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Conclusions: Making Habitable Lives in Small-Town Russia

Despite the arrival of transnational corporations to the region, and the other signs of its entry into the global economy, Izluchino remains a small town of trucks and lime, and blasting quarries and plastic, and mud and dust, and a beautiful river in the heart of European Russia. In this final chapter, we return both to the lived experience in the town itself and to some of the key people, before summarizing some of the main themes around the making of lifeworlds habitable in Izluchino.

In my final long period of fieldwork in 2012, it is early winter and the wide pedestrianized road between the bus station and the town park is a riot of coloured coats: neatly dressed women pushing equally neat prams promenade up and down in expectation. It is the end of the day shift and the works buses are arriving to disburse their blue-collared workers. I am riding with Galina on her Polymer company works bus for the short 20-minutes ride from the decrepit workshop where she and her 60 fellow workers mould and cut plastic pipes for the gas industry. Once again the management has told her team that there will be no 'bonus': the payment that makes up a large part of the pay at the plant. It looks like they will have to 'live on the basic. But it's not like we don't know how to do that! If things are bad, we make sushi. If things are good, we make sushi,'

she remarks both stoically and ironically. Particularly since the economic downturn in 2009, locals are increasingly coming to terms again with economic hardships they thought they had consigned to the 1990s. Yet, in a symbol of 'normal' life enduring, sushi mania continues in the town, with regular 'roll sessions' where Galina's large extended family and friends gather in her flat to make enormous servings of rice and fish wrapped in nori rolls. However, this should not be interpreted so much as the aping of 'middle-class' values. The sushi is 'domesticated' using herring and other less exotic staples. Like other more practical activities, it is a form of 'DIY', ersatz extravagance: comfortable and comforting home production that also cements both strong (kin) and weaker social ties.

Despite the bad news, Galina and her fellow passengers laugh and joke, looking forward to the end of the bus journey and home. We get off the bus and phone Galina's elder daughter Julia, who in turn tells us where to meet her husband Petr. He has also just returned from his shift at the car factory in Kaluga, an hour away. We meet him and go shopping—there are friendly, if brisk, queues of workers in the old-fashioned stores, divided into 'sectors' by kinds of produce and separate cashiers. We wait in one for milk, and acquaintances in the queue exchange pleasantries. Petr opens a plastic bag, smiling at me. 'Look, I've got the acrylic paints Julia wanted! The foreman in Kaluga owed me a favour and bought them from the art shop in town. Now I am nearly cleared out until the end of the month,' adding ironically, 'but I am sure our dear friend Nikita will lend me enough to get by.' I laugh in turn. 'Fat chance of that! He owes everyone a debt himself.' Taking note of Petr's words, when we get to the minimarket, I sheepishly, stealthily, try to pay for the shopping, about 1500 ($30)-roubles-worth of groceries. Petr, always observant, says, 'Aaaa, what are you doing!' and Galina bats my hand with the money away. 'What's a mother-in-law for if she can't get one over on her son-in-law,' says Galina, winking at me, and guffawing at Petr's mock embarrassment. She pays, making chit-chat with the cashier, on whom the joke is not lost.

We finally meet Petr's wife Julia and baby on the main square and go home. On the way we bump into Olga, an accountant from the milk combine who has also just arrived in a minibus from work. She's waiting for her father, who is the chief technologist at the German-owned

lime kiln. 'Oh, that's good you're here! Now I don't have to come round later.' She extracts a packet of medicine from her coat pocket and hands it to Julia. Julia's infant son has recently been ill and Olga promised to ask around the pharmacies in the district capital for a particular Swiss brand of ibuprofen. 'Listen, Julia, next time he's ill just call me, ok? We've got the 4x4 in the yard with winter tyres and you don't want to have to wait for the ambulance. They might not come.' Recently the outpatient department of the local hospital closed down and now anyone who wants such care has to travel nearly an hour to the region capital along a particularly treacherous stretch of road. You may as well not bother with the district emergency ambulance in most circumstances.

It is a good job that Petr has put his car in the winter garage: the main road past the square is nearly impassable for pedestrians and cars alike now after a deluge. In a good year when not all the regional budget for asphalt repair is misappropriated, they 'patch' the road as if it were a dear but threadbare coat. But the HGVs taking the clay and lime from the quarries make it a sea of deep potholes again in no time. There is no road drainage in the town. As soon as temperatures fall below zero the whole town will become a deathtrap. It doesn't help that only a few roads have any street lighting. Local people joke about going out in the night and falling through the holes to Australia without trace. Then there is the town's favourite topic of this time of year: the beginning of the 'heating season'. The state of small industrial towns' heating systems is a constant concern throughout Russia (Collier 2011: 204). More than cities, such towns are dependent on a single plant and pipe network; village houses have either wood stoves or stand-alone gas systems. Olga's father knows the chief of the town's district heating plant. He recently took early retirement partly in disgust at the incompetence in the maintenance of the network of pipes in the town. They had all summer to fix the leaks, but now it is too late in the year. The frosts are overdue and the system is under pressure already. Everyone is expecting a disaster: prolonged failure of the district heating and a cold Russian winter. The 'lucky ones' will plug in the electric heaters. Then the grid will fail. Last winter there was a rush to buy heaters after the latest round of corporate disputes between businesses nearly led to the town being cut off from the grid, just before winter.

A few years previously, 'persons unknown', making use of a long-standing legal ambiguity over the privatization of one of the firms, brought their own security guards with them and locked out the director of Polymer. They had the backing of various 'friendly' law enforcement agencies. Only the intervention of the district prosecutor saved the director from this '*reiderstvo*', but soon afterwards he fled the country, seeing the writing on the wall.[1] Last year a new chapter began: the substation supplying the whole industrial zone was switched off by Polymer in an attempt to blackmail the electricity supply company over disputed debts. The substation on Polymer land supplies not only another 20 companies but also the town itself. No one really knew what generator capacity the German lime kiln had and what would happen if there was a prolonged blackout there during the 1500-degree-centigrade heating process that requires careful control to prevent kiln fracture. While only threatening to cut off the town, Polymer did cut the supply to the sewerage plant and other businesses, leading to a massive discharge of untreated waste into the river. Things were really 'interesting', said Petr. Petr has recently added an extra layer of polystyrene insulation to his flat's internal wall, but that will hardly make a difference. But such worries can wait. It's time now to meet Elena, Julia's sister, and make up sushi rolls with red fish and pickled herring—Russian style. Everyone is looking forward to it.

This final extended ethnographic vignette was not a typical day, but neither was it uncommon. Many days in Izluchino were a strange mix of everyday social connectedness against the backdrop of ever-present and multilevel social precarity. What then is the point of the vignette? It illustrates the continual striving to make habitable—'comfortable enough'—the inhospitable and insecure space of lived experience for 'ordinary Russians', a generation after socialism. Reciprocity and mutualism, while not universal, are an everyday, indeed normal and normative experience. This is rather different to the micro strategies of (more) middle-class metropolitan Russians for dealing with ongoing crisis suggested by Shevchenko (2009). They are less individualistic and much less

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[1] The sometimes violent corporate disputes due to legal ambiguity and the flexible use of the rule of law are called '*reiderstvo*', from the English 'raider'. See Sakwa (2013: 69–96): 'Prosecution to order' (ibid.: 72) in cases like that of Khodorkovsky's Yukos have attracted much international attention, but they take place at a 'micro' level too.

concerned about securing the self through consumption and material goods. They arise out of a compressed social geography (Morris 2012b) that is generated by the working-class industrial history of the place, the meaning of which continues to be salient long after the end of communism and the onset of deindustrialization. These modalities in turn serve to 'produce' the local in a particular way (Appadurai 1995). Indeed, production of the local in this so-called marginal urban space in a 'marginal' part of the former-second world is grounded in actual knowledge of how 'to produce and reproduce locality under conditions of anxiety and entropy' (ibid.: 210). In any case the very label 'marginal' is in doubt, given the intersection of the local with global labour, capital and production represented by Petr's workplace at the TNC, and other enterprises even nearer Izluchino.

While 'fragility' and loss are at the heart of the experience of industrial urbanity in Russia, its ethos is the propertizing of *social life* in spite of insecurity (Appadurai 1995: 211). At the same time, it is impossible to understand the production of the local in isolation from the context of neighbourhood as a 'social form' (ibid.: 212). While the postsocialist present is fraught with uncertainty and danger, Izluchino is produced as a place by the compressed social geography that emerges from the overwhelmingly blue-collar nature of the ex-monotown. This pertains to both the sense of 'security', comfort and habitability of being 'at home' among others, and the continuing experience of the town as a semi-closed-off 'site' where exploitation and risk are managed far away from the wealthier cities. This latter interpretation is contained in the meanings of the Russian word translated as 'test range' and 'site': '*poligon*'. Izluchino, as part of the defence ministry industries in Soviet times was a 'post-office box': that is, a semi-closed city. Its residents today make use of the literal meaning of '*poligon*' as 'test range' and 'closed site' to explore metaphors of their spatial and economic insecurity in the present.

Uncle Lyova is the kindly, if morose, welder in his fifties, overweight and wheezing from too much smoking. In late 2009, we sit in his kitchen with his wife Auntie Masha and discuss the imminent opening of the new district domestic waste processing site which is being built in the town. The town's many exhausted quarries make it a perfect site for waste disposal. Indeed for most of my years of visiting the town a major problem

was the illegal dumping of waste by residents in such places at the town limits which threatened to pollute the water supply. People had little choice as regular rubbish collections and disposal were only instituted a few years ago, another example of the difficulties of life in such a place. Lyova and Masha are worried, and not only about potential pollution from the new site accepting all the district waste:

> The new waste site [*poligon*] is on the clay mining pit. Of course it is just a way of the district dumping on us. There won't be jobs for the locals; they'll bring in some Uzbeks or something. We're worried that they'll open up to Moscow waste: who knows what they'll dump there; it could be medical and toxic waste. And then there's the traffic through the town. […] If you think about it we are just a site of exploitation for Moscow and always have been. It is like a test firing range [*poligon*] for everything they aren't yet prepared to inflict on the city dwellers: cutting all the social benefits like Masha's utility subsidies. She works for the local authority so she should get a discount on heating. Then there is the reduction in our welding team at work. Down from 40 to 10 in the last eight years. How can you work in such conditions when the expectations are the same?

Lyova's use of metaphor echoes that of N. Pokrovskii and S. Bobylev, who likens the entire neocapitalist 'experiment' in Russia to a military firing range—a '*poligon*' (2003). In turn, this is similar to the lay narrative of likening Russia to an expendable patient in a medical experiment. The West first 'injected' the bacillus of communism here to see whether it would kill or cure the patient. Not satisfied they now use Russia as a site to experiment in the most extreme rollback of the social state and destruction of civic and economic rights (Morris and Polese 2014). In his brief aside about waste disposal, Lyova begins to reduce the distance between global-national-local-personal/affective concerns. Moscow as a petro-economy site of rapacious neocapital comes into contact with his personal loss of autonomy and dignity in work. His story, like that of all the people in this book, contributes to a critical or alternative political economy of Russia: a modest collapsing of the usual 'intimacy-geopolitics' divide (Pain and Staeheli 2014).

However, Lyova's tune quickly changes:

Some of the young ones go to Moscow to earn a crust, but they soon come back. No one wants to sleep in a railway carriage on a building site behind barbed wire. What did my nephew Grigory bring back from Moscow after six months working there? Syphilis; that's all.

Like many inhabitants, Lyova sees uncertainty as somehow manageable in the familiar and safer local, in comparison with the uncertainty beyond the familiar rhythms of the town. These rhythms are revealed in the immediacy of sociality outlined above, which may or may not coincide with mutuality. Equally important is the built environment as a source that produces the local and 'structures its feeling' (Appadurai 1995: 210). Lyova, Masha, Galina and others remember their part in literally building the town in the 1980s, after the use of prisoner labour ceased (the 'Zone' of the three prisons remains another important 'site' that defines the town as a place somewhat apart). The memory of worth, dignity and pride in the monotown is readily accessible even now, amidst the decrepit and decaying industrial zones. While half the workshops have been abandoned, the town still prides itself on its House of Culture (or *DeKa*). True, the *DeKa* is in poor condition, but it still boasts children's arts and crafts clubs, dancing groups, amateur theatre, discos and more. Lyova and even younger workers openly weigh up the options of labour migration. As many return as leave permanently. For them, Izluchino remains a 'little motherland'. While Lyova and others reinforce a sense of 'marginality' in their talk of the big disregarding 'other' of Moscow, their small actions reveal how a rooted sense of placeness endures. This may be revealed in the ongoing commitment to domestic improvement (decorative and DIY practices), the building of country cottages and purchase of land plots or be expressed in less material terms.

However, it would be unconvincing to argue that locals feel in control of managing risks like increasing heating prices, the threats of interrupted power and heating, the vagaries of the global and Russian economy which affect wages, the vague fears of crime and disorder, and the uncompetitiveness of local industry. 'Alien' threatening spaces and persons loom large in this fear—from Moscow (the wealthy, extractive and exploitative other, where the headquarters of the Cement works is located) to the teenage undocumented Uzbek day labourer sweeping the yard of a gated

mansion on the edge of town. Nonetheless, while the nature of risks and insecurity changes, the fundamental feeling is that one has always lived in a '*poligon*', whether the botched experiment of communism (with a grudging acknowledgement of its better aims) or 'unbridled' oligarchic capitalism of the 1990s. While systemic insecurity changes—increases even—it is a white noise in the soundtrack of life that cannot be tuned out. Uncertainty is lived through nonetheless. For the older generation of Lyova and Masha, this means living through ongoing trauma and their habitable 'niches' shrink into fleeting moments of escape.

For Galina, attachment to place is an affective attachment to both the people of the town and the enterprise she works in, but also the remnants of pride in work itself. Galina uses the term 'being in one's element' when describing the bitter-sweet atmosphere in the moribund factory. This reveals how a sense of making the local links habitability to the comfort of class-based 'feeling-in-common', rather than political consciousness or solidarity. Once again, if the making of life habitable is indicative of small agency in seemingly insignificant and meagre practices, it is not the same as 'resistance'. People repeatedly talk about their 'element' and small acts that make life 'comfortable'. While people don't have everything they want or need, they have 'enough'—'*nam khvataet*'. This is the refrain I hear again and again. The meagreness of this aim, yet the firmness of feeling that leads people to make this statement, encapsulate the experience of the present as 'no worse', somehow 'better'. The practices, social relationships, everyday rhythms and symbols of life that make habitability may be less than the 'resistance' of débrouillardise (Reed-Danahay 1993), but are more than 'just coping' (Morris 2012b). Neither is 'resilience' wholly appropriate a term—too often it is applied as the corollary to critiques of populations' supposed inability to adapt. Resilience becomes a way of naturalizing and therefore excusing neoliberal governmentality (Zebrowski 2013), and shifts risks that should be dealt with at the level of the social onto the 'adaptable' individual (Joseph 2013). Habitability, by contrast, arises out of a 'small agency' that is locally and socially embedded (Honkasalo 2009). Thus, despite a loss of generalized social trust, the social sphere and the other as a source of 'comfort', whether in drinking and smoking in the male-dominated garage space, or arts and crafts at home in a circle of female friends and relations, are integral to making

the successful habitability of the lifeworld. Being for others and being for oneself, and social practices for their own sake are key to habitability (Keat 2000; Morris 2012b).

Small Needs and 'Everyday Acts of Relatedness'

Another dreary late-autumn day I sit in the turbine hall of the heating plant. Like in the Steelpipe workshop, the window sill holds a beautiful display of enormous cacti, lovingly tended by the two female blue overalls–clad technicians who religiously mark the hours by noting the temperature burn of the Siemens gas boilers every half hour, 24 hours a day. Antonina looks older than her years. At 45 she has worked in this quiet corner of the town since leaving a job in a shop five years ago. Her husband works as a security guard in St Petersburg staying with relatives there. The other technician, Polya chimes in:

> My husband too left to Moscow for a time, but he's too old now at 50 and drives a [unregistered] taxi here. He wanted to come back. Saved up the money for the Renault Logan in Moscow, but now he won't go back. It's enough (*khvataet*) for us, even if it is little.

Polya looks slightly nervously at her boss, Nikolai Viktorovich, as she says this last 'little', worried that he'll be offended. He isn't. More than most, the town's chief heating engineer knows what it means to 'get by' on a small salary. In the Soviet period he was a factory director a thousand kilometres to the south. He's come down in the world now, tending a town's heating supply for not much more than a foreman's salary. Nikolai Viktorovich is that gem of the Russian provinces: an eccentric polymath—a Russian renaissance man. He always has an opinion he is willing to share and takes up the theme of his technicians:

> Today we've got those material goods [*materialnikh blag*] which we didn't have 20 years ago. People no longer need to strive for those things even if they remain poor; they are striving for knowledge, for the Internet, for TV.

[…] We obtained our self-expression. It has given us everything; the Internet has meant elements of that freedom. We got freedom of our thought. We can express what we want there. But engagement with politics is meaningless. We got our self-expression. And now material compensation for our labour is less important. We got freedom. […] Do we really need much? I've eaten my salad and I am so satisfied, it's so cheap and so little. But it's not that I am particularly hungry. The post-economic is here too, if you want to look for it.

While the engineer's understanding is typically bookish, his emphasis is on meagre satisfaction, with small needs; his articulation of habitability is not unlike that of workers themselves. Its linking of the practical pathways of circumstance-enforced meagreness with the idea of the posteconomic neatly encapsulates how globalizing tendencies are inflected by local concerns. At the same time it links the current crisis in the global north of over-production, underemployment and demand deficiency to Marxian roots underpinning the foundation of socialism—freedom from want and freedom to engage in creative and productive life.

Another entry point into habitability revolves around material cultures of make do and DIY that intersect with both a working-class identity and a social network of social equals for whom the working-class subject is 'suitable' in terms of rendering mutual aid. For Sasha, feeling comfortable in such a 'habitat' [*sreda obitaniia*], is anchoring and productive of feelings about 'having enough', despite his economic circumstances becoming more precarious over time. When he mentions the importance of 'trying to do it' despite difficulties, Sasha refers to the DIY practices of making decorative elements for the home from found, scrounged materials, some of which are filched from workplaces of those 'in' the system of production, even if Sasha, having left the factory to become an informal taxi driver, is not (Morris 2012b). Similarly, he can still 'call on help' from significant others who 'remember' his status as one of 'them'.

Sasha, Andrei and others emphasize the impossibility of even the smallest action without the 'helping out' of significant others in their network. They talk about this in relation to making their fish tanks, fixing their cars and getting things done in labour. Whether a 'normative' worker in blue-collar employment or a gypsy-cab driver on the margins of the formal

economy, the ability to call on help indicates an acknowledged identity as a deserving recipient of mutual support in developing and enacting the skills necessary, not only to survive, but achieve 'comfort'. This extends across a raft of both necessary and less essential activities: skills involved in building a house or a garage, mending a car or a lawnmower, making a fish tank, are maintained through the interpretation of self by others as a competent worker (one with *avtoritet* or 'prestige'). The competent worker engages in personal production, but that production is not possible without recourse to a recognizable blue-collar personhood. Because only with that recognition will 'help' from others arrive. And without help, facing the ongoing contingencies of everyday life is unthinkable, uninhabitable. For people like Sasha, the sometimes morose cab driver in the informal economy, habitability is even more dependent on the 'horizontal social network' of confrères (Morris 2013). Sasha can leave 'work' behind, but not fellow workers, even if they remain significant others and not really 'friends'. What kind of labour is the building of decorative items like aquariums that combines the economic, the social, and renders the border between at-work identity and off-work identity problematic, at the same time as drawing strongly on the socialization of its participants as workers? It is a practice as much for its own sake that involves homosociality, leisure and self-production, but perhaps most importantly, the continual reproduction of strong–weak ties between multiple people and an expansion and cementing of a blue-collar male social network through 'everyday acts of relatedness' (Sanghera et al. 2011). Thus it is practices 'for their own sake' that emerge as most central to the habitable lives of workers in the monotown. This is as true of women as it is of men. Gendered craft activities like painting and the making of decorative items from gleaned materials found in nature are as important for women as the making of items from scrap industrial materials is for men.

Bound up then with identity and gender are the shared practices and display of folksy resourcefulness in the monotown that relate closely to more traditional working-class markers of respectability, propriety, manual competence and thrift. The production of the local as habitable is entwined with the comfort of the compressed social sphere. Of course, this narrowness is for some as much a burden as a resource, in particular if they seek to break out of traditional gender or classed roles.

Nonetheless, many monotown inhabitants 'use' such practices to approximate class-, occupation- and kin-based solidarity within a circulating value system that allows them to 'propertize' a worker and monotown identity as 'theirs' (see Crompton 2008: 110 on Skeggs 2004, 2005). The very 'poverty' of the habitus is itself generative of alternative sources of worth and autonomist values (Skeggs 2011). While economically structured into the worst position the acknowledgement of 'positional suffering' in a Bourdieusian sense (1999) should not extend to a denial of social and cultural capital understood in its own terms. To do so would be to make the same mistake as those that see the monotown as a worthless dowry: containing nothing of value, not for a postsocialist groom (society generally), but the actual people inhabiting and making habitable the lot that befalls them. Indeed, here, when focusing on everyday life, the metaphor of dowry breaks down. It is more appropriate to speak of ordinary people in monotowns as making the best of the postsocialist 'inheritance' of urban space—one that will be with them for a long time to come regardless of the political and policy decisions (such as the government 'resettlement' plans frequently mooted). Where some people see lack of worth, 'others see homes situated within painful processes of transformation' (Mah 2012: 11).

In an interesting reflection on doing decades of ethnographic research on working-classes, Michael Burawoy repeatedly stresses the 'mistake' of overlooking the global context of production and the ever changing nature of capitalist hegemony (2013). Comaroff (2010), in a very different anthropological context, echoes Sahlin's concern about the 'thinness' of ethnographic accounts of the effects of global capitalism. He highlights the importance of phenomena reducible 'neither to "the local" nor to "the global"' that are 'complex, multilayered mediations in between' (Comaroff 2010: 528). Similarly, the 'remaking' of the small monotown Russian working class after socialism is both structured by articulation of multiscales and multitemporality. I have made the argument that habitability is linked to feelings of comfort in space and carved out in enduring spaces of sociality, if not in time. However, the global is everywhere intruding and infiltrating into the lifeworlds of Izluchino. Even as economic and cultural distance contracts and Izluchino is exposed to the production and consumption 'norms' of the global north and south, feelings

of localness and remoteness remain salient, even to those engaging in production for the globalized companies of Samsung and Volkswagen. For all blue-collar persons their responses—practical, rational, moral, emotional—are rooted in the past tracks and paths of labour's socialist and peasant heritage. They also confront directly the type of globalized production inflected by neoliberalism as it hails them, more insistently than most others. Older paths and traces crisscross with newer ones, but habitability emerges only where it is 'created by gestures and agentic actions', where 'inhabitants generatively participate in laying a trail of life' (Browne 2014: 112; Ingold 2007). The trace of autonomist values finds new and sometimes even invigorating re-iteration and inflection in the dangerous environment of labour precarity (whether in the risky new production regimes of German automotive factories or in the gypsy-cab world of the informal economy).

Does this mean that workers' personhood 'adapts' to the neoliberal demand to remake itself? Is an entrepreneurial self summoned forth despite arguments about the resistance to such transformation? Stenning et al. (2010) argue for a 'domestication' of neoliberalism in postsocialist communities, but more often their portrait is of enforced 'accommodation'. Similarly Kideckel (2002, 2008) stresses the 'unmaking' of a working class in Romania; the pace of 'neocapitalist' forces there leads to extreme declines in workers' fortunes. The local and micro-level responses to social and economic change in Izluchino are somewhere between these 'domestications' and 'unmakings'. The degree to which they can be called accommodations is problematic. Instead, the search for habitability entails a hotchpotch of practices made 'on the fly', but which are informed by long-standing class-based values and allegiances. Self-work is often based on an uneasy, and sometimes 'unruly' (Morris 2012a), skirting of the very idea of entrepreneurialism. Autonomist values and self-reliance are both aligned, and remain in conflict, with the 'spirit' of entrepreneurialism and 'getting ahead'.

Mauss noted (2007: 156 in Gregory 2013: 137) that morality is 'the art of living together, and it can be recognized by the presence of good'. Recognizing the presence of the good in small things and small acts of 'relatedness' is a core understanding of the possibilities of making the small Russian town a habitable space. At the same time this is the story

of people 'cohabiting' with social and economic uncertainties and the dislocations of globalization; the inhabitants of the small industrial town have no 'naive belief that they will soon fade away' (Latour 2005: 30).

By any of the conventional measures of human development, the monotown remains a poor place to seek habitability: its denizens lack financial security, their health is at risk and their life expectancy lower than elsewhere. Their access to the vehicles of social mobility, in entrepreneurialism or education is fraught. Nonetheless, their lives are structured by multiple and valued social ties of extent, commitment and deep content. They share practices that create autonomist value. If we substitute for 'human development' the concepts of human potential—'happiness', 'creativity' and 'fulfilment'—then why shouldn't their lives be thought of as any less habitable than those of the middle-class Muscovite? As has been demonstrated in similar urban contexts in the West, 'care and connection' (Linkon 2013: 44) can be built on the remains of the past. A blue-collar sense of value in shared identity remains and invigorates such social bonds, and this need not be nostalgic, even as the certainties of the socialist and industrial heritage fade into the past. People in Izluchino inhabit an insecure deindustrializing environment far from the natural world Ingold describes in his thesis about the dwelling of human beings in their environment. Nonetheless, his insights are particularly revealing of the construction of the social and the local as habitable in the monotown; it is worth considering them in that very different context:

> Our life histories are accretions intertwined with others by shared experience in particular places; we do not 'build' but dwell; our cultural knowledge is not imported into the settings in which we dwell but developed there as 'specific dispositions and sensibilities' that lead us to orient ourselves in relation to our environment 'and to attend to its features in particular ways'. (Ingold 2000: 153)

The sense of dwelling in the environment, however harsh or challenging, resonates well with the idea of making habitable or 'livable' the postsocialist small town for the blue-collar denizens of Izluchino. We return to the 'sushi' supper of Galina and her kin. For her it is so little—it is meagre, but it is 'enough'; it is something we made our own. It is 'ours'.

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