

Unfolding the post-political waste-responsible citizen. A biopolitical approach

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The presentation

- 1. The case “pay-as-you-throw”
- 2. “The waste-responsible citizen” as a biopolitical and post-political analytical figure
- 3. How to proceed ethnographically?

1. The case “pay-as-you-throw”

- The city of Göteborg introduces the pay-as-you-throw – program in 2010
- “We are introducing a weight-based charge gradually in Göteborg because we want to encourage you to sort your waste. The more you sort, the less you are charged. And it is also better for the environment, because more material can be recycled. Introducing a pay-as-you-throw program is a way for Göteborg to mitigate the environmental impact of waste: to reduce the amount of unsorted waste sent to incineration, to increase the collection and quality of food waste to produce biogas, and to increase the recovery of materials via recycling”

1. The case “pay-as-you-throw”

- The aim with the interviews with the citizens was to get them to describe the waste procedures they followed, comment upon the invoice they got and more generally reflect upon their waste disposal practices. The influence of the invoice was in an analytical centre as the study was theoretically informed by managerial studies on how artefacts as an accounting inscription in different ways make organizational action at a distance possible

1. The case “pay-as-you-throw”

- In the data analysis three different ways how the citizens had rethought relationships stood out:
 - 1. their relationship with their waste,
 - 2. the relationship between the “economy” and the “environment” and
 - 3. their relationship with the city leadership

2. “The waste-responsible citizen”

- Biopolitics
- Planning and biopolitics
- Postpolitics
- Planning and postpolitics
- Biopolitics and postpolitics in a planning context – The waste responsible citizen

2. “The waste-responsible citizen”

- We started to discuss what we do with our Nespresso [coffee] capsules, because they are very heavy. And we came to the conclusion that we should throw them there [pointing at the container for metal recycling]: Nespresso says on its website that it's OK to recycle capsules as metal”

2. “The waste-responsible citizen”

- Our waste-collection fee is weight-based. We receive an invoice for waste collection, together with the invoice for water and sewer two or four times per year... I do not remember... [With the new invoice] you can see the weight along with the cost”

2. “The waste-responsible citizen”

- “We [referring to him and his wife] have become more aware that waste weighs a great deal and that one has to set a price per gram on waste now. It has become clearer, more patent. And the [difference in] price [between recycling better or not] is irrelevant”

2. “The waste-responsible citizen”

- We have to make it easier for residents, waste [infrastructure] has to be drawn closer in order to [improve] recycling and so on... This is the rationale in the whole of Sweden, to get waste package recycling closer to the households”

3. How to proceed ethnographically?

- Any ideas?