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NEW MEDIA AND POLITICAL CHANGE
THE CASE OF THE TWO PALESTINIAN INTIFADAS

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Abstract

The media environment of Palestinians living in the Occupied Territories has developed extensively in the last twenty years, in ways that might seem to present Palestinians with enriched opportunities for public debate. Yet, examining the political contexts of media development with a focus on the periods of the first and second Intifadas reveals that the contemporary media environment is not necessarily more conducive to democratic change. Since 1948, Palestinians have assembled their media world out of other states' media, and a diverse collection of small and large media. This act of assemblage has had as a goal the assembling of Palestinians into a sovereign polity. During the first Intifada, Palestinians had no broadcast media and Israel severely censored Palestinian newspapers. In the context of the popular uprising, Palestinian activists relied on small media like graffiti to evade Israeli restrictions. During the Oslo period, the Palestinian Authority (PA) established official Palestinian broadcast media. Palestinian entrepreneurs opened radio and television stations, and Internet news sites. However, the apparent potential of this new media landscape did not come to fruition. During the second Intifada, PA restrictions on the press continued and Israeli violence against the press intensified. In this Intifada, which lacked a unified leadership or consistently popular participation, small and new media enabled networks of care and connection, but they were not widely effective tools for political organizing. Moreover, even local media like graffiti were oriented around Western audiences and producers in key locations. Thus this paper argues that technological advances must be evaluated in their political contexts.

Keywords

1. Introduction[*]

It was just after midnight on a cool summer night in a Bethlehem refugee camp in August 2007. Out of the quiet, suddenly my hosts and I heard gunshots. In my years of fieldwork, I have come to think of a sound in the night as the most elementary form of news in the West Bank. Local Palestinians or long-term residents know that if the sound is sharp and dry, it is likely that of a bullet; if it is broad and booming, there may have been a house demolition; if it is shuffling and clattering, there is likely a cadre of special forces coming for an arrest raid. For Palestinians, these sounds signal facts in a larger argument about military occupation. They are "particulars harnessed to a general claim" (Poovey 1998:xvii). Just as, in Poovey's argument, the fact is constituted by its relationship to a larger argument, news has been conceptualized – both by social scientists and by journalists – as an element that contributes to a long-standing frame (Tuchman 1978). One key difference is that news is generally expected to contain some novel information. However, in this case the general claim – about the injustice and everyday violence of Israeli occupation – is so obvious and enduring as to render these booms and clatters something other than what is usually called news. If there is usually an uneasy and mutually undermining co-dependency between facts that only acquire the status of facts by virtue of proving an argument, and the abstracted argument that depends upon those very facts for its strength (Poovey 1998), that tension is collapsed for those night listeners, because both the fact and the argument are so concrete. But there was another reason for people to stay informed, whether or not the gunshots in the night could rightfully be categorized as news. Even if they often signaled no new political development, they could have great social and personal consequences.

On this night, my host, Kareem, could tell that this was Israeli gunfire. Like many people in the camp, Kareem wanted to know what was going on not only in order to stay safe, but also because he considered it his business to keep up with community events. He called a friend who lived high enough to see the military encampment from his bedroom window. Kareem's friend Rashid reported that he had just received a phone call from his mother-in-law Rawia telling him that the bullets had hit her house, but that no one had been injured. This was vital information, as we also knew Rawia, but Rashid also had another level of analysis to contribute. From his vantage point, he further deduced that there was no larger reason for the shooting. It seemed just to be a spattering of gunfire from the military base that loomed over the camp. No jeeps had entered the camp for an arrest raid. There was no sign of Palestinian fire towards the Israeli military base. After an hour of silence outside – no gunfire, no ambulances – there was nothing else to say inside, and we went to sleep.

Cell phones have been hailed as important new democratic technologies, allowing people to gather spontaneously for protests (de Armond 2001; Rafael 2003; Rheingold 2002). They are among the crop of new media – most prominent among them satellite television and the Internet – upon which many media scholars and others have thrust their hopes for a more democratic future in the Arab world. New technologies are often caught up in popular fantasies of and mobilizations for democratization (Mazzarella 2006). I found in my fieldwork from 2003-2005 and during the summer of 2007 that there are indeed creative, politicized uses of the cell phone in the Occupied Territories. During Israeli incursions, men who feared arrest or being rounded up in the mass detentions that were a common feature of such incursions would spend the night outside their houses and keep track of what was going in their neighborhoods by cell phone. Cell phones might be smuggled into prison so that prisoners can call their families. Prisoners may even call political rallies, where the receiver of the call will hold a cell phone to a microphone and the prisoner's message will be relayed, amplified but

indistinct, to the audience. Prisoners have reached international audiences by way of the cell phone as well, as when one contacted a friend on the set of a documentary, Slingshot Hip Hop (Salloum 2008), and the scene was included in the documentary. Cell phones are tools for the ongoing, urgent mapping of checkpoint closures in the West Bank. Before embarking on a trip involving a checkpoint, one might call a friend or relative who regularly traverses the checkpoint to ask how it was that day. Cell phones were important journalistic tools, too, as journalists working for both Western and Palestinian news media often resort to cell phones in order to contact a colleague for a first person account of a news event, or to check a fact, especially since checkpoints and other movement restrictions can limit journalists' mobility (Bishara 2006).

But in the West Bank, I did not see cell phones being used as tools for mobilizing political change; that is, for issuing or organizing a direct challenge to the political system. Kareem and Rashid employed cell phones on that night and many others, within a network of friends and families, to make an immediate connection with others in the community, to make sure people were safe, and to figure out what was going on. In a society that was beleaguered by attacks from without and by political disengagement from within, in these moments people enacted a network of care that railed against a politics of isolation – but political change remained inexorably out of reach.

The next morning seemed ordinary, but in a sense this was what was most troubling. The devastation of stasis hung low over the camp. I stopped by Rawia's store and she recounted how the bullets had hit her house. They had broken her window and shattered the cabinet in her bathroom, where her teenage son had been bathing just hours before the gunfire. The family was shaken, but after so many intrusions during the second Intifada, they could muster only an indignant air that fell short of fury. Rawia's eyes looked tired as they always did; she and her husband worked long hours in a store that had only accumulated debt as the latest Palestinian economic crisis wore on.[1] Her exhaustion, her impoverishment: neither was news.

Later that day, a handful of visiting internationals[2] went up to Rawia's house to photograph the damage. These were primarily Europeans and North Americans who happened to be visiting the camp, some of whom knew Rawia well. Even if they could not carry out a lengthy conversation with Rawia, due to language differences, they may have played with her children, or eaten a meal in her home. I went upstairs with my camera, too, without knowing exactly why, and I took photographs of the unspectacular hole in the metal window frame of her bathroom, and the shards of mirror on the ground. One of the internationals wrote up a brief article about what had happened, and circulated it as an email among his network of friends and fellow activists, as he regularly did on such occasions. There is no lack of journalists and chroniclers in the West Bank today, just as there is no lack of this mundane kind of "news". Yet, there was no chance that this shooting would be taken up as an issue by a political party, advocacy group, or human rights organization. As with the cell phones, the benefit of these Internet mediated chronicles was that they made connections. They assembled networks of care, in this case, among people who cared about Rawia or about the camp, or at least about the international who witnessed the damage of the shooting. But these networks of care are qualitatively different from those traced by late night phone calls among Palestinians from the camp. As I will argue below, many contemporary forms of mediation in the Palestinian West Bank involve Western activists or institutions, either as producers or imagined audiences. The political consequences of these networks oriented towards the West deserve further consideration.

That summer, news was part of people's daily routines, as indeed it long has been in Palestinian society. Kareem's father, a man in his sixties, would walk into town to get the paper each morning,

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[1] Starting shortly after the 2006 parliamentary elections of 2006, the United States and Israel led a boycott of the Palestinian Authority (PA) that, along with Israel's withholding of tax dollars it collects on behalf of the PA, crippled the Palestinian economy

[2] "Internationals", or ajaanib in Arabic, are a salient local category in the Occupied Territories. Most are young Europeans or North Americans who have come to learn or work in solidarity with Palestinians under occupation.

and house rules stipulated that the paper was not to be used as a tablecloth until the following day. People waited with expectation for the high school examination grades to be published in the newspapers. People rushed to the Internet to read announcements about who would come home in a minor prisoner release. But while everyone was happy to see a young man rejoin the community, even if it was merely a few months earlier than he was to be released, this was not considered political progress, because long-term prisoners remained in jail and Israel continued to conduct arrest raids inside Palestinian towns and cities.

In general, at this juncture, people had low expectations from the news, as from politics (Allen 2002, 2006b). Even by late 2004, with the death of Arafat, and in the wake of the suppression of most of the Palestinian militant groups by Israeli invasions, the political landscape was clear and oppressively stable. Israel had re-established tight military control over the Occupied Territories, belying any hopes (or claims) that the Palestinian Authority (PA) was becoming a state, or that the occupation had ended. There were different opinions on important developments within the PA, but many Palestinians were sceptical that their opinions held sway with their leaders, especially given the extent to which the PA was beholden to Western foundations and states (Hanafi and Tabar 2005; Mansour 2005). In this atmosphere, the presidential and parliamentary elections of 2005 and 2006 were of diminished importance because elected leaders had so little power. Some of the journalists with whom I did the most fieldwork told me in 2007 during the months of the global blockade against the Hamas government and enduring the split between Fateh and Hamas that this was indeed the nadir of Palestinian politics. In this environment, news might be a habit, or an old responsibility; new technologies might make news more accessible or even of better quality, but new technologies were hardly making for a more democratic public sphere.

The Palestinian case might seem to be utterly exceptional in debates about the relationship between new media and political participation because Palestinians are living under military occupation. However, the reduction of state-sanctioned democratic practice to the act of voting – as opposed to popular participation in governance – is not specific to the Palestinian case (Paley 2001; Wedeen 2003). As media scholar Robert McChesney writes:

> This hollowing out of democracy is a worldwide phenomenon in the age of the uncontested market. As a Greek peasant put it following Greece's 1996 elections: "The only right we have is the right to vote and it leads us nowhere." The very term democracy has been turned on its head so its very absence in substance is now seen as what constitutes its defining essence. The Washington Post noted that modern democracy works best when the political "parties essentially agree on most of the major issues." Or, more bluntly, as the Financial Times put it, capitalist democracy can best succeed to the extent that it is about "the process of depoliticising the economy." (McChesney 1999:112)

In these circumstances, corporate media and media conglomeration have often failed to address deep problems of political participation (McChesney 2004; Rosen 1999). McChesney writes of a global media system in which the vast majority of outlets of media production and distribution are owned by a small number of global media conglomerates. McChesney emphasizes the economic structures underpinning global media systems, but also makes the point that these economic structures are created by government regulatory structures. Likewise, regarding media in the Middle East, Naomi Sakr suggests that due to structures of ownership and government restrictions on media, "it is change caused by divisions and realignments among ruling elites that surfaces via the Arab media landscape, rather than media content that triggers political change" (Sakr; 2007:6; see also 2001). In the Palestinian case, different kinds of authorities – Israel, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the PA, and Western states and institutions – have exercised distinct kinds of influence and control over Palestinian media, and they demand close analytical attention. Given these distinct forms of restriction on formal media, it is essential to include small and new media in an analysis of Palestinians' media landscape.

A comparison between Palestinian media during the first and second Intifadas helps to elucidate the changing relationships of Palestinians to these authorities and to local and international media. This is a broad topic, but I offer this paper in hopes that it can promote further research and debate. By integrating an analysis of traditional media like newspapers and televised news with small and new media like Internet news sites, cell phones, and graffiti, I seek to examine the limitations and potentialities of various media practices in political context. Liberal models of a public sphere that promotes democratic involvement and progressive change by way of disinterested, rational dialogue (e.g. Habermas 1989) have been widely critiqued for their historical specificity and telos. Scholars of media need to continue asking what else news can be when it is not about fostering a vibrant democracy, being an engine of political change, or even generating corporate profits.

The role of media in the production and reproduction of national identities has been acutely analyzed with a focus on a number of different media forms, in various historical contexts (Abu-Lughod 2005; Anderson [1983] 1991; Askew 2002; Mankekar 1999; Mazzarella 2003). What is distinct, though surely not unique, in this case is that many Palestinians – including media makers and others – have thought reflexively about the relationship between media form and political change. Palestinians have not had anything resembling a liberal public sphere, first and foremost because most theories of the public sphere take for granted location within a nation-state (Fraser 2003). Instead, Palestinians have gathered people and media in order to communicate about their society and their shared circumstances. By actively assembling their media world, they have attempted to constitute themselves as a polity.[3] In this case especially, media do not only signify by way of their contents or referential meanings, they signify by bringing people together, by signaling miniature histories of struggle of which media are themselves the evidence and the prize. Palestinians have utilized the familiar mediums of national modernity – such as television and newspapers – when possible. They have also mobilized small and new media, often to make up for the attenuated circumstances of larger media in their specific circumstances. These small and new media have been mobilized in more participatory fashions, but it is important to recognize that their activation is no guarantee that processes of political change are in motion.[4] This paper thus charts the changing relationships between Palestinians and media in the Israeli-occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip, with special attention to the role of small media.

2. Media Under Direction Occupation, 1967-1987

While Palestinians had been at the forefront of Jordanian journalism from 1948-1967, they faced new dilemmas and challenges when Israeli military occupation began in 1967. Palestinians self-consciously considered how they should assemble their media world, in relation to both Israeli military authorities and the PLO leadership in exile.

Immediately following the 1967 War, Palestinian newspaper publishers debated their role under Israeli occupation. Some were against publishing under occupation, because they thought that it would normalize Israeli rule and support Israel's rhetoric that Israel had established a benign occupation. They also recognized that a Palestinian press would be a conduit of information to Israeli authorities. Those in favour of publishing worried that the occupation might last for a long time, and they argued that newspapers were integral for political education and mobilization. They argued that running a newspaper with Israeli licenses was not the equivalent of a recognition of the occupation but rather

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[3]   The concept of media worlds emphasizes the relationship between media practices and social context, calling attention to "the necessity of linking media production, circulation, and reception in broad and intersecting social and cultural fields: local, regional, national, transnational" (Ginsburg, et al. 2002:6).

[4]   I group small and new media together because both can often be characterized in opposition to the broadcasted, non-dialogical quality of most big media. Small media like handbills and graffiti and new media like cell phones and the Internet all tend to allow for blurred lines between producers and consumers of media.

was a contribution to a society under severe new pressures. Arguments in favor of publishing eventually prevailed. When, after about 15 months, one paper began publishing and the demand for news was high, others soon followed (Najjar 1992:100).

If the decision of whether or not to publish was in the hands of a few editors, another dimension in which Palestinians assembled their media happened in living rooms throughout the West Bank and Gaza. Palestinians lacked their own broadcast media, but the contingencies of geography made available television and radio from several neighboring countries. Palestinians strategically chose from among these different news sources. The Israeli broadcast in Arabic might contribute local detail and quality images, while the Syrian and Egyptian broadcasts would provide political perspective. Palestinians also listened to radio produced in Arabic by European organizations, such as the BBC Arabic service, known for its high quality, and Radio Monte Carlo, known for its live reports (Shinar 1987). Palestinians' acts of media bricolage, or assembly from the parts which happen to be available, likely deepened their awareness of the orientation of each media, and of their own outsider relationship to them.

In this constellation of media, Palestinian newspapers remained important because they could more closely cover events than any foreign media. Yet, they operated under severe constraints. According to Israeli law, the censor could forbid the publication of anything that might be "prejudicial to the defense of [the state] or to the public safety or to public order" (quoted in CPJ 1988:67). Editors could be imprisoned for six months, fined, or both if their paper was suspended under these laws (Benvenisti 1983:18). This was a system of prior censorship, in which every word that was to be published passed under the censors' eyes. Palestinian editors interviewed in the late 1980s and early 1990s estimated that about 25% of what they submitted was deleted, with censorship increasing during tense periods; records from 1982 indicated that 34% of articles were completely censored (Najjar 1992:150).

Israeli censorship did not seek simply to stop the spread of information, since sometimes pieces previously published in the Israeli press or information broadcast by other national media would be censored. Instead, according to the New York-based press freedom organization the Committee to Protect Journalists, censorship "[was] a means of diminishing the stature of the press by hindering its ability to serve its readers" (CPJ 1988). In this sense, Israeli censors aimed to dismantle media and political identity just as Palestinians were working to gather media and people together to create new political forms. According to a report sponsored by another press freedom organization and written by a prominent Israeli political scientist:

> Israeli censors attempt to prevent not only the publication of the supposed national security secrets and the ideological tracts that are the targets of censors everywhere; nor even is such censorship the main point. Rather, the primary concern is to eradicate expression that could foster Palestinian nationalist feelings, or that suggests that Palestinians are a nation with a national heritage. (Benvenisti 1983:1)

This was precisely the struggle Palestinians would be engaged with during the first Intifada.

Indeed, Palestinian journalists saw the media as having overtly nationalist goals at this time. As a journalist, Abed al-Latif Ghit, said in a roundtable article published in Al-Dustur, a Jordanian paper, in February 1980: "The press here is an attempt at national expression, and every person with national sentiments also has ambitions in that area. For us the press is not a profession, nor is it a hobby, but a need and a means of expressing national problems" (republished in Benvenisti 1983:43). Those I interviewed more recently confirmed this view of journalism under occupation. One former journalist for Al-Fajr, a PLO-funded newspaper based in Jerusalem, told me during an interview in 2005, "When I started working as a journalist,…I used to look at journalism's role as to mobilize the people…Later I started working as a professional journalist and learned from my contacts with the foreign and the Israeli press that this is not the role for a journalist."

Working under conditions of censorship continued to raise existential questions for these politically committed journalists. An editor of Al-Fajr, Ali Khalili, wondered in 1984: "We…are a movement of

resistance literature, and we have no other reason for being except that resistance itself. How do we manufacture our literature, what type of literature?...How do we see our future?" (quoted in Najjar 1992:210). Ma'amum Al-Sayyid, another editor at Al-Fajr addressed these issues, and discussed the strategies journalists could use given the constraints of Israeli censorship:

> Our task has been to consolidate and translate national activity which has flourished and grown up against the occupation.... [W]e bring out Palestinian national culture and concentrate on the historical and national depth of the Palestinian problem in an effort to make the voice of Palestine heard from the conquered lands in the entire Arab world and in the international arena. We do all that by playing a game of cat and mouse with the censor…There is a clear contradiction between the terms "national press" and "occupation"…[our task is to] mobilize the masses against the occupation and the escalation of national activities in that struggle. That is a task best fulfilled by the secret pamphlet" (quoted in Benvenisti 1983:38-9).

This passage indicates a deep awareness of the structural constraints of certain media practices. The underground forms of media Al-Sayyid mentions took center stage during the first Intifada.

During this period, journalists saw their media as serving the leadership in exile, rather than themselves mobilizing or leading the liberation movement (Alimi 2007:75-76). Al-Fajr editor Al-Sayyid described this dynamic, "We attempt to be the voice of the 'interior' for the 'outside,' and the voice of the 'outside' for the 'interior'" (Benvenisti 1983:43). In the al-Dustur roundtable, some Palestinian journalists urged the press from the inside to play more of a leadership role. Only a few years later, this balance of power would change drastically, with those on the "inside" under direct Israeli occupation taking a more prominent role in resistance to Israeli occupation.

3. The First Intifada

The first Intifada, a popular uprising against Israeli occupation that started in December 1987 and lasted roughly until 1993, was a struggle for Palestinian sovereignty. It was an assertion of self-sufficiency, an attempt to produce and reproduce social meaning, and a precarious attempt to secure authority on the ground.

Palestinian organizations proffered many of the services usually provided by a state, including health care, alternative schools, and the distribution of information, albeit via underground media. Palestinians endeavoured to have a self-sufficient economy, as well. They declined to buy Israeli goods, and they grew rooftop Intifada gardens on whose fruit people could rely during extended curfews.

For twenty years, Israeli occupation had ruled more or less by force: controlling schools and other key institutions, establishing a network of collaborators, restricting distribution of work and travel permits, and using violent means such as shootings, arrests, and curfews. During the Intifada, the Unified National Leadership of the Uprising (UNLU) aimed to establish a parallel structure of authority that ruled by some kind of popular legitimacy. On certain protest days, the UNLU asked Palestinians to have no contact whatsoever with Israelis. So Palestinians refrained from going to their jobs inside Israel, or applying for permits. Regular strikes demanded that shops close in the afternoons. Palestinians generally endeavoured to implement the directives of the leadership, in demonstration of their support, and there were PLO activists on the ground to promote – and sometimes enforce – compliance.

Palestinians' most visible form of resistance was, of course, popular demonstrations, often centred on youth throwing stones against Israeli army positions. Israeli soldiers were located throughout Palestinian communities. As a result, these demonstrations were widespread, and aimed at establishing Palestinian control over their neighbourhoods and cities. Although on a few occasions, Palestinian towns had to be "re-occupied" by hundreds of Israeli troops, Israel maintained effective control over

the Occupied Territories. Generally, Israel had the power to determine whether or not schools would be open or permits would be granted.

Nevertheless, an essential victory of the Intifada was that despite Israeli control of many significant events on the ground, their control over political meaning was much less secure. Israel had the authority to open or close schools, but when Israel closed schools, Palestinians held smaller sessions in homes, and seized the opportunity for popular education of Palestinian history and society of the sort prohibited in the Israeli-mandated schools. When schools were open, youth saw an opportunity to gather and stage protests. Either way, the Israeli army did not determine the social and political implications of school closings and openings.

4. Media during the first Intifada

During the first Intifada, newspapers endured intensified restrictions. At various points, all of the major dailies lost their licenses to distribute their papers in the West Bank and Gaza Strip for periods ranging between a week to at least 45 days. The Palestine Press Service, the main news agency in the Occupied Territories, was closed from March 1988 until at least March 1990. During the first full year of the Intifada, in 1988, at least 44 journalists were detained for at least two days, and many were held for six months without charge. Other journalists were put under house arrest. At least two journalists were deported from Israel and the Occupied Territories (CPJ 1989).

Due to the intensity of censorship and of everyday political activity, Palestinians embraced more fully the underground tactics recommended by a newspaper editor, Ma'amun al-Sayyid years earlier. The clandestine leadership issued the bulletins of the UNLU, and then teenagers and young men and women would distribute them at night or deliver them to the mosque during Friday prayers, under risk of arrest or even being shot, for these small media were also illegal. These communiqués included practical information, such as when strike days would be held, political arguments, and discussion of internal issues. Occasionally the UNLU would address Israelis (Lockman and Beinin 1989).

In an invaluable and insightful essay on graffiti during the first Intifada anthropologist Julie Peteet notes that during the Intifada people read and talked about graffiti and their political value. Graffiti were an important source of information. One respondent told her that reading graffiti was "kind of like reading the newspaper" (Peteet 1996:151). Yet, because of the risks involved with writing graffiti, this was not just a transparent medium of knowledge; graffiti also indexed the presence of resistance. Another of Peteet's interlocutors told her, "When I wake in the morning and see new graffiti I know that resistance continues. It tells me that people are risking their lives and that they live right here in this neighbourhood" (Peteet 1996:151). Indeed, writing graffiti posed considerable danger, since the army patrolled often. The graffiti consisted of memorializations for those who had been killed during the Intifada, political declarations, instructions about collective actions like strikes, and statements by particular political parties. Some were meant to encourage resistance and fortitude: "Prison is for relaxation, deportation policy is for tourism, throwing stones is exercise – UNLU" (Peteet 1996:146). Graffiti also provided a means to discuss issues internal to Palestinian society, such as women's role in national struggle and gendered moral behavior (Hammami 1990; Peteet 1996), or the importance of education, as in the graffito, "Intifada activities do not contradict the pursuit of education" (Peteet 1996:149). Most of the time the graffiti was written in Arabic, but occasionally English was also used, especially if a delegation of foreign visitors was known to be coming.

In sum, during the first Intifada, longstanding Palestinian concerns about the feasibility of publishing newspapers under occupation were shown to be quite apt. In place of newspapers, as a vital political movement thrived, leaders, activists, and much of the general Palestinian population utilized small media to discuss matters of critical importance to the resistance movement and to society at large. As with closures of schools, Israeli authorities controlled whether newspapers could be published, but they did not control the content and political significance of small media.

5. The First Intifada on the World Stage

The first Intifada changed the relationship of Palestinians in the Occupied Territories both to the Palestinian leadership in exile and to the West, and media were in many ways the mechanisms of this transformation. The first Intifada cemented a change in the relations of power between the "inside" and the "outside," such that the Occupied Territories gained power and authority relative to the PLO in exile. For example, media produced in the Occupied Territories gained new prominence as UNLU communiqués were disseminated in audio form by way of radio stations located in Arab countries (Bookmiller and Bookmiller 1990:97).

The Intifada also made the West Bank and Gaza into a hub of interest for Western news, strengthening the place of Jerusalem as a key location for international news production (Hannerz 1998). This in turn created a demand for Palestinian journalists to work with international media organizations. As one Palestinian journalist told me in an interview in 2005, "Before the Intifada, the foreign journalists here reported mainly about Israel, and only the big events in the Occupied Territories…But the first Intifada was a big turning point." Palestinian journalists felt that work with Western media organizations fulfilled national goals of getting their story out to international audiences.

Moreover, the Intifada transformed the Western image of the Palestinians. For decades, the dominant image of the Palestinian in the West had been either of the refugee or the terrorist. The mostly unarmed Intifada changed Palestinians' global image substantially. Palestinians and their supporters extolled the "children of stones" who resisted one of the world's most powerful armies in the streets and alleyways of their own cities, villages, and refugee camps. U.S. newspapers and television networks reported about repressive Israeli policies, like that of breaking the arms and legs of demonstrators (e.g. Frankel 1988; Kifner 1988). Polls indicated that sympathy for Palestinians and support for an independent Palestinian state grew significantly in the United States during this period (Moughrabi 1990). The first Intifada set the stage for Palestinians' concern about Western public opinion, which was only to intensify during the Oslo period, as the material fates of Palestinians in the Occupied Territories came to be more closely tied to the U.S. and Europe.

6. The Oslo Period and the Palestinian Press

The first Intifada was pivotal to Palestinians winning nearly universal recognition as a national group whose representative was the PLO; this in turn led to negotiations with Israel and the Oslo Accords of 1993. However, the fruits of the Oslo Accords themselves were considerably more elusive. During the Oslo period of 1993-2000, the reality of Israel's ongoing occupation continued to limit Palestinians' economic and national development (Roy 2001). Controlled by Fateh, the new PA was rife with corruption and repressive of its opponents, most notably Hamas. It became more and more clear that the PA was much less powerful than a state, and that Israeli control of land had not ended.

However, one of the apparent benefits of the Oslo Accords was that it allowed Palestinians to establish their own broadcast media in the Occupied Territories. The Oslo period from 1993-2000 was a time of professionalization and development in media as in other fields. The PA established the Voice of Palestine radio station and Palestine TV in 1994. Gaza had its own newspapers for the first time since Israeli occupation began. Major universities expanded their offerings on journalism. The model for this new, professionalized journalism was that of "objective" journalism, often taught to Palestinian journalists by development organizations and advocates for peace journalism, and also picked up by the many Palestinian journalists who worked with international media. Professionalized, objective journalism, as opposed to the overtly nationalist journalism of the previous period, was seen as fitting for the new Palestinian state that many Palestinians hoped was under construction. However, as in other contexts, it had drawbacks.

Technological as well as political developments changed the mediascape in the 1990s, yielding a great proliferation of non-official media. First, Arab satellite television stations brought high quality news with an unprecedented level of critique of Arab governments, including of Arafat's regime (El-Nawawy and Iskandar 2002; Lynch 2003; Miles 2006; Sakr 2001). Second, local television and radio stations proliferated during the 1990s, especially in the West Bank. Many of these stations started as small businesses, and their production norms were not consistently high. They did not produce a great deal of their own programming, and instead often took advantage of weak copyright laws to rebroadcast materials from satellite stations (Batrawi 2001). Nevertheless, they served as mediums for articulating alternative views, for example regarding U.S. bombing of Iraq and issues of PA governance. Third, Palestinians, often with Western funding, initiated Internet news projects. Fourth, Islamist publications began to circulate more widely and more freely (Jamal 2005). While these media addressed religious social issues, their main focus was political, utilizing secular discourses about human rights and political pluralism often to critique the PA. Heretofore Islamist political groups' media had been limited to unofficial, unlicensed media like underground communiqués and sermons read in mosques; now, legalized, they faced restrictions from the PA.

Indeed, the PA exercised its own forms of control over media institutions. A 1999 Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) report summarized the situation:

> Since Israel began turning over parts of the West Bank and the Gaza strip to the Palestinian National Authority (PNA [or PA]) six years ago, its repression of the local press has noticeably declined. The censorship, intimidation, and arbitrary arrests of Palestinian journalists that marked full-fledged Israeli occupation are now practiced by Palestinian president Yasser Arafat and his coterie. (Campagna 1999:384)

In 1995, the new Palestinian Press Law replaced Israeli military regulations and included language about the importance of freedom of expression. Yet, the law was dangerously vague and allowed for severe limitations on free speech (Jamal 2005:92). Penalties for breaking this law included prison (Gidron and Onaran 1995:208). Though punishments of journalists were carried out only rarely, it encouraged a system of self-censorship fed by frequent threats (Campagna 1997:293; Musa 1996).

In restricting the press, the PA was constantly balancing internal and external pressures upon it. A 1995 CPJ report noted,

> The PNA [PA] crackdown on the press is symptomatic of its weakness. Because it is not a fully sovereign government, the PNA cannot ignore Israeli demands. So when suicide bombers from the military branch of Hamas or Islamic Jihad kill Israelis, PNA security services round up the usual suspects – members of the political arms of these organizations. And if the opposition papers criticize these moves, editors are arrested and the newspapers are closed (Gidron and Onaran 1995:207).

The PA's more erratic press repression sometimes functioned as a new proxy for Israel's direct prior censorship, because the PA ultimately depended on Israeli and Western support for its survival.

During the Oslo period and the second Intifada, direct political repression was not the only reason that the Palestinian press was unable to consistently foster vibrant conversations about urgent political issues. The Palestinian press lacked financial resources to report stories adequately. According to a MIFTAH study conducted in 2004 and 2005, newspapers too seldom sent journalists to the scene of an event to report about it. A full 55% of newspaper content was translated or republished from other international, Hebrew, and Arabic sources, including Western wire services (MIFTAH 2005). For a press serving a public that was ostensibly in the process of state building especially, this was problematic because it literally limited the space for development of national dialogues. I would surmise that the presence of the PA shifted how journalists thought of their work. During the first decades of Israeli occupation Palestinian journalists and editors were intensely aware of their limitations, talked about them openly, and harshly criticized the authorities – the Israeli military government – when possible. During the Oslo period, the statist proclivities of many in the PA and elsewhere suggested that the uprising was over, and many believed the PA had to be secured rather

than critiqued. Along with PA repression of journalists, the norms of objective journalism, which often involve a reliance on official sources, may have further inhibited critique of the authorities, who were now, it seemed, Palestinian and not Israeli.

7. The Second Intifada

The Intifada that began in September 2000 took a very different shape than the first Intifada because of the distinct constellation of Israeli and Palestinian authorities at that time. From the beginning of the new Intifada, popular resistance was organized differently than in the first Intifada. Unlike during the first Intifada, when protests against Israeli occupation were geographically widespread within towns and cities, during the second Intifada, clashes with Israeli troops – who were no longer inside most Palestinian areas due to PA administration – occurred primarily on the borders of towns, on settlement roads, and at Israeli-controlled religious sites. Also in the Intifada's early months, Israel exploited the presence of armed Palestinian police and security forces to justify its use of more extensive military force, despite the fact that PA forces were not initially involved in the uprising (Hammami and Tamari 2000). Israeli force swiftly escalated to include the use of air power against a civilian population. As Palestinian resistance grew more militarized – focusing on attacks on settlers and military positions in the Occupied Territories, and on suicide bombings – and Israeli attacks still more deadly, it became more and more difficult for large numbers of Palestinians to participate in the second Intifada as they had in the first (Johnson and Kuttab 2001). Palestinians' options for civil disobedience also seemed to be more limited, because they already had less contact with Israeli society. Rather than holding strike days when they refused to deal with Israel, Palestinians found that Israel was semi-permanently closing its "borders" with the PA, by cutting off communication with the PA and not letting Palestinians in to work.

In terms of internal politics, as well, Palestinians found that struggling against occupation was more difficult this time. In the period before the first Intifada, Palestinian civil society had flourished despite direct colonial rule and an exiled political leadership. In the years leading up to the second Intifada, the PA, through its harsh restrictions on opponents, had weakened Palestinian civil society (Hammami 2000). "State formation" processes of the Oslo period spurred professionalized NGOs funded by Western governments and foundations rather than popular organizations (Hanafi and Tabar 2005). This limited the kinds of political actions in which they could engage.

The PA itself played an ambiguous role in the second Intifada. The PA, as an administrative body, occupied much of the space that, during the first Intifada, was the dominion of the Israeli occupation. The PA administered schools and even the granting of permits to go into Israel; this further limited Palestinians' options for carrying out strikes and other forms of political actions. Moreover, the PA leadership was ambivalent about the Intifada. Some PA officials believed that the Intifada might strengthen the Palestinians' position at the negotiating table, as had the first Intifada. At the same time, structurally, the PA had been created to maintain order in the Occupied Territories. Its survival depended on forestalling any broad revolution and on maintaining good relations with Israel and the United States. The PA thus exhibited a profound lack of leadership, leading to a split among Palestinian factions and a lack of strategy (Usher 2003). Along with Israel's excessive use of force during the first months of the uprising, the PA's role shaped the character of the uprising, as one that actively included a much narrower segment of society.

8. Palestinian Media During the Second Intifada

Despite severe violence against the press, in some ways the mediascape of the second Intifada seemed less restricted and more varied than in the first. Though on several occasions the Israeli army did physical damage to journalistic institutions and to journalists themselves, Israel was no longer able to close down media as it had during the first Intifada. Some of the new forms of media did play an

integral role in sharing emergency information and providing a mode of connection among Palestinians during periods of intense violence. However, due to the arrangements of Israeli, Palestinian, and other international power, and due to the poor political organization of the second Intifada as described above, small and new media did not play the dynamic role they did in the first Intifada.

As during the first Intifada, Israeli restrictions on the press escalated drastically, and this affected both Palestinian and international journalism. During its many incursions, the Israeli army shot and killed seven journalists, including five Palestinians. Many Palestinian journalists had carried official Israeli press credentials, but in the beginning of 2002, Israel refused to renew their press passes, stating that Palestinian journalists presented a security threat to Israel. Even after successful legal challenges from international news organizations, few journalists have been able to regain their passes. This limits journalists' ability to travel within the Occupied Territories and into Israel, and thus to cover events. Israel militarily targeted both official and independent Palestinian media starting in 2000, when it bombed the radio transmitter for the Voice of Palestine. In the winter of 2001-2002, the Israeli army confiscated equipment and then detonated explosives in the building that housed administrative and broadcast facilities for the Voice of Palestine and Palestine TV; it also ransacked the facilities of one of the premiere independent television stations, Al-Quds Television.

The PA also continued to repress the Palestinian media, particularly during the first years of the Intifada. Arrests, detentions, and abuse of Palestinian journalists critical of the PA continued. The PA apparently heeded U.S. and Israeli pressure to crack down on extremists by closing Hamas and Islamic Jihad media following a series of bombings inside Israel in 2001 (Campagna 2002). Also in 2001, it temporarily closed a local television station in Bethlehem after it aired a militant group's statement of responsibility for an attack that implicated the PA as being involved with such activity during a truce.

Palestinians recognized the deficiencies of Palestinian media institutions, and for this reason Al-Jazeera was the most popular Palestinian source for television news, as a Jerusalem Media and Communications Center (JMCC) poll in 2003 found. Al-Jazeera and other satellite television networks' intense focus on events of the Intifada made Palestinians feel that they were at the center of events and sympathy in the Arab world more than they had any time since the Nasser era (Hammami and Tamari 2001), at least until the U.S. invasion of Iraq. In times of the most heightened conflict, Al-Jazeera played a similar role as local and national media for Palestinians, broadcasting urgent emergency information. However, Al-Jazeera and other satellite stations can never take the place of the kind of a national press that could be a forum for discussion of national priorities. Although they cover the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in some depth, they cover it not only for its Palestinian audiences but because it is a hot topic for many Arab viewers. Internal Palestinian questions are thus necessarily of less vital importance to these other audiences. Researchers have found no evidence that Al-Jazeera's coverage encourages Palestinian press to cover internal issues more critically or more thoroughly (Maiola and Ward 2007:117).

Local television and radio stations, which often broadcast to a single city, played an important role in disseminating vital information during the second Intifada. These stations, with their weak signals and relatively intimate audiences, were not ordinary broadcasting instruments; rather they often allowed their audience to connect with each other. Because Palestinians were often caught under curfew for long periods, "television news became a centerpiece of daily life for most Palestinians. TV became an instrument of extended solidarity and support, and was consciously cultivated as such by media professionals" (Allen 2006a). Television and radio were both pastimes and tools. Some, such as Nablus's Radio Tariq al-Mahabbeh (TMFM, or "The Love Lane" as it was called in English), transformed their previous fare of music and educational programming into live coverage of demonstrations and sieges, so that listeners could track the safety of relatives and friends. Traffic reports took on new meaning as radio stations reported on checkpoints. Especially during extended curfews and sieges, radio provided crucial social and logistical support for Palestinians. As Amer Abdelhadi, the owner and director of Tariq al-Mahabbeh, recounted about broadcasting during sieges:

> TMFM tried to find creative ways to keep the community informed of what was going on outside and in communication with each other. Besides getting information from our regular community network, we called around to different neighbourhoods to find out how people were coping… We hit upon the idea of using the radio itself as a tool for helping hardship cases: we invited people to call us if they were in desperate need of vital items, and we then relayed those messages on air, asking listeners to call in either if they themselves could help or if they knew someone who could. (Abdelhadi 2004:60-61)

Notably, in this time of crisis, radio constituted nothing like a Habermasian public sphere, a venue for rational deliberation among disinterested parties. Instead, by being an instrument of connection, radio facilitated social networks that were significant on a political level and imperative on a practical one, much like the cell phones did when shots rang out over the Bethlehem refugee camp.

Continuing a trend that had started during the Oslo period, funding from international organizations and technological developments facilitated the expansion of alternative news organizations. "Peace journalism" in the Middle East is a framework that arose from the increasing strength of the conflict resolution theories in international relations, as well as from trends in Middle East politics in the 1990s (Staley 2007). These initiatives have created cross-border networks and started conversations about the social and political purposes of media in Arab societies. However, these frameworks have a depoliticizing tendency, as is common in development initiatives in general (Ferguson 1994). Donors have preferred programs that promote dialogue over those that work towards political transformation. These programs are often organized in a framework that "ignores additional factors that lead to conflict, such as regional and international forces, structural asymmetry, repression, and denial of identity" (Stanley 2007:153).

In the Palestinian context, media funded by Western NGOs and development organizations have encouraged a focus outwards, for example by publishing either exclusively in English, as with the weekly e-magazine Bitter Lemons (http://www.bitterlemons.org/), in English and Arabic, as with the Arab Media Internet Network (Amin, www.amin.org) or in English alongside Arabic and Hebrew, as with Maan News (http://www.bitterlemons.org/) and the International Middle East Media Centre/Palestine News Network (http://www.imemc.org/ and http://arabic.pnn.ps/). These Internet sites have become respected sources of news for Palestinians, and they have sometimes provided a way in which journalists can avoid overly cautious editors at the major newspapers. However, the bi- and tri-lingual sites are often premised on the goal of creating political change by fostering understanding among different parties, a goal which must be viewed cautiously when it is promoted in the absence of a process of political change. More research needs to be done to determine the extent to which the different language versions of the same site carry the same messages and information, which language site is the dominant version, and how they influence each other. Funding for such initiatives, along with newspapers' extensive use of Israeli and Western wire service material, is indicative that financial pressures on the Palestinian press have political effects that may subvert the possibilities of a vibrant internal discussion about Palestinian priorities. This external orientation is the subject of the final section of this paper.

9. The Second Intifada & Media on the World Stage: The Case of Graffiti

The first Intifada caused many Palestinians in the Occupied Territories to be more aware of their image in the West, and the Oslo period intensified this trend, for different reasons. During the second Intifada and its aftermath, this trend has continued. Even the low-tech, highly emplaced media of the first Intifada are being oriented around a Western audiences and producers in curious ways. Given the risks that graffiti writing entailed in the first Intifada, and given that graffiti take as their slate the very surfaces of Palestinian life in the Occupied Territories, graffiti would seem to be a medium quintessentially expressive of Palestinian voices. Yet, in key locations of the West Bank today, most notably on the separation barrier, graffiti and murals are also produced for a Western audience and they are often produced by Western visitors. Sometimes, the authorship of this graffiti is unclear even

as graffiti circulate for an international audience, as when a journalist or tourist photographs the graffiti.

Palestinians may welcome internationals' graffiti or murals as a gesture of solidarity even if they believe, as many Palestinians do, that no one should beautify the wall. When I first asked Palestinians living in Bethlehem about the paintings internationals put on the walls, one woman, a Bethlehem refugee and college student, told me, "With or without them, there is a wall, but this is a good step by the foreigners. It's a challenge to the occupation." Another, a 19-year old man who is also a refugee and who has spent time in prison for his political activities, said, "Listen, we say yislamu yadayhum [thanks for their hands], but the problem is that the writing doesn't bring any results. The Israelis made the wall, we write on it, and they finish it. Still, it's nice that people are standing with the Palestinian people and not forgetting us."

However, some of these images occupied key spaces of discourse with indiscernible and even unpopular messages. One of the most visually striking images produced by internationals on the barrier is located near the main checkpoint in Bethlehem. It consists of pairs of black and white photographic images of Israeli and Palestinian faces, variously grinning and grimacing at the camera, blown up to be nearly 15 feet high. These images were created by a project called Face2Face, led by a pair of French artists and activists named JR and Marco who do not use their full names in relation to the project. The same photographs have also been posted in Israeli cities. On their website, they explain their project thus:

> When we met in 2005, we decided to go together in the Middle-East [sic] to figure out why Palestinians and Israelis couldn't find a way to get along together. We then traveled across the Israeli and Palestinian cities without speaking much. Just looking to this world with amazement. This holy place for Judaism, Christianity and Islam. This tiny area where you can see mountains, sea, deserts and lakes, love and hate, hope and despair embedded together. After a week, we had a conclusion with the same words: these people look the same; they speak almost the same language, like twin brothers raised in different families. A religious covered woman has her twin sister on the other side. A farmer, a taxi driver, a teacher, has his twin brother in front of him. And he is endlessly fighting with him. It's obvious, but they don't see that. **We must put them face to face. They will realize**." (JR 2007, emphasis in original)

The project has received press attention in dozens of U.S. and European publications.

Without this explanation, the photographs confused many Palestinians with whom I spoke, as, indeed, they had confused me when I first saw them. Except when the religion of the person was clear due to his or her dress, it was unclear whose faces one was seeing. The meaning of the funny or contorted expressions was also unclear. However, when Palestinians learned the intended message behind the photographs, they expressed pointed critiques. A social worker in her thirties said, "This issue is not about a similarity in appearances. All people have basic similarities in appearance. This problem is much deeper than that, and it is about the occupation." The former prisoner said, "The person who does this doesn't understand [the situation]. There is always a difference between Palestinians and Israelis because we didn't take their lands, they took ours…We haven't and we won't understand each other until they return our land and begin to make peace. These pictures should be taken down."

The Face2Face project suggests that all that is needed to solve Israeli-Palestinian conflict is a fair conversation. This view resonates with some visions of a liberal public sphere in which open communication will lead to rational decisions, a premise of many peace journalism initiatives, as well. Yet, Palestinian experiences with media make clear the extent to which creating or maintaining a space of dialogue, whether among Palestinians or between Palestinians and Israelis, is often a struggle with multiple institutions of power, some of which may use force to, among other things, close down spaces for debate. Moreover, as I have argued here, technical capabilities for communication do not insure productive dialogues. Even when these spaces of dialogue are produced, they must work alongside political movements. It is ironic, then, that this message, promoting a facile kind of

recognition, should be placed on the separation barrier, which, for Palestinians, is an obvious mark of Israeli official foreclosure of dialogue and positive political change.

Not all of the murals internationals face such opposition from Palestinians; some are genuinely appreciated for their wit and political stance – and most are more comprehensible on first sight. However, the broader point remains that these outsider-produced murals and graffiti are occupying space that could be used for internal Palestinian discussions, just as, for different reasons, Palestinian newspapers are dominated by copy not written for the Palestinian papers. Palestinians welcome international support for media, or international media, because of their physical isolation, their institutional impoverishment, and their belief that foreign states and institutions will likely play a formative role in their future (Bishara Forthcoming). Yet Palestinians must also set their own political priorities; productive international solidarity will not dominate internal political processes.

The period of the Oslo Accords and the Second Intifada have seen the proliferation of media available to Palestinians, specifically the development and proliferation of local broadcast media, the expansion of satellite stations that cover Palestinian society thoroughly, international support for independent media, and a partial lifting of control on print media. Yet, in the second Intifada and its aftermath, media have still failed to create a forum for open debate about the direction Palestinian institutions or Palestinian struggles should take. Many of these media in fact tend to reinforce a problematic tendency of Palestinian politics to look outwards rather than inwards. International organizations fund – and thus help to produce – Palestinian media, but in doing so, they may sometimes hinder popular mobilization and the development of new democratic Palestinian political strategies.

10. Conclusions

Many would argue that the most prominent difference between the first and second Intifadas was the use of arms in the second. More fundamental than this, though, is the presence of the PA during the second Intifada. The PA was the reason for the widespread and legitimized entry of weapons into the Occupied Territories during the 1990s. Starting early in the Intifada, Israel exploited these Palestinian weapons to justify its extraordinary use of force against Palestinians. Even more importantly, on a structural level, the PA took up geographic, institutional, and discursive space that during the first Intifada was occupied by struggle. If, during the first Intifada, popular protests were spread rather evenly throughout Palestinian camps, towns, and cities, during the second Intifada, conflict was focused only on the edges of these cities, making it more difficult for many people to participate and eventually promoting more use of arms. If, during the first Intifada, the struggles were over whether or not Intifada schools would open illicitly despite the closure of Israeli-run schools, during the second Intifada, the schools were administered by the PA, and this remained unchallenged. Opportunities for popular education did not materialize; nor did popular media flourish. The administrative ability of the PA was methodically destroyed by Israeli attacks on PA institutions, but no Palestinian power emerged in its place because of PA command over Palestinian political and media discourse. At times, the PA goaded the uprising on, and at times it tried to reign in the Intifada, but never did the PA lead the uprising, guiding Palestinians to establish a message and a strategy. For their parts, Intifada activists never seriously challenged the basic legitimacy of the PA, despite the fact that according to some views the PA had assumed the role of administering ongoing Israeli occupation. In no way, then, could Intifada activists succeed in establishing the kind of alternative sovereignty that they produced in the first Intifada.

Similarly, in terms of media, many would argue that the primary difference between the two Intifadas is a technical one, that in the second there were new media like satellite television and the Internet, and new local and national broadcast networks. In this estimation, the second Intifada offered a much more fertile media terrain. However, these forms of apparent progress must likewise be understood in their political context. The PA placed restrictions on Palestinian newspapers and

television. The satellite news stations have been better at reporting on dramatic and violent crises than at serving as venues for debating new directions for Palestinian politics. Internet news sites are also limited both by accessibility issues and by the fact that some have been framed around informing Western audiences or creating dialogues with Israelis. The problems with satellite news and Internet news are symptomatic of a broader predicament in contemporary Palestinian politics, that it is so often oriented towards outside audiences rather than towards vital internal dialogues. Even graffiti have been affected by this trend. In many places, Palestinians see around them graffiti and murals created by internationals which seem to signal solidarity, but may otherwise be opaque, and with which they may or may not agree once they can interpret these images.

I hope this paper will encourage further study of the relationship between media and politics in the Palestinian context, where multiple kinds of authorities restrict media, despite new technologies and funding opportunities that seem on the surface to be creating more possibilities for political communication. For decades, Palestinians have assembled their media world out of other states' media available to them by the coincidence of geography, and out of a diverse collection of small and larger media. This act of assemblage often has as its goal the assembly of Palestinians into a sovereign polity. As employed by Palestinians, media not only contain information; they also signify to Palestinians something about their collective will, and sometimes even individuals' acts of bravery. In the absence of political movements that coordinate Palestinian strategies, and in the absence of a negotiations process between Palestinians and Israelis that seeks to do the difficult work of settling longstanding injustices and ending pernicious patterns of violence, it may be that media makers in the Occupied Territories (and those of us who write about them) need to adjust expectations. Media like cell phones, local radio stations, and Internet missives can today be tools for the expansion and institutionalization of networks of care within communities facing violence, and between Palestinians and those around the world who seek to understand Palestinian experiences and understandings of political life in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Media may maintain routes for political participation, or even establish new ones. These networks of care and participation may themselves eventually help cultivate the conditions of possibility needed for political change, but we should not anticipate that the uprising will be emailed, spray painted, text messaged, or webcast in the absence of a major change in Palestinian political structures.

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