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Author(s): Patomäki, Joel

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Basel Bank Limiting Policies as Foucauldian Power/Knowledge: Risk as Assemblages, The Case of Basel Bank Limiting Policies as Discourses

Joel Patomäki

Department of Social Sciences and Philosophy

Email: joel.j.patomaki@student.jyu.fi

University of Jyväskylä

Finland

ABSTRACT

I intend to write about Basel bank's limiting technologies from the point of view of trust, coming from the fact that banks have to adjust their risk understanding tools and test them constantly.

It is not always known what exactly causes a risk. I am interested in risk-understanding technologies which do not govern this in advance but only require passing certain risk tests. Therefore, I will research the idea of Basel's bank limiting technologies as assemblages that want connections only with other specified assemblages. For example, certain risk levels must be adjusted to form a harmonious whole that passes these tests. I will argue that by understanding Basel's bank limiting technologies through the theory of assemblages, it is possible to spell out the notion of biopower in the assemblage that has only a purely economic or statistical status.

This biopower means the ability of a certain bank to control its assessments by estimating those same forms in different diagrams. I will work with the condition that there are no rules as to how to control the risks, only of what the abstract risk levels must be. This is based on the standpoint of the assemblage theory's idea that certain particles can be removed because the particles are tied to the whole. The point of this analysis is to show that trust does not lie in mutual understanding, but rather in the abstract risk levels and certain tests that the bank has to go through.

Trust is not created by doing something that would restrict the bank's ability to act by itself, but by making sure that the governor knows that the bank is in trouble if it does not keep risk at a certain level compared to rules that would govern how the bank has to act. It does this by using a technique that ties the bank's risks to the tools with which it normally functions. Therefore, it cannot cheat the system by using different tools to profit from excessive risks.

This system of certain risk technologies tied to both sides of the bank's infrastructure is called M.A.D. (Mutually Assured Destruction) because it does not show one side without the other. Therefore, biopower is applied to the bank's risk technologies by making sure that bank knows how to work for its well-being and at the same time also ensures that it works for the general good. This sounds a lot like an invisible hand that makes individuals' actions beneficial to the whole community. This idea seems to develop more instrumentally in this argument, but there is the same "clever lie" behind it.

KEYWORDS: Biopower, Assemblage, Bank Limiting, Governmentality, Social Ontology

Introduction Chapter

The paper is about bank limiting policies and how those can be analyzed in the ontological category of biopower. Beyond all theories of paper is the new realism of Maurizio Ferraris as a minor theoretical note. I explain that testing a bank's ability to tolerate risk is a biopower operation and that can be understood.

Theoretical Introduction to Deleuze as a Biopower Theorist

Biopower is the capacity to control ourselves with dispositive created in our social practices and their complex interaction. Reidar Due explains in his book *Deleuze* that all are now seen as social practices taking place within force fields composed of many social practices (Due, 2007, 127). Intuitively, this idea seems to be reasonable. When it is scrutinized in more detail there seems to be the problem that it is said that it is every thought that is composed of force fields. Due claims that this notion is not causal because real, both as process and as a 'form of content' and that social reality cannot exist independently of the thoughts that it generates and that it embodies many social practice and modes of organization" (Due, 2007, 127-128). This questions the Ferrarisan notion of separation between the social and natural worlds.

Before we address an Anglo-American reading of biopower in Deleuze's thinking that paradoxically founds this social ontology, let me briefly note some basic principles of the Foucauldian theoretical project of biopower. I must start from the

very beginning: Foucault starts his famous book *The Archaeology of Knowledge*:

For many years now historians have preferred to turn their attention to long periods, as if, beneath the shifts and changes of political events, they were trying to reveal the stable, almost indestructible system of checks and balances, the irreversible processes, the constant readjustments, the underlying tendencies that gather force, and are then suddenly reversed after centuries of continuity, the movements of accumulation and slow saturation, the great silent, motionless bases that traditional history has covered with a thick layer of events. (Foucault, 1972, 3)

On the other hand, it is important to note that from a more scientific perspective, the Foucauldian notion of biopower has been seen by Donna Haraway as altogether anachronistic as Rosi Braidotti notes, "Foucauldian diagrams of power describe what we have already ceased to be" (Braidotti, 1994, 104). The important point here is that in posthumanist thinking (which Braidotti is part of), an important figure, Latour (2005) states that scientists define facts, they leave the politics and moralists' task of values. Very important post humanist thinkers such as Deleuze and Guattari (1983) posit the socius as a full body that forms a surface where all production is recorded, and the entire process seems to emanate from this recording surface (Deleuze



Quattari, 1983, 10) with “all production constituting a surface over which the forces and agents of production are distributed” (Deleuze and Guattari, 1983, 10). This shows how ways of speaking go on the same line as object-oriented thinking, described by its creator as the object is what opposes the human subject.

Deleuze and Guattari state that “The performative itself is explained by the illocutionary, not the opposite” (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, 87). Roland Bogue describes Deleuze and Guattari’s *Thousand Plateaus* in the following way:

Thousand Plateaus takes up many themes of themes of Anti-Oedipus (volume one of Capitalism and Schizophrenia), but in ways that do not so much complement as complicate the elaborate schemata of the first work. In place of the opposition of molar and molecular in Anti-Oedipus, one finds a triad of molar, molecular, and nomadic, to which correspond three ‘lines’: the molar or hard segmentary line, the molecular or supple segmentation line, [and] the line of flight. (Bogue, 1989, 124)

These lines are not themselves important for my research except that they make it easier to see what the role of the performative in the mechanistic collective is.

Searle admits that institutions are historical and created by language (Searle, 2010). Goodchild describes Deleuze’s idea of institution: “All fixed orders of society, including conventions institutions and impulses that provide a framework for possible social relations but which themselves remain unaffected by what happens, are instances of anti-production” (Goodchild, 1996, 74)

One example of a practice approach and how it is connected to the registers is how capital plays the role of a recording surface (Deleuze and Guattari, 1983, 11-13). Ferraris’s idea is that collective intentionality is better explained through archwriting, the text as the contents (Ferraris, 2013, 154). Ferraris helps in this project by opening a door for a more sophisticated understanding of the terms that Searle calls the causal explanation in his theory. The three terms Searle uses for causal explanation in his social ontology are background, collective intentionality, and performatives seen as declarations according to his newest social ontology. An explanation of Searle is in his social ontological use of declarations. Ontologically, declarations can be seen as background governing mechanisms that create different spaces of collective intentionality and are turned back into declarations. Searle is read as a kind of process ontology that does not govern itself in any strict hierarchical terms. I will combine the best parts of these ontologies described by Renault by using Searle’s ontology as the basis of my research and constructing a process-oriented ontology on three terms that explain causation in Searle’s ontology. One example of a practice approach and how it is connected to the registers is how capital plays the role of a recording surface (Deleuze and Guattari, 1983, 11-13).

The problem of causation in Searle’s social ontology is as follows. Searle follows Austin in the understanding that speech

acts are extrinsic relations between statements, text, etc. The problem in this, however, is that *nondiscursive presuppositions* (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004, 86) are not clearly understood in the manner of cause and effect. Rather, according to Deleuze and Guattari, the performative changes the conditions of speech in three different ways: 1) It has made it impossible to conceive of language as a code, 2) It has made it impossible to see semantics as syntactic or even phonematics as a scientific zone of language independent of pragmatics, and 3) It has made it impossible to maintain a distinction between language and speech. Speech cannot be defined independently of speech acts, according to Deleuze. On the other hand, Meijers claims that “[Searle’s] account of collective intentionality is an account of intentions of individuals, that is, collective intentions, where the sharing of these intentions is not a matter of concern” (Meijers, 2001, 176). On the other hand, there is no point fixating on the term “individuals” because they only act in a way enabled by the rules or conventions of the practice. The practice consists of the elements Searle mentions, but there are also other ways of seeing the situation. The practice is not a general concept and it is divided into different theoretical branches. Different frameworks enable the practice and performatives for individuals in it.

Searle’s account, on the other hand, is based on the assumption that collective intentionality is a primitive phenomenon. So Meijers’s critique directed against the sharing of collective intentions is not a matter of concern for Searle for a reason; in other words, collective intentionality is a primitive phenomenon.

The plane of practice is, therefore, separate from any other level. According to this idea, Searle is not separate from the practice approach. He makes the separation by drawing his theory closer to the neo-materialist theory by admitting the material nature of the status function in his 1995 social ontology. I will look into the question of causality of the performatives through the ontology of Searle. It is important to how the material background enables differences.

Stephen Zepke describes some ideas on how the (social) world according to Deleuze (and Guattari) is composed: “This plan(e) of composition is not defined by its form, by its substance or by a subject” (Zepke, 2009, 116). The same idea can be found in the way Deleuze describes the concept of a **diagram**: “Panopticon traverses all these forms and is applied to all these substances: it is in this sense that a category of power exists, as a pure disciplinary function. Foucault will therefore name this the *diagram*, a function that must be ‘detached from any specific use’, as from any specified substance” (Deleuze, 1988, 72).

Deleuze describes this problem as “representing the topic does mean that it does not only bring to light the situation but also the basic things of the problem” (Deleuze, 2005, 107). The representational principle is an analytical concept. It allows elements of causal processes to be separated and observed individually. The genetic principle is described as “any ‘object’ is a cluster of relations conditioned by the composition of



determining forces and processes of different kinds” (Due, 2007, 130).

He concludes that therefore not possible to isolate within this cluster an individual thing and ascribe to it a series of events which we then set out to explain (Due, 2007, 130). According to Deleuze, this genetic principle applies to all features of social organization, including the human “subject” (Due, 2007, 130). According to Due the formal starting point of (Deleuze) their method is multiplicity. A multiplicity is an indeterminate “group” defined formally as *a capacity to be affected* before the elements that it will consist of (Due, 2007, 130).

On the other hand, I will look at the potential of the assemblage theory of Manuel DeLanda to give a theoretical space to understand capitalism as a double-layered organism. As Fernand Braudel, cited by DeLanda, says, “It was essential to my purpose to distinguish between these two upper layers and explain them about each other” (Braudel, 1992, 25). Manuel DeLanda writes in *A Thousand Years of Nonlinear History* that we may very well ask (ourselves) whether some (or most) of these applications have been purely metaphorical. There is, no doubt, some element of metaphor in my use of the terms, but there are, De Landa believes, common physical processes behind the formation of meshworks and hierarchies (DeLanda, 1997, 58).

Donna Haraway describes this process by talking about her intellectual lineage: “Alfred North Whitehead was a great influence on me, as was American pragmatism, especially Charles Peirce, and process philosophy, particularly Heidegger’s *Being and Time*. That is my lineage, not the French poststructuralists” (Haraway, 2000, 21). This posthumanist (for example, Braidotti 2013) lineage that does not use poststructuralism but some sort of neomaterialism is an important inspiration for readings of economic history (Hodgson, 2004 and Lawson, 2003, especially 110-141).

My perspective on Basel bank's limiting technologies comes from the fact that it is often useful to distinguish two levels in capitalism. A well-known object-oriented ontologist, Graham Harman, explains in an introduction to Manuel DeLanda’s most recent book *Assemblage Theory* (2016) that “Deleuze and Guattari work politically within a Marxist outlook”, which contrasts with another observation on the same page, that DeLanda prefers Braudel to Marx and that central theme in Braudel’s analysis in this assemblage approach is that “crucial distinction between markets and monopoly capitalism” (DeLanda, 2016, ix). The iteration means the ability of recordings to re-contextualize. This means a partly unstable network of meanings, which means that the process of giving meaning (or granting status via collective intentionality) is individual. On the other hand, the usage of performative theory (as earlier noted) is not the way to categorize individualism or non-individualism since the point in Searle (at least implicitly) is that there are collective entities in his social ontology and processes behind them, as the notions of the background and collective intentionality suggest. From only the use of performatives, you

cannot, therefore, make valuations about the orientation of theory on an individual collective axis in the context of ontology.

This is well shown in Braudel’s classical work on the market economy and capitalism as governing superstructure, namely, the idea that “certain groups of privileged actors were engaged in circuits and calculations that ordinary people knew nothing of [...] [A] second shadowy zone, hovering above the sunlit world of the market economy and constituting its upper limit so to speak, represents the favored domain of capitalism. Without this zone, capitalism is unthinkable: this is where it takes its residence and prospers” (Braudel, 1992, 24). The important point in this is the idea of capitalism as consisting of different zones. Therefore, Basel bank's limiting policies posit themselves in this privileged zone where, as Braudel puts it, “ordinary people know nothing”. In my theory, Basel bank consists of techniques that tie the risks that the bank has to the same tools with which it functions normally. It does so by making decisions on the level of monopoly capitalism that delegates the decisions about risks to banks themselves, only altering the handling of risks by connecting them to the banks’ survival mechanisms by linking the risk-controlling mechanism to general mechanisms governing the bank. Therefore, it has to estimate the risks functionally and control itself like a system consisting of biopower that makes it estimate everything in a manner that reduces risks, like the leader of the company, who is walking the system by using different tools to profit from too-high risks. This system of certain risk technologies tied to both sides of the bank’s infrastructure is called M.A.D. (Mutually assured destruction) because it ties banks’ risk-estimating technologies to the risk.

Biopower is applied to the banks’ risk technologies by forcing the bank to work for its well-being and, therefore, it also makes sure it works for the general good by reducing risks. Risk governance functions, according to Ferraris, as text. If biopower is seen as governmentality and banks’ risk technologies are seen as functioning as biopower, as I will later argue in more detail, then it is relevant to see what the possible problems beneath this notion is compared to the general formulations of non-relativistic constructivism today (also adapted to risks). One of the pioneers of the new realism movement, Maurizio Ferraris, states that “Documentality (meaning text as ‘social’ or constructivist notion that governs the modeling of reality) thus comes to be the foundation of what Foucault called ‘governmentality’ and of its developments in biopolitics” (Ferraris, 2013, 271).

Due represents how Deleuze and Guattari share the conviction that there might be an account of causality that is somehow based purely on materiality represented by language and achieved by contemplation and observation. This account does not take into account the interconnection between materiality and the text. The idea of Deleuze’s theory, as I understand it, is that immanent entities are intertwined with so-called textual entities and there is a need to understand the changes in the mediating process. This is the difference between mediators and intermediates. One changes the process and the other just put the



change forward in a chain that is formed as a network. This is a problem since, as Bhaskar states, objects in the intrasive dimension are real in some sense of materiality that is not present in the transitive dimension, according to Al-Amoudi (2007), is the dimension where Foucault positioned his project of analyzing power-knowledge relations. Does Deleuze describe these as unstable elements of writing through statements in a posthumanist idea that is? He sees the statement as transformations in “particular elements in corresponding space” (Deleuze, 1986, 3).

This posthumanist perspective is very important from a non-individualistic reading of Darwinian ways of modeling social sciences. If pragmatic aspects between speech and material and, in addition, the process ontology of DeLanda (2016) are taken into account, the small things matter in modifying assemblages. I will ask questions about the usefulness of these models from a real, philosophical perspective on modifying assemblages.

Basel Bank Limiting Policy as Discourses and Gaze

I will look at the Basel bank limiting technologies as biopower. In neoliberal governmentalities, such as Basel bank limiting technologies, there is a tendency to let the desires of the companies as well as consumers run free rather than control the markets as a whole with general restrictions. The point is to posit these policies to understand their dynamics and therefore where it creates trust. The point is to make clear that Basel bank's limiting policies are posited in expert knowledge and I will not look into the ways they are legitimized to ordinary people. I will only address them as a manifestation of an elitist dialogue on ways to make the risks of banks safe. Next, I will use some of Latour's most general ideas of institutional information transfers and connections, in general, to make sure that the reader understands how I see information as connected to decisions in a biopolitical sense, as I will later argue. The notion of nature as somehow passive (or differently active in the sense that it is a different part of reality than the social) is not compatible with the idea of biopower because the assemblage which governs the idea of social practice in post humanist thinking does not consist of only text or text that governs the material in the same manner as Searle's well-known formula of status function. This is interesting because Foucault states on many occasions that the rules are explicated in the text. This explication is very precise, according to Foucault.

I will make my point in the post humanist framework of Rosi Braidotti (2013), namely the idea that the virtual is everything that can happen in people's virtual experience that is not really in the strict sense. It is only possibly becoming real. This is a cultural product that defines parts of the virtual for the same social groups. Goodchild describes the causal processes behind the idea of the virtual utopia of immanence: “The revolution of desire is therefore a re-colonization of the social field. Instead of processes being oblivious of their effects, they are immediately and directly affected and changed by their environment as a result of how they change the environment” (Goodchild, 1996, 203)

This seems to me to be the same as what Derrida refers to as re-iteration. If utterance changes the environment by going to a different context, a new entity will be spotted on these new grounds. This means that the general theme of poststructuralism, namely re-iteration as a certain kind of uncertain, unclear way of seeing things, is also present in this work where Deleuze is described. Braidotti writes in her book *Metamorphoses: Towards a Materialist Theory of Becoming* in chapter five, “Meta(l)morphoses: The Becoming Machine”, that “In this chapter, I would like to argue that we approach the anomalous and monstrously different others not as a sign of pejoration, but as the unfolding of virtual possibilities that point to positive developments and alternatives” (Braidotti, 2002, 213).

I think that Ferraris's thesis about the meaning of the inscriptions. Foucault's ideas about the formation of discourses. Foucault writes: “To analyze a discursive formation, therefore, is to deal with a group of verbal performances” (Foucault, 2002, 141). Also, Latour states (2005) that the existence of the institution is (in a vague sense) based on performative existence. Therefore, to have an institution, there seems to be a consensus that performances are crucial for the process. As a realist, Ferraris, I believe, supports the position that intentionality is not a sufficient condition for the verification of the causal effects of performatives. The material facts are not in the text. Judith Butler also uses the same position in her account of performatives. Butler notes that if to understand the historic importance of the power of its name in print, so at the time it is caused by the effect is not just a causal effect and inflicted the blow, but it works, in part, through a programmed memory or trauma, who live in the language, and the language (Butler, 1997, 36).

Christian Marazzi states that based on the category developed by John L Austin's language philosophy it can be claimed that convention the convention that we have seen working in financial markets is a supplement of a series of performative utterances (Marazzi, 2006, 31). Deleuze and Guattari state that “The definition of surplus value must be modified” (Deleuze and Guattari, 1983, 237).

Butler has the idea that Foucault's idea of biopower is based on the idea of trauma beneath certain kinds of performatives. DeLanda states that speech acts do not create effects if they are not enforced (DeLanda, 2016, 53).

Diagrams is an important thesis that combines Foucault's ideas also in the realist social theoretical branch of poststructuralism. This idea combines both material and discursive institutions in the same phase. It combines knowledge with the immanent materiality that surrounds us. How can you see knowledge coming around us? According to Latour, local connections create even the greatest innovations that spread everywhere. These are very positive connections since as Latour says, connections neutralize each other and less power is present when connections are multiple and plural. This idea is important when contemplating negativity. As Ulrich Beck (in general knowledge) has noted, mutual interdependencies are the most effective way to control risks. So in this context, where is the



trust coming from? From the multitude of risks? Beck thinks that overlapping dependencies are the most effective way to control our risk society. This phenomenon is an idea where trust is completely instrumental, and risk is formed by certain assemblages.

Then the connections don't act randomly. According to Due, Deleuze and Guattari make a distinction between genetic and representational thought. According to the representational principle, beings exist as individual things. Reality consists of identifiable and observable particles, and what happens to things is observable and causally explicable. According to Due genetic principle is opposed to both the notion of observable traits and the principle of causal explanation (Due, 2007, 130). This means that when there is a genetic principle in progress, risks are minimized since the causal factors are so unclear and unstable.

In this case, the understanding is about more flexible networks and a structured understanding of background practices. I explained in the previous chapter how Searle defines Foucault's notion of biopower and talks about the normalization practices it produces like it would a background-related phenomenon, but he claims that Foucault's theory does not meet two essential criteria for a theory that discusses power relations: accuracy and exactness of intentionality. By accuracy, Searle refers to the exact analysis of who exactly is exercising power on whom, and by the exactness of intentionality, he refers to the phenomenon, that the intentional content must be specified. According to Searle, Foucault does not specify who exactly uses the power whom (Searle, 2010, 154).

The criteria of accuracy and exactness of intentionality are, as far as I can see, born from the same logic as Searle's polemic opposition to post-modernism. Searle's requirement for the accuracy and exactness of intentionality does not leave space for the explanation of the mechanisms of collective intentionality, subconscious and non-agentive functions. In the context of the previous claims, Searle does not take into account that many causal chains in social reality do not function according to the previously mentioned claims. Based on network

power described by Foucault, it does not make sense to talk of accuracy, and maybe not even of intentionality.

As far as I can see, Searle's idea about collective intentionality would be more effective if its contents were included in the causal process. This process is conceived through the concept of network power because in both cases the standards relate to each other without a clear structure. Searle defines the power that has not been codified and is not symmetric with clear norms as background/network power. According to a definition in Searle's earlier book on social ontology, the background consists of capacities, dispositive, and tendencies, which allow intentionality to function.

Conclusion

This paper is about the social ontological claim that biopower neutralizes itself. The idea in posthumanism is that risks are against each other. The point is tendencies work against each other in a way that explained that many risks neutralize each other. Different kinds of meters in bank limiting and social ontology all show how this can be done.

There are ontological terms of tendencies and dispositions in the idea of banks limiting policies and controlling them. The tendencies and dispositives are mapped in a posthuman way in the diagram to control the process as a policy for example to limit banks. The collective processes in social ontology work in a posthuman sense to neutralize these processes that cause risk. Biopower is an ontological category used when a bank's ability to tolerate risk is tested as a whole shock test system. This biopower idea is focused on testing tendencies in simulation before turning to reality. What is seen is important to map with words causing something and also the causal principles that are cyclical are important. When words describe something in the material world the causation is often cyclical, and tendencies are already mapped in a way that nothing happens to reduce risk. The harmonious whole as an assemblage where elements neutralize the risk is the outcome of this. The new realism explains all these theories and is beyond the theories in this paper.

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