

## **Circulations of Caviar: The Geopolitical Ecology of Sturgeon and their 'Black Gold.'**

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The circulation of commodities is an on going focus of work in Geography that seeks to 'Follow the Thing' (Cook, 2004; Cook & Harrison, 2007; Lepawsky & Mather, 2011; Hulme, 2017) and 'de-fetishize' commodities by tracing and revealing the hidden 'social lives' embedded at each stage of the commodities' circulatory journeys': from production to final consumption and/or disposal. This body of work paved the way for geographical explications of how commodities circulate, move, and interact with humans in an increasingly globalized world. Yet 'Follow-the-Thing' scholars have typically paid scant attention to how the commodities with which they engage, are enrolled as both subjects, and importantly, co-constitutive actors of Geopolitics. Moreover, whilst Geopolitical scholarship has extensively engaged with questions of human circulation (Hyndman, 1997, 2000, 2012; Mountz, 2010; Squire, 2010), and the 'more-than-human' in terms of circulating capital (Harvey, 1985), such scholarship has exhibited a relative lack of attention to the Geopolitics associated with, and forged by, the circulation of 'lively capital' and 'lively commodities.' This paper, based upon preliminary PhD fieldwork and analysis, seeks to bridge the identified gaps and contribute to the burgeoning literature on 'Geopolitical Ecology' (Bigger & Neimark, 2017).

Specifically, the paper will take as its focus, the circulations of a luxury natural commodity – caviar, that is traded both legally and illegally on a global scale. The paper will outline how the scarcity of sturgeon and the very material properties of their caviar, are constitutive of unique economic, ecological and geopolitical formations; thereby recognising and drawing attention to the overlooked 'agentic capacities' of sturgeon.