

ability. In the book, Woolgar and Neyland ask how the processes and practices of governance and accountability operate through ordinary everyday objects and technologies, such as waste containers or speed cameras. More specifically, they are interested in the ways our lives are regulated and controlled through mundane entities. The authors state that in order to understand governance it is important to focus on political constitution at the level of ontology.

The book contributes both to the research on governance and to science and technology studies (STS). In the beginning of their work, Woolgar and Neyland consider a variety of different aspects of theorizing governance. The authors argue that in many discussions of governance and accountability, things such as objects and technologies are often overlooked. Consequently, the authors adopt a perspective they call ontologically sensitive STS. The first chapters of the book focus on their convincing argument for the significance of ontology in STS and how it can offer new understanding of the nature and practices of governance.

To address the questions of governance it is essential to take seriously the idea formulated in STS of the possibility that things could be otherwise. Taking this standpoint into consideration

makes it possible to examine why things are done in some particular way here and now. Woolgar and Neyland state that objects and the practices related to them can't be taken for granted and considered as a result of some kind of deterministic internal logic. Instead, objects and their ontological status are closely linked to political decision making. The main challenge is to understand how politics work at the level of ontology and how things and objects express political actions and turn into governance.

Woolgar and Neyland approach the questions of mundane governance through ethnographic materials in three areas of everyday life; waste management, the management and control of traffic, and the management of passenger movement through airports. What I found particularly interesting was the description of waste management and recycling in the United Kingdom. Using waste management as an example the authors illustrate how governance, classification, and accountability are working together and are constituted in actions of households dealing with waste.

The authors argue that doing governance requires doing classifications and that the key to them are the materials themselves. For example, with re-

Governance practices in trash, traffic and transit

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Steve Woolgar and Daniel Neyland's *Mundane Governance: Ontology and Accountability* aims to explore the ontological dynamics of governance and account-

gard to what materials can and cannot be recycled and by what means, the authors point out how households are made accountable for what they put in their waste containers. The city delivers leaflets providing a classification scheme for recycling and households are supposed to follow it, in order to avoid any moral or legal consequences.

Another fascinating example in the book is the handling of the waste container itself. As the household moves the container to a pickup area, the items in it become property owned by the city. At the same time, the waste container's ontological status shifts from being a part of the household to a demonstration of the household's ability to recycle, from a container to be filled to a container to be emptied, and so on (p. 74). In everyday actions waste containers are determined as subjects and at the same time as objects of governance depending on their ontological status. Accountability provides the basis for policing ontological constitution and classification of waste, recycling, and the objectives everyday activities aim for.

Woolgar and Neyland mention briefly how the European Parliament legislation and the EU waste directive set the baseline for waste management initiatives for the European Union

countries. They shape the policies and management of waste at the operational level. The authors point out that UK's national government's objectives partly derive from the EU directive. However, they introduce the so-called R-concepts (Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle) which they consider as basic components of waste management activities in the UK (p. 60). The R-concepts are a part of European Union's approach to waste management, the so-called waste hierarchy. The waste hierarchy model aims to advance the Union's transition towards circular economy by turning waste into a resource (see: <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/waste/index.htm>). What is waste, what should and shouldn't be done with it, by whom and how, is highly regulated by the European Union. Woolgar and Neyland suggest that the political aspects are important in discussions of accountability relations and the ontological constitution of waste management. Therefore, I would have liked to see the contextualizing of the structure of governance to go a step further. As it stands now, it remains somewhat partial.

Woolgar and Neyland don't want to offer a single, final, or complete theoretical account of mundane governance. They conclude that the situated on-

tology of mundane governance rarely operates in a smooth, linear manner. Instead, the ontological constitution of governance is characterized by messiness. Mess is a very descriptive expression, not only for waste management, but it is also prevalent in airports and traffic regulation. According to the authors, the narratives constituted in the book are only momentary snapshots in the continually changing landscape of mundane governance (p. 248). Still, the book offers an encompassing picture of how governance works at the level of ontology. It is highly recommendable for sociologists and for anyone interested in governance studies or STS. The vividly presented empirical materials and analyses make the book an enjoyable read.

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