Oct 27

1. Poster peer feedback session

2. Actor–network theory: overview and key points

3. Discussion

Next class: Poster session brainstorm & feedback

Poster peer feedback

Each group member will have a chance to:

| Describe their topic

| Outline their main arguments/theses

| Show in-progress work (if they have it)

| Ask questions about interpretation, techniques, etc.

General advice:

| Posters should focus on making a *sociological* argument; historical details only as needed

| Focus on criteria from the rubric—this is what your classmates will be using to evaluate the posters

| Don't try to say too much

Poster peer feedback

Rubric:
(you will get a copy of this in your group folder)

	0 to 4 points	4 to 6 points	6 to 8 points	8 to 10 points
Knowledge and presentation of the topic (weighted 20%)	Poster demonstrates limited or no knowledge of the topic.	Poster demonstrates some knowledge of the topic, but may reveal large gaps or misunderstandings.	Poster demonstrates considerable knolwege of the topic.	Poster demonstrates thorough knowledge of the topic.
Clarity and strength of argument (weighted 24%)	Argument(s) made in the poster were very weak or unclear (or no argument made).	Argument(s) made in the poster were somewhat weak or unclear.	Argument(s) in the poster were strong and clearly made.	Argument(s) in the poster were exceptional, compelling, and clearly made.
Engagement with course themes (weighted 24%)	The poster did not engage with course themes.	The poster engaged with the course themes weakly, or engaged with only one theme	The poster engaged mostly well with the course themes.	The poster engaged exceptionally well with the course themes.
Clarity of visual presentation (weighed 16%)	The poster had very poor layout or visual presentation. It was difficult to uncerstand the images and to follow the text.	The poster made an effort at clear visual presentation, but was somewhat confusing or difficult to follow.	The poster had clear visual presentation. Images were relevant and it was easy to read and follow the text.	The poster had exceptionally clear and engaging visual presentation. The images and layout contributed significantly to the topic and argument.
Appropriateness of references (weighted 16%)	The poster had no references, or the references were not at all appropriate.	The poster had references, but some were unclear or inappropriate.	The poster had clear references that were mostly used to support the author's argument.	The poster had excellent references that effectively supported the author's argument.

Examples of previous years' posters are available on Teams (General channel)

ANT: Overview and key points

Actor-network theory (ANT)

Overview of ANT

ANT was a *new theoretical approach* to studying science, emerging in the early 1980s.

Notable proponents/developers of ANT:
Bruno Latour; Michel Callon; John Law

Broadly, ANT takes issue with the Modern idea that *culture* and *nature* are inherently distinct.

According to ANT, objects do not need to be seen in relation to humans to have meaning.

Since its introduction, ANT has expanded beyond STS and is used in a wide array of sociological research.

Actor–network theory (ANT)

ANT and the Strong Programme

"Supersymmetric"

⋮ ANT applies the principle of *symmetry* from Bloor's Strong Programme in a much more fundamental way.

⋮ ANT's symmetry can be seen either as a *generalization* or a *refutation* of the Strong Programme.

The role of scientists in society

⋮ ANT criticizes the Strong Programme for giving sociologists a monopoly on theories of social processes.

The role of non-humans in science

⋮ ANT criticizes the Strong Programme for giving humans a monopoly on reality, restricting the ability of non-humans to affect our understanding of them.

Actor-network theory (ANT)

Networks

Alliance

- For ANT, technoscientific endeavors are processes of creating and strengthening networks of *alliance*.

- Networks (and therefore everything) are made up of (human and non-human) *actants*, objects with interests that cause them to act.
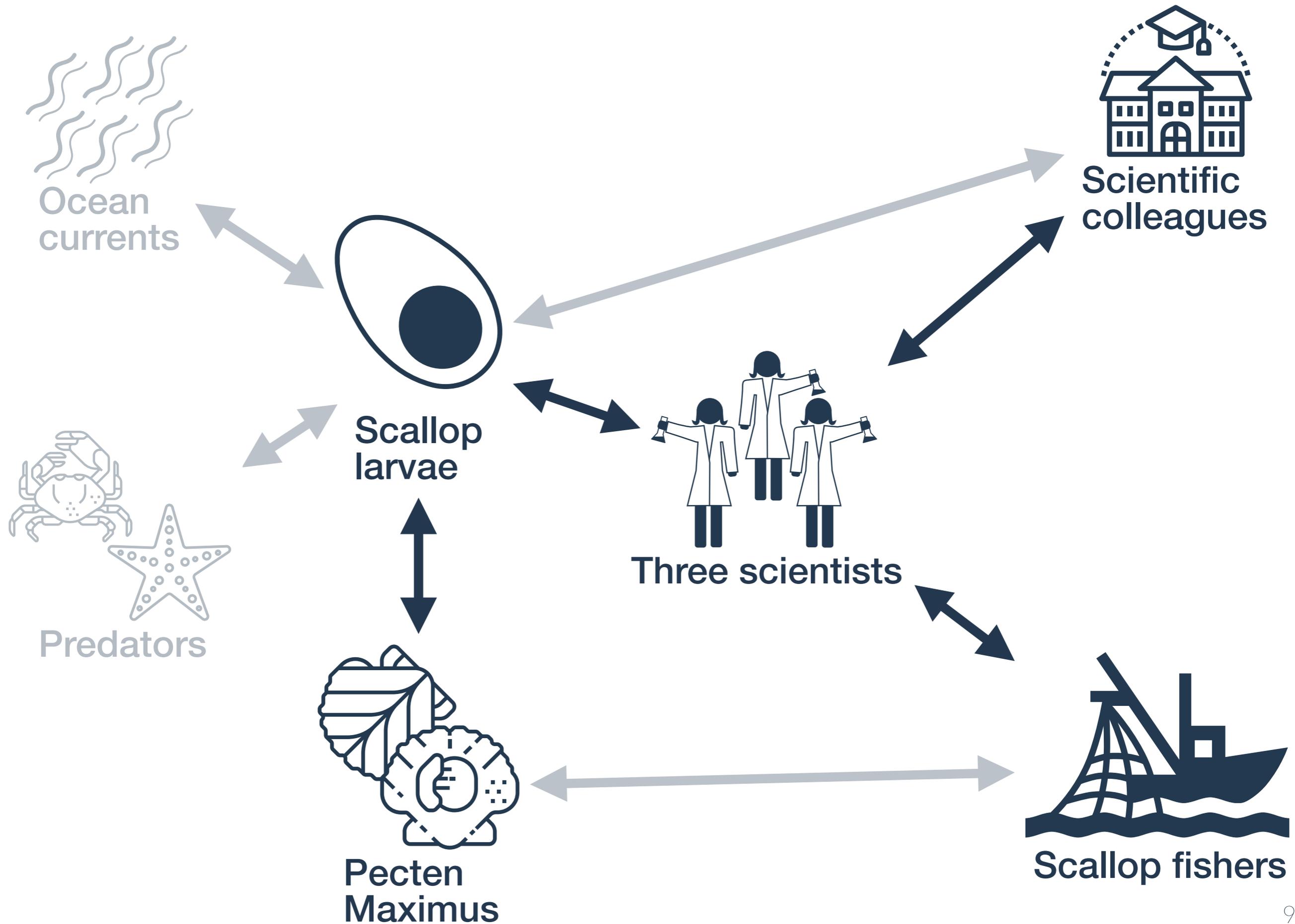

Translation

- Alliances rely on *translation*.

- Translation frames the interests of actors so that they are working toward the same goal.
  E.g. attachment of larvae in Callon (1984)

Power

- Translation and alliance lead to *power relations*.

- Distinct translations/frames can lead to distinct actions.

Actor–network theory (ANT)

Ocean currents

Scientific colleagues

Scallop larvae

Three scientists

Predators

Pecten Maximus

Scallop fishers

Actor–network theory (ANT)

Epistemology in ANT

Not purely social-constructivist

- ANT emphasizes that reality is *not centered on humans*.

- The networks that define the reality of entities can exist far from human influence.

Relational materialism

- Objects' reality is dependent on their *relations*.

- Reality is in the relationships between entities.

- "A little bit of constructivism takes you far away from realism; a complete constructivism brings you back to it." —Bruno Latour

Epistemology in ANT

What makes an atom more real than a ghost is not that the former exists as a real state of affairs and the latter only in our minds. Instead, what makes the atom more real is that it has more allies, including allies stretching well beyond the human realm. Experiments testify to the atom's existence; instruments stabilize it and make it indirectly visible; the scientific profession is transformed by it; generations of children learn about atoms and pass the word along; Brownian motion shows that particles of water are moved by atoms…. By contrast, the ghost has only a paltry number of allies bearing witness to its reality, such as hysterical children and a few old legends. But it might also happen that the atom's allies desert it one day too.
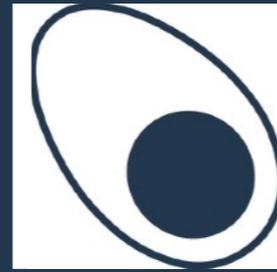
Harman, Graham. 2009. *Prince of Networks: Bruno Latour and Metaphysics*. Anamnesis. Prahran, Vic.: Re.press. pp. 110–11
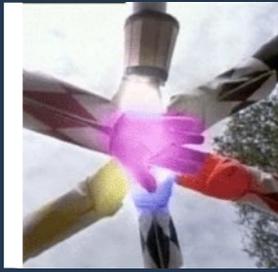
Discussion

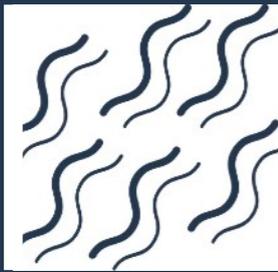# Image credit

 Animation from [Acheivement Hunter on giphy](#)

 [Egg by Claudio Gomboli](#) from the Noun Project

 Animation from [Power Rangers on giphy](#)
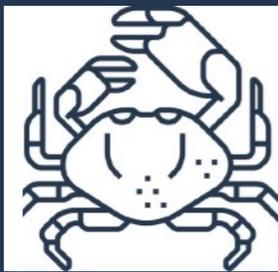
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