Why do we need to include material artefacts and their relations with humans in our analysis of social worlds?

I believe as a society, there is a need to include material artefacts because there is a greater need above that of the individual, for there is a greater need to interact and establish a cohesive community of peoples’ within a particular country as a resident citizen, and there is a greater need to ensure there is an understanding of how the material artefacts function in relations to humans and in the social worlds which can assist in the analysis of whether the material artefacts are still required, perhaps even in need of re-adjustment, or be justified as to be re-adapted to any changes that occurs in a society.

Therefore, I’d also state that there is a need to include material artefacts for particular reasons such as: conduct, security and attachment, as they are the framework of which all social worlds can operate universally, and connecting these fragments and links it can be seen if one employs the Actor Network Theory (ANT) as analytical tool, as defined as being “…a key feature of order namely the reproducibility of social rules. It shows how ANT starting from specific assumptions about [artefacts] claims that the intelligibility of rules is possible only against the background of a symmetric social world. In this light humans and artefact would be co-constituents of social order…” (Preda, 2000, p.3) and I agree that this is a key component in analysing the relationship between an artefact and humans in the social world.

As firstly, to regulate conduct within a social world, as there is an expectation that humans will act and behave according to the inscribed social process with limited interference by other third parties to mediate its enforcement, for example the citizenship ceremonies which in Britain
“...the final part of applying for citizenship is attendance at a ceremony where citizenship is conferred on an individual by an official from the local authority through a series of rituals and actions. In the UK prospective citizens also have to pass a citizenship test where their knowledge of local laws, customs and cultural practices is tested...” (Watson, 2008, Intro), thus artefacts by which a human would be still be bound by obligation to adhere to, would still be holding onto another artefact: the ‘Passport’, which secures his attachment in the social world.

Thereat, I believe most importantly, that material artefacts are needed to ensure security, in which a material artefact such as ‘the passport’ has been delegated with this transaction to hold information about a human, as its needed in the interaction between humans and government authority acting as mediators within a country, for as McFall draws on Torpey mentioned that:

“...[t]hey achieve this through regimes of identification in which passports are basically mobile versions of the vast, inert bureaucracy of files that states use to hold information about their subjects. While these identification regimes are never flawless, complete or impregnable, they have ensured that states have the capacity to successfully embrace their populations and 'acquire from them the resources they need to survive, as well as to exclude from among the beneficiaries of state largesse those groups deemed ineligible for benefits’.” (Liz McFall, 2008)

Because I think the ‘Passport’ takes over from having to remember who you are at all times when you maybe asked to verify your identity, such as at airports, so the ‘Passport’ tells you and the
other authority of state, what is essential to know about you, however, it is not concerned with a humans individuality in a particular social world.

And lastly, to form an attachment of any sort, one has to be taught its value and/or benefits via a material artefact to make it valid, such as when applying for a ‘Passport’ or ‘Citizenship’ for example Kofman draws upon Urry to say:

“...this new social contract seeks to circumscribe transnational and diasporic identities and to reassert attachment to the core values of the nation-state of potentially disruptive citizens. Whilst discourses of hybridity, diasporas, multiple belongings and cosmopolitanism circulate freely within intellectual writings on globalisation and weakening of the nation-state, and mobile non-migrant citizens are encouraged to consume places and other cultures...” (Kofman, 2005, p.464)

And that could give a material artefact, such as the ‘Passport’, a really significant form of indoctrinate relationship with humans, rather than having or solely relying on a patriotic status of attachment via social conduct as I’ve already aforementioned above, which isn’t always apparent by the wider community, but is so where human interaction is mediated via a material artefact.

For I concur with Carter (2008) when he states that “...all these materials, all these things, can be used to generate effects, whether it's power, authority or agency. So, if we look at social worlds in this way, almost all our social relations are mediated through material artefacts of one type or another [and in] conclusion, then, material objects -
whether they're machines, buildings, books, computers - all contribute to the building of ordered social worlds and it's not a question of whether the social or the material determines the other. Rather, it's by considering the social and the material simultaneously in all their complexity that we have a chance of understanding social worlds...” in his explanation regarding the framework of why we need artefacts in the social world because I also think society needs to be collocate.

Thus in conclusion, I’d say that material artefacts are needed in terms of being an external manifestation in a form that has significance as to be deployed in a specific manner; for the benefits to be realised by the individual that embodies its meaning, but requires this artefact to confirm that sense of attachment to the wider social world, and which its understood by all other humans within a given jurisdiction and/or territory, hence that the material artefact holds and binds their relations together in accordance to its terms and conditions.

REFERENCES


