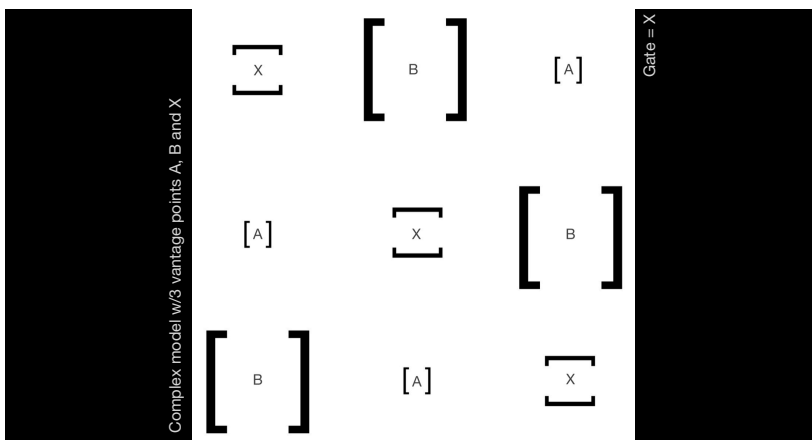


Perhaps the contrast could not be greater to the present day, during the Covid-19 pandemic: each one of us counts in order to prevent the *plague* (as we recall, the payment of 1/2 shekel is to prevent the effect of the *count* to provoke a plague [#02]). The two situations appear to be oddly related.

How is it that a count could provoke a plague? In more than one instance, one finds—in the Torah—that the count is done thrice: the **3**) *change* **1**) *after* **2**) *during* the delivery. The count and the count accounting for it is clearly not seen as the same thing. What has changed? Yes, the scope/impact.

Here, a settlement has three steps: **A**) the first step *restricted* to the act of giving; **B**) the second *assessing* the act [*expanded* by its *might*]; **X**) the third step is arrived at through the *extrapolation* from **A** and the *interpolation* from **B**: the transient **X**-factor for which there is *neither* a count *nor* an account.



Evidently, we are not talking about naming *figures* abstractly, but the act of counting *something A* and the impact **B** joined in **X** (which is *one* without being a unit [that is, it is *neither* subject to a count *nor* an account]). **X** is *neither* a set *nor* an element, but a *category*: the *vectorial sum* of **A** and **B**.

Can such a sum even be imagined? If we transpose Prof. Barth's definition: *A count is settled if we show (A) the accountability of its consequences in terms of values understood by the actor, and (B) the awareness on the part of the actor of the settlement of the count and its specific results.* How so?

Clearly, we need to determine what the 'settlement of a count' means: the notion explored here is that counting is—by its nature—*inflationary*: the number *upstream* and *downstream* of the *count* may be the *same*, but their meaning changes from **1) elementary counting** to **2) the set of the counted**.

While the elements are *constituted*, the set is *constitutive*. Which means, as the two combine in an *aggregating* process, the numbers become *beefed up*: they generate an *affordance*. Which means that the count is *not* settled *before* it becomes clear what the aggregate *affords*: cf, the *vectorial sum*.

In other words, the *affordance* is the **X-factor**. And the *vectorial sum* is as follows:  $A + B = X$ . Different actors will understand the value of the *broad* consequences of accountability. But will also have an awareness of the *specific* results from how the count is settled. Evidently, these will *differ*.

They will contend as to the *fairness* of the deal, which evidently they do if we scope the above paragraphs to describe the kind of transaction at the basis of politics, such as the nation-state and others. In other words, the above framework allows us to move *beyond* the business transaction.

Or, a household economy variant of the same. If this sort of transactions that *constrain* and *obligate* everyone as members of a society—or, as citizens—will be questioned/contended *if* the *differences* in equity is caused by a *lack of fairness* in how different people are affected by the constraints.

Can transactions that appear *equitable* at the time—time, and time again—affect the *fairness* of the same over time? This is the nature of the question that I am asking. Because, under the present circumstances, it would appear that they can. E.g., the position of a country in trade agreements.

At the time when I knew Prof. Barth, I was concerned with these questions in the wake of my fieldwork in post-Yugoslavia—Zagreb and Sarajevo in the mid nineties—while I am presently returning to the same questions, in a query on geological search, oil-findings and Norway in the EU. A frame.

Prof. Barth was moving along similar lines: then I am thinking of some aspects raised by him in [Balinese Worlds](#), but also *his* reading of Anna L. Tsing's monograph [In the realm of the diamond queen](#). The local impact on fairness as the race for equity of transactions *sped up* at a [global scale](#).