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PRACTICING UNCERTAINTY: Scenario-Based Preparedness Exercises in Israel

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Eyal Barak,[1] an official responsible for writing and directing the Israeli emergency-preparedness exercise known as Turning Point (*Nekudat Mifne*), explained to me how scenario narratives are selected: "We are talking about a serious and reasonable scenario, this is what we design, not a worst case, but plausible and serious. I'm not saying this is what's going to happen, but that this is what we need to prepare for. This is not a prophecy, it's a decision, and we need to be ready for it."

Turning Point is an annual scenario-based event that involves all government ministries, local municipalities, and essential infrastructure units, as well as all citizens. It is the largest scenario-based exercise of its kind. Preparations for each exercise are extensive; some units start preparing more than five months ahead of execution. The last two months before the exercise involve the most intensive preparations, and, then—for a specified number of days—all relevant units practice the scenario and its implications. Scenarios include preparedness for natural disasters as well as war and terrorism. The exercise has been conducted since 2007, following the country's second war with Lebanon. It is overseen by the National Emergency Management Authority (NEMA; the Hebrew acronym is *Rachel*), a unit of the Ministry of Defense. Though the organization responsible for civilian preparedness in Israel has changed several times over the years and

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remains an unsettled issue, the need for a comprehensive national-preparedness exercise has never been disputed.

In this article, I examine the scenario-based exercise as a central technology within Israel's preparedness apparatus. Drawing on my ethnographic research in NEMA and the Turning Point administration, I analyze how the scenario event works as a technology-based uncertainty, both in its conceptualization of the future and, especially, in its enactment. As Barak argued, the exercise narrative is a chosen event, one that does not replicate the past or attempt to predict the future. Though designed to challenge responders, the scenario represents not a worst-case event but a plausible one. Moreover, although the scenario is based on a preselected, well-designed event, I argue that once practiced, it is actualized as a multiplicity of subevents, or incidents, that the various participants sometimes enact with unexpected consequences. With this technology, the Israeli preparedness system is directed neither toward producing specific responses nor toward discovering the best solutions for an unknown future. Rather, the technology generates uncertainty through its execution, from which new problems are extracted.[2]

Analytically, I draw primarily on Michel Foucault's (2007) concept of security and its associated security apparatus. This form of governing has usually been highlighted in studies of insurance, statistics, and risk-based technologies that rely on the assessment and calculation of possible events. The analysis of Turning Point scenarios adds to more recent studies that track the emergence of forms of securing the future that speak to a nonquantifiable mode of governing, one that responds to the problem of *uncertainty* rather than *risk* (O'Malley 2004; Samimian-Darash and Rabinow 2015). However, rather than focus solely on how the scenario, as an uncertainty-based technology, conceptualizes the future and approaches that problem (Samimian-Darash 2013), I examine how it works in practice. I explore how, in its execution, the scenario actually generates uncertainty as a form of action. That is, I examine both the discursive and the dispositional aspects of the Turning Point scenario, approaching it as a narrative put into action. I thus go beyond the conceptualization of the future underlying this technology and address how it practices uncertainty.

SECURITY, PREPAREDNESS, UNCERTAINTY

Foucault (2007) identifies three forms of governance: sovereignty, discipline, and biopolitics. Each emerged in response to a specific governmental problem and was enacted to achieve a certain aim through determinate practices. Yet

the rationalities underlying these forms were not mutually exclusive, and the emergence of one technology did not imply the negation of another. Biopolitical security apparatuses emerged in response to the problem of circulation and freedom, that is, to the need to regulate and secure the population. Security is thus "a biopolitical problem of the protection and betterment of a population's essential life processes in an indeterminate world, rather than a geopolitical matter of prevention and exclusion" (Grove 2012, 140).[3]

Many studies discuss risk as a central thematic of the biopolitical security apparatus, grounding an approach to governing the population through the calculation and assessment of its conformity to or deviation from established welfarist norms. François Ewald (1991, 199–200) explains the rise of insurance in the nineteenth century in terms of this technology: "By objectivizing certain events as risk, insurance can invert their meanings: it can make what was previously an obstacle into a possibility." Insurance thus uses risk in effecting a distinctive mode of governing: converting events into possible accidents that can be assessed and managed. Risk, then, "builds on the premise that [threats] can be classified, quantified and to some extent predicted" (Aradau, Lobo-Guerrero, and Van Munster 2008, 147). This form of governing appears in many areas of research beyond insurance (Ewald 1991; Grove 2012; Lobo-Guerrero 2011), for example, in the fields of old age (Kaufman 1994), psychiatry (Rose 1996), pregnancy (Lupton 1999), AIDS (Elbe 2008), crime prevention, and drug use (O'Malley 2004).

Recent studies have discussed a new problematic of governance emerging from a disposition toward future threat as immanent and as exceeding calculation and risk. In relation to this development, I have proposed the concept of *potential uncertainty*, which "derives from the variety of actualities that can emerge from the virtual event rather than from the lack of knowledge about the content of any specific possibility" (Samimian-Darash 2013, 3). As is the case with risk, the basis for one *dispositif* of governing (Aradau and Van Munster 2007), the problem of uncertainty requires careful analysis to identify the multiple ways in which it is conceptualized and governed. Thus, rather than view uncertainty as a feature of the relationship between the past, present, and future, or as an outcome of the actions of society (e.g., Beck 2009; Giddens 1999), I examine how the conceptualization of the future engenders uncertainty, to which the application of certain technologies is deemed appropriate.

Several scholars have recently highlighted a new form of governing that deals with noncalculable, unassessable risks, a form they usually identify as preparedness (Cooper 2006; Diprose et al. 2008; Lakoff 2008; Lakoff and Collier 2008; Sam-

imian-Darash 2009; Stephenson and Jamieson 2009). Andrew Lakoff and Stephen J. Collier (2008) argue that preparedness goes beyond national security and population security and is directed to the security of vital systems vulnerable to events "whose probability cannot be calculated, but whose consequences are potentially catastrophic" (Lakoff 2008, 403). The rationality of preparedness addresses a seemingly inevitable future disaster that can only be managed once it happens. Intervention is aimed at reducing resulting damage rather than at preventing particular threats (Lakoff and Collier 2008).[4]

Others have drawn on François Ewald's (2002) work and use the term *precaution*. Claudia Aradau and Rens Van Munster (2007, 102), for instance, argue that "the precautionary dispositif would apply to terrorism where the scientific technologies for 'representing' the world find themselves surpassed by reality itself." Melinda Cooper (2006), meanwhile, presents the term *preemption* to conceptualize a mode of governing catastrophic future risk that denies the idea of prediction or representation. Rosalyn Diprose and colleagues (Diprose et al. 2008, 269) describe a new paradigm of prudence, one in which "the assumption [is] that the risks and threats are *incalculable, unpredictable, but always imminent*."

Though many studies discuss preparedness (however labeled) as a rationality of governing beyond the biopolitical security apparatus and risk-based technologies (see also de Goede 2008), this problematization has yet to be translated into a distinctive concept, that is, a problematic of uncertainty rather than risk, or into an investigation of the kinds of techniques devised to govern uncertainty (see also O'Malley 2004; Samimian-Darash 2013).[5] If the problem space has shifted from one of knowledge-dependent possibilities, manageable by means of risk-based apparatuses, to one of uncertainty, paradoxically deriving from new knowledge and technological developments, what are "the concepts, technologies, and modes of governing appropriate to uncertainty" (Samimian-Darash and Rabinow 2015, 203)? The current article presents an anthropological inquiry into the practical dimensions of such technology.

Some scholars provide a more nuanced analysis of the practice of uncertainty-based technologies (see Amoore 2009 on visualization in the War on Terror; Samimian-Darash 2013 on syndromic surveillance systems and flu pandemics; Schüll 2015 on gambling software; Zeiderman 2015 on environmental hazards). Studies specifically of scenarios and simulations (Adey and Anderson 2012; Collier 2008; Lakoff 2008; Schoch-Spana 2004) provide baseline observation and analyses of these forms. Yet most look at scenario narrations only. Through an anthropologically detailed empirical account and in-depth analysis of actual scenario

practices, here I examine both the discursive and the dispositional aspects of the scenario; that is, I approach the scenario as a narrative in action. I thus go beyond the conceptualization of the future underlying this technique and address how the scenario practices uncertainty.

THE EVOLUTION OF TURNING POINT EXERCISES

In July 2006, during the war between Israel and Lebanon, Hezbollah launched around four thousand rockets (about one hundred per day) toward Israel. About 25 percent hit urban areas, shutting down the northern part of the country. One million Israelis took cover in bomb shelters, and 300,000 sought refuge in the south (Inbar 2007). Both the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) and the government were perceived as performing poorly during the war, and the impact on home-front morale was significant. Intense public debate erupted over the country's lack of preparedness, with calls to investigate the government's and the military's performance. For officials and civilians alike, the war became a turning point, highlighting the need for a fundamental makeover of home-front defense. The Winograd Commission was appointed to examine related political and military issues, and the state comptroller was directed to examine home-front preparedness. Both inquiries found that defects in preparedness long predated the war and recommended, among other things, the establishment of a national institute to coordinate all Israeli military and civilian preparedness units and authorities.

In 2007, NEMA was established to coordinate national civil defense. The following year, when the first Turning Point exercise took place, Prime Minister Ehud Olmert said: "Today we start a national exercise for the defense of the home front. This is a direct follow up to the conclusions of the 2006 Lebanon war" (Sofer 2008). Turning Point 1 played out over two days, after several months of extensive preparation. Turning Point 2 took place in 2008 and extended over five days. The first two days were dedicated to training headquarters personnel and to bringing the political establishment into the scenario. A meeting was convened in which cabinet ministers enacted a scenario involving "thousands of rockets and missiles . . . launched towards cities in Israel, civilian casualties and the impact of non-conventional warheads" (Ravid et al. 2008).

The broad outlines of the 2008 scenario continued the 2007 theme: a multifront war guided the field exercises, which included responding to rockets targeting cities around the country, an attack on chemical plants in Haifa, hospital treatment of chemical wounds, and the rescue of wounded from collapsed buildings. On the third day, a new element was added: at 10 a.m., sirens sounded

throughout the country, and people were asked to go to the nearest bomb shelter. Schools were called on to take part in the exercise, and students practiced emergency procedures, including evacuating to shelters; state workers and employees of other bureaucracies did likewise. Turning Point 2 was truly a nationwide exercise, involving both state agencies and the entire civilian population.

Figure 1. Students evacuated a school when the siren sounded during Turning Point 15. Photo by Limor Samimian-Darash.

During Turning Point 3 in 2009, economy and finance were clearly major issues in the scenario, with the participation of Emergency Economy (*Melach*), the body charged with ensuring economic continuity during crises. As in 2008, the 2009 campaign asked the whole population to voluntarily participate. If the previous year's scenario was based on an event in which schools were under attack, it was now a scenario in which access to schools was impossible, triggering contingency plans for e-learning. Turning Point 3 was also an international event. Some seventy military and diplomatic observers from the United States, Turkey,

Japan, France, Germany, and other countries attended the exercise (international observation has been part of subsequent exercises as well).

In Turning Point 4, in 2010, one of the highlights of the exercise was a cyberattack on and subsequent shutdown of Israel's biggest electrical-generating station. Additionally, special attention was given to training local governing councils, and thirty municipalities practiced providing improved emergency services to civilians.

The entire Israeli banking system joined the 2011 exercise. That exercise also saw more involvement of the civilian population: two alarms were sounded, at 11 a.m. and at 7 p.m., to encourage people to practice emergency procedures both in their workplaces and at home. The focus shifted dramatically in 2012. Rather than responding to a military threat, that year's exercise was designed to test the country's ability to cope with a devastating earthquake and tsunami.

The emphasis on comprehensive readiness to meet diverse threats continued in 2013. That year, the chief of the Home Front Command, Eyal Eizenberg, said, "[The exercise will be conducted] from the level of the individual . . . up to the governmental level. . . . Our premise is that preparedness reflects *resilience*, and the security reality requires us to be in constant *readiness*. . . . Today, the front and the home front have become a unified front" (IDF 2013; emphasis mine).

Every year since 2007 a new scenario has been initiated, and each year the numbers of participants and possible hazards have expanded. In both continuity and scope, Turning Point speaks to Israel's security and securitization context, concerns and processes that have elevated protection of the home front to a paramount issue. In its sixty-eight years of existence, Israel has been involved in seven wars and ongoing conflict with its Palestinian neighbors.[6] Consequently, scholarship on the military and militarization in Israel has proliferated, especially since the 1980s. Studies range in focus from the political and sociological functions of the IDF (e.g., Cohen 1995; Horowitz and Lissak 1989) to examinations of specific processes of militarism and militarization (e.g., Ben-Eliezer 1995, 1998; Kimmerling 1993; Lomsky-Feder and Ben-Ari 2000; Maman et al. 2001; Sheffer and Barak 2010).

Though I do not frame the current case within theories of militarization and securitization, I am fully aware that in Israel those processes have contributed to creating a supreme security space, within which the emergence of the preparedness assemblage is not questioned either by government officials or by the population at large. Moreover, Israel's civil–military connections have contributed to the successful cooperation of civil units and citizens in the annual scenario exer-

cises. Turning Point is a unique nationwide program: comparable events of this scale have not been attempted outside Israel (but see Viktorin 2008 on a large-scale military exercise in Sweden). This unique context provides a novel opportunity to observe a full-scale scenario-based exercise, an event in which national agencies, local municipalities, and the general population all participate voluntarily in enacting a shared master script.

CONFIGURING THE NARRATIVE

February 3, 2015, early evening. I attend a dinner meeting at the home of Turning Point administrative head Michael Yair. I'm the first to arrive and find Michael in the kitchen preparing dishes for his guests. He tells me he has invited the team assembled to write the 2015 scenario and help with the initial design of the exercise. Ten people subsequently arrive and we sit around the dinner table on the porch and eat and talk. Those present are close friends, most of whom have known each other for a long time, and the atmosphere during the meal is relaxed, the conversation peppered with personal jokes. An administrative group will continue to meet weekly but will grow over time. By the week of the exercise, it will include approximately two hundred people.

After we have finished eating, we re-enter the house and sit in the living room on chairs and sofas arranged in a circle facing the TV screen. There, the lighthearted banter that had accompanied the meal gives way to serious, focused deliberation. The discussants represent the exercise operation team: the police, internal security, NEMA, the medical community, government ministries and local authorities, population logistics, and national infrastructure. These participants will oversee the practicing units the week of the exercise.

Michael and Alon Kedem, another senior exercise administrator, give a PowerPoint presentation. The presentation constitutes a first draft of the story outline of the main exercise narrative, what is termed Series B. The two men present thirty slides, which consist almost exclusively of verbal descriptions. No graphs. No charts. Tables, when they appear, are text-filled. Though just an initial outline, the presentation is comprehensive and richly descriptive. The first slide addresses key security trends in present-day Israel. Subsequent slides focus on international concerns and the political and military situation vis-à-vis each of Israel's neighbors (Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Egypt, and the Palestinian Authority). Some slides describe the attitudes of the Israeli public and media reactions to current concerns. I am surprised by how seriously those in the room treat the

presentation. Their attention riveted on the TV screen, they are not just going through the motions; they are engaged in reality.

An argument ensues over whether Series B should be written as a textual narrative only or whether it should include a graphical timeline. Participants also struggle with the idea of how to interest trainees in the story, so that they do not skip over the first few pages. Creating a scenario thus involves narrative techniques: how to build a story and the tension needed to keep participants involved. The meeting goes on for more than three hours. At one point, Michael summarizes what all present agree on: "Events of the scenario are a natural extension of [the real] reality. The reality of the exercise and the real reality should not be very far apart."

Preparations for each Turning Point begin with an organizational directive (Series A) that determines the scenario's central theme (war, terror, earthquake, etc.) and identifies those who will participate. The exercise is designed by a private security company hired each year by NEMA to test the entire state apparatus, as well as NEMA's own readiness. As noted, institutional participation in Turning Point has grown over the years. All ministries now take part, as do all national infrastructure authorities (energy, water, etc.). Other participants include the Knesset, the state comptroller, and the Bank of Israel. Although most municipalities fully participate, some do so only virtually (a member of the exercise administration stands in for a given municipality and responds to events on its behalf). All participating entities are represented in the administration, and their representatives are responsible for training their respective units in coordination with the administration and in accordance with the general scenario instructions.

After completing Series A, the central administration produces the national narrative of the scenario (Series B). This will eventually be transformed into a detailed scenario event (Series C), a process that takes months and yields hundreds of pages documenting multiple scenario incidents. The scenario is based on an integrated perception of threats to the State of Israel, taking into account political issues in the Middle East as well as wider international issues. Series B is "the outline, the opening scene for the assignment exercise [Series C] . . . a fictional story with a concrete purpose," Alon Kedem explained to me. The Series B program is distributed to all participants and, on the basis of its narrative, they begin their preparations for the exercise. These include management role-playing, simulations, round tables, and interorganizational training programs.

Series C includes the specific events that take place during the week of the exercise, which are tailored to the training needs of individual participating units

(in response to their requests) and must also meet national objectives. A central computer system, the "event generator," assigns incidents to participants. The system activates the event that the administration has chosen and notifies each unit of specific "occurrences" in its area. Incidents may include missile strikes, hazardous materials spills, terrorist attacks on schools, population and casualty evacuation, and damage to national infrastructure (e.g., electricity shutdown) or to emergency economy entities.

Worst Case vs. Plausible and Reasonable Case

Israeli Ministry of Transport situation room, Turning Point 15, 2 p.m. There are ten people in the room. The walls are covered with lists of telephone numbers, incident schedules, and maps of key transportation routes. Two big-screen TVs hang from one wall, their data displays continuously updating. The situation-room staff sits around a desk monitoring laptops and telephones. As information comes in from a variety of sources, the staffers relay it to one another. While no one appears apprehensive, the sense of pressure is palpable. Concentration is written across the faces of all the staffers as they struggle to keep up with the incoming reports.

Staff member 1: Rocket attack in Haifa port. Two containers hit. Another rocket hit the passenger terminal. A fire broke out and people were injured.

Staff member 2: So, is the port closed?

Staff member 1: There is damage, but the port is still functioning.

Staff member 3 (looking at a TV screen): There's a bombing in the Azrieli Towers!

Staff member 4: There's another report coming in: A direct hit on an ammonia tank!

Reaction in the room: Thousands could die . . . that's many kilometers of damage . . . population evacuation.

Staff member 1: There's a warning regarding a cyberattack.

Media representative (*playing a news flash*): One hundred twenty killed. Rocket hits. Many casualties. Number unknown. A group of terrorists invaded from the shore. Reserve forces mobilized. In many areas the sirens are inaudible.

Staff member 2: OK. There is a new event coming . . .

> Reaction in the room: WHAT?! A new event? We aren't done dealing with the previous ones![7]

The Turning Point 15 scenario was unprecedented: twenty-four thousand incidents were written in advance, representing an all-front war. It presented the country with an emergency situation unlike anything it had experienced before. During the months of narrative writing, however, the administration officials insisted: "We shouldn't overdo it with the number of events [that the units request]. Let's not overdo it. It's a blow, *but not an unreasonable one*." Though acknowledging that the scenario involved an extraordinary event, authorities did not conceive of it as a worst case. A worst-case scenario, in their view, was fiction, impossible. A scenario, they contended, should be serious but plausible, situated between what is known and has already occurred and what is an imaginable eventuality. Yaron Weiss, a NEMA official, argued:

> It can't be something abstract, too high . . . that I can't reach in terms of preparedness. Otherwise it's just a Hollywood script, it's not a basis for a work plan. On the other hand, it can't be built in such a way that I already know how to deal with it because then I'm not reinforcing my ability. . . . The attributed scenario should be what is called the *serious plausible* level. It's serious enough so that I need to prepare for it . . . and be proactive, but it's plausible so that I have the option to reach it and deal with it. *So the game is not where I am now, but it's also not in a place I can never reach.*

Monica Schoch-Spana (2004, 12) argues that bioterrorism-response scenarios operate in a milieu of emergency and apocalyptic future perceptions. Hence, scenario narratives are usually written as worst cases, in which "everything that can go wrong does go wrong." Joseph Masco (2008, 2014) has described a similar approach in his studies of Cold War scenarios and biosecurity threats. However, as several authorities explained to me, Turning Point scenarios are selected and designed to create a *plausible* event. Similarly, Ben Anderson and Peter Adey (2011) have found that, in the UK, specific scenarios are chosen over others not because they represent an apocalyptic future but because they are reasonable. Why, then, are scenarios designed to seem real and plausible?

Michael Yair reflected on a *worst case* and a *plausible case* in these terms: "When I build a scenario for an earthquake, I need to build it so that the people who are training feel that they are able to deal with the scenario, and I won't always give them the most extreme exercise. I will aim *a little lower than the*

plausible. Even that could be too much." Eyal Barak told me that during the exercise itself, his job is to control uncertainty that exceeds the limits of the original scenario. This control, he asserted, is essential for the exercise to succeed. Specifically, he emphasized that, unlike scenarios such as Operation Dark Winter, conducted in the United States in 2001 as a worst-case event, Turning Point aims for plausibility:

> Six months ago, I prepared a huge Excel table that determined . . . the rocket trajectory, how many buildings would be damaged, how many people evicted, how many injured, how many people with special needs would result from this, and how many injuries—serious, light, etc. . . . Everyone worked according to this table. . . . Otherwise, suddenly anyone can add injuries and we have no control over it, I mean the control is, again—we wanted to set the number of injuries in specific regions so that the health system in some places can't deal with it, in other places it can, for each detail we thought what . . . we want the trainees to gain from the exercise. Because if we collapse all of the systems, and hit all of the hospitals . . . this is what happened in Dark Winter, they just chose the extreme and that's it [everybody died].

During preparation meetings for the exercise, particularly while they were writing the narrative, exercise authorities emphasized the importance of creating an event that would look real and reasonable. Only then, they reasoned, could full collaboration of the trained units be achieved. At one administrative meeting during the narrative design phase, a discussion among participants centered on whether the outline they were building was realistic and would be convincing in the eyes of the participants, making them act as they would in a real emergency. One senior team member, Yoel Lapid, said that "many people will say that it's not realistic," leading a colleague to ask, "Which events should we add to make it realistic?" The point was to shape a credible story to elicit real reactions from participants. At one point during that meeting, the administration head looked at me and said, "You see? We are designing reality. Amazing, isn't it? We are designing reality. A harsh reality." That combination of both designing something new and keeping a sense of realism was evident throughout the entire exercise.

Attributed Threat vs. Attributed Scenario

Another central element in the scenario narrative is its temporality. Narratives are usually presented either as prophetic or as a way to better know or

anticipate the unknown future (e.g., Aradau and Van Munster 2007; Lakoff 2008; Lentzos and Rose 2009; Schoch-Spana 2004). Stephen Collier (2008, 225) adds that, via scenarios, knowledge about the future is sometimes produced through the practice of "acting [it] out." Thus the scenario is not simply the realization of the future but also a way of creating knowledge about it by practicing it.

Before administration officials create the national scenario (and multiple local incidents), they review information regarding potential threats to the state. Israeli intelligence agencies amass data, map possibilities, assess probabilities, and recommend a future threat that the government should consider. This map of attributed aggregated threat is distinguished from what will eventually become the attributed-scenario event created for the current year's preparedness event. Yaron Weiss explained: "The 'attributed threat' takes a specific type of threat and breaks it down to details: duration, day/night, scope . . . in a way that requires a more specific definition of the resources required and the manpower needed in order to be prepared for that threat."

During preparatory meetings, I repeatedly asked about the concepts of external future threat and attributed threat, wanting to understand the way the administration team narrates the scenario event. I was consistently told that the important issue was not the "real" future threat "out there." Although officials create a scenario on the basis of the attributed threat constructed through intelligence gathering, the scenario is not limited to that threat. Once a scenario narrative is chosen, what is important is the reality of that scenario, rather than any actual future reality. As Eyal Barak said, it is "not a prophecy but a decision."

I once asked the Turning Point administration head to articulate the goal in organizing and conducting the scenario event, and he answered that it was to "simulate reality as closely as possible." I pressed for clarification: "As close as possible to actual future reality?" He responded, "No, to the scenario reality." In other words, the attributed scenario is not simply distinguished from the attributed threat. It also does not attempt to simulate a future reality. While the attributed threat is linked to the real uncertain future and to knowledge based on past events to enable better assessment of the future, the attributed scenario is separated from the future (the attributed threat) and is not merely driven by what has happened in the past. Once a scenario is assembled, it becomes a reality in itself, for which preparedness measures are put into practice. The scenario addresses future uncertainty by putting an event into action—that is, by actualizing it.

THE PRACTICE OF SCENARIO-BASED EXERCISES: Actualization and the Unexpected

Evaluation meeting at a municipality in central Israel, Turning Point 15, Day 3, 11:20 a.m. The municipality emergency center is open for the purpose of the exercise. Staff at the center receive reports (by phone and computer) and forward specific information (see figure 2) to the municipality situation room, where the municipality chief executive officer (CEO) and main coordinators are stationed. At 11:20 a.m. a situation evaluation meeting begins. The heads of teams charged with monitoring the effects of the scenario event on local infrastructure and services present their reports. The seriousness with which they approach the evaluation is striking.

CEO: This is an emergency state, but the system can function this way for a long time. The public should obey the directives of the Home Front Command, and when a siren is heard, everyone must enter a protected space. These are not easy times, but we can deal with this threat. The blackouts are a problem, and we need to know how to deal with them.

Engineering team head: There are power crashes; we spoke to the power company and they are aware of the problem and said that the power should be back within four hours.

Population team head: Two people were injured during this morning's rocket attack, one low and one medium in severity. We received a notice from the manpower team and are in touch with the hospitals. A team was sent to the location where the incident took place.

Health team head: There is a shortage of physicians. We turned to the Ministry of Health and they said they would send physicians. Especially pediatricians. Additionally, 40 percent of the social workers haven't arrived to work, and 805 elderly caretakers left their patients alone.

The broad virtual event presented in Series B is actualized and translated into practice through multiple incidents with concrete repercussions.[8] Many subevents emerge, each with the potential to develop in unexpected ways depending on participants' reactions and on how those incidents interact with other incidents. For example, an electricity shutdown can affect pharmacies' ability to operate and physicians' ability to get to work, thus compromising medical aid to the injured. Actualization involves difference: such incidents are not and cannot be written in advance but emerge only upon actualization. Hence, once the scenario is enacted, new uncertainty emerges, as the following scene illustrates.

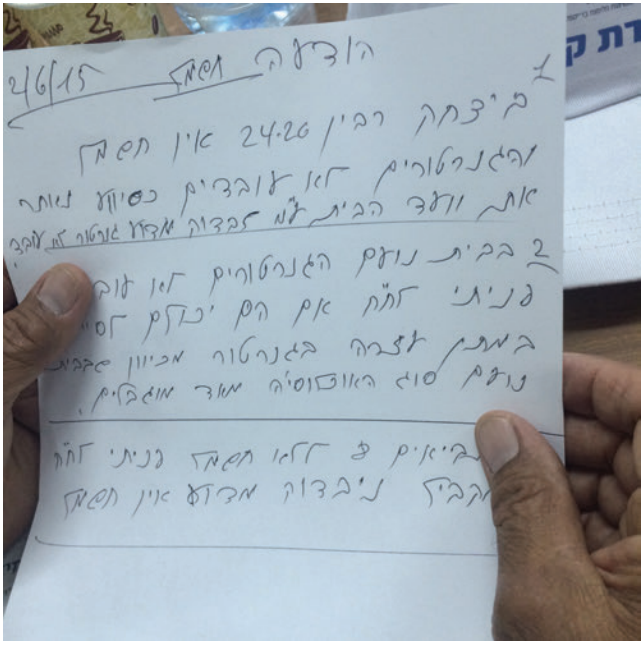

Figure 2. Turning Point achieves reality through specificity; a handwritten note reporting on incidents in an Israeli municipality. It reads: "(1) At 24-26 Yitzhak Rabin Street, there is no electricity and generators are not working. We asked the house committee to ask why the generation was not working. (2) At Noam House, generators are not working. I asked the IEC [Israel Electric Corporation] if they can assist with providing a generator, because in Noam there are people with disabilities. (3) 8 Prophets Street is without electricity. I contacted the IEC. We'll see why there's no electricity." Photo by Limor Samimian-Darash.

Some of the planned events in the 2015 scenario were evacuation drills. While the broad outline of the drills was written in advance, the specific logistics were determined by scenario participants. Several schools in central Israel were chosen to serve as the reception centers for evacuees from the north after rocket attacks in that area. On the second day of the exercise, I visited one of these schools to watch an evacuation drill. Reception desks, staffed by personnel from different fields, were set up in the schoolyard to address evacuees' varying needs upon arrival at the center.

At 11 a.m., the drill started, and evacuees began to arrive at the reception desks. As the scene became more hectic, the reception staff continued to welcome evacuees with calm, brisk efficiency. An evacuee approached the social work and welfare desk and said that his daughter was claustrophobic. The representative at the desk asked, "Is she diagnosed as claustrophobic? What are her difficulties?" The evacuee described his daughter's situation and the kind of anxiety from which

Figure 3. A schoolyard serves as an evacuation center. Photo by Limor Samimian-Darash.

she suffered. The representative (playing the role of psychologist) agreed the girl could stay outside the school building.

Another evacuee approached the public information desk, where a representative greeted him warmly and asked, "Did you arrive alone?" The evacuee responded, "No, I arrived with my wife and four kids. My wife is gluten-sensitive and needs a gluten-free meal." The representative wrote down the request and told him, "If there's a gluten-free meal, they will contact you. Enjoy your meal and have a pleasant stay." Later, this representative explained that he was operating partly according to guidelines he received prior to the exercise, but that he was mainly improvising on the basis of his common sense.

One Turning Point official described the way the scenario was enacted in terms of "children events, grandchild events, and great-grandchild events" that emerge from a "parent event." Once the parent event is activated, a multiplicity of actual descendant events follows. These descendant events cannot be fully written in advance because they change and shift as they emerge. Hence, planning for and controlling them is impossible. Eyal Barak explained the challenges:

> How do we produce the general superscenario? The challenge that we took upon ourselves . . . was to build a scenario that's as *realistic as possible*, but at the same time—and that's more difficult—*completely closed*. What do I

> mean by closed? When a rocket lands in Frishman Street, let's say that the fire service knows it's in Frishman, and the municipality also knows it's in Frishman, and Magen David Adom [the Israeli Red Cross] evacuated people from there, so they also know where it was. How do you make sure all these organizations know that a rocket landed in 32 Frishman Street? Now, if you have twenty rockets like that each day [of the exercise], you can write a story for each of them, but we're talking about two or three thousand rockets a day, you can't really write everything down.

I was often told by Turning Point headquarters officials that "every rocket has an address," underscoring the level of specificity and detail they aim for in writing the scenario narrative. However, as the national scenario event is actualized, it has unexpected repercussions that affect the contours of the parent event.

Situation Report: Extracting Problems

The Turning Point administrators convened at least twice a day during the week of the exercise to compile all situation reports they received. These meetings were held in a room whose glass door had a sign reading "No Entrance" posted on it. In attendance were all functionaries of the central administration and those in charge of the operation of government offices and local municipalities (though only twenty or so members of the exercise administration actually presented updates in those meetings). They were seated at long desks, their places marked by nameplates. Each presenter reported on the main incidents that had occurred in his or her sector that day and the actions taken by training personnel in response. After reviewing these presentations, Turning Point officials reshaped the scenario event on the basis of unexpected trainee reactions, as the following example shows.

Exercise administration headquarters, Turning Point 15, Day 2, 10 p.m. All relevant administration personnel are present in the operation room to discuss the current day's situation reports. The various representatives summarize what has occurred in their respective areas of oversight:

> Public security representative: The training forces are responding seriously all over the country.
>
> Another representative: Do they manage to get to every rocket?
>
> Public security representative: No, not to every rocket. There are a lot of traffic problems. A lot of population problems. The security forces cannot get to all the rockets and the public is very upset because of this.

Figure 4. The situation room for Turning Point 15. Photo by Limor Samimian-Darash.

Infrastructure representative: The issue of the electricity blackouts isn't working well [isn't being taken seriously]. There were many blackouts since this morning. Fifty-five blackouts. Some of them lasted four to five hours. But only one was treated.

Government representative: At 11 a.m. the prime minister ran to a protected space along with all of Israel. He made a video call to NEMA to get a situation report.

Medicine representative: A hospital director in the north called me and asked not to bring in any more injuries. He has high occupancy rates. There's a mission here—how do we evacuate these injuries? I ask that the number of injured in the exercise be reduced. It should be a kind of reward for the people training. We need to respond to what the training forces are doing and if there is a need to change and update the exercise, we should do it.

Cyber representative: Every event that is not a rocket is understood as a cyber event. There is too much background noise surrounding the actual cyber events that I have prepared for the exercise.

During the meeting, many officials complain either about an insufficient response (e.g., to the electricity shutdowns) or about an over-response (e.g., the translation of every event into a cyber event). Because training forces' reactions are sometimes unexpected, officials deliberately aim for a dynamic, adaptable administrative approach that allows them to change the central scenario during the exercise. Here, for example, given the severity of the rocket attacks in the north, two municipalities order the precautionary evacuation of their towns on the second day of the exercise. As a result, the central administration must change the targets of the next day's rocket attacks to other cities that have not been evacuated. Throughout the meeting, there is no hint that the participants are treating the exercise as anything other than reality.

Situation reports have a purpose beyond aiding scenario enactment: they enable more comprehensive assessment. After the national scenario is actualized, the various units are expected not only to respond to multiple emerging incidents/actualities but also to be able to see the broader picture of the event. Michael Yair used the metaphor of a jigsaw puzzle to describe the work of doing so.

> Michael Yair: When we let our children assemble a jigsaw puzzle, we show them the picture on the box and the pieces of the puzzle. . . . [In the exercise] they don't have the picture and not all the pieces of the puzzle. They will never have all the pieces, that's the premise. . . . Sometimes very important pieces will be missing. I mean, in the final analysis you don't need to produce pieces of a puzzle, but a story. Whoever produces pieces of a puzzle could only provide a partial solution. [They must] create a picture and complete the missing pieces based on experience.
>
> The challenge is to produce a situation report that's close to [scenario] reality. . . . Every single [unit] produces a situation report according to their level. One of the central problems is that people don't know how to define the situation report elements that they need . . . to make decisions. Now, every second the elements change, because the event itself is dynamic. That's the greatest challenge, that's the greatest uncertainty.
>
> Limor Samimian-Darash: If I use your metaphor, not only do we not have all the pieces of the puzzle, the pieces we do have are constantly changing.
>
> Michael Yair: Constantly, and [exercise participants] don't understand that they are constantly changing.

The various participants in the exercise are expected to extract the broader event, the national scenario, from what they have locally experienced as multiple inci-

dents. They are asked by the Turning Point administration not simply to respond to the incidents that confront them but also to conceptualize and recognize emerging problems beyond specific manifestations. During situation report meetings I attended, participants were explicitly instructed not only to discuss specific incidents and responses but also to focus on the larger dilemmas those incidents evoked. In one such meeting, the head administrator responded to the police representative's report by asking, "What are the problems? The fact that the police initiated a committee to examine the jurisdictional status is what's important. I don't care about conclusions of that committee." The goal of the practicing units, then, is to extract problems from multiple actualities and understand the big picture beyond specific incidents. Doing so does not lead them back to the original scenario, what the administration terms "God's vision," but it enables them to understand what is significant beyond their local experiences and to decide how to proceed from that understanding.

Producing a situation report from the experience of a multiplicity of actual events is thus a key phase in the exercise, but it is not an end in itself. As Eyal Barak stressed, "The situation report is not the purpose. The situation report is a tool for us to know what the problems are for which we need to find solutions; these are the implications of the situation report." Thus only when a situation report is assembled does understanding begin to emerge of the problems that must be prepared for.

How to prepare for future uncertainty, then, paradoxically involves the generation of more uncertainty (multiple changing actualities). Once actualized, the well-written scenario, one with an hour-by-hour resolution, creates new incidents and unexpected reactions that affect the original scenario event. Moreover, in putting together a situation report on the basis of the specific incidents they encounter, the participating units can never replicate the scenario event created by the administration. Once that scenario is actualized, it triggers subevents that alter its contours. The practicing units are then expected to reveal the broader events beyond the specific incidents presented to them, to extract the larger picture from multiple actualities, and to pose new possible problems.

CONCLUSION: Scenarios, Uncertainty, and Critical Limitations

Marieke de Goede (2008) argues that the scenario is not merely about capturing future uncertainty or knowing the unknown. As the current case demonstrates, scenarios involve practices of both remediation of already known events and premediation of a future. At the same time, they refer neither to a specific

past nor to a predicted future event. As Richard Grusin (2004, 28) explains, "Premediation is not only a creation of possible futures in a videogame logic of algorithmic possibilities (if this choice is made, then this and that happens), as is the case with risk-based technology. Instead, premediation works through the virtual as understood by the Bergsonian Deleuze, that is, a governing of the future-present as a multiplicity that is brought about." Elsewhere, Grusin (2010, 59) asserts that, "while premediation often takes the form (as in the run-up to the Iraq War) of the proliferation of specific possibilities, or particular scenarios, the generation of these specific possibilities entails the remediation of potentialities or virtualities out of which future actions, decisions, or events might (or might not) emerge."

Scenarios create a multiplicity of actual events that invoke uncertainty through unexpected reactions and interactions. Moreover, through its actualization, the scenario event is remediated; that is, the multiplicity of events it creates feeds back into the parent event. This dynamic evokes the unexpected, derived not from the unknown future—uncertainty—but from the practice of the scenario itself, that is, its performativity. In other words, uncertainty is involved not only in the way the future is conceptualized, in the discursive level of narrative, but also—perhaps primarily—in a scenario's dispositional effect, its actualization. Additionally, the unexpected effects generated through exercises like Turning Point enable the extraction of new problems the system needs to prepare for.

The current case analysis may move us from one mode of governing, via biopolitical security apparatuses and risk-based technologies, to another mode, of preparedness and uncertainty-based technologies, but this change should not be idealized; that is, the scenario has its own problematic externalities and critical limitations.

In *Designing Human Practices*, Paul Rabinow and Gaymon Bennett (2012, 52) distinguish between three modes of expert engagement in diverse problem spaces. Each mode of engagement has externalities and critical limitations. If externalities are produced through a particular mode but are not taken explicitly into account, they can become "critical limitations—that is, they can introduce structural incapacities." That is, if externalities refer to what is excluded by a particular mode of thought, critical limitations refer to that which cannot be thought through this mode.

The scenario, as an uncertainty-based technology, takes into account the critical limitations of risk-based technology and its modes of assessing and controlling the future through past experience. Moreover, as expressed in action,

scenarios not only conceptualize the future differently from what risk-based, actuarial reason licenses but they also enable a distinct form of action. Consideration of real threats is important when constructing a scenario to make it appear plausible and serious to participants and thus to evoke the unexpected through its actualization.

In this regard, the rationale of the scenario sidesteps a logical fallacy underlying many strategic planning approaches, what Henry Mintzberg (1994, 239) famously identifies as the fallacy of predetermination. In his words:

> The process of strategy making usually takes place precisely because the world does not hold still. Because planning, in the absence of an ability to control the environment, must rely on forecasting, and because forecasting amounts to extrapolation of known states, existing trends, or recurring patterns, planning typically works best under conditions of relative stability.

Similarly, and more broadly, anthropological studies criticize the fallacy of control assumed by planning experts. This body of work examines the other side of planning processes, their elusive promise, the failure and messiness of governing and planning. However, rather than considering modes of governing that differ from or go beyond risk and risk-rationality–based planning, these studies confine themselves to presenting their critical limitations. One can argue that risk-based technology is still the primary focus of their anthropological analysis. As Simone Abram and Gisa Weszkalnys (2013, 22) argue, "At all levels of state and local planning, gaps between what is designed and what is built, theory and practice, or what is said and what is done have tended to constitute a major object of concern for local actors and ethnographers alike."

My analysis adds to the discussion of planning and, particularly, to the idea of failure in planning by considering a distinctive option for governing and by demonstrating a form of governing that is not intended to design a future of controlled specified possibilities. On the contrary, generating the unexpected forms part of the process of constructing problems of preparedness through the scenario exercise. Rather than taking failure as an external object of concern, as a critical limitation to governing, this modality addresses it internally.

What, then, are the critical limitations of uncertainty-based technologies, particularly the scenario? If risk-based technologies convert reality into tameable possibilities, and thus provides the appearance of control, how does the proliferation of the unexpected in the scenario affect the reality of participants in Turning Point, and of preparedness in Israel more broadly?

When I asked Eyal Barak about how the exercise has evolved from year to year, he answered:

> First, the scope has changed. At first we talked about dozens of missiles, then we talked about hundreds, and now we are talking about thousands. Secondly, the content; for example, the scenarios at Turning Point 5 and 6 were on the matter of chemical threats, and we dealt with how long the batteries of the masks would hold, and those who have and those who do not have masks, or a biological threat. Today, the scenario is completely different. [Lastly,] the change stems not only from the scenarios themselves; the change stems from the fact that seven or ten years ago the number of government offices that had a body that deals with emergencies was relatively small. For example, the Ministry of Health already had an emergency department, it always had a strong department, but all other ministries were barely aware of civil emergency preparedness.

Not only do the types of threats in the scenario vary from year to year but the fronts and the number of participating units are also expanding. In addition, the system that deals with civil preparedness has changed and continues to do so. More governmental ministries are establishing emergency-response departments and engaging more frequently in emergency-preparedness activities. Hence the chronic uncertainty manufactured during preparedness scenarios, through events that are written to seem as if they are real, has over time produced a real reality of emergency. In other words, a scenario designed to prepare for an uncertain future in practice feeds notions of uncertainty and revives it from year to year, through the exercise itself and then in reality. Thus the narrative becomes action, that is, both the means and the end of this technology.

In June 2016, after Turning Point 15, I met with the head of the exercise administration to discuss my observations. I shared my reflections on the exercise and the scenario's mode of action. At the end of our conversation, I asked him, "What's next?" I wanted to know what the scenario for the next exercise would be and how its narrative would differ from earlier ones. Specifically, I was interested in how the future would be narrated and how emergency and uncertainty would be designed into the next year's scenario. He responded only that there would definitely be another Turning Point and that preparations would start in a few months.

The scenario modality, then, creates a chronic mode of preparedness. It leads to continuing preparations, generates more uncertainty, poses new prob-

lems, and eventually results in repetition of the exercise every year. Thus, by practicing uncertainty, the scenario not only invokes difference but also—by its very nature—repeatedly constitutes a turning point for the next event to come.

ABSTRACT

In this article, I analyze how the Turning Point scenario-based exercise works as a technology-based uncertainty, both in its conceptualization of the future and in its enactment. The Israeli preparedness exercise involves the activation of and reaction to a chosen event, one that does not replicate the past or attempt to predict the future. Though designed to challenge responders, the scenario does not represent a worst-case event but a plausible one. With this technology, the Israeli preparedness system is directed neither toward producing specific responses nor toward discovering the best solutions for an unknown future. Rather, the technology generates uncertainty through its execution, from which new problems are extracted. I examine both the discursive and the dispositional aspects of the Turning Point scenario, approaching it as a narrative put into action. I thus go beyond the conceptualization of the future underlying this technology and address how it practices uncertainty. [scenario; uncertainty; preparedness; security; risk]

NOTES

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1. All names are pseudonyms.
2. Since 2014, I have conducted fieldwork on Turning Point. Data presented in this article derive from fifteen months of participant observation of preparations for the 2014 and 2015 exercises, as well as from a review of documents and publications from previous exercises.
3. In Michel Foucault's (2007) final iteration, governmentality is an umbrella term for those "arts of government" that include the domain of ethics, plus more directly coercive modes of governance—exploitation, domination, and subjugation. Biopolitical governmentality is thus one sort of governmentality among others.
4. The Israeli case is interesting in combining elements of both schemata—the biopolitical security of the population as well as the security of vital systems.
5. Åsa Boholm (2003, 168), for example, concedes that "many of the risk issues facing late modern society fall into the [unmanageable] category" for lack of relevant knowledge, but asserts that "in those instances we could expect the development of other, more culturally informed strategies to cope with risk."
6. Conflicts include the War of Independence (1948), the Sinai War (1956), the Six-Day War (1967), the War of Attrition (1969–70), the Yom Kippur War (1973), the First

Lebanon War (1982–85), and the Second Lebanon War (with Hezbollah, 2006). Three military campaigns against Hamas, not designated as wars by the government, have occurred along the Gaza border (2008, 2012, and 2014).

7. This dialogue and others presented in the article are taken directly from the author's field notes. Some of the contextual information has been condensed, but participants' statements have not been altered beyond obvious insertions and deletions.

8. Gilles Deleuze's (1994) concepts of the virtual and the actual can help explain the relationship between the event and its incidents.

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