

Title

Following the Mammoth across Siberia: Space, Value, and Transit in Climate Change's wake

Researchers

Abstract, Intellectual Merit, Broad impact

- With recent and exacerbating rates of permafrost melting, Siberia has seen an explosion of market in mammoth bone prospecting and the creation of new markets and values. This project aims to better understand the creation of new markets and spaces in climate change's wake through following the different sites by which the mammoth is transported. Given the wide-ranging impacts of climate change, this study will elucidate how the spatial changes due to climate change facilitates the creation of new movements, values, and transits at the foreclosure of others.

Overview / Research Questions

- Site: Siberia and melting permafrost
- Different types of projects:
 - Idea 1. focus on agriculture and food, the situated, local ways in which people there and Indigenous Peoples especially "adapting," "resilience," but taking a critical approach toward such. This project would be more locally situated, although it would also have implications regarding worldwide labor and, more generally, displacement because of climate change more broadly
 - **Idea 2. "Follow the mammoth;" what a burgeoning market indicates about locality, nature/environment, scales of impact, displacement, Indigenous knowledges, and global capitalism.
 - This could be spun using a more-than-human / animal studies approach, as well. Same with "following the omega 3 fatty acid" from fish. This could be more multisited ethnography, and similar to Idea #1, can also be a way of understanding the different mobilities that are enacted / shaped / facilitated by way of climate change and the different landscapes and avenues it shepherds in.
 - Idea 3. Infrastructure studies approach. More a focus on the built environment, although interrogations between the nature/society divide are front and center to this study. This will probably be more of a single-sited ethnography. Using the medium of infrastructure, interrogate the ways in which infrastructure (broadly construed) is made, unmade, repaired, and at risk.

This topic will use "the mammoth" as the beginning object of analysis

- but taking seriously that what constitutes "the mammoth" is a dynamic, changing concept and not just limited to the material bones itself
- The scale will start in Siberia, but given that the project seeks to trace the locales by which the "mammoth goes," could also skew toward multisitedness

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Research questions:

1. What new avenues and modes of value, money, and extraction are opened up and foreclosed in Siberia under conditions of climate change?
 - a. How do these new avenues and modes of value transform the landscape, both materially but also discursively?

2. How do new markets and movements of the mammoth shape and conceptualize local impacts of climate change?
 - a. How do these new openings facilitate an understanding of global scale, capitalism, and disproportionate impact and harm?
3. What analytical purpose does an attention to transit and extractive movement (largely construed and broadly applied) provide for an analysis on understandings spatial changes in climate change's wake?

Background and Significance

Literature Review

Methods and Data Resources

- This project will trace the contours of the new mammoth market, essentially tracing the movements of "the mammoth" and its relation to transformations of landscape/space through and with climate change
- it seems like multisited ethnography might be well-suited toward this project, considering that the analysis would emphasize the transit of mammoth as well as the transformation of landscape through climate change
- Talking to people embroiled in the mammoth's movement
- Dumit's "implosion" method could also trace the colonial imaginaries wrapped up with why there's such a high value for mammoth, including their tusks
- This method would be better suited for specifically using the imagery, symbolism, and material "object" of "the mammoth" -- how to understand climate change and changing landscape/space through following/imploding the mammoth

Theoretical Frames and Data Analysis

- global capitalism
- Settler colonialism, namely an emphasis on transit (access Jodi Byrd's *The Transit of Empire*)
 - also colonial imaginaries of the mammoth (access Jennifer Hamilton's article in *Meat!*)
 - understandings between extraction and scale; tying it with Indigenous knowledges
 - Technoscience x colonialism; what it means for technoscientific artifacts to facilitate near-industrial size extraction
- Scholarship on the production and changes of and to landscape/space, tying it with climate change
- Transit also embroils questions of mobility, which calls into works on differential mobility (some of it coming out of Disability Studies that take mobility as their front and center, such as Rob Imirie and Jasbir Puar)
 - especially what the transit of the Mammoth, juxtaposed with the migration foreclosed/enabled through climate change refugee crisis indicates

Plan of work

Challenges and Ethical Considerations

- Concerns over how to study a mammoth market, criminality, and how it isn't exactly legal

Validity and Evaluation

Preparation and work thus far

References

- My bibliodiversity is pretty weak transnationally; as a US-trained graduate student, I have further to go in diversifying the geographical location of my references

Data management plan

Further Notes