

ANT PANEL – ACIS 2007

Assessing IS Proposals

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Overview

- What is this research all about?
- Introducing the case - ALFA Bank
- An overview of the process
 - ▣ Five stages of translation – the journey from planning to investment decision making
- Starting to make sense of ‘the journey’ through an ANT lens
- How did I find out?
- Questions and Discussion

What is this research all about?

- Dubravka and I are conducting an investigation into the way various Actors work together to form networks that help IS proposals transform from the planning stage through to being conceptualised justified and then selected at an investment forum.
- We approached one case – ALFA Bank which was quite receptive to our invitation to study their practices.
- We managed to interview 35 people from various business teams, the IS group and the projects area

Introducing the case - ALFA Bank

- The case (ALFA Bank) is a large multi-national financial services institution, with a financial portfolio in excess of \$1 trillion dollars.
- In ALFA Bank 'projects' are used as mechanisms to deliver business initiatives.
- The IS group is not only a partner but a well integrated and embedded part of the way projects are assessed, initiated and delivered.
- 60-80% of all project expenditure is spent on the IS effort, and over a quarter of their operating budget is spent on IS and IT.

An overview of the process

- We are interested in studying what ALFA Bank refers to as the 'demand' side of projects which deals with forming, conceptualising and shaping ideas, and justifying to a committee that makes a decision to select/reject the idea. The 'supply' side deals with the delivery of the project.

DEMAND side of projects

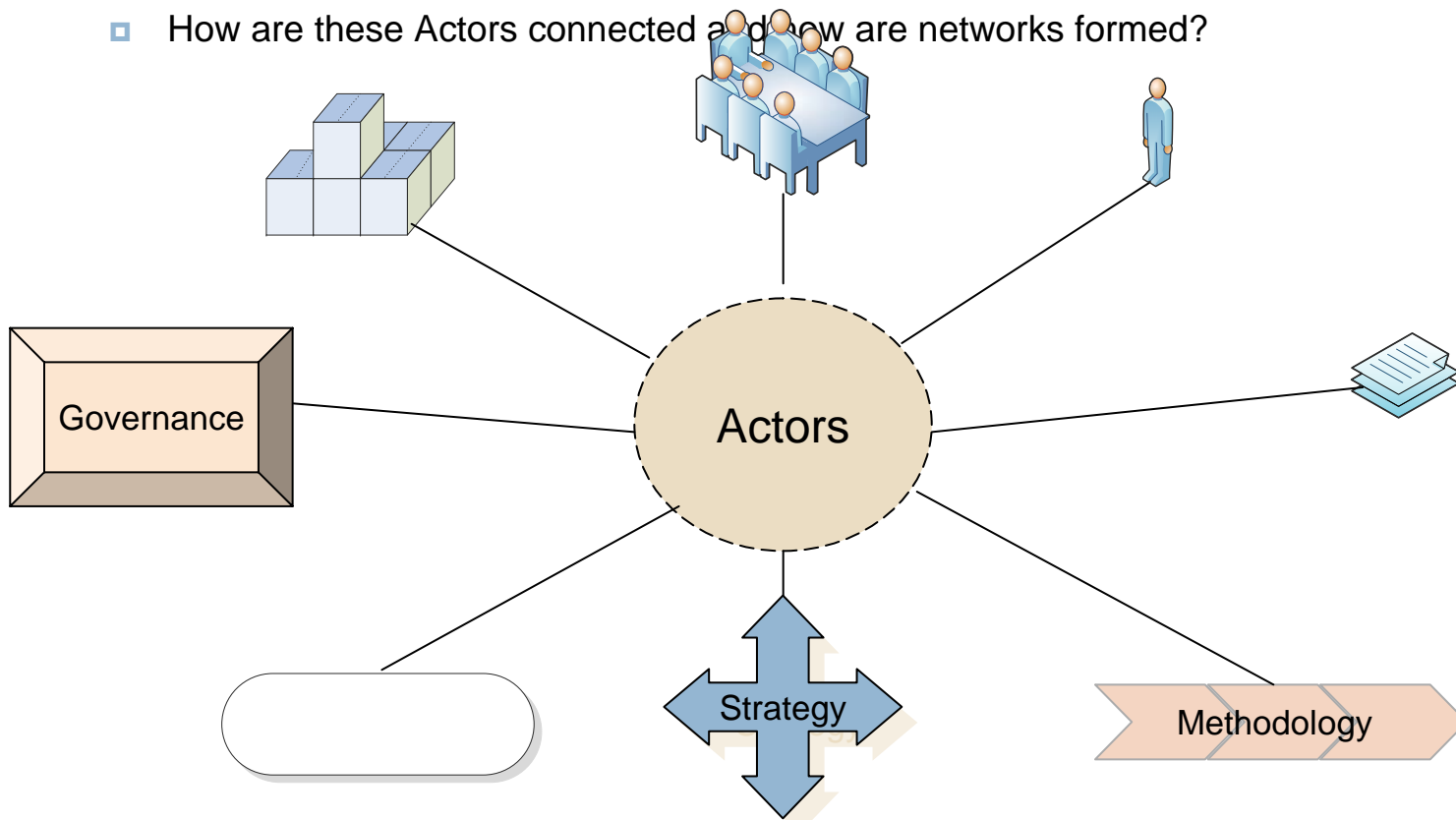
- Planning stage
- Idea stage
- Concept stage
- Business Case stage
- Investment Decision stage

SUPPLY side of projects

- Analysis
- Development
- Implementation
- Realisation (of benefits)

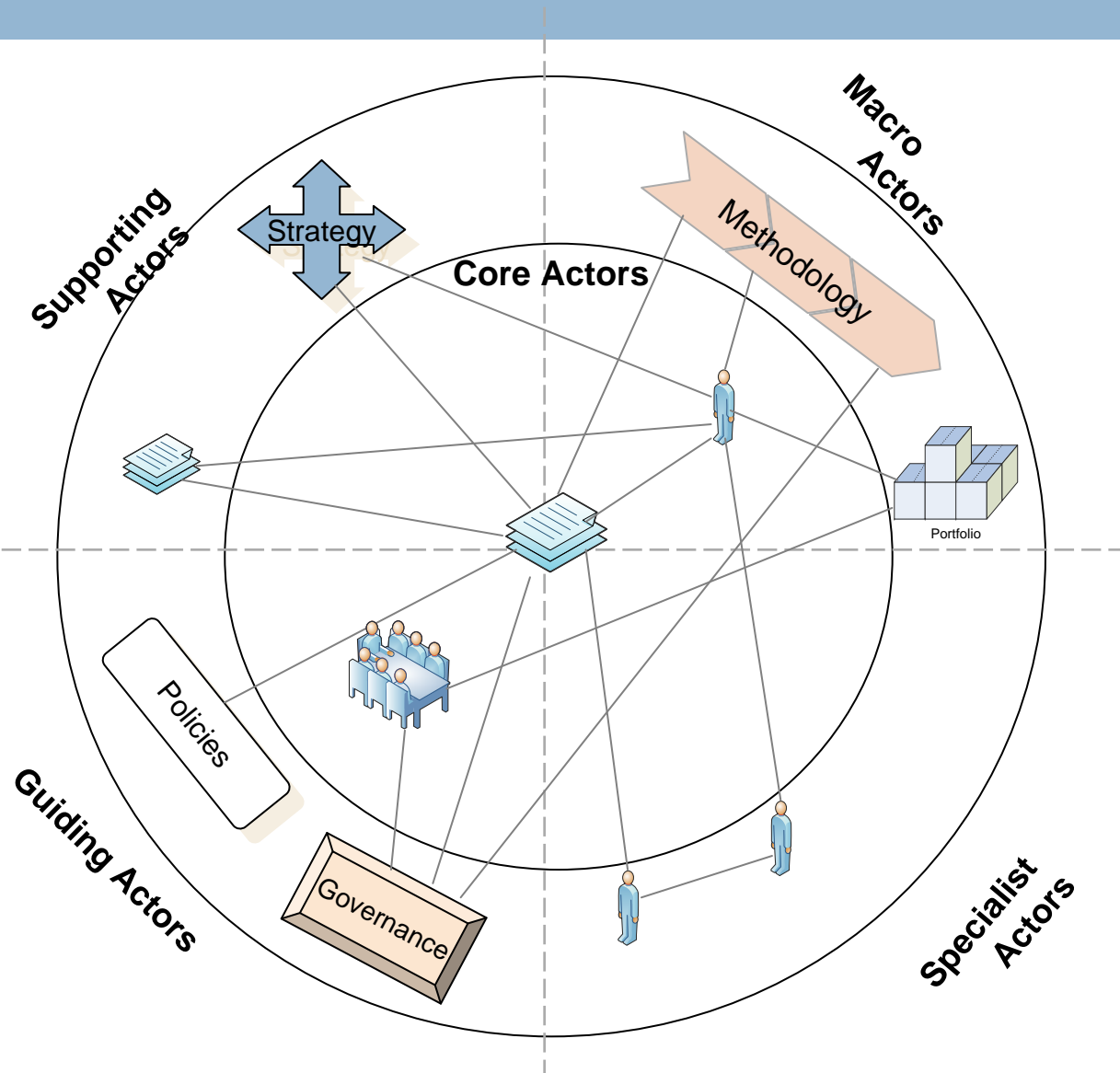
Starting to make sense of 'the journey' through an ANT lens

- We started asking the following questions:
 - Who/what are the Actors in this case? – so far we found over 40, while some Actors play a core role in each stage, others play important supporting, guiding or specialist roles in the periphery
 - What are the inscription devices? – we found over 60, but 5-7 key inscription devices
 - How are these Actors connected and how are networks formed?



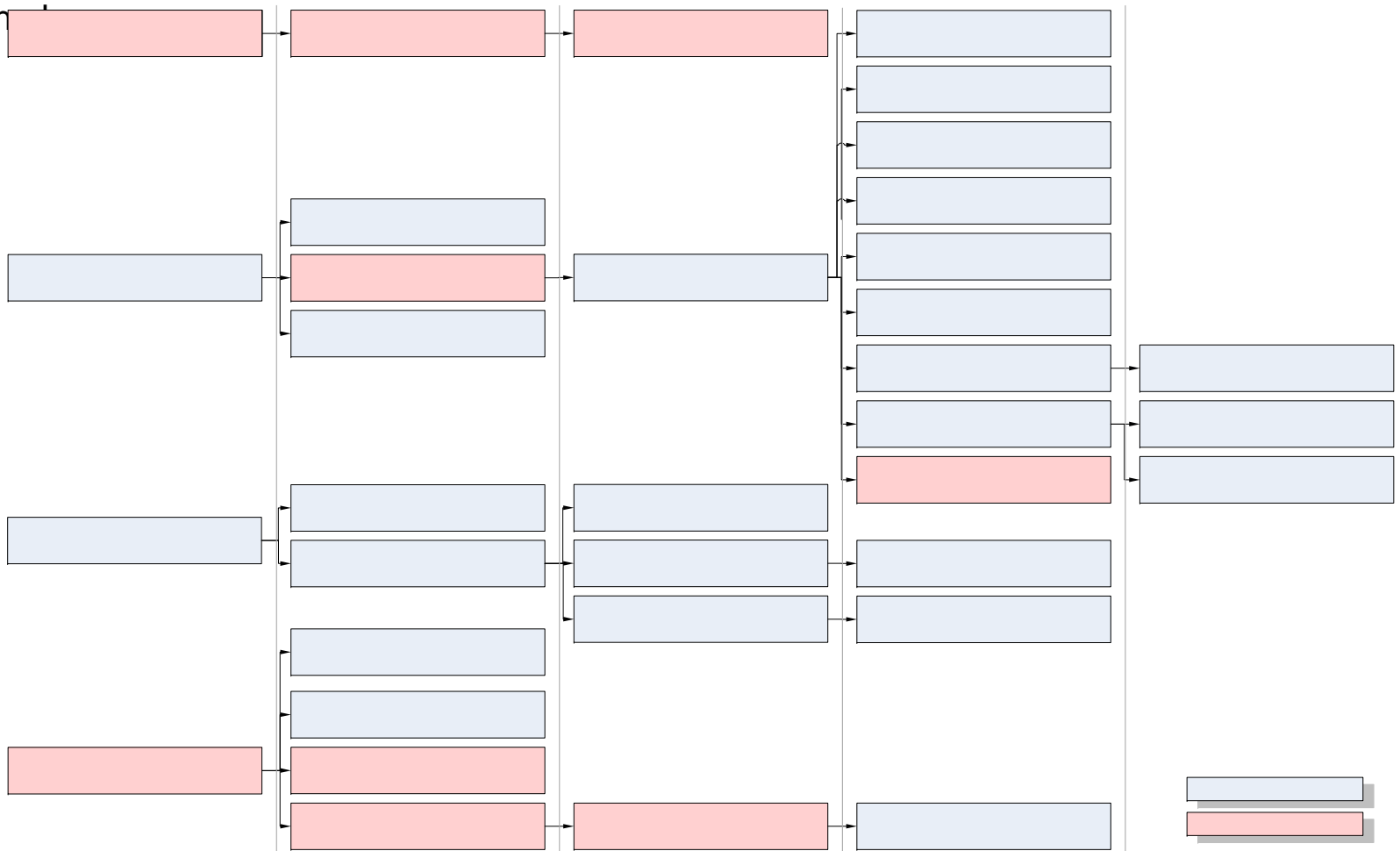
Starting to make sense of 'the journey' through an ANT lens

We are experimenting with the notion of a radar to represent the various Actors, their connections, and perhaps the role they play in the network



How did I find out?

- I didn't start off with a particular sampling technique, but I found myself following the Actors (people in various business teams, IS group, and projects as well as documentation). Evidence was collected from 35 people, including over 1,000 documents helping us to slowly piece the puzzle using ANT as a guiding principle.



Questions and Discussion

- Q. how is it that vague and uncertain ideas get translated into project proposals and business cases?
- Q. How is it that different IS project proposals. Dealing with multiplicity of realities, get described by comparable and unambiguous set of measures using typically financial evaluation techniques?
- Q. What is revealed and what is concealed by such evaluations?
- Q. What is achieved by these evaluations?