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Security and Everyday Life

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Pope John Paul II in the Holy City

Vida Bajc

INTRODUCTION

Whether we watch them on television or participate in situ, large-scale public events are occasions that draw attention to the involvement of the state security apparatus in how such events are practiced. The visit of the late Pope John Paul II to Jerusalem in 2000 prompted the headline of The Jerusalem Post to read “The Biggest Security Blitz to Guard Pope Here.” The Summer Olympic Games in 2004 in Greece were so infused with security that the LA Times dubbed them ‘the Summer Security Games.’ More than 7 miles of barricades, rooftop sharpshooters, scores of cameras, and body searches of each and every person who entered the grounds of the Capitol in Washington D.C. were used during the second inauguration of President George W. Bush in 2005. So forthcoming were the Turkish surveillance and security measures during the 2006 visit of the current Pope Benedict XVI that the New York Times was prompted to report on helicopters hovering over Ankara, police commandos in uniforms spread throughout the streets, and sharpshooters trigger-ready on the rooftops of the buildings overlooking the path of the Pope’s entourage. I suggest that through these surveillance technologies and procedures, a security apparatus—an assemblage of different agencies, institutions, professionals, private enterprises, and technologies, mobilized for the purpose of providing security—frames how such public activity is practiced.

The security apparatus works under the assumption that uncertainty of the mundane social life and its potentialities of disorder are a threat to the practicing of public events. Such uncertainty is understood to be something dangerous and potentially violent. Included in this assumption is another premise; namely, that during public events, disorder cannot be tolerated. The apparatus therefore seeks to control unpredictability to be able to ensure that public events will take place as intended and without any disturbance. My analysis of the involvement of the security apparatus in the second inauguration of President Bush in Washington D.C. in 2005 suggests that for a security apparatus, control of uncertainty during public events means the ability of its operatives and technologies to create a safe enclosure by
controlling movement of people, objects, and information to and within this social space (Bajc 2007b). This study also demonstrates that the process itself through which the apparatus brings about this social space of safety has a ritual form. What I call security meta-ritual is a process of control of space and time, through which the security apparatus transforms social reality so that public activity can unfold within the domain of this secured space and time.

This relationship between the ritual activity of the security apparatus and the practicing of the public event is hierarchical in that the public activity is subjected to the order created through the transformative activity of the security apparatus. This hierarchy can be expressed in terms of a meta-relationship. The prefix ‘meta’ signifies a higher level activity about a lower level phenomenon; that is, the security meta-ritual is a kind of ritual activity performed to shape the process of another ritual—namely, the public event. I suggest that through this hierarchical relationship, conditions are created for the security meta-ritual activity to frame the process of the public event it purports to protect. I base my argument on the nature of meta-framing, originally articulated by Bateson (2000 [1972]) in his essay “A Theory of Play and Fantasy.” I use the case of the visit of the late Pope John Paul II to Jerusalem in March 2000 and the security meta-ritual performed by the Israeli security apparatus to demonstrate how security practices meta-framed the course of the Pope’s visit.

UNCERTAINTY AND THE META-FRAMING OF SAFETY

As anyone who recently attended public rituals of the kind discussed here has been able to observe, the geographical area within which people gather to participate in the event is sectioned off from the rest of the social environment and encircled by a physical barrier. The barrier, closely guarded by the security operatives, is impermeable except for the specific number of designated openings through which only those approved by the apparatus are able to enter. Within the enclosure, there are few if any signs of normal routine daily life; small stores and coffee shops are closed, there are no random cars or bicycles passing by or parked on the street, people do not stroll about along the pavement, and the traffic lights do not serve their usual purpose. It is only outside the enclosure and farther away from its barrier that social life resembles the routine daily life as it is lived in that area. We observe that within the enclosure, a new social reality is brought into existence with the purpose of providing an ordered and controlled social space for public ritual activities.

For this new security-sanctioned order of safety to emerge and exist as such for the duration of a public ritual, the people involved need to see and interpret this reality as being void of danger and safe for a public event. This means that participants see the order inside the enclosure as qualitatively different in relation to the uncertain and potentially dangerous reality that lies outside its boundary; that is, the boundary which maintains the enclosure is understood as clearly and effectively separating the two realities. This suggests that the boundary is the point of reference in relation to which the two realities are distinguished and kept apart. The chain of fences, metal barriers, metal detectors, concrete blocks, surveillance cameras, and security operatives physically separate the social activity inside the enclosure from whatever goes on outside of its domain. These various elements of the security apparatus communicate to the people within the enclosure that the reality of which they are a part is indeed safe. As participants’ transition through metal detectors, surveillance cameras, identity confirmation, and body searches for explosives, they confirm the validity of this transformative process of the security meta-ritual. Should the people involved perceive this transition from the reality of uncertainty into the reality of safety as ambiguous or ineffective, and the boundary between uncertainty and certainty as permeable and porous, the clear distinction between disorder and order, uncertainty and safety, vulnerability and protection would be dissolved. I suggest that what enables this perception of the distinction between the uncertain world of the every day and the safety inside the bounded domain is meta-framing.

In thinking about this process, I follow the principles formulated by anthropologist Gregory Bateson (Bateson 2000a [1972]). Bateson studied the evolution of communication and the development of human language. During his observations of how young monkeys interact, Bateson noticed how, at some moment, the monkeys were sitting around idling, then, at the next, they began to play, and after a series of interactions they stopped playing and went back to idling. This play looked very much like combat yet monkeys understood that it was play. They would bite each other as if they were fighting yet those bites were not bites of combat but playful nips. The monkeys were using the behavior of combat to play, denoting that what would otherwise be understood as combat was in this instance understood as play.

Bateson concluded that monkeys were able to exchange messages with each other in ways that were meaningful to them at multiple levels of abstraction; that is, their exchange of information was meta-communicative. The signals they were exchanging with each other not only communicated a change from just sitting around in boredom to some different activity. That same exchange of information also conveyed that this new reality in which they were engaging was to be understood as play. What subsumed all other messages exchanged was the meta-message “This is play.” This meta-message, Bateson reasoned, was able to frame the new reality as play because the new reality was defined in relation to, and as distinct from, the reality which immediately preceded it, namely, the not-play. This distinction between what was before and what succeeded it was maintained through a clear-cut boundary between the two realities. This boundary became a point of reference for how the new activity was to be interpreted. The boundary that framed the new activity was the meta-message “This is
Play." Bateson emphasized that this formulation of framing applied to situations in which there is "an instance of signals standing for other events" and where "actions denote, but are different from, other actions" such as in ritual, play, threat, and deceit (Bateson 2000a [1972]).

For Bateson, this cultural capacity to envision and create a new reality is an epistemological problem: what is the process through which a particular reality comes to exist as such? This problem becomes focused on the framing of an emerging reality rather than the frame itself. It is centered on the process through which a frame and the reality it encloses come to exist rather than the nature and the working of that frame. In Bateson's terms, framing means meta-communication. Framing provides a direction and sets the parameters for a sequence of developments through which one social activity becomes separated from another. This hierarchical relationship between the two realities established through meta-communicative framing subordinates the new social world to the meta-message of its boundary. The boundary that comes to separate the new reality from its surrounding is a meta-message which frames, shapes, and articulates the social activity within its domain. It frames the social activity because it is a meta-message.

This particular epistemological position treats framing as a linear process; that is, the formation of conditions under which a particular kind of social activity emerges is a unidirectional process which begins with some basic reality and concludes with the newly emerging social world in such a way that the activity within the new reality is subordinated to the meta-message of its boundary. This formulation results in a deterministic relationship which renders the content within the enclosure dependent on the meta-message that its boundary has come to represent. This reasoning also gives primacy to cognitive communication over emotional and embodied experiences and leaves aside the perceptions of reality through the aesthetics of social space.

Sociologist Erving Goffman (1986 [1974]), who based much of his frame analysis on Bateson's case, tried to avoid this linearity by formulating his essay as a question of the organization of conditions that make a particular interpretation of an experience of reality possible. For Goffman, this meant abandoning Bateson's meta-logic, introducing variability into the relationship between a frame and the activity within the frame through the concept of keying and that of lamination, and refocusing frame theory to make it applicable to all social situations. Goffman's work redirected frame theory toward questions about different types of frames, how frames are put together, and how they are used. This has become the foundation for the study of framing in much of social sciences, particularly the research on reception of mass-mediated communication, human cognition in interpersonnel communication, power and persuasion in politics, and formation and agility of social movements (see Benford and Snow 2000). Largely unexplored, however, remain the processes through which conditions are created so that a particular reality and the frame which sustains it are brought to existence.

A major effort in this direction is the work of anthropologist Don Handelman (2006a, b) through his analysis of ritual and play. Handelman makes it an important point of departure the emphasis on differences in how parameters are set for a new reality to emerge. These parameters, argues Handelman, are culturally specific. Different contexts yield different types of processes through which frames and the realities they enclose come to exist. This would suggest that different initial conditions generate different kinds of forms of social organization that then enable variable types of frames to emerge. Handelman refers to the Batesonian framing through hierarchical interdependency as a "lineal" type. This type of framing depends on establishing a clear distinction between the reality inside the frame and that which remains outside by imposing a clear-cut boundary between them. Elsewhere, Handelman (2004: 3–42) suggests that this exclusionary logic is characteristic of bureaucratic systems. Such cultural systems generate realities with impermeable and unambiguous boundaries that divide the world into exclusive categories. Each element in the social world must fit into an assigned category. Participation in one reality excludes a person from the possibility of being a part in another reality. In this sense, the pinnacle of creation through this logic is the security apparatus itself for which social life is divided into clear-cut categories of safe and dangerous, unpredictable and certain, pure and polluted, desirable and undesirable.

I suggest that exclusionary meta-framing can help us understand how the security apparatus separates public ritual activity from the uncertainty of the everyday life and frames the course of a public event by bringing to existence a reality of public safety. Following the logic of exclusionary meta-framing, for the reality of safety to be conceived there needs to be willingness on the part of those who initiate the framing to set apart from the reality of the everyday life. To desire differentiation means to envision the new order as qualitatively different in relation to that given reality. As envisioned by the security apparatus, the reality of safety is a kind of social world in which all possible uncertainties and indeterminacies should be eliminated. Nothing may be left to chance. All possible future scenarios are envisioned and preempted so that human and nonhuman activity can be in its proper place, ordered according to the template of the apparatus, and controlled by the apparatus throughout the duration of the public event.

In the case of public ritual activity, this vision begins to emerge into what will become a new reality when an initiative is provided to separate the public event from the uncertainty of the daily life. This initiative comes from the security apparatus that designates a particular public event as vulnerable to disruption. Because disorder is threatening to the apparatus whose conception of the world is made of unambiguous categories, the apparatus declares that the public event must be protected from interference. This designation and the decision to protect the event are communicated to the public through the mass media. This mass-mediated information also communicates the initiative to separate the public activity from the routine everyday life. This allows for a cognitive shift by the public away from the daily life and its uncertainties and indeterminacies, and diverts
public attention toward whatever is coming. Once the public perception is shifted, it does not take some random path. Rather, this shift is diverted in a particular direction by those who do the framing. This renders framing meta-communicative in that the direction of communication is from the apparatus via the mass media toward the public. Neither does the new reality begin to take a random form. What is to take shape is patterned after something already known and meaningful to the public. That is to say, the emerging reality is qualitatively different in relation to the reality from which it is differentiated but familiar in that it resonates with some aspects of the collective memory of those involved. This meta-communication sets the conditions and lays out the parameters that will enable the creation of the reality of safety: surveillance and sanctioning by the apparatus of all movement to and within which will become the reality of safety.

As Goffman (1986) emphasizes, framing is as much a matter of mind as it is of the organization of social activity but it is also a specific human experience of that activity in a particular place and time. Framing is cognitively conceived and communicated, but what enables framing to materialize is that it is practiced and experienced through a particular form of social organization and social ordering. The analysis of the second presidential inauguration of President Bush demonstrates that the kind of social ordering which enables setting in motion the process through which the reality of safety is brought to existence has a ritual form (Bajc 2007b). This security meta-ritual is a ritual of order the purpose of which is to effectively and efficiently perform the separation from uncertainty and the transformation of people and their sociocultural space so that a reality of safety can be made possible. This is a type of ritual whose practice is aimed neither to achieve social solidarity nor realistic social membership, as is the case with the Durkheimian kinds of ritual. This type of ritual is performed to facilitate change on the social world for the purpose of some social activity. The elements that comprise the process of this type of ritual, however, are common to other kinds of ritual practices. All possible resources are mobilized to achieve the ritual outcome. The people involved are all expected to follow the ritual script as it is meant to be performed. The transformation involves purification of a designated physical space and people within it. The meaning of the meta-constitution of the security ritual is in the belief that the security apparatus of the modern state and its technologies and techniques can be effectively utilized to prevent disorder and control uncertainty in all contexts and for all purposes.

Once the unpredictable world of uncertainty has been kept outside of the domain of the reality of safety and the new reality brought to existence through separation of insiders from outsiders and safe from unsafe, what enables the emerging social world to exist as different is a boundary that encloses the new activity and keeps it separated from everything else in that context. In line with Bateson’s reasoning, to be able to keep the two social worlds effectively separated, the boundary must communicate to those implicated within the enclosure how they are to interpret the new activity. This boundary is therefore a meta-message that conveys to the people involved how they should orient themselves within the new reality. The boundary communicates to the people involved the Batesonian meta-message of “This is Order.” This message means that the reality of safety is void of uncertainty, ordered according to the template of the apparatus, and therefore secure. It is meaningful to the people involved because they have gone through the transformative process of the security meta-ritual. They understand that beyond the boundary of the reality of safety lies the uncertain and potentially dangerous world. The meta-message conveys that conditions are now created for the public event to take place as intended. Within this controlled space, the public event will be able to unfold, step by step, day by day, following the structure of the public event but always in relation to the meta-message of the security apparatus: “This is Order.”

In the following text, I discuss the process of the security meta-framing of the visit of the late Pope John Paul II to Jerusalem in March 2000. The ailing Pope had an extended stay in the area that lasted for 6 days, and he moved within the Israeli and the Palestinian communities, crossing national, religious, and political boundaries not customarily crossed. The Israeli security apparatus announced the process of separation from the uncertainty of daily life in Jerusalem through Operation Old Friend, a process which shifted attention away from the daily routine social life in the city and directed people’s focus on practices through which the apparatus began to create the reality of safety. This security meta-ritual mobilized all security forces and their technologies. It achieved cooperation of the Israelis and the Palestinians, the secular and the religious, the local and the foreign pilgrims. The purification process created a ‘sterile zone’ of safety and kept those deemed unsafe outside its domain. Inside this reality and through its meta-message, communicated symbolically through the images of the Pope’s body, the apparatus framed every step of the activities of the Pope’s visit. I present two examples of the framing of the Pope’s activities: the open-air mass on the Mount of Beatitudes and the Pope’s unplanned return to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre for prayer on Calvary. The data are a part of my ongoing ethnographic field research in Jerusalem (see Bajc n.d.).

THE NEWS OF THE POPE’S VISIT TO JERUSALEM IN 2000

Security meta-framing of public events is most visible when such events require extensive participation of the general public and when their activities occupy extensive public areas and disrupt the daily routine social life. In this regard, the coming of the Pope John Paul II to Jerusalem in March 2000 was an extraordinary event. It was not simply a visit of another dignitary whose whereabouts could be reduced to a handful of invited politicians and journalists and contained at the prime minister’s residence in
Jerusalem. The visit required public participation unlike any other in that not only the local dignitaries and officials but also Christians locally and from around the world were expected to attend. It interchangeably involved the religious and the secular, the political and the nonpolitical, and multiple spaces populated by the Israelis and the Palestinians. The activities surrounding the visit stretched out across a large geographic area and lasted 6 days, from March 21 to March 26, which is far beyond a regular visit of a dignitary.

The Pope's arrival was announced with the 'shock' notice. There were rumors in the city that Pope John Paul II might be coming on a pilgrimage in 2000 to honor the Jubilee Year, a Roman Catholic tradition that encourages the followers to visit the biblical sites in the Holy Land and the holy sites in Rome (see Macioti 2002). Yet, no one knew for certain whether he was coming, and there was hardly any mention about it in the Israeli or the Palestinian media. Weeks before his scheduled arrival, it was suddenly announced that the Pope was coming to Jerusalem. Such 'short notice' tends to be typical, particularly for events that are planned, designed, and carried out in a way that allows them to be fully broadcast live on domestic and international television. These broadcasts interrupt the daily routine television programming and keep the audiences in front of their television screens so that the social process of viewing in people's homes creates a ritual connection to the event outside (Dayan and Katz 1992).

The Pope's journey had a profound symbolic significance for several issues: religious claims to Jerusalem by Christians, Jews, and Muslims in the context of the peace negotiations between the Israelis and the Palestinians; the reconciliation between Christian and Jewish theology; and the attempts by the Vatican to legitimate both the already-established state of Israel and the continuous struggle for Palestinian statehood. The visit took place when the Israeli-Palestinian peace process was at its peak. The significance of these events began to be widely debated on Israeli and Palestinian streets and closely followed by their media.

In light of this context, the visit was designed to symbolically reconcile the complex dynamics of social relations between the three monotheistic religions represented in the city. This required crossing of spaces and intergroup boundaries usually not routinely transgressed in Jerusalem. It necessitated taking on several different roles not customarily a part of state visits. For John Paul II, this was the first visit to the Holy Land. As a pilgrim he requested a series of private visits and prayers at various sites scattered throughout the area. He was flown with his private entourage in a helicopter between places along the Jordanian border, the West Bank, and northern Israel. His visit was also a carefully orchestrated diplomatic attempt to set into motion an interfaith dialogue between the three monotheistic religions represented in Jerusalem and encourage the political dialogue between the two political entities. This, too, required movement between the Palestinian and the Jewish populated areas. The Pope met with the Ashkenazi and the Sephardi chief rabbis in the Jewish Quarter in the Old City. He visited the Israeli president at his residence in West Jerusalem as well as the late Palestinian Chairman Yasser Arafat at his residence in Bethlehem. He also held an inter-religious meeting between the heads of the three religions in the Palestinian-populated east Jerusalem.

The Pope also had to be a pope. He responded to invitations of a number of small Christian communities in Jerusalem to visit their respective churches. This meant movement through narrow, windy streets and alleys of the Old City of Jerusalem and moving through the Christian, Jewish, and Muslim neighborhoods, lines rarely crossed by political dignitaries. It also meant physical exposure and close proximity to members of these communities. The height of the visit was his open-air Mass for Youth at the Mount of Beatitudes in the northern part of Israel by the Sea of Galilee. During the tenure of John Paul II, such masses were known to attract a very large number of pilgrims from the Catholic countries around the world. This meant that there also had to be a way to allow at least some Christians from inside Israel, the West Bank, and Gaza to participate. It is the scope of this public event that made the process of the security meta-ritual and its framing of the Pope's visit unusually visible.

SETTING PARAMETERS AND CONDITIONS FOR THE CREATION OF REALITY OF SAFETY: THE TRANSFORMATIVE PROCESS OF THE SECURITY META-RITUAL

The process of separation from uncertainty and the shift in public perception was distinctly marked with a name of its own: Operation Old Friend. The play on the words "old friend" is a reminder of the long-unresolved relationship between Christians and Jews and, more recently, between Israel and the Vatican. The notion of "operation" signifies agency, a large-scale process of treatment of the body, an individual body in medicine and a social body in the military. It is a treatment with a series of acts that remedy its injury and deformity with precision and efficacy. If "Old Friend" is a conundrum attributed to the play of historical forces beyond control, "operation" is a noun of confidence and exactness of the military and the surgical type of intervention.

The "shock" notice of Operation Old Friend was the starting point of the unfolding of the security procedures as ritual, framing the cognitive shift in a specific direction. It came with the announcement of "the biggest security operation ever for a visit to Israel." The security operation was considered 'unprecedented.' As the prominence of the security apparatus in its role of exerting order under conditions of uncertainty has grown in the eyes of the public, such superlatives in the working of the apparatus are becoming increasingly common (see also Bajc 2007b). They endow the security practices in their goal of eliminating uncertainty with ritual power. The media
continuously attributed ‘the scale of the operation to the sensitive religious significance of the pontiff’s visit.’ Indeed, the ‘unprecedented operation’ was not related to a threat to the life of the Pope. The media continuously reassured its audiences that the protective measures were “not based on any intelligence information on a threat to the Pope.” To the security apparatus, uncertainty does not mean knowledge or prediction that disorder will actually occur. Rather, uncertainty means a possibility of disorder of the kind that can not be allowed or tolerated.

Resonance with Collective Memory

This framing of the shift in perception made sense to the Israeli public, and it resonated with their collective memories. Benford and Snow (2000: 619) write that resonance refers to “why some framings seem to be effective or ‘resonate’ while others do not” (see also Snow and Corrigan-Brown 2005). In the case of security meta-ritual, framing resonates with people because it draws on their collective memory. Kimerling (1985) reports that, at least until the visit of Anwar el-Sadat to Israel in 1977, the Israeli society perceived every instance of warfare in the series of wars with its neighbors as a threat to the whole society. A possible defeat in a war would be perceived as a total annihilation of the Israeli society. Israeli institutions, from the Israeli Defense Forces to the Jerusalem Holocaust Museum, remain committed to the vision of Israel as a ‘nation-in-arms’ that must be able to protect itself from any attempt of destruction (Handelman 2004: 105). The absence of threat and the loss of such collective memory would take away the meaning and therefore the existence and the practice of the security meta-ritual.

An accident few days before the Pope arrived elucidated the reality of the threat and the possibility that something could go wrong in the minds of many people in Jerusalem. The public was informed shortly before the visit that “a wind gust blew down the stage” at the Mount of Beatitudes “on which the Pope was to have stood to speak to some 100,000 people during his visit to Israel next week.” The church officials were publicly blamed for the accident because they chose not to cancel their contract with a Palestinian company after the security apparatus took over the arrangements for the event. “The project administration at the prime minister’s office, in charge of the preparations for the Pope’s visit,” the media reported, “claims that the church representatives are responsible for the collapse, because they chose the contractor who built it.” The report concluded that “dozens of Israel Electric Corporation Workers were recruited to rebuild the stage, 30 meters long [and] 20 meters wide.” One of the officials from the Catholic Church actively involved in overseeing the planning and the performance of the Pope’s visit lamented over this issue: “The Israelis were good hosts,” he related, “but they lacked awareness.” To perform a mass you need an altar, he explained, a table-like structure behind which the priest stands as he performs the mass and on which the various elements used in the administering of the mass are laid. “And they were building this huge altar that was going to be put on the stage” where all that was needed was a small table.

These details were lost among the Israeli public. Rather, the accident resonated deeply among the people at home and on the street as well as in the media because it recalled a similar accident in another event from the past. A bridge collapsed under a visiting Australian sports team during the 1997 Maccabiah Games, also called the Jewish Olympics, causing several team members to drown and left others injured. The collapse of the stage at the Mount of Beatitudes reassured the meta-framing of the security apparatus and the parameters and conditions it set for the creation of the reality of safety; namely, total control over each and every step surrounding the Pope’s visit through total control of mobility of people, objects, and information. The incident strengthened the validity of the process of the security meta-ritual and its constitutive elements: total mobilization of all possible resources, expected cooperation of all involved, and purification of places and people.

Mobilization of All Resources

The transformative process of the security meta-ritual demanded total mobilization of all possible forces. First and foremost, this included the media itself. It is through the mass media that the apparatus communicates its framing intentions and initiates the shift in public perception. Through the system of ‘pooling,’ a pre-paid arrangement between the state that organizes an event and a few major media corporations, it was ensured that only a handful of journalists were able to accompany the Pope and follow him on his route. Such an arrangement details exactly who is to be present in situ, how the event performers are to enact their role, and where the cameras are to be positioned during the process. It also specifies where the members of the security apparatus and its technologies are to be positioned in relation to these arrangements. Some 3,000 other journalists, who were not permitted to be present in situ at the events, rotated between the press centers in Bethlehem and in Jerusalem. Journalists complained bitterly about the press center in Bethlehem for what they saw as lack of organization. They praised the press center in Jerusalem where the footage, which had been filmed by the ‘pool’ and broadcast live on five TV channels, was transmitted simultaneously onto five huge television screens at the convention center. In addition to simultaneous viewing of coverage from multiple television channels, the press center in Jerusalem provided the journalists with printed leaflets with up-to-date information regarding sites visited, numbers of people at any given site, names of people present, contact information of spokespersons, and a great variety of other information regarding history, society, politics, and culture in Jerusalem. No such services were provided at the press center in Bethlehem, which offered a modestly equipped room staffed by a few volunteers. The two press centers served as hubs from which the majority of the journalists who came to cover the Pope’s
visit were reporting to their own respective media houses. The journalists sat at desks with high-speed Internet connections and transmitted their stories. In this way, the media engaged the audiences in the security meta-ritual by communicating and detailing its transformative practices.

Other elements of the security apparatus and its network of agencies were immediately mobilized. This included specially trained individuals and their institutions such as “the entire police force,” the Border Police, the General Security Service, the Israeli Defense Force, and the “various civil bodies.” It also included specific technologies and techniques for surveillance of the mobility of individuals and objects such as surveillance cameras “set up in Bethlehem and Nazareth and monitored in Jerusalem.”

Throughout the Old City of Jerusalem, long before the Pope’s visit, surveillance cameras had been placed visibly and conspicuously on the edge of the stone walls at every intersection and in the middle of every street. Each is facing its own direction, together covering a full spectral gaze of the entire space between the walls. The cameras continuously gaze at the daily movement of people and objects through the narrow streets and alleys of the Old City: merchants and their display of consumer goods, children hand-pulling carts full of merchandise, tourists, pilgrims carrying wooden crosses along Via Dolorosa, clergy on their way to service, housewives and their daily food shopping, and children running errands. The Pope would have nothing to fear. “From the very moment” he arrived, he was “under constant surveillance by the special VIP unit” of the General Security Service. All agents of security, those placed outside of the national boundaries, those positioned within, and those placed on the edge of borders with neighboring countries, all worked together toward a common goal of creating the reality of safety, ordered according to the vision of the security apparatus.

A reality of safety as conceived by the apparatus is a social space that is void of all uncertainty. For that reality to come to exist as such, uncertainty must be left outside of its domain. Everything must be done for uncertainty to remain in the social world beyond its boundary. Any presence of indeterminacy within the reality of safety would be considered a failure of the performance of the security meta-ritual because it would undermine the meta-message of “This is Order.” Therefore, while this process can stretch the limits of available social and natural resources, the security meta-ritual will nevertheless be performed according to the script because after the fact, the question always remains: could it not have been done more perfectly? Was it not possible to eliminate all uncertainty? One of the security meta-ritual performers publicly defended his decision to overextend the resources in the following terms: “The finance minister is blaming me for creating an unexpected deficit in the Israeli budget.” He noted that the Israeli government spent $7 million to prepare the sites. “About 5000 people [were] deployed each day,” he emphasized. Yet, despite the use of so many people, “God forbid, if something happens, people will say why not 10,000?”

The shift in perception away from the everyday and toward the new reality was framed in the direction of “the biggest security operation” and set the total surveillance and control of all mobility using all available means as the conditions that would enable the creation of the reality of safety. The statement “God forbid, if something happens, people will say why not 10,000” most lucidly captures the underlying logic built into the script of the security meta-ritual, the practicing of the form of social ordering through which the security apparatus transforms the everyday life to bring to existence the reality of safety during public events. The reality of safety is characterized by an assumption that uncertainty—that is, events that have not yet occurred—can be prevented from happening through preemptive actions made possible through total control of all social activity. Conventional risk assessment analysis in economics or in medicine, for example, is a process of weighing all possible risks against the costs associated with future actions so that steps to be taken in the future are those that are most cost-effective. The security meta-ritual, in contrast, is expected to bring to existence absolute certainty. This is predicated on having absolute control over what can possibly happen in the future. The preemptive actions are not weighted against the cost-effective activity. They are driven by the urge for maximum control of the ritual space and the human movement within. Beck (1995) observes that this urge to eliminate uncertainty is grounded in the belief that the security apparatus and its technologies and scientific knowledge are capable of bringing the uncertain under control. When uncertainty, perceived as a form of threat, resonates with collective experiences of the past, the perceptions of the reality of safety are subordinated to the meta-framing of the apparatus and the conditions it set for achieving that reality. Therefore, every measure possible will be taken to ensure that the creation of the reality of safety is made possible and all available resources and all activity will be subordinated to this end.

Cooperation of All Involved

To subordinate human activity to the security meta-framing means to get people to agree to adjust their behavior in accordance with the security imperative. For many people in Jerusalem, the security meta-ritual was disruptive to their day-to-day life. The streets leading through the center were blocked off closer to the area of the Old City and the public transportation was rerouted. While some Jerusalemites may have been indifferent or perhaps even not agreeable to the Pope visiting the city, they accepted that, once the Pope arrived, there was no other choice but ordering of people’s movement to ensure the visit would not be interrupted. A city official lamented that some people in Jerusalem complained that using all available means toward the goal of the reality of safety inconvenienced their life by overly disturbing their daily routine. “This week some people are not happy that they can’t move around the city,” he lamented. Yet, he added,
these disturbances would be accepted as necessary because people in Jerusalem understand the need for security and elimination of uncertainty. "It's important that the Pope will come and leave healthy," he emphasized. "We want to avoid any possibility that anyone would do something that would cause damage. You don't need to convince people about this. They know it is important that the visit goes smoothly." The security apparatus assumes that the people in Jerusalem will cooperate and willingly adjust their activities in relation to the parameters set by the apparatus.

Rituals require cooperation. As Dayan and Katz (1992: 19) assert in their analysis of the organization and the working of the media events, "public approval is required for an event to succeed; official events cannot be imposed on the unwilling or unbelieving." Indeed, not only Jerusalemites cooperated. So did the "Palestinian counterparts," as the media called them, those who in times of real warfare are on the side of the enemy. The Palestinians did not simply cooperate. As the media reported, they participated as an "equal partner" from the "areas under their jurisdiction." At the time of the visit, the area beyond the so-called Green line of 1967 was divided into three areas of jurisdiction. The Israelis assigned are C to themselves. Area A was given to the Palestinian Authority. Area B had a status of shared control by the two. But even the local politics was subordinated to the security imperative. The Palestinians worked together with the Israelis "in preparing for the medical arrangements" such as "appoint[ing] a cardiologist of their own to accompany the Pope during the visit to Bethlehem and other areas under [the Palestinian] jurisdiction." With forces now joined, no less than 17,695 police officers would be responsible for securing the Pope—and the tens of thousands of pilgrims expected with him—throughout the country and the Palestinian Authority areas. In the same breath, the report continued that "the Pope [would] spend a full day in Bethlehem and a half-day in Nazareth," effectively blurring the boundaries between the Palestinians inside Israel who are Israeli citizens and therefore move freely, such as those living in Nazareth, and the Palestinians who live beyond the 1967 border and enjoy no such freedoms, such as those in Bethlehem.

Great efforts were also made to achieve full cooperation from the incoming pilgrims, who, at least at that time, were not accustomed to the security procedures that have long been a part of life for the people in Jerusalem. The Israeli border crossing procedures were known to be long and tedious. Many visitors felt insulting to their notion of privacy. Particularly those who traveled to Jerusalem individually rather than in groups complained about the Israeli airport security procedures. They found the questions asked by the airport security, the unrestricted inspection of their belongings, and the long interrogation and cross-examination invasive of their privacy. Travel agents who organize tour groups to Jerusalem try to spare their clients from these experiences by employing a person with special airport security clearance who mediates between the tour group and the airport security services. The apparatus is generally not bothered by the delays and the complaints about their security procedures at the airport because, as they say, they are merely doing their job. The security meta-ritual, however, required full cooperation from the incoming visitors. It required that the pilgrims understood that it was necessary for them to adjust their attitudes and behavior to the security imperative and the parameters set by the apparatus. To this end, "some 300 religious leaders and heads of Italian pilgrim groups met with El Al security officers in Rome" the media reported, "to have the airline's rigorous security checks explained to them."

The apparatus reached out to the pilgrims and their group leaders to make them shift their perception from what they otherwise deemed reasonable and necessary checking at border crossings to the security measures executed at the Israeli border crossings. "The Rome conference," the media reported, "was held to prepare community leaders for their visit to Israel and to brief them on the kinds of questions they should expect at El Al security." The shift in perception was successful, the media concluded, as "the community leaders and religious people who took part in the meeting welcomed the initiative and expressed their understanding on this sensitive topic." Adjusting to the parameters set by the apparatus meant that, when the pilgrims began their journey, they adjusted their behavior according to the security imperative. The "No Joking" signs that have recently been posted in several U.S. airports are meant to achieve the same shift in perception by setting the parameters: you are now in the domain of the security apparatus—behave as expected. Once all involved have willingly adjusted to the parameters set by the apparatus, their movement to and within the reality of safety could be perfectly planned and executed. There would be no delays, no problems, no complaints, and no conflict. Everything would work smoothly. The apparatus, including the bus company, the police, and the customs authority, were now able to simply board the pilgrims on some 800 buses and arrange for them to be transported "from the airport without their having to pass through the airport terminal." With everyone cooperating and following instructions, security procedures were able to be "carried out on the pilgrims in their countries of origin before their departure for Israel." The apparatus works under the assumption that whatever is best in the eyes of the security apparatus is best for everyone involved (see Buzan, Waever, and de Wilde 1998). Its meta-framing means that following the parameters set by the apparatus to achieve the reality of safety necessarily silences perceptions alternative to the logic of the security apparatus. Those who partake in a public event also partake in the security meta-ritual. The ritual engagement in the former is dependent on the cooperation in the latter.

**Purification of Participants and Social Spaces**

Through the use of all available resources and cooperation of everyone involved, the apparatus sterilizes the social space within which the public event is to take place, and transforms that space and its people into
a purified ritual space within which the reality of safety can be brought to existence. This process takes place in multiple ways. Whenever possible, the apparatus discourages people from participating in the public event. This alleviates the performance of the security meta-ritual. When a detailed road itinerary of the Pope’s entourage was made public, it was provided with a prognostic course of the traffic congestion: “A sturdy pair of walking shoes will get many people in Jerusalem next week a whole lot farther than a set of wheels.” As it befits the occasion, crowds should accompany the Pope’s procession through the city, but continuous associations between crowds and traffic jams persuaded Jerusalemites, accustomed to driving to their destinations in the city, that they were better off staying away. “Parking along many of the capital’s streets will be severely disrupted,” the media predicted, and the roads on which the Pope would be traveling would be closed to traffic. Given that the Pope was to be “traveling part of the time in his open-roofed car” and that car would “be driven slowly so as to interact with the expected crowds,” the media reported, traffic was “expected to be jammed for hours on some days, and parking along those streets would be prohibited.” But there was no reason to panic. The security apparatus had everything under control. Everybody, including the emergency bilingual hotline for English and Hebrew speakers, performed as expected: “tourists will be able to receive advice in English—and Israelis in Hebrew—by calling the city’s situation room.”

People were encouraged to remove themselves from the ritual space in other ways. With the exception of the mass on the Manger Square in the heart of the Palestinian city of Bethlehem and the open-air Mass for Youth on the rural Israeli Mount of Beatitudes, all spaces where the Pope moved were closed off to those who were not invited. Most events were invitation only. The Popemobile may have “driven slowly so as to interact with the expected crowds” as quoted earlier, but the streets were empty and void of cheering enthusiasts. Many people in Jerusalem took advantage of very attractive and affordable offers of tourist packages to Italy on the return flights that brought in the pilgrims. Others were encouraged to stay at home and participate as media audiences. An official from the Israeli Ministry of Tourism related that “people don’t have to see [the Pope]. People will watch TV. Even if I had an invitation I don’t want to go to the [open mass in] the Galilee. I can’t park. Too many people! In Yad Vashem, how many people will be there? 50? 100? It’s invitation only. I will go tomorrow to greet him at the airport—again, invitation only.” This official assumed that most Israelis would find it perfectly acceptable that they were being discouraged from participation. “It’s good this way,” he concluded, “for security. People will understand that it’s for security. Believe me. It’s better to watch it on TV.”

If people stay away or watch the public ritual unfold on their television screens and if, as Dayan and Katz (1992) have suggested, through their discussion on media events, they create in the process their own family ritual out of the occasion, there is less movement to surveil, less public sociality to control, and hence less work to separate from the reality of uncertainty.

Sterilization of social spaces through which the Pope moved was achieved through processes of enclosure and purification. This meant encircling the space and removing, blocking, and redirecting the unwanted human movement away from that space. The areas in the proximity of the Pope’s body were purified, cleaned, and void of pollutants from the time he landed at the airport through the time he bade farewell. The most trusted among the apparatus ensured that the areas around the Pope were not just safe but “sterile.” Ben-Gurion International Airport security, the media reported, “which usually provides security for important visitors in and around the airport, has passed the baton” to the internal security service known by its Hebrew initials as Shin Bet or more commonly as Shabak, which would “take the utmost precautions to ensure the Pope’s safety, including the creation of ‘sterile areas’ around him.”

The expression ‘sterile area’ first suffused the Israeli public sphere after the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin in November 1995. It denoted that for more than an hour before that fatal shot was executed, Rabin’s assassin and his gun were within the safe area, the zone that was purified by the Shabak, the apparatus in charge of the prime minister’s security.

Among the locals, Shabak is known to have “the mentality that a strong man can overcome two but not three.” When the Pope prayed at the Cenacle, a location just outside the Old City wall of Jerusalem, associated with Jesus’ last supper with his disciples, the Pope “needed breakfast which he did not eat,” a local priest related. The church officials instructed that “only one wafer” was allowed to deliver the food to the Cenacle and “we [the Shabak] will take it in” to deliver it to the Pope. The priest recounted how he delivered the food. As he walked to the entrance to the Cenacle with the breakfast tray in his hand, the Shabak “was standing there with the machinegun.” The Shabak operative greeted the priest with: “No problem—but we have to taste the food.” The priest replied in a very serious tone: “Oh really?” to which the Shabak responded “No, no. I am just kidding.” This may sound like there was room for humor. After all, when every person has been accounted for, the process should be able to go smoothly and with less tension. More likely, however, the “just kidding” response of the security apparatus was an instance of reaffirmation on its part, at the most minute level, that every element of the public event is always subordinate to the security meta-frame. Indeed, this type of control seems to have few limits. “If he [was] somebody known to the Shabak than yes,” the priest related. “For the time these three workers were inside [the Church of the Holy Sepulchre] their cell phones did not work.”

Throughout the visit, the sterilization process took place in phases of zoning in accordance with the Pope’s day-to-day itinerary but immediately
preceding his movement. Less than 24 hrs before the Pope’s entourage would enter a particular area, the security apparatus first closed off all the movement in and out of that zone, completely stopping the regular movement of people and objects so that only the security-sanctioned movement could resume for the duration of the public event. So, for example, on the day when the Pope visited the Wailing Wall and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, all the shops and restaurants along the route were ordered closed. The security apparatuses combed through all the churches, courtyards, streets, and alleys where the Pope would move. They checked every corner, turned over every object, and accounted for every resident on those streets. They put up a checkpoint at every gate along the wall of the Old City of Jerusalem and allowed only certain individuals to enter. Minutes after the Pope’s entourage left the area, the checkpoints were dismantled, taking with them all the traces of the event that had just happened. As soon as the security apparatuses left the scene, movement resumed as usual.

THE FRAMING OF PUBLIC EVENTS WITHIN THE REALITY OF SAFETY THROUGH ITS META-MESSAGE “THIS IS ORDER”

Throughout the visit, full and undivided attention was given to the protection of the Pope’s body. We were reminded by the media that “the pontiff [was] an elderly man with medical problems,” and an old, fragile, and ailing body that had a long, 6-day journey to sustain. The body of the Pope united the totemic powers of the ritual of reconciliation with the cosmic powers of the catastrophic uncertainty. The body that sacrificially took on the burden of the world to rescue it from the uncertain was also the body that could collapse any time and bring about a much larger catastrophe. The favorite photogenic angle was one that featured the Pope’s degenerated spine curvature in Atlas-like symbolism of carrying the world’s problems on his shoulders. This aging body with Parkinson’s disease was determined to move through the dark, narrow alleys of the unknown neighborhoods of the Old City of Jerusalem to reach “the number of sites” scattered throughout the city at which the Pope wished to pray and give himself to “the large numbers of people who want to see the pontiff.”

The apparatus communicates to the public the conditions necessary for the creation of the reality of safety and the media conveys to the public certain elements of the transformative practices of the security meta-ritual, but the actual operations performed by the operatives remain in the background. Even though the security apparatus is not in the media spotlight, Handelman (2004: 106) argues that it is inexorably connected to the way Israeli public events are practiced so that it shapes every single aspect of these events. The protection of the Pope’s body, the use of the all-pervasive, white, trapeze-like, bulletproof vehicle with the see-through windows dubbed ‘Popemobile,’ and the armored vehicle of the General Security Service designed specifically to move through the narrow alleys and walkways of the Old City of Jerusalem powerfully communicated the meta-message “This is Order.” The Pope’s unrelenting activity throughout the visit was made possible through the protective shield of the visually attractive and cute Popemobile as well as the rugged armored vehicle. These two fortresses on wheels, the fortified mobile havens of safety that are able to move fearlessly and confidently through the purified social space, communicated to those involved that the public event was unfolding within the reality of safety.

The meta-message “This is Order” was continuously highlighted as the visual symbolism of the two vehicles and the Pope as their happy passenger communicated that the performance of the security meta-ritual has enabled the creation of the reality of public safety within which the Pope can now fulfill his mission. The framing process of the security meta-ritual has successfully separated the public event from the uncertainty of the daily life in Jerusalem and enclosed the public activity within the reality of safety with the security frame. In Batesonian terms, the meta-constitution of this frame communicates as a meta-message. This means that it subordinates all the social activity within its frame to its message; that is, the people within the reality of safety orient their thinking and their activity in relation to the meta-message of the frame “This is Order.” Any activity within this frame will be carried out in accordance to the meta-message of the frame. It follows that through the performance of the security meta-ritual, the form of social ordering through which the apparatus enables the bringing to existence the reality of safety, the apparatus also frames each and every aspect of the public event itself. I present two highlights of the achievement of the security meta-ritual to demonstrate how the meta-constitution of the message “This is Order” frames every subsequent of the public event.

The Open-Air Mass on the Mount of Beatitudes

Throughout the process of the security meta-ritual, the purification achieved the separation of safe from unsafe. For the open-air mass on the Mount of Beatitudes, this meant that those who were perceived as likely to follow the rules of the security apparatus were allowed in and others whose identity records may have indicated a possibility of disobedience were kept outside. The Palestinian Christians who live in Israel proper as well as those from Bethlehem and other places in the West Bank and Gaza were given the opportunity of what was to many an experience of a lifetime. After providing proper documentation, some were allowed to travel to the “northern shores of the Sea of Galilee, where the pontiff [would] officiate at one of the spectacular public masses he holds on foreign trips.” For the Christians in the area, this was a unique opportunity to be surrounded by tens of thousands of other Christians from around the world. Particularly for those from the West Bank and Gaza, it was also the very first possibility to
leave home and see what the world might look like outside the realities of military control.

Only individuals who came in organized tour buses were allowed on the site. No access was given to personal vehicles or pedestrians. Buses are mobile physical enclosures whose movement in space is dependent on the driver. Once the driver and the passengers have been purified, the bus becomes a useful enclosure through which purified individuals can be transported through space unpolluted. The pilgrims from Jerusalem boarded the buses at 1 a.m. for a 4-hr drive to the site of the open-air mass on the Mount of Beatitudes that was scheduled to start at 10 a.m. When the media reported about the Palestinian pilgrims it also provided other details: "Preparations have also been made with the Palestinian Authority regarding the Pope’s visit to Bethlehem. Some 5000 Palestinians from Gaza and the West Bank are to be transported by bus to Mount of Beatitudes for Friday’s mass, escorted by the Israel Police." As clearly stated by the officials, the buses that came from the West Bank were escorted by the Israeli police in an organized convoy from their churches to the place of the mass and escorted back to their home church after the mass. I was told by the officials of the Catholic Church in Jerusalem that the group from Gaza never made it beyond the Gaza–Israeli border. It was held at the Rafah checkpoint and eventually denied permission to enter. Older Palestinians and children who could not withstand the sleepless overnight pilgrimage were also left behind as were those who, for whatever reason, did not provide proper documentation.

Not only did the security meta-ritual purify the space and the people within the reality of safety, it also spatially reordered the physicality and the aesthetics of that space. The site of the open-air Mass for Youth was the Mount of Beatitudes, an unpopulated and uncultivated peace of land, far removed from any urban area. Here, the security apparatus created spatial order out of nothingness. It first created a spatial enclosure by installing a physical barrier, a fence that encircled what was to become a place for the mass. Within that enclosure, the space was further sectioned off into smaller spaces with walking aisles between them for a free movement of the security apparatus between the subspaces. The outer fence had several openings, which became entry points for the participants who arrived in organized buses to a parking lot built several hundred meters away from the enclosure. Each bus was assigned to a specific entry point and each entry lead to a set of specific subspaces within so that after the mass, participants left their particular subspace and walked directly back to their bus that waited for them in the parking lot to take them back to where they came. In this case, the security apparatus literally created social order according to its own design: with boundaries completely sealed, entry points assigned to specific groups of pre-selected participants with appropriately assigned badges, and human movement to and within the ritual space perfectly spatially ordered.

Once the ritual space was created, the outsiders were separated from the insiders, and the access to the sterile zone took place as envisioned by the security apparatus, the group effervescence, the Turnonian communities, and all properly ritual experiences as required by the public event were able to resume. Within the sterile subareas, united in one fortified island of safety in the midst of the unsafe and dangerous world, dancing, singing, and chanting “Viva el Papa!” erupted spontaneously. By the early morning hours before the 10 a.m. religious service, all groups had arrived at the site, each to their assigned subspace. There was great excitement and anticipation of the Pope’s appearance. Music blasted out of the loudspeakers, Palestinian tunes commonly sung in Arabic in the local churches far outnumbering those in Latin and other languages. Groups displayed banners and held up posters in English, Spanish, Italian, Croatian, Arabic, Polish, and many other languages.

A Palestinian woman in her mid-30s, standing next to a man of a similar age, reflected on her experience of coming to the site: “[I came] to share with the people the happy moment,” she said, because “if it’s nicer to come here than to sit at home and watch it all on TV.” While the Israeli official quoted earlier suggested that watching the event on the television screens at home would be much more convenient, this Palestinian woman had a very different experience. “You see,” she explained, “[for me] it’s something different. This is the first time I come here to Israel and to this place [in particular]. I am from Bethlehem, but if I want to come here I should have a visa and a passport and that’s not so easy to get.” Control of mobility has been a fact of her everyday life. “Because of that,” she continued, “it’s the first time for me to come to these places . . . We have a lot of nice places and holy places that we can’t go to. So, every opportunity that we have, we take.”

Even though she and those who came with her have clearly passed through the purification process, their opportunity to attend the open-air mass was nevertheless micro-ordered by the apparatus. “We came by bus,” she explained. “The bus that we were taking, [the security operative] did everything, he took all the names down, our identities, everything, and took care of everything by himself.” All the passengers have been pre-selected and pre-approved so that the operative merely reaffirmed the order. “It was so easy,” she emphasized. Unlike the reality of her daily life where passing through the checkpoints is no easy matter, this time, “[the security operatives] didn’t make any problems. They check[ed] the bus at the checkpoint in Bethlehem and in Jerusalem.” She clarified, “they stop[ed] the bus because there were students, guys on the bus, because they were young.” In the eyes of the apparatus, young men are a source of uncertainty. This woman understood that, in accordance of the meta-massage “This is Order,” these young men had to be reconfirmed.

She had also come to accept that their pilgrimage to and from the open mass had to be micro-ordered by the apparatus. “We have succeeded to
have [the] police [to follow the buses] from Bethlehem till here with us!” she exclaimed. She emphasized that “thirty-seven buses . . . from all over” came to the site, “it was very nice, you know.” The meta-message “This is Order” conveys that in the hands of the apparatus and according to its design, life can be ordered and lived in certainty and safety. For this Palestinian woman, the micro-ordering of the open-air Mass was in line with the meta-message. “One police car was in front, and between two buses there was another police car,” she described. “Every two buses we have two police cars. And if you [could] see the view, it was very nice.” But how could police escort be nice? “Yeah,” she confirmed, “you know, it was like, ah, if you are inside the casino.22 You have these lights, they are blue . . . [blinking] from all around. We were together, behind each other. It was nice. And now, if you will [be able to] see it, we will leave here at fifteen minutes before two . . . and we will go home accompanied by the police.”23 For this Palestinian pilgrim, attending the open-air Mass for Youth on the Mount of Beatitudes, orienting, adjusting, and interpreting her own pilgrimage within the reality of safety and its meta-message “This is Order” enabled a journey to places otherwise unreachable. It allowed for a freedom of movement beyond the possibilities made available in the reality of her day-to-day life. The social order of the reality of safety, made possible through the security meta-ritual and interpreted as such through its meta-message, was perceived as a common good for its participants in that it provided a protective shield within which the symbolic, the expressive, and the emotional of the public event was able to unfold.

The Pope Goes Back to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre

The day after the Pope’s departure, the chief of the Israeli Police summoned the journalists at the press center in Jerusalem for a press conference. He reported on the success of the operation, recounted the number of security personnel employed, provided detailed reports of occasions when the operation was particularly challenging, and concluded that “the Operation was extremely successful” because “absolutely nothing went wrong.” The script of the security meta-ritual was perfectly executed. All uncertainty had been eliminated and kept outside the reality of safety. Within the reality of safety, the public event unfolded smoothly, without interruption, and in line with its meta-message “This is Order.” The Chief was particularly pleased with how the apparatus was able to frame an event which was not listed on the schedule: “The Pope suddenly decided on Saturday that he wanted to go back to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre,” the chief told the audience, and “we let him do it. It was not on the schedule but we were flexible. We accommodated him.” He concluded his briefing with “I thank all the men and women who participated in this Operation. And we thank all of you [journalists] for your cooperation.”

The chief had rightly thanked everyone for their cooperation. In its goal to enable the bringing into existence the reality of safety, the process of security meta-ritual is indeed more pleasant and more enjoyable for everyone involved when every person orients his or her behavior in relation to the meta-message “This is Order.” The unanticipated demand by the Pope to return to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre on that Saturday afternoon and how the apparatus thought of itself as being in a position to say that they would accommodate the demand of the Pope, however, makes another aspect of the security meta-ritual transparent. Not only does security frame each and every subelement of the public event, it is that a public event or any aspect of it will even take place at all that depends in a very large part on whether the event is able to be subjected to the meta-framing of the apparatus.

The Pope’s sudden decision to return to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre is an example of how framing and ordering works under very different conditions from those at the open-air Mass for Youth discussed earlier. The open-air mass made it possible to see what a sociospatial social order would look like when the apparatus had an opportunity to create order out of nothingness. The Church of the Holy Sepulchre, on the other hand, is buried among the residences and other structures inside the densely populated Old City of Jerusalem. It is a physical place, kept alive by the pilgrims and the locals who visit the place daily, and sustained through the rituals performed around the clock by the clergy. The church houses the Calvary or Golgotha where Christ was put on the cross, the Stone of Unction on which his body was laid after being taken down from the cross, and the Tomb in which his body was buried.

For the mass inside the church that the Pope was to perform, “every single detail was done over and over again,” recounted one of the priests. “The mass was planned,” he recalled, with the Shabak determining every aspect of it: “They had a massive presence: one phone call and 200 came down.” The mass was invitation only. “There were only some 500 tickets made available by the Shabak. There were few diplomats and non Catholics, There were no political people [present], mostly locals.” The Pope wanted to visit the Calvary or Golgotha, but “he didn’t go up to Calvary because the steps were to steep,” recalled the priest. Everyone was under a strict timetable: “We had to roll by 11:30,” the priest recalled, because “the Pope had lunch at the Latin Patriarchate. All bishops were there.” After lunch, the Pope took a mid-day rest and, “it had to be about 2:30 p.m.,” the priest recalled, when the Pope declared “I want to go back” to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. The priest suggested that “for the Shabak, this was the best situation because no one knew about it . . . The mass was planned. But going back was not. It was completely unscripted.”

How the apparatus ordered and framed the Pope’s return to the church has become one of the memorable tales about the visit. I present here an account as it was remembered by a local involved in the process.28 After the mass, the local recalled, as the Pope was leaving the church, “I felt something is going to happen.” This local has been observing the pilgrims come and go for a
long time and he knows very well what a pilgrimage to this church entails. "As a [person] who lives here for many years, [I asked] how come the Pope is inside visiting the Tomb and not visiting Golgotha? The Popemobile came but the Pope wanted to walk through [the courtyard] not ride." Walking is an integral part of pilgrimage. Many Christians come to Jerusalem to walk in the footsteps of Jesus along the Via Dolorosa, leading into the church. "So, I told the security, but they said [the Pope] should go back because he was tired. I told them not to open the church for at least one hour after the Pope left . . . but after 40 minutes . . . they decided that the Pope was not going to come back . . . they gave up and gave order to open" the church for the public. "And in 25 minutes, we had more than 15,000 Italian, Spanish [coming along] the Via Dolorosa" on their way to the church.

After some time, he recalled, "a priest called the Latin Chapel [inside the Church] but nobody answered. So he called me and said in seven to ten minutes, the Pope will be here." I said 'are you sure?' He said 'no time to argue.' It was my lucky day!" he exclaimed. "I close the phone. I called the Greek patriarch because I felt the Pope would come to Golgotha. Then I called [the head of the secret police]. We had seven minutes. I told him the Pope was coming back. He said, 'this is order. All people out of the church in two minutes.'" The local paused to emphasize the situation: "How can I get 15,000 out [of the way] in 15 minutes?" The Church, its courtyard, and a number of alleyways needed to be cleared. He had to be creative. "I said 'there is a bomb!' and believe me, all were out. I told them to go out this door. No one can go out that way. Then I sent seven police to the Jaffa Gate and half others to close the other side. I called the Greek patriarchate, then Sacristy to Golgotha. All in one minute." This local is very well aware of the way things work in the Church. "I called churches first, then the security chief. I cannot empty the church without the church permission. They said, 'yes, empty.' The priests were skeptical and wanted to know how this could be done. "How will you do it? I have my ways," he told them. He repeated "first in Italian, then Spanish, I said 'leave this place immediately. There is a suspicious object, a bag inside. They looked at me, I [looked like I] was shocked so they believed. One minute later the chief called. I said 'the church is empty.' He said, 'if one is inside you will be sorry.' I said 'it's empty.'" Not everything is always perfect so "at the last minute, some 20 or 30 people were inside [the Church]" but this was to be understood "because it was not arranged."

In recalling his story, the local also provided some sense of how the internal hierarchy may work: "Which way you need to leave?" asked the Israeli security of the Italian delegation. "Italian security waited for answer from Italian security. The Italian security said to Israelis that [the Pope] need to leave [the Church via the street passing] the Lutheran Church toward the Jaffa Gate. The Pope's assistant to the Israeli security to the Israeli security." This meant for the local that "Ok, close off part by Lutheran. [The area around the] Mooristan and the Jaffa Gate must be empty." It was indeed a lucky day for this local: "So, I stood next to the Pope and held his hand up [the steps to the Calvary]. We went up, I brought the Greek priest, took pictures, we came down, I put police in their positions, then they left." But in the world of the apparatus, it seems that, as lucky as these moments can be for those who are involved in its operations, the hierarchy is difficult to penetrate. "After the Pope said goodbye, the Italian pushed me aside [communicating that] my job is finished. But he is Italian and not from here. If it was people from here I would make sure to get my honor back."

CONCLUSIONS

In light of cross-cultural ritual traditions as we know them from early anthropological and sociological studies of ritual, the ritual process I have been describing is a new phenomenon that speaks to how technologically advanced and globally interdependent societies respond to disorder and cope with uncertainty. For pre-modern peoples, uncertainty as much as ritual failure were understood to be integral to living and not something that could be contained or put under control. For societies with organic cosmology, everything is connected and therefore influenced by everything else. Failures, accidents, and other kinds of disorder are understood in relation to that cosmological order. Today, uncertainty is seen as a threat that comes in the form of violence. Threat and the expectation that action must be taken to prevent a possible disruption of a public event are fundamental to the continuity of existence of security meta-ritual.

Security meta-ritual is a ritual that orders—rather than represents—social life. It is performed to separate public social activity from uncertainty of the everyday life and transform that sociocultural space into a reality of safety. Following Handelman (1998), unlike the Durkheimian types of rituals whose practice is aimed at achieving solidarity, this kind of ritual is performed to facilitate change on the social world for the purpose of some social activity. Because of its exclusionary framing, this kind of ritual is in a meta-relationship to any other activity it encloses so that any social activity within its domain will unfold in relation to the meta-message of its frame.

Rituals are grounded in narratives that represent a body of thought, cultural ideas, and practices within which ritual itself makes sense. Security meta-ritual narrative is based on the belief that the security apparatus of the modern state and its use of the scientific and technological advancements can be effectively combined to impose order on conditions of uncertainty. This type of ritual is therefore rooted in science and technology and rests on the belief in the capacity of scientific and technological
knowledge to make social life ever safer by controlling the vicissitudes of possible future events. Its practices exude confidence in validity and efficacy of metal detectors, fingerprinting, surveillance cameras, record checking, body searches, and alike to produce certainty within the ritual space and time. Each enactment of security meta-ritual provides a new opportunity to put these technologies to work in real time, allowing for improvement of the procedures enacted in a previous security meta-ritual, and preempting one more possibility of unwanted activity.

Primary to this type of ritual are the efficaciousness and the goal-rational aim of preventing disorder and controlling uncertainty. Through the tendency to expand the notion of security to wide-reaching domains of social existence and acceptance of these processes by the ritual participants as legitimate, security meta-ritual performers are able to transcend our fragmented social existence and engage in a wide mobilization of individuals, resources, and social institutions to their end. In this process, they draw on social memory of disruptive events from the past and the technological knowledge of the present to envision how future disruptions can be pre-empted. Order is achieved through the separation of outsiders, safe space from unsafe areas, and security-sanctioned movement from other movement. This process follows the exclusive template conceived by the security apparatus. The significance of this practice is not the security meta-ritual itself. Rather, the importance of this practice is in its ability to demonstrate that reality of safety can be brought to existence when ritual participants follow the security template.

Through its own process, security meta-ritual reflects the vision of what it means to have safety and order. In the case of a public event in which the stakes are extremely high for the state, the process of security meta-ritual becomes highly visible and rigidly executed so that all available resources and all social activity within the ritual space are subordinated to this end. This visibility communicates the ability and the power of the security apparatus to channel, block, and control the movement of people and objects within that ritual space. The increasingly close coupling of security procedures with public events also exposes the normalization of the vision of social order as conceived by the security apparatus through the ritual process. Through the process of transformation of an environment that is polluted and unpredictable to a social space that is secured, ordered, and controlled, the idea of orderliness of security meta-ritual is recreated, experienced, and made known and visible to the ritual participants and the general public alike.

Rituals tend to have a capacity to be perceived as time-honored, unchanging practices that speak to legitimacy of tradition (Bell 1997). Yet, ritual is an emergent phenomenon and therefore every ritual enactment is open to a possibility of change (Handelman and Lindquist 2005). Security meta-ritual is a type of ritual adapted to absorb the risks of its own performance in that each enactment of security meta-ritual provides its performers an opportunity to put their ever-improving technologies of control to work in real time. Each security meta-ritual enactment is therefore an occasion that allows its performers to adapt to varieties of public events in different kinds of social contexts. Change is built into its very process. Whether this type of ritual will be performed depends on perceptions of fear of uncertainty. As long as the threat of disorder and violence can be made to seem plausible to the public, security meta-ritual can be justified and reenacted.

NOTES

1. At this essay passed through multiple reincarnations, colleagues too numerous to be listed contributed to its ongoing transformation. I am, however, particularly indebted to Diana Crane, Don Handelman, Costas Nakassis, Regina Smardon, David Snow, and Charles Tilley. All footnotes referring to media reports are based on paper editions of the newspapers and are on file as research materials with the author.
5. Interview with a Catholic Church official, April 2006.
7. "Operation Old Friend set to protect Pope."
8. "Operation Old Friend set to protect Pope."
9. "Biggest security blitz to guard Pope here." The Jerusalem Post, March 12, 2000. The internal guide for the media distributed to journalists at the press center lists Haim Ramon as "Coordinating Minister for His Holiness's visit."
10. Interview with an official from the Jerusalem Municipality, March 2000.
15. Interview with an official from the Ministry of Tourism, March 2000.
17. Interview with a Catholic priest, April 2006.
19. "Biggest security blitz to guard the Pope here."
22. At the time of the Pope's visit and until the Second Intifada, there was just outside the city of Jericho in the West Bank, a successfully run casino,
supported through local and foreign investment. Only those with a passport, including the Israelis, were allowed on the premises.

23. Interview during the open-air Mass on the Mount of Beatitudes, March 2000.


25. Interview with a local, April 2006.

26. A classic anthropological study that demonstrates cultural differences regarding uncertainty and the prospects of controlling the future is that of E. E. Evans-Pritchard (1965) who studied magic among the Azande.

Part III

Struggle and Resistance