
Facsimileing the State: The Bureaucracy of Document Transmission in Israeli Human Rights NGOs

Omri Grinberg *University of Toronto*

Abstract: This article focuses on faxes as techno-social activity, and on the part they play in infrastructures of mediation. It anthropologically examines how document transmissions function as practices of power and its undoing, using the case of anti-occupation Israeli NGOs that document human rights violations in the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories. The article ethnographically traces the initial transmission of documents (mainly testimonies) to the office from the field, and the eventual transmission of legal documents (mainly complaints) from NGOs to the state of Israel, practices that constitute symmetries between state and NGO bureaucracies. This odd mirroring raises questions about what we take for granted about a shared infrastructure of communication.

Keywords: Israel/Palestine, NGOs, documents, colonialism, human rights, fax

Résumé : Cet article étudie l'envoi de télécopies comme une activité techno-sociale et les infrastructures de médiation comme des instruments du pouvoir et de sa défaite, à travers le cas d'ONG israéliennes ayant pour mission de documenter les violations de droits humains par l'occupation israélienne dans les territoires palestiniens. L'article retrace d'un point de vue ethnographique la transmission initiale de documents depuis le terrain jusqu'au bureau (principalement des témoignages) et la transmission ultérieure de documents juridiques (principalement des plaintes) depuis les ONG jusqu'à l'État israélien – pratiques qui créent des symétries entre les bureaucraties étatiques et les bureaucraties non gouvernementales. Cet étrange miroir interroge nos présupposés quant aux infrastructures communes de communication.

Mots-clés : Israël-Palestine, ONG, documents, colonialisme, droits humains, télécopies

Introduction: Fax-on, Fax-off

Fax/es, as a communicative technology and material record, are integral to Israeli non-governmental organisations' (NGOs') documentation of Israel's human rights (hereafter HR) violations in the occupied Palestinian territories. Fax machines transmit data from NGOs' fieldworkers to their offices and are NGOs' main mediation interface with various branches of the Israeli state. Fax-in and fax-out actions thus bracket the work processes of NGOs: from the initial data incoming from fieldworkers (usually a fieldworker-written account of the oral testimony of a harmed Palestinian) to the eventual outgoing documents, faxed by NGO office workers to the state. The faxed-out documents are commonly either a complaint (which has a standardised format in terms of content and structure) or supporting documents for the rarely reached subsequent phases of investigations and hearings.

While some common routes of fax transmission are usually successful (mainly fax-in), failure is still a dominant factor because of NGOs' self-imposed bureaucratic systems of communicating documents and verifying that the transfer was successful via phone, and due to the immense difficulties Israeli bureaucratic state agents impose upon NGOs' efforts to transmit documents (fax-out). As much as faxes create a technological infrastructure that makes imagined networks tangible, they also illuminate the engaged actors' distinctly separate interests and positions of power through recurring failures in communication. Faxes, and the bureaucratic networks of mediation that they make im/possible, are easily glanced-over yet important elements of Israeli NGOs' HR activism. They are telling also due to their prompting of reflexive moments in which NGO employees find these mechanisms of self-maintenance harmful, since they create a semblance of similarity between the bureaucratic practices of the state and NGOs.

This article consists of six sections – while the final two are standard discussion and conclusion sections, the

first four warrant foregrounding: The first is this introduction, which both provides an overview of the paper and situates this research in relation to anthropologies of the state. The second establishes context about the role of NGOs as mediators in Israel/Palestine through a review of literature about Israel's occupation and what I have termed elsewhere as its use of "bureaucratic lacunas" (Grinberg 2016a): a specific conflict or problem that the state is formally committed to resolving, while also admitting that the issue is difficult to contend with through standardised legal and bureaucratic means. Layered on this is an additional absence of state agents' acknowledgement of the state's own role in both causing the problems and making them impossible to solve using bureaucratic and legal means. The third and fourth sections are the ethnographic crux of the paper: two vignettes, based on participant observations, of faxing debacles in two different NGOs where faxes were used in near-identical ways.¹ These events highlight the influence of faxes on the politics of bureaucracy between state and NGO, and within NGOs.

While these and most other state-NGO dynamics may not be violent in themselves, they are embedded within and play a role in a violent regime, and – as I show – are an integral element in the alignment of HR with the state and colonialism through interaction and discourses. In this case, I suggest the alignment is unwitting, even if problematic (compare with Perugini and Gordon 2015, 23), and is constituted through the bureaucratic infrastructures and practices of mediation. Hence, faxes are considered here in relation to Palestinians' experiences of Israel's violence *and* as a site for an anthropological observation of the state, even if this research is not based on data collected from the formal halls of the state or through the words of its agents.² The voice I speak in is one that is common in the NGOs, where employees generally encounter and hence perceive the state as a diverse powerful entity whose branches share radical ineptitude, lackadaisical attitudes, brute apathy toward law, professionalism, basic common courtesy, and disregard of Palestinians' rights.

The paper makes three main claims:

1. In relation to the anthropology of documents, I suggest that if we look at documents as mediators, we should also look at how these mediators are themselves mediated. Given that documents and bureaucracy function to validate organisations, mechanisms and subjects, an ethnography of documents should also be attentive to how these validations themselves rely on validation through and of the documents' transmission (compare with Hetherington 2011; Navarro-Yashin 2007).

2. As Matthew Hull summarises, "In scholarship on bureaucracy, the document has remained the very image of formal organizational practice, the central semiotic technology for the coordination and control of organizations and the terrains on which they operate" (Hull 2012a, 256). This literature regards the document's centrality as residing not only in its content, but (also, and perhaps mainly) in its graphic form. I challenge this by suggesting that for *either* content or form to succeed (that is: communicate itself), there is a preliminary phase that is often ignored: the document must first successfully reach its destination. I thus highlight the ethnographic and political significance of technological failures, which have as much influence as the successes of technological infrastructures (Larkin 2004, 291; see also Stein 2017). Such breakdowns in/advertently leave open a space for critical introspection, serving a meta-pragmatic role by "providing reflexive commentaries on the conditions that make communication possible" (Barker 2008, 128–129).
3. The paper displays how shared infrastructures of communication between state and NGO are anything but obvious: they are destabilised every day, and also constitute coordination and loose alliances (compare with Hull 2012a, 257), a source and resource of these organisations' political agency *and* its undoing. As I detail, the relationship between state and NGO is then also based on how they ambivalently define for each other the in/formality of practices (compare with Elyachar 2003).

The contention made through these three interrelated claims is that faxes and other infrastructures of document mediation are a particularly pertinent iteration of what I term as NGOs' "facsimileing" of state bureaucracy: creating nearly identical copies of organisational structures and schemes of work processes, and engaging in efforts of mimicry and adaptation of state means of documentation and for the communication of documents.³ By accounting for how mediation is formative in producing the political effects of documents, we can also observe facsimileing as practice and metaphor that illuminate the political role of objects in shaping the agency of the subjects/organisations that handle them.

Bureaucracies and Counter-Bureaucracies of the Occupation

The cursory tracing I offer below of the im/mobility of bureaucratic and legal documents reveals the various means of control Israel utilises in its effort to dominate Palestinians' lives and territories, and how these methods dynamically interlock and shape each other (Gordon

2008a). As Tobias Kelly (2006a, 102) notes, Palestinians often assume that there is not a rule, reason or logic behind Israel's violence, but rather "whims" of its agents. Since Israel does not hold itself accountable to its own occupation's violent crimes,⁴ there is little reason to expect accountability for bureaucratic malpractices, especially those that can be easily explained as lapses. This paper sets out to display the political power of the unaccountable within set bureaucratic procedures and infrastructures of communication, what Ilana Feldman (2008, 222) defines in relation to the ongoing colonial history of Israel/Palestine as "the coming together of contradictory practices – the nontotalizing governmental field – [that is] practice rather than policy."

The means and effects of Israel's occupation of Palestinian territories are achieved through complex networks of legal-bureaucratic regulation, too large and complex to thoroughly review here.⁵ Since 1967 and through various phases and changes, Israel has mounted a vast array of physical barriers, technologies of surveillance and disciplining, laws, regulations, bureaucratic procedures, economic constraints, and random individual actors' impositions. These have amounted to the epistemological separation between Israelis and Palestinians (Jones 2012). The most common exercise of power by Israel's occupation of Palestinian territories is the radical limiting of the spatial mobility of Palestinians to Israeli territories and within the occupied Palestinian territories themselves through a bureaucratic "permit regime." Making Palestinians' presence in certain territories illegal and forcing them to obtain various documents in order to move around, Israel governs Palestinians' movements and tries to assume control of their bodies and actions by determining economic horizons, access to health care and education, and even overall prospects for romance, love and living an "ordinary" life (Bornstein 2002; Kelly 2008).

The uncertainties and insecurities of the regime are constituted and reiterated through Palestinians' unavoidable reliance on and attachment to the paperwork that this excessively bureaucratic-legal colonial enterprise manipulates. Palestinians often go through impossible, endless Kafkaesque ordeals in attempts to obtain or retain these documents or put them to use, encountering Israeli state agents' apathy and arbitrary application of the state's rules and regulations (Kelly 2006a). These bureaucratic-legal means of domination interlock with the spatial fragmentation of Palestinian territories (Weizman 2007) to enable Israel's control over Palestinians' time (Peteet 2008).

The face-to-face interaction of submitting a document (paper, "smart" (digital), or both) at a checkpoint

prompts an immediate estimation of the person and document, and constitutes the split subjectivity of the Palestinian living under occupation, who is forced to navigate between interpellation as a bureaucratic-security record and agentive-experiential subjecthood (Kelly 2006a, 102; see also Allen 2008). However, much of the bureaucratic and legal "relationship" between Palestinians and the Israeli state takes place without direct interaction, with the sovereign remaining "hidden" for Palestinians (Berda 2012). In order to obtain these documents, Palestinians communicate with and through letters, faxes, secured-glass separated windows, and offices and other legal/bureaucratic/security sites that are inaccessible because of restrictions on movements, even if the Palestinians are *required* to reach them to obtain the very same travel permits they currently do not hold and so cannot obtain (compare with Hochberg 2015).

More precisely still, the effects of these bureaucracies are (at least partially) constituted through their failed translation to practice, and the uncertainties, frustration and fear that these systems' over-complexity, inefficiency and arbitrary application induce for Palestinians. Such failures are indeed systematic, but are actuated mainly through collective and individual (Israeli) agents' confusion and ignorance about the legal and bureaucratic wrangling they are supposed to impose and monitor, at times combined with apathy if not outright disdain toward Palestinians (Berda 2012; 2017). The paradoxes and the ambivalences of failure and incompetence within such carefully orchestrated apparatuses of state bureaucracy of paper-tagging, surveillance and disciplining are hallmarks of "the colonial state" (compare with Comaroff 1998; Gupta 1995). As critical legal sociologist Yael Berda (2017) and various Israeli NGOs have convincingly shown,⁶ Israel efficiently deploys various modes of these ambivalences as a form of rule over Palestinians; Israel parades its mechanisms of self-investigation and "enlightened occupation" to international audiences, using these mechanisms to reject local and transnational NGOs' appeals (compare with Geva 2016; Hajjar 2005; Kuntsman and Stein 2015). Simultaneously, Israel ensures that these mechanisms fail to provide Palestinians with protection or justice, deterring Palestinians from appealing to the state and communicating to NGOs that their struggle for change is futile.

As I suggest elsewhere, "the occupation ... uses perpetual confusion and disarray among Palestinians as a strategy" (Grinberg 2016a, 404). When NGOs confront the state with such claims, usually in requests for the state branches' responses to research reports before their publication, Israeli authorities tend to avoid contending with the core issues and matters of principle

raised by the NGOs by providing responses that refer to a mix of micro-details they claim are inaccurate or “unrepresentative” data, and listing meta-informational details with little relevance to the matter at hand; sometimes, claims are ignored or simply brushed off as “irrelevant.” Rarely do such responses admit to any state failures or areas of improvement beyond token minimal clarifications; more commonly, these responses lay blame on NGOs for relying on information from popular media, lack of cooperation with the state, and biased analyses of inaccurate information.⁷

Especially since 2000 and the start of the second Intifada, Israeli NGOs have rushed to undo these gaps, lapses and obstacles by playing the state’s parts and/or inadvertently legitimising the state by turning to it on behalf of Palestinians. NGOs (Israeli, Palestinian and international) are *the* mediating agents of the occupation’s violation of HR (Allen 2009; Bishara 2013; Helman 2015), communicating representations and disseminating data about Palestinians’ suffering to audiences near and far, thus playing a significant role in constituting Palestinian political and national subjectivities (Fassin 2008; Marshall 2014; Weizman 2011). Israeli NGOs are thus part of ongoing local and transnational processes where the state is substituted by non-governmental politics based on HR, development and humanitarianism “industries.” NGOs seem to unavoidably serve the perpetual deferral of establishing a sovereign Palestinian nation-state (Roy 2012; Allen 2013).

During my time working in an NGO and throughout fieldwork research in NGOs, and also based on a short open-ended questionnaire I circulated to a dozen NGO veterans, I learned that faxes are the central means of (NGO-intermediated) communication between the perpetrator of an HR violation (the Israeli state) and the violation’s victim or their representative (NGOs). Faxes are the main means of document transmission in these communications, with registered mail a distant second option (though, after I concluded fieldwork, it seems that e-mails are becoming more and more commonly used). Faxes are used by NGOs to send the various state branches initial inquiries, to demand investigations, and to request information. In some NGOs, for some of the more routinely submitted documents that have common structures and styles of text, there are standardised forms – the content is (somewhat) different in each case, but otherwise they are minimally adjusted. Faxes are also used for the transmission of additional information related to the cases such as medical files (whether upon the state’s request or proactively by the NGOs) and to provide updates about what has (or usually hasn’t) been done by the state, and to see if any decisions have been made but were not communicated to

the NGO. Faxes are also the common way for the state to communicate with the NGOs as it responds to the NGOs’ faxed prompts; the state sends the NGOs formal succinct notifications that the fax was received, replies with updates, comments and decisions, and faxes information requested. The state faxes information even if the documents faxed originated in a computerised file, such as an Excel sheet. However, the state branches often ignore NGOs’ requests and other communications or responds only after repeated requests. The state tends to request additional time to respond, and quite often replies only under threat of violating the state’s laws and regulations should its own offices breach the timelines stipulated by Israel’s adaptations of freedom of information acts.

Faxes have served this function in NGO–state communication since the early 1990s, though in recent years, specific state agencies have allowed NGOs and other non-state actors certain limited communication via email, often relying on the state agents’ personal addresses. The state branches that Israeli NGOs communicate with include the various security forces (the military and its various units, and the police and its various units, including the often-contacted Border Police and the Israeli Security Agency), the High Court of Justice, Israeli Prison Services (including specific prisons), the different internal investigation units of the various security forces, the state attorney, government offices, and the Israeli Civil Administration, which governs the West Bank. These state extensions should not be viewed as monolithic or identical, as they serve different roles in terms of their function as part of Israel’s operations of control. Each of them has its own ethos, standard levels of professionalism, adherence to rules and regulations, and commonly found acceptance of or il/licit objections to the roles played by the NGOs. Indeed, more often than not, NGOs are resented and even perceived as anti-Israeli traitors. Such fairly common popular perceptions can, at times, surface in the communications between NGOs and the state. There is a certain correlation between those agencies that insist on relying on faxes and those more open to other forms of communication, including phone conversations, meetings and transferring documents via email: the more a state agency insists on faxed communications, the less likely it is to do anything about or with the documents submitted.

The overall insistence on faxes thus forcefully demarcates the boundaries of communication between NGO and state, establishing the political and ideological contours of the dynamics between the two through prioritisation of certain telling media and technology (Gershon 2010). By looking at faxes as an infrastructure of communication, we can consider that it is not through the contents of the communicated document itself that the

state creates a semblance of maintenance of due process for Palestinians, one of the ways in which Israel proclaims and displays supposed adherence to and acquiescence with international formal standards and less formal expectations of a supposedly liberal democracy. Rather, it is the very existence of documented channels of communication that aids Israel in its efforts of propaganda (or, as it is commonly known by its Hebrew term, *hasbara*). I make this claim also because, as I will show, NGOs' employees communicating with the state are often, though not always, treated in a way that can be described as informal hostility by the state's agents. These experiences are significant and telling, even if they are minor compared to how blatantly ineffectual the state can be when it comes to investigating cases of its own abuses of Palestinians' rights or crimes committed against Palestinians by Jewish-Israeli settlers.⁸ Prominent NGO B'Tselem revealed the impacts of these daily debacles in its May 2016 announcement that, after 27 years, it would cease to file complaints to the state: "There is no longer any point in pursuing justice and defending [HR] by working with a system whose real function is measured by its ability to continue to successfully cover up."⁹

And yet, despite B'Tselem's unprecedented move, other anti-occupation NGOs not only insist on communicating with the state in these ways, but they also adopt such bureaucratic systems and communicational infrastructures for their own internal uses. The blurring of state and NGO boundaries through NGOs' reliance on their shared adherence with the state to the morals of HR (whether the state's adherence is faux or real) implicate NGOs in the adaptation of colonial legacies (compare with Berda 2013). In Israel/Palestine, NGOs' perceived inability to radically break from hegemonic stances – or even oppressive discourses and mechanisms – has long been a point of contention for the NGOs themselves and for Israeli, Palestinian and international anti-occupation scholars and activists (see Berkovitch and Gordon 2008; Ḥanaḥi and Ṭabar 2003; Ophir 2001). As HR legal activist and scholar Michael Sfard has testified and claimed, dynamics of communication with the state of Israel are an inherent part of the work of anti-occupation NGOs and yet are reflexively understood by them as radically problematic. This is the unavoidable double-edged element of the common dynamics of Israeli NGOs' struggle with reliance on state authorities: even in the rare cases where HR legal (and other) activism achieves relief, aid, compensation and/or justice for individual or small-scale collectives within the oppressed Palestinian population, by virtue of struggling with the state through its own mechanisms, the work of HR NGOs provides legitimisa-

tion to Israel's regime and thus strengthens the already immense durability of the occupation (Sfard 2009).

My analytical aim here is to go beyond pointing to instances of NGOs affirming the state's authority. I do stress that shared discourses, practices and infrastructures of communication create a dynamic of mimicry between NGO and state. However, my emphasis is on suggesting that by ethnographically observing the everyday repetition and lapses of how such near symbiosis occurs, the ethical-political critical agency of NGOs and their employees is brought into analytical focus. I thus highlight NGOs employees' rejection or critiques of state and state-like bureaucratic power and their commitment to dismantling the occupation, which goes beyond performances of adherence to HR.

Fax-in

In September 2015, a new round of violence erupted in Israel/Palestine. Though violence is ever present in Israel/Palestine (Ron 2003), the intensity and adaptations of pre-existing forms of violence separated this new eruption from the routinised violence of the occupation.¹⁰ The events caught Israeli HR NGOs unprepared for the intensity of the documentary work such incidents inevitably set in motion. At the time the violence escalated, most of the NGOs were closed for the Jewish holiday season (or "High Holy Days"). Many employees in the NGOs I was following had booked off vacation time in advance. With only a skeleton staff available to track the developing situation, the volume of information gathering quickly overwhelmed the NGO I here call "NGO #1."

When the holidays were over, NGO #1 had to shift gears from simply maintaining stop-gap emergency work to their usual full-on engagement. Staff had to gather new information about what had taken place over the holidays and connect it to the information they already had, while also tracking and making sense of ongoing, escalating daily events. Adding to the confusion were changes in Israeli tactics of oppressing Palestinian resistance, proclaimed by Israel as responses to new types of attacks by Palestinians on Israeli security forces and civilians: "lone wolf" car attacks, clearly suicidal knife-wielding attacks, and other acts that were often committed by young adults, including unprecedented participation by teenagers, children and older and younger women.¹¹ The NGOs had a deluge of details that had to be interpreted and then assembled into a larger picture, and this needed to be done quickly. NGO #1's staff was motivated, but also perplexed. Tensions were therefore high and soon came to revolve around the way in which data flows into the office, from the NGO's fieldworkers, via fax.

One mid-October morning, I arrived to find an eerily quiet office: most employees were hunched behind their desks, some even taking the unusual step of shutting their office doors – more a statement about office politics and interpersonal strife than an attempt to focus. Walking down the hall, I quickly gathered from office small talk that several of the NGO's staff members had been embroiled in fierce shouting matches the day before. Toward the end of the hall was the office of Daniel, one of my main interlocutors, a non-confrontational professional who was visibly shaken and eager to share his surprising role in the office turmoil:

Yesterday was chaotic, lots of stress ... We've been having technical problems getting testimonies [in from the field], just now of all possible times to have to deal with this ... no one is taking responsibility for what had happened and no one sees eye to eye about what to do now. I raised my voice at some of my colleagues ...

Beyond his obvious disappointment with himself, Daniel explained that the whole drama was due to NGO #1's work structures and their reliance on faxes. I then collated an account of how several employees narrativised what had led to the arguments.¹²

Since the early 2000s, fieldworkers for NGO #1 have sent the documents they collect and produce via fax, mainly written accounts of oral testimonies they themselves handwrite, documenting Palestinian witnesses' and victims' narratives of Israel's HR violations. Each fieldworker has an accessible fax machine, whether at home or in a small office space nearby. NGO #1's fieldworkers have three optional ways to send the fax, but whichever they choose, the actions they take are essentially the same: placing a paper document in the fax feeder, dialing a number, waiting for the document to send, and checking that the fax machine prints out a confirmation that the transmission was successful. What differs between the three options are the numbers the fieldworkers dial and the subsequent processing of the faxed document.

In option 1, a "classical/traditional" fax is sent to an actual fax machine in the office that prints the document on paper – scans or other digital variations of the document are *not* automatically produced, so the NGO has to manually scan the document if it wants it to be digitally available. In option 2, the digitalised, computer-friendly and preferred option, the document is sent as a paper fax to a special fax modem that has its own line, where it is processed into a digitised file of some type (usually JPEG, an image file). The digital document is then saved in a central folder on the NGO's computer network and is made accessible to all relevant personnel.

In option 3, the costlier digitalised option, the fax is sent to the number of an external service provider, who processes the file as an image file and then sends it to the NGO via email.

Options 2 and 3 are essentially the same; the main difference is that in 3, the server is external – this option is mainly a backup in case the other methods do not work. Option 3 costs more money and entails some potential rigmarole for the fieldworkers, who need to ask the NGO for refunds for the extra fax charges. With 1, the office employees have to – eventually, usually quite early on – scan the documents, replace paper in the machine, et cetera, and sometimes things simply do not go through – it is an outdated system; with 3, almost every task handled by the external company costs money. Option 2 is the most convenient one and is what NGO #1 used for years and up until a few months before this conflict surfaced, when they were forced to switch phone (and fax) line service providers. The phone numbers were kept and "migrated" to the new provider, but somehow, the special fax modem number used for option 2 could not be properly migrated, plus all of the faxes-turned-emails were saved in a folder on a special server that was now unavailable. If the system was to be relaunched, the entire staff, relying on the same folder, would have to readjust and use a new, different folder, which would mean rerouting existing shortcuts and paths. But the NGO's administrative staff did not take care of this, and no one remembered (or cared to remind others) that option 3 existed, probably because it costs extra money. So, by default, it was option 1 that became the mode of transmitting-in data from the field to the office.

As long as realities in the field were somehow consistent, NGO #1 could manage with the old-style, simple fax-in paper-printed document of option 1. The legal department allocated one of its employees to take care of the incoming paper-printed documents by scanning them, saving them in a specific folder and distributing the scanned files via email to the relevant personnel. But once violence escalated, and fieldworkers were faxing-in dozens of documents a day, the one staff member in charge of digitising the printed faxes could not keep up; he was also investing all his time in this single task just when the NGO needed him to put his expertise to better use. NGO #1 then tried to recalibrate its faxing-in system so that faxes would again be automatically scanned and saved and the employee in charge of scans could get back to his actual work. Since option 2 could not be revived, certainly not quickly enough, one of the NGO's administrators was suddenly reminded of option 3, which seemed like the obvious choice, even if only as an intermittent solution because

of its costs. However, it was then revealed that the number was blocked because the NGO had an outstanding debt for the few previous uses the fieldworkers had made of that number.

While trying to sort option 3 out, a phone technician came in and reallocated an existing office number to the fax modem, which can automatically scan, save and email incoming faxes, essentially recreating option 2. But the faxes sent by the fieldworkers working from the occupied Palestinian territories mysteriously did not go through. After some careful investigation, it was revealed that the Israeli phone company and the Palestinian phone company did not recognise some of each other's numbers – attempts to communicate between the two had failed. This was too big of an issue for the NGO to fix, since the phone companies were reluctant to solve this issue by directly working with each other.

Daniel, my above-mentioned interlocutor, was furious that other staff members did not realise just how crucial the issue was: “How data is transmitted and in what form and format it arrives and is saved in is literally what everything all of us do is based on: if we cannot properly receive data from the field, then the NGO cannot do anything at all.” It was unfathomable for Daniel that the functionality and importance of the NGO's bureaucratic mechanism was somehow overlooked, even if a string of coincidences and circumstances had led to its near breakdown. When he encountered signs of apathy by other NGO employees, Daniel could no longer contain himself and the situation quickly escalated into an atypical shouting match. About faxes.

Once the attempts to sort the fax-in issue were finally taken more seriously, the outstanding debt issue was solved so that the NGO could use option 3, even though some fieldworkers were annoyed with the need to send their faxes to a new number for option 3 after just getting used to the option 1 number following years with the same number for option 2. Still, much to the relief of most of the office personnel, the faxes were again automatically converted to documents sent via email and saved in a folder accessible to all relevant colleagues. Attempts were still ongoing to set up option 2 again, but since this was up to the Israeli and Palestinian communication companies, it was clear that the staff were better off finding a workable solution in the meantime.

For Abeer, who worked in the NGO's administrative department and had to contend with the technical and bureaucratic side of this fax drama, the ordeal pointed toward the need to reconsider the work processes of the NGO:

Why are we still working with faxes? I'll tell you who still works with faxes: only government offices, and us, an anti-occupation NGO ... I thought we'd return to the office after the holidays and face a pile of faxed-in testimonies, but then everything was somehow backed up, so we waited and then got all the documents all at once, unsure of how to process them, because they weren't scanned as a computerised document ... and no one realised this has to be a top priority for the NGO, that we cannot get any work done without this thing being solved ... just buy a new scanner or establish a proper fax line, or just come up with another technological solution ...

Abeer's reflexive moment flushes out the realisation that faxes serve as a key element for both the state and the NGO, creating an uncomfortable organisational similarity between the NGO itself and an entity whose bureaucratic malice is one of NGO #1's main targets of criticism.

As Brian Larkin suggests, the hold that reliance on technologies has over working methods and procedures makes for a dominant infrastructure that produces its own gaps and failures, potentialities of intentional sabotage and unintentional self-undermining (2004). In this case, the self-perpetuated reliance on the different infrastructures of fax communications – each with its own set of different problems – destabilised the NGO's self-perception as distinctively non-state, in both character and ethos. Instead of engaging in a humane form of political action, the fax ordeal mirrored to the NGO a Weberian image of its own bureaucracy: detached, impersonal and opaque (Weber 2013 [1922]).

I attribute the somewhat fiery emotions triggered by this fax-centric issue in NGO #1 to the employees' realisation of how they are facsimileing state bureaucracy: creating a copy that while easily distinguishable from its origin still remains in an awkward, often highly contentious, dynamic relationship with its seemingly authentic origin (compare with Schwartz 2014). Following Don Handelman's (1998, 2004) contention that all public events can be placed somewhere on the binary axis between enacting a bureaucratic mirroring (copying) or modelling (suggesting a new format) of the nation-state, we can consider the reflexive understanding of NGO #1's facsimile practices – as articulated by both Daniel and Abeer – as the NGO's encounter with its own inability to radically break from the paradigmatic infrastructure of “the state.” National-bureaucratic logic thus extends deep into the everyday practices and mediating infrastructures of the NGO.

If in the case of internal NGO communications, this realisation was somewhat subdued and required an

exceptional string of small problems to evolve into an office drama, then the following ethnographic vignette about communications from NGO to the state illustrates that the realisation can also be loudly and quickly articulated.

Fax-out

In March 2015, Souad – a 30-something year old Palestinian-Israeli lawyer – joined the staff of NGO #2: a small but long-running and influential Tel Aviv-based organisation. NGO #2 was considerably smaller than NGO #1, with only about ten employees, some part time, that worked either in the office's small, disorganised work spaces or from home. I usually worked in the office of the research and data department, where the NGO's fax machine was situated.

In one of Souad's first few days at NGO #2, I was sitting in front of the computer with my back to the fax machine and heard her grumbling and complaining, walking back and forth from the corridor to our shared office space. Responding to what I thought was Souad's attempt to provoke someone to pay attention to her, I asked Souad what was wrong. Souad explained that she sent an Israeli state office an unusually long 29-page fax, for one of the very few cases that had reached an initial phase of investigation. In this case, the 29 pages were additional documents requested by the state's attorney to determine whether they should formally open an investigation about abuses suffered by a Palestinian during his arrest and imprisonment by Israeli security forces. The documents included mainly medical files, as well as affidavits and experts' forensic assessments of the Palestinian witness's physical and mental condition.

Souad understood the rarity of the occasion and hence its importance. She was also stressed about the technical task of faxing so many pages, which can be difficult: paper often gets jammed, the machine may skip some of the pages, and feeder detectors accidentally decide there are no further pages to send, ending the transmission before all the pages go through. But Souad did manage to send the fax – NGO #2's fax machine printed out the standard automated one-page report on the success/failure of the transmission, which confirmed that the transmission was "OK": the 29 pages were properly faxed and supposedly successfully received at their destination.

However, this automated confirmation was not enough – protocols in most NGOs, including NGO #1 and NGO #2, dictate that staff have to verify via phone with the state office that the latter did indeed receive everything in fine order. Souad told me that it took her almost two hours to get someone from the state office on

the phone, only for them to claim that they did not get the fax at all. She asked the random interlocutor from the state office to check again, and they then told her that they did have a fax from the NGO, so the issue seemed to be resolved. Still, Souad insisted that the state agent check what document it was, and it turned out to be a fax from a different case altogether.

Eventually, the state office asked Souad to resend the 29-page document. Souad complied – she was unaware of the option to mail the documents, whether by courier or as registered mail, and neither the state office nor any of her colleagues mentioned it to her. When Souad again tried to verify that the fax was properly transferred, the state office was, again, very slow to answer her call; when they eventually answered, they once more claimed that the fax was not received. Now the Israeli state office told Souad that there was a technical problem with their fax machine and that *they* would call *her* back when it was fixed. Given their conduct in this specific ordeal, and the state's overall disdain toward NGOs, the prospect of this office calling Souad back seemed like an unlikely scenario.

After finishing recounting all this to me, the tired and angered Souad said she had "no patience for this bullshit. I think I'm just going to give up [and not validate that the fax was received]." Souad explained why she was so frustrated by describing a solution that was unattainable in the context of the material realities of NGO #2: in the past, when working in law firms, she would ask a secretary to send a fax repeatedly until the bureaucratic agency had no choice but to acknowledge that they had received it. In NGO #2, there was no secretary or even a designated employee in charge of administrative matters, and Souad could not afford to spend the whole day faxing the same 29-page document over and over again, then trying to verify via phone that it was properly transmitted. She seemed fed up with the state's bureaucratic strategies and, more importantly, with the NGO's bureaucratic acquiescence and limited resources.

The ordeal of faxing a document and barely, if at all, confirming it was properly received is almost an everyday occurrence in NGOs. In this case, it was amplified by the importance of the documents that failed to send via fax and by Souad's past experiences and first encounter with the NGO's bureaucracy. Cases such as this make clear how Israel brings into tactical practice its strategy of un/intentionally confusing and frustrating not only Palestinians, but the state's own agents. The former are forced to go through legal and bureaucratic mazes, while the latter seem to be themselves ignorant about, and continually distanced from, a position allowing

them to comprehend the logic and practical intricacies of these systems (see above section “Bureaucracies and Counter-Bureaucracies of the Occupation”; compare with Berda 2012; Kelly 2006b).

This vignette also displays how transmissions of documents are as fundamental in shaping power relations as documents are as objects and/or texts. Such occasions intensify underlying, often suppressed, senses of disenfranchisement of the NGOs’ employees with the HR industry. They prompt a two-phase contention: a realisation that NGOs have their own “bureaucratic black box” (Thomson 2012), followed by a critical-reflexive gaze toward its commonalities, and even its merging with, state practices that are formally critiqued by NGOs and intensely resented by their employees.

Discussion: Occupation Hazards

Formalised, routinised technological means of communication are a form of control by those who dictate that such communication will take place, and – more importantly – how it will take place (compare with Yates 1993). The shared reliance of state branches and NGOs on a mode of communication that is outdated and inefficient conveys their similar systematic understandings of the need to control communications. If viewed from the side of the NGOs, this mutual perception is indicative of NGOs’ acquiescence to a type of bureaucracy that bears repercussions on what the NGOs do, how they do it and why.

In the two vignettes presented above, faxes are disruptive as they cause “two valences” of what Rebecca Stein (2017, 557) has recently defined as a “lapse”: “instances of technological misstep, blunder, or failure in the use of photographic technologies [and] a temporal interval – a gap, pause, or interlude – attending the photographic or communicative operation.” Building on and departing from Stein’s claim that “the ethnography of lapse might provide a means of figuring colonial breakdown, even if only on the microscale” (564), I suggest a different framing of lapses: rather than assume that they are (micro) failures, we can also view them as an instigated, or at least uninterrupted, informal resource of power that constitutes bureaucratic lacunas. These lacunas are, in turn, constitutive elements in colonial domination, in this case Israel’s control over Palestinians.

Souad’s vignette is littered with small failures, or incompetences, by state agents to facilitate communications with NGO #2. The communication of documents is thus manipulated in order to serve the purpose of keeping Palestinians from setting foot on the path toward justice, or in this case, from pushing it forward. For such failures to become critically telling (compare with

Kafka 2012, 122), a more radical critique of the interfaces of NGOs and the state must be elaborated: Why do these NGOs not only acquiesce to the state’s demands of how information has to be submitted, but also simultaneously not produce new modalities of perception and revitalised media networks (compare with Larkin 2004, 291)? As Stein (2017, 563) suggests, in the context of HR and in Israel/Palestine specifically, technological lapses signify the inability to obtain justice or garner empathy through documentation, as piercing as this documentation may be. The state’s insistence on technological means susceptible to lapses is essential in how the state solidifies, through failed mediation, a foundational distance between the documenting text and its potential audiences. A failed mediation is hence, also, a successful disruption of HR/humanitarian ethics (compare with Chouliaraki 2011).

The “failing” practices of the state, and NGOs’ role as representatives and caretakers of Palestinians’ rights, blur the distinctions between the state and other actors, which as noted is common for colonial encounters and is a recurring claim in critical anthropologies of the state. The important point in relation to NGOs is that the blurriness is mutually constructed: it is not only a matter of where the state’s reach stops and how, but of where and what NGOs try to reach, how, and for what purpose. This blurriness is thus expanded through this unchoreographed and reluctant, though still mutual, dance.

And yet the acts that constitute the blurriness simultaneously accentuate distinctions, a point that Akhil Gupta’s (1995) discussion of the state’s “blurred boundaries” does not quite address. As the above review and vignettes show, the state fails at the basic bureaucratic procedures it is supposedly committed to as part of its formal commitment to uphold its own law, policy, and moral ethos (whether this commitment is translated to ethical practice or remains declarative). In these dynamics, NGOs represent the non-citizen as an intermediary before the sovereign state that also replicates certain bureaucratic modes of the state; NGOs then mutually constitute – with the state – the very in/distinction between the two seemingly contesting bureaucratic-legal entities.

Here it is useful to compare and distinguish between the political significance of the fake document and its political-violent efficacy and that of the failure/lapse. The lapse is less extraordinary than the falsified; it is more routinised and does not necessarily lead to physical violence. It is, however, as effective a means of governing, constitutive of a political order through the simplest, completely undemanding non-act of not succeeding. Flaunting or accepting failure and apathy is a

privilege of the state (Bubandt 2009, 574) that the NGOs can neither accept nor replicate but must respond to, a supposedly unavoidable acquiescence to these practices that undermines their own values and goals. However, NGOs generate for themselves what I term, following Matthew Hull (2012b, 14, 24), as *frames of in/validation*: the graphical, material and textual actions and representations of bureaucratic documents as dictated by the state, in which the legitimated means of transmission are a decisive factor. In this case, attempts at validation cannot but ultimately fail, or at least disappoint. Thus, a dynamic of failure blurs and distinguishes state from non-state, while simultaneously affirming these very categories – an ambivalence that characterises the discursive and lived-reality effects of Israel’s legal-bureaucratic practices (Grinberg 2016b) and is echoed in the everyday rigour of anti-occupation NGO activism.

Faxes, including the lapses that they are susceptible to, thus promote frames of in/validation that reaffirm, through the bureaucracy of documents and their transmission, the power of the state while destabilising the political distinguishability of NGOs. The dominance of the state in validating certain graphic ideologies and/or discrediting others hinges also on how it makes certain forms of transmission acceptable and possible while annulling others. Whether intentional or not, what matters here is the state’s ability to use technology and its failures to alienate and frustrate NGOs – and Palestinians – in ways that appear as unintentional rather than as an application of a formal policy. When the state overlooks certain realities, the informal is informally legitimised by virtue of this overlooking (Elyachar 2003, 765);¹³ the state further imposes its power by dominating the common NGO–state political negotiation over definitions and quantifications of in/formalities and over their lived repercussions.

Conclusion: Facsimileing and the Critique of Human Rights

As Perugini and Gordon (2015, 133) have recently shown, HR NGOs in Israel/Palestine declaratively avoid “political instrumentalization” of HR and by doing so treat the occupation’s violence as if it emanates “from a distinct structure rather than from Israel’s colonial project.” As I have shown, NGOs can be characterised then not only as complying with, but also as facsimileing the state: they copy certain elements of the state’s bureaucratic processes and technological infrastructures that they themselves suffer from and use them as part of their own work procedures. “Facsimile” here does not stand for an elaborate copy, an impressive reproduction

(Schwartz 2014, 213), but for an outdated, inefficient, usually blurry and ineffective document.

Recent studies of HR and other types of NGOs further critique their modes of compliance with oppressive power by noting how they rely on methods (mainly quantitative data; see Erikson 2012; Merry 2016) that bring them dangerously close to the hegemonic forces and discourses NGOs are – in theory – supposed to destabilise and protect vulnerable populations from. While in this paper I myself critiqued the facsimileing practices of NGOs, here I suggest that as useful as such critiques are, critical scholars of HR and NGOs need to pay closer attention to the dissimilar element produced by the very lapses of the technological infrastructures that fail to properly facsimile. In Israel/Palestine, facsimileing is anything but a comfortable acquiescence to the state, but rather more of a colonial type of mimicry. Mimicry, as Homi Bhabha (1994, 86) famously suggested, is “an ironic compromise ... constructed around an ambivalence” that “continually [re]produce[s] its slippage, its excess, its difference ... [a] representation of a difference that is itself a process of disavowal.”

Israeli HR NGOs then play a particular role in the genealogy of colonial intermediation, which has its specific histories in Israel/Palestine (Cohen 2010; Feldman 2008). This role has yet to be thoroughly addressed by scholars through the lens of postcolonial ethnographic critique, despite a number of other important studies of NGOs in Israel/Palestine (for example, Gordon 2008b; Hammami 2000; Ḥanafī and Ṭabar 2005) and the consideration of this matrix of colonialism-NGOs-intermediation in other geopolitical contexts (Richard 2009; Drążkiewicz-Grodzicka 2016). Placing NGOs within the coloniser–colonised binary as intermediaries affirms a critical distinction that insists on noting the ethical and political commitment of NGO employees to Palestinians and to the struggle against Israel’s occupation. The question that remains is if and how NGOs and their employees can, while facsimileing the state, engage in the activist’s duty of the “undoing of social moralities,” an undoing that consists of what Naisargi Dave (2012, 4–5) defines as a “creatively oppositional relationship to the normalization of life and words.” In this case, “moralities” stands for the set of HR ideologies and practices that induce NGOs’ interpolation of state bureaucracies (compare with Goodale 2006).

I conclude with this remark not (only) as a form of redemptive backtracking, but as what I perceive to be a necessary analytical refusal to bundle legal discourses and formal documents together with organisational

practices and agentive faculties that do not comfortably fit the binaries of state/NGO, coloniser/colonised, perpetrator/victim. In other words, even though they are facsimileing the state, we still cannot equate NGOs with the violent state or accuse them of enabling or encouraging its deadly violence. Indeed, as Michael Sfar has claimed, while the Israeli legal system is complicit with the occupation, to radically do away with the few available courses of critical action it enables means to completely forego the chances – as slim as they may be – of Palestinians to protect themselves and be protected.¹⁴ As Israel denies – for itself and others – the realities it makes, faxes constitute and represent how the state itself dismantles the very elements of its supposed democratic liberalism that it uses to self-legitimise.¹⁵ Such instances of undoing do not end the mass violation of Palestinians’ rights or bring historical justice and balance to Israel/Palestine, but they are still packed with political, activist and indeed historiographic critical significance. And even these tiny windows of reflection and critique would not open without NGOs’ facsimileing of the state.

Omri Grinberg, *Department of Anthropology and Centre for Jewish Studies, University of Toronto, Toronto, ON.*
Email: o.grinberg@mail.utoronto.ca.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my teachers Louise Bethlehem, Donna Young, Merav Shohet, Joshua Barker and Andrea Muehlebach; my in/formal mentors, Yael Zerubavel, Yael Berda and Rebecca Stein; my friends and colleagues Mathew Gagne, Sandy Oh, Nadine Blumer and Marnie Thomson; Nino, Adi, and my family; my inspiring interlocutors, whether individuals or some sort of collective, those written about above and others; my supervising committee: Ivan Kalmar, Alejandro Paz and Naisargi Dave; and the editors and staff at *Anthropologica* for their professional work and kind support.

Notes

1 All names and other potentially identifiable information of individuals and organisations have been altered. Research was conducted from June to August 2013 and January 2015 to June 2016. It included two extensive periods of participant observation in two NGO offices, which also included joining fieldwork and attending staff meetings, social gatherings and public events organised by the NGOs or in which they were involved. I also had two shorter periods of mainly observations with two additional NGOs. Participant observations included research in NGOs’ archives, as well as open-ended qualitative interviews with activists, journalists, lawyers, politicians, current and past NGO employees, and artists that used or

referred to NGO materials. I systematically monitored and gathered data through media sources (both “standard” and social), and analysed various relevant texts that incorporated, or were based on, materials gathered and disseminated by NGOs. Additional insights and anecdotal data stem from my own pre-PhD experience of working with one such NGO for two years. The University of Toronto provided generous funding for this research. The Research Ethics Board at the University of Toronto approved this research; organisations were asked for full and written informed consent, and informants were thoroughly briefed about my research and gave unwritten informed consent to avoid documentation of individuals.

- 2 Here, it is important to note that this article discusses the state without providing ethnographic data from the “other side,” but rather employs accounts of the state through NGOs’ perspectives and experiences of state influence through un/intentional failure. If state documents constitute the reach and impact of the state – and hence make the state itself – then an anthropological study of the state can certainly rely on the technological means that the state uses to communicate and to be communicated with. Such observations about the state should not be viewed as coming from outside of it; indeed, as oft-cited critical studies of post/colonial states have shown, the boundaries or edges of where the state ends and non-state actors begin are blurry (compare with Arondekar 2009; Das and Poole 2004; Gupta 1995; Stoler 2008). This ethnography contributes to and challenges this literature by accentuating the simultaneity that characterises actions within and relating to the infrastructures of communication, discourses and practices shared between NGOs and the non-monolithic yet coherently interrelated branches of the state. In this case, faxes are documents and instances of mediation that simultaneously make such boundaries apparent, and radically undermine the ability to distinguish between NGOs and the state, for the NGOs themselves, their local and transnational proponents, and NGOs’ Palestinian “clients.”
- 3 I will not go into details about the history of the fax (or facsimile) and its technology, nor about its recent and contemporary cultural-political significance. It is, however, important to note that I use “facsimileing” as the name for a type of document and/or means of communication that, like all such technologies, has its own history and is part of a larger puzzle of the politics of infrastructure and communications. At the same time, by suggesting that NGOs “fascimilise,” I am referring to the metaphorical value of facsimile as a problematised copy (compare with D’Andrade and Strauss 1992; Winston 1998).
- 4 See, for example, two publication summaries by Israeli HR NGO B’Tselem: “Whitewash Protocol: The So-Called Investigation of Operation Protective Edge,” September 2016, http://www.btselem.org/publications/summaries/201609_whitewash_protocol; “Void of Responsibility: Israel Military Policy Not to Investigate Killings of Palestinians by Soldiers,” September 2010, http://www.btselem.org/publications/summaries/201009_void_of_responsibility.
- 5 See *The Permit Regime: Human Rights Violations in West Bank Areas Known as the “Seam Zone,”* report by Israeli HR NGO HaMoked – Center for the Defense of the Individual (2013), <http://www.hamoked.org/files/2013/>

1157660_eng.pdf. Countless other depictions of Israel's structural violence and Palestinians' struggles through Kafkaesque measures have appeared in academic, journalistic, artistic and other forms – see various references throughout this paper (and Ball 2014). See also an illustrative account by Yigal Bronner, "Kafka in Area C," *Mondoweiss*, 3 October 2016, <http://mondoweiss.net/2016/10/kafka-in-area-c/>.

A recent example that seems relatively extreme and hence received some media attention is the case of the Israeli military leaving a notice of evacuation for a Bedouin village "lying on the ground" – see Jacob Magid, "IDF Issues Evacuation Order for Bedouin Village Near Major Settlement," *Times of Israel*, 17 November 2017, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/idf-issues-evacuation-order-for-bedouin-village-near-major-settlement/>.

6 See endnotes above and below; see also:

- Israeli NGO HaMoked's report, *Activity Report 2011–2012*, mainly pages 41–42 on the Civil Administration's delays in giving Palestinian farmers much-needed permits, and its increased foot-dragging due to the NGO's involvement. http://www.hamoked.org/files/2014/1158510_eng.pdf.
- HaMoked, "Rumours, Suppositions and Very Few Facts: Arrests Made by Israel during the Attack Dubbed Operation Protective Edge," 28 September 2014 – on the chaos that ensued following Israel's 2014 attack on Gaza and the mass arrests of Palestinians. <http://www.hamoked.org/Document.aspx?dID=Updates1363>.
- Yossi Gurvitz, "Perpetrator Unknown: The Systemic Failure to Investigate Settler Violence," *+972*, 30 May 2015. <https://972mag.com/perpetrator-unknown-the-systemic-failure-to-investigate-settler-violence/107285/>.
- Yesh Din, "Inspector Clouseu – the Israeli Military Police Corps Version," about a four-year failed investigation into a Palestinian's death at the hands of an Israeli soldier. <https://www.yesh-din.org/> [in Hebrew].
- Yotam Berger, "Israel Police Fail to Charge Offenders in 95% of Reported Anti-Palestinian Attacks," *Haaretz*, 13 March 2017, <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-israel-police-fail-to-charge-offenders-in-95-of-reported-anti-palestinian-attacks-1.5447966>
- Yesh Din, "Avoiding Complaining to Police: Facts and Figures on Palestinian Victims of Offenses Who Decide Not to File Complaints with the Police," 8 February 2016, <https://www.yesh-din.org/en/avoiding-complaining/>.

7 This is the case for practically every NGO report I know. An ideal example is the state's response to Yesh Din's report focused on these informal policies, *Mock Enforcement: Law Enforcement on Israeli Civilians in the West Bank*, in which the various state branches each provide their own iteration of avoiding responsibility while justifying themselves and placing the NGO as responsible or deceitfully manipulative in its research – see pages 145–154. <https://www.yesh-din.org/en/mock-enforcement-law-enforcement-on-israeli-civilians-in-the-west-bank/>.

8 See Yesh Din, "Alleged Investigation: The Failure of Investigations into Offenses Committed by IDF Soldiers

against Palestinians," 12 July 2017, <http://www.yesh-din.org/en/alleged-investigation-the-failure-of-investigations-into-offenses-committed-by-idf-soldiers-against-palestinians/>.

- 9 See B'Tselem, "B'Tselem to Stop Referring Complaints to the Military Law Enforcement System," 25 May 2016, http://www.btselem.org/press_releases/20160525_occupations_fig_leaf.
- 10 In Arabic, this eruption was known as *habba* (the "outburst"). It was also named the "individual's intifada," the "knife intifada," the "children's intifada," or "the third intifada." These various names are indicative of the confusion brought on by these events, which caught Israeli and Palestinian publics by surprise and have yet to be coherently analysed by onlookers from media/academia/NGO circles. There are ongoing debates about whether or not these events constituted an intifada at all, and regarding their timeline and historical framing, mainly: When did they start and have they really ended? Commentators do seem to agree that initial signs of this uprising and its clashes can be found before their 2015 eruption, in the incredibly violent and tragic summer of 2014; that it was mainly carried out by Palestinian individuals without any organisational orchestration by political parties or other Palestinian factions; that both Palestinian and Israeli politicians latched onto its events to promote certain, mainly narrow self-serving, interests; and that Israel's response entailed massive means of oppression in terms of both scale and use of previously mostly avoided violent tactics. See, for example, the following journalistic texts from 2014 to 2017, spanning different orientations (pro-Israel, liberal-critical Israeli, pro-Palestinian): Avi Issacharoff, "The Jerusalem Intifada Is Underway, and It's Going to Get Worse," *Times of Israel*, 21 November 2014, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/the-jerusalem-intifada-is-underway-and-its-going-to-get-worse/>; Natasha Roth, "Israel Responds to Lone Attacks with Collective Punishment," *+972*, 22 June 2015, <https://972mag.com/israel-responds-to-lone-attacks-with-collective-punishment/108070/>; Budour Yousef Hassan, "This Uprising Is About More Than Knives," *Electronic Intifada*, 27 January 2016, <https://electronicintifada.net/content/uprising-about-more-knives/15416>; Alison Deger, "Palestinians Grapple with Knife Attacks as Violence Enters Fifth Month," *Mondoweiss*, 16 March 2016, <http://mondoweiss.net/2016/03/palestinians-grapple-with-knife-attacks-as-violence-enters-fifth-month/>; "Over 230 Palestinians Have Been Killed, and 18,500 Injured, since Beginning of 'Jerusalem Intifada' a Year Ago," *Mondoweiss*, 4 October 2016, <http://mondoweiss.net/2016/10/palestinians-beginning-jerusalem/>; Yonah Jeremy Bob, "Did the Knife Intifada Ever End?," *Jerusalem Post*, 18 June 2017, <http://www.jpost.com/Israel-News/Did-the-Knife-Intifada-ever-end-497133>.
- 11 Israel's retaliation included:
- sharp increases in the number of Palestinians held in Israeli prison facilities (from about 5,400 in September 2015 to 6,600 in March 2014) (see B'Tselem, "Statistics on Palestinians in the Custody of Israeli Security Forces," 20 March 2018, http://www.btselem.org/statistics/detainees_and_prisoners/);

- specifically, a spike in the number of Palestinians in administrative detention (from 315 in September 2015 to 692 in April 2016) held without indictment or trial (see B'Tselem, "Statistics on Administrative Detention," 20 March 2018, http://www.btselem.org/administrative_detention/statistics);
- an enormous rise in the number of Palestinian minors held in detention (from a total of 171 in September 2015 to 444 in March 2016), including in administrative detention (from 0 to 11) and in the numbers of detained minors younger than 16 (9 to 31) (see B'Tselem, "Statistics on Palestinian Minors in the Custody of the Israeli Security Forces," 20 March 2018, http://www.btselem.org/statistics/minors_in_custody, and "Israel Once Again Holding Minors without Trial," 28 July 2016, http://www.btselem.org/administrative_detention/20160725_minors_in_admin_detention);
- reports of abuse of detained children by Israeli security forces (see Human Rights Watch, "Palestine: Israeli Police Abusing Detained Children," 11 April 2016, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2016/04/11/palestine-israeli-police-abusing-detained-children>);
- large numbers of children subjected to deadly violence by Israeli security forces (see Defense for Children International Palestine, "Forty-one Palestinian Children Killed as Period of Violence Enters Sixth Month," 3 March 2016, http://www.dci-palestine.org/forty_one_palestinian_children_killed_as_period_of_violence_enters_sixth_month);
- the drastic appearance, perhaps unprecedented, of Israeli security forces performing extrajudicial killings of Palestinian attackers and those supposedly suspected of intention to carry out attacks, including of minors (see Amnesty International, "Israel/OPT: Pattern of Unlawful Killings Reveals Shocking Disregard for Human Life," 28 September 2016, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2016/09/israel-opt-pattern-of-unlawful-killings-reveals-shocking-disregard-for-human-life/>);
- further ramp-up of already escalating use of house demolitions across the West Bank, for both punitive reasons (to demolish homes of relatives of Palestinians that carried out attacks against Israelis) and "other" (bureaucratic, legal) reasons (see Amira Hass, "Israel Dramatically Ramping Up Demolitions of Palestinian Homes in West Bank," *Haaretz*, 21 February 2016, <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/premium-1.704391>; Al-Haq, "Israel Escalates Demolitions in the West Bank," 16 April 2016, http://www.alhaq.org/images/stories/PDF/2012/wf_2016.pdf; OCHA, "Record Number of Demolitions in 2016; Casualty Toll Declines," 29 December 2016, <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/record-number-demolitions-2016-casualty-toll-declines>);
- and monitoring of Palestinians' online activities, leading to mass numbers of arrests for "incitement" and other related charges (see Asa Winstanley, "Palestinians Are Being Arrested by Israel for Posting on Facebook,"

Middle East Monitor, 27 June 2017, <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20170629-palestinians-are-being-arrested-by-israel-for-posting-on-facebook/>; Orr Hirschauge and Hagar Shezaf, "How Israel Jails Palestinians Because They Fit the 'Terrorist Profile,'" *Haaretz*, 31 May 2017, <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/premium-1.792206>; Amos Harel, "Israel Arrested 400 Palestinians Suspected of Planning Attacks after Monitoring Social Networks," *Haaretz*, 18 April 2017, <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/1.783672>).

- 12 While I mostly avoid direct quotes and inclusion of specific voices, these descriptions are loyal to what different interlocutors described: these are the views and insights of the NGO's personnel, with my own analysis clearly demarcated.
- 13 Elyachar discusses a more macro-scale "informal," informal housing and economies, for example. Her insights still apply to informal policies of the micro scale, such as failed communications.
- 14 See Michael Sfard, "Either High Court, or House of Lords," *Haaretz*, 14 September 2005, <https://www.haaretz.com/either-high-court-or-house-of-lords-1.169810>, and "Abandoning the Israeli High Court Is an Abandonment of Palestinian Rights," *Haaretz*, 19 February 2017, <https://www.haaretz.com/opinion/premium-1.772474>.
- 15 See Sfard, "Occupation No More," *Haaretz*, 20 July 2012, <https://www.haaretz.com/opinion/occupation-no-more-1.450251>, and "Israel's Crackdown on UN Aid Organization Part of an Assault on Democracy," *Haaretz*, 25 July 2012, <https://www.haaretz.com/opinion/israel-s-crackdown-on-un-aid-organization-part-of-an-assault-on-democracy-1.453430>.

References

- Allen, Lori A. 2008. "Getting by the Occupation: How Violence Became Normal during the Second Palestinian Intifada." *Cultural Anthropology* 23(3): 453–487. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1548-1360.2008.00015.x>.
- . 2009. "Martyr Bodies in the Media: Human Rights, Aesthetics, and the Politics of Immediation in the Palestinian Intifada." *American Ethnologist* 36(1): 161–180. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1548-1425.2008.01100.x>.
- . 2013. *The Rise and Fall of Human Rights: Cynicism and Politics in Occupied Palestine*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Arondekar, Anjali. 2009. *For the Record: On Sexuality and the Colonial Archive in India*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1215/9780822391029>.
- Ball, Anna. 2014. "Kafka at the West Bank Checkpoint: De-normalizing the Palestinian Encounter before the Law." *Journal of Postcolonial Writing* 50(1): 75–87. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17449855.2013.850245>.
- Barker, Joshua. 2008. "Playing with Publics: Technology, Talk and Sociability in Indonesia." *Language & Communication* 28(2): 127–142. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.langcom.2008.01.002>.
- Berda, Yael. 2012. *The Bureaucracy of the Occupation: The Permit Regime in the West Bank, 2000–2006* [in Hebrew: *Ha'birokratia shel ha'kibush: mishtar heiterei ha'tnu'a bagada ha'ma'a'ravit 2000–2006*]. Jerusalem and Tel Aviv:

- The Van Leer Jerusalem Institute and Hakibbutz Hameuchad.
- . 2013. "Managing Dangerous Populations: Colonial Legacies of Security and Surveillance." *Sociological Forum* 28(3): 627–630. <https://doi.org/10.1111/socompare.with12042>.
- . 2017. *Living Emergency: Israel's Permit Regime in the Occupied West Bank*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Berkovitch, Nitza, and Neve Gordon. 2008. "The Political Economy of Transnational Regimes: The Case of Human Rights." *International Studies Quarterly* 52(4): 881–904. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2478.2008.00530.x>.
- Bhabha, Homi K. 1994. *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge.
- Bishara, Amahl A. 2013. *Back Stories: U.S. News Production and Palestinian Politics*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Bornstein, Avram S. 2002. *Crossing the Green Line between the West Bank and Israel*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Bubandt, Nils. 2009. "From the Enemy's Point of View: Violence, Empathy, and the Ethnography of Fakes." *Cultural Anthropology* 24(3): 553–588. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1548-1360.2009.01040.x>.
- Chouliaraki, Lilie. 2011. "'Improper Distance': Towards a Critical Account of Solidarity as Irony." *International Journal of Cultural Studies* 14(4): 363–381. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1367877911403247>.
- Cohen, Hillel. 2010. *Good Arabs: The Israeli Security Agencies and the Israeli Arabs, 1948–1967*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Comaroff, John L. 1998. "Reflections on the Colonial State, in South Africa and Elsewhere: Factions, Fragments, Facts, and Fictions." *Social Identities* 4(3): 321–361. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13504639851663>.
- D'Andrade, Roy G., and Claudia Strauss, eds. 1992. *Human Motives and Cultural Models*. Cambridge, UK and New York: Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139166515>.
- Das, Veena, and Deborah Poole, eds. 2004. *Anthropology in the Margins of the State*. Santa Fe, NM and Oxford, UK: School of American Research Press.
- Dave, Naisargi. 2012. *Queer Activism in India: A Story in the Anthropology of Ethics*. Durham: Duke University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1215/9780822395683>.
- Drażkiewicz-Grodzicka, Elżbieta. 2016. "'State Bureaucrats' and 'Those NGO People': Promoting the Idea of Civil Society, Hindering the State." *Critique of Anthropology* 36(4): 341–362. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0308275X16654553>.
- Elyachar, Julia. 2003. "Mappings of Power: The State, NGOs, and International Organizations in the Informal Economy of Cairo." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 45(3): 571–605. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0010417503000264>.
- Erikson, Susan L. 2012. "Global Health Business: The Production and Performativity of Statistics in Sierra Leone and Germany." *Medical Anthropology* 31(4): 367–384. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01459740.2011.621908>.
- Fassin, Didier. 2008. "The Humanitarian Politics of Testimony: Subjectification through Trauma in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict." *Cultural Anthropology* 23(3): 531–558. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1548-1360.2008.00017.x>.
- Feldman, Ilana. 2008. *Governing Gaza: Bureaucracy, Authority, and the Work of Rule, 1917–1967*. Durham: Duke University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1215/9780822389132>.
- Gershon, Ilana. 2010. "Breaking Up Is Hard to Do: Media Switching and Media Ideologies." *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 20(2): 389–405. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1548-1395.2010.01076.x>.
- Geva, Maayan. 2016. *Law, Politics and Violence in Israel/Palestine*. Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-34153-8>.
- Goodale, Mark. 2006. "Toward a Critical Anthropology of Human Rights." *Current Anthropology* 47(3): 485–511. <https://doi.org/10.1086/503061>.
- Gordon, Neve. 2008a. *Israel's Occupation*. Berkeley: University of California Press. <https://doi.org/10.1525/california/9780520255302.001.0001>.
- . 2008b. "Human Rights, Social Space and Power: Why Do Some NGOs Exert More Influence than Others?" *International Journal of Human Rights* 12(1): 23–39. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13642980701725178>.
- Grinberg, Omri. 2016a. "Constructing Impossibility: Israeli State Discourses about Palestinian Child Labour." *Children & Society* 30(5): 396–409. <https://doi.org/10.1111/chso.12177>.
- . 2016b. "Radical Indeterminacies: Affirmations and Subversions of the Separation Wall – the Case of the Palestinian Children of the Junction." *Journal of Borderlands Studies* 31(3): 319–337. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08865655.2016.1174600>.
- Gupta, Akhil. 1995. "Blurred Boundaries: The Discourse of Corruption, the Culture of Politics, and the Imagined State." *American Ethnologist* 22(2): 375–402. <https://doi.org/10.1525/ae.1995.22.2.02a00090>.
- Hajjar, Lisa. 2005. *Courting Conflict: The Israeli Military Court System in the West Bank and Gaza*. Berkeley: University of California Press. <https://doi.org/10.1525/california/9780520241930.001.0001>.
- Hammami, Rema. 2000. "Palestinian NGOs since Oslo: From NGO Politics to Social Movements?" *Middle East Report* [New York, NY] 214:16–48. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1520188>.
- Ḥanaḥī, Sārī, and Lindā Ṭabar. 2003. "The Intifada and the Aid Industry: The Impact of the New Liberal Agenda on the Palestinian NGOs." *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 23(1–2):205–214. <https://doi.org/10.1215/1089201X-23-1-2-205>.
- . 2005. *The Emergence of a Palestinian Globalized Elite: Donors, International Organizations, and Local NGOs*. Jerusalem [Ramallah]: Institute of Jerusalem Studies; Muwatin, Palestinian Institute for the Study of Democracy.
- Handelman, Don. 1998. *Models and Mirrors: Towards an Anthropology of Public Events*. New York: Berghahn Books.
- . 2004. *Nationalism and the Israeli State: Bureaucratic Logic in Public Events*. Oxford, UK and New York, NY: Berg.
- Helman, Sara. 2015. "Challenging the Israeli Occupation through Testimony and Confession: The Case of Anti-Denial SMOs Machsom Watch and Breaking the Silence."

- International Journal of Politics Culture and Society* 28(4): 377–394. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10767-015-9198-y>.
- Hetherington, Gregg. 2011. *Guerrilla Auditors: The Politics of Transparency in Neoliberal Paraguay*. Durham and London: Duke University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1215/9780822394266>.
- Hochberg, Gil Z. 2015. *Visual Occupations: Violence and Visibility in a Conflict Zone*. Durham and London: Duke University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1215/9780822375517>.
- Hull, Matthew S. 2012a. “Documents and Bureaucracy.” *Annual Review of Anthropology* 41(1): 251–267. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.anthro.012809.104953>.
- . 2012b. *Government of Paper: The Materiality of Bureaucracy in Urban Pakistan*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Jones, Reece. 2012. *Border Walls: Security and the War on Terror in the United States, India and Israel*. London and New York: Zed Books.
- Kafka, Ben. 2012. *The Demon of Writing: Powers and Failures of Paperwork*. New York: Zone Books.
- Kelly, Tobias. 2006a. “Documented Lives: Fear and the Uncertainties of Law during the Second Palestinian Intifada.” *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 12(1): 89–107. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9655.2006.00282.x>.
- . 2006b. *Law, Violence and Sovereignty among West Bank Palestinians*. Cambridge Studies in Law and Society. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press.
- . 2008. “The Attractions of Accountancy: Living an Ordinary Life during the Second Palestinian Intifada.” *Ethnography* 9(3): 351–376. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1466138108094975>.
- Kuntsman, Adi, and Rebecca L. Stein. 2015. *Digital Militarism: Israel’s Occupation in the Social Media Age*. Stanford Studies in Middle Eastern and Islamic Societies and Cultures. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Larkin, B. 2004. “Degraded Images, Distorted Sounds: Nigerian Video and the Infrastructure of Piracy.” *Public Culture* 16(2): 289–314. <https://doi.org/10.1215/08992363-16-2-289>.
- Marshall, David Jones. 2014. “Save (Us from) the Children: Trauma, Palestinian Childhood, and the Production of Governable Subjects.” *Children’s Geographies* 12(3): 281–296. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14733285.2014.922678>.
- Merry, Sally Engle. 2016. *The Seductions of Quantification: Measuring Human Rights, Gender Violence, and Sex Trafficking*. Chicago Series in Law and Society. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. <https://doi.org/10.7208/chicago/9780226261317.001.0001>.
- Navaro-Yashin, Y. 2007. “Make-Believe Papers, Legal Forms and the Counterfeit: Affective Interactions between Documents and People in Britain and Cyprus.” *Anthropological Theory* 7(1): 79–98. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1463499607074294>.
- Ophir, Adi. 2001. *Working for the Present* [in Hebrew: *Avodat Ha’Hove*]. Tel Aviv: Hakibutz Hameuchad.
- Perugini, Nicola, and Neve Gordon. 2015. *The Human Right to Dominate*. Oxford Studies in Culture and Politics. New York: Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199365012.001.0001>.
- Peteet, Julie. 2008. “Stealing Time.” *Middle East Report* [New York, NY] 248: 14–15.
- Richard, Analiese M. 2009. “Mediating Dilemmas: Local NGOs and Rural Development in Neoliberal Mexico.” *Political and Legal Anthropology Review* 32(2): 166–194. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1555-2934.2009.01040.x>.
- Ron, James. 2003. *Frontiers and Ghettos: State Violence in Serbia and Israel*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Roy, Sara. 2012. “Reconceptualizing the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: Key Paradigm Shifts.” *Journal of Palestine Studies* 41(3): 71–91. <https://doi.org/10.1525/jps.2012.XLI.3.71>.
- Schwartz, Hillel. 2014. *The Culture of the Copy: Striking Likenesses, Unreasonable Facsimiles*. Rev. and updated ed. New York: Zone Books.
- Sfard, Michael. 2009. “The Price of Internal Legal Opposition to Human Rights Abuses.” *Journal of Human Rights Practice* 1(1): 37–50. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jhuman/hun002>.
- Stein, Rebecca L. 2017. “GoPro Occupation: Networked Cameras, Israeli Military Rule, and the Digital Promise.” *Current Anthropology* 58(S15): S56–S64. <https://doi.org/10.1086/688869>.
- Stoler, Laura Ann. 2008. *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and the Colonial Common Sense*. Princeton: University of Princeton Press.
- Thomson, Marnie J. 2012. “Black Boxes of Bureaucracy: Transparency and Opacity in the Resettlement Process of Congolese Refugees.” *PoLaR* 35(2): 186–205. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1555-2934.2012.01198.x>.
- Weber, Max. 2013 [1922]. *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Weizman, Eyal. 2007. *Hollow Land: Israel’s Architecture of Occupation*. London and New York: Verso.
- . 2011. *The Least of All Possible Evils: Humanitarian Violence from Arendt to Gaza*. London and New York: Verso.
- Winston, Briann. 1998. *Media Technology and Society: A History: From the Telegraph to the Internet*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Yates, JoAnne. 1993. *Control through Communication: The Rise of System in American Management*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.