



Centre for Institutional and Organisational Studies

- TITLE:** Actor Network Theory
- PRESENTER:** Graham Lucas
- DATE:** Thursday 27 August 2009
- VENUE:** SRS203, The Oasis
- TIME:** 11:30am – 12:30/1pm – a sandwich lunch will be served
- RSVP:** If you could please RSVP to Leanne.Cleare@newcastle.edu.au by the morning of Wednesday 26 August 2009 if you wish to attend so that sufficient catering can be ordered.

BIOGRAPHY:

Graham Lucas is a Senior Manager with 30 years experience in an Australian State Owned Corporation. He has spent the last 10 years developing consultation strategies and undertaking 'front line' consultation with various infrastructure projects. He has vast experience in undertaking group facilitation, public meetings, running focus group sessions, mediation, political liaison and conflict resolution associated with consultative activities.

Building upon his engineering background, Graham pursued a keen interest in organizational theory and sociology through a B. Bus (Hons 1) Mngt. degree at UTS researching "Teams and Emotion". Graham now broadens that interest to explore the sociology of Community Consultation as a part time PhD research student with the University of Newcastle.

Introduce the idea of how ANT (Actor Network Theory) might be useful to organisational studies Graham will discuss his research as per the description below in relation to community consultation, and then, secondly, he will discuss a few areas of organisational studies where ANT might be useful for example: corporate strategy, marketing, organisational theory such as teams and decision making.

THESIS SUMMARY:

This thesis uses an Actor Network Theory (ANT) analysis of a specific case of community consultation undertaken by a State Government agency in determining the route and configuration of a new electricity power line. Generally the research aims to explain the social complexities of community engagement and public participation in technological decision-making. That is, the thesis attempts to apply ANT insights into understanding the social heterogeneities that span the public, scientific, environmental and political realms. Specifically, using Latour's (2005) words, it is asked:

1. Why is it that quiet citizens turn into revolutionary crowds?
2. Why is it that some dull individual is moved into action by some obscure piece of news?

It is theorised that present day community consultation activities draw us together because they relate to divisive matters of concern – not because of a socially binding common cause as some other research might suggest. Seen in this way, community consultation can be understood as the destabilisation of an existing order and hence, once commenced, leads to the creation of a new controversy around which a new set of negotiated stable relationships and trials of force between actors seeking order and settlement may occur.

The contribution of this thesis to Sociology will be in the area of Science and Technology Studies.