Agenda

Actor–network theory (ANT)

1. Administrative
2. Poster peer feedback session
3. Actor–network theory: overview and key points
4. Discussion

Instructions: Evaluate each of your collaborators on all of the dimensions using the grading rubric provided. If you edit the shared file in your browser it will be automatically synced, there is no need to turn it in. ***These evaluations will be kept confidential, and only shown to your collaborators in aggregated form.***

Your name: XXXXX
Group: XX

	0 to 4	4 to 6	6 to 8	8 to 10	Name 1	Name 2
Contribution	Did not complete any of the required tasks and/or was not engaged in any group activities.	Completed some of the required tasks and was sometimes engaged in all group activities.	Completed almost all of the required tasks and was actively engaged in all group activities.	Completed all of the required tasks and was always actively engaged in all group activities.	X	X
Effort	Always came late, and/or was inactive or distracted in group activities.	Missed more than one discussion without contacting group members, sometimes came late, brought in some of the required material, and was distracted.	Missed one group discussion without contacting group members, almost always came one time, brought in most of the required material, and was not distracted.	Attended every group meeting, always came on time, brought all required material, and was not distracted.	X	X
Quality of Work	Barely contributed to the team project. Having this person on the team made the group significantly weaker.	Prepared adequate work that did little to bolster the overall quality of the team's project. Having this person on the team had little effect on the quality of the final product.	Prepared solid work that bolstered the overall quality of the team's project. Having this person on the team made the final product somewhat better than it would have been otherwise.	Prepared original and insightful work that significantly bolstered the overall quality of the team's project. Having this person on the team made the final product far better than it would have been otherwise.	X	X
Respect	Did not display ethical behavior in the group and/or did not pay attention to others' ideas.	Sometimes displayed ethical behavior; sometimes paid attention and listened to peers with respect.	Displayed ethical behavior in the group; paid attention and listened to peers with respect.	Displayed highly ethical behavior, always paid attention and listened to peers with respect, and responded thoughtfully and appropriately to others' ideas.	X	X
Comments				If you have any further comments about a group member that you want to share, please include them in this row.		
Average						

Midterm peer evaluation

- Each of you should have received an email this weekend with a link to an evaluation spreadsheet
- Please complete by this Friday (Oct 28)
- Scores will be aggregated, anonymized, and shared with group members
- Comments will only be seen by instructors

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

ANT: overview & key points

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.

"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 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

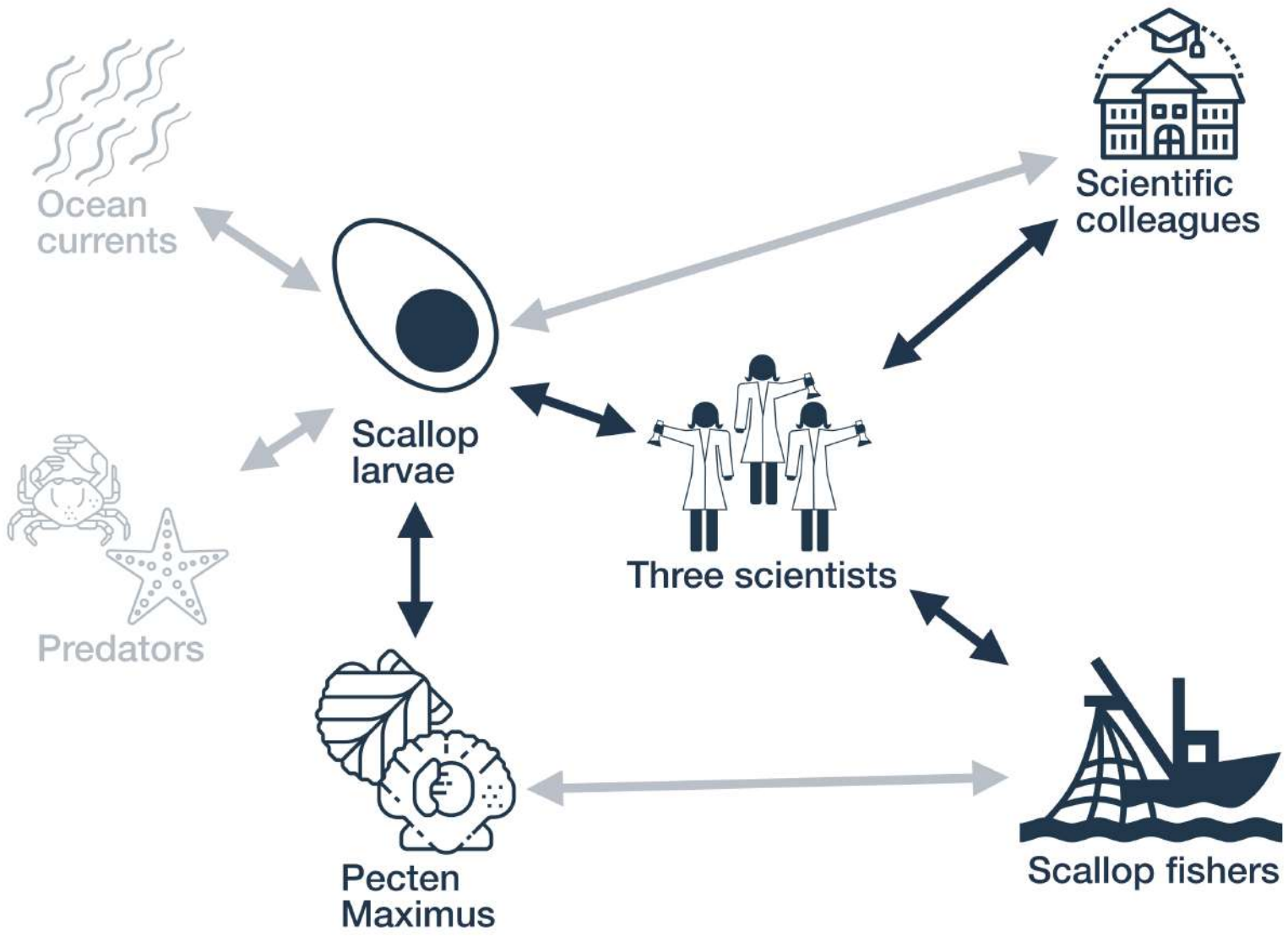
- Alliances rely on ***translation***.
- Translation frames the interests of actors so that they are working toward the same goal.

  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



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.

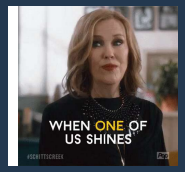
Relational materialism

- 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

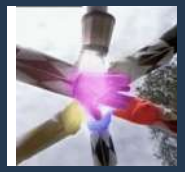
> What makes an atom more real than a ghost is not that the former exists as a real state of affairs and the latter only in our minds. Instead, what makes the atom more real is that it has more allies, including allies stretching well beyond the human realm. Experiments testify to the atom's existence; 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

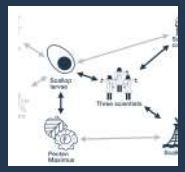
Image credit



Animation from Schitt's Creek (2015), via tenor



Power Rangers animation from via tenor



Source images from Noun Project
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