

DELEUZE, TARDE AND MOLECULAR POLITICS

Julius Telivuo¹

Abstract

The paper discusses political and social ontology in Gilles Deleuze's philosophy, more precisely the notion of *micropolitics*. As many other continental thinkers of the 20th century, Deleuze is critical towards any general idea of community. However, Deleuze does not explicitly tackle the problematic, unlike thinkers like Bataille, Blanchot, Derrida and Nancy, who develop closely related notions of a community without identity, unity, actuality etc. Still, similarly to many thinkers of his generation, Deleuze seeks a way out of the predicament of the conscious subject and of collective representations. Instead, he approaches the socio-political sphere from a microscopic perspective. Thus, what determines this sphere is not a general structure or logic of the community, but the immediate, concrete modes of interaction, or rather the social processes in which people are caught up. More importantly, these concrete processes differ from the general consciousness and the molar representations concerning the social sphere, projected as genders, classes, races, ethnicities. Together with Félix Guattari, Deleuze seeks to uncover the micropolitical and non-conscious processes underlying not only the general, summary representations but also the individual conceptions dominating the social sphere. In addition, Deleuze and Guattari's inspiration in Gabriel Tarde's microsociology is discussed in the article. Based on the work of these three thinkers, the article argues for an idea of communality beyond conscious experience, not implying its lack as such but rather the superfluity of individual or collective experience with regard to the concrete processes that make up the social sphere and form the core of political action.

Keywords: Deleuze, Tarde, micropolitics, ontology, process, the unconscious.

Introduction

Deleuze's political thinking rejects the choice between individualism and communitarianism. Initially however, Deleuze comes across as a rather individualistic thinker, or at least as an anti-communitarian thinker. For instance, for them guerrillas and artists offer more relevant and fruitful models of political agents than statespersons and members of civil societies. Also, for them desire as the driving political force burgeons first and foremost locally, instead of being subjected to a general will or reason. Furthermore, Deleuze and Guattari criticise the notion of class as an abstract representation downplaying real social processes. More generally, Deleuze denounces common sense as a model of thought, as

¹ Julius Telivuo, PhD student, University of Jyväskylä.

well as *communication*, partly as a reaction to Jürgen Habermas's theory of communication as an attempt to establish universal rules and ethics for communication.²

However, Deleuze is famously also the philosopher of multiplicities and assemblages or *agencements*: according to him, we are always at the intersection of various processes, things, actions, expressions and indeed we are ourselves composed of such multiple dimensions. This is the first tension in Deleuze's thought one must keep in mind: singularities and individuations always take place in a *multiplicity* and are defined by such a multiplicity. A multiplicity in Deleuze's sense can be defined more or less as a system with several dimensions. To put it briefly, for Deleuze the focus of the social and the political is neither on the individual nor the community, but on the processes that happen *to* individuals and appear as communal phenomena. Accordingly, social processes are primary with regard to individuals but also to communities.

First, I shall introduce the general spirit of Deleuze's political philosophy and its relation to the ideas of community, communality and sharing. It will turn out that Deleuze's relation to communality depends on the way one conceives of the sharedness of the community and sociality. Second, I shall move on to the microsociology developed by Gabriel Tarde, who was an important influence for Deleuze, especially in terms of his notion of micropolitics, developed in collaboration with Félix Guattari. Tarde's theory allows us to peer at the presuppositions of Deleuze and Guattari's micropolitics more concretely. After that, I'll discuss the specifics of Deleuze and Guattari's theory and the notions of the molar and the molecular. These two aspects of social reality form the basic tension in Deleuze and Guattari's political thought and develop the basic Tardean tension between macro- and microsociology. Finally, I shall introduce the notion of *line of flight*, which specifies the dynamics of socio-political life as its dimension of change and mutation, thus being what ultimately politicizes it.

Active, unconscious sharing

Something common or shared (lat. *communis*) seems to define the sphere of investigation for social and political theory. A community is shared by its participants and arguably, politics consists of managing affairs of common, shared interest. However, *prima facie* Deleuze's thinking does not seem to concern any themes of such communality, as he avoids postulating general structures based on commonness or something shared. Still, I would argue that a theme of sharing resonates with many aspects of his political philosophy. However, the Deleuzian sharing is never properly communal, or it does not refer to anything common or shared as such. Rather, these processes of sharing would be closer to processes like connecting, intensification or contagion, which for Deleuze are determinant processes of the socio-political field.

² P. Boutang: *L'Abécédaire de Gilles Deleuze*, Paris: Éditions Montparnasse 2004. Deleuze interviewed by Claire Parnet.; G. Deleuze, F. Gilles: *Qu'est-ce que la philosophie?* Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit 1991, 11–12.

Traditionally, sharing has been a relatively static notion related to joint possession or division of goods. However, Deleuze's political thinking endorses precisely the more recent, dynamic sense of sharing as spreading by connecting. Actually, the relatively new form of sharing on the social media comes even disturbingly close to what for Deleuze is essential about the socio-political sphere: the passing of currents or flows that work by alliances and contagion.³ This is also the crux of the famous concept of the *rhizome* as a principle of immanent connection without a centre or overarching unity.⁴ In fact, sharing on the internet could express the nature of the spread of ideas and customs in a more general sense, regarding also the time long before the internet. In a sense, sharing in the social media is only making more visible and accelerating the microscopic logic of the spreading of cultural phenomena that has always been around.

Deleuze's basic intuition is that social and communal processes are primary to the individual or collective subjects that appear as the agents of social change. However, even if these processes are essentially impersonal and pre-individual, this does not entail a blind determinism or teleology *à la* Hegel. Indeed, these processes are strictly immanent to a given society and do not transcend it even temporally or historically by hindsight. Thus, the social processes precede the individuals and persons primarily as conscious agents. Namely, the socially determining processes *affect* the individuals immediately regardless of their perceptions and wishes. Thus, at this level the individual is defined only in terms of her affects, or immediate sentiments and reactions. Also, as was noted above, the sociality of these processes for Deleuze consists in being passed from one individual to another. However, to maintain the Deleuzian vein, this sharing should be seen as independent of conscious choices, hence the images of contagion, connection and propagation. Indeed, Deleuze defines a *network* as an immanent series of encounters, which together acquire a certain consistency, but independently of a governing centre or transcendent perspective on the whole.

Deleuze's microscopic perspective on society is significantly inspired by Gabriel Tarde's microsociology, which I shall present next and then move on to Deleuze and Guattari's micropolitics more in detail.

Gabriel Tarde: Imitations, oppositions and inventions as modifications of desire and belief flows

Gabriel Tarde (1843–1904) was a sociologist and criminologist active in the late 19th century. He was to some extent the rival of Émile Durkheim's (1858–1917) and was later over-shadowed by Durkheim and his followers. Durkheim is famous for his theory of the division of labour, which according to him characterises all civil societies. Tarde however claims that the basic mistake of Durkheimian sociology is to suppose the similarity of human beings as the basis of the structure and nature

³ G. Deleuze, F. Guattari: *Capitalisme et schizophrénie 2: Mille plateaux*, Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit. 1980, 36, 295–297.

⁴ Deleuze, Guattari, op. cit., 13–15.

of societies.⁵ That is, humans are for Durkheim naturally inclined to forming societies and although the division of labour entails differences among people, for Durkheim the functioning of this diversity requires that people share similar beliefs concerning the common good.⁶ The problem for Tarde is that in a way Durkheim abstracts his analysis from the final outcome of an established society while he neglects a large part of social reality and how this established society concretely comes about. Durkheim focuses on the citizens of an established, relatively peaceful, modern society with division of labour and functions. Furthermore, he presumes that the advantages of this kind of society are *a priori* desirable.

From Tarde's point of view, Durkheim is merely supposing what should be explained about the nature of society, as well as simply ignoring the struggles that have led to the status quo. By contrast, Tarde argues that social phenomena can only be explained by referring to the microlevel of individuals and the processes that take place there. The starting point for Tarde is precisely the fundamental differences of individuals from one another. He explains the similarities among individuals as resulting from mutual *imitation*. Thus, similarity is not something pre-existing in a society, but it is produced by imitation and repetition. However, according to Tarde, this similarity is just a middle term leading again to difference (Tarde 1895: 190). Thus, Tarde argues that differences prevail in societies and that imitations and assimilations are only transitory phases leading to ever new differences. Thus, postulating imitation as a driving force of social processes does not necessarily entail predicting a tendency towards social and cultural unity, as unity is only the effect of imitation within a multitude of mainly differing processes. In a sense, the primacy of difference or identity is a question of point of view, but for Tarde the primacy of difference is crucial, as starting with similarity would mean ignoring the real differences and heterogeneity in societies and seeing these as mere mirages of an underlying identity or unity of the human race or being. Furthermore, emphasizing similarities as the basis of the social makes social processes ephemeral or even inconceivable. Tarde says: "To exist is to differ" (*Exister c'est différer*, Tarde 1895, 192). Thus, existence constantly produces divergent processes, which may be brought to resonate with each other, but this leads to ever new divergent processes.

Micro-operations: invention, imitation and opposition

Tarde defines three principal sociological micro-operations as causes of all social phenomena: 1) invention, 2) imitation and 3) opposition. First, according to Tarde, the basis of constructive social change is *inventions*, which Tarde defines as a form of the more general phenomenon of adaptation. Inventions are provoked by particular social circumstances and needs. These can be inventions in the usual sense, as appliances, or simply new ways of doing things or behaving. Second, *imitation* is the propagation, spreading or repetition of social phenomena (and

⁵ G. Tarde: *Essais et mélanges sociologiques*, Paris: A. Maloin 1895, 183–185.

⁶ Durkheim, 1893, 203.

inventions). For example, the viral videos on the internet would seem to be based on imitation in two senses: first of all, sharing a video is imitative either because somebody else first shared the video with me, or because I see other people sharing videos they like. On the other hand, creating a new video clip on the internet is itself a trend which is imitated. Trends in general are a kind of imitation in Tarde's sense. Third, *opposition* is a division relative to a phenomenon, for instance taking sides about different alternatives or hesitating between them.

Tarde explains the dynamics of societies and social change by these three operations or processes. The essential point is that they are not general representations concerning a society, but concrete processes happening at the immediate social level instead. Namely, Tarde believes that in one way or another, the great lines of history are always produced by smaller lines, taking place between individuals or within individuals. However, the social operations are not essentially individual or even inter-individual, as they in a way happen *to* the individuals or in them, not *by* them. Accordingly, Tarde refers to these processes or tendencies as "currents" (*courant*), and Deleuze will use the term flow (*flux*).

Deleuze describes the nature of these social flows in a lecture from 1971:

"What moves over the body of a society? It is always flows, and a person is always a cutting off [*coupure*] of a flow. A person is always a point of departure for the production of a flow, an arrival point for the reception of a flow, of a flow of any kind; or then a person is an interception of many flows."⁷

Let us define the Tardean microsociological operations anew in terms of social flows: 1) Imitation is the propagation or spreading of a flow or current, 2) opposition is the binarisation of flows and 3) invention is conjugation or a connection of diverse flows. Thus, imitation is simply the spread, propagation or repetition of an existing social current. Secondly, the basic idea of opposition is that a flow bifurcates or divides in two. Thirdly, invention means adapting to a situation and involves bringing different flows together by connecting them or conjugating them, conjugation of flows entailing that one of them is the dominant flow. In this sense, nothing completely new ever takes place in a society, as everything new is the combination of existing material and social flows.

What do these social currents or flows consist of? According to Tarde, *beliefs* and *desires* are the two main psychological and sociological quantities, the real quantitative basis of sociology as the motors of human action (Tarde 1893, 14–15). They constitute the primary, immediate processes guiding the actions of individuals and producing the visible social structures and institutions through the three operations presented above.

⁷ G. Deleuze: *Course in Vincennes*, 1st lecture, 16 November 1971.

Belief and desire

Tarde accords a central place for belief and desire in social phenomena as they precede all conscious experience – perception, will and pleasure – and the human constructions based on these. That is, according to Tarde, belief is the immediate process grounding perception, while desire is the fundamental thrust giving rise to the secondary phenomena of will and pleasure. Tarde himself talks about *currents* of belief and desire because of the continuous and repetitive nature of these basic attitudes or actions. Deleuze calls these currents flows possibly because of the economic implications of the term. Daniel W. Smith traces the source of the Deleuzian usage of the term to the economist John Maynard Keynes, and economic flows indeed are a central theme in the opus pair *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, where economic flows and the libidinal flows are meshed together in a libidinal economy (Smith 2012, 164; cf. CV2). In fact, the authors argue that the socio-politico-economic sphere and desire are inseparable, meaning that all individual desire is always socio-politico-economically invested as deployed in a concrete assemblage, while the social, the political and the economic in turn are precisely expressions of these same flows of desire.

In the Deleuzian context, the flows of beliefs and desires constitute the molecular sphere, while the molar sphere is occupied by structures and actions corresponding to general representations. Accordingly, the distinction between the individual and the social exists only within the molar realm, and it loses all meaning in the molecular sphere. However, if for Tarde the macroscopic phenomena are essentially produced by the microscopic phenomena, for Deleuze and Guattari the microscopic and macroscopic tendencies coexist, side by side. Also, they complement the Tardean social dimensions by a dimension of potentiality for change.

Deleuze and Guattari's micropolitics in A Thousand Plateaus

The notion of micropolitics is discussed the most extensively in *A Thousand Plateaus* from 1980, which also provides the context for the present paper, but the related theme of molecularity and molarity is presented already in *The Anti-Oedipus* from 1972. The notion of micropolitics defines Deleuze's approach to political theory and also connects with other central themes, e.g. the non-conscious dimension of experience, the critique of representation and of the model of judgment in philosophy. In an original manner it presents political phenomena neither in terms of opposed alternatives nor underlying consensus, but as the coexistence of fundamentally different tendencies – molar, molecular and fleeing ones. Thus, the essential socio-political distinctions concern the nature of the tendencies in terms of these three coexisting dimensions which differ in kind.

Like Tarde, Deleuze asks: *how* is social reality produced? So instead of merely describing the structure of society, Deleuze is interested in how it comes about or how it happens. Again, this is not merely an empirical

or historical question, as what Deleuze wants to account for is the logic of production of societies, how a society or the social is produced all the time. More precisely, this production is not so much the genesis as a dynamic account of different contemporary tendencies in a society. But if Tarde's interest is still primarily a descriptive one, Deleuze also stresses the political nature of all social actions. In my view, the sense of the political here can be defined quite generally as the *attempts to influence or affect other people*. Tarde's microsociology seeks to account for large social formations by reference to small-scale processes, whereas Deleuze and Guattari's micropolitics concerns the sphere of actions that relate to immediate perceptions and affections among individuals. Thus, while Deleuze and Guattari are sympathetic to Tarde's perspective, they do not give ontological or temporal primacy to one level over the other; on the contrary, the molar and molecular are coexisting tendencies of a society. Accordingly, the manifest primacy of the molecular social processes is a political or ethical one – social change operates through the molecular level.

Deleuze and Guattari draw a basic distinction between the *molar* and the *molecular* aspects or tendencies of life, culture, action and thinking. Broadly speaking, the molar and macro aspects of thinking and action refer to general representations and categories and perhaps more importantly, to the dominating social structures and institutions that strengthen these representations and embody them. On the other hand, the molecular or micro dimension of socio-political reality consists of activities and processes which appear irrelevant from the point of view of the molar structures, but from which these structures gain their power. Even if Deleuze and Guattari assimilate the molar structures with social *representations*, this does not imply that the molar structures would be any less real than the molecular processes. Indeed, they claim that there is a concrete difference between the two, but this difference is rather a matter of *speed* or suppleness. That is, the molar and the molecular pick out different traits of social life, but their difference consists essentially of the degree of suppleness the social process manifests, the molar aspects being more rigid and the molecular aspects more supple and malleable, but consequently also more open to change.

It is perhaps helpful to link the notion of micropolitics to Foucault's more famous concept of the microphysics of power. The basic idea is very similar – so instead of analysing general concepts and structures such as class and gender, or stark social dichotomies and hierarchies, Foucault is interested in the minute ways in which power is exercised. Thus, a prison is primarily a molar institution, distributing power and punishment as well as controlling and separating a group of criminals from the rest of the population.

The molar, rigid lines

The term 'molar' originally comes from chemistry, a mole being a constant amount of basic units i.e. of atoms or molecules. Thus, a mole is basically a perceivable amount of any substance. In terms of social

theory, the guiding idea concerning molarity is accordingly that the molar consists of perceptible or representable social units, such as families and social classes, whereas the molecular is something that forms the real ground or material for these stereotypical units. Deleuze and Guattari adopt this terminology from psychology and ethology rather than from chemistry, but the notion of molarity and molecularity has essentially the same meaning in all of these fields: the molar refers to large units, whereas the molecular refers to the processes that produce these larger units. Deleuze and Guattari also use the terms micro and macro, more common in the social sciences, but it would seem that the tension between the molecular and the molar would refer more to *production* than the distinction between micro and macro, usually referring to scale. Manuel De Landa has suggested that in order to present social processes aright, one must forge a new third, dynamic dimension between the usual atomistic micro dimension concentrating on individual agents and the holistic macro dimension focusing on large units, which according to De Landa are bound to be abstractions.⁸ To put it roughly, for Deleuze the molecular or the micro refers to production and the molar and the macro to representation.

In certain respects, the distinction molar–molecular can also be viewed along the axis conscious–unconscious. According to Deleuze, molarity is expressed in conscious perceptions and sentiments, it is the correlate of these. Thus, we perceive and present our opinions and sentiments as molar beings or persons with particular reference groups: ‘In my view...’, ‘As a man/expert/professional, I would say...’, ‘I don’t like cheese/I’m not one of the cheese-lovers’. However, it is essential that both molecular and molar aspects are equally real – thus, the molar is not reduced to representations, but it is the side of social life that best fits them.

The molecular

The molecular on the other hand, consists of “percepts and affects”, corresponding to the Tardean beliefs and desires respectively.⁹ However, if the Tardean beliefs and desires still refer to the individual as the starting point, Deleuze places the focus more strongly outside the individual. Accordingly, percepts and affects are immediate influences on us – objective, pre-individual and external elements, to which beliefs and desires relate at a subconscious level and on the basis of which perceptions and sentiments are formed in a conscious subject. In fact, Deleuze and Guattari develop an original theory of desire and expression. The details of this theory are not relevant from the point of view of the article at hand, but the essential feature of Deleuze and Guattari’s notion of desire is that it is a process developed in relation to an assemblage of things and expressions or enunciations. The original

⁸ M. De Landa: *A Thousand Years of Non-Linear History*, New York City: Zone Books. De Landa 1997, 18–19.

⁹ G. Deleuze, F. Guattari: *Capitalisme et schizophrénie 2: Mille plateaux*, Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit 1980, 260.

Deleuzo-Guattarian insight is that desire does not consist in the *lack* of the desired object nor in a phantasm of a subject.¹⁰ Thus, they propose instead a positive and productive concept of desire, developing itself in a concrete environment or assemblage. Also, Deleuze and Guattari do not contradict the traditional notion of desire as a primitive, immediate drive opposed to reason as a mediating faculty, but they accord desire a more constructive role as the source of all activity.

The molecular elements are intertwined with the molar aspects, which however imply a conscious judgment based on the molecular elements but in a way transcending this immediate level. In a similar vein, Deleuze claims that politics and its judgments are always molar, but it is the molecular and local assessments or evaluations that actually *do* politics.¹¹ *Micropolitics concerns precisely this sphere of minute assessments of affects and percepts*, which are covered over by the conscious judgments and declarations of politicians. “Take aggregates of the perception or feeling type: their molar organization, their rigid segmentarity, does not preclude the existence of an entire world of unconscious micropcepts, unconscious affects, fine segmentations that grasp or experience different things, are distributed and operate differently. There is a micropolitics of perception, affection, conversation, and so forth.”¹² The molecular aspects of socio-political reality would consist of all the apparently irrelevant or inessential impressions, feelings, processes and actions that take place within the more apparent and established molar structures. However, there is not so much a difference of scale, as a difference of kind between the molar and the molecular: for instance, going to school is a molar segment of human life in a civil society and more concretely, the actual tasks and actions a pupil must carry out at school are realisations of this molar segment. However, even the most diligent of pupils performs constantly a thousand little things, quirks, whims or mannerisms that are not essential for the ideal pupil, but are not directly opposed to the ideal either. Thus, underneath the molar realm of social structure, there subsists a molecular realm of percepts and affects. Still, the molar and the molecular do interact and are ultimately opposed to one another, when taken to the extreme: in their extreme forms, molecular tendencies resist the molar structures and molar structures in turn only tolerate the molecular tendencies that are perfectly compatible with them.

Deleuze presents an interesting solution to the question of the relative statuses of the micro and macro levels. Namely, instead of reducing one level to the other or leaving the relation indeterminate, Deleuze suggests that the relation is one of coexistence.¹³ However, there are four specifications to this claim. 1) First of all, according to Deleuze, both of these levels are real in the sense that they have effects on social reality, although in a difference sense. 2) Consequently, the molar cannot

¹⁰ G. Deleuze: *Pourparlers 1972–1990*, Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit 1990, 29, 32.

¹¹ MP, 270.

¹² MP, 260.

¹³ G. Deleuze, F. Guattari: *Capitalisme et schizophrénie 2: Mille plateaux*, Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit 1980, 260.

be reduced to the molecular or the other way round. 3) The molar and the molecular suppose one another and coexist without following the one and same logic. So they differ *de jure* in kind, but depend *de facto* on one another. 4) The molar and the molecular both refer potentially to the whole of the social field.¹⁴

To recapitulate Deleuze and Guattari's theory concerning the molar and the molecular, first of all, there are stabilizing and homogenizing molar tendencies in societies, people are categorised according for instance to gender, age, ethnicity etc. or according to segments as Durkheim would put it. Underneath these categories or representations, there are minute perceptions and feelings or affections, which relate to these categories but operate at a different level and do not enter the general representations. This would be the micro realm of Tarde's beliefs and desires. However, societies and communities in a sense also *leak* all the time, or something is fleeing and escaping within them. This third, fleeing tendency of a society as its potential is a specification that Deleuze and Guattari add to the Tardean picture.

The line of flight

Deleuze and Guattari speak of the three socio-political tendencies as different kinds of *lines*. This might seem confusing, given that we were just getting used to the talk of socio-political flows associated with molecular processes. The discourse of lines stresses the fact that these processes are immanent to each other, that is, they work on each other immediately, with no privileged perspective. On the other hand, the talk of flows emphasizes the difference of nature between molar structures and molecular processes, molar lines consisting of stabilised, controlled social aspects, while molecular flows refer to the positive activity of desire working as a fuel for the molar order.

So all social processes and actions can be mapped according to three kinds of lines: 1) rigid lines, 2) supple lines and 3) lines of flight (*ligne de fuite*). If the first two elements refer to the macro and microstructure of a society, the line of flight leads out from the system. The line of flight is the way that enables the transformation of the society. Thus, a revolution essentially consists in following a line of flight. Quite simply, the line of flight refers to activity which radically changes the way things are done. At the individual level, it could simply consist in divergent actions, resistance and creativity, but this would not necessarily amount to a line of flight in the social field. The point is that the individual is caught up in the line of flight as a social phenomenon, reassembling and rearranging or possibly destroying the molecular and the molar lines. However, to be quite precise, the line of flight and the fleeing tendencies in a society are always *molecular* tendencies that are accelerated or intensified. Thus, the line of flight operates within the molecular sphere.

In fact, Deleuze and Guattari to some extent let molecularity oscillate between the supple lines and the lines of flight. That is, supple molecular

¹⁴ Deleuze, op. cit., 262.

segmentarity with its subtle codes is closer to the molar segments, while the molecular flows possess many of the characteristics of lines of flight, e.g. deterritorialisation, albeit from a predominantly constructive point of view, serving as the driving force of social phenomena and thus exhibiting only a relative form of the mutational power of lines of flight. Nevertheless, for Deleuze and Guattari, the transforming tendencies of societies are always actual, although they may be dispersed and imperceptible. Revolutionary activity would thus consist precisely in the connection and intensification of the already existing lines of flight of a society.

The dangers of molarity and molecularity: totalitarianism and fascism

Although the power and order related to molar segments may offer us safety and security, the accompanying conservatism is not without dangers. Indeed, for Deleuze and Guattari, totalitarianism is an expression of the inherent dangers of molarity, consisting in the effort of eliminating lines of flight, making it an essentially conservative phenomenon. On the other hand, while fascist societies have indeed manifested totalitarian traits, according to Deleuze and Guattari the essence of fascism nevertheless does not consist of conservative molarity, but instead in pursuing a line of flight, which however is turned into a line of destruction. Accordingly, for instance the Stalinian totalitarianism operated via centralised and organised power, while Hitler's power was based on a network of micro-fascisms. Consequently, The different lines as such are beyond good and evil, and the point of the analysis of the different kinds of lines of is not simply to glorify the creative power of the fleeing tendencies of societies, but to allow to better grasp the different lines present in all individuals, groups and societies. Thus, molarity offers us safety but also hinders creativity and progress. Fleeing lines on the other hand constitute the potential for change and creation, but may also display the greatest power of destruction. Most importantly, all of the lines are present in everyone and thus the essential problem is not to tell the good tendencies from the bad ones but to discern the relations of the different coexisting tendencies.¹⁵

Concluding implications

We saw that a Deleuzian kind of communality should be understood as an immediate, immanent connectivity. The inspiration for this notion of unconscious, pre-individual processes underlying the established large-scale social formations can be traced in the microsociology of Gabriel Tarde, with its microprocesses of imitation, opposition and invention, which account for social phenomena at a local level without presuming general social structures or properties. Deleuze and Guattari add that these micro processes or social flows take place in particular

¹⁵ G. Deleuze, F. Guattari: *Capitalisme et schizophrénie 2: Mille plateaux*, Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit. 1980, 261–262, 277–282.

situations or assemblages characterised by three different tendencies: rigid, supple and fleeing ones. According to them, the nature of political action is determined by an immanent assessment of the composition of these different tendencies or lines.

Micropolitical processes are non-conscious and precede the decisions of a conscious subject, although they can only be expressed through individuals. Tarde and Deleuze give a concrete meaning to the notions of social and cultural currents or even the notion of “mainstream”. The idea of *mainstream* is important in this respect, as it underlines the fact that assuming a habit or an idea means precisely to be caught up in a kind of a stream, depending on individuals but not reducible to their actions. However, the Deleuzo-Guattarian molecular flows and supple lines sidestep the dialectics of the mainstream and the marginal, as the latter categories concern precisely the representation of the phenomenon, while micropolitics aims to deal with the concrete processes that condition these representational oppositions and presents the divergent tendencies as coexisting and immanent to each other. The important point is to note that the social and political flows, or flows of beliefs and desires do not presuppose individual or collective subjects, but these flows do not exist on their own either, independently of real individuals. They take place in empirical individuals, but acquire a life of their own through them, like a wave.