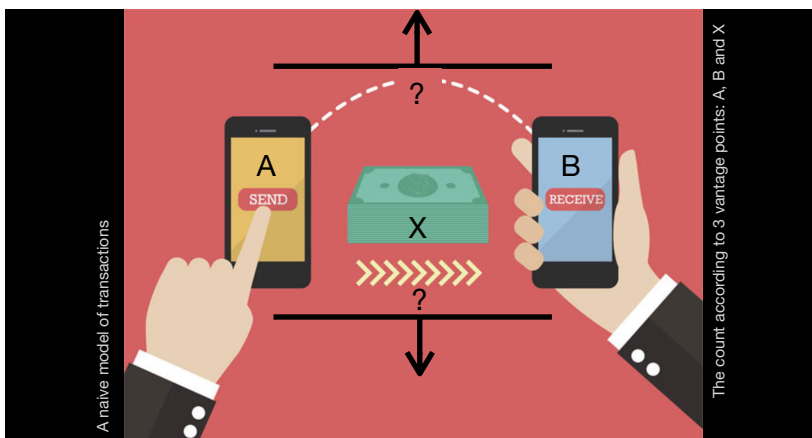




During my fieldwork, I learned to read liturgical Hebrew: the prayer book (*siddur*) and the Pentateuch (*torah*). As my field of study was the understandings of citizenship among European Jews, I also caught a theoretical interest in a passage of the Torah where Jews are counted by 1/2 *shekels*.

Each one was counted by a *half unit*, rather than a whole unit. A number of explanations have been given for this by Rabbinical authorities. For instance, that no one is complete on their own (as pertaining to the relation of each one to God and society). But maybe *no count is complete on its own*.

“... each shall pay the Lord a ransom for himself one being enrolled, that no plague may come on them through their being enrolled.” The price of 1/2 shekel is repeated: from the vantage points of the *giver* and the *sanctuary*. This *non-identity of the count* interested me in the study of *transactions*.



Prof. Fredrik Barth's idea of models was as form of experimental theorising close-up to empirical process, based on von Neumann's and Morgenstern's games theory: the idea was to simulate empirical process rather than abstracting from it, and thereby remaining experience-near/field-close.

He explained these ideas in *Models of Social Organisation and Anthropological Models and Social Reality* that were both published the same year (1966). In [...] *Social Organisation* the idea that the observable manifestation of social life-forms could be explained as aggregates of *zero sum games*.

That is, transactions between A and B in which both parties to the exchange sought to get a return equal—or, superior—to what they put in. I.e., transactions with *no exit*: such that are consummated based on value assessments that differ between **A** and **B**, based on what they have to offer.

In [...] *Social Reality* he writes: "Human behaviour is 'explained' if we show (a) the utility of its consequences in terms of values held by the actor, and (b) the awareness on the part of the actor of the connection between an act and its specific results." In sum: (a) and (b) is different for **A** and **B**.

That's why there are transactions at all. Between **A** and **B**, however, a no-man's land opens in which Prof. Barth's actors—in the shaved down games theoretical account—resemble Bruno Latour's actor networks. And he does turn to Latour in the [Balinese Worlds](#). However, social reality is different.

Here *ethnographic experiments* can tease out the *difference* between **A** and **B**, outlined the terms of the above quote: the ethnographic experiments are embodied *alongside* the experience of their outcomes. I was interested in how it happens—somehow—that the sum strikes zero (i.e., a *ground-zero*).

I was interested in this as an aspect of how a transaction is *closed*: that is, in such aspects that can be in aspects be mutually beneficial *and* asymmetric, but is not directly concerned with this; but rather with the sense that a balance is struck and deal is closed, even when it is not advantageous.

Suggesting that there are models that are in circulation, as more and something else than what is commonly understood by negotiation and/or interpretation, but are constraining the parties to a transaction, and often differently so. Models, in this sense, are more like *contraptions*/apparatuses.

This idea of immersive models was something that I pursued, and Fredrik Barth accepted, pondering the possibility, without outrightly disagreeing. That is, the possibility that models could be included into the ethnographic experiment: extending it e.g. to cyberspace/the *digital* and to *performance*.

How do we count when something counts? Not simply assuming that if something cannot be counted it doesn't count. But rather when something counts, how do we arrive at that realisation? What are the metrics *upstream* and *downstream* of a deal (*zero sum*) that may turn to **A** or **B**'s advantage?