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**THE RED LINE:
PRESS FREEDOM IN POST-MUBARAK EGYPT**

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ABSTRACT

When a state undergoes a revolution, and the chaos subsides, and the dust of the aftermath settles, the next thing one would expect is change. Change in government, politics, policies, law, and society, change is the goal and expected reward. Yet, for Egypt, change seems as distant as it was under Hosni Mubarak. Within the media in Egypt, both foreign and domestic, elements of tangible change are evident in the growing volume of newspapers and television channels. Nevertheless, much remains the same, from the status quo of state media as a mouthpiece for those in charge to the limitations on what can and cannot be written. This paper seeks to examine the changes, or lack thereof, in press freedom and argues that the state of press freedom serves as an indicator for how the revolution will continue to unfold in politics and society. The media played a vital role in the weeks of protests leading to Mubarak's departure, and remains an important actor within Egypt's transformation. The press was used as a tool under Mubarak, and it appears that Supreme Council of the Armed Forces has sought to use it in the same manner. More than just a potential political pawn, the media remains a channel through which society can voice itself and become informed. If that channel remains tarnished and corrupt, as in previous years, it inhibits society's relationship with the political apparatus and its freedom of expression.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Much has been written about the uprising that shattered preconceived notions of Egyptian society and politics. From the Battle of the Camel to questions over a Muslim Brotherhood run government, the topics that have emanated from Egypt's revolution are unending and scrutinized by everyone and anyone. Or are they? As Egypt moves forward into the next stages of its post-Mubarak transition, it has become increasingly clear to those that monitor and know Egypt that the press, from its traditional newspapers and broadcasts to online media and the blogosphere, is changing. In the Egypt of Hosni Mubarak, a commonly held perception existed that the media played one of two roles: either the mouthpiece of the regime, particularly the state media, or something not worthwhile given the inability to write freely, particularly opposition and independent media. In an Egypt ruled by the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF), does this notion remain?

The focus of this study is to highlight the changes that took place in the realm of press freedom under SCAF, in comparison to Mubarak's era. When Egyptians took to the streets on January 25, 2011, they sought to change the government, but in the process they sent waves of both intended and unintended change throughout various institutions. The media, which played an instrumental role in the revolution, was caught in this wave of change and has been mounting it ever since. Mubarak saw the media as a tool, as did his predecessors Gamal Abdel Nasser and Anwar Sadat, to spread the information he wanted to the Egyptian people. It was a tool for cementing power, and any voice of dissent within the media was suppressed to the best of the regime's ability, using the most discrete and subtle measures sometimes, and using outright suppression and punishment at other times.

In a revolution that promised freedom for the people, freedom of the press is assumed to be a given. While the past year saw a more vivacious and diverse press than Egypt ever knew before, it also became clear that freedom is not a given to a new media in a new society under a new leader, for the old ways of the past seem persistent.

Under SCAF, members of the media, both foreign and Egyptian, have been arrested, beaten, interrogated, censored, and killed. From the violence at Maspero on October 9, 2011 to the arrests of journalists and influential bloggers over the past months, it seems relevant to ask whether or not the press exhibits any more freedom under SCAF than it did under Mubarak. While the press may appear to demonstrate a greater sense of freedom, given that everyone is talking more openly in ways they could not before, we argue that little has tangibly changed given the persistent level of suppression within the press when it comes to certain topics. It remains true that the majority of voices within the media are not allowed to speak critically of SCAF or any of its affiliates. For those who have been critical and crossed SCAF's red line, they have likely seen the inside of an interrogation room if not worse. "Red lines remain that cannot be crossed. In the old days Mubarak was the red line. Today, it is the ruling military council or SCAF," says journalist Khaled Dawoud, who works for the national, daily newspaper *Al-Ahram*.¹ In brief, it could be argued that regardless of how many more newspapers have been launched and how many more television shows have appeared since January 25, 2011, as long as members of the media are arrested, imprisoned, or persecuted, the press is not free.

¹ "Egypt's media revolution only just beginning." Index on Censorship. 17 Jan. 2012. Web. <<http://www.indexoncensorship.org/2012/01/egypts-media-revolution-only-just-beginning/>>.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

It is not this paper's goal to provide a prescription for Egypt's model government, whether democracy or another form, but it is no doubt expected that the change this revolution intended to bring is support for greater freedoms in choice and expression. This underlines the important role the media plays within Egyptian society, particularly at this crucial time when things can either revert back to the former system of command or move forward into something different and more open to opposition. In order to determine what changed for press freedom between Mubarak and SCAF, the point of departure for analysis will be Mubarak's own departure on February 11, 2011. While it is clear that the press was under harsh surveillance and the target of violence between January 25 and February 11, examining that time period will not aid in the comparison of press freedom under Mubarak versus SCAF. For these aforementioned reasons, the crackdown on the media during the revolution will not receive examination.

Following a brief description of press freedom under Mubarak, the paper will detail the relationship between SCAF and the media over the past 14 months, between February 2011 and April 2012. Given the lack of transparency in some information regarding the treatment of journalists as well as the difficulty to gauge matters such as censorship and self-censorship, the following research attempts to appropriate as much information as possible in order to determine the current situation of press freedom in Egypt. Research methods are primarily grounded in qualitative research and not quantitative due to the lack of accurate data and numbers regarding the treatment of journalists as well as the distribution of newspapers and audiences of television shows. As time progresses, more research and monitoring of the situation is needed in order to further expose the reality of press freedom under SCAF.

Research methods and tools primarily include literature written on the topic, news articles and analyses, public interviews with journalists and those involved in the media, accredited blogs by activists and journalists persistently involved in events since the revolution, as well as data and polling from verified sources. In addition to these methods, several interviews conducted by the authors in Cairo and Washington, D.C. will be used as evidence for analysis. Interviews were conducted with journalists in the foreign and Egyptian press, of broadcast news and newspapers, state and independent press, and bloggers and activists involved in the issue.

While it remains up for debate whether or not bloggers belong to the press community, this analysis will include them as they play an important part in Egypt's current environment of information and depict the general state of freedom of expression. There are some, like Egypt's Press Syndicate, who do not consider bloggers as part of the journalism world. This is correct, bloggers are not journalists; however, they are linked to the general world of media. Although bloggers find a role in our research, Twitter and Facebook do not play significant parts. While bloggers represent a form of online editorial similar to what can be found on the op-ed pages of newspapers, those who operate on Twitter and Facebook do not fall into the same category.

Having shed light on the state of press freedom under SCAF, this paper will then question what the press can expect of their freedom in the future, both under SCAF, which we can assume will maintain a role in Egyptian politics, and a potential Islamist dominated government. Beyond that of politics, the future of the media within their own realm, their professionalism and the future of the Ministry of Information will be put under the microscope.

In order to compare the state of press freedom between Mubarak and SCAF, it is necessary to understand the history of press freedom in Egypt.

III. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND: PRESS FREEDOM IN THE AGE OF MUBARAK

Censorship and government restrictions imposed on Egypt's media scene are nothing new. Government control over the press dates back to 1952, when Gamal Abdel Nasser and a group of Egyptian officers, the Free Officers, took control of the government and established a fully independent state. For better or worse, changes occurred in every public and private space, the media not excluded. As Sahar Khamis explains, "In this new era, all media fell under strict governmental supervision, control and ownership. Newspapers of the pre-1952 era started to disappear, as many were closed by the government, heavy financial fines were imposed on them, and many journalists were jailed."²

Under Nasser, the plural press of Egypt's past faded as government control extended its reach over all sectors of society. Government control over the media did more than curtail certain freedoms, it guided journalists in radio, television, and print media on what should be written about and how. According to William Rugh, "President Nasser used both to evoke enthusiasm for the social, political, and economic changes he was promoting and contempt for the domestic and foreign enemies he was fighting. Regular listeners understood quite clearly from news and commentaries, and from features, drama, and music programs what direction his policy was taking and who his friends and enemies were."³ Nasser saw the media as a tool through which he could bolster public support for Egypt and its nationalist policies. He used his friends in the media, such as *Al-Ahram's* editor-in-chief Muhammad Hassanian Haykal among others, to spread his influence over the media world.

² Khamis, Sahar. "The Transformative Egyptian Media Landscape: Changes, Challenges and Comparative Perspectives." *International Journal of Communication*. Web. 2011: vol. 5. Pg. 160. <<http://ijoc.org/ojs/index.php/ijoc/article/view/813/592>>.

³ Rugh, William A. *Arab Mass Media: Newspapers, Radio, and Television in Arab Politics*. London: Praeger, 2004. 188-189. Print.

When Anwar Sadat became president following Nasser's death, changes in press freedom and liberalization took place in accordance with Sadat's experimentation with democracy. With Sadat's opening up of Egypt's political system to include opposition parties, the press enjoyed some liberalizing effects following the removal of the restrictive policies of Nasser, allowing opposition parties to establish newspapers of their own. Nevertheless, Sadat also took part in Nasser's method of using the press as a tool to promote state policies and did not object to repression. Towards the end of his presidency, in October 1981 Sadat arrested an estimated 3,000 "dissident journalists" and opposition leaders.⁴

Although the freedom of the press experienced some improvement under Sadat, the media was still subject to state policies which allowed Sadat to influence and manipulate information. Similar to his predecessor and his successor, Hosni Mubarak, Sadat continued to censor the press on certain topics, particularly anything written about him, his family, or the armed forces.⁵ As Munir K. Nasser writes, "Both [Nasser and Sadat] left their imprint on the media which reflected their highly personal style...Both have played a significant role in influencing the structure and content of the Egyptian press and broadcasting."⁶

Following Sadat's assassination, Mubarak assumed the role of president and would remain head of state for 30 years, until his resignation on February 11, 2011. Mubarak's relationship with the press was similar to his predecessors' and he continued to censor the media regarding his presidency and the armed forces. Although privatization of the press increased under Mubarak and opposition parties were still allowed to publish their own papers, censorship

⁴ Nasser, Munir K. "Egyptian mass media under Nasser and Sadat: two models of press management and control." *Journalism Monographs*. Print. 1990: no. 124. Pg. 2.

⁵ Cook, Steven A. *The Struggle for Egypt*. New York : Oxford University Press, 2011. 139. Print.

⁶ Nasser, Munir K. "Egyptian mass media under Nasser and Sadat: two models of press management and control." *Journalism Monographs*. Print. 1990: no. 124. Pg. 2.

remained on the agenda and institutions, such as the Ministry of Information and state-run media, maintained their monopoly on information and access to the public.

One noted change during the Mubarak era was the proliferation of satellite television; however, television remained under a 1975 law on broadcast censorship, banning anything conflicting with Egypt's religion, national security, or government positions on certain issues.⁷ State television, as well as the private television stations that emerged during Mubarak's presidency, were still subject to this system of on-air censorship. As Rugh explains, "Egyptian radio and television almost never criticize government policies or reports on human rights abuses, and political parties do not have access to them even during election campaigns."⁸

As private television stations emerged under Mubarak, private publishing licenses were also granted to newspapers, such as *Al-Masry Al-Youm* in 2004, Egypt's first independent daily newspaper in 50 years.⁹ Despite the creation of private media, the law of shame and emergency law remained in place and allowed Mubarak's government to continue its policies on censorship and media surveillance. "On occasion," writes Mohamad Hamas Elmasry, "Mubarak used the emergency law as grounds to ban publications, arrest opponents without charges or trial and torture suspects."¹⁰ According to Naomi Sakr, "the Press law of 1996 offered explicit justification for the Mubarak government to imprison and fine journalists for relaying 'false news.'"¹¹ Mubarak did not shy away from using the law to influence the press or curb their ability to write and publish freely; however, at the same time, decisions like the press law of

⁷ Rugh, William A. *Arab Mass Media: Newspapers, Radio, and Television in Arab Politics*. London: Praeger, 2004. 206. Print.

⁸ *Ibid* pg. 242.

⁹ Elmasry, Mohamad Hamas. "Producing News in Mubarak's Egypt: An analysis of Egyptian newspaper production during the late Hosni Mubarak era." *Journal of Arab & Muslim Media Research*. Print. 2012: vol. 4. Pg. 123.

¹⁰ *Ibid*.

¹¹ *Ibid*.

1996 were rescinded upon with new laws that, on the face of it, were intended to bolster the freedom of the press.

For instance, in 2004, Mubarak “announced that journalists would no longer face the risk of imprisonment for publishing criticism of officials or other citizens, spurring speculation of further liberalization.”¹² Yet, despite Mubarak’s promise in 2004, journalists and bloggers continued to face threats from the government. For example, Ibrahim Eissa, widely known as a staunch critic of the Mubarak regime, was fired as editor-in-chief of *Al-Dostour* newspaper in the run up to the 2010 parliamentary elections, allegedly for attempting to run an article by opposition figure Mohamed ElBaradei.¹³ Eissa’s case serves as one example among many.

Unlike Nasser and Sadat, Mubarak faced different challenges in the media, particularly the evolution of the internet and technological advancements which opened up new channels through which information could spread. To counter this, the Egyptian government maintained a close eye on the internet and its voices, leading to intimidation tactics and arrests of certain bloggers and online activists. For example, Steven A. Cook writes that, in 2006 “one hundred bloggers and internet activists, including award-winning blogger Ahmad Said al Islam and the well-known Alaa Abd el Fatah, were arrested. The situation was so bad that year that the Paris-based *Reporters without Borders* added Egypt to its list of “Internet Enemies.”¹⁴

Regardless of Mubarak’s attempts to censor and inflict harm upon the voices of protest throughout the publishing world and on the internet, the pressure for change emanating from across Egypt in the wake of the Tunisian Revolution of 2011 pushed Egypt into a new era. This new era contains much hope; however, the progress of such hope has yet to be realized. In the

¹² “Pressure for Rights” *Middle East & Africa Monitor*. Print. 2004: Vol. 14. Pg. 1.

¹³ “Dissident al-Dustour editor sacked ahead of Egypt poll.” *BBC*. 5 Oct. 2010. Web. <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-11478791>>.

¹⁴ Cook, Steven A. *The Struggle for Egypt*. New York : Oxford University Press, 2011. 195. Print.

media, there is the hope that a greater freedom to publish and produce accurate information will emerge out of a new Egypt no longer conquered by the apparatuses of past regimes. While Mubarak made his departure from Egypt's political scene on the façade, the skeleton of repression remains. And with it, the press in Egypt is threatened by an old leader wearing a new uniform: the military.

IV. SCAF'S TUMULTUOUS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PRESS

When the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) assumed power in February 2011, the Egyptians believed that SCAF would remain loyal to the people's interests. At the beginning, SCAF seemed to demonstrate a departure from the policies of Hosni Mubarak. As 2011 progressed, events took place that made SCAF fall in line with the same system of repression implemented by past regimes. From October 9, when SCAF violently broke apart a predominantly Coptic protest in front of Maspero, Egypt's state television and radio complex, to the crackdown on journalists that took place in November and December, the relationship between SCAF and the media grew tense. The interrogation, subsequent beating, and false imprisonment of journalists who disparage SCAF in the press exemplifies a continuation, and in some cases, a radical expansion of National Democratic Party policies regarding subversive political commentary in the media. Actions taken by SCAF against the media in an ongoing effort to protect the image of the military would extend beyond curtailing freedom of the press and into freedom of expression; for example, by targeting non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in late December 2011. The following section provides some examples of the main events of late 2011, which highlight how SCAF resembles Mubarak and his predecessors in dealing with the media.

FIRST: CHAOS AT MASPERO

On October 9, 2011, what initially began as a peaceful protest led by a group of Egypt's Coptic Christians turned into an all-out battle along the outer walls of Maspero, a building located in downtown Cairo that hosts the Egyptian Radio and Television Union, but known to many as Egypt's home to state-run television. The details surrounding the Maspero incident remain unclear as does the exact cause of the violence between protesters and the armed forces. The march, which began in Cairo's Shubra district, headed for the Maspero building and was met with a large mass of Central Security Forces (CSF) and armed soldiers. As evening fell, tension erupted between the protesters and soldiers, with varying accounts of rock throwing, live ammunition, and beatings, some of which are verified through video.¹⁵ One widely circulated video includes what appears to be an army tank driving into a mass of protesters along the Corniche.¹⁶ The night's chaos resulted in a total of 24 confirmed deaths and over 200 injuries, culminating one of the worst incidents of violence following Mubarak's resignation in February.¹⁷ That night at Maspero turned a page for the media's role in the revolution, as reports broadcast on state television were criticized for aligning with SCAF's narrative of the story.

Following the outbreak of violence, state television claimed that protesters were armed and later reported that soldiers were among the "martyrs" killed in the clashes, a report that was

¹⁵ Gaber, Yassin. "Reconstructing Maspero's Bloody Sunday: An Ahram Online investigation." *Ahram Online*. 1 Nov. 2011. Web. <<http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/25521/Egypt/Politics-/Reconstructing-Masperos-Bloody-Sunday-Ahram-Online.aspx>>.

¹⁶ لماذا هوجم الجندي كما ادعى المجلس؟ [Video]. 16 Oct. 2011.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s_WnX3MBVPg&feature=player_embedded>.

¹⁷ "Cairo clashes leave 24 dead after Coptic church protest." *BBC*. 9 Oct. 2011. Web. <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-15235212>>.

later retracted.¹⁸ Anchors on state television took an active role that evening, calling on Egyptians to defend the army, hailed as the protectors of the revolution, against what they labeled as "angry Christian protesters."¹⁹ One anchor, Rasha Magdy, specifically targeted Coptic Christians for causing the violence and attacking soldiers.²⁰

On the night of the protest, the military cut off live feeds for several television stations, including *25TV*, *al-Hurra*, and at one point *Al Jazeera*, all of which broadcasted accounts contradicting reports on state television.²¹

In the fallout over the chaos at Maspero, award winning blogger Alaa Abd el-Fattah was arrested and charged with inciting violence and stealing a military weapon.²² Fattah's arrest led to several months of imprisonment and harsh criticism against SCAF for targeting the blogger, who has been critical of the army in the past and was active during the revolution. Although state television as well as other state-sponsored news mediums put their support behind the revolution following Mubarak's resignation, the events at Maspero uncovered that Egypt's old system of governing the press still exists. State-owned media may no longer follow Mubarak's narrative, but October 9 made it clear that the government's narrative is still being followed as reports constantly took the side of SCAF. The night of violence at Maspero is a major indicator that little has changed regarding press freedom in a post-Mubarak Egypt.

¹⁸ Ammar, Manar. "Egypt state television admits to making up news over soldiers' death." *Bikya Masr*. 10 Oct. 2011. Web. <<http://bikyamasr.com/45280/egypt-state-television-admits-to-making-up-news-over-soldiers-deaths/>>.

¹⁹ El Gundi, Zeinab. "Outrage over state TV's misinformation and anti-Coptic incitement." *Ahram Online*. 10 Oct. 2011. Web. <<http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/23813/Egypt/Politics-/Outrage-over-state-TVs-misinformation-and-antiCopt.aspx>>.

²⁰ El-Husseiny, Momen. "The 'Maspero Crime': Accounts Against the Counter-Revolution's Power, Media, and Religion." *Jadaliyya*. 31 Oct. 2011. Web. <http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/3022/the-maspero-crime_accounts-against-the-counter-rev>.

²¹ El Amrani, Issandr. "Maspero and sectarianism in Egypt." *The Arabist*. 10 Oct. 2011. Web. <<http://www.arabist.net/blog/2011/10/10/maspero-and-sectarianism-in-egypt.html>>.

²² "Egypt: Free Blogger Held in Maspero Case." *Human Rights Watch*. 15 Nov. 2011. Web. <<http://www.hrw.org/news/2011/11/15/egypt-free-blogger-held-maspero-case>>.

SECOND: CRACKDOWNS IN NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER

After Maspero, SCAF began committing a series of repressive actions against journalists in November and December 2011, which mimicked the authoritarian ways of Mubarak. Gamal Eid, Director of the *Arabic Network for Human Rights Information* (ANHRI) claims that SCAF utilizes new tools to enforce censorship of the media.²³ The actions taken by these instruments of repression facilitate SCAF's clampdown on free and fair press coverage of the ongoing revolution.

State media's less than accurate reporting of SCAF continues to pose a problem, and did so during the crackdown on protesters and journalists during demonstrations surrounding parliamentary elections. Violent clashes between protesters and security forces took place throughout the end of November 2011 in and around Tahrir Square.²⁴ State media provided adulterated coverage, which placed responsibility for the incident on the protesters. Only a month after the incident at Maspero, state media's coverage of the protests surrounding parliamentary elections demonstrated the same type of image preservation utilized by SCAF. Private media exposed how SCAF came out in droves and fired on protesters from armored vehicles, while state media omitted such details.²⁵ Nader Gohar, chairman of Cairo News Company (CNC), reiterates the assertion of state media's protection of SCAF by explaining how state media continues its role as the mouthpiece for the regime; however, it now works for SCAF.²⁶

²³ Eid, Gamal. Personal interview. 10 Jan. 2012.

²⁴ Shenker, Jack. "Egypt: Violent Clashes in Cairo Leave Two Dead and Hundreds Injured." *The Guardian*. 19 Nov. 2011. Web. <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/nov/19/egypt-violent-clashes-cairo-injured>>.

²⁵ "Kazeboon - كاذبون - Revolution Records [video]. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4h0KPtC-Dqc&oref=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.youtube.com%2Fresults%3Fsearch_query%3Dkazeboon%26oq%3Dkazeboon%26aq%3Df%26aqi%3Dg2g-m2%26aql%3D%26gs_nf%3D1%26gs_l%3Dyoutube-psuggest.3..0l2j0i5l2.5286.7748.0.8002.10.10.1.0.0.0.39.276.9.9.0.&has_verified=1>.

²⁶ Gohar, Nader. Personal interview. 8 Jan. 2012.

As December began, some protesters continued to display their disapproval of SCAF and the deficiency of state media coverage regarding the violent actions of SCAF. Some journalists in the media persisted in covering protests, but a SCAF campaign of intimidating these journalists started to materialize. During a sit-in at the Egyptian Cabinet, which took place on December 16, 2011, videos surfaced of security forces using live ammunition and throwing rocks, plates, and other objects onto protests from the roof of the Cabinet building.²⁷ Once again, state media reported no such thing, but instead, accused demonstrators outside the Cabinet building of instigating the violence by harassing police officers.²⁸ Other attacks on journalists occurred on the same day, including the editor of *El-Badil* newspaper. The angle of videos produced by state media does not incriminate the military, thus vindicating security forces of perpetuating any violence.²⁹ December 16 further revealed SCAF's exploitation of the media in portraying the military as a force restoring order and stability to an atmosphere rife with chaos. The days that followed demonstrated to members of the press that SCAF possesses no limit in its attempts to intimidate and strike fear into the journalist community.

A SCAF enforced media blackout on December 17, 2011 created yet another challenge to the press freedom for journalists in Egypt. Military forces invaded Tahrir Square and surrounding areas in an effort to silence protesters. The military confiscated and destroyed camera equipment to avoid filming of their security operation, which could produce negative publicity. After videos surfaced of the military attacking protesters at the Cabinet building,

²⁷ Iskandar, Adel. "A Year in the Life of Egypt's Media." *Jadaliyya*. 26 Jan. 2012. Web. <http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/3642/a-year-in-the-life-of-egypts-media_a-2011-timeline>.

²⁸ "Egyptian Security Forces did not Break-Up Sit-in." *Egypt News*. 17 Dec. 2011. Web. <<http://www.egynews.net/wps/portal/news?params=151870>>.

²⁹ Iskandar, Adel. Personal interview. 13 Feb. 2012.

SCAF could not afford any further damages to its image.³⁰ According to Gohar, plain clothes soldiers looking for camera equipment entered the CNC office. He explains that the soldiers changed their clothing in an effort to avoid recognition; however, Gohar expresses his ability to distinguish the men as soldiers by the heavy boots they wore. The soldiers came into the office and took all of the broadcasting and filming equipment, which CNC had directed toward Tahrir Square, and proceeded to throw all of it out of the window.³¹ No one received physical harm during this incident; however, SCAF's actions reiterate their intention to use fear as a tool toward journalists in order to limit the transparency of their actions to the Egyptian public.

On that same day, another journalist felt the pressure of SCAF's crackdown on press freedom. Joseph Mayton, editor-in-chief of *BikyaMasr*, encountered a civilian outside the Cabinet building, who questioned his reasons for taking photos of protesters and security forces. Speaking in English, the civilian began explaining that the protesters create problems for Egypt. After the exchange, a man claiming to be a journalist demands to see Mayton's passport. Soon after, a military officer places Mayton in a headlock, punches him in the back and drags him into a backroom of the Cabinet building, where Mayton describes seeing other people on the ground "bloodied."³² The officers interrogate Mayton, beat him, confiscate his camera, and attempt to format his computer. A senior military officer tells Mayton, "If I ever see you again, I'll slit your throat...leave." Upon leaving Mayton meets other security officers near the exit, who inform him that he must return for further questioning. The security officers finally allow him to leave after holding him for a total of 13.5 hours.³³ During his captivity, Mayton pled for his release to

³⁰ Iskandar, Adel. "A Year in the Life of Egypt's Media." *Jadaliyya*. 26 Jan. 2012. Web. <http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/3642/a-year-in-the-life-of-egypts-media_a-2011-timeline>.

³¹ Gohar, Nadar. Personal interview. 8 Jan. 2012.

³² Mayton, Joseph. Personal interview. 5 Jan. 2012.

³³ Ibid.

members of the U.S. Embassy to no avail. His eventual release came through the help of a family friend.³⁴

Mayton was one of three Americans arrested during a four day period, none of which received coverage in the mainstream media.³⁵ Through Mayton's story, SCAF conveys its capability in suppressing journalists, who wish to describe the oppression committed by the military regime. Merette Ibrahim, a correspondent for *Al-Youm Al-Sabe'*, believes that freedom of speech does not exist under SCAF, expressing, "During Mubarak and now, [we] cannot write anything about the army."³⁶ The story of the CNC filming equipment thrown out of a window by security forces and Mayton's detention and subsequent beating illustrates the reality of Ibrahim's sentiment. SCAF continues to utilize similar methods of suppressing the media in an effort to silence any criticism of their policies.

THIRD: TARGETING NGOS

In late December, SCAF illustrated its willingness to not only suppress journalists, but anyone who criticizes its form of governance. On December 29, 2011, SCAF raided six offices of NGOs, primarily focused on the advancement of democratic values and human rights.³⁷ *Al-Ahram*, an Egyptian state-owned newspaper instigated this raid by releasing a report listing NGOs in Cairo which receive foreign funding.³⁸ Once again, SCAF utilized state media to justify its actions by stating the military's commitment to preventing foreign involvement in the affairs of the Egyptian government. The forced entry and confiscation of computers and documents

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Mayton, Joseph. Personal interview. 5 Jan. 2012.

³⁶ Ibrahim, Merette. Personal interview. 12 Jan. 2012.

³⁷ Carr, Sarah. "Crackdown in Cairo." *Foreign Policy*. 29 Dec. 2011. Web. <http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2011/12/29/crackdown_in_cairo?page=0,1>.

³⁸ Ibid.

served SCAF's purpose of intimidating groups in Egypt, regardless of their status as journalists or activists for democratic change. Anyone who poses a threat to the authority of SCAF will find themselves suppressed by the military command, in a manner similar to that of the Mubarak regime.

V. PRESS FREEDOM'S UNCHANGING PATH

With repeated acts of violence against journalists and the monitoring of material being published and broadcast, the freedom of the press has not improved under the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces. In many ways, it appears as though SCAF is utilizing the same tactics as Hosni Mubarak in order to control the flow of information and filter material they observe as potentially damaging. In 2010, *Reporters Without Borders'* Press Freedom Index ranked Egypt at 127, nestled beneath Bangladesh and above Cambodia.³⁹ In the 2011-2012 report, Egypt's ranking plummeted to slot 166, below Laos and above Cuba.⁴⁰ According to RWB, Egypt's depreciation in the ranking is "because the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces, in power since February, dashed the hopes of democrats by continuing the Mubarak dictatorship's practices."⁴¹

Under Mubarak, there was a red line drawn around him and his policies that could not be crossed. However, now that red line has been redrawn around SCAF. While the military was always a taboo subject matter for journalists, it has become even more so now as they've stepped up on the chain of command within the Egyptian government. Egypt's newspapers and television shows may have the ability to report on protests, the political scene, and the government in ways

³⁹ "Press Freedom Index 2010." *Reporters Without Borders*. Web. < <http://en.rsf.org/press-freedom-index-2010,1034.html>>.

⁴⁰ "Press Freedom Index 2011-2012." *Reporters Without Borders*. Web. < <http://en.rsf.org/press-freedom-index-2011-2012,1043.html>>.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

they were not allowed to before; however, as journalists are continually arrested and barriers are set in place, this negates any positive change that has occurred. The following section will outline how press freedom is viewed through Egyptian law and the increasingly bureaucratic process of obtaining a license for newspapers and television stations. In addition, the different levels of censorship implemented by SCAF will be outlined as well as state media's return to advocating the government's narrative, despite a period of independence following Mubarak's resignation. Finally, the different ways in which Arabic language and foreign language press is censored will also be examined.

LAW: DRAWING THE LINE BETWEEN FREEDOM AND FELONY

Where freedom has been curtailed or arrests justified, the law is never far behind.

Egyptian law intertwines itself with the press, often binding the hands of journalists and reporters and their ability to publish freely. From the Penal Code to the Emergency Law, the rules of the game may guarantee freedom, but those freedoms have guidelines.

The Egyptian Constitution prior to the revolution and the provisional constitution of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces both promote the concept of freedom of expression and freedom of the press. Article 48 states, "Freedom of the press, printing, publication and mass media shall be guaranteed. Censorship on newspapers is forbidden as well as notifying, suspending or cancelling them by administrative methods."⁴² While this may underline forbearance of government restriction and intervention in matters of the press, Article 48 further states, "In a state of emergency or in time of war a limited censorship may be imposed on the newspapers, publications and mass media in matters related to public safety or purposes of

⁴² Egyptian Constitution, Article 48.

national security in accordance with the law.”⁴³ Since Egypt has been under a constant state of Emergency Law following the assassination of Anwar Sadat, which includes the entire duration of Hosni Mubarak’s presidency, the “state of emergency” has prevailed in giving the government the capability to censor the press or label certain subjects taboo for discussion. Egypt’s Emergency Law, Law No. 162, gives the government the right to arrest and detain individuals without charge and put them on trial in special security courts.⁴⁴

Moving beyond the constitution, Egypt’s Penal Code also restricts journalists in terms of discussing or writing about sensitive matters. Article 308 of the Penal Code entails a prison sentence of at least six months for journalists who attack “the dignity and honor of individuals, or an outrage of the reputation of families,” and Article 179 states that “whoever affronts the president of the republic” is liable for detention.⁴⁵ In addition, Article 102 states that, “whoever deliberately diffuses news, information/data, or false or tendentious rumors, or propagates exciting publicity, if this is liable to disturb public security, spread horror among the people, or cause harm or damage to the public interest,” they are liable to be arrested.⁴⁶ Besides the laws enacted within the constitution and Penal Code, the media is also placed under restrictions by the Ministry of Information and the Supreme Council of the Press, a government-controlled body.⁴⁷

In a 2008 report on press freedom, Amira Abdel Fatah, wife of notorious Egyptian journalist Ibrahim Eissa, writes, “It is assumed that...legislation protects the principle of freedom, but does not turn this principle into practice.”⁴⁸ Abdel Fatah’s point is illustrated through the

⁴³ Egyptian Constitution, Article 48.

⁴⁴ “UPR Submission: Egypt September 2009.” *Human Rights Watch*. 16 Feb. 2010. Web. <<http://www.hrw.org/news/2010/02/16/upr-submission-egypt-september-2009>>.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ “Egypt Code: Supreme Council of the Press Code of Ethics.” *Reynolds Journalism Institute*. Web. <<http://www.rjionline.org/MAS-Codes-Egypt-Ethics>>.

⁴⁸ “حرية الصحافة في مصر.” *Arabic Network for Human Rights Information*. Jun. 2008. Web. <<http://anhri.net/reports/pressfreedom/06.shtml>>.

implementation of Egypt's Penal Code on journalists throughout the years. One notable case in 2006 resulted in the sentencing of Ibrahim Eissa, former editor of *al-Dostour*, and Sahar Zaki, another journalist for the paper to one year in prison for "insulting the president" and spreading false information.⁴⁹ This is one of numerous examples where Egyptian law targets journalists for reporting on information that deals with what the government deems sensitive material. Prior to the 2011 uprising, sensitive material was perceived as anything critical of the president and his policies.

Since the revolution, the red line between what is taboo and what is considered permissible has not shifted, but it has been redrawn both by the military and in relation to the military. The military has always been a taboo subject to write about; however, since SCAF has taken the role of leadership, the red line between them and the media has been put in bold. According to journalist Ashraf Khalil, "It was always a red line, the line about the military," and that red line has always existed especially in regards to the military's economic investments which journalists are not allowed to write about and where information remains ambiguous.⁵⁰ Although the provisional constitution employed by the military in March 2011 included an article in support of press freedom, that freedom appears to stop short when it comes to issues pertaining to the military.

Because Egypt's Emergency Law remains in place, although its removal was one of the primary demands of protests during and after the revolution and SCAF has promised its expiration upon the election of a new president, journalists and others are subject to military

⁴⁹ "Egypt: Journalists Still Risk Jail Under Press Law." *Human Rights Watch*. 11 Jul. 2006. Web. <<http://www.hrw.org/news/2006/07/10/egypt-journalists-still-risk-jail-under-press-law>>.

⁵⁰ Khalil, Ashraf. Personal interview. 31 Jan. 2012.

trials if deemed a risk to public security.⁵¹ Thousands of citizens have been put on trial in military courts, which are considered harsher and offer less protection than civilian courtrooms. Furthermore, a multitude of journalists and bloggers have been summoned to the military prosecutor for statements or publications on the military. For instance, Egyptian journalist and activist Hossam El-Hamalawy was summoned for accusing the military of attacking protesters during the height of the Egyptian revolution. The comments were made on the television show of Reem Maged, who was also summoned by the prosecutor.⁵² Other cases of journalists and bloggers put on military trial include Maikel Nabil, who was sentenced to three years for “insulting the military establishment,” and the high profile case of blogger Alaa Abd El Fattah, who was detained for nearly three months in late 2011 for allegedly inciting violence on October 9 at Maspero.⁵³ Abd El Fattah was released on December 25, 2011 and is barred from travelling as his case remains under investigation.⁵⁴

Egyptian journalist Yasser alZayat states that putting journalists on trial is being used as a type of intellectual terrorism. “We have our laws and we have too [many] restrictions in these laws.”⁵⁵ It is unclear how far military trials and laws curbing press freedom will extend past SCAF’s expiration date as the head of Egypt; however, it appears unlikely that any changes within the law will take place, unless the parliament puts them into effect, or at least backs them.

⁵¹ In January 2012, the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces partially lifted the Emergency Law; however, the law generally remains in place in order to target cases of “thuggery” and there is much ambiguity over which part of the law remains intact.

⁵² “Details of Military Prosecutor’s Summoning of Egyptian Activist and Journalist Hossam El-Hamalawy.” *Jadaliyya*. 01 Jun. 2011. Web. <<http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/1734/details-of-military-prosecutors-summoning-of-egypt>>.

⁵³ “Egypt: End Military Trials for Civilians.” *No Military Trials for Civilians*. 25 Oct. 2011. Web. <<http://en.nomiltrials.com/2011/10/egypt-end-military-trials-for-civilians.html>>.

⁵⁴ “Judge Releases Arrested Blogger Alaa Abd El Fattah.” *Egypt Independent*. 25 Dec. 2011. Web. <<http://www.egyptindependent.com/news/judge-releases-arrested-blogger-alaa-abd-el-fattah>>.

⁵⁵ alZayat, Yaser. Personal interview. 11 Jan. 2012.

RED TAPE OVER MEDIA LICENSING

In post-Mubarak Egypt, independent media outlets continue to struggle with SCAF in obtaining broadcasting and printing licenses. News outlets like the Cairo News Company (CNC) and the Cairo Bureau of *Al Jazeera* broadcast illegally because of the Egyptian Government's reluctance to grant licenses. In print, the English edition of *Al-Masry Al-Youm*, the *Egypt Independent*, has yet to obtain a license to print newspapers in Egypt, but it may seek a foreign license and print copies of its newspaper in Cyprus.⁵⁶ These examples illustrate one of the major difficulties independent journalists operating in Egypt must contend with in order to disseminate information regarding political developments. For viable change and reform to take hold in the media, the Egyptian Government must ease the limitations for obtaining a broadcast or print license. The continued restrictions placed on independent media outlets makes it a certainty that the perspectives of the government fill the airwaves and newspapers of Egypt in state-run media, leaving little room for objective, unbiased reporting.

Independent media outlets in Egypt must pass through a series of bureaucratic hurdles when acquiring a press license to broadcast or print. This problem stems from the passage of provisions in the Emergency Law, which makes it permissible for the Egyptian Government to censor the media through a capricious method, that serves the interests of the regime, not the people. Thus, the Emergency Law makes it legal for the regime to suspend aspects of the constitution that guarantee freedom of expression and freedom of the press.⁵⁷

Before privately owned media outlets in Egypt can go to the Ministry of Information and seek a license, the applicant must receive clearance from all Egyptian intelligence and security

⁵⁶ Topol, Sarah. "The Assault on Egypt's Free Press." *International Herald Tribune*. 15 Feb. 2012. Web. <<http://latitude.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/02/15/the-assault-on-egypts-free-press/#>>.

⁵⁷ Rugh, William A. *Arab Mass Media: Newspapers, Radio, and Television in Arab Politics*. London: Praeger, 2004. 124. Print.

agencies.⁵⁸ According to Article 211 of the Egyptian Constitution, the Supreme Press Council must govern all matters relating to the press.⁵⁹ Unfortunate for the independent media, the Egyptian President heads this council, which grants licenses to newspapers. The Egyptian Radio and Television Union (ERTU), which acts as an extension of the Ministry of Information, handles the licensing of all radio and television broadcast outlets.⁶⁰ Some newspapers that cannot obtain a print license from the Supreme Press Council choose to print their papers in other countries; however, such newspapers can still find themselves censored by the Foreign Publications Censor in the Ministry of Information.⁶¹ With government institutions controlling the licensing of independent media in Egypt, journalists must remain wary of any criticism against the president because revocation of a license will occur if the outlet broadcasts or prints any negative depiction of the government. A government monitoring system embodied by the strenuous licensing process in Egypt does not produce an environment conducive to press freedom and objective reporting. Under these regulations, state owned media can circulate the opinions and propaganda of the government, without any regard for the truth.

According to Nader Gohar, chairman of CNC, the Egyptian intelligence services handles media licensing.⁶² This process can take a long time, sometimes lasting for over 20 days. The intelligence services also provides a specific allotment of licensing for independent media outlets

⁵⁸ Amin, Hussein. "Report on the State of Media in Egypt." *The Arab Center for the Development of the Rule of Law and Integrity*. Web. Pg. 16.

<http://www.arabruloflaw.org/Files/PDF/Media/English/P2/Egypt_MediaReportP2_En.pdf>.

⁵⁹ Ibid, 15.

⁶⁰ Ibid, 16.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Due to past incidents of disciplinary action against the CNC for operating without a broadcasting license, they must now pay fines to Egypt TV, a state-run media outlet. This decision came from the Egyptian intelligence services and is enforced by the Ministry of Information.⁶² Furthermore, Egypt TV, under the auspices of the Ministry of Information, can implement additional punitive measures for CNC's continued broadcasting without a license.

in Egypt, making it possible for competing independent media outlets to enjoy a monopoly on broadcasting or printing certain types of programming.⁶³

Al Jazeera faces problems of its own when it comes to obtaining licenses for broadcasting because it faced disciplinary measures from SCAF for broadcasting images arbitrarily declared “sensitive” and seditious to the state. On September 11, 2011, Egyptian security officers, dressed in street clothes raided the Cairo office of *Al Jazeera Mubasher*.⁶⁴ The raid came after a warning from the Egyptian Minister of Information, Osama Heikel, who stated that the government would take action against channels that threaten the “security and stability” of the state.⁶⁵ Further action occurred after this incident, when the government decided to suspend the issuance of new licenses. Subsequent closure of the Cairo office of the *Al Jazeera* affiliate highlights another challenge faced by media outlets not associated with the state. Government raids against private media corporations, whether Egyptian or regional, demonstrate the extreme measures the government continues to take in order to silence any criticism against their policies.

As the inability to obtain broadcasting and print licenses from the Egyptian Government perpetuates, the quality of journalism conducted by local independent media outlets and Arab media outlets such as *Al Jazeera* will wane. Increased fines, potential arrest, and imprisonment will force the independent media to censor themselves, and not broadcast or publish anything considered critical of the government while under the stewardship of SCAF. Active members of the media believe that the most important action that could resolve issues with licensing and the censorship of the press would involve the establishment of a codified set of laws that regulate the

⁶³ Gohar, Nader. Personal interview. 8 Jan. 2012.

⁶⁴ Afify, Heba and David Kirkpatrick. “Raid on Egyptian Al Jazeera Affiliate Seen as Part of a Broader Crackdown.” *New York Times*. 11 Sept. 2011. Web. <<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/09/12/world/middleeast/12egypt.html>>.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

media.⁶⁶ Under Mubarak and SCAF, the government acts arbitrarily against members of the independent media, using the Emergency Law as justification for legal action taken against journalists. A set of established laws would prevent actions of this sort from occurring in the future. Without a codified set of regulations governing the behavior of the media and the government instruments that supervise media action, the sense of fear that currently exists in the media will remain, preventing the Egyptian people from receiving objective accounts of political developments.

CENSORSHIP & SELF-CENSORSHIP

When it comes to press freedom, one of the most threatening tactics employed by the Egyptian government is censorship; however, it is also one of the most difficult to gauge given the written and unwritten rules of what topics are forbidden for discussion within the media. From Nasser to Mubarak, there was always a degree of censorship being used within the media and all of its mediums. Clearly, censorship occurs on a daily basis within state media, as reporters and anchors are told what they are allowed to discuss and what they cannot by editors and directors hand-picked by the government; however, the independent media, both national and international, experience censorship in many different forms.

A level of censorship already exists within the information disseminated to the public through the government and its various agencies. “The government from time to time passed guidance on content to the print media, directly or indirectly,” writes William Rugh, citing Egypt’s government news agency, Middle East News Agency (MENA).⁶⁷ MENA is both affiliated with the Ministry of Information and considered a national news agency under

⁶⁶ alZayat, Yaser. Personal interview. 11 Jan. 2012.

⁶⁷ Rugh, William A. *Arab Mass Media: Newspapers, Radio, and Television in Arab Politics*. London: Praeger, 2004. 128. Print.

supervision of the Shura Council.⁶⁸ Various channels for news, within both state and independent media, will often quote the state-owned MENA for official information from the government. However, that information is produced by the government and its facts and reliability are questionable because the agency is restricted in the details and accuracy they can produce.

Aside from relegating certain subjects as taboo and accepting the government's curtailed narrative of events, there is also the general censoring of reported and published information and viewpoints within the media. At the height of this past summer's media clampdown initiated by SCAF that saw raids on the offices of *Al Jazeera Mubasher* and a halt in the issuing of new licenses, authorities seized the September 25, 2011 edition of *Sawt Al-Ummah*. Initially, no reason was given for the confiscation of the newspaper; however, its editor-in-chief Abdel Halim Qandil claims that the issue in question targeted General Murad Muwafi, the head of Egyptian intelligence.⁶⁹ In October 2011, prominent Egyptian television host Yosri Fouda suspended his program on the privately owned ONTV in protest over the government's censorship of the media.⁷⁰ Fouda released a statement stating, "this is my way of self-censorship, either to say the truth or to be silent."⁷¹ In response to Fouda, SCAF General Ismael Etman made a phone call to a different ONTV program, denying that the military was infiltrating the media and causing censorship.⁷² Despite the military's claim that they have not cracked down on the media during the past year, journalists contest that evidence suggests otherwise.

⁶⁸ "Middle East News Agency." *MENA*. Web. <<http://www.mena.org.eg/index.aspx?uc=UI/Visitors/About>>.

⁶⁹ "Egypt: Sharp decline in freedom of opinion and expression." *Arabic Network for Human Rights Information*. 26 Sept. 2011. Web. <<http://www.anhri.net/en/?p=3951>>.

⁷⁰ "Egypt: TV host suspends program in protest." *Associated Press*. 21 Oct. 2011. Web. <<http://news.yahoo.com/egypt-tv-host-suspends-program-protest-152636181.html>>.

⁷¹ *Ibid*.

⁷² "Egypt Military Council member denies media censorship, urges TV presenter Fouda to resume show." *Ahram Online*. 24 Oct. 2011. Web. <<http://english.ahram.org.eg/News/24949.aspx>>.

Comparing SCAF to Mubarak, Egyptian journalist Yaser alZayat says that, “[Under] Mubarak, I didn’t feel afraid,” however, under SCAF, “they don’t understand the concept of opinions.”⁷³ According to alZayat and other journalists, although there was a sense of liberation following the revolution and freedom was ripe in the air, as the months progressed and events, such as Maspero, unfolded, they have become increasingly concerned over the status of press freedom in post-Mubarak Egypt.

Freelance French journalist Nina Hubinet states that, “After the revolution, actually, in a way it’s more difficult,” and that “the big taboo is [now] the military.” While as a foreign journalist Hubinet is given greater liberty than Egyptian journalists to report on certain stories, she continues to feel pressure while reporting in a new Egypt under the direction of SCAF. Several weeks after publishing a piece regarding the military’s financial ties in a foreign-based publication, one journalist stated that they received a phone call by someone from the Ministry of Information, inquiring about the article’s content. More specifically, the Ministry of Information seemed wary about the article’s intention and motive.⁷⁴

In August 2011, *Al-Ahram* reporter Khaled Dawoud said, “I think people expected more transparency since we had our revolution...because that was one of the major problems about the previous regime, which is an act of transparency.”⁷⁵ However, given the level of censorship that has penetrated the press at the behest of SCAF, transparency appears far from reality for most in Egypt. In a further setback to a more transparent Egyptian leadership, the military censored the testimony of Field Marshal Mohamed Tantawi at Mubarak’s trial in September 2011, ordering a

⁷³ alZayat, Yaser. Personal interview. 11 Jan. 2012.

⁷⁴ Anonymous, Personal interview. 11 Jan. 2012.

⁷⁵ “State of Post-Revolutionary Egyptian Media: Transcript.” *On the Media*. 26 Aug. 2011. Web. <<http://www.onthemedial.org/2011/aug/26/state-post-revolution-egypt-media/transcript/>>.

complete media blackout.⁷⁶ Director of the *Arabic Network for Human Rights Information* (ANHRI), Gamal Eid, believes that one of the motives behind SCAF's crackdown on the press is that it wants to secure its image given Egypt's uncertain future. "They're trying to improve their image before they leave power," says Eid.⁷⁷

Similar to *Sawt Al-Ummah, Al-Masry Al-Youm's* new English Edition, the *Egypt Independent*, saw itself censored and pulled off the shelves before the publication could establish a footing amongst other independent publications. *Egypt Independent* was told it could not distribute its newspaper due to the inclusion of a piece written by historian Robert Springbord titled, "Is Tantawi reading the public pulse correctly?"⁷⁸ The piece suggested that the best way to save the military and to get rid of Field Marshal Tantawi was for a "coup within a coup" to take place. Pulling the newspaper, the military saw this as a risk to security and thus censored the publication.

All of these levels of censorship, some direct and some indirect, illustrate an impact on the quality of reporting and the overall independence of the press to publish and report on certain issues. Censorship is clearly taking place in post-Mubarak Egypt. Yet, what may be more damaging during this sensitive time period for Egypt is the censorship that comes from within the journalists on the ground: self-censorship.

The concept of self-censorship is difficult to gauge and uncomfortable to admit to. It has existed for decades, although it was slightly eroded upon in the final years of Mubarak with increasing activism in the media and the development of an independent press. However, with

⁷⁶ Shadid, Anthony. "Egypt's Military Leader Testifies at Mubarak Trial." *The New York Times*. 24 Sept. 2011. Web. <<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/09/25/world/middleeast/tantawi-testifies-at-mubaraks-trial-in-egypt.html>>.

⁷⁷ Eid, Gamal. Personal interview. 10 Jan. 2012.

⁷⁸ Chammah, Maurice. "The Springborg Affair: A Censorship Debacle Reflects Egypt's Future." *Huffington Post*. 13 Dec. 2011. Web. <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/maurice-chammah/egypt-media-censorship-springborg_b_1146133.html>.

SCAF's crackdown on the media over the past year, from the targeting of journalists in November during the protests surrounding parliamentary elections to the overall monitoring of publications and talk shows, journalists are becoming more aware of what is safe to write about and what is not. The red line is becoming more and more clear with each passing event.

According to media scholar Adel Iskandar, "The only way around self-censorship is a mob mentality amongst journalists."⁷⁹ Journalists need to evoke a sense of solidarity in their determination to step over the red line in order to deliver information to the public. However, the continued threatening and targeting of journalists, activists, and bloggers threatens the development of such a mentality in the same way it has in previous decades.

STATE MEDIA'S STATUS QUO

In September 2010, Egypt's top national newspaper *Al-Ahram* ran a story about a summit meeting on Middle East peace featuring the heads of state from Israel, Jordan, Egypt, and the U.S. The accompanying photo depicted each of the country's leaders as they made their walk toward the press room. However, the photo appeared quite different from the original, which features U.S. President Barack Obama in front of the other leaders. *Al-Ahram*'s photo has Obama one step behind Hosni Mubarak, who was cut out of his original position in the group and photo-shopped to look as though he was the one at the front of the helm.⁸⁰ *Al-Ahram*'s then editor-in-chief, Osama Saraya, claimed that "altering the image wasn't meant to distort the truth but to illustrate the leading political role of Egypt's president" on the Palestinian issue.⁸¹ This example

⁷⁹ Iskandar, Adel. Personal interview. 13 Feb. 2012.

⁸⁰ Kamen, Al. "Mubarak leads the way . . . sort of." *The Washington Post*. 21 Sept. 2010. Web. <<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/09/21/AR2010092104827.html>>.

⁸¹ Abdel-Ghani, Alaa. "What's in a photo?" *Al-Ahram*. 23 Sept. 2010. Web. <<http://weekly.ahram.org/2010/1016/eg2.htm>>.

is one of countless others that demonstrate how state media is not only run by the government, but also presents the government's vision to the public.

Egypt's state media consists of a myriad of newspapers, television stations, and also encompasses nearly all radio stations.⁸² In previous decades, state media has been one of the Egyptian government's main instruments for dispersing narratives specific to the president. During the revolution, journalist Ashraf Khalil writes, "Egypt's state-owned empire of newspapers and television channels dutifully did its job almost until the very end – de-emphasizing the size of the crowds in Tahrir, and pushing the line that the protests were led by a sinister combination of Muslim Brothers, shadowy foreign infiltrators, and *Jazeera* correspondents."⁸³ Following Mubarak's departure from office, state media completed a 180 degree turn from its previous self. On February 12, 2011, the headline "The People Have Toppled the Regime" dominated *Al-Ahram's* front page, a previously unthinkable move for the national publication.⁸⁴

As Egyptian protesters took to the streets in January and February 2011, journalists and reporters in state-run media began to protest on internal matters of censorship, such as being told to present selective information to support Mubarak and his government. There were sit-ins at *Al-Ahram* and resignations at state television, such as the high profiled resignation of Shahira Amin from Nile TV.⁸⁵ In the weeks following the revolution, it appeared as though state media

⁸² According to William Rugh in *Arab Mass Media*, All state media outlets are run and legally owned by the Supreme Press Council and the Shura Council, and the chief editors and directors of the national press. In addition, the government-controlled publishing houses maintain control over the printing and distribution of all newspapers, including opposition newspapers.

⁸³ Khalil, Ashraf. *Liberation Square: Inside the Egyptian Revolution and the Rebirth of a Nation*. New York: St. Martin's, 2012. 282-288. Print.

⁸⁴ Iskandar, Adel. "Free at last? Charting Egypt's media post-Mubarak." *Jadaliyya*. 19 Dec. 2011. Web. <<http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/3641/free-at-last-charting-egypts-media-post-mubarak>>.

⁸⁵ Osborne, Lucy. "Interview: Shahira Amin on broadcasting in Egypt." *The Guardian*. 28 Aug. 2011. Web. <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/media/2011/aug/28/interview-shahira-amin-broadcasting-egypt>>.

was going through a transformation, rebuking its ways of old as a mouthpiece for the government and turning into proper media institutions.

However, as the months passed on and SCAF further entrenched its power in Egypt, it became clear that the only visible transformation that state media has undergone was switching support from Mubarak to SCAF. Speaking about his bosses in Nile TV, anchor Nabil Chouchaby says, “they always ask us to take care of the army.” He claims that they pick certain guests according to their track record with the army and whether or not they are critical of SCAF. “Concerning SCAF, we cannot have freedom,” says Chouchaby.⁸⁶ “Mubarak’s methods are still here,” he adds. “The only real difference between before and now is that it’s the army that’s in charge.”⁸⁷

Aside from government policies and actions, state media is seen as one of the biggest hurdles in the way of a greater freedom of the press. “Until we have a free national [press]...we will not see a free media,” says Merrette Ibrahim, a reporter for *Al-Youm Al-Sabe’*.⁸⁸ State media will continue to pose a problem for overall freedom of the press as long as it is tied to the government and abides by the decisions and policies of whoever is in charge. However, a significant amount of the Egyptian population remains loyal to *Al-Ahram* and *Nile TV*. Thus, if state media continues down its current road, the problems it creates in the disseminating of curtailed information will only fester. “Saddled with massive debts, overstaffed, facing dropping circulation, and politically exposed (making a bailout difficult), a serious restructuring is needed,” according to Nathan Brown.⁸⁹

⁸⁶ Chouchaby, Nabil. Personal interview. 12 Jan. 2012.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibrahim, Mervet. Personal interview. 12 Jan. 2012.

⁸⁹ Brown, Nathan. “Can the Colossus Be Salvaged? Egypt’s State-Owned Press in a Post-Revolutionary Environment.” *Carnegie Endowment*. 22 Aug. 2011. Web. <<http://egyptelections.carnegieendowment.org/2011/08/22/can-the-colossus-be-salvaged-egypt's-state-owned-press-in-a-post-revolutionary-environment>>.

On a positive note, as previously indicated, there appears to be a slight rumbling from inside the state media apparatus indicating that some are pursuing change. Within the Maspero complex that houses state television and radio, two groups have formed, called the Media Revolutionaries Front (MRF) and the Independent Media Professionals Coalition.⁹⁰ Both groups formed after Mubarak's departure and over the past year have increased their demands for media reform. Groups such as these and individuals like television host Hala Helmy, who has refused to reappear on-air in protest over censorship, give hope to reform internally. The downside is that while calls for reform may persist, it will take a change in the governing of state media in order for it to sever its ties with SCAF or Egypt's government. "The credibility of the Egyptian television is very important," says Chouchaby, "We have to change...if we want to survive we have to change."⁹¹

THE NOT-SO-INDEPENDENT MEDIA

In the later years of Hosni Mubarak's presidency, privately owned media began to flourish in Egypt, countering state-run media's dominance over the country. With the emergence of *Al-Masry Al-Youm* in 2004 and numerous other newspapers and television shows, Egypt's media landscape was slowly becoming more diverse and liberated. However, despite the continued presence of privately-owned media, often referred to as independent media, many restrictions remain over the industry, making problematic the ability to report freely on all subject matters.

For example, as previously mentioned, the Ministry of Information has made it more difficult to obtain media licensing over the past months, going as far as to incorporate a

⁹⁰ Khazbak, Rana. "Seeds of dissent in the state TV fortress." *Egypt Independent*. 17 Nov. 2011. Web. <<http://www.egyptindependent.com/news/seeds-dissent-state-tv-fortress>>.

⁹¹Chouchaby, Nabil. Personal interview. 12 Jan. 2012.

temporary freeze on licenses in September 2011.⁹² Aside from the restrictions set in place by law and licensing, journalists within independent media, some of which have already been mentioned, have been individually targeted over the past months due to their criticisms of SCAF. One notable case is that of Dina Abdul Rahman, who was fired from her talk show on the privately-owned *Dream TV*. She entered into an argument with General Abdul Moneim Qato over the publication of an article by Naglaa Bedir which criticized SCAF.⁹³

Another example is that of political columnist Ahmed El-Sawi, who was forced to leave *Al-Masry Al-Youm* after writing a critical column about pharmaceutical businessman El Sayyid El-Badawi, who also owns *Al-Hayat*.⁹⁴ El-Sawi criticized El-Badawi for his ties to the Mubarak regime, which resulted in El-Badawi pressuring Salah Diab, owner of *Al-Masry Al-Youm*, over El-Sawi's job. After a few months of repeated criticism from El-Badawi, El-Sawi resigned from *Al-Masry Al-Youm* and resumed his column at the newspaper *Al-Shorouk*.⁹⁵

The firing of Dina Abdul Rahman and Ahmed El-Sawi raises concern over the ownership of private media, as well as the reappearance of censorship and self-censorship. Although the introduction of privately-owned media can be seen as a significant improvement to Egypt's media freedom and diversity, it is worth noting that many of the privately-owned newspapers and channels are owned by businessmen who flourished under Mubarak's presidency.⁹⁶ For example, *Dream TV* is owned by construction tycoon Ahmed Bahgat and Naguib Sawiris, who is the head of telecom giant Orasom and recently founded a liberal political party, is owner of

⁹² "Is the Supreme Council a New Predator of Press Freedom?" *Reporters Without Borders*. 10 Sept. 2011. Web. <<http://en.rsf.org/egypt-is-the-supreme-council-a-new-10-09-2011,40962.html>>.

⁹³ "The Sacking of Dina Abdul Rahman is a threat to the Freedom of Media in Egypt." *UNCUT*. 5 Aug. 2011. Web. <<http://uncut.indexoncensorship.org/2011/08/the-sacking-of-dina-abdul-rahman-is-a-threat-to-the-freedom-of-media-in-egypt/>>.

⁹⁴ Hamamou, Sabah. "Egyptian Journalism: An Oddly Connected Mix of Old and New Media." *Neiman Reports*. 2011. Web. <<http://www.nieman.harvard.edu/reportsitem.aspx?id=102682>>.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

ONTV.⁹⁷ These are a few examples of how Egypt's business elites, who are also intertwined in politics, dominate the independent media scene. Similar to what transpired under Muabarak, it has become evident, through such cases as Dina Abdul Rahman, that those who own these independent newspapers and television channels are not willing to enter into conflict with SCAF because of critical publications or broadcasts. The depth of the relationships between Egypt's business elite and SCAF is difficult to gauge; however, given that SCAF is not entirely severed from Mubarak and these businessmen were notable because of their ties to Mubarak's government, a link still exists. This link between the world of privately-owned media and SCAF, or any future Egyptian government, is damaging in ways not entirely evident. Although the direct relationship between state-run media and the government is clear and acknowledged, the relationship between privately-owned media and the government does not appear entirely different if media owners are still adhering to the demands of SCAF and censoring journalists so as not to step over the line.

FOREIGN AND ARABIC LANGUAGE PRESS

Throughout Hosni Mubarak's presidency, as well as under SCAF, it seems evident that foreign journalists covering events in Egypt operate with greater freedom compared to their Egyptian counterparts, especially those who write or broadcast in the Arabic language. Nina Hubinet, a French freelance journalist working in Egypt, expresses this notion by stating that it has never been difficult for foreign journalists, "as long as you are not talking about sensitive [things]."⁹⁸ Hubinet claims foreign journalists possess more freedom than Egyptian journalists. Even during the time of Mubarak, foreign journalists were allowed more freedom when reporting

⁹⁷ "Sacking of TV host raises fears of self-censorship in private media." *Egypt Independent*. 28 Jul. 2011. Web. <<http://www.egyptindependent.com/news/sacking-tv-host-raises-fears-self-censorship-private-media>>.

⁹⁸ Hubinet, Nina. Personal interview. 11 Jan. 2012.

on elements of the regime. For example, concerning Mubarak's health, Hubinet states, "For the foreign journalists, you could speak about it."⁹⁹ Yaser alZayat, a member of the National Coalition for Media Freedom, also believes foreign journalists convey a greater sense of free expression in the press, saying, "you have more protection as foreign journalists."¹⁰⁰ A foreign journalist writing about the actions of SCAF can write with impunity because Egypt is an Arabic speaking nation; thus, criticism of SCAF in the foreign press does not produce a negative impact on the Egyptian public's perception of the military council.

Not only does the foreign language press enjoy more freedom in print media, but it also benefits from lack of governmental interference in foreign language television broadcasts. Even on state television channels, which broadcast in English, French, and other languages, the political commentators demonstrate more freedom in expressing their views. As long as such comments do not attempt to provoke an insurrection, foreign language commentators appearing on Egyptian television can generally criticize the regime. Nabil Chouchaby, an anchor for *Nile TV*'s French channel, supports these assertions, expressing, "in our channel, because it's in English and French, we have more freedom."¹⁰¹ Chouchaby also states satellite channels broadcasting in foreign languages display the greatest amount of freedom in the expression of critical viewpoints, because SCAF does not possess recourse against such channels.¹⁰²

Criticisms against SCAF made by members of the foreign press and by Egyptian journalists in foreign languages do provide interesting commentary about the political transformation of Egypt. However, only the elites in Egypt are the most capable of understanding foreign languages and having access to foreign satellite channels, where viewpoints condemning

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ alZayat, Yaser. Personal interview. 11 Jan. 2012.

¹⁰¹ Chouchaby, Nabil. Personal interview. 12 Jan. 2012.

¹⁰² Ibid.

the actions of SCAF are mostly presented. These disparaging perspectives against SCAF do not threaten the military government because the majority of Egyptians do not watch such broadcasts or read newspapers written in languages other than Arabic. SCAF permits a greater freedom to the foreign press knowing that its domestic effects are not as grand in comparison to the effects greater freedom would have for a local, Arabic speaking press.

VI. THE FUTURE OF PRESS FREEDOM IN EGYPT

As Egyptians prepare to go to the polls to elect a new president, a new political era is set to begin in Egypt. During the parliamentary elections in November 2011, Islamist parties received an unprecedented show of support from voters, a trend that may likely continue as Egyptians prepare to vote in the first round of presidential elections on May 23, 2012. How will the new president deal with the press in Egypt if he belongs to an Islamist party? What will happen to the media if SCAF maintains control of the government through a new president who is simply a figurehead for the military, or if SCAF decides to retain control of the government after the presidential elections? The following sections will analyze the potential effects that an Islamist government or a SCAF-dominated government could have on the future of press freedom in Egypt.

PRESS FREEDOM UNDER AN ISLAMIST GOVERNMENT

Islamist parties like the Muslim Brotherhood and the Egyptian press share a relationship that precedes the Egyptian uprising in January and February 2011. Before the uprising, media outlets freely criticized the Muslim Brotherhood and other Islamist groups seeking a stake in the

political process.¹⁰³¹⁰⁴ The participation of the Brotherhood in the democratic process, and its promotion of freedom of expression suggests that the Brotherhood would not suppress media opponents of its government, should its representatives find themselves in high office after the presidential election.

Abdel Moneim Aboul Fotouh, an independent presidential candidate and former member of the Muslim Brotherhood, was a stark opponent of Mubarak and Sadat, and was incarcerated for a number of years because of his political activism.¹⁰⁵ Despite his candidacy as an independent, he could reconnect with the Brotherhood if elected president or embrace a moderate form of political Islam. There is also Mohamed Mursi of the Freedom and Justice Party, who the Muslim Brotherhood has chosen to support as its main candidate in the presidential elections.¹⁰⁶

The potential election of Aboul Fotouh or Mursi as president could turn Egypt in either direction, and it remains unclear how an Islamist government will reshape Egypt's future. However, while Egypt's future president remains a decision to be decided, it is clear that Islamist parties, whether the Brotherhood or the Salafis' al-Nour party, will have an influence on Egypt's future policies and politics. In trying to determine how this may affect press freedom, it is useful to know that the Brotherhood has taken command of its own press, including *Freedom and Justice*, the political party's official newspaper, and their use of social and online media through

Ikhwanweb.¹⁰⁷ Navigating the media is nothing new for the Brotherhood; however, the question

¹⁰³ Fawzi, Sameh. "Brothers and Others." *Al-Ahram*. 8 Dec. 2005. <<http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2005/772/op8.htm>>.

¹⁰⁴ Saghiyeh, Hazem. "The Misery of the Brotherhood, the Misery of Egypt, the Misery of us All." *Al-Hayat*. 27 Nov. 2002. Web. <<http://www.worldpress.org/Mideast/828.cfm>>.

¹⁰⁵ El Gundi, Zeinab. "Abdel-Moneim Abul-Fotouh." *Ahram Online*. 2 Apr. 2012. Web. <<http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/36/124/36854/Presidential-elections-/Meet-the-candidates/AbdelMoneim-AbulFotouh.aspx>>.

¹⁰⁶ "New Brotherhood candidate for Egypt vote may struggle." *Reuters*. 18 Apr. 2012. Web. <<http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/04/18/us-egypt-brotherhood-mursi-idUSBRE83H13H20120418>>.

¹⁰⁷ "Looking to consolidate its influence, Brotherhood takes to the media." *Egypt Independent*. 27 Dec. 2011. Web. <<http://www.egyptindependent.com/news/looking-consolidate-its-influence-brotherhood-takes-media>>.

is now whether or not they will develop a healthy relationship with the media or seek to influence or undermine it in order to distribute their narrative like their predecessors.

PRESS FREEDOM AND THE FUTURE OF SCAF

According to Joseph Mayton, any illusion of press freedom in Egypt disappeared after SCAF's response to the protests at Maspero on October 9, 2011.¹⁰⁸ Even though SCAF states its proposal to relinquish power to civilian authorities in June 2012, some Egyptians remain skeptical of SCAF actually following through on their promise.¹⁰⁹ Based off the Maspero incident and crackdowns on journalists in November and December 2011, any remaining traces of SCAF's authority over the Egyptian government will prove detrimental to future prospects of press freedom.

According to this paper, it seems as though most journalists in Egypt believe that the restrictive nature of the press comes directly from SCAF; therefore, replacing SCAF with a civilian government would at least provide an environment conducive to the cultivation of free expression. Any civilian government that takes control of Egypt after the elections must close the Ministry of Information, because it exemplifies the bloated bureaucracy in Egypt, which has failed the people on numerous occasions.¹¹⁰

Allowing SCAF to remain in power will likely mean an increase in repressive measures towards the press and freedom of expression. Merette Ibrahim equates SCAF to the old regime, which demonstrates the necessity of replacing SCAF with a more democratic form of governance, one that encourages freedom of expression and the free exchange of ideas. Ibrahim

¹⁰⁸ Mayton, Joseph. Personal interview. 5 Jan. 2012.

¹⁰⁹ Blair, Edmund and Shaimaa Fayed. "Barred Islamist Says Egypt Army Wants to Keep Power." *The Chicago Tribune*. 18 Apr. 2012. Web. <<http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/sns-rt-us-egypt-presidencybre83h1g8-20120418,0,7228519.story>>.

¹¹⁰ Iskandar, Adel. Personal interview. 13 Feb. 2012.

states, “SCAF is trying to provoke people, with campaigning against NGOs...this is just like the old regime. [The difference is, under SCAF there are] more violent actions being taken. They are the same people in the same mentality.”¹¹¹ Using state media as a tool in an ongoing strategy to turn the people against journalists, NGOs, and other advocates of democracy and reform suggests that SCAF does not serve the interests of the Egyptian people or the revolution.

VII. CHANGING THE MEDIA: FROM THE OUTSIDE AND WITHIN

The restrictions placed on members of the media within Egypt hinder the ability to report information accurately or at all. The removal of red lines in order for a greater press freedom is one thing, but the ability of the press to cope with this greater freedom is also in need of attention. After years of censorship, it will take more than removing the chokehold over Egypt’s media scene for journalists to be able to perfect the profession.

DISBANDING THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND STATE MEDIA

One of the greatest calls for change is to disband the much loathed Ministry of Information, which is seen by many Egyptians and journalists as a farce and a further tool of suppression, let alone a bureaucratized piece of Egypt’s past. “It’s proved that it’s failed on so many different occasions,” says media scholar Adel Iskandar, calling the ministry a “bloated bureaucracy” that creates more and more censorship for the media. “[State media] is the legacy of the ministry of information.”¹¹² Furthermore, Iskandar believes that with the disbanding of the ministry state media will be given an opportunity to start with a clean slate. “I think you can transform Egyptian State [media] into a public media.” Removing the Ministry of Information, a

¹¹¹ Ibrahim, Merette. Personal interview. 12 Jan. 2012.

¹¹² Iskandar, Adel. Personal interview. 13 Feb. 2012.

daunting task, will prove difficult and may leave many holes in the way the media thinks; however, its removal has the potential to be a catalyst for the transformation of a free media working within Egypt.

REVISING THE ROLE OF THE PRESS SYNDICATE

To fill the void left behind by the Ministry of Information's removal, one option is for there to be a greater role played by Egypt's Press Syndicate. The syndicate has been a forum for journalists to oppose the military's censorship of the media, and has been a serious opponent of the military's summoning of journalists for investigation.¹¹³ However, the role that they play within Egypt's media world is limited and often overshadowed by the government and the Ministry of Information. Cairo Bureau Chief for *Al Jazeera* Abdel Fattah Fayed claims "the Press Syndicate does not have any [substantial] rules."¹¹⁴ Still, if they were allowed to play a greater role in the governing of the press with the removal of the Ministry of Information, the syndicate could act as a defender of press freedom within Egyptian society as it grapples with change. "The journalist syndicate will continue to defend but on the ground it's not clear yet how things will be," says ANHRI director Gamal Eid. The current head of the Press Syndicate is Mamdouh Wally, who was elected in what has been considered the syndicate's first round of free elections in a post-Mubarak Egypt.¹¹⁵

¹¹³ "Journalists Syndicate urges members to shun military prosecution." *Egypt Independent*. 16 Nov. 2011. Web. <<http://www.egyptindependent.com/news/journalists-syndicate-urges-members-shun-military-prosecution>>.

¹¹⁴ Fattah Fayed, Abdel. Personal interview. 9 Jan. 2012.

¹¹⁵ Tarek, Sherif. "Thousands vote in first post-revolution Journalists' Syndicate elections." *Ahram Online*. 26 Oct. 2011. Web. <<http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/25209/Egypt/Politics-/Thousands-vote-in-first-postrevolution-Journalists.aspx>>.

TRAINING A NEW GENERATION ON PROFESSIONALISM

If the media is to gain a greater amount of freedom within Egypt, a certain level of adjustment will have to take place. Adjusting to greater liberties will not be an easy task for a media that is used to numerous amounts of red lines and restrictions. Aside from this, journalists will also be challenged to report on stories with accuracy and efficiency. No longer would information be handed to them for reporting, and thus journalistic work ethics would need to be implemented, particularly among Egyptian journalists. According to journalist Merette Ibrahim, the problem now is that “people are receivers, they don’t really analyze what you’re saying.” Toward change, she says, “the media is the first step,” and journalists will have to begin analyzing information and stressing objectivity in their field as opposed to simply receiving it.

There has been an increase in the amount of journalists and bloggers who have taken to the role of activism within Egyptian society. However, with the events surrounding January 25, 2011 aside, it is not a journalist’s duty to be an activist. Pushing for reform within your field is one thing; however, meddling in politics is another. It is the only line that should remain for journalists in Egypt, and that is the line of objectivity and professionalism. “If you’re not telling the truth you shouldn’t be a journalist,” says Yaser alZayat, claiming that Egypt does not have enough professional journalists.¹¹⁶ “I think we need many training centers, it will affect our future,” says alZayat. At the present, alZayat is working on a website called *Radar Misr* that will train young Egyptian journalists for investigative journalism, and says “new journalists will affect the way we are thinkers about our profession.” If Egypt is to abide by freedom of the press, it is important that the press is ready to exemplify ethical journalism in order to efficiently execute their role in society.

¹¹⁶ alZayat, Yaser. Personal interview. 11 Jan. 2012.

VIII. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Antonio Gramsci's "Southern Question and the Prison Notebooks" posits that in order to rule by force and coercion, ruling groups lead with the consent of subordinate groups.¹¹⁷ What this paper seeks to demonstrate is that, in comparing press freedom under Hosni Mubarak and the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF), over time we have witnessed the reintroduction of Egyptian leadership's desire to rule by consent of the public rather than allow a free media to develop at the risk of removing the public's approval.

SCAF's motives are difficult to determine, as were the motives behind the actions of past Egyptian governments. The military leadership clearly seeks to protect their image within the public; however, to a certain degree this pursuit has failed given the public criticism that remains and the perseverance of protesters, activists, and journalists to understand reality and confront it. Even more so than simply protecting an image, SCAF has cemented their position within Egypt's future political order. Having demonstrated that SCAF's treatment of the press is on the same par of Mubarak, the question is whether or not this will continue under a new government or a government at the behest of the military. Will the policies remain or will new leadership abide by what is written in the constitution? We cannot predict this and nor have we set out to.

What this study reveals is a continuation of repression and manipulation of the press to meet the goals of those in power. "If the media isn't talking about what the people are talking about how can you expect change?" asks journalist Joseph Mayton. "The lack of media freedom doesn't allow the ideas to come out."¹¹⁸ If a new Egypt is to emerge, a truly free press needs to exist in order to facilitate those ideas.

¹¹⁷ Gündoğan, Ercan. "Conceptions of Hegemony In Antonio Gramsci's Southern Question And The Prison Notebooks." *OAIster*. 2008. Print.

¹¹⁸ Mayton, Joseph. Personal interview. 6 Jan. 2012.

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