

Actor-Network Theory: Trials, Trails and Translations

By Mike Michael




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In this thought-provoking and engaging book, Mike Michael brings us a powerful overview of Actor-Network Theory. Covering a breadth of topics, Michael demonstrates how ANT has become a major theoretical framework, influencing scholarly work across a range of fields.

Critical and playful, this book fills a notable gap in the literature as Michael expertly explicates the theory and demonstrates how its key concepts can be applied. Comparing and contrasting ANT with other social scientific perspectives, Michael provides a robust and reflexive account of its analytic and empirical promise. A perfect companion for any student of Science and Technology Studies, Sociology, Geography, Management & Organisation Studies, Media & Communication, and Cultural Studies.

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Editorial Review

Review

Dear M, the manuscript of your ANT book managed to lure me away from all kinds of urgent tasks. Wow. You did the rest of us a great favour. It is sharp and casts its net widely while attending to all the right details. I will highly recommend it to my students. And, if I get a chance, to everyone else, of course. Best, A

--Annemarie Mol

Mike Michael provides a clear and comprehensive map to ANT: its histories, concepts and problematizations. Building on his own personal engagement with ANT, he creates a compelling, reflexive and sometimes-humorous invitation to its network of associations. An excellent introduction to this significant field.

--Maja Horst

This smart provocative book deepens conceptual understandings of actor network theory and offers an acute assessment of its intellectual history and significance. Mike Michael's engagement with formative texts and debates in ANT will excite anyone interested in social theory and its generative force. In the shift from studying society to studying networks and relations crude causality gives way to explorations of process and performativity. Michael examines this profound shift and shows how it is at the heart of ANT's trials and tribulations and also its radical impact.

--Gay Hawkins

Mike Michael's book would be of great value for researchers interested in Actor-Network Theory but lost in the growing number of its variants. It contextualizes ANT by explaining its roots, but it also projects it into the future by presenting possible post-ANTs. Both the veterans and the novices of ANT will find the book useful.

--Barbara Czarniawska

What is actor-network theory and what can we do with it? Its adherents have always insisted that their approach does not need faithful, obedient spokespersons, and if there is someone who can be trusted to introduce ANT in a suitably irreverent and creative spirit it is the sociologist of Velcro, animals, expectations, design and idiotic methodology, Mike Michael. Written in a casual style, this book nevertheless offers a highly useful map of ANT's defining ideas, studies, commitments and methodological innovations.

--Noortje Marres

In this beautifully concise and endlessly fascinating book, Mike Michael demonstrates the power of Actor-Network Theory to transform how we think and do social science. Readers unfamiliar with the approach will find the book indispensable, whilst those familiar will feel that ANT has here been refreshed and re-invigorated.

--Steven Brown

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About the Author

Mike Michael is a Lecturer in the Centre of Science Studies and Science Policy, Independent Studies at Lancaster University

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