy and governmental appointments. "Take the case of the Secretary of the Presidency, Tayeb Abdulrahim. He was out shooting at night, causing a huge stir and controversy. There was a large social media outcry and then he was sacked. There's no English language news about this, no Palestinian news about this, it's all done on social media." Abudaka asserted that this was quite common. "There are dozens of cases of this."

4.2 Conclusion

The respondent's views on the democratic potential of social media in the West Bank confirm, that in some sense, New Media directly effects the policies of the PA. The positions affected most directly appear to be the dismissal and appointment of officials in the government, as seen by the examples of Salaam Fayyad, Saeb Erekat and Tayeb Abdulrahim, and others alluded to by respondents. Though it may seem meager, the appointment of governing officials by means of popular expression—whether it be through the ballot box or a social campaign—is the essence of democracy. Movements towards this goal are positive developments.

As for Seib's thesis that New Media can help governments become more transparent, this is obviously the case. To begin with, all the investigative journalism that has documented the misdeeds of the PA, exposing their actions to the Palestinian people, have open the door to

criticism of the regime which was previously impossible. Also, the crackdowns on journalistic freedom in response to these allegations was also documented and made widely available. In the digital age, the actions of the PA are no longer obscured behind the loyal press completely under government influence and control. The expansion of New Media, and the ease of access to said media, has undoubtedly made the PA more transparent.

Given the intricate political reality of a state that sits somewhere between reality and the aspirations of its people, some would say that the case of the PA is not a salient example. However, since it acquired substantial control of media, Palestine exhibited characteristics of Rugh's loyalist designation. Many of the countries where there was no regime change after the Arab revolutions—Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Bahrain—also exhibit these same loyalist characteristics. The effects of New Media's on the PA, as well as the PA's response, can be used as a guide to encouraging democratization in the rest of the Arab World.

The findings in this thesis point to a potential of democratization without the need for mass revolution, which inflicts great human and economic costs to whatever society undergoes this social upheaval. What is required, however, is freedom of access to internet and a stop to reprisals that encourage self-censorship. The key to encourage this democratization is international consensus from interested parties such as donor nations and organizations on the subject of freedom of access to information and freedom of journalism. In order to promote this democratization, international organizations, governments, civil society and policymakers who influence media policies of restrictive governments must insist that a basic level of freedom and access be allowed to all of society; all those who have a voice.

Appendix A: Interviews

Example Questions

Do you feel social media plays a role in the policy formulation of the PA?

Do you think the PA has had a consistent response to social media/online journalism?

Do you think satellite broadcast channels such as Al Jazeera or Al Arabiya have affected the policies of the PA?

Name	Position	Experience/Knowledge	Type of Interview	Date of Interview
Patrick O. Strickland	Freelance Journalist	Frequent contributor to Al Jazeera, Electronic Intifada, Others	Semi-structured	15 May, 2014
Alaa Tartir	Program Director of the Palestinian Policy Network	Years of research into the PA, research fellow at the Palestine Economic Policy Research Institute and Bisan Center for Research and Development,	Semi-Structured	22 May, 2014
Diana Buttu	Lawyer/Analyst for the Institute for Middle East Understanding (IMEU), Former member of the Negotiations Support Unit for the PLO (2000-2005)	Direct knowledge of the inner workings of the PA, years of media involvement, researcher for IMEU	Semi-structured	27 May, 2014
Ehab El-Shafi	Student activist at Birzeit University	Has organized protests against PA policy for students at the Birzeit university for the past 3 years	Semi-Structured	20 May, 2014
Mashhour Abudaka	Former PA Minister of Telecommunications and Information Technology (2009-2012)	Oversaw licensing of broadcast frequencies, was in charge of internet policy in the West Bank	Semi-Structured	30 May, 2014

Dr. William Rugh	Edward R. Murrow Visiting Professor of Public Diplomacy at Tufts University's Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Former U.S. Ambassador to Yemen (1981-1984) and the United Arab Emirates (1992-1995)	Established Scholar with five books and many articles published focusing on Arab Media	Semi-Structured	29 May, 2014
Dylan Collins	Journalist at Palestine Monitor, frequent contributor to Al Jazeera English, Al-Akhbar, Electronic Intifada, others	Years of journalistic experience and NGO work dealing specifically with Palestinian issues	Semi-Structured	18 May, 2014
Hisham Melhem	Head of Al Arabiya Washington Bureau	Journalist with years of experience in satellite broadcasting	Semi-structured	27 May, 2014

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