

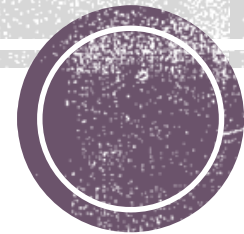
Actor-Network Theory for health promotion: an opportunity for innovation

Annie Larouche - Caroline Robitaille - Sherri Bisset

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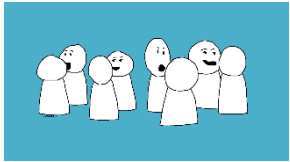
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Learning goals

- Explore two core concepts of ANT
 1. sociotechnical network
 2. translation
- Explore how these concepts may be operationalised to:
 1. understand a behavior in context
 2. understand the implementation of a program
 3. understand the scaling up of an innovation
- Relevance of an ANT perspective for health promotion

Proposed activities



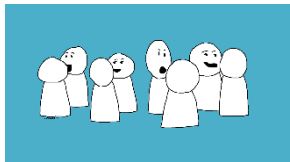
1st activity - ice-breaker



2nd activity - facilitators presentations



3rd activity - sub-group work on proposed scenarios



4th activity – plenary discussion and conclusion



1st activity

What do you know about ANT?

Actor–Network Theory in a nutshell

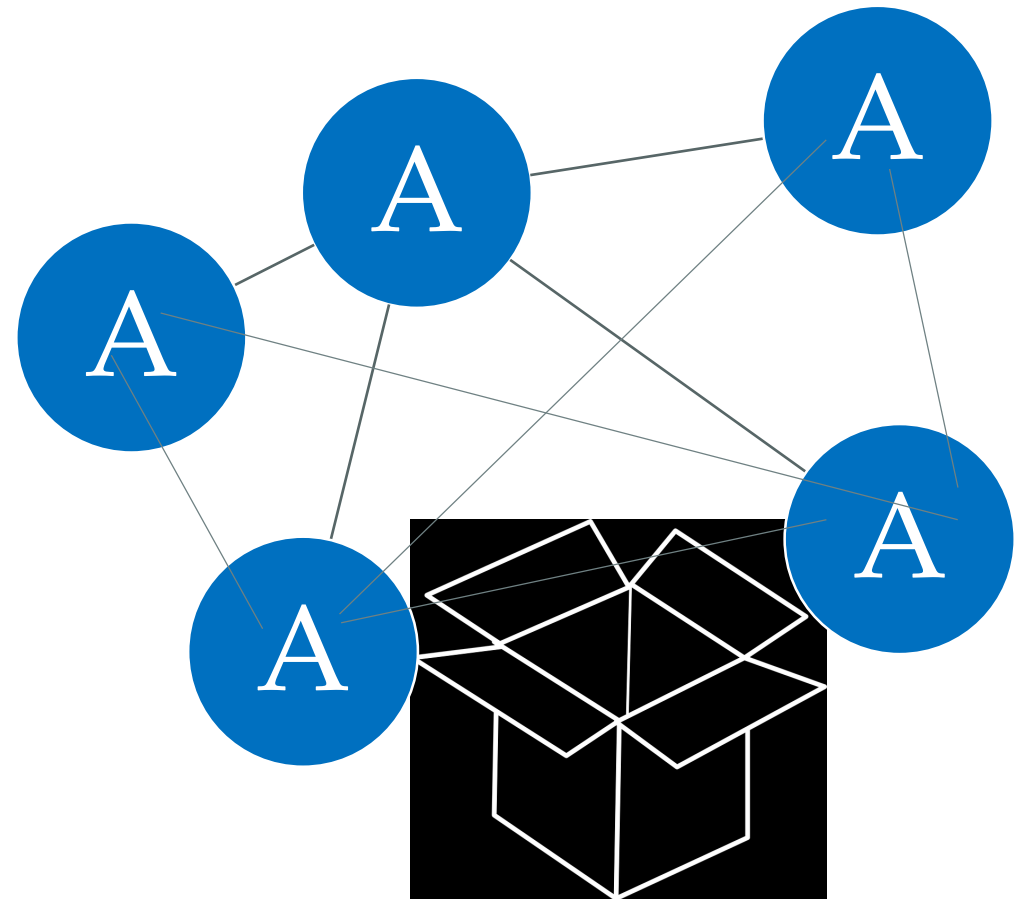
- Social sciences theoretical perspective
 - Michel Callon, Bruno Latour, John Law, and others
 - Other labels used: sociology of innovation, of translation...
 - Complex theory with many different concepts
 - Used in political sciences, geography, organizational studies, nanotechnologies, health promotion...
 - Useful to understand complex issues
- Describes how diverse actors – *human and non-human* – linked to each other in a network lead to specific phenomena, or « make change happen »

Sociotechnical network

Actors – human and non-human
– and the relations between them

The « trace » of the relations
developed over time

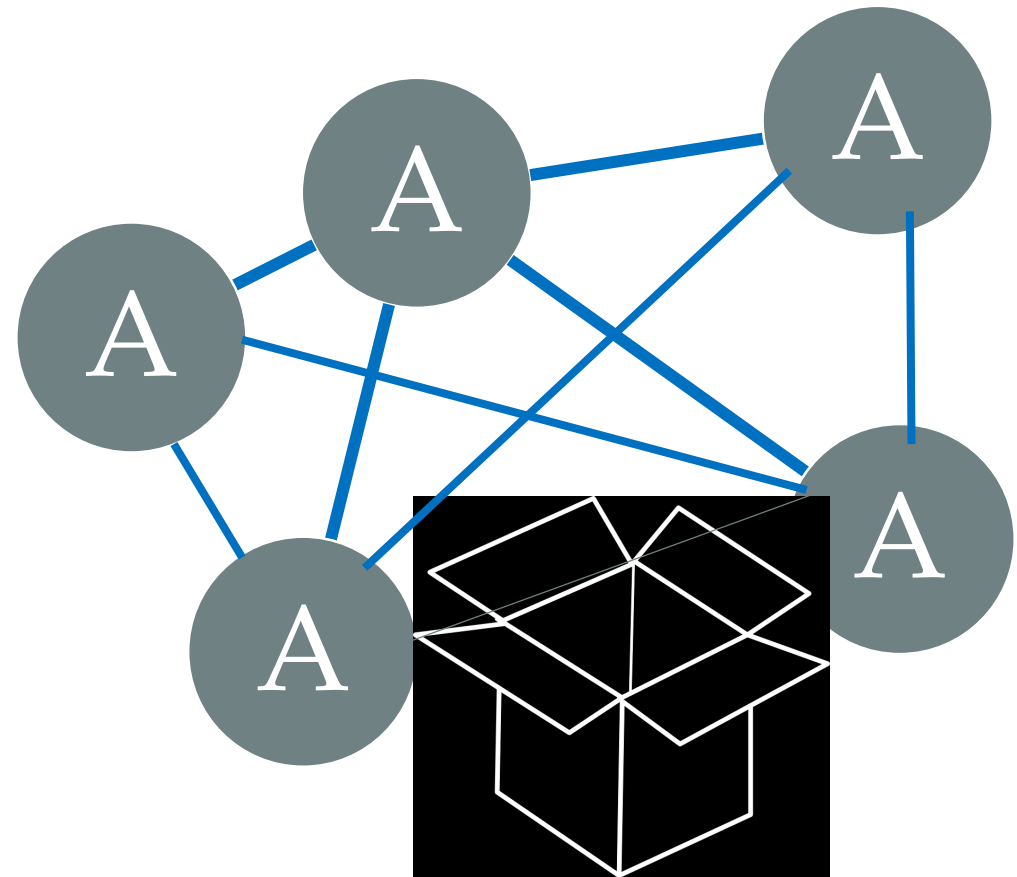
(Latour, 2005)



Translation

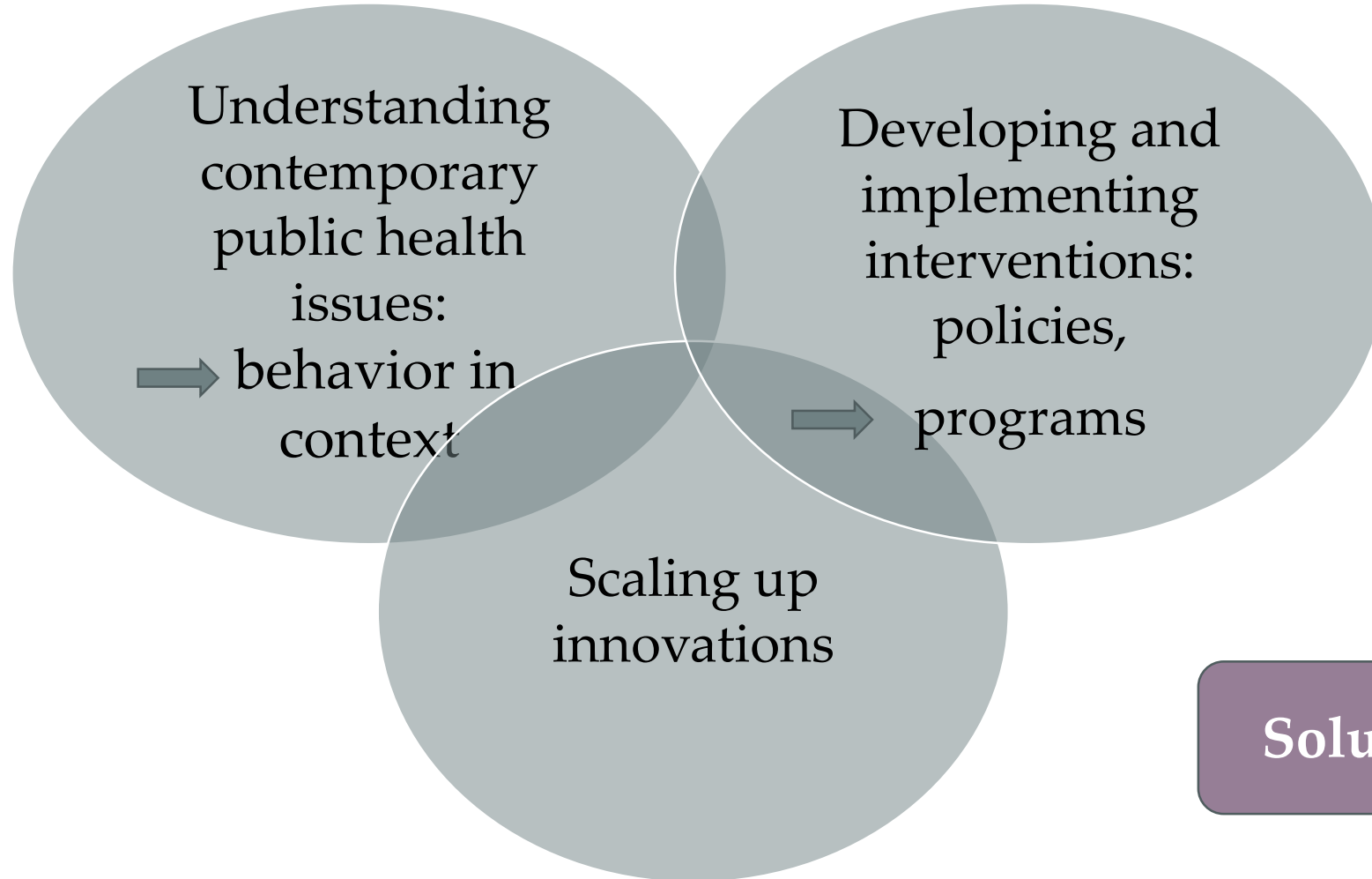
- A process linking actors
- Four iterative operations:
 1. problematization
 2. agreement of participation (*intéressement*)
 3. enrolment
 4. mobilization
- Negotiation and delimitation of identities, possibility of interactions, and margins of manoeuvre

(Callon, 1986)



ANT and health promotion

Problems

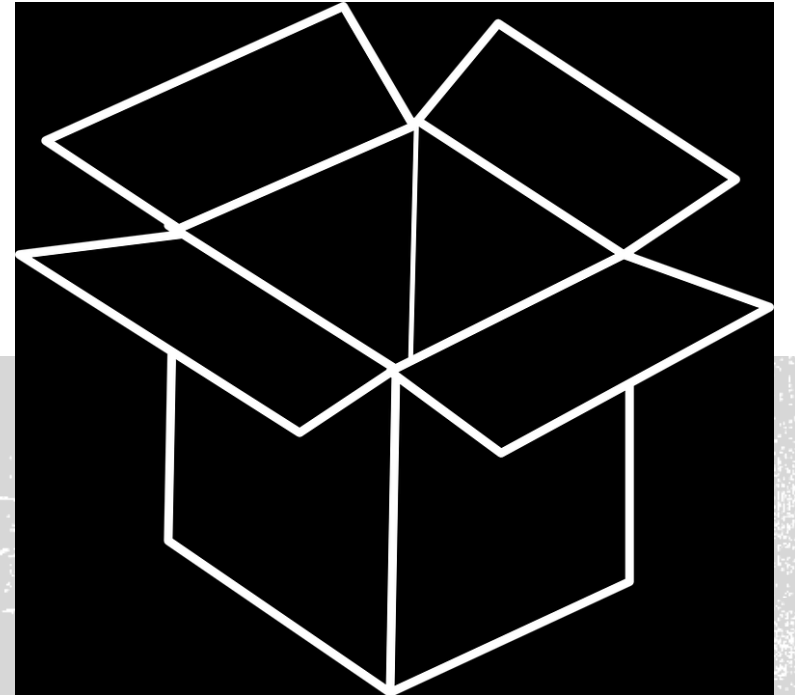


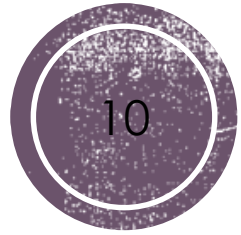
Solutions



2nd activity

Presentations





Understanding behavior in context

Caroline Robitaille

Example

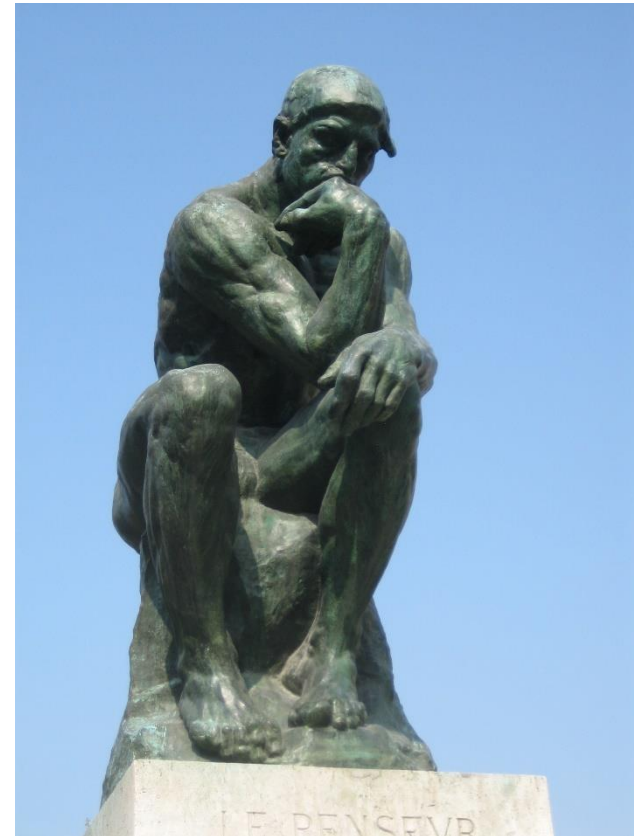
Non-medical use of psychostimulants among young adults

- Amphetamine salts, Methylphenidate, Lisdexamphetamine
- Escalation in use over the last three decades



Example

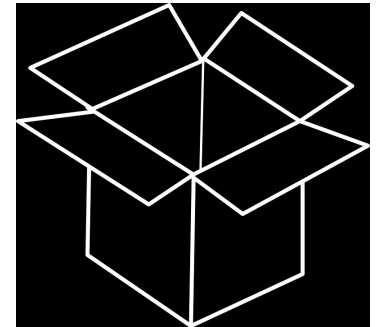
- What practices are related to the contemporary use of psychostimulants?
- How does psychostimulant use contribute to the fashioning of contemporary subjectivities?



Why Actor-Network Theory?

Why is ANT useful for understanding the non-medical use of psychostimulants among young adults?

- *Tabula rasa* on a biomedical point of view
- Allows taking into account the complexity of psychostimulant use
- Allows taking into account the transformative potential of psychostimulants (as objects)

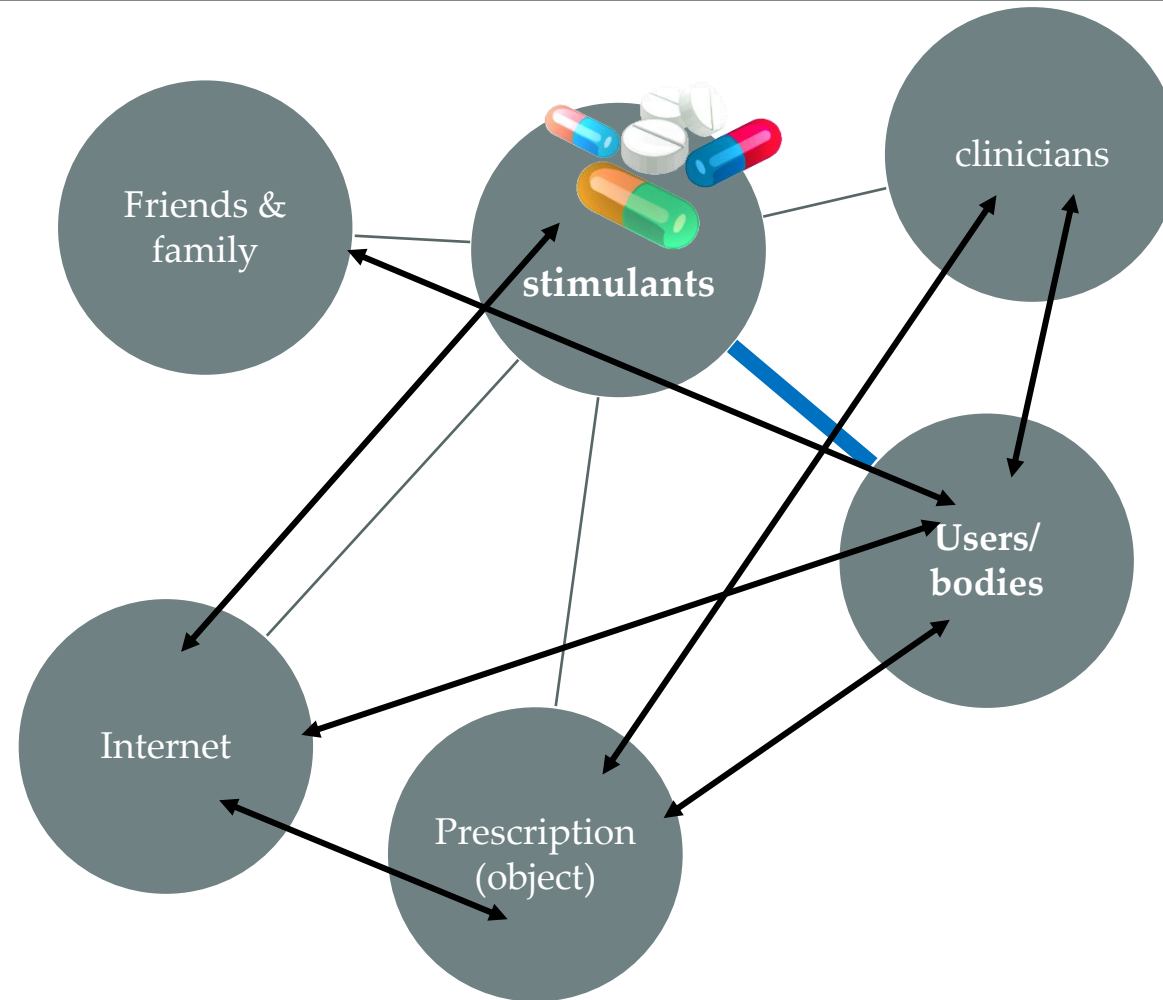


Sociotechnical network

Social norms

Academic or
work ethic

Values of
productivity
and efficiency



Translation

- Negotiation of identities
- Highlighting the varying logics and dynamics underlying psychostimulant use

“ (...) For me, it means approval from parents and a first real job. It means adult friends & colleagues impressed of my capabilities. It means jumping socioeconomic brackets above my parents at a young age. It means no grown adult questioning my intelligence provided a few moments of conversation, now and seemingly forever. It means satisfaction and pride with my own accomplishments. It means freedom.”



Understanding implementation

Sherrí Bisset



The example



- Ma cour, un monde de plaisir (MCMP)
 - Elementary schoolyard intervention
 - Aiming to build social, physical and psychological health
 - Based upon: 1) school mobilization; 2) equipment and layout; 3) organization; 4) animation and 5) supervision
 - Offering tool kit, school training and support
- Complementary and competing interests of what is best for children;
 - to be more physically active
 - to 'let loose' and have fun without adult intervention
 - to play collective games with shared rules
 - to get along
 - to concentrate in class

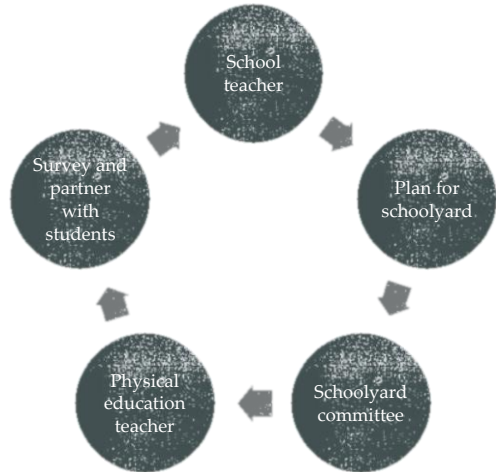


Why Actor-Network Theory?

1. **Network formation**: Schoolyard monitors have complementary definitions of the **roles** and **identities** of the actors in their network. This connection is influenced by similar perceptions of children's **interests**.
 - Schoolyard monitors are not **neutral**. By defining the **identity** of actors in their network, they establish how they can respond to the needs of these actors and their behavior will align accordingly. In order to change a behavior the actor must accept a new definition for the identities of the actors in their network.
2. **Translation**: Occurs when interests are competing. The negotiation of which roles are privileged and whose practices are promoted.
 - Schoolyard monitors aim to expand their own definitions. They do so first, by forming alliances with other 'like minded' actors and second, by implementing strategies to **translate** actors and thus convince them to become 'like minded'. The strategy is accomplished through a process of **interessement** and **negotiation**.

Sociotechnical network

Network 1: Schoolyard Monitors - Teachers

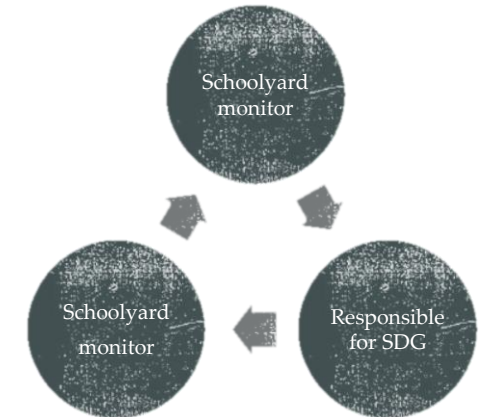


"We make decisions quickly and can implement change"
"We connect with other school committees"
"There is no representation from 'service de garde' (SDG) on our committee"

School Direction

"There is a lack of coherence between SDG and Teachers in their rules and procedures"
"SDG doesn't apply them, so the Teachers have a hard time enforcing rules"

Network 2: Schoolyard Monitors - Service de Garde (SDG)

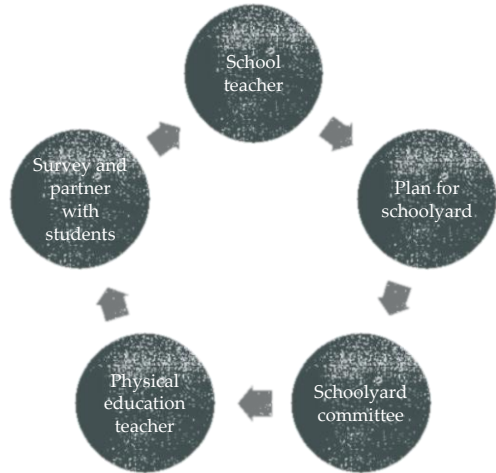


"We don't have a common vision with the schoolyard committee"
"It is like we are two separate teams"
"We don't have the impression our opinion is considered...the committee listens but their ideas are fixed. Nothing changes"



Sociotechnical network

Network 1: Schoolyard Monitors - Teachers



School Direction

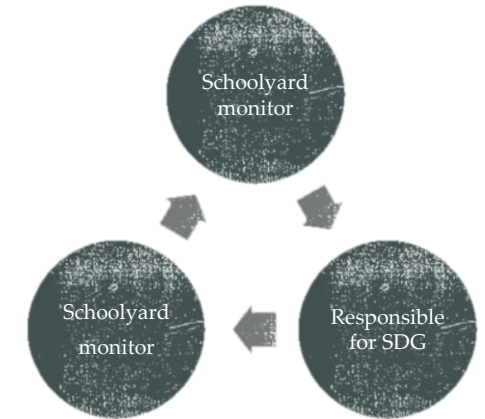
“There is a lack of coherence between SDG and Teachers in their rules and procedures”

“SDG doesn’t apply them, so the Teachers have a hard time enforcing rules”

“A schoolyard monitor is there to organize and propose games for the students”

“They are suppose to interact and circulate amongst the students”

Network 2: Schoolyard Monitors - Service de Garde (SDG)



“My role is to survey the children”
“I cannot do this AND show children how to play”

“The monitors are not there for that, they are there to watch only”



Translation

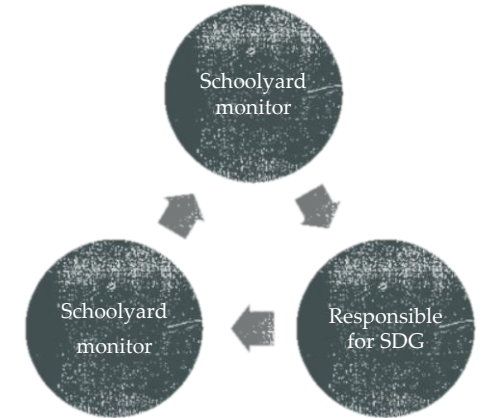
Network 1: Schoolyard Monitors - Teachers



Potential Translators;

- 1) The MCMP training
- 2) The school director
- 3) The schoolyard policy and activity plan

Network 2: Schoolyard Monitors - Service de Garde (SDG)



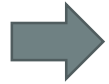
The Schoolyard policy and activity plan was appropriated by the schoolyard committee (Teachers) with the aim of defining the role of the SDG actors to correspond to the interests of Teachers.



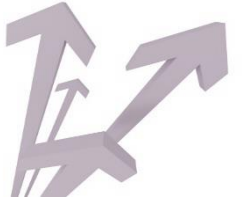
Understanding scaling up

Annie Larouche

Example



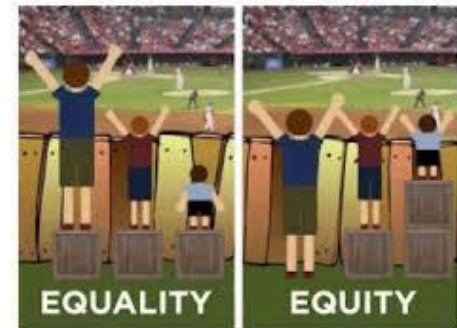
Scaling up an innovation fostering early child development equity (ECDE)



- **Scaling up:** an organizational process of expansion of innovations
(Subramanian et al, 2012; Mangham & Hanson, 2012; Edwards, 2010)
- Importance of the evolution of innovations in their scaling up – maintain and expand the innovation's equity goals



How do leading public health actors influence this evolution ?



Example

Scaling up process of ECDE innovation



- new contexts encountered
- bringing together heterogeneous actors
(local health centres, parents, community organizations, childcare centres, schools)
- health actors as leaders of the process
 - integration into the routines of health organizations
 - “crystallization” of actions around specific roles

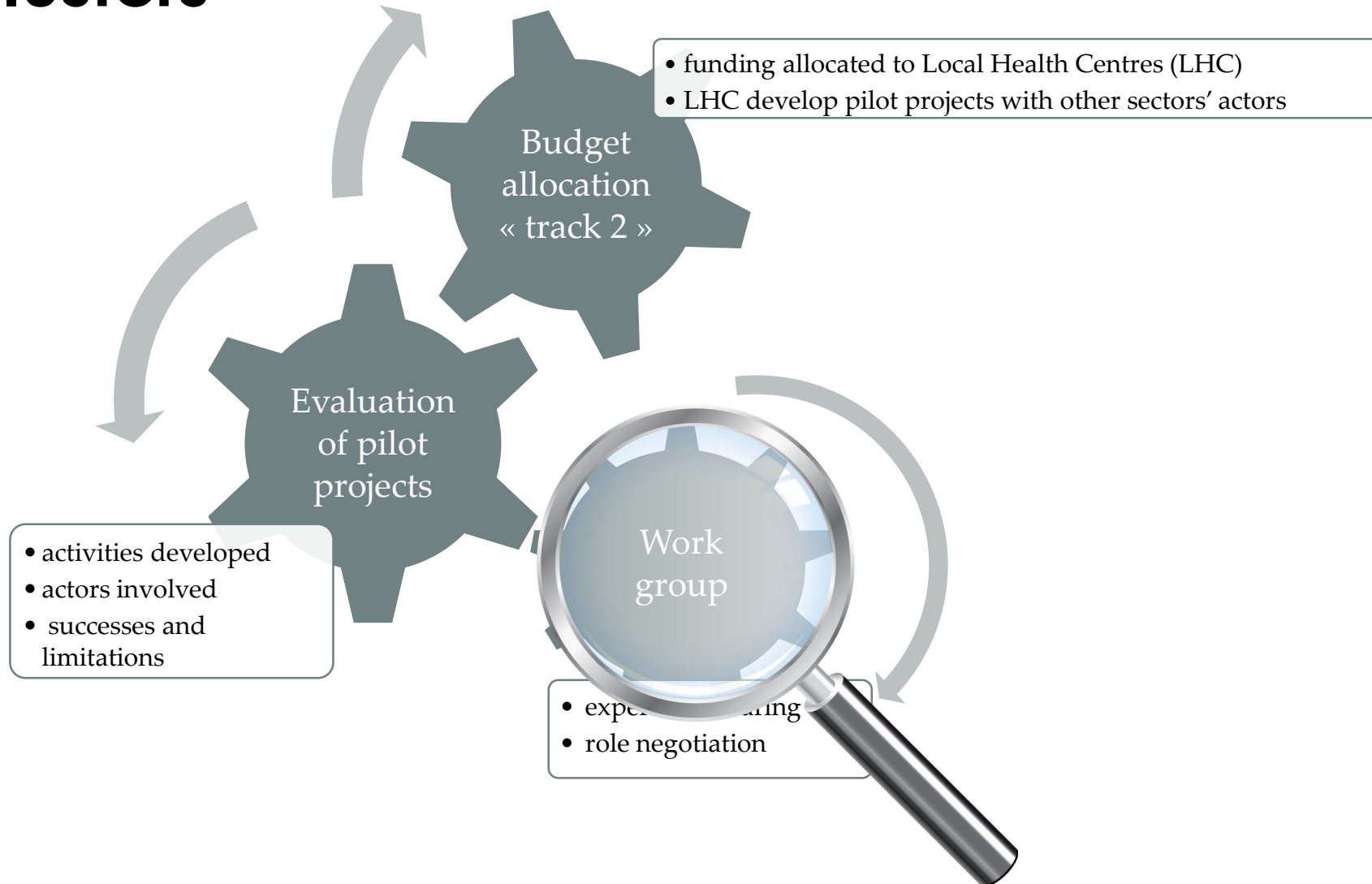
(Paina & Peters; Potvin & Clavier 2012; Pluye et al 2004)

Why Actor-Network Theory ?

- **Innovations** as the product of the **consolidation of relations in networks** of actors: multiplicity of actors from different sectors/levels of governance in ECDE innovation, multiple action clusters
- **Socio-technical networks (STN)**, ie. relations between human **and non human actors**: PH actions mobilize institutional objects that influence the innovation's conceptualization (budget rules, work groups, other health programs, partnership agreements, planning and monitoring tools, knowledges...)
- **Translation** as the **process of negotiation** by which understandings of the ECDE issue and its solution evolve
 - ➔ **Specific and temporary framings of actors' roles, identities, interests**

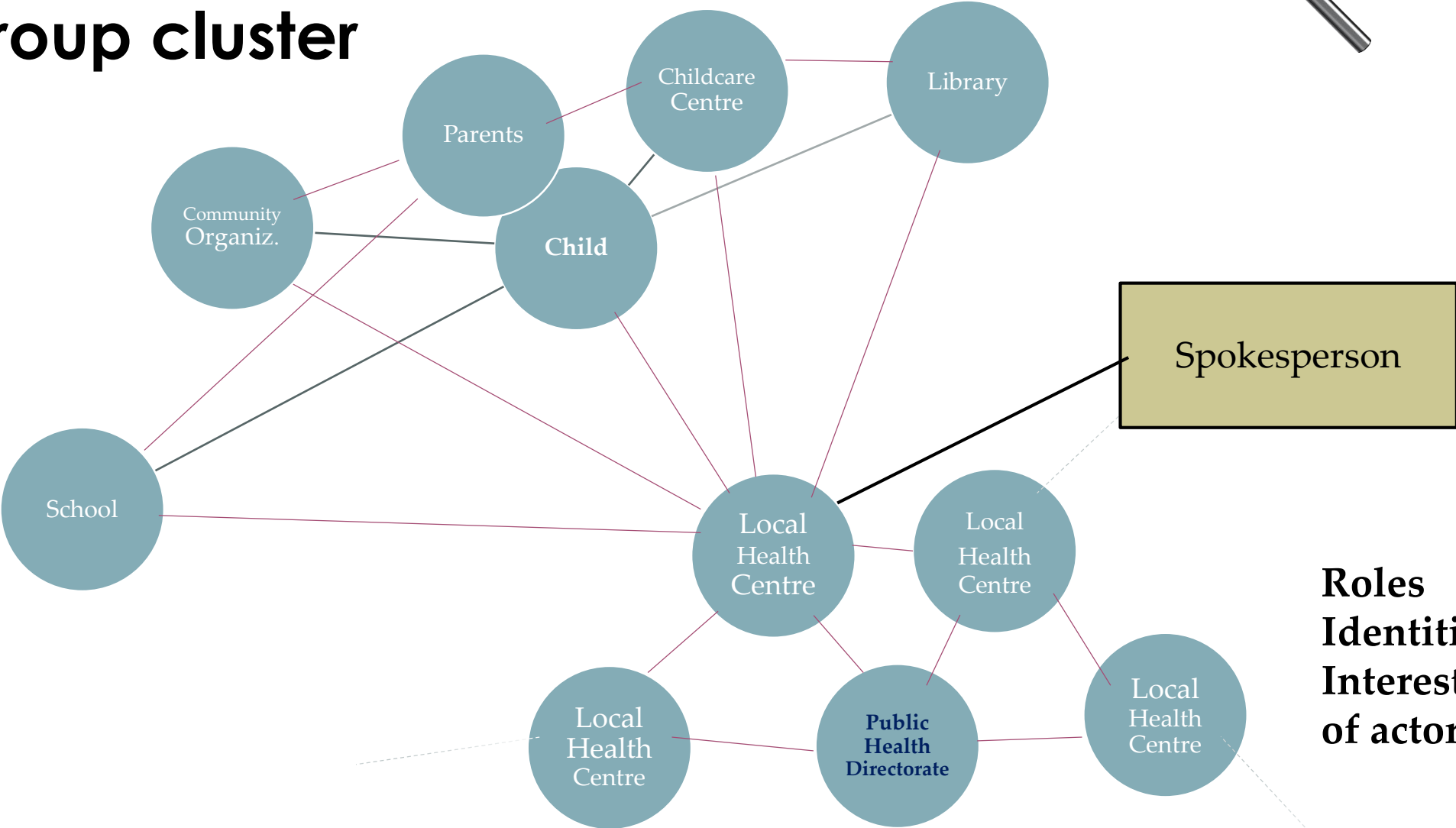
Sociotechnical network

Action clusters



Sociotechnical network

Work Group cluster

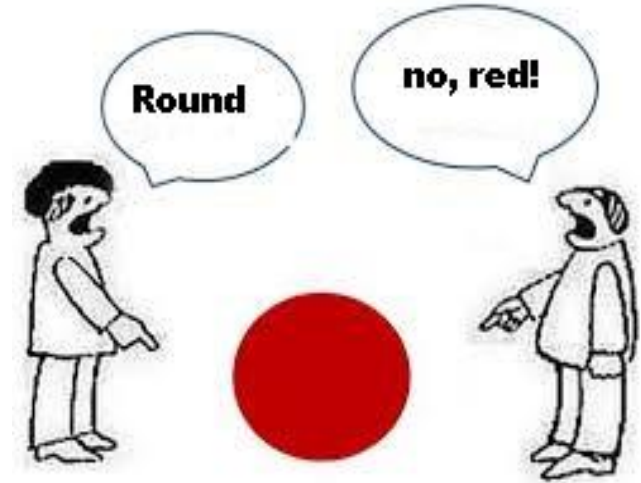


**Roles
Identities
Interests
of actors**



Translation

- Iterative process of negotiation of the roles in the ECDE innovation
- Pertains to actions developed by PH leading actors and events occurring during scaling up
- Mechanisms of influence about actors' roles, which implicate specific « objects » and gathers specific people
- Objects as *mediators*: transform innovation's conceptualization



An example

“When as least 4 half days per week of childcare is seen as the solution to foster child development, this suggests parental incompetence . This approach does not favor the responsibility of parents for the development of their child. Parents too should be included in early stimulation activities for children, not just the children! ”







3rd activity

Sub-group work



4th activity

Plenary discussion

Plenary discussion

- Summary of discussions in sub-groups
- What is the relevance of ANT for health promotion research and practice?

Conclusion

A new perspective to envisage what are complex phenomena

- Understanding behavior in context
- PH interventions (development and implementation)
- Scaling up of interventions

Can guide our understanding of the underlying mechanisms related to these phenomena

- Taking into account actors - *human and non-human* - and the relations between them
- Understanding how transformation / innovation / change occurs
- Can foster reflexivity toward PH interventions

Thank you!

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