Inside the Red Lines:
Policies that Obstruct Local Journalism in Palestine

By

Miriam A Berger
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“Journalism is an interesting job. You are meeting with people, you discuss different subjects, you hear about differing issues. Something comes in your blood and you can’t really give it up after a while”

-Interview with Maher Abu Khater, 2011

*Al-Hayat al-Jadeedah, May 15, 1998 (Personal photo) Coverage of a demonstration on the 50th anniversary of the *nakba*, or catastrophe, which marks the 1948 founding of Israel and displacement of Palestinians. At the demonstration, Palestinians were injured and killed by Israeli soldiers, as the photo and headline emphasize.*
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Peoples, Places, and Terms

Palestinian Journalists

Abdul Nasser Najjar, Al-Ayyam Managing Editor, Journalist Syndicate President (August 2011, January 2012)
Abdulkarim Samara, Internews (August 2011, January 2012)
Fadi Arouri, former al-Ayyam photographer and writer (August 2011)
Hafez Barghouti, EIC of al-Hayyat al-Jadeedah (August 2011, January 2012)
Hussam Ezzeldeen, al-Ayyam writer, AFP Correspondent (August 2011)
Khalil Shaheen, former al-Ayyam Editor (August 2011, January 2012)
Maher Abu Khater former al-Fajar English editor, WAFA correspondent (August 2011)
Maher Alami, al-Quds writer and editor (August 2011)
Maher Esheikh, al-Quds Managing Editor (August 2011, January 2012)*
Mohammad Abu Khadier, al-Quds writer (August 2011)
Mohammad Daraghmeh, former al-Quds writer, al-Ayyam writer, AP Correspondent (August 2011)
Mohammed Assadi, former Reuters Jerusalem Bureau Chief (August, 2011)
Muntaser Hamdan, Al-Hayyat al-Jadeedah Writer (August 2011, January 2012)
Saman Khoury, former al-Hadaph, AFP writer, Ministry of Information, Ministry of Culture (August 2011)
Yousef Shayeb, al-Ayyam writer, al-Ghad writer (August 2011)

Media Monitors

Daoud Kuttab, former al-Fajr and al-Quds writer, Co-founder Amin.org and al-Quds University Institute of Modern Media, Media scholar (August, 2011)*
Amal Jamal, Tel Aviv University (August, 2011)*
Johara Baker, Mi'lah, JMCC (August 2011, January 2012)
Juman Quneis, Birzeit University Professor, former Voice of Palestine correspondent (August, 2011)*
Khaled Abu Aker, Former al-Quds writer, Director of Amin.Org (August 2011)
Mousa Rimawi, Director of Palestinian Center for Development and Media Freedoms (MADA) (January 2012)
Nabil Khatib, former al-Fajr writer and Director of Birzeit Media Center, Executive Editor of al-Arabiya**

Nibal Thawabteh, Director of Media Development Center, Birzeit University (August, 2011)*

Walid Batrawi, former al-Quds writer, Internews (August, 2011)*

Walid Omari, Aljazeera Palestine Bureau Chief**

Public Officials

Ali Hussein, WAFA (Palestine News Agency), Chief Editor (August, 2011)

Daniel Seaman, Former Israeli Government Press Office Spokesperson (GPO), (January, 2012)*

Ghassan Khatib, Director of the Palestinian Media Center (PGMC) (August, 2011)

Glenys Sugarman, Director of the Israeli Foreign Press Association (FPA) (January, 2012)

Hani al-Masri, former al-Fajr editor, Minister of Information, al-Ayyam columnist (August 2011)*

Spelling of names and newspapers based on most common use for greatest clarity
* Some quotes drawn from previously published works
** All quotes drawn from previously published works (i.e. not personally interviewed)
One interviewee agreed to be quoted but without their name.

General Map of the Palestinian Territories
(Source: BBC UK, Israel and the Palestinians, 2012)
Terms:

Fatah: A secular-nationalist political party and the largest faction in the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO).

Hamas (The Islamic Resistance Movement): Fatah’s main rival and the largest Palestinian Islamist movement. Hamas currently controls the Gaza Strip, and has a political and paramilitary wing.

Mahmoud Abbas: Also known as Abu Mazen, Abbas is Yasser Arafat’s predecessor and Palestinian Authority President since 2005.

Oslo Peace Accords: Formally called the Declaration of Principles of Interim Self-Government Arrangements. In 1993 Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Palestinian Liberation Organization leader Yasser Arafat signed the accords, which aimed to end the Israeli-Palestinian conflict through the creation of negotiated two-states for two-peoples and the establishment of the PA.

Palestinian Authority (PA): Also called the Palestinian National Authority (PNA). Formed in 1994 by the Oslo Accords to govern parts of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO): Founded in 1964, the PLO is a political and paramilitary organization dedicated to achieving Palestinian sovereignty.

Rekaba thateya: Arabic for self-censorship.

Tadakhulat: Arabic for interventions. A word that journalists I interviewed used to describe when political or socio-political forces interfered in their work to press for certain outcomes.

Wasta: Arabic for intermediation. Used to describe influential social or political connections.

Yasser Arafat: Arafat was a leader in the PLO and Fatah Party, and the first President of the PA. He is both revered as the most important Palestinian nationalist, and criticized for his corruption and militancy. He died in 2004.
Acknowledgements:

In one way it all began in February 2011 when I read an article that led to a book on the relationship between Palestinian state formation and Palestinian print media. In March 2011 I was awarded a Wesleyan University Davenport Grant to conduct further research on state-building nationalism and local Palestinian newspapers in the West Bank. In August I flew to Tel Aviv, where I boarded a Jerusalem bound bus and then a two-dollar ride to Ramallah and stayed there for three weeks. I had a list of questions to ask and grandiose ideas about what I was looking for—only to find that the journalists I interviewed had other important stories that needed to be told.

For as I spoke with local journalist after journalist, from print, broadcast, and online mediums, they consistently talked about the poor conditions they faced in the workplace—an angle missing in the existing English language literature. Reviewing my notes at night, I found that without prompt the same problems continued to pop up in conversations, issues that I at first did not even know to ask about. As I probed further, I put aside my original hypothesis and found that specific Israeli and Palestinian Authority policies were a main cause of many of print media’s problems. Within this framework, my interests in the Middle East, Arabic, Journalism, and College of Social Studies (CSS) training propelled my thesis forward.

But in another way it begins far further back. It starts with the supportive family, friends, and teachers that instilled in me the values and provided me the tools to believe that I could and should pursue this topic. I am forever lucky for my parents, Mark and Jane, and their unceasing love, support, and constant encouragement to pursue my passions. And for my sisters, Amalia and Rachel, whose love and friendship have helped me to find the confidence and drive to carry this project through. Without all of you in the family, I would have given up long ago. Amanda, Ashley, Kathlyn, Nick, Noa, and Rachel—thank you for helping me to keep sight of my purpose and enjoyment in the project. In particular, thank you to Rachel, Kathlyn, and Amanda for your edits and insight. I would also like to thank Nehal Elmeligy for her translating help; Charmeine Seitze, Julia Pitner, and Johara Baker for their assistance during and after my field research; and the Davenport Committee for the funds to begin the work.
in the first place. Without the over fifty Palestinian journalists, public officials, and media monitors I interviewed in Ramallah and Jerusalem the project would not be the same—so thank you for speaking with me.

I am additionally grateful for the guidance of my academic advisor Professor Adelstein, Professor Miller’s editing advice, and my other CSS Professors Fay, Moon, Peters, Williarty, and Smolkin-Rothrick. You have been formative figures in my Wesleyan experience and lessons I learned from your courses inform this thesis. Finally, without my thesis advisor, Professor Peters, none of my ideas would have gotten off the ground. From support with the Davenport Grant, guidance in helping me develop this thesis’ framework, and advice on everything along the way, you have been a pivotal and positive force in my search for the right path to report on what I found.

Before concluding it is necessary to define a term. In this thesis I use the term Palestine to refer to the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip—areas generally agreed to constitute the future state of Palestine. This is not a study of Palestinian media and the Israel-Palestinian conflict. Rather, I chose to focus on what work life is like for local Palestinian journalists under Israeli and PA rule because it was a story I felt that those who practice and study the media could benefit from knowing. Former Palestinian Journalist Saman Khoury’s parting words last August capture this thesis’ intent:

“I hope that you would be able to write something, first of all that will help you with your research, but then can be useful and helpful to add to this journalistic understanding that more of the public in the world should be more seriously learned in what’s going on here. And I would like to read it” (Interview with Khoury, 2011).
Part I
Chapter One:
*Tahrir* in Theory and in Practice

*The quality of the news about modern society is an index of its social organization. The better the institutions, the more all interests concerned are formally represented, the more issues are disentangled, the more objective criteria are introduced, the more perfectly an affair can be presented as news.*

- *Walter Lippmann, 1922, p.364*

IT was late one night in December 1995, on the eve of the first Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) elections, when Maher Alami, head night editor for *al-Quds* (Jerusalem) daily newspaper in East Jerusalem, received a fateful call.

“We want you to publish this story in the news for our President Arafat on the front page,” Alami heard a voice on the phone say (Interview with Alami, 2011).

“What news?” Alami asked.

The news in question came by fax and concerned a meeting between Palestinian Authority (PA) President Yasser Arafat and the Patriarch of the Greek Orthodox Church. In the meeting the Patriarch compared Arafat to the Caliph Omar, to whom the Patriarch in the Crusades allegedly conferred control of Jerusalem. The symbolism was important for Arafat because Israel was then in the process of transferring control over parts of the Palestinian Territories to the new PA, as stipulated by the Oslo Peace Accords. Jerusalem remained contested, and so Arafat considered it politically significant on the eve of elections to have the Patriarch call him the historic ruler of Jerusalem on the front page of the Palestinian newspapers.
Alami considered what to do. He read over the faxed statement and corrected many grammar mistakes and historical inaccuracies. He scanned the front pages of the next day’s paper and saw four other articles about Arafat, including one on the PA taking control of Bethlehem. He thought about the many advertisements PLC candidates paid for, a key source of the paper’s revenue, which also needed to be published the next day. Arafat may have placed the order, but “It’s not news,” he lamented (Interview with Alami, 2011). So in an act that would come to define his career, Maher Alami published the article on page eight. The next day al-Quds Editor-in-Chief Mahmoud Abu Zuloff phoned Alami.

“Maher, why did you publish the story of Arafat on the eighth page and not on the first as you were ordered to?” Alami recalled Zuloff asked (Interview with Alami, 2011).

Alami was trying to explain when Jibreel Rujoub, Head of West Bank Preventive Security, grabbed the phone. In Alami’s words:

He shouted, “Why you didn’t publish it? You are crazy you are! You have to come tomorrow to my office in Jericho!”


“You have to come,” he said. “Otherwise if you do not I will send someone to cut you into pieces and bring your pieces in a car to Jericho... Why do you hate our president Arafat?”

And I said, “I don’t hate Arafat. It’s just that there wasn’t space... I didn’t know where to put it.”

“No you hate our President. You are an agent. You are a collaborator with the Jordanians and with the Israelis.”
“No, no,” I said. “I’m a journalist. That’s my profession. Your profession is to liberate us from the Israeli occupation and our profession is to edit, to liberate our material” (Interview with Alami, 2011).

Alami’s reply was a play on the word tahrir, which means both to liberate and to edit. But the security forces did not find this so funny. Rather, Arafat ordered Alami imprisoned, where he remained for seven days. Several foreign delegations came to Alami’s defense, but his own newspaper did not publish the news of his arrest. Neither did the two other daily Palestinian dailies, al-Hayyat al-Jadeedah (The New Life) or al-Ayyam (The Days). Nor did al-Quds’s Editor-in-Chief, the Fatah controlled journalist syndicate, or most of his own colleagues offer public support. After a week of detention, Alami was brought to the Mukata’a, the President’s compound, where Arafat kissed him three times, told him he was sorry to detain one of his brothers, and ordered him released (Interview with Alami, 2011).

Palestinian media and human rights reports often cite Alami’s arrest as an indicator of the limited freedoms of press and expression in Palestine (Jamal, 2005, p.89) because of the PA’s hegemony and the Israeli occupation’s unavoidable imprint. An often-overlooked part of Alami’s story, however, is that during the past sixteen years he has continued to write for al-Quds, where he still works, and to be a syndicate member. All this despite the fact that the Palestinian security forces detained him again in 2000, this time for thirteen days, for writing on corruption in the PA. “I liked the press since elementary school,” Alami said of his resolve to stay. “This love of the press and journalism only grew with me. Now I’m in my sixties, and despite this I like
to work and follow the news” (Interview with Alami, 2011). Alami’s words allude to an often-overlooked element of media systems: the power of the profession itself.

In interviews I conducted with Alami and over fifty Palestinian journalists, public officials, and media monitors in August 2011 and January 2012, a common theme resonated throughout: a frustration with the limited professionalism of local print media. The Palestinian journalists I interviewed were quick to criticize the material in their three daily newspapers and frequently conveyed their desire for a more professional press. They expressed their dissatisfaction with the newspapers’ often politicized, censored, and unoriginal content, lack of investigative and human-interest stories, and low salaries, circulation, and revenue rates. The problems did not stop there. “You can’t imagine the work at a newspaper without an editing board, without a media policy, without contracts, without a syndicate that will protect you, with a political system that is not a state, as you have the PA but then you have Israel which is controlling everything,” mused former *al-Ayyam* editor Khalil Shaheen (Interview with Shaheen, 2011). In interviews Palestinian journalists frequently cited the same issues, but existing scholarship has yet to provide a sufficient explanation for why—despite attempts to the contrary—these professional problems persist.

So what explains the limited professionalism in the Palestinian press? Some media monitors in Israel and America explain these conditions by focusing on the role of incitement, or calls for violence, in Palestinian political culture (PMW, 2012). It is true that Palestinian political groups have instrumentalized the Palestinian media as a means to encourage violence against Israelis, Jews, and Americans—and at times other Palestinians. In doing so, the standard narrative goes, objective and professional news coverage has been pushed aside by the need to publish provocative statements,
aggressive language, and one-sided stories. Through this dynamic, the Palestinian media has become a propaganda machine that tries to shape political opinions, rather than a vehicle of unbiased information that allows citizens to form their own views.

Yet, as Alami’s story alludes, this view is too narrow: the conditions under which news is collected and constructed are far broader than merely the imperative for incitement. The politicization of press content is a problem, but viewed from the newsroom in Palestine it is not the only one that affects the life of local Palestinian journalists as they strive, against many odds, to put out a paper each day. Scholars of anthropology and communications have made efforts to widen the scope of inquiry by focusing on Palestinian news consumption patterns, how media consumers and producers mediate information, and the effect of international news competition (Bishara, 2006, 2008, 2010; Tawil-Souri, 2007). Media and human rights studies from groups like Human Rights Watch (HRW), Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), al-Haq, and the Palestinian Center for Development and Media Freedoms (MADA) have tried to account for the press’ key attributes by documenting the many ways Israeli and Palestinian forces violate the rights of journalists or intervene in controlling media content. These studies, however, provide few systematically traced evaluations and often conflate the problems of local and international journalists from print, broadcast, and online mediums. The existing explanations, I argue, are not sufficient.

Instead, in this thesis I contend that in the case of Palestinian print media, Israeli and PA formal policies and informal practices have been a primary cause obstructing its professionalism. In this thesis, I study how these government policies effect print media through case studies of the three Palestinian daily newspapers—*al-Quds*, *al-Ayyam*, and *al-Hayyat al-Jadeedah*—to make three key claims. First, I argue in
this chapter that scholars of the Palestinian media should concern themselves with a more nuanced notion of “professionalism” than they have. I develop a basic framework for qualitatively assessing the five facets of professionalism I consider: autonomy from political pressures, commercial independence, internal media policies, self-censorship, and organizational capacity. Moving beyond surface-level criticisms of the “ politicization” of Palestinian media, these five outcomes were identified by both Palestinian journalists and media studies scholars as important and portable components of professionalism. Second, throughout the remaining chapters, I deploy this framework for all three newspapers and I establish that all have had consistently low levels of professionalism. Third, I demonstrate the thesis of this study—that low levels of professionalism in Palestinian print media are primarily determined by the formal policies and informal practices of both the Israeli government and PA.

The argument is developed across seven chapters that analyze the practice and organization of local print journalism in Palestine. In this chapter, I conduct a literature review and present the study’s theoretical framework. Chapter Two provides a history of the Palestinian press, highlighting the historical trends and policies that inform present regulations. Chapter Three outlines the specific media, labor, and security policies and explains their general effect on the content, conventions, and organization of print media. Chapters Four, Five, and Six examine all five aspects of professionalism within the three daily newspapers, and account for the causal role of Israeli and PA policies. I provide specific examples of the limited professionalism of the press through the personal narratives of journalists and editors and through content analyses of the newspapers. These chapters are in a style that mixes long-form journalism with the thesis’ social science framework.
In this thesis I do not seek to argue how journalism must be normatively practiced or to claim that the Israelis or the Palestinians are more to blame. Instead, I explain how professional journalism can provide a public good in disseminating information in an accountable and transparent way, and I identify five components that cross-regionally empower this kind of practice. I also assert that Palestinian developments can and should be analyzed in an academic framework, with the hope of generating new perspectives and solutions to the problems Palestinians and their media face. That journalists continue to work despite the many obstacles is a feat in itself, and this thesis does not seek to undermine their courage and determination. Indeed, it was the stories of the journalists that first inspired this line of inquiry and the desire to probe further into the problems they face. My overall objective, therefore, is simple: to explain how and why local journalists in the newspapers report, edit, and disseminate the news in the way that they do.

1) Conceptualizing Professionalism: Are There Objective Standards?

According to a standard definition, the primary functions of a journalist and journalistic organizations are “gathering, writing and editing of material which consists largely of the reporting or interpreting of current events” (Porter, 1968, p.265). Like many other fields, the practice of journalism initially was not considered a profession. Historically, as defined by Western scholars, a profession denoted attributes like specialized education, a code of ethics, a degree of autonomy, a claim of a monopoly over a certain type of work, a recognized public significance, and the expression of a service ideal (Anderson and Schudson, 2009). As the practice of journalism developed in public importance and reach in the West, scholars and
journalists began to connect certain conventions, routines, and ideologies with the work of news production and organizations. In recent decades attributes of other professions—like press laws, university degrees, and commercial markets—have become increasingly common parts of media systems worldwide. Equally important, many journalists and societies generally perceive the media’s work as something distinctive (even despite the growth of social media), providing it with a recognizable role as an interpretive community of events (Zelizer, 2004).

Having defined journalism and professions, how do we go about labeling print media as “professional” or “unprofessional?” This question is part of an important and still ongoing debate within Media Studies (Schudson and Anderson, 2009). In the specific context of journalism, professionalism has traditionally meant that journalists have a degree of autonomy and specific occupational standards, as well as legal, social, and economic status and security. In this study, I concentrate on five common indicators of journalistic professionalism: autonomy from political pressures, commercial independence, media policies, self-censorship, and organizational capacity. There is no definitive definition of professionalism, a term that in some academic circles has a pejorative connotation. This thesis, however, focuses on journalistic professionalism because of the concept’s emphasis on examining the work environment and institutions of the press.

Like all social scientists, media scholars continually debate how the concepts in their fields, such as professionalism, can be comparatively deployed in an ever more global and digital world (Josephi, 2010; Hallin and Mancini, 2004; Sreberny, 2008; Dobek-Ostrowska, 2010). Research demonstrates increasing convergence in journalistic institutions and practices, like the rise of similar news values, dominant
ideologies, and production styles. At the same time, studies show that considerable differences persist as journalists’ professional views, conventions, and routines are still deeply shaped by national media systems (Josephi, 2010; Rugh, 2007; Youm, 2009). Here the conceptual debate too often ends: while studies confirm that journalists cross-regionally stress ideals associated with a professional press, the objective standards of professionalism across regions and communities are not well described by either scholars or practicing journalists.

The literature has traditionally approached the question of whether we can objectively conceptualize professional conventions from two perspectives: the “trait based” approach, which argues that there are objective standards for measuring professionalism, and the “power struggle” standpoint, which primarily says there are none (Allison, 1986). Though the parameters of what constitutes professionalism are not set in stone, I contend that there are institutional characteristics and conventions that can be compared and contrasted with objectively based nuance.

According to a trait-based approach, a press is “professional” or “unprofessional” based on whether or not it possesses certain traits generally associated with media practices, norms and institutions. Many of the earlier trait-based studies imposed a paradigm of how journalism should be practiced based on the norms of (mainly white-male dominated) American newspapers in the 1950’s and 1960’s. Some scholars argue that these studies tarnished the idea of objective standards because the entire concept is biased towards Western norms (Schudson and Anderson, 2009). More recently, however, the trait-based approach has been credibly revived and now provides an important framework for comparative studies that incorporates the different contexts in which journalists operate (Dobek-Ostrowska,
2010; Slavko and Splichael, 1994; Ramaprasad, 2001, 2003, 2006; Pintak 2008; Amin, 2002). These studies do not simply say how a press should act, but rather analyze cross-regional indicators within the context of the media’s social relations.

Sociologists and cultural analyses, on the other hand, largely champion the “power struggle” approach, which argues that much of the professional paradigm is a way for commercial, social, and political forces to control the journalistic field by socializing and standardizing the workplace (Soloski, 1997) This approach highlights how competing powers often co-opt the configuration of a profession for personal gains, or to construct and maintain dominant ideologies. Here professionalism is not what it objectively seems: a profession is a construct, and differs according to socio-cultural context.

This line of reasoning, however, can also lead to an intellectual paralysis in which Media Studies and media practitioners stand at odds. The discomfort with comparing and contrasting core traits of the profession seems very esoteric given that so many of the Palestinian journalists I interviewed expressed desire for many of the conventions common to journalists around the world, including a greater degree of standards, status, and security in the workplace (Amin, 2002; Ginges, 2009; Pintak, 2008). While there is no one-way to produce the news, some routines and structures enable and empower the press to disseminate information better than others.

Compared to the sizable English-language studies on professionalism in America and Western Europe, moreover, fewer studies provide a comprehensive explanation for how the press operates on the local level in non-Western countries. Until recently, much of the scholarship has simply studied the media systems in other countries as a ‘non-Western’ kind too different to seriously analyze. This is
unfortunate because while media studies, like all social sciences, is deeply embedded in the Western industrial capitalist and liberal democratic nation-state experience, studies of the non-western presses can and should still be approached cross-regionally with the same analytical rigor (Sreberny, 2008). The research gap is particularly true in the Middle East and North Africa, where studies often focus on pan-Arab media trends or content, rather than on the specific contexts and conditions of the local presses and how and why they differ with other countries (Josephi, 2008). This debate demonstrates the need to assess different qualities common to the operation of the media, rather than to try and develop all-encompassing typologies that cannot capture a media environment’s complexities (Dobek-Ostrowska 2010).

In this thesis I contend that journalistic professionalism can be appropriately assessed from an objective perspective. From the United States, to Europe, to Africa, to the Middle East (and each country in between), the practice of journalism and the content and organization of media outlets are not monolithic. Nonetheless, theory and practice demonstrate that in regions across the world, all journalists benefit from a greater degree of control and authority in their practices and institutions—and this jurisdiction is critical for the advance of the profession in any context.

2) Why Study Palestinian Print Media?

Local Palestinian print media has significant implications for those interested in the comparative applicability of Media Studies, as well in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and internal Palestinian affairs. The Palestinian press is often merely dismissed as “bad,” or assessed in relation to the Israel-Palestine conflict. In this way, researchers theorize in broad terms about economic, political, and socio-cultural
problems, or focus on certain aspects, like incendiary content or assaults on journalists. Rarely considered is the professional jurisdiction of the local press, an essential element that constructively expands the scope of analysis to include the occupational problems facing Palestinian journalists and how these problems are related to certain outcomes in the press.

For example, going beyond the basic assessment that identifies broad claims of propaganda or incitement as unprofessional, Birzeit University Professor Nibal Thawabteh in 2010 explained how other elements of Palestinian media could be situated within a broader global literature:

“Palestinian media institutions lack the minimum components, such as a transparent legal framework, media management planning, and necessary specifications for the journalistic profession… Qualified people—and there are few—become like unqualified people, which leads to a brain drain from those institutions, or pushes them to search for another job because of the lack of salaries. There are no administrative councils, editorial boards, or plans. In addition, one of the assessments of standards in the work of any media institution’s cadre is its degree of harmony with the institution’s manager. In Palestine, the institution manager has extraordinary power to control performance of staff who thus turn into obedient servants” (Thawabteh, 2010, p.74.)

While Thawabteh’s depiction is of great use for researchers to expand their analysis of the press beyond the prism of the Israel-Palestine conflict, existing scholarship has not incorporated these findings into the broader Media Studies literature. Though Thawabteh’s statement captures many interesting components, there is a need for a systematic explanation for why these unprofessional aspects persist. Left alone without analysis, these issues can contribute to an incomplete picture of the opportunities and constraints Palestinian journalists face and restrict possibilities for reforms. The problems Thawabteh highlights often mattered most to the journalists I interviewed, and it is this reality that makes Palestinian print media critical to study.
The unprofessional practices in print media are important to study because of how they also more generally reflect Palestinian media, political and socio-economic developments (Interview with Jamal, 2011). “All the problems of the media can be attributed to their mother, and she is the written press,” wrote journalist Rowan Dama’an in a book on journalism values and practices (MDC, 2010, p.15). Unlike broadcast news in Palestine, newspapers in Palestine have published most consistently and for the longest time. They thus serve as the basis for most of the media profession’s related laws, media paradigms, training programs, syndicate policies, and ministry posts (Interview with Jamal, 2011). Moreover, beginning in 1994 the PA directly or indirectly closed all local newspapers, and helped to create two new daily papers in the West Bank – *al-Hayyat al-Jadeedah* (The New Life) in 1994 and *al-Ayyam* (The Days) in 1995 – and revitalized a third – *al-Quds* (Jerusalem). These three newspapers serve as the case studies of this thesis because they are the only newspapers that have published throughout the PA period, and thereby can provide researchers a consistent source with which to assess the progression of local media, and Palestinian developments more generally.

Internationals also often have little understanding of how the Palestinian press operates, despite the region’s intense media security and the local significance of these newspapers. Shaheen comically recalled,

“What is meant by local or national or independent or private media? Here these are different terms. This is why when a foreign journalist asked me, where do you work? [I would say] at *al-Ayyam*. Is it local? You say yes. Or if they ask is it national. Yes, it’s national. You mean local? Yes, yes, it’s local. Because local it means Palestinian and national it means, *yaneel*, also Palestinian” (Interview with Shaheen, 2011).
Since its inception, the written press in Palestine has been closely affected by the Palestinian national struggle—but it need not only be assessed through this prism. It is therefore particularly important to understand the press’ institutional configuration in order to understand other related developments.

3) Measuring Professionalism in Palestine

This thesis focuses on five factors identified by both Palestinian journalists and media studies scholars as important and portable components of professionalism: autonomy from political pressures, commercial independence, internal media policies, self-censorship, and internal organizational capacity. In the absence of an existing framework for analysis that I found adequate, I chose these five indicators based upon characteristics of professionalism that the literature emphasizes. In this section, I discuss how I conceptualize my indicators and measurements, provide an overview of the sources that inform this study, and address the limitations of the available information. I categorize my indicators according to a spectrum of moderate to limited professionalism, and consider high professionalism to represent the theoretical, but practically impossible, ideal. My measurements include consideration of both the journalists and the newspapers in which they work. In addition to developing a basic framework for qualitatively assessing these five facets, in the chapters that follow I deploy this framework for all three newspapers and provide evidence that—while each newspaper and journalist has its own story—according to these indicators, all three display consistently low levels of professionalism.

*Autonomy from political pressures:*
This study measures political autonomy by the level of political parallelism and political instrumentalization. Political parallelism is the closeness between the newspaper and the political establishment (Hallin and Mancini 2004). Political instrumentalization—or tadakhulat (interventions) as the Palestinian journalists called them—is the degree to which a newspaper acts according to political agendas imposed by outside political actors. In a moderately professional press, there are moderate to low rates of political parallelism and instrumentalization, and in a limited professional press, there are high rates of instrumentalization and political parallelism, leading to very low media independence. This study focuses on two specific measures of these concepts: the frequency of Israeli and PA violations against journalists, and the dominance of the PA’s nationalist discourse on the newspapers’ editorial lines.

Commercial independence:

In a moderately professional press there is a moderate to high independence of advertising, revenue, and circulation rates, while in a limited professional press there is a low independence of advertising, revenue, and circulation rates. This study measures these two concepts according to the politicization of the newspapers’ circulation and the monopoly of commercial considerations over content.

Internal media policies:

A moderately professional press has differentiated and recognized reporting, editing, and ethical standards, and a limited professional press has ineffective and inconsistent ones. This study contents that the Palestinian press has limited professionalism as exemplified by its discretionary use of ethics codes, unoriginal and arbitrary reporting, and ineffective and inconsistent editing procedures. This indicator
is important because claims to journalistic expertise and standards are in part what
distinguish the practice from other seemingly similar work.

Self-censorship:

Self-censorship is a related but distinct indicator from political, commercial, and internal autonomy. While self-censorship by its nature is the hardest to definitively measure, in a moderately professional press, there is no legal prior-censorship and moderate to low rates of self-censorship. In a limited professional press, there is legal prior-censorship and high institutionalization of self-censorship. The old image of journalists acting as objective gatekeepers of the news has proven to be a far more complicated and subjectively influenced process, but that operates on a different order of magnitude from self-censorship.

Internal organizational capacity:

In a moderately professional press there is moderate to high worker autonomy and empowerment, while in a limited professional press there is a low and inconsistent worker autonomy and low empowerment of workers, specialization, or standardization of their jobs. This is particularly important because professionalism is not just a measure of political independence, but also more generally telling of worker control in the workplace vis-à-vis management, which this indicator measures.

This is not the standard study measuring journalistic professionalism: my methodology is different because I draw from a number of measuring tools in order to demonstrate my argument as holistically as possible. One approach in the literature has been to use descriptive interviews or quantitative questionnaires in which journalists rate or discuss aspects and values related to their work. These
studies are useful in that they provide insight into the differing degrees of control journalists have over their work environments and the kind of standards, statuses, and security that they consider the profession requires. Methodologically these studies alone are not sufficient as they may include leading language, leave terms undefined, or do not adequately analyze responses within the context of those interviewed (Hanitzsch, 2009; Splichael, 1994). In the Palestinian case, the few quantitative questionnaires that do exist do not distinguish between journalists from print and broadcast mediums or between local and foreign journalists. Given the lack of scholarship on Palestinian media, I rely heavily on over fifty qualitative interviews I conducted in August 2011 and one week in January 2012 with Palestinian journalists, Israeli and Palestinian public officials, and media scholars familiar with local print, radio, television, and online news.

   Professionalism can be measured using content and discourse analysis, in which print or TV content, organization, and style is systematically aggregated, often quantitatively, and presented as a snapshot indicator of professional orientation (Bell and Garrett, 1998). Like interviews and quantitative studies, the use of content analyses as a measurement must also be assessed in the context of the media system. In this study I rely on content analyses conducted mainly by Palestinian researchers as the basis for my measurements (Jamal, 2005; Miftah; Shbee, 2004; Ouda, 2011; Omari, 2010).

   A more recent measure of professionalism is to study a profession’s social and market capital. These studies, emphasized by sociologists, often highlight socializing indicators, like the affects of newsroom organization, occupational hierarchies, salaries, and ethics codes (Gans 2004; Josephi 1998; Schudson 1989).
In conversations, journalists consistently stressed these kinds of organizational conditions without prompting, but rarely are these characteristics discussed in depth in existing literature. I therefore also rely on this approach when conceptualizing professionalism and its measurement.

4) Source Selection:

My methodology utilizes primary Palestinian sources, which are often overlooked by researchers but that provide very essential insight. In many circles, the limited professionalism of the Palestinian newspapers is a politically charged topic. Several Israeli and American watchdog groups, like Palestinian Media Watch (PMW) and the Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI), monitor Palestinian schoolbooks and media. However, while PMW and MEMRI reports should not be ignored, their findings do not serve as the major source in this study. Their content analyses are methodologically weak, in that they fail to provide a consistent or comprehensive picture of the Palestinian newspaper page, rarely assess similarities and differences between the papers, and provide only a limited picture of the problems that face the Palestinian press. Their overtly political agenda ultimately undermines their legitimacy; compared to other cross-regional studies, their reports purposefully focus on the most shocking attributes without attempting to situate these findings within the press’ larger context.

Rarely cited in English-language reports are the works of credible Palestinian media monitors. These studies serve as my main secondary sources because of these reports’ more comprehensive, consistent, and comparable approach. One group, the Palestinian Initiative for the Promotion of Global
Dialogue and Democracy (Miftah), based in Ramallah, has published dozens of in-depth content analyses since 2004, most of which are available in English. The Miftah studies generally cover an event or topic for three days, and compare and contrast coverage in the three daily newspapers. In another study, Tel Aviv University Professor Amal Jamal analyzed newspaper content in the three dailies from 1996 to 2000, assessing the degree to which the papers provide for a democratic public sphere (Jamal, 2005). His findings provide useful insight into the political dimension of the press from an institutional perspective.

*Muwatin*, the Palestinian Institute for the Study of Democracy, also based in Ramallah, has published in Arabic several qualitative and quantitative content analyses of the newspapers that contribute to the breadth and diversity of my sources. One useful study is “The size and content of the coverage of the al-Aqsa intifada in the local press,” by Sameeh Shbeeb, which analyzes the three dailies at the start of intifada, from September 29th to October 29th, 2000 (Shbeeb, 2004). Another study, “The Paper Press in the West Bank and the Internal Division,” by Ghazi Bani Ouda analyzes and compares the content of the papers in June 2007, the first month of fighting between Fatah and Hamas, and then again in June 2010, three years into the geo-political divide (Ouda, 2011). Many prominent Palestinian journalists and media scholars write for *Muwatin*, and it is crucial to include more of their voices and scholarship. These studies also provide quantitative data, which is largely missing from other work.

Similarly, my field research contributes to the existing literature on Palestinian media by expanding the scope of available sources and including more input from the journalists themselves. The over fifty interviews I conducted were
centered on the broad question of what work life is like for Palestinian journalists.

For these interviews I relied a great deal on the snowball effect (in which interviewees suggested who I next contact) and journalists were generally open to speaking with me for the project. The conversations were mainly conducted in English, or in a mix of English and Arabic; seven were conducted only in Arabic. I spoke with journalists from print media, as well as from television, radio, and online mediums in order to gain a sense of the particular and general media trends. I recorded all interviews, and journalists are quoted with their permission. Only one who agreed to be quoted asked to remain anonymous. (All references cited as an interview are my own. Occasionally I do not cite the exact names of journalists. I do this when information was commonly referenced knowledge amongst most or all of the journalists, but may not be for other readers).

There are also some limitations to my research and reliance on qualitative interviews that inform my findings. Despite repeated attempts, I was unable to meet with the Editors-in-Chief of al-Quds and al-Ayyam or the Israeli military censor in East Jerusalem. Stories about these figures or institutions are therefore drawn from interviews with journalists familiar with them. Due to restrictions on travel to the Gaza Strip, my research is West Bank, and to an extent Ramallah, centric. I tried to avoid leading questions or language, a common shortfall to qualitative interviews, and to verify all information with at least three different sources. Sometimes only general estimates rather than hard numbers were available.

5) Obstacles to Professionalism: Conventional Claims
While the Israeli occupation and incomplete Palestinian national struggle are unavoidable obstacles to the professionalism of journalism in Palestine, too often studies cite these two factors as the overarching obstacle without further parsing out the micro level associations. While these studies do discuss problematic Israeli and PA policies, they do not sufficiently explain how they directly cause the issues I contend are related to a lack of professionalism.

Seeking to address the divide between media theories and practices, previous studies of Palestinian media have followed several trends. These include content and discourse analyses (Jamal, 2005; Miftah; Shbeeib, 2004; Ouda, 2011; Omari, 2010), human rights reports on violations of journalists (Al-Haq; HRW, 1999, 2010; MADA, 2008, 2010), opinion polls on Palestinian media consumption (PGMC, 2011; Internews, 2007; JMCC, 1996, 2003), analyses of Israeli and PA’s restrictions of the press and expression (Al-Zubaidi, 2003; Batrawi, 2002; Nossek and Rinnawi, 2003; Khashan and Mendel, 2006; Khatib, 1999, 2003; Kuttab, 1998; Najjar, 2007; Quneis, 2008), and studies of broadcast and pan-Arab media (Maiola and Ward, 2007; Najjar, 2007; Tawil-Souri, 2007; Bishara, 2006). In these studies, there are several commonly cited causes for the lack of professionalism: the Israeli occupation and the PA’s rule, technological changes, insufficient investments, regime type, historical trends, socio-cultural traditions, international competition, and poor training. Researchers have not yet synthesized many of these findings to produce a systematic explanation of how Israeli and PA policies affect local journalism, as I do in this study.

Moreover, several key assumptions about media developments over the last two decades—and in particular in Palestine—need to be directly refuted to better
understand my argument. While in other media environments the creation of online space and the digitizing of the news have disrupted many of the practices and conventions of news institutions, and thereby rendered parts of the newsroom and newspaper organization and practices obsolete, the Palestinian media presents an alternative case. The dailies’ websites are mainly a republished version of the print edition—or in al-Quds’ case, news from other media outlets. The writers and editors in the newspapers have little to do with their papers’ websites and do not consider Internet applicability such as reader comments when formulating the day’s edition.

The Internet presents a general challenge to the authoritative routines and conventions of journalists, but in the three newspapers it has had a far less significant day-to-day effect on how and why information is shared and journalists work.

Many others argue that inadequate investments have primarily obstructed the development of professional Palestinian print media (Interview with Kuttab, 2011). This explanation is not sufficient as it overlooks the purposive politicization of subsidy and advertising policies that are rooted in political and not market logic. Researchers and journalists lament the low salaries and market capital of journalists, but too often overlook the institutional limitations creating these conditions. Substantial funds are legally and illegally provided to the newspapers, but still these characteristics persist. Palestinian newspapers are also based on a different business model than in the United States and must be assessed within these terms; it is unhelpful to simply claim that the press is unprofessional because its business model differs from the US.

Another cited cause is that Palestinians have viewed the purpose of the press differently from the West because of specific historical trends and socio-cultural traditions. No doubt a credible study of professionalism cannot dismiss this context,
but this explanation overlooks why certain characteristics have remained in place and the role government policies have in creating these incentives. Moreover, though competition with international news outlets would seem to account for the local press’ lower popularity, studies show that Palestinians want more local coverage and investigative stories—and still the newspapers do not respond to the demand (Internews, 2007). This demonstrates that the presence of international media outlets alone does not increase the openness of local newsrooms.

In a related way, others contend that the institutional conventions of the newspapers are a result of their poor circulation and readership rates. Rather than rely on local media as a source for news and analysis, studies show that over 70% of Palestinians turn to the Qatar-based Aljazeera as the first or second source for news, while less than 30% of Palestinians read the local newspapers (PGMC, 2011, p.27).\textsuperscript{vii} Along these lines, reports often examine low readership rates in relation to media consumption patterns, concluding that they are bad because no one reads them, and that no one reads them because they are bad. This line of reasoning alone, however, overlooks the systematic problem, in that these characteristics continue because the newspapers are not organized in such a way that they can creatively respond to public demands or incorporate public opinion.

Lastly, one of the main criticisms leveled by Palestinians themselves is the poor training of journalists in the universities and newspapers that, they claim, leads to lousy reporting and lazy workers. This tendency towards passive and politicized reporting, however, is not the root cause of the press’ limited professionalism; rather, it is an interrelated outcome. Restrictions put in place have obstructed the ability of university and NGO trainings to make significant improvements in newspaper
practices, creating a more complex condition that needs to be assessed within the context of the policies that incentivize newspaper conventions and organization.

6) Government Policy and Professionalism in Palestine

It is too simple to say that the Palestinian print media was doomed from the start to an unprofessional state; rather, this thesis contends that specific Israeli and PA policies have obstructed the development of the three daily Palestinian newspapers. Focusing on the effect of Israeli and PA media, labor, and security policies on journalistic professionalism is an appropriate approach because state and political actors determine and regulate the social and market capital of the press. As Beate Josephi argues, “Each country faces a specific set of problems underlining the fact that journalism and journalism education still needs to be seen in terms of nation states” (Josephi, 2010, p.3). Government policies enable the press to become more professional through laws, regulations, and organizing bodies that differentiate the work of journalists from other sets of practices or institutions. It is moreover not just national media policies that pertain to the profession, but also labor and security regulations that condition the practice of the press.

Commercialization, globalization, and digitization of news have undeniably affected the views and orientations of journalists, but local policies still have considerable influence on the press’ outcome. William Rugh, in a reassessment of his now often-criticized 1979 work, adeptly characterizes a cross-regional truism: “Recent changes in information technology, especially the growth of satellite television, have had an impact on Arab media, making national borders more porous, but I would argue that existing national political systems are still a dominant variable affecting the
structure and behavior of Arab media” (Rugh, 2007, p.1). Government policies are one of the main reasons journalism is practiced differently in each country, and an analysis of the framework they create is critical to understanding the very real red lines in place for local journalists in Palestine.

In this thesis I trace how formal and informal Israeli and PA media, labor, and security policies and practices have obstructed the professionalism of the local Palestinian press. It is not that each policy has led to a specific outcome, but rather in congruence these regulations have directly contributed to local journalism’s limited professionalism. Chapter Two places the Palestinian press within its historical context, Chapter Three describes in detail the specific media, labor, and security policies and examines their general outcomes, and Chapters Four through Six specifically trace the ways these policies and practices lead to the limited professionalism in the three daily newspapers. The media policies I highlight are: the Palestinian Basic Law, the 1995 Palestinian Press and Publications law, the PA libel law, (absent) access to information guarantees, PA presidential decrees, the Ministry of Information’s mission, and the 1998 Israeli-PA Wye Agreement. The labor policies include the Palestinian labor law, the PA’s subsidy and patronage policies, and the Palestinian journalist syndicate. The security policies include the Israeli military censor, Israeli press credential procedures, Palestinian security forces, and the prominence of Palestinian wasta (intermediation).

Part II of this thesis (Chapters Four, Five, and Six) uses the stories of the journalists I interviewed and content analyses from the newspapers to explain the on the ground realities these formal and informal policies and practices make. Chapter Four examines how government policies have limited the press’ autonomy from
political pressures and obstructed its commercial independence. This chapter first focuses on the press’ limited political autonomy and explains how certain policies have enabled the frequency of Israeli and PA violations against journalists, and the domination of the PA’s national discourse in the newspapers’ content and editorial lines. In particular this section highlights repercussions from the unclear roles and responsibilities delineated in the 1995 Palestinian Press and Publications laws; the 1998 Wye Agreement’s politicization of incitement; presidential decrees that undermine press autonomy; the Basic Laws’ practical weakness; the dysfunction and innate politicization of the journalists syndicate; the inefficacy of Palestinian press credentials; PA (and PA aligned actors) patronage and subsidies; Israeli restrictions on and arrests of journalists; PA intimidation and detention of journalists; the lack of adequate legal protections from political, military, economic, and social actors; and the denial of Israeli press credentials.

The second section of Chapter Four explains how these policies have led to the newspapers’ limited commercial independence, and cites as examples the politicization of the newspapers’ circulation and the monopoly of commercial considerations over content. This analysis traces these characteristics to the outcomes of certain Israeli and PA policies: the primacy of economic concerns because of the 1995 Press Laws’ licensing regime; the Press Law’s emphasis on the Editor-in-Chief above journalists’ needs; the weak application of the Palestinian Labor Law; PA (and PA affiliated) patronage and subsidies that limit independence revenue sources; the inaction of Palestinian journalist syndicate to alleviate problems; the lack of adequate protections from political, military, economic, and social actors; Israeli restrictions on and arrests of journalists; and PA intimidation and detention of journalists.
Chapter Five focuses on the absence of internal media policies and high rates of self-censorship. This chapter first explains how policies have obstructed the newspapers’ professionalism by furthering the use of discretionary ethics codes, unoriginal and arbitrary reporting, and ineffective and inconsistent editing procedures. These characteristics result from the following causes: the Wye Agreement and political misuse of incitement; the 1995 Press Law’s vague and broad restrictions on what kind of content can be reported and why; formal and informal obstacles to access of information; an ineffective and politicized syndicate that does not help journalists to champion for their professional rights; Israeli limits on movement and access to sources; and PA tadakhulat and judicial corruption.

The second section of Chapter Five highlights the high level of institutionalized self-censorship in the press, focusing on the high reported rates of self-censorship among journalists, and the pervasive absence of certain coverage. This chapter accounts for these characteristics by tracing the effects of the Wye Agreement’s politicization of incitement; unclear roles and responsibilities delineated in the 1995 press laws; the absence of clear access to information; the Ministry of Information’s politicized press’ missions; the dysfunction and politicization of the journalists syndicate; inefficacy of Palestinian press credentials; PA (and PA actors) patronage and subsidies; the Israeli Military Censor and its soft and hard power; Israeli restrictions on and arrests of journalists; PA intimidation and detention of journalists; and the lack of adequate legal protections.

Chapter six concerns the limited internal organizational capacity of journalists and cites as examples of the press’ limited professionalism the limited means for internal mobility, the low market and symbolic capital of journalists in the
newspapers, the absence of specialization among the journalists, and inadequate internal trainings. I connect these outcomes to specific policy consequences: the PA Press law and licensing regime that creates a condition in which the Editors in Chiefs’ political needs (and by extension economic and social) trump the professional rights and wants of journalists; Presidential decrees that manipulate the media; the Basic Law that provides weak protections; the Ministry of Information’s mission; the absence of access to information that further reinforces the PA’s soft and hard power over the media sphere; the syndicates ineffectiveness as an independent recourse for journalists; and the Israeli and PA *tadakhulat* that further reinforce the second-class status. (Figure 1 in the Conclusion summarizes these arguments in chart form.)

7) **Conclusion:**

Viewed from the Palestinian newsrooms, Israeli and PA formal policies and informal practices have dramatic repercussions on the lives of the journalists and the stories they are struggling to tell. In this thesis, I explain how specific media, labor, and security policies have obstructed the professionalism of the three daily newspapers. The journalists I interviewed, however, know that it does not have to be this way. While the practice of journalism does vary across time and place, it is possible to objectively discern certain configurations that provide journalists a greater degree of authority and that are critical for the advancement of their profession—their *tahrir*, as Alami put it. Indeed, after hearing Alami’s story, it is clear that the professional problems in Palestinian print media cannot be simply dismissed as beyond the academic sphere because of the politicized nature of the Israeli occupation and PA rule. Alami did not stop here, and neither should we.
Chapter Two: 
The Palestinian Press: 1908-1993

...We are three hundred years behind Sweden; we have not yet had the chance to develop the internal institutions that would enable freedom of the press to become a reality. 
- Nabil Khatib, 2003, p.3

Palestinian journalists often describe their work after the 1993 Oslo Peace Accords and the establishment of the semi-autonomous Palestinian Authority (PA) in the West Bank and Gaza Strip as “starting from where others stopped” (Interview with Khoury, 2011). As this phrase conveys, the constant starting and stopping of the press under previous regimes—Ottoman, British, Jordanian, Egyptian, and Israeli—initially constrained the development of a local and autonomous Palestinian press (Omari, 2010). After a century of rule by others, many hoped that the signing of the Oslo Accords and the beginning of the PA’s rule would lead to the creation of an autonomous Palestinian state—and a more open local media environment. In the two decades since, neither of the two has happened.

To better understand the cause of the second stalemate—how Israeli and PA policies and practices obstruct the professionalism of Palestinian print media—it is first necessary to consider the trends in the media regimes that came in the century before. In this chapter I explore how under Ottoman, British, Egyptian, and Jordanian rule, journalists had little legal, economic, political, or social resources to develop or expand their work. I then unpack the expansion of the Palestinian press from 1967-1987, and the effect of the Israeli occupation, the first intifada (1987-1994), and Palestinian Liberation Organizations (PLO) on the norms and institutions of local
newspapers and journalists. In conclusion, I provide a brief background on the 1993 Oslo Peace Accords and the formation of the PA as a formative break with the past. This history provides the necessary context to understand the regulations I examine in the chapters that follow. I contend that dismissing the press’ present problems as an inevitable outcome of history is too easy a claim. By first examining the past, we can see how it came to be that government policies and practices have had such a significant effect on the Palestinian press today.

In this chapter I also fill an important research gap in the English literature on Palestinian media by providing a comprehensive background of print media in Palestine. I base this chapter on a mix of sources: English language scholarship, Palestinian sources in Arabic, and personal interviews I conducted. Palestinian history is often defined in terms of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict—who was on what land and when is continually contested. Instead, here I provide a different perspective and map the developments of local Palestinian journalists and media institutions in pre-1994 Palestine. The history of the local press is a pivotal part of the region’s history that, like present conditions, is often ignored or presented in overly politicized ways.

1) The Ottoman Empire: 1908-1918

In 1908 the Ottomans issued a license for the first indigenous, Arabic-language newspaper in Palestine—the start of a century of government regulation of local journalism in Palestine. It took the owner of the newspaper, *al-Quds* six years to attain the license, exemplifying the Ottoman disinterest in the development of local media institutions. Under Ottoman law, a newspaper or publication had to first apply for a publishing license. The Ottomans did not practice prior censorship, but
newspapers were only licensed to print certain news (WAFA, 2011). Beginning in the early 1800’s, the Ottomans also allowed publications from Beirut, Egypt and Syria, the early centers of the Arabic press, into Palestine (Khalidi, 1997), a trend that continued throughout the century. In many ways these papers came to fill the void of the limited local press, an interesting parallel to international media’s present prominence among Palestinian news consumers. By World War I, about thirty non-daily literary and political magazines were published in Palestine (WAFA, 2011), all owned by political elites who had the capital and connections to obtain the necessary licenses. This was common of Arab newspapers in this period, as well as those in many Western nations.

2) The British Mandate Period: 1918-1948

In a break with Ottoman rule, the British Mandate government created a much more stringent system of entrenched press censorship (Najjar, 1997), laying the foundation for many of the Israeli and PA policies and practices to come. In 1933, the British Colonial Office issued the Press Ordinance, which stipulated general terms for newspaper and printing press licenses, granted the government the power to suspend a newspaper’s publication for publishing matter “likely to endanger the public peace,” and authorized police to confiscate copies of banned newspapers, as well as to levy fines against anyone caught publishing a suspended publication (Najjar 1997, p.59). In 1939 the British issued an Emergency Law, which further expanded the government’s power to prevent distribution of publications and imposed stricter wartime censorship and sanctions (WAFA, 2011). Israel incorporated the Press Ordinance and Emergency law into her statues in 1948.
In this way the decision to apply for a publishing license or to write as a journalist meant more than just a commercial cost-benefit analysis; it also necessitated consideration of participating in or opposing the occupying government. The British encouraged a limited proliferation of publications as part of their broader colonial policy to encourage the independent provision of some services for major ethnic groups (Shinar, 1987). They did so also because local publications were a means to glean information about Palestinian political, social, and ideological developments, rather than to create a more diverse and pluralistic press (Shinar, 1987).

From inception the press consisted of largely elite editors and owners, and was highly political and concerned with the Zionist movement (Khalidi, 1997), reflecting both internal and regional changes. Ayalon argues that the early Palestinian press typified the role of Anderson’s *Imagined Communities* “of cementing a dispersed public into a self-conscious community” (Ayalon, 2004, p.64) in its emphasis on Arab opposition to foreign intrusion. At the same time, the newspapers presented partisan views that contributed to factional consciousness and rivalries on both local and regional levels. Khalidi records the press’ early concern with Zionism and Palestinian rights, as well as the Beirut, Damascus, and Cairo press’ primacy in shaping political and cultural discourse (Khalidi, 1997). Many of these proprietors had commercial interest in Palestine land holdings, which also explains their concern with Zionist pioneers (Khalidi 1997). Two popular local papers were *Filastin* (Palestine), which was founded in 1929 and promulgated the more pro-British establishment views of the powerful Nashashibi family, and *al-Daifa’a* (The Defense), which began in 1934 and supported the Husseini family’s anti-British and anti-Jewish settlers line (Shinar and Rubenstein, 1987). By the 1940’s, three daily newspapers, ten weeklies, and five
quarterlies published in what is now Israel and Palestine (Rubenstein and Shinar, 1987). Jerusalem, Haifa, and Jaffa were prominent publishing centers (WAFA, 2011). At the start of World War II, the Palestinian press was restricted by local policies and economics, and intertwined with elite and political concerns.

3) Jordanian and Egyptian Rules: 1948-1967

The 1948 Arab-Israeli war and the geo-political divisions of the region dramatically changed the on the ground realities of Palestinian journalists in local print media. The war (the nakba, or catastrophe, in the Palestinian narrative) ended with the founding of Israel in much of mandate Palestine, the Egyptian occupation of the Gaza Strip, and the Jordanian occupation of East Jerusalem and the West Bank. Among many political, economic, and socio-cultural changes, the war divided the press’ centers, with Haifa and Jaffa now inside Israel and Jerusalem under Jordan’s control. Many prominent Palestinian intellectuals and writers that had formed the journalistic core were also displaced from their homes during the war and dispersed to other countries (WAFA, 2011). Jordanian and Egyptian policies in the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and Gaza Strip continued to limit the differentiation of journalism and autonomy of local media institutions.

The Jordanians and Egyptians took two different approaches to regulating local journalism: Jordan initially attempted to oppressively incorporate the Palestinian press into their own media sphere, while Egypt from the start repressed all local media (WAFA, 2011). Despite the initial differences, these two strategies led to largely the same outcome of a highly regulated, politicized, and elite oriented press with few domestic revenue resources and no tradition of independent journalism.
Initially the Jordanian’s worked to integrate the Palestinian press into their fledgling media market; however, beginning in 1953, the government adopted a much more hostile approach to indigenous newspapers (Najjar, 1997). During the Jordanian military administrative period from 1948-1949, the authorities often arrested Palestinian journalists and closed newspapers if they disapproved of an article’s content. The same practices continued after the West Bank’s official annexation and the passage of the Press and Publications Law in September 1953. The law granted the government the right to license newspapers and publications and to refuse or revoke a license if a publication, “threatened the national existence,” “the constitutional principles of the kingdom,” or “the national feeling” (Shinar 1987, p.32). This law served as the model for the 1995 Palestinian Press Law (discussed in depth in Chapter Three), which incorporated many of the statutes and language.

Jordanian press policies during this period were also closely connected to changes in the country’s parliamentary and election procedures (Najjar, 1997, p.66). Jordan was founded in 1948, and had previously been under English rule. In 1953, the newly created Jordanian government moved to liberalize the press scene, as part of other political changes, and allowed new publications and publishing houses. Facing internal opposition, a year later the Prime Minister backtracked on his promises and issued a new press law, which strictly regulated the issuance of newspaper licenses. Over the next four years, the fledgling Jordanian regime further repressed freedom of the press and expression to reassert its control over the country. Najjar posits as causes the regime’s fears of local repercussions from Gamal Abdul Nasser’s coup in Egypt and rumors of Communist party plots (Najjar, 1997). Relations were further complicated because Jordan, unlike Egypt, offered citizenship
to Palestinians, creating new population considerations. (Today many in Palestine also have Jordanian citizenship). The Jordanian King felt significant pressure to control the new nation’s press, and in particular lessen its Palestinian flair.

Amidst these restrictions in 1955 Jaffa-born businessman Mahmoud Abu Zuloff founded the *al-Quds* newspaper in Jerusalem (Shinar, 1987). Abu Zuloff had been involved in journalism since moving to Jerusalem in 1948 and intended *al-Quds* to be a family owned and run paper. *Al-Quds* was the only entirely new newspaper to be formed in the West Bank after the Jordanian annexation and remains the longest publishing Palestinian paper. Today it is the most read of the three daily Palestinian papers and serves as one of the case studies in the chapters that follow.

In the 1960’s the Jordanian regime ordered a reorganization of the press to move the center of the press from Jerusalem to Amman, the country’s capital, where the government could exert more direct control (Shinar, 1987). Several mergers ensued, one of which led to the reorganization of *al-Quds* through a union with *al-Daifa’a* and *al-Jihad* (The Struggle) (Shinar, 1987; WAFA, 2011). The newspapers’ reconfigurations, and the relocation of many Palestinian journalists from Jerusalem to Amman occurred right before the 1967 June War. This left far fewer experienced journalists in the West Bank following the Jordanian loss of the land (Najjar, 1997).

In contrast, the Egyptian government took a more direct approach to preventing the development of local Palestinian journalism. Under Egyptian rule, few local newspapers were printed, and most were brought in from surrounding areas each morning (WAFA, 2011). This is largely due to Egyptian policies that did not attempt to integrate Palestinians or to economically develop the Gaza Strip, and forbade the creation of local newspapers or autonomous Palestinian institutions.
WAFA reports that the Gaza Strip historically has had a weaker press, noting the limited support among the strip’s bourgeoisie and the lack of capital for the large expenditures needed to compete with the Jerusalem and Haifa press. Gaza is also a more culturally and religiously conservative society, and traditionally mosques’ and markets were more popular mediums for the exchange of information (WAFA, 2011).

The early restriction of unionizing is another trend central to later developments in the Palestinian journalist syndicate. In the early twentieth century Palestinian working society was predominantly migrant workers, peasants, and merchants. Amidst an expanding capitalist economy, the first Arab trade union formed in 1923 and unions were active in the 1936-1939 revolts against the British and Jewish settlers (Sovich, 2000). Palestinian unions still remained small compared to the Israeli labor movement, the Histadrut. Egypt forbade the creation of unions in military-controlled Gaza. The Jordanian 1953 Labor Law initially allowed them in the West Bank, but the King soon curbed union activity out of fear of communist threats to the regime (Sovich 2000). By the end of Jordanian and Egyptian rule, the Palestinian press lacked both the structures and resources to professionally develop.


The 1967 June War and Israel’s occupation of the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and East Jerusalem (known as the naksa, or setback, in the Palestinian narrative) created a new reality that in different ways increased the professionization and the politicization of local Palestinian journalism. Under the influence of Israel and the PLO, the media sphere expanded in the 1970’s and 1980’s, but also became intertwined with internal politics and the nationalist struggle (Omari, 2010).
One lasting effect was the legal distinction between East Jerusalem from West Bank and Gaza Strip newspapers. At the conclusion of the 1967 war, Israel found itself in control of millions of Palestinians living in East Jerusalem, the West Bank, and Gaza Strip. Israel placed the West Bank and Gaza under military administration but instead annexed East Jerusalem. The three regions came under two kinds of legal restrictions: East Jerusalem newspapers were under Israeli law, while in the West Bank and Gaza Strip the press operated under much more restrictive military rule. This split also bifurcated the status of Palestinians. In the West Bank and Gaza, the Israeli military administration imposed significant restrictions on Palestinians. Palestinians in East Jerusalem were afforded better treatment, including an East Jerusalem Identity Card that provides Israeli health, education, and other services.

In addition, Israeli labor law provided journalists in East Jerusalem greater severance pay and insurance than in the West Bank and Gaza (Kelly, 2004). East Jerusalem thus provided Palestinians with a greater degree of legal and labor rights than previously afforded, a contrast to conditions in the military controlled West Bank and Gaza Strip. “More Palestinian papers moved to East Jerusalem, where they could operate because they appeared on “Israeli territory,” while the possession of the very same papers in the West Bank was met with prison sentences” (Al-Zubaidi 2003, p.72). The Israeli occupation also fostered the development of the journalist syndicate. Workers can unionize under Israeli law and in the 1970’s Israeli journalists encouraged Palestinian colleagues to apply for a syndicate (Interview with Shaheen, 2011). How the syndicate developed is discussed in greater depth in the next section.

Israeli policies also enabled Palestinians to begin to develop their own universities and increased training opportunities for journalists. Given the limited
local universities under Jordanian and Egyptian rule, it was common for Palestinians to study abroad. In the 1970’s, the Israeli’s radically restructured and expanded the higher education system, which included new accreditation, staff changes, curricula and degrees (Shinar, 1987). Relatively few journalism courses existed, and those that did relied on textbooks with old techniques, some from the 1930’s. Journalists I interviewed who were at universities in this period often studied English or political science, and recalled their enjoyment in writing and the praise they received from professors (Interviews, 2011). Besides the connection with political activism, increased access to writing and media classes raised interest in journalism.

At the same time, Israeli laws in East Jerusalem, and in particular press licensing and censorship policies, continued past trends that undermined the institution of a more professional work environment. The British Press Ordinance of 1933 allowed the government to license, regulate, and supervise the press, as well as to issue administrative and penal punishments for violations. The Defense Regulations of 1945 authorized a censor to prohibit the publication of material related to the defense, public safety, or public order of the state (Shinar, 1987, p.62). The Palestinian press in Israeli-annexed East Jerusalem faced harsher and more frequent censorship than the Hebrew press, which the military censor did not insist comply with these rules. This reflects the early institutional differentiation between Israeli and Palestinian journalists—a trend, as Chapter Three explains, is still in place.

Though publishing conditions in East Jerusalem were an improvement (from both previous policies and conditions in the West Bank and Gaza Strip), the freedoms of journalists were still highly constrained. In addition to distribution restrictions and limited access to information, journalists faced violence through frequent detentions,
harassments, deportation, and house arrests. Failure to comply with the Press Ordinance of 1933 or the Defense Regulations of 1945 often resulted in threats to close or the actual closing of newspapers, sometimes indefinitely. To attain a license (only valid for three-months) a newspaper first had to apply to the Israeli military administration and then to the Israeli civil administration, as well as obtain a security clearance (Shinar, 1987). The Committee to Protect Journalists examined this process, “Through licensing authorities decide whether a publication may exist at all. Through censorship they each determine what the publication may say. Through confiscations and distribution permits, they can control whether the product that has been licensed and approved by the censor may reach its readers” (Najjar, 1997, p.27). In this way, the press constantly started and stopped.

The Israeli military censor created a permanent state of uncertainty that left Palestinian writers and editors confused about their legal status. Editors of daily papers had to present the next day’s material to the military censor in Jerusalem by noon, which would then be returned to them by midnight with either one of three stamps, “passed,” “passed with deletions,” or “censored” (Najjar, 1997, p.66). Many bitterly described the cat-and-mouse like game in which vague regulations about what was “provocative” or “anti-Israel” often depended on the whims of the censor. Everything—from photo captions to editorials—had to be sent. Often large sections were deleted, as it was illegal to leave a blank space in the next day’s publications. Under these conditions, editors developed techniques to circumvent restrictions, like turning in more articles than were needed or turning in the same article in multiple versions hoping that one would pass. Another tactic was to leak sensitive information to the Israeli press; if a Palestinian wrote, “According to a Ha’aretz article such and
such occurred,” or just translated the Hebrew into Arabic, the article had a higher chance of passing the censor (Interviews with Khoury; Esheikh; Abu Khater; Abu Aker; Kuttab, 2011). Maher Abu Khater, also then at al-Fajr, summarized the lasting affect. “We had to be careful how we wrote the stories. And the censorship was always in our thoughts” (Interview with Abu Khater, 2011). The censor became a very formidable part of the Palestinian experience, a practical and psychological fear that further policies have entrenched.


The PLO entered the media scene fairly late in the press’ history; however, the organization’s policies and practices radicalized and politicized print media in this period. The PLO was founded in 1964 as a political and paramilitary organization to represent the Palestinian people and bring about their liberation. The PLO at first refused to recognize Israel, demanding a Palestinian state in all of Mandate Palestine, and organized attacks on Israelis. Israel consequently forced much of the leadership to work in countries like Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, and Tunis, as well as banned membership in the PLO as a terrorist organization. (As part of the peace agreements in the 1990s (discussed later in this chapter), the PLO recognized the sovereignty of Israel, and Israel recognized the PLO as the representative of the Palestinians.) Since inception, the Palestinian Authority (PA) has been largely aligned with PLO people and policies. A review of the PLO’s media history is hence crucial because of its centrality to understanding present PA policies within this historical context.

The openings, closings, and orientation of Palestinian media in the 1970’s and 1980’s reflect changes in the PLO’s relationships with Israel, neighboring states,
and other nationalist Palestinian forces (Jamal, 2005). The PLO largely depended on its Arab neighbors for financial and political support, as well as for providing land bases for the movement to operate. The PLO media system had two purposes: to lobby for the Palestinian right to self-determination in the diplomatic fields and to mobilize Palestinians within the occupied territories in support of their movements (Jamal, 2005b). The PLO information center began in the 1960s, but it was not until the 1970’s that the PLO moved to actively promulgate its messages in the territories (Shinar, 1987), largely due to its loss of a base of support in Jordan and Lebanon. As the PLO moved from country to country over the next two decades, its financial and political support for local Palestinian newspapers was a prime cause for the highly politicized and precarious media scene that ensued.

In the 1970’s and 1980’s newspapers were a major means for communication among Palestinians, and therefore a medium that PLO activists consciously targeted. Describing the media as primarily “an instrument of nationalism,” Palestinian journalist and commentator, Daoud Kuttab explained, “The center of Palestinian activism was in the newspaper world. That was a way of solidifying Palestinian identity… and enlisting people to support the Palestinian cause” (Interview with Kuttab, 2011). The PLO communication network directly funded two openly affiliated publications, Filastin al-Thawra (The Palestine Revolution) and the monthly Shu’un Filistinia (Palestinian Affairs). Possession of these publications in East Jerusalem, the West Bank, and Gaza was illegal, as PLO and other nationalist activities were a criminal offense under Israeli law (Shinar, 1987). This put the Palestinian press at a great organizational disadvantage, by restricting the kind of reporting journalists could do, while reinforcing its PLO dependence.
To circumvent these restrictions, in 1972 the PLO began to indirectly fund two local daily newspapers, *al-Fajr* and *al-Sha’ab* (The People), as well as a weekly English version of *al-Fajr*, and several weekly papers and monthly magazines (Jamal, 2005). In 1975, Akram Haniya (now *al-Ayyam* Editor-in-Chief) became editor of *al-Sha’ab*, and shifted the paper’s support from radical PLO factions, like the PFLP, to Yasser Arafat’s Fatah faction. These newspapers were in competition with several other papers, like the pro-Jordanian *al-Nahar* and pro-PFLP *al-Hadaph*.

Some journalists I interviewed who worked at these papers hesitated to speak about the PLO ties, despite that the relationships are known, perhaps because of the lingering secrecy over what occurred during these tumultuous periods (Interviews, 2011).

In addition to the more conventionally cited subsidies, the PLO also notably shaped the practice of journalism through its union, university, and aid activism. In an effort to gain local popularity and control mobilizing networks, in the 1970’s the PLO increased its emphasis on internal organization as a liberation tactic (Sovich, 2000). This directly led to the politicization of unions, including the journalist syndicate. It also reflects a general trend among emerging Palestinian professional organizations to prioritize national rather than professional agendas. As Brown argues, “In an era in which PLO leadership was hardly contested and in which nationalist issues predominated, most professional groups loyally accepted PLO leadership and specific directives (Brown, 2003, p.29). Many journalists held dual roles as union leaders and Fatah or PFLP members, as still occurs, and the unions played an important role in mobilizing people in the first *intifada*.

As is still the case with Palestinian newspapers, determining exact circulation numbers is quite difficult; editors were hesitant to provide precise details about the
papers because of the often-illegal dealings with the PLO. *Al-Quds* had the highest circulation, as is still the case today, and estimates from the 1980s varied from 30,000 to 10,000, depending on the source’s political leanings (Shinar, 1987, p.72). *Al-Fajar*’s rate was around 3,000 to 5,000 copies, while *al-Sha‘ab*’s varied from between 10,000 (during the Lebanese War) to about 1,500 to 2,000 copies a day (Shinar, 1987, p.73).

**b) Who were the journalists and how did they practice?**

For local Palestinian journalists the censor presented a daily reminder of their occupied condition and their role in disseminating their story to a world they perceived to be all too saturated with only the Israeli version. The constant pressure of closings increased the tendency of journalists to self-censor, while closures that did occur severely constricted their economic viability by restricting revenue sources. This furthered the papers’ PLO dependence, as the weak Palestinian economy provided few means for revenue through local advertisements or investors not preoccupied with the nationalist struggle. Without a chance to develop a tradition of journalism or media institutions prior to the Israeli occupation, the professionalization of the Palestinian press became intimately intertwined with the nationalist struggle. Of the overall trend in this period Kuttab notes, “This meant that no true traditions of journalism, or serious understandings of the role of press in society, were able to develop” (Interview with Kuttab, 2011)—important context to understanding the detrimental effects of later press restrictions.

Palestinian journalists were largely untrained and hired based on social connections or political views, both vis-à-vis Israel and internal Palestinian dynamics (Shinar, 1987). Only a handful worked as full-time journalists and they faced low
salaries and insecure working conditions (Shinar, 1987, p.72). Moonlighting became quite common, in that many teachers or lawyers worked as journalists in their free time. Distributors were another trend; people with no journalistic training would for a fee provide reports on local events that were then edited before publication in the newspapers. The early newspapers also relied frequently on the services of international news agencies and on their Israeli colleagues. Shinar estimates that half of the content dealt with Palestinian and Arab affairs, including the occupation, while the rest was split between Israel and international affairs (Shinar, 1987).

To be a journalist in this period necessitated taking a political position because of the Israeli occupation and Palestinian national struggle. “The growing power of the national elite in the occupied territories turned the pro-PLO national worldview into the dominant ideology in the area. Journalists were among the most active nationalist forces supporting the PLO and opposing Israeli occupation” (Shinar, 1987, p.73).

Journalists who worked in the local press during this period—who faced the Israeli censor each day and reported on the political conditions of their people—emphasize the purposefully political aspect of their work. From the Israeli government’s perspective, control of the Palestinian press was necessary to protect Israelis and maintain control in the territories. Of the overall trend Kuttab characterized, “The journalists, then, had a mission but not a professional one. Rather, the political mission of disseminating the ideas of the PLO” (Interview with Kuttab, 2011). While the tension between the professional and political orientation of journalists continues to characterize the press and remains a quite controversial element, it is important, as later chapters due, to consider how government policies are in part responsible for reinforcing these tendencies in the post-Oslo media-regime.
While many journalists did not directly fall under Uttar’s stereotype, what is telling is the overall trend of this period: the professionalization of a press coupled with its politicization as part of the nationalist struggle both against the Israelis and within the PLO itself. Journalist Nabil Khatib emphasizes this aspect. “There are, basically, two main generations of Palestinian journalists: Those who previously worked with the PLO in the diaspora, especially in Beirut and then Cyprus, and those who were under occupation” (Khatib, 2003, p.11). Those who worked abroad were more culturally open-minded, but remained very attached to the PLO line and their previous propaganda tactics. In contrast, the journalists who worked for newspapers supervised or subsidized by the PLO in the West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem were more professionally oriented but had less developed skills and often fewer connections or protections.

The early history of the Palestinian journalist syndicate also reflects developments in this period that inform of the backdrop of the practice of journalism in Palestine today. Palestinian journalists first began to formally organize in the late 1970’s in unions that were and have remained highly factionalized and dominated by the PLO. Though Palestine’s specific state-society characteristics informed the orientation of it unions, the journalist syndicate’s early factionalization and politicization also reflects a general trajectory of unions in neighboring countries. Journalism unions began to develop in America and Western Europe in the early twentieth century as part of the struggle to attain occupational power and autonomy. Unionization among journalists in the Middle East and North Africa was further complicated as it was also incorporated into nationalist, de-colonization, and state-building processes (Sovich, 2000). The rising interest in unionizing among journalists
was hence a reaction to increased exposure to Western norms of journalism, as well as to a rising in associations through which to lobby for their nationalist rights.

For Palestinian journalists, the decision to join groups like the Palestinian Writers Union necessitated a careful deliberation of professional, ideological, nationalist, and pragmatic considerations. Saman Khoury, then a journalist at Agence Frances Press and member of the leftist PFLP, recalled how he saw the syndicate as a positive force to lobby for rights as Palestinians and to increase journalists’ standards. “It put journalists in the situation where they would have issues to talk about among themselves in their own circles. And rather than the obstacles only being with Israel, people could also see the obstacles that they face in their work through the owners of their own newspaper” (Interview with Khoury, 2011). For others, the union had a much more political rather than professional purpose. Many journalists were hesitant to participate in a union that might normalize relations with Israel, which was seen as counter to the Palestinian national struggle (Brown, 2003, p.31).” As noted, Israeli journalists initially championed for the creation of a Palestinian journalist union, in part because of Israeli society’s then more socialist leanings. At first Palestinians opposed to the PLO led the union, but in 1981 PLO-affiliated journalists (including now al-Ayyam Editor-in-Chief Akram Haniya) coordinated a takeover of the union and put in place leaders that supported Arafat’s Fatah party’s line—an important backdrop to the union developments that followed under the PA.

c) Background on Radio and Television: 1967-1987

Though the presence of new media alone cannot explain the press’ characteristics, it is useful to briefly discuss other forms of media to gain a clear
understanding of the opportunities and constraints journalists faced. The Israelis forbade indigenous Palestinian radio broadcasts, but Palestinians could still receive the signals of daily governmental broadcasts from, Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq, and North Africa, as well as from Lebanese and PLO factions. Available radio coverage also included several non-Arab stations such as The Voice of Israel, the BBC, French Monte Carlo, and Voice of America. In keeping with PLO demands for more direct involvement in Palestinian affairs, in the 1960’s nations hosting PLO factions began to provide airtime for semiautonomous PLO programs. This served as the model for the Voice of Palestine, which first aired in 1965 and by 1970 broadcasted in much of the region (Shinar, 1987). The PLO information services unified in June 1972, but internal divisions within the PLO, shifts in the political positions of host governments, and the PLO’s displacement from country to country limited the Voice of Palestine’s centralization and led to erratic transmissions (Shinar, 1987).

In addition to radio and newspapers, Palestinians were exposed to limited Television service. Palestinians were able to receive transmissions of Arabic and non-Arabic radio stations from neighboring nations as well as Fatah broadcasts from abroad because of Palestine’s proximity to population centers in the Middle East (Shinar 1987). Palestinians watched Jordanian, Egyptian, and Israeli television stations, as well as Syrian and Lebanese broadcasts depending on location. Like much of radio and newspaper content, television reports were mainly dependent on foreign news sourcing and reporting. To a greater extent than newspapers and radios, Palestinians had far less experience with television broadcasts when they later began to develop this sphere under the PA (Shinar, 1987; Interview with Khoury, 2011).

For Palestinian journalists, the first intifada and developments that followed marked a monumental shift in the reality Palestinian journalists faced, creating new problems and prospects for the future of their work. The first intifada was a largely grassroots, non-violent uprising (though violence did ensue) amongst Palestinians in the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and East Jerusalem against the Israeli occupation. The intifada marked a dramatic change in Israeli-Palestinian relations, as until this point Palestinians had not unified on such a large level to oppose the occupation. When the intifada began in 1987 the PLO was still in exile (Israel did not allow Arafat and PLO leaders to return until 1994), and much of the activism was localized and organized by civil society groups (Jamal, 2007). On the one hand the working conditions were extremely difficult in the upheaval: Palestinian movement was highly constrained amidst curfews, increased checkpoints, and frequent arrests while Israeli censorship of newspapers rose and harsher regulations put in place. The increased presence of the foreign press, on the other hand, provided journalists with new working opportunities and exposure to more professional practices and media institutions.

During the intifada it was very difficult for Palestinian journalists to work in their local press and to try and collect facts and capture the significance of events. As Mohammad Daraghmeh recalled, “Sometimes you will be under curfew for like ten, twelve, or thirty days and you cannot go out of your apartment and you cannot report. You see things and you cannot make phone calls, you cannot cover” (Interview with Daraghmeh, 2011). Unable to report themselves and restrained by the censor, the Palestinian newspapers had to relay on the Israeli military or media’s official accounting of events. Palestinian journalists could often not verify the number
of people killed and the circumstances surround the deaths. Maher Esheikh of *al-Quds* described how “his hands were tied” by the military censor in terms of what he could report on and how he could say it, “They couldn’t deny that there was a demonstration, let’s say, in Jerusalem. But we would cover it without using the Palestinian words. Like you would say someone *saqat* (fell) instead of *istashada* (martyred)” (Interview with Esheikh, 2011). For similar reasons, the newspapers also depended on the international press for much of the content.

Putting in forbidden articles or pictures became an increasingly grave act of resistance rather than a question of professional jurisdiction. Abu Khater recalled the decision to publish a photo of an Israeli soldier beating a Palestinian, “Sometimes we knew they would take action against us, but we knew we had to put these pictures” (Interview with Abu Khater, 2011). While newspapers continued to print, under these conditions alternative media forms, such as graffiti, the loudspeakers of Mosques, and leaflets from the United National Leadership, assumed the role of informing and mobilizing people (Al-Zubaidi, 2003).

The international media’s influx also provided Palestinian journalists with a source of income and experience that in increased the opportunities and competitiveness of many journalists. This contact provided more venues for practical experience, and exposed Palestinian journalists to new notions about increasingly cross-regional practices and institutions of professional journalists. The salaries of Palestinian journalists in the international media were also much higher than in their resource-stressed local press. “The *intifada* was really the first real chance for Palestinians to strongly hook up and work with the international media. And I think it was a great learning experience,” said Kuttab. “We became much more professional
in our approach to facts and our necessity to show different points of view, the need to
dig deeper, to offer humanizing profiles and interest stories” (Interview with Kuttab,
2011). As further chapters examine, these positive professional experiences came in
direct conflict with Israeli and PA policies put in place.

Local press conditions improved after the October 1991 Madrid conference,
when Israeli and PLO delegations met, along with other nations, to begin peace
negotiations. By 1991 the PLO faced severe financial problems after supporting
Saddam Hussein in the First Gulf war; for Palestinian journalists, this meant a
cessation of most funds to PLO affiliated papers, like al-Fajr and al-Sha’ab, which were
close to closing. Participation in Madrid legitimized the PLO’s internal and external
standing, strengthening its financial resources and in part its funds for local papers.
Within this changing situation, Palestinian journalists increasingly interviewed local
politicians in their papers, including PLO members, without worrying about legal
punishments (Kuttab, 1998). “This resulted in news about the negotiations coming
not from Tunis, but from Jerusalem, and foreign journalists taking their information
from their Palestinian counterparts… This situation continued until the arrival of the
PNA” (Khatib, 1999).

6) The Oslo Accords and the Break with the Past: 1994-Present

What makes the 1994 to present period unique to study are the
unprecedented changes the Oslo Accords instituted that continue to affect the
development and daily realities of the Palestinian press in distinct and important
ways. In 1993, the Israeli government and PLO, headed by Arafat, signed the first
round of the Oslo Accords, also called the Declaration of Principles. Intended as an
interim agreement, the Oslo Accords allotted the West Bank and Gaza Strip as the Palestinian territories and created the PA to govern this area, with various levels of Israeli military administrative control continuing. Chapter Four discusses in greater depth the shape of Palestinian political institutions and local media in this period.

More generally, the agreements necessitated a reconfiguration of the physical and psychological map of Israel and Palestine, as both publics had to reconcile that neither side could rule over all of mandate Palestine. This marked a shift for the PLO, who formally recognized the existence of Israel, and for Israeli politicians, who also had to recognize the right of Palestinians to self-determination. Significant scholarship has assessed the pros and cons of Oslo, both from the Palestinian and Israeli perspective, and politicians from both sides largely fault the other for the current stalemate in the two-state negotiations paradigm that Oslo normalized.

Most important for a history of local journalism was the unprecedented autonomy for Palestinians that presented the prospect of the growth of local media and its more professional development. Journalist Hussam Ezzeldeen recalled, “It was the beginning of the Authority, and I can say it was the beginning of the media, because we don’t have a professional media until 1994. Before that who are the journalists? Who can write a political statement in a prison, you can find a job as a journalist” (Interview with Ezzeldeen, 2011). While up to Oslo the press had been intimately connected with the national struggle, many journalists stressed that the continuation of these close ties in the manner that presently manifests was never innately a given. Expectations for improvements in the press were very high, as they were more generally for the prospect of peace. “It was like moving from heaven to hell,” recalled Esheikh of the move from the upheaval of the first intifada to the
legitimization of Palestinian claims in the Oslo Accords periods. “It was like a great vacation. It was completely another language at that time. The language of hope and peace” (Interview with Esheikh, 2011). Journalists I interviewed recalled how Oslo was positively covered in many of the newspapers, both because of PLO pressures but also because many Palestinians believed in its promise of the prospects for the PA.

Indeed, the PA’s establishment presented a fundamental a shift in Palestinian realities, and particularly the prospects of developing media institutions that provided for the professional standards, status, and security of journalists. The story, however, cannot end here. For when explaining developments in the last two decades, the histories and policies that matter from the newsroom of the Palestinian newspapers are often different from those that scholars of statehood and security emphasize. After the signing of Oslo and creation of the PA, Palestinian journalists for the first time faced the long-sough prospect of independently reporting on their sovereign state and people. As Abu Khater recalled:

“When the PA came in and there was some real changes in the way of life and we became more autonomous in our work I was hoping that the Palestinian press and papers would eventually become competitive with the foreign press and be able to produce some really good quality stories and writers and columnists that really reflect the views of the people here. Unfortunately, it did not happen...” (Interview with Abu Khater, 2011).

Within this backdrop, this thesis tells the story of what did.

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Chapter Three: Israeli and Palestinian Authority Policies

There is no way to change the situation without developing the professional structure of the newspaper itself, because if you do not do that the same thing will continue happening on a daily basis. Without structural changes everyone will turn to be, as we say, a screw in the machine.

- Interview with Khalil Shaheen, 2012

In this chapter I describe the Israeli and Palestinian Authority (PA) policies—the “red lines” as Palestinian journalists call them—that directly obstruct the professionalism of Palestinian journalists in Palestine. I first provide a brief background on Palestinian political structures and the media under the PA and then explain the specific media, labor, and security policies of interest and their relation to the study’s five indicators. In Chapters Four, Five, and Six, I then trace how these policies limit professionalism through the personal narratives of journalists and content analyses of the three daily Palestinian newspapers.

This comprehensive overview of how Palestinian print media has been regulated provides an in-depth account missing from much of the scholarship on this topic. From my research, I conclude that existing analyses, which largely focus on only a few specific media policies, are not sufficient to explain the unprofessional workplace realities of journalists as they struggle to put out a newspaper each day. I determine that a more holistic approach that incorporates media, labor, and security formal policies and informal practices is necessary for a nuanced understanding how the journalists and newspapers are shaped to operate. This chapter is therefore detailed in order to provide a thorough analysis of the red lines in place.
1) Background on Palestinian Political Institutions and Media After Oslo

The 1993 Oslo Peace Accords, and interim agreements that followed, established the PA as the semi-autonomous representative of the Palestinian people in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Under the Accords, the Palestinian Territories were divided into three parts: Area C where Israel has full military control over internal administration and security; Area B, where Israel and the PA have joint security control and the PA manages administrative matters; and Area A, where in theory the PA has both administrative and security control. To add to this Semitic-alphabet soup, Hebron is divided in two, H-1 and H-2, with partial PA control in the former.

The Oslo Accords were to be a temporary agreement, with negotiations and land transfers over the next five years to settle controversial topics like Jerusalem, Israeli settlements, and the status of Palestinian refugees. However, by 1998 many of the interim benchmarks were not met, and over the last two decades this temporary situation has become largely the status quo.

Though the Oslo Accords granted Palestinians greater sovereignty than before, it also enabled much of the discretionary control of the Israeli government and the PA in Palestine. The Accords did not define the formal authority of PA institutions, but rather commingled executive, legislative, and judicial powers and responsibilities, which largely undermined the last two (Jamal, 2005a). This was much to the benefit of PLO leaders in control, particularly Yasser Arafat and other elites in his Fatah Party, who retained the upper hand and could freely intervene in and co-opt judicial and legislative areas. This also benefited the Israeli military administration, which faced a less collectively empowered Palestinian public (Jamal, 2005b), and still retained significant control and disproportionate power over the Palestinian Territories.
Considerable scholarship has assessed the pros and cons of the Oslo framework and developments since (Brown, 2003; Khan, 2004). Instead, here I address how this backdrop informs the professional jurisdiction of local print media.

Israeli policies in the occupied territories have thus remained a critical shaper of on the ground realities in Palestine because the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) still maintains control over the land. Like all Palestinians, journalists are subject to internal checkpoints and closures that Israel controls, which make movement in their lands an often arduous and time-consuming endeavor, and movement of out of their lands generally impossible. Palestinians are also quick to point out the harassment, arrests, destruction of property, and other abuses, sometimes to a deadly degree, they face at the hands of Israeli soldiers they may face at checkpoints, raids, demonstrations, and other planned or spontaneous intersection points. In addition to cross border raids, the Israeli military has reoccupied parts of Area A and B over certain periods in the last two decades, while the growth of Israeli settlements has also extended the Israeli civilian and military presence in the Territories.

These developments are also problematic in relation to the Israeli Government Press Office’s (GPO) “zero-status” philosophy towards the authority of the local press: Palestinian journalists are no different from other Palestinians, all of whom pose a potential security threat to Israel (Interview with Seaman, 2012). The Secretary of the Israeli Foreign Press Association (FPA) criticized the effect: “They have no recognition. Not as journalists, not as anything else” (Interview with FPA Secretary, 2012). In other words, in the post-Oslo context, Israeli policies both create and reinforce conventions that undermine the institutional strength of the local press.
But the occupation alone is not a sufficient explanation for the press’ weakness, as the PA is also part of the problem. Though the PA’s configuration is in many ways a result of the Israeli occupation and the Oslo Accords, it is too simplistic to equate or justify all Palestinian political and socio-economic institutions as a product of the occupation. PA policies and practices also have important repercussions that impede the development of a more professional and open local media environment. As with Israel, this may not be the initial intent, but it is the decisive overall affect of policies and practices put in place. Shaheen summarized intended effect of the PA’s approach to mass media, “The problem is that the people don’t know that they have the right to intervene and say these are our media institutions, it’s for the people, not for the President or the PLO…. and nobody wants them to know” (Interview with Shaheen, 2011). While the PA formally provides freedoms of the press and expression for journalists, in practice these legalities further a framework that fails to recognize journalistic work as differentiated from other practices or institutions.

The limited development of democratic processes and an autonomous civil society in Palestine is another critical layer that informs Palestinian political structures in the PA period. Arafat, and now other high level politicians, can easily monopolize and coerce civil society, including the construction and content of the media. The unclear division of labor in and between government branches and ministries that Oslo instated has institutionalized the personalization of politics that continues to characterize the PA’s rule and constrain the development of democratic political and social structures. In a system of cliental politics, security forces often run rampant at the behest of certain parties, personalities, or families, while the courts and legal systems remain a corrupt and dead-end route for journalists seeking safeguards. To
maintain control of the Palestine issue vis-à-vis Israel and Palestinian opposition groups, the PA and Fatah have tried to silence internal disagreements while co-opting powerful families, businesspeople, and civil society leaders (Jamal, 2005b).

While others may argue that Israeli or PA policies are more to blame, I do not compare and contrast because this undermines the larger claim: it is the environment that these policies together create and institutionalize that so detrimentally limits print media’s professionalism. At different times certain red lines have had more of an influence than others, but overall these policies have consistently restricted the jurisdiction of journalists in the daily newspapers. This context really matters.

2) Background on The Time Period: 1994 to Present

Researchers generally divide the ups and downs of the media scene under the PA into five key phases (Omari, 2010), which also reflect broader trends in Palestinian politics and society. In the first stage, from September 1993 to mid 1994, Palestinians for the first time were allowed to develop their own indigenous radio and TV stations, in addition to the print sector, amidst the Oslo peace process. In the second phase, from July 1994 to the first PLC elections in January 1996, journalists from newly created or revived media organizations experienced a great deal of repression from the PA, which was trying to reassert its newly legitimized control. According to a Human Rights Watch report, journalists were the third most likely group to be harassed by security forces, following members of the Hamas opposition and perceived Israeli collaborators (HRW, 1999). The third period, from the 1996 elections to the second intifada’s 2000 outbreak, is characterized by the greater institutionalization of the limited professional standards, status, and security of
journalists in the local press. While the overall rate of harassment decreased, an atmosphere of fear further entrenched the culture of self-censorship. In the fourth stage, from the intifada’s September outbreak to the second PLC elections in March 2006, the press was largely concerned with the violence of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, at the expense of coverage of local and internal concerns. The 2004 death of the charismatic leader Yasser Arafat also affected the PA’s media politics, raising the ceiling for criticism slightly; as a founding father figure, public criticism of Yasser Arafat was very dangerous (Omari, 2010).

The final phase, in which the press is still mired, began in June 2007 with Hamas’ takeover of the Gaza Strip after its success in the 2006 elections. Palestinian journalists commonly use the word painful to describe this stage (Omari, 2010, Interviews 2011). Beginning in 2007, the Hamas and PLO-aligned governments in the Gaza Strip and West Bank, respectively, cracked down, closed, and closely monitored many media organizations. Those that remained were forced to take sides, and for the first time the term incitement, or tahreed, became a norm when discussing intra-Palestinian media coverage. Conditions for journalists were notably far worse in Gaza than the West Bank, and it is not an overstatement to claim that journalists are still traumatized from this polarizing event. In recent years the rates of arrests and intimidation have slightly decreased, but the intense working conditions remain. Indeed, in the last few weeks the rates of arrests of journalists has again risen. These general trends have a structural context, as we are about to see.

3) Israeli and PA Media Policies
Media policies are integral to the professional development of the press because the conditions they create make media in Palestine different from seemingly similar media environments in other regions. The international media sphere is far different from the scene two decades ago when these media policies were first implemented. Palestinian journalists are quick to note that while practices in their newspapers have not changed much, they have witnessed worldwide dramatic media changes, such as the spread of transnational satellite channels like NBC and CNN, the rise of pan-Arab media like Aljazeera, and the development of the Internet and social media as popular communication mediums. Despite these changes, for Palestinian journalists, government policies and practices remain at the forefront in forming and sustaining the conventions, content, and organization of their work because of the power they have in shaping everyday realities in tangible ways.

The 2002 Palestinian Basic Law and its 2003 amendments reiterated the PA’s theoretical commitment to freedoms of press and expression. Article 19 of the Basic Law reads, “Every person shall have the right to express his opinion and to circulate it orally, in writing or in any form of expression or art, with due consideration to the provisions of the law” (Quneis, 2008a). Article 27 continues, “freedom of audio, visual and written media as well as freedom to print publication, distribute and transmit, together with the freedom of individuals working in this field, should be guaranteed” (Article 19, 1999).

Given the unstable structures in which Palestinian journalists operate, the safeguards that the Basic Law provides are inefficient, as exemplified by the frequent political and security interventions and ineffective legal system. Instead, they only serve to reduce the chances of professional standards, status, and security. Writing for
the freedom of press organization Article 19, Ali Khashan and Toby Mendel summarize the provisions’ main problems: “Authorities that violate constitutional rights do not fear sanction because the legal provisions are unclear, because no punishment is stipulated in the law, and because there is no proper mechanism to enforce the Basic Law” (Khashan and Mendel, 2006). Circumstances surrounding the Basic Law’s long-awaited ratification allude to the PA’s lack of interest in implementing this policy: proposed in 1996, Arafat only ratified the law in 2002 after considerable international and domestic pressure (Jamal, 2005), not out of interest in creating a friendly and progressive legal framework.

The 1995 Palestinian Press and Publications law is an outdated and vague piece of legislation that plays an important role in incentivizing a certain kind of journalism and often used by the PA to justify their actions (Najjar, 1997; Nossek and Rinnawi, 2003; Quneis, 2008; Jamal, 2005). Arafat enacted the law by presidential decree, shortly before the 1996 PLC elections. Drafted by members of the PLO politburo, the law is based on the 1993 Jordanian model and is the PA’s only media law in place. In 1994 Arafat annulled all Israeli military laws in Area A issued since 1967, then used this as a pretext to quickly enact new laws prior to the PLC’s elections (Jamal, 2005b). “Arafat’s immediate enactment of the press law reflects the PA’s interest in creating favorable media conditions for the 1996 elections.

The quick enactment of the law without public debate or input from the PLC continues to stigmatize the laws’ legitimacy in the eyes of many Palestinians and media workers. Palestinian politicians proudly point out that in theory the 1995 law is one of the most liberal media laws in the Arab world. They also concede that the problem is in the practical application of the very vague clauses (Omari, 2010) that
together with other policies lead to limited professional standards, status, and security for journalists. Politicians and judges often claim to be acting in accordance with it, and a thorough review of the law is important for understanding the implications.

The 1995 Press and Publications law notably avoids prior censorship, but reinforces a regime of self-censorship, substandard internal media practices and organization, and provides ample space for political and economic *tadakhalat*. Article Two promises freedom of opinion and expression: "Freedom of the press and printing are guaranteed. Freedom of opinion is guaranteed to every Palestinian, and he can express himself in the form of speech, writing, photography or drawing, for the purposes of expression and information" (*Article 19, 1999*). The articles that follow, however, foster a framework that stunts the development of professional norms and practices. For example, Article Four defines media outlets as “searching for information, news and statistics that are of interest to citizens from their various sources as well as analyzing, disseminating and commenting on them within the limits of the law” (*Article 19, 1999*). Quneis argues that the frequent vague use of phrases like “within the limits of the law” provides the executive, and those within his sphere, undue discretionary power to impose a politically expedient meaning (Quneis, 2008a). This happens in cases where politicians or judges manipulate the language, without oversight, to fit their own purposes.

It is not just because of broad claims to freedom of the press or expression that this law is important, but also because of the significant limits it places on the professional jurisdiction of journalists and their press. The creation of arbitrary space for political interventions and self-censorship is codified in Article Seven, which prohibits dissemination of “any materials that contradict the principles of freedom,
national responsibilities, human rights and the respect of truth” (Article 19, 1999). This provision provides sweeping restrictions on what information journalists can disseminate. This emphasis on the national interest and responsibilities has been widely exploited given the ambiguity of its use as a safeguard for a vaguely defined political and social fabric. In practice, it provides space for powerful people to impose their will, regardless of changing times. Terms like “national interest”, moreover, are intentionally left to the discretion of the Editor-in-Chief to interpret. As the Editor-in-Chiefs are de-facto political rather than professional appointees (a problem further discussed), the Editors-in-Chief avoid creating clear media policies so that they can instead manipulate the meaning of the terms according to their personal needs.

Article Eight of the law directly limits the internal organization and media policies of the newspapers, by denying journalists control over the development of their own professional norms and standards. The article mandates journalists to comply with rules and morals that, removed from their context, appear constructive:

- “Respect the rights of individuals and their constitutional freedom and not infringe on their right to privacy”
- “Produce the journalistic work in an objective, full, and balanced form.”
- “Seek precision, honesty, and objectivity in commenting on news and events”
- “Avoid publishing materials that could encourage violence, extremism, and hatred or call for racism and religious extremism” (Jamal, 2000, p.51).

It is beneficial to define the media’s duties and expectations, but in reality this is not what Article Eight does. These phrases paradoxically have a negative affect when considered within the larger political frame. Instead of empowering the local press, the Article provides vague provisions that are easily exploited for political gain and are made meaningless by the absence of other structures to protect the profession’s
integrity. It is not enough to claim to be objective or balanced, as there must also be institutional incentives to influence these kinds of conventions (Schudson, 1978).

Article Thirty-Seven adds another layer of red lines to press practices though broad content restrictions, including material that is harmful to religious doctrines or national unity, shakes belief in the national currency, incites crime or violence, or is inconsistent with morals. The Article also outlaws publication of secret information about the Palestinian National Council, the PA Council of Ministers, or classified information on the weapons, equipment, locations, or movements of the police and security forces (Quneis, 2008a). Again, widely sweeping red lines delineate where journalists cannot go—which could be interpreted as everywhere—and restrain the development of differentiated standards, as well as sufficient press autonomy, and safeguards. The particularly problematic phrase “national interest” has come to haunt journalists in the workplace. As Chapters Four to Six examine, the repercussions are evident in problems like the domination of the PA’s nationalist discourse, the politicization of newspaper circulation, the discretionary use of ethics codes, absent reporting and editing standards, and high rates of self-censorship.

The 1995 Press and Publications Law is also enables very limited occupational rights and specialization through the enactment of a licensing regime in which the Editor-in-Chief’s economic and political needs across the board trump journalists’ rights (Article 19, 1999). According to Article Seventeen, only three bodies can receive a publication or broadcasting license: a journalist as the law (and therefore syndicate) defines, an established and registered press corporation, and a political party (Article 19, 1999). Article Eighteen delineates the information needed for a license application, such as the Editor-in-Chief’s name, age, residence, education and
experience, and available capital. While this section provides the Minister the licensing power, it is intentionally unclear about the guidelines for coming to the decision (Quneis, 2008a). Article Twenty-One stipulates that capital for a daily print paper cannot be less than 25,000 dinars (and 10,000 for other publications).

This financial limitation provides fertile ground for direct and indirect dependence on PA subsidies and corruption among journalists, as well as increases the pressure on the owners to maintain the economic stability of their papers above the needs of their owners. “They effectively exert a chill on the establishment of new publications,” argues Article 19 (Article 19, 1999), as these regulations make it nearly impossible to sustain a newspaper without open and covert PA patronage through subsidies, advertisements, and special information. The licensing regime also feeds the syndicate’s factionalization. Only a registered journalist can get a non-party paper license. In the PA’s quest to control their opponents’ public sphere, it is thus expedient for the PA to also control the syndicate. In this way the limited internal organizational capacity of journalists, like their low market and symbolic capital and limited internal mobility is not an isolated problem, but a product of poor leadership and limited professional opportunities, which the media policies put in place.

The law also emphasizes the status of an Editor-in-Chief and owner above the journalists, which impedes development of internal media policies and structural improvements. The law describes in great depth who is qualified to be an Editor-in-Chief and an owner. According to Article Eleven, the Editor-in-Chief must be a journalist, have a good command of the language, not accept any other job in the media field, live in Palestine and not have been convicted of an immoral crime, felony or misdemeanor. Owners of newspapers must be Palestinians, reside in Palestine,
have the consent of the Minister of the Interior, and cannot have been convicted of a felony or misdemeanor related to immorality or dishonesty (Quneis, 2008a).

Viewed from the newsroom, these policies have a particular face: in restricting access to these positions, the law’s authors no doubt had in mind the men (or family, in al-Qu'd’s case) that have remained the Editors-in-Chief of the three newspapers since the PA first allowed them to print. In the available literature little emphasis is placed on this part of the law: in passing Article 19 argues, “These conditions effectively limit access to these positions” (Article 19, 1999). The undue concentration of ownership and overall lack of strategy and policy guidance for the media sector are a product of a policy that grants the Editor-in-Chiefs sole control over the work of journalists and a paper’s organization, conventions, and content. The same men—Akram Haniya of al-Ayyam, Hafez Barghouti of al-Hayyat al-Jadeedah, and Abu Zuloff family of al-Qu'ds—have run these newspapers, and for the PA this is intentionally a political and not professional matter. No provisions are put in place for the hiring, rewarding, or promoting of journalists: such decisions are made second to the Editor-in-Chiefs’ needs at the expense of Palestinian print media’s long-term health. It is clear that this particular structuring of the profession and primacy of management has had a dramatic affect in limiting internal mobility, and the development of reporting, editing, and ethical codes.

Interestingly, the law’s penal provisions are the least limiting on the security of local Palestinian journalists—and so the PA generally uses the harsher Jordanian libel law instead. Articles Forty-One and Forty-Two state that punishments for breaking the law range from publishing an apology, paying a fine, or imprisonment for maximum of six months (Quneis, 2008a). No journalist, however, has actually been
brought to court or fined for violating the law. This may seem positive, but for
trespassing the spirit of the law they are instead arrested at the request of Palestinian
security forces, fuming families, or irate political figures. In (rare) cases journalists are
brought to court, it is on the basis of the Jordanian libel law still in place. Journalists,
nonetheless, are very aware that these penalties exist, as they sustain psychological red
lines that set out limits on their work (Interviews, 2010).

Another penal section widens the rule of the security forces over the professional
jurisdiction of the journalists. Article Forty-Two states, “the competent court will
consider all the violations committed” (Quneis, 2008a), but, as Quneis argues, this
dangerously fails to delineate what constitutes the competent court. This vagueness
enables further governmental authority over media outlets, such as the abuse of the
State Security Court and the expansion of the Ministry of Information’s ambiguous
obligations (Article Forty-Nine), in the absence of a formal oversight (Quneis, 2008a).
These conditions lead to outcomes later described, like the high rates of self-
censorship, absence of specialization, unoriginal and arbitrary reporting, and low
market and symbolic capital of journalists.

The PA policy of denying journalists the right to access information is another
problematic polity that obstructs press norms and routines. There is no law directly
delineating rights to access information, though one was proposed in 2004. Articles
Four and Six of the 1995 Press and Publications law grant journalists the right to seek
information from sources “within the limits of the law” and requires officials to
facilitate journalists by advising them of programs and projects, respectively. Article
Four also provides the right to protect confidential sources unless a court rules
otherwise “to maintain security, prevent a crime, or promote the interest of justice” (Quneis, 2008a).

In a system where the executive, judicial, and legislative branches are designed so that in practice their distinctions are mainly nominal, the law furthers an environment in which journalist have no means to protect, or often even access, sources of information—a part of their work.” As Article 19 argues, “There is no doubt that an informal and non-institutionalized PA censorship apparatus, utilizing legal and covert methods, has successfully prevented the dissemination of material deemed undesirable by the PA leadership” (Article 19, 1999). Denied the necessary resources to disseminate information, journalists mimic what government press releases say, avoid investigations or specializations, copy and paste from international agencies, and all-around self-censor to avoid crossing into controversial coverage.

The PA’s use of the Jordanian libel law as the legal ground for bringing a journalist to court for undesirable newspaper coverage or content further demonstrates the PA’s overall disregard for empowering a local press. The libel law applied in the Territories comes from the 1960 Jordanian penal code. The law mandates imprisonment of up to ten years for violating the libel provision (Article 19, 1999) and claims that the right to access information is circumscribed by the need to care for the state’s safety. That journalists are brought to court based on the penal codes and not the Press law, reflects the larger affect of PA policies on the design of the profession: journalists are not a distinct group deserving autonomous standards, status, and security. Their practices are purposefully indistinguishable from that of other citizens and therefore they have no right to access information or criticize the actions of powerful politicians, companies, and families.
The discretionary use of presidential decrees has also placed the media under the purview of politics in an attempt to shape the orientation of print media. In addition to the 1995 Press law, several other decrees have been particularly important in relation to the work life of journalists (Quneis, 2008a). In 2006, right before the second PLC elections, PA President Mahmoud Abbas issued a decree making all public media under control of the office of the President (his office) rather than the Ministry of Information, as it was before (Interview with Batrawi, 2011). This decree would have a dramatic affect in furthering the polarized media environment that violently erupted the following year. In another decree in 2010, Abbas ordered that the PA media must respect those countries that support the Palestinian cause. This statement was referring to Arab League countries, and in practice reiterated that media criticism of friendly regimes would not be tolerated (Interview with Pitner, 2011). While these are just two decrees that journalists and media watchers mentioned as most significant, without a doubt others have instated more red lines. The President’s ability to make such decrees without legislative or judicial oversight is also reflective of the larger consequence of PA policies on the configuration of the profession, and the importance of analyzing the government’s role in creating these kinds of institutional conditions.

The Ministry of Information is another oft overlooked but critical regulator of the press that obstructs opportunities to develop depoliticized reporting, editing, and ethical standards. The Ministry of Information, established in 1994, was based on the information centers the PLO had set up across the region. Like many PA institutions, the Ministry of Information has ambiguous boundaries and duties often at the political whims of the personality in charge. As the 1995 Press Law stipulated,
the Ministry is responsible for the issuing of licenses and regulating media content. But the issuing of licenses is by all accounts is conventionally a political rather than professional process. In 1996, around when the honeymoon between PA and journalists began to come to an end, the Ministry of Information published six goals of the public and private media (Omari, 2010, p.44):

- To strengthen the national affiliation
- To publish the Authority’s domestic and international political goals
- To inform the citizens of their rights and obligations
- To preserve the rights of the citizens to know what is happening around them locally, among Arabs, and internationally
- To participate in raising society’s level of national consciousness, strengthening relations, and preventing the invasion of foreign culture
- To develop the consciousness in what is related to the peace process through rejecting violence and terrorism

These statements underscore the Ministry of Information’s de facto policy to undermine a differentiated and autonomous press for fear that it would not tow the party line. These roles and responsibilities were never discussed by the journalists or public, but imposed top down. The Ministry has also clashed with the syndicate over the right to issue press identity cards (which the syndicate does), additionally complicating the accreditation problem and development of a transparent press. These regulations lead to problems such as the low market and symbolic capital of journalists, the absence of reporting, editing, and ethical standards in the newspapers, and the political and socio-economic instrumentalization of the press.

The Wye Agreement is another seemingly positive step, that in practice Israelis and the PA have used this policy to again politicize the media and reduce the agency of journalists. Signed by the Israelis and PA on October 23, 1998, the Wye agreement was a follow-up to the Oslo Accords and reiterated steps both sides were contracted to undertake. In November of that year, Arafat issued a statement, “prohibiting all forms
of incitement to violence or terror, and establishing mechanisms for acting systematically against all expressions or threats of violence” (Jamal, 2000, p.52).

Instead of only doing so, this agreement also made claims of incitement a political rather than professional consideration. Israeli authorities often put pressure on the PA to close down or sanction a paper or broadcast if they consider the content contrary to the broad principles of the agreement, while the PA and its political apparatus use this law to close down and harass oppositional papers and broadcasting stations (Interview with al-Masri, 2011). Again, in spirit such measures are important, but when considered within the broader journalistic structure, this furthers a framework of a politically aligned and controlled media that continues to lack the resources and incentives to develop professional standards, status, and security.

4) Israeli and PA Labor Policies

The labor policies related to the practices of the press are fewer and less publicized than the media laws; this is part of the problem. Labor policies are necessary to analyze because Palestinian politicians, media owners, and journalists often emphasize the economic weaknesses of the press, in particular the low salaries and revenues, when seeking to explain its low level of professionalism. All around the world journalists and media organizations—in particular newspapers—are facing financial woes in the face of changing business models and news consumption patterns. Limited pay, revenues and investments are not a problem unique to the Palestinian press—but probe deeper and often in Palestine politics are feeding the problem. In fact, particular labor policies related to occupation conditions, salaries, and rights to organize are an integral component to explain newsroom practices.
Palestinian journalists in print media work without contracts or sufficient occupational safeguards, a situation directly related to PA policies and weakness in the Palestinian Labor Law. Rather than create formal contracts with worker rights clearly delineated, the Editors-in-Chief rely on labor laws as the regulating source. According to Article Twenty-Four of the Palestinian labor law, an individual work contract is:

A verbal or written agreement, implicit or explicit, concluded between an employer and a laborer for a limited or not limited period of time or to perform a certain work by which a laborer pledges to do a work for an employer under his administration and supervision and an employer pledges to pay a laborer the agreed upon wage (Official Copy).

Article Twenty-Nine provides an employer a three-month period before the contract begins. Though perhaps unintentional, use of the weak labor law as the contracting source rather than creating new contracts that clearly delineate the rights, routines, and responsibilities of journalists has a dysfunctional affect. Consequently, the limited status and security related to pay and occupational rights cannot simply be attributed to economic conditions, as it is also a repercussion from a strategic use of PA policy.

The Palestinian Labor Law effects the reality of work life in al-Quds in a slightly different way: while it publishes out of East Jerusalem and technically falls under the purview of Israeli labor laws, the Palestinian labor law still has a large institutional influence. Though Israeli law provides for greater work benefits and a higher minimum wage, it is not as widely applied. The bulk of the Palestinian journalists working in the three dailies do not have Jerusalem status and hence the Palestinian labor law regulates the majority of salaries and occupational rights (Interview with Esheikh, 2011). Many Palestinian institutions in East Jerusalem in principle also follow PA rather than Israeli laws anyway; it is quite controversial for a Palestinian in disputed East Jerusalem to argue for a higher wage based on Israeli law.
PA policies also formally and informally shape the newspapers through their subsidy policies that reinforce the disincentive for journalists in the newspapers to develop more professional practices. According to Barghouti, about half of *al-Hayyat al-Jadeedah* workers are on the PA payroll; in the late 1990’s, Arafat bought the bulk of *al-Hayyat* shares to bolster the new newspaper. As part of this relationship, a PA fund paid the salaries of workers at that time. Barghouti explained that the PA salary is low (he would not give exact numbers when pressed), and so *al-Hayyat* also pays for part of the wages. The rest of the workers (i.e., those hired since the funds purchase and which today constitute about half of the paper’s employees) are paid by *al-Hayyat* (Interview with al-Barghouti, 2011). Speculation that journalists at the other papers are also paid by the PA could not be confirmed. These kinds of facts are hard to come by, as there is little available accounting and, conscience of the publishing license’s capital requirement, editors are loath to provide real circulation and revenue rates.

In addition to the PA’s legal and illegal payments to the papers’ staff, other forms of patronage such as inflated circulation rates also contribute to the inefficient and unprofessional status quo. Along with large Palestinian business companies and foreign NGOs, the PA pays for many advertisements that publishers cannot afford to lose this support. The PA also provides the newspapers in offices “free of charge,” further inflating circulation and revenue rates. The PA’s formal and informal support for certain media stations, both public and private, creates unfair competition that provides these organizations an undue advantage and limits the chances of free initiatives (Interview with Kuttab, 2011). Low salaries and political parallelism of the press also creates an incentive for journalists to accept gifts from politicians and businessmen eager for popular coverage (Jamal, 2005). In addition to politicizing
circulation and revenue rates and placing commercial concerns over content, these practices normalize self-censorship and restrict the incentives and resources to develop empowering internal media policies and organizational capacity, indicators of limited professionalism that I discuss in depth in the chapters that follow.

The journalists I interviewed were very concerned with the character of their syndicate because of how it has profoundly affected the practice of journalism in Palestine and colleague relations. The syndicate has historically been a politically rather than a professionally oriented body that began by using Israeli laws and with the PLO’s blessing (Brown, 2003). Palestinian labor law allows professional organizing, and in theory the syndicate “purports to have taken on the task of defending the interests of journalists, establishing a social system that respects journalists’ rights, and supporting journalists who face the oppression of the authorities and occupation” (Thawabteh, 2010, p.85). In practice, however, the syndicate’s present form paradoxically undermines the development of an autonomous press and the defense of journalists’ rights, besides issuing statements condemning Israeli violations of news workers or participating in media conferences.

While journalists and Palestinian media scholars emphasize the syndicate’s consequence, the effect the syndicate has on the occupational strength of journalism in Palestine is lacking in much of the English literature. “I look to what goes on in the syndicate for what is really going on the ground,” explained Ezzeldeen, echoing a common sentiment of the syndicate’s significance on the jurisdiction of journalists. “When can I say that the media will be free? When I can say that the syndicate elections will be free” (Interview with Ezzeldeen, 2011). As Ezzeldeen expressed, journalists today see the syndicate as emblematic of a major problem facing the larger
media sphere: it is co-opted by political rather than professional forces that interfere in the production and dissemination of the news.

This is partly the case because trade and professional unions in Palestine are not independent bodies, but are considered part of the PLO and therefore implicated on broader politics. The head of each union is automatically a member of the PLO council, a powerful and prestigious position. The syndicate is strategically part of the PLO, so that going against it is equated with harming national unity, which formal policies and informal practices forbid journalists from doing. Consequently, the Fatah party, largely the dominant party, is invested in preserving its majority in the unions to maintain its control in the PLO council. The syndicate thus rarely holds free elections, and until 2010 the same Fatah-affiliated man, Na’im al-Tubasi, was president of the syndicate—and widely known not to even be a journalist. The few times the syndicate has held elections, votes have been cast along party lines. Journalist press cards have been granted to virtually anyone applying—journalist or not—so that Fatah can retain its majority when elections are held; the vegetable grocer or delivery man is a common stereotype of who votes Fatah in syndicate elections (Interview with Shaheen, 2012; Hamdan, 2012; Pitner, 2012).

There have been several movements to reform and improve the syndicate over the last two decades, and recent changes in leadership in particular could prove promising if reforms are sustains. In November 2010 Abdul Nasser Najjar (al-Ayyam managing editor) was elected President, ending al-Tubasi’s reign. A group of journalists have also developed substantial new internal guidelines that address many of the syndicate’s structural problems, particularly the registry and elections, and are intended to replace the old bylaws.xxviii "The problem is not just the elections, but how
to upgrade and develop the basic law of the syndicate... to have a syndicate that represents those who work in the media,” Shaheen explained (Interview with Shaheen, 2012). In recent months there has been a split between the West Bank and Gaza Strip syndicate branches. When the syndicate held another round of elections in the beginning of March 2012, Hamas threatened to arrest any journalist who participated in the election. This divide has put any further internal changes on hold, like much else in Palestine, until after a long-anticipated Fatah and Hamas reconciliation (Interview with Pitner, 2012). As Chapters Four, Five, and Six examine, the configuration of the syndicate directly obstructs the internal organizational capacity of the journalists, reduces incentives to develop internal media policies, and enables the political and socio-economic instrumentalization of the press—all to the detriment of those it claims to represent.

Though the bylaws as they stand hold little conventional weight, it is nonetheless useful to assess the professional limits they provide as a reflection of the intentions of those in charge. According to the internal bylaws, the syndicate is committed to the PLO’s charters. Article Three of the bylaws delineates the syndicate’s goals, several of which include:

• To enable journalists to perform their mission and maintain freedom of expression
• To be committed to ethics and professional values, to preserve fundamentals and traditions, and to defend rights and interests
• To take care of the problems of the syndicate and the demands of its members, and employment as to guarantee them a dignified life
• To spread and deepen national sentiments, to promote culture and knowledge, and to strengthen the awareness of citizens to face challenges with human and national pride
• To access the source of information and the right to protect these sources in accordance with the law regulating this right
Like in the Press Law, these provisions are in practice meaningless rhetoric to which politicians can point and claim that they are committed to an autonomous Palestinian press but which in reality form a framework that denies journalists professional standards, status, and security. The meaning of certain words—like “professional values,” “national sentiments” “collaboration and solidarity”—and who gets to decide these definitions are definitively absent. According to the bylaws the syndicate is responsible for helping to provide health care, health insurance, pensions, trainings, etc., but such services have never been provided. The top editors justify the absence of these services in the papers by asserting that they are the syndicate’s duty to provide. Structured to further a political over professional mission, the syndicate lacks the means to aid journalists when their freedoms are threatened. This may seem like an obvious point, but as Chapters Four, Five, and Six further demonstrate, this cause has a very real effect in maintaining divisions amongst Palestinian journalists.

The syndicate’s criteria for registering a journalist are also so broad that the rules blatantly undermine the press’ independence. Article Four states that a journalist must have good behavior and not be convicted of a felony or misdemeanor regarding moral turpitude, as well as fit at least one of eight other credentials. The credentials the bylaws delineate are in practice meaningless: the list begins by stating that a Palestinian qualifies to be in the syndicate if they have a Ph.D. in journalism, and concludes that they also qualify if they have worked as a full time journalist for at least five years. In a profession with no contracts, claims of full time work are highly exploitable. The syndicate’s registry is also notoriously error prone and the processes for presenting the application to the secretariat (Article Thirteen) rarely followed. The question of who is a journalist—i.e., who can hold a press card—is central because of
its impact on internal elections. Journalism press passes are easily obtained by Fatah supporters—journalist or not—in order to retain the party’s dominance in the syndicate. Under the news regulations the number of registered journalists has dropped by several hundred; this is a very important and laudable step, but it is in part due to the geo-political West Bank and Gaza divide rather than a dramatic change in the syndicate’s institutional orientation.

The syndicate’s all encompassing criteria for a professional journalist and its explicit partnership with the PLO have undermined the differentiation and authority of journalists. While university training is not considered a necessity for professional journalists worldwide, Article Six explains that those already registered in the Writers and Journalists Association prior to the PA’s reformation of the syndicate automatically belong to the new syndicate—whether or not they are actually journalists. In this way people who worked in PLO papers thirty years ago or drove a delivery car for one of the dailies can retain this status, weakening the syndicate’s authenticity as a support system for practicing journalists.

The internal regulations go into even less depth delineating provisions for the training of journalists, reflecting the PA’s de-facto policy of impeding the press’ development. According to Article Five, any specialized institute in the press or media, whether inside or outside Palestine, can provide training as long as it is recognized by the syndicate and Minister of Higher Education. As is the case with contracts, media policies, and worker insurances, the Editors-in-Chiefs claim to defer to the syndicate for political and economic expedience to provide trainings; the syndicate, however, has been derelict in these duties (Interview with Shaheen, 2011.)
In its absence, foreign funded NGOs have been the primary supporters of trainings, which have led to important improvements in the press more generally, but in print media have not corrected flaws in the fundamental framework. “For a while there were high hopes that the Palestinian training centers for journalists offered a solution to the problems of the Palestinian media,” explained Nibal Thawabteh, Director of the Birzeit University Media Development Center. “The problem, however, is that once these journalists went to work in the PA, they encountered all sorts of professional limitations” (Thawabteh, 2010, p.74). The topics of these trainings are generally based on the NGOs yearly mission—like empowering women or democratic reform—rather than targeting the particular needs of the journalists and strengthening their long-term capacity and skills in the newspapers (Interview with Shaheen, 2011). The press’ limited political autonomy and commercial independence, the absence of internal media policies, the institutionalization of self-censorship, and the limited organizational capacity are all products of labor policies and the way that Israel and the PA regulations have shaped journalism in Palestine.

5) Israeli and PA Security Policies

Israeli and PA security policies are additionally influential factors that also cause the unprofessional environment in which local Palestinian journalists practice. The physical and verbal harassment of journalists, sometimes to a deadly degree, is one such palpable element that receives the most publicity; of additional concern are policies that prevent dissemination of information on the pretext of security, as well as those that reinforce cliental relationships, the power of wasta, and tribal politics—which make for particularly difficult and unprofessional working conditions.
The Israeli Military Censor of publications in east Jerusalem has considerably evolved over the last two decades, but remains a practical and psychological source of red lines for journalists. The censor, itself a leftover of the British mandate period, was much harsher in the pre-PA period and today concerns only al-Quds, and occasionally al-Ayyam and al-Hayyat al-Jadeedah sometimes when they are brought across the border into East Jerusalem (Interview with Esheikh, 2012.) Journalists say that the amount of material the censor forbade al-Quds to publish fell by about 50% after the Oslo Accords. While in the first intifada words like Palestine and Occupation were forbidden, restrictions on language were greatly reduced in the years that followed. Today the censor only mandates prior review of information seriously concerned with security, like covert movement of military forces (Interview with Esheikh, 2012).

The Israeli censor is nonetheless a problem for journalists in the press because of its practical and symbolic restraint on journalism’s professional jurisdiction. First, the stigma still remains, a fact that should not be underestimated. Facing very volatile work and life conditions in the Territories, Palestinian journalists are very fearful of taking provocative measures. All journalists interviewed (and an unmeasured number of Palestinians) know that al-Quds used to be harshly censored and still remains under Israeli control. This notably reinforces the degree to which journalists continue to view their work as a politicized and subjugated practice. The intended chaos of the censor also serves to confuse Palestinian editors about their legal status; “There has never been a coherent Israeli censorship policy, but rather an incomprehensible apparatus of parallel and sometimes even contradictory regulations” (HRW, 1999). Secondly, many of those who presently work in al-Quds have been journalists since the
harsher censorship days. They remember the sting of the Israeli censor and still see much of their work as a political reaction to these kinds of policies (Interviews, 2011).

It is also now virtually impossible for a Palestinian journalist to attain Israeli pass credentials, which would enable easier access through military checkpoints and to Israeli officials and press conferences (Interview with Israeli FPA Secretary, 2012). As Palestinians, journalists are not entitled to membership in or the benefits of the Israeli journalist union or the Foreign Press Association (FPA). Instead, the Palestinian journalist syndicate theoretically serves as the “journalists house,” which clearly provides no such conduits for control in their work life. The GPO rules for Israeli press credentials have changed slightly over the years, increasing in severity following the second intifada, but a de facto general trend remains: zero status for Palestinian journalists as a distinct body deserving recognition and differentiated treatment.

According to Israeli policy, the main barrier to Palestinian journalists attaining a press pass is a security one: “We don’t differentiate between ordinary Palestinians and Palestinians who claim to be journalists,” said Daniel Seaman of the GPO (Interview with Seaman, 2012). In the Oslo years, journalists in the local press could more easily access Israeli politicians, spokespeople, and press conferences; many of the senior journalists recall with pride interviewing Peres and other Israelis in the mid-1990s (Interviews, 2011). Then it all changed with the second intifada. Beginning in 2002, the GPO refused to renew Israeli press passes for journalists from the Territories, both in the local and foreign press. A court case ensued between Reuters and the GPO, but journalists in the local media had no international clout with which to protest. As of 2005, Palestinian journalists first needed to obtain a work permit to enter Israel before they could apply for a GPO card (and then received it
only for three-months); in contrast, international and Israeli journalists can get a yearlong pass with relative ease (Bishara, 2006). Palestinian journalists with a Jerusalem ID remain hemmed in by many of the same restrictions, undermining many of the other benefits of this ID.

Despite the entrenched red lines in place, it is of interest to review the criteria for achieving an Israeli press pass in order to better understand how these processes limit the press’ professionalism. According to the GPO’s website in January 2012, foreign journalists who are “working on assignment for a recognized news organization (Newspaper, Television, Radio) covering real time news” can apply. As of December 2011, bloggers can apply as well. The Press card assists in accessing government building, press conferences, IDF checkpoints, and police lines. According to the GPO’s website, a journalist is required to submit the following:

1. An official, dated letter of assignment in English signed by the chief editor. The letter should state the nature and the duration of your assignment in Israel.
2. Valid press credentials from country of origin.
3. One non-returnable passport-size photograph.
4. Your passport plus one copy of your passport.
5. A 50 shekels administration fee per application.

The GPO reserves the right to consider an application submitted by either a local or foreign journalist for up to 90 days before they are obligated to make a final decision; under Seaman it was the expressed GPO policy to utilize this entire waiting period for press deemed unsupportive by the official working at the desk (Interview with Seaman, 2012; Guttmann, 2005). Upon acceptance, a journalist must sign a declaration to the military censor. This formal policy differs from the informal practice, in which local Palestinian journalists are generally denied press credentials.
These policies reflect the general philosophy of the Israeli administration in the Palestinian Territories: a systematic denial of Palestinian journalists the equal right to professional autonomy and jurisdiction that, perhaps not so surprisingly, directly effects their workplace. Some Palestinian journalists have posed a threat to Israel’s security and intentionally tried to exploit the media to further their political or nationalist activism; issues of intentional misrepresentation of facts was especially rampant during the second intifada period (Gutmann, 2005). But as the FPA Israeli Secretary attested and conversations with journalists confirmed, too often the decision is made based on political and not security or professional criteria (Interviews, 2012).

The journalists interviewed were highly aware of their second-class status and many lamented that they cannot freely report and disseminate information in most places. Those with a West Bank or Gaza Strip ID card cannot travel to Jerusalem without the proper papers that require security clearance, and attaining a visa to travel abroad is an even less likely and more expensive process (Interview with Rimawi, 2012). Those with a Jerusalem ID or Jordanian citizenship have a slightly higher threshold for travel, but are still subject to the whims of the young soldier at the checkpoint or District Coordinating Office.

Without the necessary status, journalists are denied access to Israeli officials, personal protection in the field, and other professional means to attain information. When journalists are caught in crossfire or injured while covering a demonstration, often the official Israeli version denies responsibility or dismisses the incident as collateral damage (HRW, 2010). In interviews I conducted journalists recalled many dangerous dealings with Israeli soldiers when working in the field, a problem that further chapters more thoroughly address. As the Israelis control who and what
legally crosses the borders, journalists face barriers when trying to import materials like cameras, computers, etc., which can sit for months or years at crossings waiting for the proper clearance (Interviews, 2011).

The discretionary powers of PA security forces are another problem for the media in Palestine that conditions their content and conventions and leaves workers with no protection. It is no exaggeration that every journalist in the newspapers either knows the story of Maher al-Alami’s arrest, or personally knows of another case just like it. A 2010 HRW study explains how the security forces can easily circumvent the rule of law. “In cases of arrest and detention, the security services typically act on warrants issued by the PA’s military judicial authority, including warrants issued by military courts against civilians in defiance of explicit provisions of Palestinian law and numerous Palestinian High Court of Justice rulings” (HRW, 2010). In this way, the many laws on the books can be exploited for political expediency, rather than productively regulating the press.

It is important to note particular ups and downs in the security situation, which are conventionally known to the journalists interviewed. Generally speaking, the relationship between the security forces and journalists improved slightly in the period between the first PLC elections and outbreak of the second intifada; however, conditions still remained precarious, especially for those that the PA deems oppositional. In the second intifada, Israel’s reoccupation of Palestinian cities and villages in Areas A and B and the rise of armed factions roaming the streets severely diminished the PA’s discretionary power. In this period, journalists faced the everyday dangers of war-like conditions, difficulties in accessing information and resources, and threats from armed Palestinian brigades who amidst the chaos became their own
fourth authority. Following Arafat’s death and the reorganization of the security forces, relations improved to a degree as the unchecked control of the security forces diminished. For example, the security forces recently appointed a spokesperson to help facilitate communication (Interview with Pitner, 2012). The continued geopolitical factionalization along Fatah and Hamas lines, however, has impeded further developments and added another detrimental level of complexity.\textsuperscript{xxxiv}

Recent changes, therefore, have yet to significantly alter the overall systemic affect of security policies; in some cases they have just formalized preexisting policies. Quneis recaps the situation journalists have generally faced, “The laws are too weak to protect anyone, especially journalists. Any security group can go and arrest a journalist from their home without even a warrant, a notice, anything legal” (Quneis, 2008a). For example, in 2005 the PA passed General Intelligence Law No. 17 to better regulate the dysfunctional agency. The law failed to delineate the security forces’ jurisdiction (HRW, 2010), undermining its potential for improvement. Article Thirty-Five of the law prohibits officers from revealing “data pertaining to the matters of work to the media, which during the service or thereafter, except through a person authorized,” but does not identify the authorized person (Quneis, 2008b, p.15). Another policy, the Law of Service in the Palestinian Forces (2005), prohibits officers during military service from issuing “statements to the media, except under an official authorization by the competent minister” (Article Ninety), which Quneis describes as “a striking example of the executive authorities’ direct involvement in media affairs” (Quneis, 2008b, p.15). The law further prevents the security forces from developing effective media departments by restricting the role of official spokespersons.
The continual lack of transparency in and control over the security forces remains a significant cause of the problematic working conditions and conventions—even despite recent changes. According to Palestinian law, the Preventive Security forces were initially not allowed to make arrests or run detention facilities, though this occurred nonetheless. In November 2007, Abbas issued a decree formally providing the agency these powers. Article Eight of the decree mandated that the security forces must act within the limits of the law, but then limited transparency by stating that “the information, activities, and documents pertaining to the work of the Preventive Security shall be considered confidential and cannot be disclosed to anyone” (HRW, 2010, p.9). These examples are emblematic of other security policies that reinforce a regime of self-censorship, create an uncertain and politically controlled workplace, and reduce the agency of journalists to conduct their own reporting or develop their own skills and editorial standards (Interview with Quneis, 2011). It is policies like these that make it difficult to develop professional norms under such conditions.

The lack of security PA policies provide also reinforce the prominence of *wasta*, big business, and family matters over the media, further limiting the professional autonomy of journalists in the Palestinian press. As journalist and media scholar Walid Batrawi posits, “The study of monitoring and censoring what the Palestinian media say is not limited to the security forces but also taken up by local communities, militant groups, and political parties” (Batrawi, 2002). Amidst the chaos, it is not just that Israeli and PA policies prevent coverage of sensitive security or political matters: it is also that they fail to provide the necessary protections from social and economic *tadakhulat* that then shape the reporting, editing, hiring, and production practices in the papers (Interview with Quneis, 2011). Hence culture, economics, or technology
alone are not sufficient explanations for conditions in the press, such as the absence of investigative stories or reliance on official press, as government policies have an important role in institutionalizing these practices.

6) Conclusion:

This chapter delineated the primary Israeli and PA policies that affect the professionalism of Palestinian print media in very real and detrimental ways. As Palestinian journalist and commentator Nabil Khatib contends, “The same red lines and the same overall PA policy pertain to all three newspapers, despite their varied ownership” (Khatib, 2003, p.3). While conditions have fluctuated over time, in general the journalists in all three daily Palestinian newspapers have faced the same professional obstacles because of problematic formal government policies and informal practices in place. For this reason I discussed these policies in depth because it is important to understand how all of these details together contribute to the limited professionalism of local media in Palestine that I next examine in greater detail. Indeed, these are not problems that that increased investments or trainings can alone simply solve. As Shaheen posited:

“There is no way to change the situation without developing the professional structure of the newspaper itself, because if you do not do that the same thing will continue happening on a daily basis. Without structural changes everyone will turn to be, as we say, a screw in the machine” (Interview with Shaheen, 2012).

Situated within the Palestinian media’s history and present institutional context, the next three chapters provide specific examples what work life is like for the journalists inside the red lines these policies perpetuate.
Part II

Chapter Four: Political Autonomy and Commercial Independence

The more you print, the more you lose.
- Interview with Hafez al-Barghouti, 2011

Acclaimed Palestinian journalist Yousef Shayeb sat in the chic Zaman café in Ramallah smoking a cigarette and flipping through the pages of the day’s al-Ayyam. He is Palestine’s only film and art critic and he has been at al-Ayyam for thirteen years. He also writes for al-Ghad in Jordan, where he is a citizen, a job that provides insight into what work life is like in other media environments. “I love al-Ayyam,” he explained of his personal commitment to the paper, “I cannot get out” (Interview with Shayeb, 2011). Shayeb wanted to be a journalist since childhood in Kuwait: he used to watch an animated French show in which the main character was a journalist. “Since then I knew that I must be a journalist,” he said (Interview with Shayeb, 2011).

The day of the interview Shayeb was also quick to criticize the political, military, and commercial instrumentalization, or tadakhulat (interventions), that plague his profession. It is not merely that the newspapers have adopted PA terminology, Shayeb explained, but these politicized pressures have come to control virtually all parts of the profession. In practice, political reason dominates media logic.

It did not have to be this way. The three dailies once represented the promise of a new Palestinian media for a new Palestinian state (Jamal, 2005). As al-
Ayyam’s name conveys, journalists envisioned a media that would report on “The Days” of a free Palestinian press and people. Now, two decades later, neither has realized their independence. Instead, the Palestinian press resembles something more like an occupied fourth estate, bordered in by Israeli and PA red lines. “I can write what I want outside of Palestine,” Shayeb sighs as he closed the paper. “But I cannot write what I want inside Palestine” (Interview with Shayeb, 2011).

Six months later in early February 2012, Shayeb was detained, without a warrant, by the West Bank Palestinian Security forces and interrogated for eight hours, allegedly for stories he wrote on corruption in a Palestinian diplomatic mission in France (JMCC, 2012). He reportedly refused to disclose his sources to the security forces, which he technically must do by law. On March 25, the Palestinian Attorney General ordered him arrested again, reportedly on charges of libel based on the Jordanian Penal Code (RSF, 2012). As of April 2, 2012 Shayeb remained in jail, facing an uncertain future for doing what he saw as his job to do. “It makes me a lot of trouble with the politicians here,” Shayeb said back in August before his arrest, describing some of his more daring and in-depth reports. “But it makes me feel that I am a real journalist” (Interview with Shayeb, 2011).

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In this chapter I examine two measures of professionalism—political autonomy and commercial independence—and demonstrate how indicators of limited professionalism are present in all three newspapers and are primarily determined by the formal policies and informal practices of the Israeli government and the PA. The political and commercial instrumentalization manifests in several ways: in the frequency of Israeli and Palestinian violations against journalists, in the
domination of the PA’s nationalist discourse in the newspapers’ editorial line; the monopoly of commercial considerations over content; and the politicization of the newspaper’s circulation. These characteristics are in the same chapter because in Palestine, military and economic pressures are often closely related to political calculations, and it is most appropriate to discuss them together.

1) **Background:**

As Chapter One explained, a press with limited professionalism displays high rates of political parallelism and political instrumentalization and very low independence over advertising, revenue, and circulation rates. It is the effective absence of this differentiation—so apparent in the high rates of political and commercial *tadakhulat*—that is to the great detriment of Palestinian journalists and their professional standards, status, and security. In this way, it is not simply the newspapers’ parallelism with the PA that is the problem, but that the journalists have no professional rights or mechanisms to choose which party, actor, or idea they want to support over another. True, in nationalist conflicts it is common cross-regionally for media to perpetuate narratives that justify the righteousness of the struggle and that negatively portray the traits and intentions of the other (Interview with Baker, 2011). While no journalist in any environment works entirely removed from political, military, and economic pressures, in the case of the Palestinian press, Israeli and PA policies have been structured in such a way that innately privileges the political over professional considerations.

2) **Autonomy from Political and Military Pressures**

   a) *The frequency of Israeli and Palestinian violations against journalists:*
Fadi Arouri did not see the bullet coming. It was 2007 and Arouri, a photojournalist for *al-Ayyam* as well as several foreign news outlets, was covering a clash between the IDF and an armed Palestinian faction in Ramallah’s iconic al-Manara square (Interview with Arouri, 2011). A moment later he was down in shock on the pavement, shot three times by an Israeli tank ten meters away. Arouri lost an appendix and half a liver that day, and spent ten months recovering, with the hospital and court costs nearing $20,000. The IDF denied responsibility: they claimed he was negligent, caught in the confusing line of fire with no obvious press credentials (Interview with Arouri, 2011). But a colleague caught Arouri’s assault on camera. In the shaky tape, he is wearing a helmet and a bulletproof vest that says press—generally known signs of a journalist. Now confined to the Territories without traveling rights, Arouri cannot avoid having to drive past the bullet-ridden lion statues that sit in the center of al-Manara square.

Human rights organizations document these and other kinds of violations against journalists in the Territories. Human Rights Watch (HRW), the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), Freedom House, *al-Haq*, the Palestinian Independent Commission on Human Rights (PCHR), and the Palestinian Center for Development and Media Freedoms (MADA) are just some of the groups that issue reports recording cases of abuses, arrests, detentions, and deaths. These studies focus on international and local journalists from print and broadcast. They are mainly descriptive, and often do not distinguish between local, international, print, and broadcast conditions.

MADA delineates twelve common tactics that Israeli and Palestinian political and military forces use to suppress the press: attacks, detentions, arrests,
summons for investigations, prevention of coverage, prevention of
tavel/deportation, destruction of property, threats, closures/blockades, equipment
confiscation, and frequency disruption (MADA, 2008). To provide a sense of the
overall trend, Figure 2 tracks the progression of media freedoms, according to

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However, exact numbers and details of violations are
hard to quantify, as journalists often underreport
instances out of fear and fatigue and the sequence of
events are innately difficult to verify. Moreover, these
reports often group international and local journalists
together, despite their differing institutional conditions.

According to MADA since 2000, twenty Palestinian
journalists have been killed in the Occupied Territories
(MADA Website) while on the job. More, without a
doubt, have gone unreported.

It is no secret that the PA and its security forces
are in part to blame: violations of journalists’ rights are an all too common
occurrence. As the Freedom House and other surveys suggest, despite
reconfigurations and recent improvements in the Palestinian security forces, a
consistent trend is clear: the security establishment—and the politicians behind it—
does not respect the right of journalists to work as a differentiated and autonomous
sphere. The journalists interviewed have many stories of *tadakhulat* of varying
severity, from hostile calls criticizing certain coverage, to the destruction of
recorders and cameras while in the field, to the fateful summons, interrogations,
and detentions, and sometimes death, at the hands of Palestinian security forces.\textsuperscript{xcv}

Journalists are often denied access to buildings or meetings; \textit{al-Ayyam} writer Hussam Ezzeldeen indignantly recalled how he was banned from the Parliament in late 1999 because of an article he wrote on the PLC (Interview with Ezzeldeen, 2011). As Chapter One argued, these examples confirm that the three daily newspapers exhibit low levels of professionalism as a result of government policies.

These violations represent one PA tactic to impose its will on the Palestinian press: create a condition of fear that deprives journalists control over their work norms, content and organization. PA violations of Palestinians rarely make it into the local newspapers, and if they do are hidden in the inside pages (Interview with Shaheen, 2011). The frequency and notoriety of these assaults creates an atmosphere of uncertainty and ambiguity in which journalists are left with few resources to assert their professional rights. The PA’s instrumentalization of the press manifests in a violent and coercive message: walk inside the red lines. If you cooperate and follow a political rather than professional agenda, then safety is, most likely, guaranteed. But dare to cross the red lines—the restrictions in place—at one’s peril. In the case of the three newspapers, the journalists know that critical coverage of the PA, both vis-à-vis internal political and socio-economic problems, will cost them far more than simply the price of news print.

Since the 2007 geo-political divide and further polarization of Palestinian media, the PA has also become even less tolerant of opposition sentiments in the press, while the Hamas government in Gaza has cracked down even more severely on all media-related freedoms (Interview with Rimawi, 2012). These violations have further politicized the press along factionalized lines and obstructed its
professional potential. “Journalists were no longer journalists but they were Fatah journalists or Hamas journalists and it was very hard to be anything in between,” explained Daoud Kuttab (Interview with Kuttab, 2011). In this way officials have used their discretionary power to intentionally try to co-opt the press. These tactics have included non-violent ways, like when PA President Mahmoud Abbas issued a presidential decree that put the PBC under the purview of his office. But often this manifests in the systematic targeting of journalists because of their own political coverage or affiliations, or that of the media outlets in which they work. These actions are possible because of policies like the unchecked power of security forces, the politicization of incitement claims, the inadequate legal protections of journalists, the factionalization of journalist syndicate, and PA subsidies that enable this kind of instrumentalization.

Journalists in Gaza have faced more brutal repression than in the West Bank (HRW, 2010) further complicating the prospects for the development of a professional press. In solemn voices the journalists relay stories of the precarious state of their colleagues in Gaza. Gaza-based al-Hayyat al-Jadeedah writer Nafouz al-Bakri told HRW that Hamas security forces repeatedly harassed her in March, February, and April 2010. She recalled one instance in a HRW report:

On March 4, a man who identified himself as Khaled Qahman and said that he worked for the Interior Ministry arrived at al-Bakri’s apartment and “asked what I was doing,” al-Bakri said. “I closed the door on him, and he said, ‘I knew I would get information about you,’” apparently as a threat. On March 7, at 2 p.m., she said, two men in civilian clothes who said they were from the Interior Ministry “knocked on my door and said, ‘We came to arrest you.’ They accused me of chairing suspicious meetings. I shut the door on them, and they banged on the door for about 15 minutes…. Al-Bakri said she called Hamas Interior Ministry spokesman Ihab Al-Ghussein and several members of the Palestinian Legislative Council, with whom she had professional contacts. “The men
left and said they would send the police the next day to arrest me.” The
next day, according to al-Bakri, she received a phone call from Huda
Naim, a Hamas member of the Palestinian parliament, who said that she
had checked with the Internal Security Forces, which denied sending the
men (HRW, 2010, p.28).

This lack of safeguards afforded to Palestinian journalists is systematic of the press’
larger institutionalized problems and limited professionalism. As al-Bakri’s story
exemplifies, these moments are particularly difficult because the journalists have
little sense of who is responsible for the man with a gun at their door. While
journalists with greater wasta, like al-Bakri, are able to slightly better protect
themselves from these arbitrary dealings because of their connections, the courts
offer no reprieve and the syndicate only reinforces the problem. With no tradition
of respect for freedom of the press in Palestine, the recent Fatah/Hamas divide has
only further fed the problem: government policies continue to obstruct the
professionalism of Palestinian print media.

Beyond the intense pressures from the political and security establishment,
the newspapers are also susceptible to tadakhulat from armed Palestinian factions.
*Miftah* reports find that the newspapers have generally not been critical in their
coverage of armed Palestinian factions (Interview with Baker, 2011). In a 2005
content analysis, *Miftah* criticized the newspapers for this kind of coverage. “The
Palestinian media widely ignored its role as a public watchdog as well as
elementary journalistic ethics by not criticizing Palestinian militant attack ads”
(*Miftah*, 2005a, p.7). This is in part the case because the editors and journalists fear
being accused of harming the national unity, and possible ramifications on their
personal safety and occupational security. For example, during the second intifada,
armed Palestinian groups from all political orientations roamed the streets, acting
as their own fourth estate and threatening journalists with whom they disagreed. Wanting to be seen as a unified front, PA politicians often did not criticize these actions—and the newspapers followed suit. While the lawlessness has decreased since the intifada, coverage of armed factions is still largely dependent on the PA’s perceived needs, meaning that protection of journalists is not guaranteed.

Israeli violations against Palestinian journalists add another level of complexity that obstructs the professionalism of journalists in the newspapers. While there have been highs and lows in their treatment, across the board the IDF and GPO provides no recognition of a differentiated status for Palestinian journalists. Like all Palestinians living under occupation, the journalists contend with a myriad of problems and mainly encounter Israeli soldiers at these intersection points: checkpoints, raids, demonstrations, etc. The second intifada was a particularly violent and polarizing period: Barghouti recalled with revulsion how al-Hayyat al-Jadeedah was bombed by the Israeli military during the Ramallah siege (Interview with Barghouti, 2011). It is no exaggeration that every Palestinian journalist I interviewed has clashed with an Israeli soldier, whether on or off the job. Recent weekly non-violent protests in villages like Bilin have become a major flashpoint, with soldiers firing rubber bullets, stun grenades, and tear gas at journalists—which in the eyes of the journalists further politicizes the events.

The IDF and GPO perpetuate the systematic branding of Palestinian journalists as a fighter—as soldiers of the pen (or camera)—with no right to work in an environment with a degree of standards, status, and security. Subject to military rather than civilian rule, Palestinian journalists work without freedoms afforded to other groups of journalists, such as Israeli press credentials and equal access to the
court systems. As Arouri concluded of his assault that fateful day, “The Israeli system is against Palestinian journalists. If an international journalist was killed, they will give him money and admit that they were wrong. Because I’m a Palestinian, they would say no” (Interview with Arouri, 2011). In a study of Palestinian journalists and international news outlets, Amahl Bishara confirms these findings, citing in particular how Palestinian journalists are more institutionally marginalized than news workers from other countries. “For Palestinian journalists, authorities’ frequent lack of recognition of their professional status only increases the dangers they face” (Bishara, 2006, p.32). The GPO and some media monitoring groups consequently admonish the Palestinian press for its adoption of the PA nationalist-struggle line, as if their own policies and violations had no role in creating and imposing this politicized status.

Here the cycle of political instrumentalization through frequent Israeli and PA violations comes full circle: Palestinian journalists are twice deprived of their political autonomy. The IDF, GPO and PA treat them as politicized vessels—but often deny responsibility for the repercussions of the red lines they make. In these ways, formal government policies and informal practices are a direct cause of the limited professionalism that characterizes Palestinian print media.

b) The domination of the PA’s nationalist discourse in the newspaper’s editorial line:

It was a week after fighting broke out between Hamas and Fatah forces, and the day Abbas announced the dissolution of the Palestinian Unity government, which had been formed the year before after Hamas won a majority of seats in the second PLC elections. In the months that followed Palestinian journalists—both willingly and not—found themselves ensnared in the geo-political divide. Like much of the West Bank based media, the newspapers reflected a pro-Fatah, anti-Hamas narrative (*Muwatin*, 2011). This high level of the dominance of PA discourse in the editorial line is one measure of limited professionalism that reflects the effect of formal government policies and informal practices.

That the papers adopted the PA’s nationalist discourse—presenting news articles, advertisements, opinion pieces and cartoons that justified PA policies—is well documented. The 2007 events, for example, could not be called the *inqlaab*, coup, but rather the *inqisaam*, division: the first implies a Hamas victory, and the second implicitly blames Hamas for instigating a national divide (Interview with Shayeb, 2011). The term *matlubeen*, wanted, is another case: once used by the Israelis to describe wanted Palestinians in Arabic, now the PA describes Hamas combatants using the occupier’s language (Interview with Khater, 2011). In this way the papers do not have their own editorial lines; rather editors make these decisions largely according to political and not professional signals. This strategic wording, while in part a product of the time, also represents the continual domination of PA discourse in the papers, which is in large part enabled by the vague and broad language in the 1995 Press Law, subsequent presidential decrees, and messages from the syndicate and Ministry of Information that shape local journalism. In this case it is too simple to dismiss the newspapers as merely a
propaganda tool of the PA, without taking a step back and examining the institutional framework that made it this way.

The use of *shahid* is a further contentious but fitting example of the domination of the PA’s political and nationalist discourse. The Israeli censor initially forbade use of *shahid*, or any of its cognates, in the pre-PA period that Chapter Two described. While *shahid* translates as martyr, the word has come to have differing religious and political-cultural usages. In the press, the term frequently defines someone who has died for the Palestinian cause, be it for a nationalist or Islamist mission (Interview with Baker, 2011). In this way *shahid* is attributed to Palestinian combatants who died in terror attacks against Israeli civilians, Palestinians who died in conflict with Israeli soldiers, or other direct results of the occupation (*Miftah*, 2007b, p.10).

Again the journalists have no professional parameters for when and how the term should or should not be used; rather, institutionally deprived of autonomous norms because of government policies, its use reflects the PA’s politicized call. The press often parrots the tone and terminology of WAFA and direct statements from ministers (Omari, 2010), which often leads to the use of *shahid* in the headlines or front pages of the papers. For example, the term was not used in the coverage of a suicide attack in Tel Aviv on February 25, 2005, and the PA in several of that day’s news and prominent columns collectively condemned the attack (*Miftah*, 2005a, p.21) In contrast, *Miftah* reports that it was used in the coverage of a suicide operation in Eilat in May 2007. “*Al-Ayyam* and *al-Hayyat al-Jadeedah* resumed the use of the word “*Istishadia*” to describe the Suicide Operation, and ‘martyr’ to describe the executor of the operation, a practice they had stopped earlier.” *Miftah* provides the necessary
context to understand this discrepancy. In the first case, the PA was in the midst of negotiations, and therefore wanted to portray a state of calm and control. In the second case, Miftah notes that this was a period of escalating internal conflict, in which arguably the term became politically expedient for the PA in an attempt to portray a unified Palestinian front against the occupation (Miftah 2007c, p.10).

How the newspapers describe their own land is another telling example of the PA’s institutional influence. The problem in this case is not specifically the terms the press uses, but why they do so. A two-state solution along 1967 lines with East Jerusalem as Palestine’s capital has been the PA and PLO line since Oslo, and so it is also the borders that the newspapers in their news coverage adopt. In this way Filastin (Palestine), or occupied Palestine or Palestinian Territories, is used to describe the pre-1967 area of the West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem, while Israel, beyond the Green Line in Israel, or a variance, denotes what international law considers the sovereign state of Israel. The newspapers also refer to Jerusalem as al-Quds al-Muhtala, or Occupied Jerusalem, a term the Israeli government opposes, as it considers East Jerusalem a legal part of Israel, and the IDF as the occupying forces. The language and point of view differs to a larger degree on the opinion page (as it does for internal issues, too) where there is less rehashing of news events. This phrasing, while moderate, again reflects the absence of autonomy over the norms and content in the newspapers because of PA policies. The PA must watch and make sure that the newspapers toe this rhetorical line because of the Wye Agreement; this is also to their benefit, as it limits the language available to others with which to dissent. Rather than a reflection of a professional decision, the journalists know that they do not get a say over the use of these terms, even if they did agree with the usage.
The term “incitement” is often used to describe the more serious instances of provocations to violence or hatred towards Israelis or Jews, a term that has serious political and legal ramifications. Incitement may take several forms in the newspapers: direct calls for violence; the omitting or sidelining of information on Israeli deaths or injuries; provocative photographs, cartoons, etc. There is no doubt that avert glorification of violence to Israel and calls for the deaths of Jews, Israelis, Zionists (sometimes all three interchanged), Americans, or any other peoples, constitute incitement and are contrary to the promotion of peace, as well as cross-regional journalistic ethics (Miftah, 2005a). For example, Miftah records how the word “massacre” is often inaccurately used to describe the death of two or three people by Israeli fire. “This frequent use of the word “massacre” that is not based on a logical approach undermines the value of the word and weakens the media’s credibility” (Miftah, 2007d, p.27). In other instances, the deaths or injuries of Israelis are sidelined or omitted, while photos of bloodied Palestinians convey a quite violent and aggressive image of Israel (Miftah, 2008). The Israeli government often cites incitement to argue that the PA and Palestinians are not serious about peace.

Within this context, the Israelis and PA too often use claims of incitement to suppress news content they deem inappropriate based on amorphous political criteria—rather than be a source to reinforce cross-regional journalistic ethics of balance and accountability. The guidelines delineated in the Wye memorandum and other agreements are quite vague, and thereby can be expediently exploited by the Israelis and PA. In theory, these policies are a constructive opportunity to incentivize the press to provide a more balanced and accountable exchange of information. In practice, these policies undermine the autonomy of the newspapers
to develop their own norms and control over this decision making process because of the expediently varying ways in which incitement is defined. It is too simplistic to charge that incitement is all that these newspapers are about.

Moreover, to accurately explain these outcomes it is necessary to evaluate the PA’s media message in its entirety, and not just point out particular instances removed from the rest of its political and current events context. For example, moving beyond simplistic claims that characterize these instances as examples of a Palestinian culture of hate, Jamal in his 2005 study argues that this language must be considered in context of the PA’s broader national discourse, the decades long nationalist struggle, and present state of semi-sovereignty.

“The dailies’ selection of subjects worthy of coverage and their methods of priming help to promote the PA’s national agenda and frame public attitudes in favor of official policy making…. Most of the front-page headlines, as well as the editorials, address the efforts of the national elite to achieve a suitable solution for the Palestine question… Internal affairs are covered from the same vantage point, with problems and disagreements framed in order to contribute to the national endeavors for statehood” (Jamal, 2005, p.77).

Though verbatim republishing of government press releases occurs less often, much of the newspaper content still rarely goes beyond surface descriptions of events based on a few select government sources. “The Palestinian press focuses on reactions of officials in the Authority rather than on the action itself,” concludes the Palestinian Human Rights Monitoring Group, citing how when a prisoner dies in jail, the newspapers do not report on the reasons for his death, but rather the reactions of certain officials (PHRMG Annual Report, 1999). In his quantitative study of the second intifada for Muwatin, Sameen Shbeeb found that 96.24% of al-Quds articles, 90.73% of al-Ayyam, and 88.85% of al-Hayyat relied heavily on direct
statements by PA officials (Shbeeb, 2004, p.33). Walid Omari notes the repetition of other terms that present the PA line, like calling Arafat “Commander” or “leader” before and after his death, and using phrases like “alleged” or “what is called” to describe the opposition (Omari, 2010, p.156). Guest columns by political and religious leaders are another daily staple and expedient way for the PA to present their views and for the papers to safely fill space (Omari, 2010, p.156). Major speeches are also often reprinted without additional analysis or context. In his study of the dailies in the Hamas/Fatah division, Ghazi Ouda argued that translated Israeli articles were used to foster the divide, as they presented another indirect way for the editors to push anti-Hamas positions.

Rather than simply a cause of limited investments, the low number of investigations the three dailies print is another example of the PA’s domineering discourse. “We deny, and we condemn strongly, and blah blah blah,” Ezzeldeen exclaimed in frustration, parroting the writing style of news reports that present information through PA statements. “Ok, let the political line go and go to the life. There’s a life of the people, restaurants, festivals, sports. Our media should deal with this kind of life” (Interview with Ezzeldeen, 2011). Instead, social problems are most often framed through PA policies or issues with the occupation. Articles chronicling PA problems are largely dependent upon the targeted official’s level of power in the political sphere. Corruption coverage is either an indication of the lack of an official’s power or the manipulation of the media by more powerful politicians to embarrass an opponent (Interview with Shaheen, 2011). Critical views of the education, economic, and health sectors are few, and often the reports that do make it to print occur after the problem has been fixed and therefore
mainly praise and publicize the PA’s work (Jamal, 2005). When discussing a violation by one of the Palestinian security services the vague “security services” is used, rather than the specific name of the perpetuating force (PHRMG, 1999). These are again caused by government policies and practices, such as the Press Law, syndicate by-laws, and primacy of security forces that continually undermine the credibility of the newspapers.

The tone, terminology, and placement of coverage of the “other” similarly manifests along these lines because of the absence of legal, social, or occupational protections for the journalists to write otherwise. In a report on coverage of the 2005 Palestinian presidential elections, Miftah recorded how the media did not provide balanced information on or space for all the candidates, but rather demonstrated an undeniable bias towards Fatah’s Abbas (Miftah, 2005d). “If we change our political situation, our parties, it will reflect in the media and in newspapers,” al-Masri posited, emphasizing the connection between what is printed and Palestinian political parties (Interview with al-Masri, 2011). The PA’s often-patriarchal discourse also manifests in the newspapers’ coverage of women: women are rarely presented as decision makers or political activists, but more often as students and social activists, whose names are sometimes omitted (Miftah, 2010). Miftah draws a direct connection between this outcome and the PA policies that obstruct the political autonomy of the press.

“The findings indicate that the continued gender inequality in the media may be partially attributed to the fact that newspapers lack an institutional structure, in which editing boards play a central role in formulating editing policies and work plans. This adversely influences their professionalism and their ability to plan and implement media policies, and increased the leverage of paid advertisements on the editing policy,” (Miftah, 2010, p.12).
As this analysis demonstrates, the limited political autonomy of the newspapers is not the only problematic condition that characterizes the journalist’s work place. After discussing similarities in the newspapers, this chapter will then address a related indicator: the lack of commercial independence.

c) Variation Between the Three Dailies

It is hard to measure differences between the three papers in terms of the number and severity of violations against journalists, both because few researchers record this information and because these facts are politically challenging to gather. Here I present some of the conventional wisdom amongst the journalists. In theory the Palestinian security forces have no jurisdiction in East Jerusalem where *al-Quds* publishes, but as Alami’s story demonstrated, they remain powerful nonetheless. Moreover, while journalists claim that *al-Hayyat* faces the fewest problems because it is closest to the PA, no numbers confirm these findings. Another stereotype is that *al-Ayyam* journalists face the most violations because many also work in the foreign press, which sends its journalists to report from the field far more than the Palestinian newspapers (Interviews, 2011).

While the newspapers largely reflect what Jamal calls the mirror effect—i.e. the same stories and advertisements in the same place on the front page for reasons just explained—there are some differences between the papers in respect to the dominance of the PA’s discourse. This is mainly due to the differing needs of the Editors-in-Chief, an issue discussed in greater depth in Chapter Six. *Miftah* studies confirm that in terms of tone, content, and terminology, *al-Hayyat al-Jadeedah* is closest to the PA, with large headlines more often parroting the official discourse.
Al-Ayyam, the stereotypical newspaper of the elite, is best known for its opinion pieces; according to Jamal, Al-Ayyam presents the greatest diversity and depth of views from within the PA and Fatah party (Interview with Jamal, 2011). This may be because the Editor-in-Chief, Akram Haniya, is part of the political establishment’s inner circle and therefore more comfortable with his status. Al-Quds is considered the least likely to criticize the government. This is partly because it is the most likely to use articles from foreign agencies, and more concerned with commercial and social events than its particular political line.

d) Summary of Section:

This section argued that Israeli and PA policies have limited the Palestinian print media’s autonomy from political pressures. Through personal interviews and content analyses I described and explained how in all three newspapers certain policies have consistently enabled the frequency of Israeli and PA violations against journalists, and the domination of the PA’s national discourse in the newspapers’ content. Instead of making broad claims about political problems, I drew direct connections between these outcomes and particular Israeli and PA policies and practices that shape local journalism.

To summarize for clarity, the analysis focused on the unclear roles and responsibilities delineated in the 1995 Palestinian Press and Publications laws; the 1998 Wye Agreement’s politicization of incitement; presidential decrees that undermine press autonomy; the Basic Laws’ practical weakness; the dysfunction and innate politicization of the journalists syndicate; the inefficacy of Palestinian press credentials; PA (and PA aligned actors) patronage and subsidies; Israeli
restrictions on and arrests of journalists; PA intimidation and detention of journalists; the lack of adequate legal protections from political, military, economic, and social actors; and the denial of Israeli press credentials. According to the study’s framework, these are measures of a press with limited professionalism.

3) **Limited Commercial Independence**

a) *The monopoly of commercial considerations over content:*

One notable Palestinian journalist did stand up for Maher Alami after he was arrested that first time in 1996 for moving Arafat’s article to page eight. It was Daoud Kuttab, and he was fired from *al-Quds* after signing a petition protesting his colleague’s detention. As Jamal reports, “The newspaper’s owners felt they could not tolerate Kuttab’s behavior, which could endanger the future of their paper, and therefore they got rid of him” (Jamal, 2005, p.91). Kuttab is now one of the most renowned journalists in the region, but so-called dissident journalists like Kuttab are a threat to the financial interests of the Palestinian newspapers, where commercial considerations—and the inevitable political implications—too often come before the quality of news norms, content, and organization.

As this case demonstrates, the newspapers are known to prioritize their commercial sponsors over the value of reports. The PA (as a sponsor) presents the most obvious example. Hillel Nossek and Khalil Rinnawi explain:

“Mainly as the result of economic instability, most of the media organizations in the West Bank and Gaza Strip subsequently fell under direct or indirect PA control, making it virtually impossible for media to effectively organize independently. The Palestinian private sector had little incentive in media enterprises… The PA came to subsidize almost all Palestinian newspapers with a steady and reliable flow of paid advertisements, official notices and tenders, creating a situation where the
PA became a major advertiser whose patronage no Palestinian publisher could afford to lose” (Nossek and Rinnawi 2003, p.188).

From the start, the PA supplied the main advertisements and artificially inflated circulation and revenue rates, but the cause is less purely economic as Nossek and Rinnawi assert. In a way, the patronage represents a continuation of the PLO’s funding of newspapers in the pre-PA decades, but there are also important differences that distinguish this characteristic from the past. As the economy developed in the 1990’s, new private sector companies, such as bank, housing, and electricity, provided another source of funds, as well as smaller businesses and foreign campaigns like USAID projects. These new economic elites remained largely tied to the PA and its beneficiaries, thereby reinforcing the relation between political and commercial instrumentalization (Jamal, 2005, p.96). In this way commercial concerns are intertwined with political considerations, adding another level of complexity to the question of what content is fit to print.

Within this context the absence of critical coverage of important organizations and business people is a clear example of the commercial instrumentalization that indicates the Palestinian press’ limited professionalism. “If there is a story against Jawwal, of course they will not publish it because it is against their client,” Arouri explained (Interview with Arouri, 2011.) Indeed, substitute Jawwal, a major cell phone carrier, with any large business, organization, or charity, and chances are high that probing investigations will never reach the newsstand. In such a small economy, the PA and the economic elite can directly and indirectly control the businesses model: critical coverage of a business or ministry may be missing, but their advertisements surely are not. These outcomes
are in particular a product of the PA’s formal and informal subsidy policies, as well as the licensing regime that prioritizes the Editor-in-Chief and undermines the status and security of the journalists.

While exact rates are hard to quantify, many journalists interviewed admitted that bribes from politicians, businessmen, and heads of organizations are also used to manipulate newspaper content. One journalist claimed that big organizations often have bribe budgets set aside (Interview with Hamdan, 2011). The newspapers have no transparent budgets of publicly available accounts or other kinds of incentives that might dissuade these practices. Increasing access to information is unfortunately not a common goal of those in charge of the newspapers. In this way PA subsidies can come and go, as well as other big businesses or important families. There are no structures in place dissuading this kind of opportunism. The commercial concerns of a journalist may also dictate newspaper content: in exchange for checks or other financial rewards, journalists may provide flattering publicity of events or information, refrain from publishing articles until after a problem has been solved, or abstain from publishing stories that cover certain organizations or individuals (Jamal, 2005).

Al-Hayyat al-Jadeedah journalist Muntaser Hamdan recalled one such case he faced. One day Hamdan received a call from the accountant of a Palestinian company, who asked him to come visit. When Hamdan arrived, the accountant pulled a check out of the drawer and told Hamdan it was for him. Angry at the accountant’s audacity, Hamdan said that they had no contract and promptly left. A few days later the accountant called Hamdan and apologized: the organization was planning a new project that they said would benefit society, and was simply
looking for more positive coverage of their work (Interview with Hamdan, 2011).

Hamdan’s case is of use to recall because it provides a window into how these kind of transactions can occur and how, perhaps for a journalist not like him, the limited commercial accountability in the newspapers could reinforce the tendency. When these instances happen there is no place for support—not inside the newspaper, or the syndicate, or the court system—to which he knows that he could turn.

The newspapers will also cover social and community events through paid advertisements rather than news coverage or analysis, in order to boost revenue opportunities and security. For example, the newspapers publish paid obituaries. After a suicide attack against Israelis, the papers might publish a paid for obituary rather than write their own. In this way, they lose editorial control over the content, as the obituary might use the word shahid, even if the newspaper’s other coverage of the event did not (Miftah, 2008a). Newspaper coverage of the few Palestinian election campaigns is another telling case. As Miftah points out, the newspapers did not analyze the various party positions, but instead republished the platforms of opposition parties verbatim as advertisements (Miftah, 2006a). In this way the newspapers were able to receive more money, while also shielding against any repercussions from actual in-depth discussions. Here it becomes clear that Israeli and PA formal policies and informal practices are a direct cause: fearing repercussions for creating their own new content that might cross an arbitrary red line, it is both politically and economically expedient for the newspapers to not.

b) The politicization of the newspaper’s circulation:
Shortly after Hamas gained control of the Gaza Strip in 2007, the PA banned the pro-Hamas weekly *al-Risala*, the daily *al-Filastin*, and the *al-Aqsa* television station from the West Bank. Over the next two years the Hamas-led government of Ismail Haniyeh intermittently prevented the distribution of the West Bank and East Jerusalem dailies because of their content. Then in mid-2009, Israel banned the newspapers from Gaza, as part of her blockade of the strip. Israel lifted the ban in 2010, but since Hamas officials have barred the newspapers’ entry at their border terminals (HRW, 2010). *Al-Risala, al-Aqsa*, and the three dailies can be and are accessed online. But this is not merely an example of politicians trying to prevent the dissemination of undesired material. Rather, it is consistent with another facet of the press’ limited commercial independence—the two-decades long trend to politicize the newspaper’s circulation—part of the broader trend of government policies that obstruct print media’s professionalism.

There are no confirmable circulation numbers for the newspapers—and the PA establishment prefers to keep it this way. The editors of the papers estimate that *al-Quds’* circulation is at 50,000, *al-Ayyam* 10,000, and *al-Hayyat* 8,000 (Interview with Batrawi, 2011). There is no doubt that the true numbers are much lower. The PA uses several tactics to artificially inflate these numbers by providing the newspapers an unfair competitive advantage, such as providing the papers for free in its government offices. “The authority has created unfair competition,” Kuttab asserts. “This factor is continuing its effect on reducing the chances of free initiatives” (Interview with Kuttab, 2011). Arafat also reportedly controlled the price of the papers. Barghouti described how when he proposed to raise the price of his paper from one shekel to two, Arafat objected. “He said why? Let the people
read. Don’t you know that one shekel can provide a paper for a family in Gaza? (Interview with Barghouti, 2011). The other two newspapers sell for two shekels; while there is no confirmed price fixing for these papers, no doubt the PA is similarly conscious of keeping the circulation of these newspapers within reach rather than promote profit-seeking or accountable structures. In conversations with the top editors of the newspapers, they expressed the desire to increase circulation but described no strategies in place or plans to implement any to do so.

The openings and closing of news outlets is another telling example of the politicization of newspaper circulations. The repercussions of Alami’s arrest in 1996 had another important result: one month after the event, the PA revoked al-Qud’s license, making it illegal to distribute the paper in the autonomous Palestinian areas (Jamal, 2005). The owners reportedly raced to Gaza, where newly elected PA President Arafat was based. According to Jamal, “After the meeting, the paper changed its editorial policy and began to cover the President’s travels, prominently displayed on the front page, and reported on the positive dimensions of PA policies more” (Jamal 2005, p.89). Indeed, a message was sent: the right to circulate is a political and not professional matter. As Jamal further claims, “Newspapers have emphasized a national responsibility approach to the role of the press, rather than of the press driven by the economic forces of the market” (Jamal 2005, p.77). Since then, the PA has not revoked the licenses of the dailies, but it has repeatedly done so to other news outlets, a threat which continually hovers over the Editors-in-Chief. In this way formal government policies and informal practices have led to a measurable limited professionalism, and increased the difficulties that Palestinian journalists face each day in their workplace.
c) Variation Between the Three Dailies

There are some differences between the newspapers in respect to the level of fiscal autonomy and commercial concerns. *Al-Quds* is the most commercially minded of the three; about a third of its 30 or so pages are reportedly reserved for advertisements. But while *al-Qud*’s advertising model leaves it more removed than the other dailies from direct PA fiscal control, as noted, many of the businesses and groups advertising in the paper directly rely on the PA for support.

*Al-Ayyam*, on the other hand, relies on its printing company—and the political connections that come with it—to cover any loses in the newspapers. Since its founding, *al-Ayyam* has largely relied on revenues from its printing press to cover any loses from the newspapers. In addition to printing many of the weekly or monthly Palestinian magazines and newspaper inserts, *al-Ayyam*’s printing company is also responsible for all of the PA textbooks. *Al-Ayyam* reportedly received the contract with little transparency (Interview with Samara, 2012). Though it was not possible to confirm any direct wrongdoings, some journalists I spoke to speculated that *al-Ayyam*’s printing press was not an independent source of income.

*Al-Hayyat al-Jadeedah*’s financial relationship with the PA, while still confusing, is the clearest of all three dailies. As Chapter Three explained, since its inception some of *al-Hayyat* employees have been on the PA’s payroll; today, about half receive salaries partly subsidized by the PA (Interview with Barghouti, 2012). As the closest newspaper the PA has to an official organ, *al-Hayyat al-Jadeedah* has to worry the least about advertising and circulation rates because of the PA’s patronage. However, this also leaves *al-Hayyat* more vulnerable to not upsetting any political or commercial facet of the extensive PA and Fatah establishment.
d) Summary of Section:

This section argue that Israeli and PA policies have caused the newspapers’ limited commercial independence, which is one measure of limited professionalism, and cited as examples the politicization of the newspapers’ circulation and the monopoly of commercial considerations over content. This section traced these characteristics to the outcomes of certain Israeli and PA policies that Chapter Three discussed: the primacy of economic concerns because of the Press Laws’ licensing regime; the 1995 Press Law’s emphasis on the Editor-in-Chief above journalists’ needs; the weak application of the Palestinian Labor Law; PA (and PA aligned actors) patronage and subsidies; the inaction of Palestinian journalist syndicate to alleviate problems; the absence of sufficient independent revenue sources; the lack of adequate protections from political, military, economic, and social actors; Israeli restrictions on and arrests of journalists; and PA intimidation and detention of journalists. I provided a more nuanced assessment of these commercial problems by situating them within their political context and I demonstrated that limited investments are alone not the cause—as within this framework more investments might presumably be used to only continue these problems. In the next chapter, I provide an in-depth look at two others indicators that also help to make sense of some of the characteristics just explained: internal media policies and of self-censorship.

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Chapter Five:
Internal Media Policies and Self-Censorship

Bimshi hadd al-heit (Walk along the wall)
- A Palestinian saying on how to deal with political pressures (Interview with Hani al-Masri, 2011.)

“What would you do if you have news about a female child that is kidnapped, raped, and killed? How would you deal with that?” (Interview with Shaheen, 2011). It was the fall of 2000 and Khalil Shaheen, then an editor at al-Ayyam, was asking himself that very question. The police had just found the raped corpse of an eight-year-old girl who went missing two days before while walking to school. The killing occurred in a village right before the outbreak of the second intifada, a time of great insecurity and frustration in the territories. Now Shaheen had to decide how to present the news: what should he do?

Al-Ayyam has no internal media policies formally delineating the paper’s institutional norms of conduct for coverage. In all three newspapers there are no written guidelines delineating the reporting, editing, and ethical standards, or other strategies and vocational expectations that differentiate the newspaper’s practices and product. In this way the pages within are often fraught with inconsistencies in sources, repetitive information, and little attention to the accuracy, details, or overall presentation of the news narrative they tell. When questions arise over how to cover certain events, the Editor-in-Chief or Managing Editor wields his discretionary power and act according to whatever political or social actors are pressuring the press that day. In this environment ripe with self-censorship, issues like rape generally go
unreported and journalists, weary of the amorphous consequences, are conditioned to rarely try to violate this unwritten rule. If the newspapers did codify an internal media policy, it would presumably be short: You do not show society as fragmented and rife with problems, not under occupation (Interview with Shaheen, 2011).

Shaheen disagreed with the way the newspaper covered the girl’s murder and rape that day. He wanted the story on the front page alongside the victim’s photo. It was, he argued, a very gruesome story deserving of this coverage. But the Editor-in-Chief, Akram Haniya, intervened and refused. Instead, Haniya put the article below the front-page fold, without a photo. The article was short and descriptive, with no framing or discussion of the event within its larger context. The girl’s name was also omitted and, like in the rare reports on sexual assaults, only initials were used.

“He said you have to imagine the impact on society.” Shaheen said, recalling Haniya’s rationalization. “We have a conservative society that will not accept publishing the name of their daughter and we will have problems” (Interview with Shaheen, 2011). In this case, the murder’s backdrop—the period’s socio-political turmoil—greatly conditioned its coverage. So it was not simply that Haniya feared upsetting the girl’s family by publicly airing their grief, but rather the larger message this publicity might send: that Palestinian society was unsafe and rampant with internal problems. And according to the newspaper’s unwritten code this was not the place of a Palestinian journalist.

While the political and commercial instrumentalization of the press is one facet of this equation, this chapter focuses on two other consequences of Israeli and PA regulations—the absence of internal media policies and institutionalization of self-
censorship. In this chapter I demonstrate that all three newspapers generally display a similar level and that Israeli PA formal policies and informal practices are a direct cause of these unprofessional outcomes. I consider these two indicators together because they are both primarily a product of similar socialization processes and are characteristic of interrelated elements of the newspapers’ limited professionalism. The argument focuses on five measurements—discretionary ethics, unoriginal and arbitrary reporting, ineffective and inconsistent editing, high reported rates of self-censorship, and the absence of certain coverage.

1) Background:

It is a general consensus in journalism studies today that insincerely broad and jargon-based guidelines can be to the detriment of innovative media and quality reporting. In a fast-paced career chronicling the ever-developing news, it is important for a journalist to maintain an accepted degree of flexibility and independence from the editor’s control within a similarly agreed upon framework of conduct. Journalism also emphasizes the importance of a set of ethical codes by which professional journalists abide, such as accuracy, accountability, balance, and transparency. With these norms, journalists can preserve their work’s integrity and claim that they provide a distinct expertise—a particular narrative of events—not readily available otherwise (Ward, 2009; Anderson and Schudson, 2009).

In the three daily Palestinian newspapers, however, there are no internal media policies discussing or delineating parameters when certain choices should be made over others. The absence of these practices is another measure of limited professionalism. While in some cases adherence to reporting, editing, and ethical
codes can be used to stifle improvement, in the case of the Palestinian press the opposite is true: the discretionary power of the editors over media policies and what should be censored creates a confusing workplace to the detriment of the practice’s standards, status, and security. In an environment fraught with political unrest, internal media policies are useful in that they define the purpose and practices of the paper and therefore provide a shield for journalists from arbitrary and instrumentalist behavior of those with greater market and symbolic capital (Ward, 2009). Instead, in the Palestinian newspapers, Israeli and PA policies and practices unfortunately cause quite different outcomes.

2) Absence of Media Policies:
   a) Discretionary Ethical Codes:

   “How can the people know our policy?” al-Ayyam Managing Editor Abdul Nasser Najjar asked, repeating my question. “When they read our newspaper they will know what is the policy of al-Ayyam,” he simply explained (Interview with Najjar, 2012). The Editor-in-Chief and two managing editors interviewed all expressed a similar way in which for two decades they have unilaterally conveyed the ethical norms and news values of their newspapers from the top down. Al-Hayyat Editor-in-Chief Hafez Barghouti claimed that by convention all implicit expectations of professional ethics were collectively agreed upon and accepted. “We understand each other without any order what we will do with this or that. It is known. So I never give orders, just for the new who don’t know how to manage the stories” (Interview with Barghouti, 2012).
But if the ethical codes of the newspapers are reflected in its content, then in respectful disagreement with the editors, it seems that they are in fact not there. Ask the editors what the mission of the newspaper is, and they all reply with the same broad statement: to present the Palestinian news and oppose the occupation. But push further about the basis for which decisions are made about what news to cover and how, and it becomes clear that professional considerations are trumped by one main motto: whatever creates the least short-term problems so that we can go to press again tomorrow. In this way news values are determined on an ad hoc and politicized basis, and journalists are not expected nor allowed to contest these limits.

This use of discretionary ethics is not simply because of insufficient economic investments or technological competition; rather, because of certain government regulations, the newspapers have little incentives to pursue transparent or accountable news. In such a small and conflict-ridden territory, the journalists face conflicts of interest each day between their nationalist and professional values. But the Wye Agreement, Palestinian Press Law, and Basic Law have denied journalists control over what constitutes good or bad journalism. Instead, politicians get to decide. The syndicate furthers the problem by leaving journalists without a professional base of support and reinforcing the politicization of their work. Disempowered in the newsroom, Israeli limits on movement and access to sources, and PA _tadakhulat_ and corruption of the judicial system further restrain chances for a formal internal media policy that codifies the newspapers ethical standards. As Chapter One delineated, this is another measure of the limited professionalism of the three daily newspapers.

The Palestinian journalists I interviewed struggled with the mission of their work: the desire to be independent and responsible journalists—to present their
people with the realities of their condition—and the individual and socio-political implications of their job. Journalists often emphasized terminology like fourth estate, independence, and objectivity as ideals to which they should strive. They also had their own ways to characterize the desire to speak truth to power. “I usually write just from what I am seeing,” explained Mohammad Khadier of al-Quds of what being a responsible journalist entails. “I don’t sit in a corner and write this kind of propaganda or for this organization or not. I try to be in the field, not to quote from the TV. I try to be straight. I pray” (Interview with Khadier, 2011). Yousef Shayeb emphasized the human side of events that is too often sidelined. “The good journalist catches what other people think is normal. When I walk in the street I must have ten eyes…I’m not interested if Israel builds the wall in a village, but I’m writing about the effect of this on the Palestinian people” (Interview with Shayeb, 2011). Others echoed Khadier and Shayeb’s emphasis on reliable and realistic field reporting, rather than rehashing reports from too often-duplicious sources.

In contrast, prominent al-Ayyam columnist Hani al-Masri explained an oft-heard counter-claim: “If you are under occupation, you should unite your efforts and the whole parties against occupation… You can’t work like the journalists in the United States or other countries, not under occupation” (Interview with al-Masri, 2011). This statement reflects a general sentiment expressed in interviews that the international media is biased against the Palestinian narrative and Palestinian media must work to counteract this prejudice by portraying PA politics and society in a positive light. In this way, the newspapers have become intertwined in the PA’s political project, where there is little recognition of a differentiated journalistic ethical standard to independently and consistently present the news. As a consequence,
primarily politically motivated or just merely irresponsible journalists can
inappropriately employ claims to objectivity—and vague jargon in the 1995 Press law
and others like it—as a professional shield, despite their true intentions.

Rather than deal with this unresolved tension, those in power have largely
dismissed internal deliberations over what principles and norm Palestinian journalists
should follow as a counter-productive endeavor in an occupation era. “Because of the
political situation we live under, everyone says that we have an occupation that should
be our concern and not worry about internal differences,” former al-Quds writer
Maher Abu Khater said of a common establishment sentiment. “But if we focus
mainly on the occupation and ignore our own problems we keep sinking lower and
lower” (Interview with Abu Khater, 2011). Kuttab relayed a similar way in which
journalistic ethics are subverted to political questions. “That [the Israeli occupation] is
the kind of existential question that predominates the work of Palestinian media,
Kuttab concluded. “And so it is very difficult to deal with issues like corruption, like
workers right, women’s rights, all these issues that require a kind of breaking the
consensus” (Interview with Kuttab, 2011). Without a clear code of professional
conduct respected by political and socio-economic actors and institutions, Palestinian
journalists work in conditions inconducive to more professional practices. Such
improvements could empower them to better deal with the difficult challenges they
face as journalists in general—and more so as journalists working in a conflict zone
and under an occupation.

Indeed, caught in conflict and shaped by Israeli and PA policies, the three
dailies symbolically and financially benefit from presenting an overtly biased account
based upon discretionary ethics in the absence of an internal media policy. Objectivity
is an ideal stressed at trainings held by NGOs, but that in practice has few institutional benefits: it has little market or symbolic capital, as the journalists have no autonomous niche to try and preserve. Beginning in the twentieth century, the ethic of objectivity—the press’ claim to serve as an honest broker—institutionalized as the vanguard of American journalism as it became professionally honorable and financially profitable for journalists to claim to provide objective news narratives for mass dissemination in conjunction with other media trends (Schudson, 1978). Facing an occupation and authoritarian proxy governments, the local press in Palestine operates under quite different configurations. Instead, news-value decisions are made on a day-to-day basis and the journalists are thus left with no foundation upon which to assert their right to more standardized working conditions. In this way Israeli and PA policies pose an institutional constraint on the development of an autonomous Palestinian press because of the confusing environment the regulations perpetuate and the discretionary use of ethics codes it necessitates.

b) Unoriginal and Arbitrary Reporting:

Like the lead in the standard news article of the last century, Kuttab succinctly captured the situation “My main criticism is that there is a lack of original reporting,” said Kuttab. “There is a lack of features and investigative reporting and there’s a lot of rehashing of news from wire services” (Interview with Kuttab, 2011). Indeed, the newspapers are structured in such a way that the journalists are not encouraged to seek out news, but rather to passively collect and rehash what happens to come their way. “As usual, the newspapers were swamped with the daily, new, and eminent news, but had fallen short of making their own reports, or raising their own distinctive
questions about issues,” concluded a 2007 *Miftah* report on coverage of the Palestinian National Unity deal (*Miftah*, 2007d, p.15). Hussam Ezzeldeen, speaking the day of an August 2011 terror attack in Eilat by Gaza militants, described a similar tendency: the majority of Palestinians turn to pan-Arab news outlets like *Aljazeera* and *al-Arabiya* as a first source for news, and the newspapers have made no attempt to try and compete.

“All the news on the front page is bullshit. For example, today something happened in Eilat. Tonight *al-Arabiya* [pan-Arab satellite news channel] will speak about that, *Aljazeera* will speak about that; all the channels will speak out it. Tomorrow in the morning we will see about the operation in Eilat. Who will read it? They are looking for something new. Tomorrow people want to know when [PA Prime Minister Salam] Fayyad will give them their salary. They already know what happened in Eilat from last night” (Interview with Ezzeldeen, 2011).

Nail Mousa of *al-Hayyat al-Jadeedah* placed Kuttab and Ezzeldeen’s statements within the context of the profession’s internal organization. “It’s an infrastructural problem. Palestinian journalism reflects the news that is in front of it rather than makes the news. It’s like the sun. It reflects the rays” (Interview with Mousa, 2012).

Indeed, there are unprofessional reporting standards, and Israeli and PA policies and practices are a measurably direct cause of the absence of formalized internal rules, responsibilities, and regulations in the newspapers. With little access to sources or scenes, and in constant fear of losing their financial and personal security, Palestinian journalists have been institutionally conditioned to walk inside the red lines rather than face the amorphous consequences.

A simple perusal of the papers confirms these assessments of unoriginal and arbitrary reporting norms that are a cross-regional measure of limited professionalism. According to *Miftah*, on average about 55% of the newspapers’ editorial copy (the paper’s content minus advertisements) constitutes news and translated material from
international Arabic- and Hebrew-language journals (Miflah, 2005a, p.3). Without the necessary press passes, freedoms of movement, or internal support from Israeli authorities or the PA, Palestinian journalists are largely not first-hand reporters. As a consequence, the newspapers often contain accounts of local events from the lens of the international press. Interestingly, in opinion polls the sports pages of the three dailies are ranked as one of the most read sections, in part because they contain local information not readily available from Aljazeera or AFP (Internews, 2007; PCPSR, 2011). The cartoons of the Palestinian newspapers, especially al-Hayyat, are also praised as one of the papers’ best parts: they present a purely Palestinian perspective, unlike much else printed (Interviews, 2011).

Moreover, the translated material in the three dailies constitutes not only news reports, but also a great deal of opinion and political analyses. For example, each of the newspapers generally devote a two page or so spread to articles from the Israeli press, such as from the liberal Ha’aretz, centrist Yediot Ahranot, or right-wing Yisrael Hayom, in addition to columnists from popular western newspapers like The New York Times, Financial Times, and the Guardian (Personal observations; Interview with Shayeb, 2011). These articles provide Palestinian readers insight into their neighbors’ views, but they are also an expedient way for the dailies to fill space and to present opinions that may not hold a consensus without individual journalists or editors being held directly accountable to opposing political or socio-economic forces. The articles are emblematic of a reporting norm conditioned by government policies: collect what is presented, but only selectively analyze.

The newspapers are particularly dominated with politics-related and translated news-reports during periods of intense conflict, when movement is even
more restricted, news scenes are even more dangerous, and the dissemination of one narrative over another even more contentious. In his study of the Palestinian press during the second intifada, Shbeeb reports that 35.53% of al-Quds sources came from foreign media outlets, 36.19% of al-Ayyam, and 23.29% of al-Hayyat (the latter generally relies on the Palestinian WAFA the most), rates overall higher than local sourcing (Shbeeb, 2004, p.28). The same study found that articles on politics constituted 73.38% of al-Quds’s coverage, 79.10% of al-Ayyam, and 73.58% of al-Hayyat, while society/culture came in a distant second at an average of 15% (Shbeeb 2004, p.25). In contrast to far less dangerous periods, a 2009 Miftah study found social issues and politics covered on par at about 30% (Miftah, 2009b). In addition, Shbeeb reports that articles on Arab affairs were more likely to come from foreign agencies, another tactic to defer responsibility for the reporting, editing, and ethics of the article. Though the papers also showed a notable increase in the use of photos as a reporting technique in this period, the majority were from foreign agencies (Shbeeb, 2004). In this way reporters are not encouraged to be on the front lines during periods of intense conflict (or periods of more relative calm), but rather to create the news based on politically expedient topics and sources.

Similar reporting stigmas and limited professionalism are also in place against investigative and in-depth coverage of important Palestinian political and social events. The newspapers send reporters to the same conferences and meetings with the same public officials, after which they mainly just repeat what was said (Interview with Arouri, 2011). Journalists cannot call Israeli or Palestinian politicians to ask probing questions, but rather only Palestinian politicians for their reaction to an event or achievement (Interview with Hamdan, 2011). The IDF denies Palestinian journalists
entrance to events in the Palestinian Territories that Israeli and international
journalists can attend, such as the 2005 Gaza Disengagement (Miftah, 2005). In a
2005 study, Miftah reports on how the PA intentionally slighted Palestinian journalists
during a round of peace negotiations, exemplifying the political establishment’s
limited respect for local media.

“…The Palestinian leadership adopts a method of exclusion in dealing
with the Palestinian media, and this summit was no exception. The
Palestinian media is unjustifiably ignored, and more than one Palestinian
media observer noted that the Palestinian delegation was not concerned
about taking a team of journalists along to the summit” (Miftah, 2005a,
p.20).

In this way findings discussed in Chapter Four—such as the prevalence of direct
quotes, reliance on official statements, investigative reports only on politically
inexpedient people, and focus on workshops and political meetings—are additionally
emblematic of the kind of reporting encouraged, in which the new perspective is
indeed not what the dailies are able to research and present.

The way the newspapers reported on the 2006 PLC elections is particularly
telling: with no media policies in place concerning the approach to this coverage, the
newspapers relied on paid advertisements, wasata, and the reprinting of candidate’s
platforms (Miftah, 2006a), to the press’ detriment. Hamas’ victory in the elections thus
captured many by surprise, for when the election results came in, the journalists in the
dailies had not heard of many of the candidates who won. The public knew of these
Hamas men, but the journalists, caught in the rays of the sun, were left effectively
blinded by events beyond their traditional purview (Interview with Shaheen, 2011).
Coverage of Fatah front man and Abbas, however, was front and center, in large part
due to PA advertisement subsidies and relationships with the top editors.
The domination of male-centered news is another example of this reporting trend: journalists are not to seek out their own story or to counter the image of reality the PA has tried to construct within the backdrop of the Palestinian national struggle. A *Miftah* study monitoring the low coverage of women from March to July 2009 found, “news, with its various political, economic, and social subjects, is the predominant form of media coverage in the three newspapers, regardless of its source” (*Miftah*, 2010, p.3). When articles do include women’s voices, it is largely through the arbitrary coverage of workshops or NGO conferences to which reporters are sent, or in the context of Israeli actions about which politicians are often eager to assess. Though there are Palestinian women who are prominent political and social leaders, the reporter is not to counter the general male-centrality of the news sphere. Without clear parameters or internal policies, journalists rarely take the first step to criticize, investigate or analyze. They parrot the code that exists—safely repeat.

To be sure, there is criticism of political leaders in the newspapers, and reporting that does cover voices beyond that of the highest officials; but it is by no means an independent kind of coverage. Rather, the criticisms expressed generally falls within the Fatah and PA mainstream—views that the Editors-in-Chief similarly share and, in the case of *al-Ayyam’s* Haniya, have a role in creating. Jamal described nuances of what mainstream reporting means in practice. “We could differ on how to lead the new life, we could differ on tactics, but we don’t differ about a national secular state, we don’t differ on the place of the presidency, about negotiations, or not negotiating at this stage, about going to the UN or not going to the UN” (Interview with Jamal, 2011). Indeed, this is just as the 1995 Press Law, Ministry of Information,
syndicate bylaws and other government policies that obstruct the professionalism of Palestinian journalists in the three newspapers intended.

c) Inconsistent and Ineffective Editing:

The main offices of the three Palestinian dailies are quiet until around three or four in the afternoon. Before then, there may be a few writers working at their desks or in small cubicles in the main newsrooms, but mainly it is just the accounting or administrative staff around. The real editing and production rush begins later in the evening, when a particular picture of the day is codified and, like in all newsrooms, the process is quite chaotic. Shaheen described it in this way:

“They say that the newspaper is like your bag. You put all of your things in it and when it is full (claps hands), ok that’s it. In the newspaper there is in an hour when it is like that… It’s like the bag. You keep throwing the news in it of the day, and then Abdul Nasser says “Enough! Stop working! Stop, the pages are full.” So if I ask, but there is more important news then what you put in, and he [Abdul Nasser Najjar] says, “No, no, no. We don’t have time. We have to rush.” That’s it (claps hands). The bag. We have a word for it… The pads you put on the donkey of Bedouins” (Interview with Shaheen, 2011).

While there is no one way to edit a newspaper, journalism cross-regionally emphasizes the importance of having certain standards: where to put the comma, how to refer to different ministries, when to cite sources, etc. There are no written rules, however, that govern the way the three dailies are edited, no Associated Press like style guide to consult when a question comes up about how to reference a certain event or describe a particular official’s position. In this way, much of the paper’s content appears inconsistently and ineffectively edited, resembling the bag that Shaheen described. This is not just a question of allotting enough time for editing; the problem goes much deeper. This is again emblematic of the limited professionalism
Chapter One described: hemmed in by Israeli and PA policies, Palestinian print media has little control over workplace norms and conditions, which reinforces a culture of complacency with inconsistent and ineffective editing standards.

There are notable inconsistencies in the style and language used to cover events and peoples—and no plans in place to address this problem. According to Palestinian media researcher Johara Baker, these changes are more often “a reaction than a systematic method of setting down phrases or terminology” (Interview with Baker, 2011). In other words, these findings are not necessarily part of a concerted effort, but rather a byproduct of a nonsystematic editing process. For example, in one article the same Israeli official may be referred to by multiple names (Miftah, 2005a). Other times staples like comics and editorials are missing, without any plausible explanation. Analyzing coverage of the anniversary of the 1967 June War, Miftah notes that while cartoons are one of the most popular forms to express nationalist sentiments, for an unknown reason none of the papers printed cartoons that day, but did the day before and after (Miftah, 2007b). Characteristics from Chapter Four, such as the inconsistent use of words like shahid or the multiple descriptions of suicide bombings in the same article, are also telling of the way in which the newspapers lack the means to set standards by which writers and editors adhere. Without a media policy discussing how words like cease-fire should be used and way, journalists instead use these words as their sources do, which most often just means the PA.

The newspapers are also notoriously fickle on proving facts and figures, another example of the absence of internal media policies. There are often exaggerations in the language or numbers attributed to an event. As noted, a 2007 study of the Palestinian unity deal discusses the press’ overuse of the term “massacre”
to depict the death of three or more Palestinians by Israeli fire \cite{Miftah2007d}, p.27). Mousa provided another telling example. The day of the January 2012 interview was Martyrs Day, in which articles, Television, and posters in the city remembered those who had died in the nationalist struggle. Mousa cited one particular problem with this coverage: there were no consistent facts about the circumstances of those claimed to be martyrs \cite{Interview with Mousa, 2012}. While there are cross-regional variances in how words can be used, the failure to confirm basic facts and figures is a further indicator of the press’ limited professionalism.

These arise not from a planned policy of the paper or the purposeful intent of journalists, but rather a spontaneous ordering of news within the amorphous red lines in which journalists are conditioned to walk inside. The 1995 Press Law and later security-service related laws and PA Presidential decrees consistently deny journalists the right to access information, while the institutional disorganization of most PA ministries further constrains any such possibility. The second-class statuses with which Israeli policies treat Palestinian journalists makes it practically impossible for them to report, confirm facts, or investigate further. There are non-media related reasons for these restrictions, but their effect on the practice of journalism cannot be understated.

Such consistent barriers to accessing information over time can also lead to institutionalized editing gaffs, such as the misuse of the word *shahid*. Ezzeldeen described one such case. He recalled a situation in the second *intifada*, in which *al-Ayyam* published a report about a Palestinian killed by Israeli soldiers, calling him a *shahid*. Unable to try and verify the information or access sources prior to publication, when Ezzeldeen was finally able to several days later, he learned that the man in fact had been accidentally killed by someone from his brigade, but that fearing the
repercussions the perpetuators exploited the term and spread this false report. There was, however, no public correction or attempt to inform the public of this incorrect information. “It’s a lie. It’s not nationalism. It will not help the Palestinians,” Ezzeldeen said, recalling his frustration at this unjustifiable use (Interview with Ezzeldeen, 2011). This example typifies an unfortunate pattern: in an environment where Israelis and Palestinians continually clash for control over news narratives and numbers, policies that undermined professional editing codes contribute to conditions in which the press is more likely to label all victims a shahid—in a way just as some in the West are conditioned to characterize Arab or Muslim challengers as terrorists.

Another common editing gaffe is the prominence of plagiarism and anonymous sourcing among journalists in the three newspapers, which the Editors-in-Chief tolerate. Content analyses of the press provide countless cases of plagiarizing from international agencies, as well as copying and republishing articles without proper bylines or attribution. Journalists also often use the by-line “special source,” instead of their own and cite vague sources, such as “a high level official” or “a member of a prominent family” to avoid upsetting the powerful (Omari, 2010, p.56). In his study, Shbeeb found a high rate of anonymous reporting: 18.36% of articles in al-Quds, 6.86% in al-Ayyam, and 3.96% in al-Hayyat al-Jadeedah had no bylines (Shbeeb 2004, p.28). A former Reuters Jerusalem Bureau Chief, who is Palestinian, noted that al-Quds continually republished his articles under the byline, “Reuters,” while it would include the full name of his non-Palestinian colleague (Interview, 2011). A Miftah study on the coverage of the anniversary of the June 1967 War in the three Palestinian newspapers in June 2007 also noted how al-Quds failed to provide full bylines for Arab writers (Miftah, 2007b, p.10). Arguably such incidents occur because
the editors face few repercussions for these practices: the legal system provides no means for journalists to mandate their work be represented, the syndicate is an ineffective champion of any such standards, status, or security, while the conditions and structure of the workplace provide journalists with little professional incentive to challenge these practices.

d) Variation Between the Three Dailies

Differences between the newspapers are consequently based largely on the personalities of the differing Editors-in-Chiefs in power both their political and socio-economic needs. “I wrote about problems in one hospital in Ramallah and later found it canceled because of relation between the Editor-in-Chief and the head of the hospital,” Arouri of al-Ayyam recalled. “It was not something political, but a way for the editor to make a favor for that person” (Interview with Arouri, 2011). Al-Hayyat al-Jadeedah displays the highest political parallelism with the PA, and therefore most often adopts the PA’s rationale. Al-Ayyam and al-Quds, however, must further toe the line in terms of their commercial relations. As the paper of the elite, journalists generally classify al-Ayyam as most trustworthy, though to the extent that opinion polls are representative of this question, the general public prefers al-Quds’ content.iii Further research into the Editors-in-Chief’s social history may provide clues for when and how certain coverage appears (Chapter Six provides a bit more background). In regards to differences among the newspapers and their reporting standards, al-Quds is conventionally considered the least original of the three. A common sentiment shared by journalists and media scholars interviewed was that if you want to do know who died, who got married, who graduated, and whose business is doing
well, then look at al-Quds. But if you want an in-depth study, then you’d better save your two shekels. In theory, al-Quds East Jerusalem status should enable more original reporting from East Jerusalem and the West Bank because of the greater ease of access. Like in the other three newspapers, al-Quds journalists generally continue to lack press cards, legal protection, security guarantees, and freedom of movement that consequently reinforce their passive reporting practices. Moreover, some attributed this distinction to the continuing prevalence of the Israeli censor. Later in the chapter I discuss the censor in greater depth. Briefly, today he Israeli the censor rarely prohibits a newspaper to publish most information, but its stigma and coercion still reinforces limited reporting practices in the eyes of the journalists (Interviews, 2011).

Again, the strength of the reporting in each newspaper most often depends on the socio-political standing of the journalist in relation to the events and people involved. For example, recently al-Hayyat al-Jadeedah began a weekly insert called al-Hayyat wa al-Suq (The Life and the Market) to investigate consumer problems. This is a positive development in regards to investigations and several PA officials have taken significant heat. However, as conversations with journalists who write for the insert confirmed, many of the same reporting practices—i.e. covering stories through information that for political expedience has been passed on to journalists—remains the norm. “We do real investigative work. Or we like to think that,” one of the writers explained (Interview Anonymous, 2011). This is not wholly surprising, given the difficulty of improving reporting standards without deeper, more institutional changes to the framework of their profession.

Similarly, al-Ayyam also publishes several weekly inserts that can provide a place for more investigative journalism. During the second intifada, it was the only
paper to continue to do so after the first month of fighting (Shbeeb, 2004). Over the years the magazine-like inserts, which are printed by the *al-Ayyam* press, have included an array of topics, such as women’s issues, the environment, parliament, and youth. This increase in the specialization and diversification of available media outlets to collect and disseminate information to the public is a positive improvement. But this must also be placed in context: many of the articles in the inserts and opinion come from sources that are not journalists, such as workers from NGOs or guest writers of political and social prominence (Interviews, 2011, 2012). In this way, these inserts do not automatically represent another opportunity for journalists to practice their trade.

As the editing numbers indicate, *al-Quds* is most notorious for publishing non-attributed articles, in part because as the most financially secure and long-time preferred newspaper its editors have grown complacent with these kinds of practices. *Al-Ayyam* is also considered the most literary of the three, with the highest adherence to editing standards. *Al-Hayyat* is the most sensationalists, with often over exaggerated headlines and disputable facts (Interviews 2011, 2012). More content analyses of the newspapers could provide further insight into these areas.

e) Summary of Section:

This section addressed the absence of internal media policies, citing as example the use of discretionary ethics codes, unoriginal and arbitrary reporting, and ineffective and inconsistent editing procedures. These characteristics were caused by: the Wye Agreement and the politicization of content questions; 1995 Palestinian Press Law’s vague and broad restrictions on what kind of content can be reported and why; the absence of formal access to information; an ineffective and politicized syndicate.
that does not help journalists to champion for their rights; Israeli limits on movement and access to sources; and PA *tadakhulat* and corruption of judicial recourse.

I focused on these elements in depth to provide a more nuanced and complete perspective of the three daily newspapers; rather than attribute all of these findings to political problems, my argument demonstrated the importance of a more holistic approach to studying the content, conventions, and organization of a newspaper. In this case, the internal media policies have a related but distinct purpose from political autonomy that adds another important analysis to this assessment of professionalism.

**3) Self-Censorship**

*a) High Rates of Reported Censorship*

“It is better for me to have a censor, instead of making a ‘mistake’ and then being thrown in prison because of it,” declared Esheikh (Khatib, 1999). It was then 1995, and Arafat had just issued the new Palestinian Press Law. At a press conference on the new law, held by then Minister of Information Yasser Abed Rabbo, many journalists, including Esheikh, expressed their fear about what kind of press climate this law might create. While as an editor Esheikh has in fact benefited from this situation, with hindsight his fears were right: Palestinian journalists work in a reality where the norm is self-censor or bust.

Palestinian journalists are very open about the high rates of self-censorship, or *rekaba thateya*, in their press. Of the over twenty-five print media journalists I interviewed, not one refused to talk about self-censorship or denied its prevalence. In a June 1999 survey of 228 Palestinian journalists, Nabil Khatib found that 59.1% of journalists “felt they have red lines that they cannot cross in their coverage,” 53.5%
had their editor censor material for political or security reasons, and 62.6% felt “that he subjects himself to self-censorship while he is reporting” (Khatib, 2002, p.6). These findings do not differentiate between broadcast and print mediums (no systematic study of print journalists is available) but are nonetheless telling of the general high rates of self-censorship. Journalists work in a world where self-censorship is paradoxically not something to hide but is directly related to Israeli and PA government policies that restrict the development of internal newspaper media practices and deny journalists’ professional autonomy. After decades of conflict, the journalists I spoke to all assumed that everyone else was doing it.

In an article comparing the Israeli and PA censorship regimes, Hillel Nossek and Khalil Rinnawi capture how PA policies enable censorship and limit the professional writing, editing, and ethical standards of journalists in the press by creating disincentives to standardized reporting, editing, and ethical codes.

‘The PA’s severe actions as well as the economic, social and political pressures exercised on the whole media production process, in combination with the privileges and the rewards the PA grants to “good” journalists and media institutions, create a kind of “carrot and stick” policy that ultimately encourages wide-scale self-censorship” (Nossek and Rinnawi 2003, p.199).

Former al-Quds writer and media activist Walid Batrawi elaborated on the relationship, drawing a direct connection to the 1995 press law’s vague wording.

“If the law says that nothing should be published against Palestinian unity, or national unity, but they do not give a definition of what national unity means, I start thinking when I begin to write that maybe this sentence might harm the national unity. Ultimately, it leads you to self-censorship, which is an extremely dangerous thing. The Palestinian Authority does not ask you to submit your articles to the censor, but in one way or another, the Palestinian press law restricts you” (Jamal, 2004, p.102).
Indeed, as both these assessments argue, the high rates of self-censorship are very much a product of the environment in which the journalists work: the arbitrary meaning and application of many of the laws loom over the journalists, and there may be a little refuge from Israeli and PA *tadakhulat*, as long as certain words are not said.

In contrast to the pre-PA period, the IDF military censor today has a stronger psychological than day-to-day effect on press content. “The problem in Palestine is that we don’t have censorship, but we have self-censorship,” explained Ezzeldeen (Interview with Ezzeldeen, 2011). While *al-Quds* is still subject to the Israeli military censor in a more minimal way, Ezzeldeen’s comment captures the larger picture: Israeli prior-censorship reinforces self-censorship’s widespread dominance and, in congruence with other policies, institutionalizes and politicizes the practice. It is important that many of the journalists who work in all three newspapers today remember the days when the Israeli military censor was a far more formidable force, a symbol of the intentional delegitimization of their right to work as their Israeli or international colleagues (Interviews 2011, 2012).

Though the journalists interviewed were all forthcoming about the normalization of self-censorship, some were very critical and cynical about its predominance. For example, Ezzeldeen described a situation in which he wrote a now famous *al-Ayyam* report about the abuse of government cars by PA officials. He explained how “he protected himself with his professionalism,” and spent weeks thoroughly researching the story so that no facts could be contested (Interview with Ezzeldeen, 2011). He criticized what he considered the tendency of journalists to hide behind the veil of self-censorship out of laziness rather than fear, despite (admittedly rare) instances, such as the success of his story, which showed that taboo topics could
be safely broached. This story raises an important counterpoint expressed by several other journalists: that claims of self-censorship among their colleagues sometimes were simply excuses for ideological motivations, contentment with mediocrity, etc. While this may be true for some individuals, as a whole what these reported high rates demonstrate is the degree to which self-censorship has become a highly institutionalized norm in the newspapers because of government policies that lead to arbitrary protections and few rights of journalists. This is related but distinct from the vocational failing of several individuals because of the very common ways in which the journalists describe the phenomenon. HRW captured this dynamic:

“Journalists practice self-censorship by avoiding working on certain topics, they said, for fear that PA officials would otherwise deny them access to PA officials or facilities. Other journalists have told Human Rights Watch that they have refrained from publishing information they possess due to fear that they will be prevented from covering events, or harassed, or even detained and physically abused” (HRW 2010, p.5).

Self-censorship is a trick of the trade that Palestinian journalists are conditioned to accept. There are many individuals like Ezzeldeen who try and oppose these pressures. However, his is not a typical situation—as a distinguished writer in both the international and local press he has more privileges and protection than the average journalist. In the same conversation, he noted that because of these conditions for many, the daily obstacles opposing professional practices could seem too overwhelming. “If I write something about an officer, maybe if I am weak I will suffer from the officer directly” (Interview with Ezzeldeen, 2011). It is therefore important to critically assess this element within the context of the organization in which the journalists operate, rather than simply dismiss self-censorship as simply a personal failing or only focus on an exception to the rule. A 2008 MADA report underscores...
the effect that this insecure situation, coupled with Israeli and PA regulations, has on the professionalism of local journalists:

“Palestinian territories are characterized by the security domination of many factions, which leads to a multiplicity of actors who violate media freedoms: the Israeli occupation forces, the Israeli settlers, the Palestinian security services in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, in addition to armed Palestinian groups. This combination has not only led to a significant decline in the freedoms of expression and freedom of information landscape, but leads journalists and media outlets to practice too much self-censorship, therefore is a setback at the level of the media outlets themselves” (MADA, 2008, Online English abstract).

b) The Absence of Certain Coverage

While self-censorship is, by nature, difficult to measure, it is additionally evident in an unwritten code of what for a journalist is not fit to print. Jamal lists:

1. Any material that reflects negatively on the PA chairman or his family
2. Criticism of the PA patronage system, especially favoritism and corruption
3. Any subject concerning the lack of political, administrative or financial accountability of PA officials
4. Criticism of social and immoral behavior in society, having to do with clan relationships, religious discrimination or gender problems (Jamal, 2000, p.55).

Media expert Walid Omari adds several more red lines: incest; suicide; sexual assault; honor killings; corruption; prostitution; extremism; child exploitation; and persecution of women. In this way self-censorship manifests through restricted coverage of the political, as well as social, cultural, and religious issues (Omari 2010, p.146). Hence in an environment in which media policies subvert the reporting, editing, and ethical standards of the newspapers to all encompassing political needs, where labor policies provide no space for journalists to lobby for their rights, and security policies deny journalists any semblance of professional security, the absence of certain kinds of coverage begins to make more sense.
It is necessary to stress that self-censorship is a related but different characteristic from the instrumentalization discussed in the previous chapter. Journalists work in an environment influenced both by political and interpersonal pressures. Palestinian society, while often consumed by politics and the occupation, is not limited to these elements and perspectives. And it is the absence of much of this other news or the limited way in which parts of it are covered that most strongly alludes to the prominence of self-censorship. It is important for all journalists cross-regionally to consider the consequences of what they write and common for editors to impose their particular preferences. But the prevalence of self-censorship among Palestinians more so reflects the expressed fear of what trying to seek and present the truth entails (MADA, 2008). In this way self-censorship is not simply another example of *tadakhulat*, in which the practices of journalists are reduced to a political rather than professional matter. Rather, it is within the subtleties of the *who, what, where, when, why, and how* that information is presented that self-censorship is an evident and distinct trait to describe—to the detriment of the professionalism of the journalists and their press (Interviews, 2011, 2012).

For example, self-censorship is evident in the superficial way in which many topics are only simplistically assessed. Arouri explained:

“You cannot say anything against Arafat or any leader who spent his life making *intifada* or revolutions. And for sure not anything against the culture and religion, by that I mean Islam and Christianity. People are very sensitive about culture, religion, and political symbols” (Interview with Arouri, 2011).

As Arouri’s comments convey, journalists are quite aware that their newspapers represent only a certain kind of reality, but for them one that presents the safest of perspectives in an all too insecure and uncertain socio-political environment. It is
hence a norm of the newspaper to positively cover issues where there is a consensus. Journalists recalled how, when they sit to down to write, they innately try to air on the side of caution, a practice of their workplace that is now like second nature. Under these conditions, journalists are prone to repeat facts from the foreign press, to cite a byline as “special correspondent,” or to leave articles as anonymous (Interviews, 2011; 2012). In this way it is not only political but also societal actors who effectively deny recognition of differentiated journalistic institutions, norms and practices.

Abu Khater explained how self-censorship is also evident in the kinds of sources upon which the journalists rely. He described how the lack of political, economic, and social safeguards provided to journalists leads to their self-censorship.

“Ah, rekaba thateya. Sometimes when you feel that the editor upstairs of our newspaper maybe he doesn’t like this guy [in an article], you are going to chose another, maybe not the expert, but maybe if I use him they will publish it. If you work in this country, you can’t avoid some issues like this” (Interview with Abu Khater, 2011).

Indeed, in such a tiny territory, the creation of the news is very often based on interpersonal relations. In this way self-censorship of certain peoples, topics, or terminology reflects the personal, day-to-day experiences of the journalists and the societal pressures in which they operate. While politics are part of the story, sometimes it comes down to something as basic as the journalist trying to find a way to publish a story within the discretionary likes and dislikes of the editor on top.

c) Variation Between the Three Dailies

It is difficult to address differences in self-censorship between the three newspapers because, as noted, few studies have systematically examined the problem within specific institutions. Nonetheless, it is useful to make some preliminary
conclusions based on the prevalence and kinds of topics covered. In general, it is
conventionally considered that *al-Hayyat al-Jadeedah* journalists have the greatest
leeway in how close to the red lines they can come, while *al-Ayyam* and *al-Quds*, which
have a lesser defined relationship with the PA, need to be more cautious (*al-Quds
perhaps more so than al-Ayyam*). Overall, the image among journalists that everyone
else in the newsroom is self-censoring is a powerful cross-newspaper norm I heard
often-expressed in interviews and discussed in the Palestinian literature.

It is also generally accepted that the Israeli censor is far less formidable now
than in the past. *Al-Quds* is the only of the three newspapers daily subject to the Israeli
censor, though during sensitive security times, the IDF occasionally censors *al-Hayyat
al-Jadeedah* and *al-Ayyam* when they are brought across Israeli controlled borders into
Gaza or East Jerusalem. As Esheikh explained of prior censorship today,

> “Now-a-days there almost is no censorship, because it doesn’t mean
anything anymore. Why would they censor the newspaper when you can
turn your computer on or the TV and you would listen to anything that
in the past they would not be allowed to publish” (Interview with Esheikh
2012).

Without systematically reviewing the correspondence between the military censor and
the newspaper, it is difficult to determine exact changes in the number and kinds of
articles censored over time. In Shbeebs’s 2005 study of the press in the second *intifada*,
the author described several subtle ways in which the Israeli military censor continued
to assert its pressure. He describes how *al-Hayyat* and *al-Ayyam* began to use terms that
were taboo under Oslo, and argues that the Israeli censor is the cause for the absence
of similar words in *al-Quds* (Shbeebs 2004, p.44). The study does not list the terms in
question, perhaps because it was intended for Palestinian readers. The study also
attributes to the Israeli censor *al-Qud’s* quantitatively less coverage of the *intifada* than
the other two papers (Shbeeb 2004, p.21). However, the study provides no quantitative or qualitative information on how much \textit{al-Quds} material was actually censored or the exact content, which is another area for potential further research.

Nonetheless, the Israeli censor still remains a significant impediment undermining the development of professional standards and reinforcing self-censorship. Esheikh’s last statement exemplifies the importance of focusing on professionalism in the Palestinian press: in an age when the technological barriers to freedom of the press and expression have been dramatically lowered, the particular systems in which journalists operate are still integral to explaining why certain limited standards continue to manifest, in this case in the repeatedly noted absence of certain content and coverage within the newspaper page.

Interestingly, the websites of the newspapers generally do not provide a major respite from the unprofessional self-censoring norms and limited reporting, editing, and ethical standards of the newsroom. As is cross-regionally true, the Internet in Palestine provides a public sphere for less restrictive expression. But the journalists at the newspapers are not able to take advantage of this space. The websites of the dailies are largely just a repeat of the news in print, with the pages simply uploaded in PDF form. All three newspapers used to put the day’s PDF copy up at noon so that people would have an incentive to buy the print edition in the morning. Now they have pushed the PDF’s uploading back until two. Online archives of the papers are also inconsistent and difficult to navigate, another sign of the institutional de-emphasis on increasing access to information (Interviews 2011, 2012; Personal observations).

The websites of \textit{al-Ayyam} and \textit{al-Hayyat al-Jadeedah} are less popular and informative than \textit{al-Quds}—and the editors have no plans to change this. The online
sites of the first two papers provide readers with basically nothing new. Rather than publish articles that did not fit in the print edition or were too sensitive to pass the socio-political censor, the editors have chosen to largely avoid the online trend.

*Al-Quds* is a slightly different situation—their website does continually update information, including videos and articles not put in print—but according to interviews it’s use of the online site has not greatly affected the practices of journalists in the newsroom. This is the case because the online content of the newspapers comes from sources disconnected from the print edition. The video clips come from a partnership with *al-Quds* television channel, and the journalists in the newspaper have nothing to do with this work. Moreover, the updates on the website and the different articles are kept institutionally separated from the print publication; the news articles come from international agencies, or from reporters based in London, where the Zuloff brothers run the website (Interview with Esheikh, 2012). On a whole, the internal conventions of the newspapers continue on without adapting to online space.

d) *Summary of Section:*

In this section I explained the high level of institutionalized self-censorship in the press, focusing on the high reported rates of self-censorship among journalists, and the pervasive absence of certain coverage. This section accounted for these issues by tracing: the effects of the Wye Agreement’s politicization of incitement; unclear roles and responsibilities delineated in the 1995 Palestinian Press and Publications laws; the absence of clear access to information; the Ministry of Information’s politicized missions; the dysfunction and innate politicization of the journalists syndicate; inefficacy of Palestinian press credentials; PA (and PA aligned actors) patronage and
subsidies; the Israeli Military Censor and its soft and hard power; Israeli restrictions on and arrests of journalists; PA intimidation and detention of journalists; and the lack of adequate legal protections. Abu Khater recalled the fear that journalists feel when they are unsure if they have crossed a red line: “Suddenly you feel you are alone. No one helps or defends you” (Interview with Abu Khater, 2011). To provide a more complete picture of why this is so, in the next chapter I discuss a related facet that journalists and media scholars I interviewed also lamented: the limited organizational capacity of journalists in the newspapers.
Chapter Six: Organizational Capacity

We need a system to support the journalists
- Interview with Muntaser Hamdan, 2012

For Muntaser Hamdan the staff of *al-Hayyat al-Jadeedah* is like his family (Interview with Hamdan, 2012). The last fifteen years he has worked in the same office under the same management with many of the same men covering much of the same story. He has shared with these men in their highs and their lows—both the moments that make it on to the newspaper page, and those that do not. But while decades of discord have disrupted much of Palestinian political, economic, and socio-cultural life, for Hamdan the routines and norms of his newspaper have largely remained much the same.

For fifteen years the organization has not profoundly changed from within. Hafez Barghouti has been Editor-in-Chief, and he never holds all-staff meetings or editorial boards, which might contest his power. There are no internal incentives for journalists to pursue investigative stories, or structures that enable them to specialize in a field or advance their career. In addition to this managerial control, salaries are low, contracts ineffective, and the Palestinian press card too politically compromised to be of real use. “We need a system to support the journalists,” he concluded (Interview with Hamdan, 2012). But Israeli and PA policies prevent that.

Seated in a side room in the main *al-Hayyat* office with a cigarette in one hand and a Turkish coffee in the other, Hamdan admits that his newspaper—rife with political, military and commercial instrumentalization and limited reporting, editing,
and ethical standards—is not what he had originally imagined. He joined the newspaper as a sports writer in 1996, and eight months later moved to the politics and society division where he still is today. When asked why he began he echoed a familiar refrain: because he liked the news and he wanted to report on the Palestinian story. But now Hamdan has basically nowhere in the newspaper to advance. Instead, as the best of the Palestinian press often do, he began to write five years ago for foreign news agencies, too. Like many others, he is deeply frustrated with the limited protections afforded by his politically corrupted union. It should be “the house” of journalists, but in fact only further complicates life for his extended family (Interview with Hamdan, 2012). He knows they can do and deserve better.

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Hamdan’s descriptions are characteristic of the limited organizational capacity of journalists in the three daily Palestinian newspapers, this study’s fifth measure of limited professionalism. The cause is not difficult to discern. As I argue, specific Israeli and PA formal policies and informal practices have undermined the organizational capacity of journalists in all three newspapers. In this chapter I describe and explain four related facets—limited internal mobility, the absence of specialization, low market and symbolic capital of journalists, and inadequate internal trainings.

1) **Background:**

In Media Studies sociologists emphasize the position of workers in the newsroom and the arrangement of newspaper pages as important measures of the organizational capacity of the press (Beate, 1998; Gans, 2004). This is not to imply that there is only one way to organize a newspaper page. This study purposefully
argues against a natural history approach, which posits that given certain technological and literacy advances all media will naturally progress towards a similar, and often implicitly American, media model (Schudson, 1982).

Yet it is cross-regionally true that occupational configurations providing journalists a greater degree of control and authority in their practices, norms and institutions are critical for the advance of their profession. “Journalists are not free agents. They are constrained by a set of complex institutional relations,” argues Michael Schudson (Schudson, 1982, p.61). In conversations with dozens of Palestinian journalists from the three newspapers about their work life, they often without prompt expressed the desire for a higher degree of recognized roles and internal representation. In this way it is not only autonomy from political, military, and commercial pressures, or recognized reporting, editing, and ethical standards that journalists lack. As a result of Israeli and PA formal policies and informal practices, they also lack on an organizational level a division of their labor vis-à-vis one another.

2) Internal Organizational Capacity

a) Limited Internal Mobility

One day in 1979 Maher Esheikh read an advertisement in al-Quds newspaper for an English translator. He was looking for work, having recently left the law profession. He applied, took a test, and was chosen from among fifty others. Perhaps, he admitted, it helped that his father was a friend of an editor. A few years later Esheikh became one of three night editors, and soon after that was promoted to managing editor. “Being the managing editor of the most important newspaper in
Palestine that means a lot of power. Where ever you go you get special treatment,” he boasted (Interview with Esheikh, 2011). It is not a job one is likely to easily give up.

Esheikh’s experience is characteristic of the way that journalists advance in the Palestinian press: it is often based on *wasta* (intermediation) and there are rarely opportunities (Interview with Shaheen, 2011). The same men have been in the same positions of power from the start, and they gained these roles largely because of their political affiliations. At *al-Hayyat al-Jadeedah* Barghouti has been Editor-in-Chief since the newspaper opened in 1994. At *al-Ayyam*, Akram Haniya and Abdul Nasser Najjar have been the Editor-in-Chief and managing editor, respectively, since the newspaper began in 1995. At *al-Quds*, Walid Abu Zuloff has been Editor-in-Chief since his father, Mahmoud, died in 2005. Amongst the journalists there is also little turnaround and even less room for upward mobility. The average journalist has worked at the paper for about ten years, and while reporters can be promoted to be editors, there are a finite number of positions—which do not vacant often. “I’ve worked as a journalist for as many years as the Editor-in-Chief,” Hamdan complained, “and there is no way for me to advance” (Interview with Hamdan, 2012). Instead, as noted, Hamdan looked elsewhere to the international press.

These problems cannot simply be dismissed as an economic or managerial problem removed from their broader context; they are in large part due to policies that shape the practice of journalism in Palestine. In particular, government policies that place the primacy of the Editor-in-Chief and his needs above all else are a direct cause of the press’ limited organizational capacity and the limited professional mobility of journalists. As Chapter Three discussed, the 1995 Press law spends considerable time delineating the roles and responsibilities of the Editors-in-Chief and
newspaper owners. This intentional structuring of the press enabled the Editors-in-Chiefs’ political (and by extension economic and socio-cultural) priorities to trump the professional rights and wants of the journalists. Weary of the newspapers’ licenses being provoked, of employees too boldly crossing red lines, or of losing much needed subsidies—all amidst an uncertain security condition—the newspapers are run in a top-down manner to the detriment of its organizational capacity and professionalism.

The Editors-in-Chief never hold all-staff meetings or convene editorial boards; they do not trust their workers enough or wish to rescind to them some of their power. Instead, the Editors-in-Chief make internal policies based on their discretionary needs, which the managing editors and section editors diligently carry out. Just as for decades the same political leaders have dominated the front page of the Palestinian newspapers, so have the same expediently aligned men managed the newspapers under the PA’s licensing regime. “One of the problems with the Palestinian Press is a management problem. Where there are seldom-editorial meetings in the newspaper or the newsroom. This usually leads to miscommunication between the journalist/reporter and the editors or simply leads to poor coverage of events,” argued Nabil, Khatib in 2003 (Khatib 2003, p.6). Indeed, there is little internal organizational capacity among journalists in the newspapers in part because of these men and the non-professional interests they are there to represent. Poor leadership is a big part of the problem.

It is not simply a culture of patronage that is to blame, but also the policies that make it this way: the profession is organized so that those in control remain in order to reinforce the political status quo. The 1995 Press Law, structure of the syndicate, and use of Presidential decrees are all part of this process, while it becomes
even harder for journalists to gain experiences and prestige if they cannot access
government sources or Israeli press cards. This is important because of what it reflects
on the level of professionalism—journalists lack control over the norms, routines, and
representation in their workplace.

As Esheikh’s story exemplifies, *wasta*’s institutional entrenchment is also
emblematic of the dynamic in which journalists are both discouraged from competing
to advance and unable to do so based on professional criteria. The newspapers are
not structured in a way to empower the journalists, increase their competitiveness, or
facilitate their advance; rather, they are part of a broader intent of those in power to
preserve the political status quo and keep the newspapers in a particularly subdued
state. This is evident in that only those with enough *wasta* can write as they please, as
forces beyond the workplace protect them. Hani al-Masri, one of the most respected
and well-connected journalists, is one of those very rare cases in which he has an
almost untouchable status because of his familial and socio-political prominence.

“For words and terms, etcetera, you must try to satisfy the owner of the
newspaper and the party who support it and the authority that belong to
it. Not me. Me, I have a margin. But most journalists are afraid as they
have small salaries, they have no guarantees” (Interview with al-Masri,
2011).

The newspapers are also of limited use as a place for the next generation to
increase their competitiveness and further develop their tricks of the trade. While the
newspapers do take interns, they are rarely given substantive work, field experience,
or hired long-term. For example, early afternoon on a Friday in January 2012, the *al-
Quds* main office bordering the Qalandia checkpoint was largely empty except for
three copy editors. They were three young women, studying journalism in the *al-Quds*
University media department. When asked how they got the job, one girl laughed and
muttered under her breath the unspoken rule: *wasta*. They explained that they were responsible for copyediting and small filler pieces. One of the women had also recently begun to write a weekly column profiling famous Palestinians in history (Interviews, 2012). All three women expressed the desire to be in broadcast media instead; in the newspapers, except for one or two notable exceptions, women rarely advance beyond layout and copyediting. It is still mainly a men’s world—men, that is, which were largely hired decades ago.

b) *Absence of Specialization*:

Nail Mousa of *al-Hayyat al-Jadeedah* calls himself a specialist in parliamentary, legislative, and presidential affairs. He gloats that at one point he was banned from nearing the PLC because of some of his coverage. But since 2007 the PLC has not met to discuss or pass legislation—an obvious impediment for Mousa to expand his skills and his specialty (Interview with Mousa, 2012). When covering parliamentary issues, moreover, ministers often write guest reports in the newspapers, rather than have journalists themselves present their own analysis.

It is true that a broad skill set is important for journalists, whose jobs often necessitate well-researched and well-written articles on an array of topics. It can be to the benefit of a news organization to have journalists cover multiple areas, to prevent myopic or corrupted coverage of a particular topic. In an increasingly multimedia world, in some news environments it is more so necessary to diversify. A newsroom in which journalists are like workers in a pin factory is not the intent.

But rather than being a tactic to preserve the press’ competitive edge, the absence of specialization of journalists in the Palestinian press undermines its
organizational capacity because it deprives journalists the means to develop a particular expertise or jurisdiction over a beat. In this way the management maintains its hold and reinforces the surface and parrot-like reporting—all to the detriment of a professional press. Journalists are discouraged from probing deeper, building independent sources and contacts, and gaining a long-term perspective on particular facets of Palestinian life. In a similar way no staff meetings plan special coverage and editorial boards do not convene to develop the paper’s long-term strategies. The press is constructed so that there are few incentives or means for Palestinian journalists to develop a marketable specialty or an expertise in a person, topic, or field.

Again, these characteristics can be attributed to the press’ particular configuration and the red lines Israeli and PA regulations that circumscribe and obstruct the development of a more specialized and less controllable press. The continued restrictions on and arrests of journalists, the PA’s intimidation and detention of journalists, and the IDF’s across the board denial of a differentiated status create an environment in which the lack of adequate legal protections from political, military, economic, and social actors leads not only to problems of self-censorship, but also constrains the journalists’ ability to professionally assert themselves and develop their occupational capacity. Despite the rhetoric otherwise, in practice neither party supports a more autonomous press with the necessary skills and specialties to disseminate information that might critically counter or question the political establishment’s authority.

For example, the unclear organization of the newspapers not only reflects the absence of media policies but also the newspapers’ de-emphasis on journalists developing an authoritative specialty. As discussed in Chapters Four and Five, the
papers generally contain the same information, pictures, and advertisements: each front page generally consists of a dozen or so articles, most quite short, on the goings and comings of political leaders, developments in Israeli-Palestinian relations, and reports on regional events. Also significant is how within each paper, the news, opinion, analysis, features and few investigations are often overlapping. Journalists rarely follow trends or try to find the real story behind the official statement they are faxed. Sometimes pages are rows of a mishmash of articles leftover from different sections (Personal observations). Beyond the limited aesthetic quality, this layout is problematic because of the confusing message it sends in terms of what articles are intended as news, opinion, editorial, etc. Though each newspaper does have distinct sections, they are largely only in name. It is to the detriment of a professional press that journalists are institutionally discouraged to specialize in seeking out their own version of the truth, as reflected in the construction of the newspaper page. It is no mistake that only the Editors-in-Chief and owners, and not the managing editors or lower echelons, are listed on the papers’ mastheads (Interview with Shaheen 2011).

This trend towards disorganization is also evident in the structuring of the central newsrooms in which many of the journalists work, another measure of organizational capacity (Interviews with Barghouti, Najjar, and Esheikh, 2011, 2012). In this respect the structure of the newsrooms in the main offices reinforces the divide between the Editors-in-Chief and the journalists. None of the section editors have their own offices, but rather work at desks next to the others. The newsroom areas are mainly divided according to editorial, layout, copyediting, sports, and everyone else. The administrative staffs have a separate space removed from the others (and in the case of al-Quds a separate building) (Interviews 2011, 2012).
way the journalists all generally work in the same areas and are socialized by similar processes, just as their final products often appear as a hodgepodge on the page.

The process in which articles are assigned further exemplifies the primacy of management at the expense of more standardized reporting routines and norms. Journalists in all three newspapers expressed a similar pattern: they are generally not encouraged to seek out stories, but rather the editors tell them each morning what news they will make that day (Interviews 2011, 2012). Often times it is workshops or conferences that take up much of the day, leaving little time for in depth reporting or developing long-term coverage or investigative studies. Shaheen told of a pattern he observed over the years: at first, new or more daring journalists would ask to cover a certain story or event, but over time they stopped asking. Those schooled in these practices from the start generally never even bothered (Interview with Shaheen, 2012). Moreover, often journalists from all three papers attend the same meetings and conferences, as exemplified by the near identical coverage of particular events in the newspapers. There are few attempts to coordinate reporting, which often leads to four small stories on the same topic in the newspaper page, each from a different government source or international agency. cv

It is necessary to again dispel a potential counterclaim: that it is the individual personalities of lazy journalists, and not political policies and institutional constraints that are the problem. Indeed, work in the newspaper can be a comparatively effortless job if done right—i.e. if you try and walk inside the red lines. For politically or ideologically motivated journalists, moreover, these newspapers present an opportune space to single mindingly publicize the occupation and help to support the PA.
This is too simple a description that underestimates the complex effects of the journalists’ socialization and newspapers’ organizational incentives. As Chapter Five explained, policies that inhibit the development of internal media policies and reinforce self-censorship contribute to a certain kind of limited reporting, editing, and ethical standards. In a similar way, the shape of the workplace is such that the journalists work without clearly defined vocational roles and limited occupational control. This does involve lazy reporting, but does not end here: the disincentives in place and the barriers they face are part of why these unprofessional practices continue to permeate. Left alone, the newspapers would be unsustainable, as they are structured to be dependent on the PA and its socio-economic establishment.

In this way Israeli and PA policies present a myriad of barriers to the advance of a more empowered journalistic jurisdiction by limiting resources for the development of specializations. “In Palestine there is a problem. We have a problem with the laws,” Mousa explained when asked about what causes the limited organizational capacity of journalists in the newspapers (Interview with Mousa, 2012). It is not just that certain journalists are hesitant to move beyond their present comfort zones and develop their distinct skills further. Rather, regulations of the press create a particular kind of unprofessional workplace that privileges certain skills and resources over others. Aspects of social life where there might not always be a consensus are often sidelined for supposedly more hard news coverage because of these institutional pressures. The newspapers’ institutional privileging of Palestinian politicians and the Israeli occupations, for example, undermines the ability for a writer like Yousef Shayeb to specialize in arts and music. The day of the interview Shayeb described in
excited detail an award-winning article he wrote on a Palestinian street artist: no one else would have covered it, he mused, if he had not.

This is additionally related to the problems journalists face in accessing information, in which regulations directly related to government policies control the dissemination of information. For instance, different officials and ministers will give varying numbers, while even the same official will waffle over the facts and provide several conflicting opinions. “Facts in Palestine are not so clear,” Mousa said, concisely characterizing the situation (Interview with Mousa, 2012). Journalists are most often unable to access Israeli sources or sites because of the politicization of the Palestinian press card and inability of Palestinian journalists to receive an Israeli GPO issued one. “Movement restrictions also limit the potential career paths of journalists by narrowing their beats, often to one city,” argues Amahl Bishara (Bishara, 2006, p.24). In this way the problems described in previous chapters—no access to information, the discretionary and secretive power of the security forces, fear of libel and the press law consequences, restrictions on movements—contribute to a condition in which the newspapers do not have the resources or the will to have journalists specialize in a topic or event. Instead of journalists developing their own opinion shaped by their own reporting and evidence, they are to follow the findings of a politician whispering in the Editor-in-Chief’s ear.

c) Low Market and Symbolic Capital

In 2008 Naila Khalil of al-Ayyam, one of the few women in Palestinian print media, wrote an article on problems in Palestinian prisons, a very contentious topic. Najjar reportedly refused to publish it. Khalil wanted to submit for a European Union
sponsored journalism prize and she needed a place to publish it first. So like many other Palestinian journalists, she turned to Amin.org, an on-line cite created by former al-Quds journalists in 1995 as a place to circulate articles the traditional news outlets rejected (Interview with Abu Aker, 2011). A few months later Khalil won the prize for her piece and Haniya was reportedly furious with Najjar. Why did you refuse to publish that piece without first checking with me, he supposedly demanded. I assumed that you would not let it be published, Najjar reportedly replied (Interview with Shaheen, 2011).

It is no coincidence that while Palestinian journalists win many regional and international writing and reporting rewards each year, it is often for work published online or by an international agency. The Palestinian newspapers never provide internal monetary or symbolic prizes to their journalists to praise certain kinds of coverage or conduct. There are no workers of the month moments or other institutional practices in which an employee’s work can be recognized and rewarded as representative of the newspaper’s mission. In March of 2012, Prime Minister Salam Fayyad unveiled the first ever PA prize for journalism (time will tell if it will continue) but otherwise the PA provides no support for a professional means to assign and recognize prestige (Interview with Pitner, 2012). Instead, journalists work hard on stories that are too often rejected by the editors as being too close to a truth not fit to print. They are again encouraged to simply accept the conventional status quo so as to make the least problems for themselves and the newspaper.

These conditions are in part enabled by policies that create disincentives for a culture of achievement within the newspapers. journalists have largely no chance to advance (or to create a rival newspaper) because of the PA’s protection of the Editors-
in-Chief, who also protect the PA. The 1995 Press law, presidential decrees, Basic Law, mission of the Ministry of Information, and the absence of access to information all reinforce the PA’s soft and hard power over the media sphere. Coupled with ineffective contracts and other forms of occupational security, journalists are both structurally and symbolically rendered professionally inferior: reduced to a second-class occupational status and left with few resources to remedy their practices’ underperforming condition, journalists have no tangible or symbolic rewards through which to assert and champion their rights to work in a place with more than a limited level of professionalism. While some of the journalists who have worked in the newspapers for a long-time have a higher margin of leeway, across the board within the newspapers there are no institutional incentives for improvement.

When the Palestinian newspapers refuse to publish a piece, moreover, journalists with the connections often turn to international agencies where they can receive more compensation. Mohammad Daraghmeh, formerly of *al-Ayyam*, described how he wrote an article on arms smuggling between Israeli, Palestinians, and Jordanians. “I was proud of that story because I made a huge research and it touched a nerve to society and I thought that I was doing a great job,” Daraghmeh explained (Interview with Daraghmeh, 2011). But *al-Ayyam* “killed it,” deeming the content too politically damaging: the PA has an agreement with Israel to stop the flow of arms, which the article proved it was failing to do. At the time Daraghmeh was also a stringer for the Associated Press, which gladly accepted the story. “Oh AP was joyful for that story. And they disseminated the story and they gave me a bonus,” he boasted (Interview with Daraghmeh, 2011).
In a related way the poor salaries of workers are further emblematic of the limited market and symbolic capital of journalists in the Palestinian press. Salaries send an important implicit message: I value your output this much compared to another. On average, journalists are paid around 2,000 shekels (500-600 dollars) a month, and section editors at most around 4,000; in comparison, foreign journalists and those at the Palestinian Broadcasting Society are paid much higher (Interviews 2011, 2012). According to Jamal, these low and insecure salaries make journalists more amendable to bribery and patronage, as well as increasingly likely to work for foreign media outlets at the same time (Jamal, 2005). Shayeb added another dynamic more directly related to the limited market and symbolic capital: he has now won several international rewards, but is still paid the same low price as before his career advanced. “They treat us as children,” he complained (Interview with Shayeb, 2011).

These low salaries further reflect the limited status of the journalists in the eyes of those in the PA: while the international press reaps the financial benefits of covering this region, journalists in the Palestinian press lack the means and organizational capacity to lobby for greater financial representation and their work’s recognition. Unfortunately, the newspapers provide very few hard facts as to exact revenue numbers and sources; despite requests, I was unable to obtain any more substantial information. It is a widely held belief that the newspapers only survive because of PA direct and indirect financial support that the PA provides through advertising, connections, and inflated circulation rates. While for this study statistics regarding the newspapers’ profits and pay of senior management were not available, what is clear is that the low salaries are not merely an isolated problem of financial
feasibility. The newspapers’ poor economic state—and more general market and symbolic capital—is largely a politically rooted and now institutionalized problem.

This characteristic of the limited internal organizational capacity is in large part due to the labor law that regulates contracts and to the syndicate bylaws that in theory are meant to monitor, improve, and standardize the salary and contract process. As Chapter Three outlined, journalists work without written contracts that clearly define the roles and responsibilities of a particular position. According to the law, after six months they become an employee and subject to a salary and limited benefits. For media workers, it is technically then the syndicate’s responsibility to set the salary standard and ensure that a respectful exchange is made. In this regard the syndicate is ineffective; lacking the means to conduct independent investigations of conditions inside the newsrooms, the syndicate does nothing to improve the salary and contract statuses of journalists in the newspapers (Interview, 2011, 2012). Even the head of the syndicate, Najjar, allows these disempowering practices to continue in his newspaper. While editors claim they have no money with which to increase the pay, if creating an empowered Palestinian press was truly the political establishment’ intent, then funds for salaries and not indirect pay offs could presumably be found.

d) Poor Internal Training

Generally no one—the practicing journalists, media students, and professors themselves—is satisfied with the present state of journalism education in Palestine (Interviews 2011, 2012). Everyone I interviewed was quite critical of the education at the universities (courses are offered at Birzeit, Al-Quds, Al-Najah, and Bethlehem University) primarily in that the training provides little practical preparation, such as
interviewing preparation, copyediting skills, effective writing exercises. While journalism, unlike other professions, does not mandate a certain degree or specific course training, as Chapter One discussed, it is an increasingly cross-regional norm for journalists to study a specified body of knowledge related to their practice. In this way editors can have a sense of what norms and experience journalists have before hiring them, and the profession as a whole has a higher chance of preserving within it a certain kind of shared mission. The experiences of journalists in the universities on the one hand exemplify the problems that journalism education is facing worldwide: a tension between how much theory must be studied versus practical experience. But in this case it is also characteristic of a deeper flaw in the framework of the profession, in which trainings do not develop the institutional strength of the media organizations.

The Editors-in-Chief do not provide internal trainings or professional assessments for their employees; instead, they rely on outside training organized by NGOs, or simply blame the problems in the university training programs. They claim that they prefer to train the journalists in their own discretionary way, but provide no long-term capacity building to the detriment of a professional Palestinian press. This inadequate training further reinforces the limited mobility of journalists and obstructs their organizational capacity. Shaheen stated the problem:

“Usually you don’t have at al-Ayyam and the other newspapers policies that are directed to upgrade the capabilities of those who work at the newspapers, either editors or reporters. They don’t supply professional training, but urge people to get it outside of the newspaper because they [Editors-in-Chief] don’t want to pay. This means that the objectives and needs of the training are not decided by the newspaper, but rather it is provided by the establishments or institutions that provide this training for the reporters in particular” (Interview with Shaheen, 2012).
In this way journalists are not trained to deal with the systemic problems in how their newspapers’ are organized and operate because of these regulatory failures that undermine the development of professional norms and routines. While the journalists say that the outside trainings are of great benefit, the newsrooms of the newspapers are still hemmed in by the same red lines. Many of the full-time and guest lecturers at Birzeit University, moreover, read like a whose-who of Palestinian journalists. In this way the norms of the papers (and Palestinian media more generally) become intimately intertwined with the problems in the kinds of training being presented.

Indeed, while the university programs and the NGO trainings are of benefit for some journalists, these outlets cannot compensate because they do not alleviate the systematic problems that enable an unprofessional work place. According to Nabil Khatib’s 2002 survey of 228 Palestinian journalists (from both broadcast and print mediums), 80% of those surveyed felt that they needed more training, and 17.8% had never had a training course in journalism (Khatib, 2002, p.5). Though not specific to print media, these numbers still depict a general environment of inadequate training.

Moreover, instead of working to empower journalists in the development of their professional roles, the Editors-in-Chief exploit the limited training as a way to maintain the primacy of their management. Barghouti of al-Hayyat expressed how he considers much of the University training inconducive to the reporting norms and practices in his newspaper, preferring to indoctrinate new journalists within his own newsroom’s culture:

“If he finishes the university and he studies journalism we found him empty because he take lessons in theory and never in practice. And when he comes here to work he finds all the things that he studied at university un-useful. For that you have to spend a lot of time to train these people. I
am proud, it was difficult, but it is the only way to create a new generation of journalists” (Interview with Barghouti, 2012).

In this way the practices that journalists do learn in the newspapers reinforce existing conditions. Many journalists do not have the necessary information or resources that can help to empower them within their work place. For example, many of the journalists are not aware of their legal rights and resources as citizens or as journalists, which adds to the already confusing situation when the security forces interfere (Interview with Rimawi, 2011). Editors often also complain about the journalists’ poor Arabic language skill, as the media Arabic in which the newspapers are written in is different and much more grammatically complex than the spoken language. In addition to benefiting the copy editing in the newspapers, internal training would also help the journalists to develop their own sense of when certain words should or should not be used, and perhaps empower them to less often accept the political spin. Discussions of the power dynamics in play when conducting interviews—how to ask questions to journalists versus a child versus a friend—are of additional use for a press that is conditioned to not ask at all.

Three years ago Muntaser Hamdan of al-Hayyat attended a training held by Aman Transparency, a government accountability advocacy group, along with twenty other journalists from local Palestinian media outlets. At the training, the group discussed why there were rarely any local investigations in the Palestinian press: they require a lot of time and money, they concluded, and in the end the paper might still refuse to publish the story. Then the group generated seventeen ideas for local investigations. Aman agreed to provide a reward to journalists who published an investigatory piece on one of the topics. Three years later, out of the twenty, Hamdan
recalled, only five have followed through. Without a system to support the journalists, he explained, he did not see this changing (Interview with Hamdan, 2012). Right now the stagnated state of the three daily newspapers limited professionalism does not bode well. With specific changes to policies and the organizations in which journalists operate, however, perhaps Hamdan will have a chance to publish his story.

e) Variation Between the Newspapers

It is difficult to determine the exact number of workers, as there are no newspaper directories and many journalists and staff work in other jobs and professions. *Al-Quds* has the most employees at around 150, then *al-Ayyam* and then *al-Hayyat al-Jadeedah* at around 100 or more. The newspapers have writers dispersed across the West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem, with editors sometimes assigned to certain municipalities or big cities like Ramallah. This is a slightly different case for *al-Quds* who, because of the barrier and frequency of closures, is less likely to hire journalists without a Jerusalem ID status (Interview with Esheikh, 2012). During times of increased violence, like the second intifada, many villages, cities, and journalists are also disconnected, thereby limiting reporting possibilities, especially for *al-Quds*.

However, as workers in East Jerusalem, journalists from *al-Quds* generally have a more preferred status (Interviews, 2011, 2012).

*Al-Ayyam* and *al-Hayyat* are conventionally considered the better source for specialty news and investigations. *Al-Hayyat al-Jadeedah* has several fluctuating weekly inserts that specialize on particular topics, like a sports magazine, which is reportedly popular. *Al-Hayyat* also has a defined religion section, unlike the other papers. The religious section often consists of articles from prominent religious leaders discussing
nationalist events or political policies. In this way, like other sections in the newspapers, these in practice often do not provide journalists the opportunity to further develop a specialty but rather for the political and socio-cultural elite to share their views. Al-Ayyam’s opinion page is considered to be the most informed and analytical of the three, traditionally a place for the political elite within the Fatah mainstream to present their policy platforms and discuss current events (Interview with Jamal, 2005). As Chapter Five discussed, al-Ayyam has several weekly supplements, which largely survive because of NGO affiliations.

Before concluding, it is important in brief to discuss general differences in the experience of the top editors that policies helped to put and keep in place in order to better understand the effect of these men on newspaper culture and conventions. (Further research on the social history of the top editors, as well as other journalists, would also contribute greatly to our understanding of the workplace.) Haniya, born in Ramallah, is an extremely powerful and well-connected man. He declined to be interviewed. One of Arafat’s and now Abbas’ trusted advisors—“a member of the kitchen,” as the journalists say—Haniya has been a part of the PLO establishment since his years running al-Sha’ab newspaper in the pre-PA period. The IDF deported Haniya in 1986 and he came back with the PLO in 1994. Haniya rarely writes in his paper, and is often described a private figure, slow and conservative in making changes, and attentive to the newspapers content and details (Interviews 2011, 2012). In interviews, journalists attributed al-Ayyam’s elite-centric focus to Haniya’s influence.

Najjar has similar political connections and work experiences, ties that in part help to keep the status quo in al-Ayyam. He had been working in an Arabic-language publication in Florida when the Oslo Accords were signed and he moved back to
Palestine. “When I was a child and my father would read what I wrote, he told me I had a big mind. [He said] maybe what you write will be bigger than you,” Najjar said, recalling how he read the newspaper everyday since the age of ten and liked to stay informed about current events. “These things create a journalist inside of me when I am a child” (Interview with Najjar, 2011). Najjar had worked with Haniya at al-Sha’ab, and Haniya made Najjar al-Ayyam’s first (and thus far only) managing editor. Now he also lectures on the media at Birzeit University, and in November 2010 was elected President of the (now only West Bank) Palestinian journalist syndicate.

In contrast, Barghouti works without a managing editor and brings his experiences working in the external PLO press. Barghouti, born in Dier Ghassana near Ramallah, began his media career as a political columnist in a PLO newspaper in Kuwait in the 1970’s (Pitner, 2012). Soon he found himself in trouble with the Kuwaiti authorities for some views he expressed (he had a satiric writing style, he explained), and with the start of the first intifada moved back to Palestine to work in the PLO press (Interview with Barghouti, 2011). Barghouti, like Haniya, is a Fatah member, and is also a member of the Revolutionary Council, a 120-member policy making body. He had always dreamed of running his own newspaper and so with Arafat’s support helped to found al-Hayyat, first as a weekly and soon after a daily. He talks of perhaps retiring soon, but there are no clear parameters for selecting his replacement (Interviews 2011, 2012).

Al-Quds is managed most like a family firm: the Editors-in-Chief have all come from the Zuloff line. Abu Zuloff was the founder and editor for fifty years. He was a shrewd businessman, and the least politically connected of the three Editors-in-Chief. After his death in 2005, his two sons, who were born in Jerusalem and are now based
in London, took over; one is now disconnected from the work, the other, Walid, retains the Editor-in-Chief status and works on the Internet content from his London base. Esheikh is the main man in charge of day-to-day activities, while Walid manages the website and calls in to check in on the newspaper’s news (Interview with Esheikh, 2011, 2012). There is no talk of him leaving soon

f) Summary of Section:

In this chapter I discussed the limited internal organizational capacity of journalists and cited as examples of the press’ unprofessionalism the limited means for internal advancement, the low market and symbolic capital of journalists in the newspapers, the scarcity of specialists among the journalists, and inadequate internal trainings. This chapter connected these outcomes to consequences of specific policies: the PA Press law and licensing regime that creates a condition in which the Editors in Chiefs’ political needs (and by extension economic and social) trump the professional rights and wants of journalists; Presidential decrees, Basic Law, Ministry of Information’s mission, and the absence of access to information that all further reinforce the PA’s soft and hard power over the media sphere; the syndicates ineffectiveness as an independent recourse for journalists and a champion of their professional rights and needs; and the Israeli and PA tadakhulat that further reinforce the second-class status; and the ineffectiveness of contracts or the labor law to help regulate the workplace. The episodes in this chapter many not be newsworthy in the traditional newspaper sense, but for the Palestinian journalists at the three dailies, it is these kinds of conditions that are part of their profession’s story.
Chapter Seven:
Conclusion

As a Palestinian journalist, you are like a fighter. Because you fight in many aspects. You fight the occupation, you fight in social aspects, in political aspects, in economic aspects. Sometimes when you see the people in the street, they know me as a managing editor, and they ask me, what’s happening in the world, what’s happening in the coming year, what will, what will, what will.

- Interview with Abdul Nasser Najjar, 2011

As of April 2, 2012 Yousef Shayeb of Al-Ayyam—Palestine’s best film and art critic—remained in detention in Ramallah for the article he wrote in the Jordanian al-Gad newspaper back in January on corruption in a PA diplomatic mission in France (Ha’aretz, 2012). “The entire Palestinian press has been put on trial, not just Yousef Shayeb, who just did his duty as a journalist by reporting information supported by sources,” Shayeb’s lawyer reportedly said, trying to capture the incident’s significance (Reporters Without Borders, 2012). Shayeb’s detention, on the one hand, parallels Alami’s arrest two decades earlier—the PA exerting its discretionary power to suppress the dissemination of dissenting information on internal issues. Like in Alami’s case, Palestinian and international media rights groups have expressed condemnation. The PA has claimed to act according to the law, but simply exploited different clauses for expediency’s sake.

On the other hand, this time there are some notable differences. The journalist syndicate in the West Bank has spoken out against the PA and organized a small protest on Shayeb’s behalf. This is an important improvement that could reflect advances in recent months to reform the internal regulations of the syndicate. Time
will tell if the proposed changes can lead to more institutional reforms. The Palestinian and Israeli press is also watching closely. Perhaps it is because the case involves a Jordanian newspaper that could have diplomatic repercussions, or because the story reflects negatively on the PA during a time of failed negotiations. Or perhaps the case’s prominence is more generally due to the rise in Palestinian online news outlets that publish in multiple languages and can more easily reach a broader audience. In any case, the systematic problems for Shayeb still remain.

For the story is not simply that Shayeb was arrested because of the abuse of power in a region fraught with conflict; rather, to fully understand the conditions of journalists in Palestinian print media, it is necessary to take a closer look at the organizations in which they operate. As this thesis contends, this incident is part of an institutionalized problem: Israeli and PA formal policies and informal practices have obstructed the professionalism of local Palestinian print media.

1) **Summary of Argument**

In Chapter One I presented this study’s theoretical framework and discussed the conceptual weaknesses in the existing media studies literature. I focused on the idea of journalistic professionalism, and argued that it can be usefully measured cross-regionally in an objective way. After discussing the pros and cons I found in the existing Western and comparative scholarship on this concept, I deployed my own framework for characterizing, measuring, and explaining print media professionalism. I outlined my five indicators of interest—autonomy from political pressures, commercial independence, internal media policies, self-censorship, and organizational capacity—and delineated how to measure a press as limited or moderate, with high as
the ideal type. I argued that all three local Palestinian daily newspapers exhibited limited professionalism according to my model, and I attributed these outcomes to Israeli and PA policies that shape and regulate the profession.

In Chapter Two, I traced the history of the Palestinian press, and provided background on the policies and practices that inform later findings. This chapter followed the development of Palestinian print media under Ottoman, British, Jordanian, Egyptian, and Israeli rules. While print media today still shares some of these past characteristics, I argued that the 1993 Oslo Accords and formation of the PA symbolized and formalized a decisive break with the past. I based this history on both Arabic and English language sources, as the English-language literature on Arab media too often just relies on other English-language scholarship (Mellor, 2007).

In Chapter Three I provided an overview of the political structures and newspapers in Palestine, and then described in detail the Israeli and PA media, labor, and security policies that obstruct the press’ professionalism. I provided general explanations for how these regulations limit the autonomy and the standards, status, and security of journalists. For sources I relied on analyses by media scholars and NGOs, as well as several studies by Palestinians that are either unpublished or only available in Arabic. Because of my field research, I was able to visit Palestinian media institutions and collect several studies that expanded the scope of my analysis.

In Chapters Four through Six I provided specific examples of the press’ limited professionalism through the personal stories of journalists and editors and through content analyses of the newspapers. I wrote these vignettes in a style that mixed long-form journalism with the thesis’ political science framework. Chapter Four focused on limited political autonomy and commercial independence, Chapter
Five explained the absence of internal media policies and institutionalization of self-censorship, and Chapter Six detailed the limited organizational capacity of journalists in the newspapers. At the start of each chapter I focused on the personal narrative of a particular journalist, and then situated their experience within my evidence and explanations. I concluded each section with a discussion of any differences between the three papers and then a summary of the major outcomes of Israeli and PA formal policies and informal practices. Figure 1 summarizes the main claims made:exi

**Figure 1:**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Autonomy from Political Pressures</th>
<th>Moderate Professional</th>
<th>Limited Professional</th>
<th>Causes</th>
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<td><em>Moderate to low rates of political parallelism</em></td>
<td><em>High rates of political parallelism</em></td>
<td><em>Media Policies</em></td>
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<td><em>Moderate to low levels of political instrumentalization</em></td>
<td><em>High level of political instrumentalization and very low media independence</em></td>
<td>-1995 Press Law’s unclear press limits and vague claims to national unity</td>
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<td><em>Labor Policies</em></td>
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<td>-Dysfunction and innate politicization of the journalists syndicate</td>
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<td>-Inefficacy of Palestinian Press Pass</td>
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<td>-PA (and PA aligned actors) patronage and subsidies</td>
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<td><em>Security Policies</em></td>
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<td>-Israeli restrictions on and arrests of journalists</td>
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<td>-PA intimidation and detention of journalists</td>
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<td>-Lack of adequate legal protections from political, military, economic, and social actors</td>
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<td>-Denial of Israeli Press Passes</td>
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<td><em>Frequency of Israeli and PA violations against journalists</em></td>
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<td><em>The domination of the PA's nationalist discourse in the newspapers' content and editorial lines</em></td>
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<tr>
<th>Commercial</th>
<th>Moderate to Low</th>
<th><em>Moderate to Low</em></th>
<th>Media Policies</th>
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<tr>
<td>Independence</td>
<td>high independence of advertising, revenue and circulation rates</td>
<td>independence of advertising, revenue and circulation rates</td>
<td>-Primacy of economic concerns because of Press Laws' licensing regime -1995 Pres Laws emphasis on EIC above journalists’ needs *Labor Policies -Ineffective contracts -Weak application of Palestinian Labor Law -PA (and PA aligned actors) patronage and subsidies -Inaction of Palestinian journalist syndicate to alleviate conditions -Limits on sufficient independent revenue sources *Security Policies -Lack of adequate protections from political, military, economic, and social actors -Israeli restrictions on and arrests of journalists -PA intimidation and detention of journalists</td>
<td>politicization of newspaper circulation *The monopoly of commercial considerations over content</td>
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<td>Internal Media Policies</td>
<td>*Differentiated and recognized reporting, editing, and ethical standards</td>
<td>*Ineffective and inconsistent reporting, editing, and ethical standards</td>
<td>*Media Policies -Wye Agreement and political misuse of incitement -1995 Palestinian Press Law’s vague and broad restrictions on what kind of content can be reported and why -Absence of clear access to information, both formally and informally *Labor Policies -Ineffective and politicized syndicate that does not help journalists to champion for their professional rights *Security Policies -Israeli limits on movement and access to sources</td>
<td>*Discretionary ethics codes *Unoriginal and arbitrary reporting *Ineffective and inconsistent editing procedures</td>
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<tr>
<td>Self-censorship</td>
<td>&quot;No legal prior censorship  &quot;Moderate to low self-censorship  &quot;High institutionalization of self-censorship</td>
<td>&quot;Legal prior censorship  &quot;High institutionalization of self-censorship  &quot;Media Policies  --Wye Agreement and political misuse of incitement  -1995 Palestinian Press Law’s vague and broad restrictions on what kind of content can be reported and why  -Absence of clear access to information, both formally and informally  -Ministry of Information’s politicized press’ missions</td>
<td>&quot;High reported rates of self-censorship among all journalists  &quot;Pervasive absence of certain coverage</td>
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<td>Internal Organizational Capacity</td>
<td>&quot;Moderate to high worker autonomy and empowerment  &quot;Low and Inconsistent worker autonomy  &quot;Law empowerment of workers, or specialization or standardization of their jobs</td>
<td>&quot;Low and Inconsistent worker autonomy  &quot;Law empowerment of workers, or specialization or standardization of their jobs  &quot;Media Policies  -PA Press law and licensing regime create a condition in which the Editors in Chiefs’ political needs (and by extension economic and social) trump the professional rights and wants of journalists  -Presidential decrees, Basic Law, mission of the Ministry of Information, and the absence of access to information all further</td>
<td>&quot;Limited means for internal mobility and primacy of management  &quot;Absence of specialization  &quot;Low market and symbolic capital of journalists in the newspapers  &quot;Inadequate internal trainings</td>
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Throughout this study I addressed several counterpoints and explained why they were not sufficient explanations for the press’ unprofessional practices. In particular, I argued that regime type, technological changes, inadequate investments, historical trends, socio-cultural traditions, and poor training alone cannot account for the characteristics that I described in this thesis. I also narrowed my analysis to the Palestinian three daily newspapers, because print media, television, radio, online news sites, and international media are all shaped and regulated in slightly different ways. In the wake of the Arab Spring, this focus runs counter to the seemingly more popular narrative on Arab media, which concentrates primarily on television and social media. Viewed from the newsrooms in Palestine, however, it is too hasty to dismiss old media without fully examining the structural problems that made it this way.

Before concluding, I more thoroughly address one counterpoint by providing a brief background on local radio and Television in Palestine. I first map out the magazine and opposition publication scene for comparison, and then examine broadcast laws and outlets. I focus on the similarities and differences with the daily

| Reinforce the PA’s soft and hard power over the media sphere |
| Labor Policies - The syndicates ineffectiveness as an independent recourse for journalists and a champion of their professional rights and needs |
| Security Policies - Continued Israeli and PA tadakhulat further reinforce the second-class status |
newspapers, and note several research gaps. During my field research, I focused primarily on print media, but also spoke with Palestinian journalists from local television, radio, and online news sites. A discussion of these findings is useful to situate this thesis’ arguments and to provide a generally more nuanced account of Palestinian media. I purposively do not delve into social media developments because this thesis is focused primarily on questions of professionalism. Online news institutions and the practices within then is another interesting area needing further research that my field research focused on less.

2) Magazines and Opposition Newspapers

Over the years there have been several attempts to create new newspapers as alternatives to the three dailies, but no serious competition has succeeded. In Palestine there is a relatively vibrant publication scene of monthly and weekly magazines that are largely funded by NGOs or political parties. A more recent addition, al-Hal (The Situation), which is published monthly and ad free by Birzeit Media Development Center, has stirred controversy with its frank coverage of sensitive topics like gay rights and corruption (Interview with Thawabteh, 2011). In many ways al-Hal has fewer concerns than the dailies because it is funded by the MDC and prints without advertisements. In 1997, Hamas began the daily newspaper al-Risala (the Message), which scholars dismiss as political propaganda. The PA closed another Hamas paper al-Watan (The Homeland) in 1996 soon after it began. Al-Istiqlal (Independence), Palestine Islamic Jihad’s weekly, has remained in print since 1995, but with very low readership (Jamal, 2005).
An array of magazines have also published at different points throughout the last two decades, generally providing a surface assessment to a niche audience of political, social, gender, etc. issues. These newspapers and magazines include Sawt al-Nisa’a (The Voice of Women) begun in 1997, al-Aphaaq (The Prospect) in 2001, and al-Tariq (The Way) in 2003, to name just a few. Like the newspapers, these publications are mainly read by a self-selecting demographic, and many are funded by NGOs. There are also popular Palestinian newspapers and magazines, such as Kol al-Arab (Voice of the Arab) and al-Sinara (The Angle), which are published in Israel, especially in Haifa and Nazareth (WAFA). These papers are considered beyond the scope of this research because of their structural differences, as well as distinctive historical and socio-political context.

3) Local Broadcasting

Technological factors and their political implications make working conditions for journalists in broadcast media different from the newspapers. Under the Oslo Accords, the Palestinians were granted eight airwave frequencies; today there are more than sixty local radio and television stations (Tawil-Souri, 2007). Jurisdiction over airwaves remains an unresolved political problem. As technological barriers to creating local radio and television stations lowered and local demand rose, the Ministry of Information began to provide licenses for frequencies the Israeli’s did not recognize as Palestinian. The Israelis claim that many of the technically illegal stations interfere with military operations and the workings of Ben Gurion airport, which are grounds for the Israelis to have them closed. (Interview with Batrawi, 2011). Hani al-
Masri, then Minister of Information Director, explained the threefold philosophy behind the PA’s media policies:

“The PA has allowed private media in Palestine, especially broadcast media, firstly because it wanted to create facts on the ground for future negotiations with Israel in terms of occupying as many radio frequencies as possible. Secondly, the PA was afraid that Israel may at some point close down the government-owned broadcasting corporation. Thirdly, people at the Ministry of Information, especially the Minister, believe in freedom of expression” (Batrawi, 2003).

Revenues from the licensing fee were no doubt a fourth consideration. To some degree, Ministry officials, like al-Masri, did support some freedoms of expression, but overall PA broadcasting policies center on politics above professional concerns.

Whether the broadcast reaches only those in the few miles of a village or across the many hilltops between the West Bank and Gaza Strip, local broadcast media is regulated by very outdated policies. There is at present no PA broadcasting law; proposed in 1996, civil society leaders and media scholars strongly opposed the legislation because of several draconian clauses (Quneis, 2008a). In its absence, the 1995 Press and Publication law, 1998 Wye Agreement, and subsequent Presidential decrees related to broadcast mediums formally regulate television and radio stations, while the Ministry of Information (Telecommunications sector), Ministry of Interior, and Ministry of Culture all have jurisdiction over broadcast media. Many of the same tactics that politicize and suppress the print media affect the practices of journalists within the stations, and Israeli and Palestinian security forces still come calling, knocking, and breaking down doors for perceived offenses.

Palestinian media activists have for years been trying to enact an updated law to replace existing broadcast media legislation. If enacted in its present form, the broadcast law would be the most liberal in the region (besides Israel). Prospects for its
passage are not promising; first proposed in 2005, consideration of the law has been postponed, like much in Palestinian politics, until the PLC is reinstated (Interview with Aker, 2011). As it now stands, the new law would override the 1995 Press and Publications law and annul the Ministry of Information. The exact details of the changes are subject to PLC decisions. The law would also establish the National Council for Audiovisual Media, made up of media, political, and civil society leaders, which is considered a progressive move. Other provisions provide the right to keep confidential information sources and to be free of prior censorship (Quneis, 2008a).

To circumvent the politicization of advertisements common in the print media, many NGOs also fund their own broadcast stations or online cites, creating a particular kind of semi-independent “NGO journalism” (Interview with Kuttab, 2011).

The training of radio and television journalists is another problem, as much of the material is still based on the print media sector, despite the increasing need for a multi-media news world (Interview with Thawabteh, 2011). The programs at Birzeit, al-Quds, and al-Najah University have been improving (Birzeit the most of all) and several media development groups like Internews have been working hard to improve the skills and resources of journalists in the sector. Nonetheless, the training opportunities for in field experience are still quite few and journalists with cameras are more likely to be found on the front lines, where they face the greatest dangers.

Under these conditions, today there are several PA owned stations, and many private stations with either political or geographic-based followings. Generally speaking, the Palestine Broadcasting Company (PBC), established in 1994, presents mainstream PA perspectives and its journalists, with some exceptions, are considered mainly political activists rather than professionally oriented journalists (Interview with
Quneis, 2011). PBC includes Palestine TV and the Voice of Palestine radio station, both also established in 1994. In 2006, Hamas in Gaza began the private al-Aqsa television, which media scholars dismiss as propaganda rather than any serious journalistic undertaking. The IDF destroyed PBC buildings during their siege of Ramallah in 2003. During the 2007 fighting between Hamas and Fatah factions in Gaza, the PBC building (where Arafat once had his headquarters) was one of the first buildings Hamas fighters seized and destroyed (Interviews with Quneis, 2011).

Like the monthly supplementary magazines inserted in the newspapers, the local private channels generally have very niche audiences. One of the main problems facing journalists within these environments are the lack of funding and financial support for their stations that leads to a reliance on re-broadcasting news reports and shows from public Palestinian channels or international Arabic-language stations (Interview with Khatib, 2011). This rehashing of news is different from the conditions in the newspapers, because, by order of the Ministry of Information, at least one third of news the radio and television stations broadcast must be local. Though radio and television channels are largely without their own new content, some stations do provide popular shows that tackle social problems and rely on audience input. Al-Quds Educational TV and al-Wattan are two of the largest channels and considered to have the most respected reporting quality (Interview with Pitner, 2011).

In addition to technology and the PA’s outdated policies, competition with the international press is another factor that distinguishes conditions in the three daily newspapers from other media. Tawil-Souri describes the Palestinian broadcast media scene as “an extremely ‘localized’ industry (channels barely reach audiences within their own cities), and a very ‘globalized one’ (channels rely on foreign outlets for
programming)” (Tawil-Souri, 2005, p.5). As study after study confirms, Palestinians rely on the Qatar-based Aljazeera as their first source for news, and since the PA’s start have relied on international news agencies more than their local sources (PGMC, 2011). This is partly due to the second intifada: stations were destroyed or damaged during the fighting, while journalists faced near-impossible working conditions amidst both Israeli and internal-factional violence. Unlike the newspapers, the PA did not provide subsidies to many of the private stations to keep them afloat. In addition to the technological upper hand, foreign journalists, and to an extent the Palestinians who work for these organizations, also have an elevated status, as exemplified by their higher salaries, at times slightly easier movement, increased access to sources, and greater room for investigative or sensitive reporting (Interview with Assadi, 2011). More recent developments in the Palestinian political scene, in particular the 2007 division between Hamas and Fatah and the further fictionalization, also affected the broadcast media slightly different than the local press. The media’s polarization and rise in internal incitement was felt more acutely in television stations than in print.

4) Concluding Reflections

There are many forces working against Palestinian journalists in print media, but it does not have to continue this way. While this thesis focused on the negative effects of formal government policies and informal practices, within the IDF, GPO, and PA there are many individuals who disagree with the harsh way in which the press is counterproductively regulated. In particular, the Palestinian Government Media Center (PGMC) has been working hard to improve relations between politicians and journalists, as well as to implement progressive changes to existing
laws. Many local and international media development organizations, like the USAID funded Internews, are also working hard to help empower the local media sector (primarily broadcasting fields), and there have been significant improvements in part because of their trainings and support systems. However, while reforms of individual laws are of use, more important changes are needed to address the institutionalized, second-class status with which local Palestinian journalists are treated from all sides. And in order for NGOs to continue to achieve results, organizations need more sustained financial support and emphasis on building local capacity, rather than erratic funding that comes and goes where and when the funding does.

This thesis raised many questions about how to approach the study of journalism. Looking at professionalism is a useful way to examine the norms, practices, and organizations of journalists in the workplace. The model I developed—which focused on the degree of political autonomy, commercial independence, internal media policies, self-censorship, and organizational capacity—can be usefully applied to other sectors of the Palestinian media sphere, as well as to other cross-regional media environments more generally. This thesis’ focus on the relationship between government policies and local journalism also demonstrates the importance of further research into how state policies effect media practices in other cross-regional environments. As we live in an increasingly interconnected world, it is important to be critical news consumers and to consider the social organization of the news within its historical, political, and economic context.

I intended this thesis to provide a new perspective inside the red lines that restrict the practice of local journalism in Palestine. As I concluded, government policies have a tangible effect. Short-term changes can initiate improvements, but for
long-term advances the structural problems need to be realistically addressed. No
doubt Palestinian sovereignty in the once promised West Bank, Gaza Strip, and East
Jerusalem would lift much of the burden that Palestinian journalists bear. But it is to
the detriment of the Palestinian polity to avoid addressing questions over the
appropriate roles and responsibilities of their press now. “We hope that we will have a
state where none one will be above the law...” Alami concluded, despite his
experiences to the contrary. “We hope that the journalists will be like the watchdog,
an honest monitor. And we are working on it” (Interview with Alami, 2011). This
study identified part of why this has not yet happened. The next step is to work to
empower solutions to support a more professional local Palestinian press.

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i Chapter One
Only the pro-Jordanian al-Nahar, which permanently closed in 1997, published news of his arrest (Interview with al-Alami, 2011)

ii As noted in the preface, here I use the term Palestine to refer to the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and East Jerusalem—the areas generally designated as the future Palestinian state.

iii There is no one definition of a journalist and the profession’s parameters. Here I provide one of the more conventional definitions.

iv This thesis takes as a given that journalism can be considered a profession, a claim that some media studies scholars disagree with based on more technical definitions, but which is not a debate relevant to this study.

v The term local in this thesis is used because, as Shaheen’s statement points out, its meaning resonates most clearly with a Western audience.

vi Many reports are part of Miftah’s work with Kishev, an Israeli media monitoring NGO, to develop an Israeli-Palestinian guide to critical media consumption.

vii According to the PGM’s comprehensive 2011 study, 18% of Palestinians turn to al-Quds as a first or second source for news, 8% al-Ayyam, 6% al-Hayyat al-Jadeedah, and 5% another local paper (most likely Hamas’ al-Risala).

viii Chapter Two
WAFA attributes this delay to Turkish chauvinism against Arabs.

ix In particular, following the 1929 riots and polarization of Jewish-Arab relations, the British imposed harsher censorship policies.

x Regional papers and publications, such as al-Karnal (Carmel Mountains), al-Ahram (The Pyramids), and al-Itihad al-Uthmani (The Ottoman Union), mainly represented the opinions of political elites with access to capital in Egypt and Bilad al-Sham (Lebanon, Syria, and Palestine).

xi Comparatively fewer English-language sources discuss the Gaza Strip media during this period. This reflects a common theme among Palestinian studies that tend to focus on the relatively media rich West Bank more than Gaza Strip.

xii This change is largely due to the 1970 Black September event, when the Jordanian government routed out the PLO from its base near the border with Israel (Jamal, 2005b). The 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon also had a noteworthy affect, as in the invasion Israeli captured the Beirut based Palestinian Research Center that was a vital conduit for information between the PLO’s internal and external network (WAFA, 2012).

xiii There was also a diversity of weekly and monthly publications, mainly mouthpieces for political, secular, communist, and religious factions, as well as scientific, literary, sport, student, religious and women’s magazines (Shinar, 1987).

xiv Media scholars and Palestinian journalists also highlight several linguistic, cultural and religious traditions that influenced aspects of the form and function of local newspapers. Arabic words have deep historical, cultural, religious, and political meanings that may not be clear to the non-native speaker. Some of these qualities include rich grammar, repetitive style, a quality of vagueness, exaggeration, appeal to pride and shame, the invocation of religious ideas, and expressions of readiness to take action (Shinar, 1987). Journalists were also influenced by older newspaper writing styles, in which the first paragraph was mainly
an adjective-filled greeting to the reader, rather than a concise summary of events (Interview with Pitner, 2011).

xv Two terms used in Palestine to describe union organizations reflect the affect of the differing mobilizing structures that developed in the West Bank and Gaza in this period; the first, syndicates, or *niqabat*, was more common in the West Bank and entailed a greater degree of legal recognition and formalization, while the second, associations, or *jamm'iyyat*, was used in Gaza and implied a more informal organization (Brown, 2003)

xvi BBC Arabic broadcasts, begun in 1938, were BBC’s first non-English service.

xvii The Palestinian National Authority (PNA) and PA are largely interchangeable.

xviii Chapter Three
See also Guttmann, 2005

xix Having just triumphantly returned from abroad, Arafat and his politburo moved fast to squash the rise of local leadership and rival leftist and Islamist parties that developed in their absence (Jamal, 2005b).

xx Article 19 is the UN Article that provides for a universal right to freedom of the press. This sentiment is also echoed in Article 10.

xxi Arafat’s 1994 annulment further complicated the legal structure of the territories, as at this point there were no Palestinian laws to take the place of previous legislation. Amidst this legal confusion, Ottoman and British mandate law were applied in the civil sector, and Jordanian and Egyptian law for penal punishment.

xxii The licensing system with a capital requirement for print media is technically in violation of international law, though still a common practice in neighboring regimes.

xxiii Article 20 stipulates a variety of enterprises, including libraries, publishing houses, research centers and advertising agencies that must also apply for a license issued according to the same conditions. There are also restrictions on who can direct them.

xxiv A MADA report on limited access to information in Palestine highlighted several PA policies that have bolstered claims that journalists have the professional right to access certain information, such as a 2000 law on public statistics, a 2010 ruling against corruption and a part of the 2005 election law. However, when considered within the larger political framework, these surface guarantees do not alter the larger philosophical approach with which the PA continues to regulate the practice of journalism in the press and reinforce red lines around the profession.

xxv Today Ministries of Information are increasingly viewed among media scholars as an outdated government institution and countries are increasingly doing away with this soviet era model. The draft of the Palestinian Broadcasting Law, discussed briefly in the conclusion, would overhaul the ministry.

xxvi Personal translation.

xxvii This is from the English translation of the Palestinian Labor Law (Received from Pitner, 2011).

xxviii Neither the old nor the new bylaws are available in English or online. Julia Pitner provided me a PDF copy of both. The new bylaws are substantially longer than the older ones, and go into greater detail in many areas in order to prevent further exploitation of ambiguous clauses.

xxix Because Gazans cannot leave Gaza and travel to Ramallah where elections were held, the syndicate developed an online voting system.
According to the bylaws, the permanent headquarters is in Jerusalem, but the syndicate has the right to choose a temporary headquarters in any Palestinian city until “Jerusalem’s liberation.”

Not until Article Seven is the press defined: an Editor-in-Chief, managing editor, editor, translator, cartoonist, reporter or photographer in a press or media organization, or an editor in a certified news agency. These criteria, like in Article four, are intentionally indistinct so that everybody or nobody can register, depending on the needs of those in charge.

Attempts to speak with the IDF censor in East Jerusalem were unsuccessful.

The change in GPO policies towards Palestinians in the early 2000s was also part of a larger and controversial reworking of the GPO’s relationship with the foreign press that Seaman initiated.

“The basic structure of the PA security forces was established on the basis of peace agreements between Israel and the PLO in the 1990s; some agencies were created unilaterally by the PA, or emerged from later PA reforms. In 2005 Abbas reorganized the security services into six main forces” (HRW, 2010).

Chapter Four

The statement was made in regards to circulation numbers, but is emblematic of the larger situation that this captures.

Arouri recovered in an Israeli hospital, where he could receive the necessary treatment.

I viewed the movie several days later at one of his colleague’s offices.

In the case of broadcast radio and Television stations, raids, closures, and arbitrary summons are an even more common occurrence.

While for many Jews or Israelis this terminology may be jarring, the same can also be said for Palestinians when they hear the West Bank—part of their once-promised state—referred to by the Israeli government as the Biblical Judea and Samaria.

Said differently, “It tries to convince the people in the Palestinian territories that there is a place called Palestine, although it’s not sovereign, although it’s only an authority, and so on. But still it has a president; it has parts of the practices of the state and the ceremonies of the state. You need ceremonies, you need events, and these events are portrayed in the media. And you see competition from among different ministers to be interviewed in the media to try and first of all say we are here, and second to make the impossible understandable, meaning that the state is tangible and there” (Interview with Jamal, 2011).

The closures of newspapers more often occur of opposition papers and smaller magazines, which no doubt also affect the psyche of journalists.

Chapter Five

Shaheen was a very active and prominent writer in the PLO press abroad throughout the 1980’s. He left al-Ayyam last year frustrated with the newspaper. He now co-leads an organization on Palestinian refugee issues with Hani al-Mastri, in addition to other work.

The same study found that 17.88% of al-Quds sources were local, 25.03% of al-Ayyam, and 34.59% of al-Hayyat

Features constituted only 1.1% of the overall media coverage; 16.6% culture; 12.1% sports; 6.8% economics; 2.3% arts; 1% religious topics; 2% legal topics; and 3.4% covered topics that did not fall under any of the categories in the questionnaire.

A 2007 survey by Miftah, “Perception of Palestinian Journalists of the Performance of the Palestinian Media in the coverage of the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict” provides some
interesting but inconclusive information. From among 102 Palestinian journalists surveyed (from print, online, and broadcast mediums) al-Ayyam was rated the highest from among the three newspapers in terms of its coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In this category overall it came in second place, after Ma’an News and before WAFA News. (The Palestinian Broadcasting Company ranked the lowest). While a majority of journalists rated their media as “biased towards the Palestinian story” rather than “critical and objective,” a majority also claimed that they preferred “critical and objective” coverage over the former. The study confirmed sentiments expressed by the journalists in regards to what factors have the greatest impact on their coverage of the conflict: rated the highest were first “the desire to strengthen and enhance Palestinian steadfastness,” followed by “lack of freedom of mobility of Palestinian journalists” (Militah, 2007e).

Chapter Six

Even when accessed online these arrangements retain their importance, since, as noted, they are largely read as PDFs in their original arrangement.

eiv Each newspaper also has several centers throughout the major municipalities in the Palestinian territories. These smaller offices are of lesser significance because the editors and printing press are all based in Ramallah.

ev Quneis complained, “You have to search and find and go to camps and villages and find the news there. Not copy only what’s published in Ma’an or WAFA news agency. The sinaat al-khabar (production of news) is missed. In the northern areas of Palestine, people are annoyed. What are they doing? We don’t need information about Fatah and Hamas. We know this information from all over the world, BBC, CNN, Aljazeera, al-Arabiya. But we need to know about the streets, educational problems, health. All these things are not covered in the media” (Interview with Quneis, 2011).

evi As discussed in Chapter One, generally there is a generational divide between the journalists: those who worked in the PLO press, either in Palestine or abroad, before the PA, and those that began work under the PA. Those of the earlier generation—still a large part of the newspapers—for the large part had less formal training. In the early 1990’s, the few Palestinian universities started to offer journalism courses. Several journalists interviewed began working in the press because of a journalism class they took to fill an elective prompted their passion. Others were drawn to the profession because of its perceived higher financial, social status, or love for writing and current events since childhood. Today there are more Palestinians graduating with media degrees from Palestinian universities than there are jobs in the industry. Many do not consider the newspapers a viable or attractive alternative; many want to go into the media because of the allure of power, prestige, fame, and high salaries—benefits more commonly associated with Television or foreign media outlets (Interview with Thawabteh, 2011)

evii The more classical form of Arabic that the media uses is grammatically quite complicated and often structurally very different from the spoken colloquial dialect. All Palestinians study the modern standard form in grade school and universities.

eviii The Hamas/Fatah fighting further complicated the case, as Hamas subsequently closed many of the Gaza offices of the West Bank newspapers, intimidating and interrogating the remaining writers.

Conclusion

cix As Chapter Four reported, after Shayeb’s initial interrogation in February (JMCC, 2012), on March 25 the Palestinian Attorney General ordered him arrested, reportedly on charges of libel based on the Jordanian Penal Code still in place (PNN, 2012).
According to a Ha'aretz article, al-Shayab has been fired from *al-Ghad*, which recently issued a formal apology for the article.

The chart was Professor Peters idea

Further research is also needed into developments of online publications and news sites. There are no laws in Palestine to regulate the Internet, which today about 30% of Palestinians report that they use as their first source for news (GMC, 2011).

Today it is only in Gaza, as Israel banned its importation into the West Bank after the 2006 elections, in addition to online.

The exact details delineated in the Oslo Accords regarding Palestinian frequencies and broadcasting rights are much more complicated and complex. According to Saman Khoury, who was part of the PA team to initially build the television sector, the PA initially did not realize the repercussions of the low number of frequencies, having never before run a legal broadcast sector (Interview with Khoury, 2011).

A Recent case has drawn considerable coverage, in which the IDF raided the two stations in Ramallah (which are part of Area A).
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