Into the Hands of the Many: Production and Persistence in Rural Russia

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Abstract: In this paper, the Russian village of Moshkino provides an opportunity to analyze neoliberal market development in the postsocialist context. Unenthusiastic growth in individual farming has resulted due to a desire among villagers to farm collectively. This desire is based on internalized and culturally accepted forms of labour exchange and social welfare. Villagers have succeeded in creating a neoliberal collective—a farm that operates under basic market principles but maintains the labour and social support structure of the traditional collective. The Russian model is a salient example of how capitalism cannot be exported as uniformly as consultants have suggested.

Keywords: Russia, privatization, neoliberalism, emotions, postsocialism, farming

Résumé : Dans cet article, le village russe de Moshkino nous fournit l'occasion d'analyser l'évolution du marché néolibéral en contexte postsocialiste. Il en est résulté une croissance peu enthousiaste de l'exploitation agricole individuelle, puisque les villageois préféraient conserver le modèle collectif. Ce désir est fondé sur des formes internalisées et culturellement acceptées d'échange de travail et de soutien social au bien-être. Les villageois ont réussi à créer un collectif néolibéral – une ferme qui fonctionne avec des principes fondamentaux du marché mais conserve les structures de travail et de soutien social du collectif traditionnel. Le modèle russe est un exemple saisissant de comment le capitalisme ne peut pas être exporté de manière aussi uniforme que ne l'ont suggéré les consultants.

Mots-clés : Russie, privatisation, néolibéralisme, émotions, postsocialisme, agriculture

Despite sweeping reform efforts in Russian agriculture after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the majority of rural inhabitants continue to rely on community collective agricultural endeavours to earn a living. Privatization has not resulted in a growing class of rural private entrepreneurs, or a population of independent family farmers. While there are more family farms than before the 1991 reforms, "80%-90% of agricultural land is still controlled by large former collectives" (Lerman 2009:4). Indeed, changes have occurred, but they have not been as far-reaching or as representative of free-market development as economists predicted they would be. The resulting hybridity in privatized agricultural structures stands neither as a testament to the conservative history of the collective nor as proof of the inevitability of free market shifts. This paper examines the institutional and emotional attachment to work and production found in the persistent collective organizations and suggests this not an outright defiance of neoliberalism but is a community response to institutional shifts resulting in a neoliberal collective.

Background

The research on which this paper is based was carried out in a village called Moshkino 400km south east of Moscow. Moshkino was once home to the collective farm "60 Years October," which was organized as a result of forced collectivization in 1930. Many villagers can easily still identify the land their grandparents farmed individually prior to Stalin's collectivization drive. Just as villagers decades earlier were forced into collective farming against their wills, Moshkino villagers were ushered into privatized agriculture in 1993-94. I spent 11 months doing research in Moshkino during 1997-98 and returned in the summer of 2002 for follow-up research. The sentiment expressed by villagers during both of these periods was the same: in 1997-98 of the nearly two hundred villagers interviewed 93% said they were uninterested in

pursuing independent farming while in 2002 there was a slight increase with 95% claiming to be "uninterested."[1] The mandate that had been handed down from the government, largely to appeal to Western economists and bureaucrats who had a keen interest in seeing the Soviet system successfully dismantled, was one about which villagers said they had no choice.[2] Even with the provisioning of institutional support by Western privatization organizations, the local population was not persuaded to leave their collective community-based organizations. The quality and purported economic potential of privatized institutions was of little consequence to villagers who instead viewed their own traditional rural institutions as worth saving after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Effort was maintained in mutual support and subsistence endeavours while talk of the free market echoed around them. Interestingly, more than 15 years after privatization villagers are not openly lamenting the ineptitudes of the market economy, but rather the risk that "the art of living together is getting lost" in the shuffle.[3]

In the summer and fall of 1991, Harvard professor Jeffrey Sachs and other Western economists met in a country home outside Moscow to advise President Yeltsin on how to best orchestrate the impending economic and political restructuring of the crumbling Soviet Union. By December, President Yeltsin had signed a government resolution entitled "On the Procedure for the Reorganization of Collective and State Farms."[4] Managers of collective and state farms were charged with carrying out the privatization of collective enterprises and farmland, and they had to do so by 1 January 1993. The attack on collective agricultural structures was to be swift and comprehensive, becoming known as "shock therapy." One way Western governments could be more certain that the Soviet system would not be resurrected was to remove businesses, land and wealth from state control and redistribute it into the hands of the many citizens. In light of the aims of neoliberalism, where control of a major part of the economy should rest in the private sector in order to further deregulation and government efficiency, once the Russian people had access to and control over the production of food and other goods, the invisible hand of the market would arguably begin to work its magic. As Sachs prescribed in his well-known article "What is to be done?," "the energies of business must be unleashed, through the combination of market reforms in the East and financial assistance and open markets in the West" (1990:24). Similar to a neoclassic point of view of economic transition where "the destruction of the traditional institutions of central planning guarantees the appearance of a market economy," the only message being delivered to the Russians was one of comprehensive institutional change (Sánchez-Andrés and March-Poquet 2002:1).

This message resounded more convincingly in urban areas where concepts of community support were not as persuasive a part of institutional history. The village situation was different. A primary, albeit overlooked, concern for the transformation of the nation's vast rural populations was how to give new incentives to the farm workers who were having the historical socio-economic safety net torn from beneath them. In addition to the "practical" problems of privatized farming and dismantling collectives (Van Atta 1993:83; Wegren 1998:86), village social structures were threatened and part of the subsequent resistance shown to comprehensive changes in labour practices was, I argue, to try to preserve some of these traditional features of rural life. If working collectively no longer ensured villagers' medical care, daycare for children or other social services, but did maintain important socio-emotional connections, there was little incentive to cast that cultural practice aside.

First a note on *institution* as I am using it here is in order. An institution is something relevant to human behaviour only in that it actually does something. Institutions govern the behaviour of a set of individuals within a given human collectivity. Institutions are social forms. Thus institutions are structures and mechanisms of social order but they are also significant practices and relationships within those social collectivities. As Searle argues, the essential role of human institutions is "not to constrain people but to create new sorts of power relationships" (2005:10). An institution, like the concept of culture, is therefore, enabling rather than ultimately restrictive, although both qualities certainly present themselves. While institutions can and do change with pressure from individual actors in terms of the parameters for acceptable engagement within one, they also have a great ability to be maintained even after those who might have been instrumental in the initial formalization have long since gone. This is part of the deontology that Searle highlights with regard to the critical rights, duties, obligations, requirements and permissions characteristic of institutions (2005). Institutions are cultural artifacts containing both the possibilities and parameters for interaction. While they are constructs of collectivity, they are manifest through the actions of individuals, which is why examining the individual response to privatization is salient.

As individuals, our experience of educational, social, economic, political and social institutions creates a framework of expectations. Very few of us will experience in our lifetime the kind of comprehensive institutional shift

Russians experienced in the 1990s. Such a shift does not take place without a germane response from the villagers who were charged with carrying the rural process of restructuring forward. By evaluating the choices made by villagers on an individual level, we capture a telling picture of the wider social and institutional realm of the Russian village. Here I will link the individual villager's participation in collective institutional practices with their socio-emotional choices and cast light on the persistent rural message of community coherence.

The Village Setting

By the end of 1992, the city of Nizhnii Novgorod, not far from my research site, had become a leader in economic reforms in Russia. The first privatization in the country took place here in April 1992 with the International Finance Corporation assisted privatization of shops. The British Know How Fund, together with the World Bank-International Finance Corporation, funded and organized the privatization of industry and the reorganization of collective farming. These procedures employed a public auction method as the allocation mechanism for privatized resources. Despite farm and enterprise managers' mixed reception for the auction method, since along with the opportunity to control or even own assets went the risk that the assets would go to some other individual or group, auctions were used without significant problems. In fact many higher-ups in state and collective farms did fall into step with the changes as they saw an opportunity to grab, solidify or extend their power within the privatization schema. Average villagers, however, were less moved by the overall process.

In late October 1997, I attended the first reorganization meeting of the Fyodorovsky *kolkhoz* (collective farm) two hours north of Nizhnii Novgorod. Speaking to a crowd of approximately 60 people, Alexei, the privatization representative, focused on the imperative for the collective to reorganize. He described the various ways that they could do this; they could reregister as a joint stock company, a limited partnership, a collective private venture farm and so on. He also explained how they could, as workers and shareholders in these organizations, receive *dividendi* (dividends) in the future. He said finally, that the most preferential choice would be to form private, family farms. Throughout, he avoided the disinterested gazes of the attendees as he read nervously from his notes. Finally he said "I am here because you have decided to reorganize, am I right?"[5] No one responded for some time until one older woman yelled out, "We don't know what's happening. What do you mean 'reorganize'? What language are you speaking? It's not Russian!" Many people stirred in their seats and the rest of the meeting was brief. The director of the collective told the villagers they had no choice; the collective was bankrupt and had no way of supporting everyone unless they reorganized, thus qualifying them for monetary aid from foreign sources like the World Bank. He implored them to vote for reorganization despite their confusion, which they did a few minutes later. Serafima, interviewed after the vote, said she felt like she might suddenly be sent away, "Off to the gulag—you know our history—one can never be sure what's going on, so it's good that a Westerner is here."[6] Eventually the farm did reorganize into a Joint Stock Company and continued to farm and raise pigs as they always had, collectively, but they qualified for much-needed bankruptcy forgiveness and an influx of cash to keep them afloat for the next few years.

This scenario was typical of the times. The farms were forced to reorganize and villagers were mainly concerned with their immediate subsistence needs. Because the process was entirely top-down, villagers rarely had a choice but to attempt to fold the reorganization process into their lives. Their responses at Fyodorovsky and in Moshkino highlight an intricate combination of historical memory and an emotional interface with the economy.

In Moshkino, the farm was reorganized in the first agricultural auction, with great media hype, under the direction of Ekaterina. Ekaterina was the former accountant, economist and eventual sub-chairman of the kolkhoz and worked on the kolkhoz for 16 years before assuming the role of director for the newly formed Joint Stock Company. In the reform auction, Moshkinskoe received 1,477 hectares of land, 400 cows, 200 pigs and eight horses. As of December 2000, there were 80 permanent paid farm workers, down from 92 in January 1998, and 20 seasonal workers (see Table 1).[7]

TABLE 1
Moshkino Population Features

Population Feature	1998	2002
Village Population	203	165
Full-Time Farm Workers	92	38
Seasonal Farm Workers	—	15-30
Number of Workers Who Emigrated	—	8
Births	10	2
Deaths	12	7

This reduction in the number of full-time farm workers would signal progress to many since "redundant agricultural labour is generally regarded as the main obstacle

to productivity growth in Russian agriculture" (Lerman et al. 2008:62).[8] More critical, however, is to note that the village population has not substantially decreased, therefore pointing to the necessity for many villagers to find wage employment elsewhere. Generally this comes in the form of non-farm self-employment such as increasing production in the household garden or collecting and selling wild mushrooms and berries. Most Moshkino villagers continue to try to maintain some minimal form of contract, informal or formal, with Ekaterina to ensure a monthly in-cash or in-kind income. The self-employment subsistence efforts, while perhaps reducing the "redundancy" of agricultural labour, are only "stopgap measures" not intended to be longterm employment activities (Lerman et al. 2008:70). A sustainable long-term solution has yet to emerge.

The rural population of Russia has been declining since the collapse of the Soviet Union, however, a significant 27% of the population is still rural making villagers and their responses to privatization the central actors in this economic reform era (Lerman 2009).[9] Thus, the behaviour of rural dwellers has been singled out as the reason for sluggish agricultural reform. Many analyses of the transitional economies of Eastern Europe and Russia have pointed to the characteristics of individuals as a primary culprit in the lethargic activity surrounding individual farming. Rural Russians have been characterized as lazy, unable to understand the need to work hard, unfamiliar with basic market principles necessary for success, risk averse, or just too habitually drunk to manage private farming (Deininger 1995). Only a few have actually teased out some of the more cultural, or first-level institutional factors that created suboptimal situations for a growing individual farming sector. In so doing, it is clear that classic economic theory falls short in explaining the slow transformation of Russian agriculture. The villagers' actions after reorganization rest on more than the weighing of fiscal risk, possible gains and future outcomes. We are all risk averse. We simply have varying degrees of risk we are willing to take on given the possible rewards. On a fundamental level the situation in Russia contained "too much risk for rural people to accept" (Allina-Pisano 2008:90). This risk can be interpreted on a fiscal level, as is the case in many neoliberal analyses, or nuanced more broadly to include emotional, social and cultural elements. In the end, the literature has maintained that a rural class of independent and prosperous private farmers has not developed due to various conditions, including the implementation of the reform process from above (O'Brien et al. 2004), the weakness of civil society (Howard 2003), institutionalized corruption in the process of economic development (Schoenman 2005), historical relationships between peasants, labour and land (Shanin 2003), and the fact that rural responses and adaptations to change have not followed models that were accurately interpreted by Western academics (Wegren 2005). Certainly these were all factors in Moshkino.

Like others in post-Soviet Russia, Ekaterina has her feet in two different realms: first as director of a newly independent agricultural venture pressed to create a profit, second as matriarch of a village institution still charged with providing social support to villagers. Villagers expect more from Ekaterina in terms of social welfare than they do in terms of a profitable, reorganized farm. Failure in the former would be unconscionable while failure in the latter would matter little to the individual villager. The institution of social welfare, a significant practice and relationship for villagers, remained a firm part of the collective intentionality after reorganization. During my research I witnessed dozens of occasions where villagers were offered small jobs to do on the farm and then were given an in-kind payment, usually produce or meat. Older men and women gathered in a dark, cold barn to help sort and sack potatoes in late autumn. Some filled in if other workers were ill and the cows needed to be milked. Generally people who had worked on the collective their entire lives still looked for some way to participate in the life of the farm. Ekaterina did not often turn them away.

The idea of connectedness in the village was always critical, whether one viewed it as propaganda or idealized nostalgia, thus to many individuals something salient had been lost. Vlad, one of the animal keepers on the farm, said, "before, I knew who I was working for and why. I might not like it but I was here for the collective. We all were. Now I am here, still working, thank god, but for what?"[10] A collective worker's effort in the Soviet village was met by the efforts of others which lends more meaning to the collective institution, and to the individual, who can emotionally rationalize, as Searle describes, "when I am engaged in collective action, *I* am doing what I am doing as part of *our* doing what we are doing" (2005:6). For some, the successes of the post-Soviet reforms are more resounding than the failures, but the dissenting voices offer a clear opportunity to delve more deeply into the individual's response to institutional shifts especially in the case of purported market advancement. The fact remains, the labour relationships during and after the transition in rural Russia remain "strongly influenced by the Soviet legacy" (Shlapentokh 2006:9) and much less influenced by neoliberal opportunism.

The Obshchina and the Village Institution

To understand the relationship between the individual and the village institution today it is necessary to examine the pre-Soviet *obshchina*. There is great variation in the definition of the term, but most agree that the obshchina was a commune of sorts. These communes were peasant communities as opposed to individual farmsteads. A peasant had little independence from the obshchina. The individual was not the owner of the land—his claim was merely to the use of his share of the communal land. The Emancipation Act of 1861 gradually granted personal freedom to Russia's serfs and gave official support to the organic concept of the obshchina, thus arguably formalizing one of the first rural institutions of Russia.

The concept and position of the obshchina is important because it sets the rural Russian experience apart from other possible comparisons. Russian philosophers have attached importance to the obshchina as a unique feature distinguishing Russia from other countries.[11] Similarly, the *kollektiv* that effectively replaced the obshchina was a very culturally specific phenomenon, existing almost exclusively in Soviet society (Kharkhordin 1999:75). In the Russian context, the rural community, the total agricultural institution and the individual were intertwined in a persistent, if not complex and pliant, way. The obshchina stood as a rural corporate entity, and as such, was a property owner (Watters 1968). Communal property in the village was group-owned and partitioned among all members for their individual use. This included most critically each households' kitchen garden. Common property, on the other hand, was open to the use of all members and devoted to the benefit of the community. This included roads, pastures and meadows. If one equates ownership with control, then it was the obshchina and not the individual peasant who owned the land. The individual's place in the community was thus an intersection of his communal labour efforts and his personal rewards. The levelling effect of the obshchina's ultimate control over the land and thus livelihood make rural Russia stand apart from other "company towns" or single-industry communities in Europe or North America. Despite its long history, the obshchina was effectively destroyed by the Stolypin agrarian reforms (1906-1914), the Russian Revolution (1917) and subsequent collectivization of the USSR. However, the dye had been cast for the model of the rural Russian community characterized by a symbiotic relationship between the individual and the institution.

The Individual and the Village Institution

Institutional changes in every society typically come about in a slow and somewhat measured manner. In times of crisis such as warfare, internal political unrest, or economic strain, institutional reactions may be more dramatic. Significant institutional shifts were a long-standing feature of the former Soviet Union. Reconstituting the ground-level behaviours of the villagers, organizing the methods for enforcing such transformation, negotiating the governance structure charged with monitoring the success of such plans, and reframing the institutional rhetoric designed to replace discarded cultural frameworks for local meaning and action, were all part of the Soviet system. Most of the institutional plans were not the result of organic shifts in the country. In fact, the very idea of "unofficial" institutional policies was anathema to Soviet life. With each new Five-Year Plan, Soviet citizens were put to the test with yet another recipe for increasing agricultural and industrial productivity and ensuring the Soviet Union's eventual place of dominance in the world order. The forced collectivization of agriculture was the socialist state's main tactic in its efforts to push the peasants from their old way of life. This new method and discourse of farming was to be one steeped in collectivity, progress for the people—not one's individual family or community—and the countryside. This was necessary in order to fuel industrial growth and provide food for workers in the cities. After collectivization was decreed necessary to fulfill Stalin's First Five-Year Plan (April 1929, which called for a 150% increase in agricultural production), cadres were sent into the countryside to explain the benefits of collectivization and *enroll* peasants in the new collectives. What transpired was unexpectedly strong resistance from peasants leading to an all-out government attack on traditional farming practices as found in the obshchina.

Ironically, in 1993, a similar process began when international development agencies and local government offices began ushering in the shift from collective to individual farming. As described above, when I arrived in Moshkino, the process was still underway throughout the region with development representatives, or neoliberal cadres—the revolutionaries of neoliberalism—holding village meetings and preaching the benefits of private landholding and farming. Eventually, nearly 12 million Russians received the right to land shares as a result of privatization, thus creating a huge and potentially powerful population of first-time land owners. This process, however, was often more complicated than reports conveyed.

Many analysts assumed, like the architects of the privatization process themselves, that once the initial difficulties of the transition had passed, individuals would take up the reins of market-driven farming in search of financial success. In these analyses, however, the individual actors were effectively subsumed within features of the privatized market institutions being developed (Åslund 1995; Mau 1999). A sociologist from Moscow, when asked about the level of attention being paid to the individual and social aspects of reorganization in the rural areas, told me, "there is not enough attention on the social element of privatization, especially in the villages where there is not such a tradition of private farming. They don't show the same interest as people in the cities, but it is not part of the reorganization program to understand this."[12] The dearth of social analysis at the time of reorganization resulted in what many would argue was a program of privatization centred on legal frameworks, national political economy and registering businesses rather than on the social lives of people. The negligence of attention to village socio-emotional constructs was easily avoidable. In other situations where market reforms have taken place and cultural institutions were integrated with the economic transformations rather than dismantled, reforms have been more successful. Research demonstrates that individuals support transitions which maintain the integrity of traditional emotional economies.[13]

New Institutional Economics (NIE) has attempted to deviate from other neoliberal economic frameworks by drawing out the individual in a system of economic analysis. In trying to systematically examine economic issues that classic economic theory simply assumes away, Williamson (1985), winner of the 2009 Bank of Sweden Prize in Economic Sciences in Memory of Alfred Nobel, focuses his New Institutional Economics on the importance of various institutions and their relative importance in local economies. Part of NIE in general is a greater self-consciousness about its behavioural assumptions and using a more comparative approach which appeals to anthropologists. Local institutions, thus, are recognized as being key factors in explaining differences in performance between industries, nations, and regions (Brousseau and Glachant 2008). Because local institutions are culturally bound, they provide a framework for understanding horizontal and vertical arrangements in various settings and how transformation might affect them.

Williamson (2000) expands on the institution by designating four levels. The first level, the culturally embedded institutions that are shaped by informal rules, cultural beliefs, religion and local norms and values, is perhaps more the territory of traditional anthropology. This is the level of analysis most critical here. The second level is the legal environment of the institution based on laws including property rights. These formalize the choices available and subsequent behaviours of individuals. Third level institutions have more to do with the process of transactions and fourth level institutions control and create rules for allocating resources. The persistent theme in each of these levels is the way institutions formalize group *and* individual behaviour, creating "schema" for behaviour, in anthropological terms. NIE is unique in that it recognizes the evolution of institutions as both an informal and formal process (North 1990). In other words, individuals, their beliefs and practices, are recognized as agents in the process. Institutional power structures and changes within them can arise organically or be compelled by outside forces, but are always the result of individual actors.

The Russian context is clearly one where it is possible to examine the implementation of such institutional reordering from outside. In terms of an institutional analysis, those at the second level, concerned with the legal environment, third level, the process of transactions, and fourth level institutions controlling and creating rules for allocating resources, were first to be shifted. As far back as 1989-90, Soviet legislation allowed first, the creation of a non-state enterprise as a cooperative; second, the denationalization of land and non-land assets by transferring them legally from the state to kolkhozes and *sovkhozes* (state farms); and third, the establishment of a legal basis for individual (family) farming. With the introduction of the Law on the Peasant Farm in December of 1990 and more recent (2008) laws and decrees defining the legal forms of large agricultural enterprises, land ownership, and the procedures for certifying and exercising ownership rights, it was expected that creating private holdings in rural areas would result in an institutional shift at all levels. This was extended to individual behavioural modification expectations, namely that the "magic of property" (Kingston-Mann 1991:23) and private "ownership would compel market behaviour in rural residents" (Allina-Pisano 2008:56). As it turned out, few villagers were interested in establishing individual farms, and management and operating practices inside large agricultural enterprises remained largely unchanged when my research began in 1997. Clearly, legislation was not enough to bring private agriculture into being.

While NIE theory allows for a more culturally nuanced economic analysis of the individual within institutions, there are shortcomings. A key problem with Williamson's NIE model is that while it recognizes the multi-dimentional quality of local institutions, it is not

holistic enough in its overall framework and most notably leaves individual voices out of an analysis that arguably wrests the individual from the background of economics. Once again we find the individual existing in theory but not in practice. NIE is a useful starting point but the discussion is dangerously tautological without a clear epistemological basis. Rather than maintain the individual's existence and agency in some transient way, it is necessary to concretely present the interaction between the individual and the institution.

Instituting a Neoliberal Identity

Instituting neoliberalism requires what Wegren referred to as "an attitudinal, behavioural, and cultural revolution" (2005:2). The risk to first level institutions, to local economies and cultures, is part of global neoliberalism (Robotham 2005). Individuals in communities are responsible for carrying the change by adopting an ethos of competition, fiscal differentiation and power inequities (Bourdieu 1998; Granovetter 1985; Woolcock 1998). Even the most ardent capitalists admit that this transformation requires more than supporting legal structures. Alan Greenspan, former Chairman of the Federal Reserve Board of the United States, argued that capitalism is "not nature at all, but culture" (Pfaff 1999), as the Russian case exemplifies.

Neoliberalism accentuates the productive capacity of the individual within the market, but it is still within *communities* of individuals that change and innovation must occur. Habermas offers a lesson in the representativeness of individual actors by arguing that agents who act are not simply individuals since knowledge is socially constructed at the level of larger agents—such as institutions (1981:100).[14] Pointing out the limitations of methodological individualism present in the foundations of neoliberal thinking, Habermas argues that this model cannot account for the real diversity of moral systems that exists in societies (1998:10-16). Certainly rural Russia is no different in its degree of complexity in traditional and contemporary moral systems. Thus the application of market principles critical to neoliberal ideology and practice wound up as an uncomfortable fit in rural contexts.

When Sachs and the others at the Harvard Institute for International Development implemented privatization in Russia, they paved the way for competitive neoliberal manoeuvring. This took a nation with relatively insignificant wealth disparities to a new level of full-blown hyper-inflation and the overnight status of having as many billionaires as Saudi Arabia. Privatization certainly rewarded those who were well positioned and could quickly take control of the nation's considerable natural resources and it appeared that the market might quickly gain control and rescue Russia from its decades-long stagnation within a state-controlled command economy. The "Harvard Boys," as Wedel referred to them (1998), were given carte blanche by both the Clinton Administration and the Russian government, whose representative Anatoly Chubais, Yeltsin's economic tsar, was single-handedly responsible for getting presidential decrees passed without parliamentary approval in order to carry out his radical capitalist reform process. The corruption that followed, more closely resembled "Klondike capitalism" than the nascent building of a reliable new market system (Wedel 1998). Rather than displaying the measured institutional guidelines of neoliberal policy, "'fiscal discipline,' 'structural reforms,' and 'export competitiveness'" (Colloredo-Mansfeld 2002:113), the free market in Russia created an institutionalized financial free-for-all. The shift in economic policies and politics did not result in reliable institutional restructuring in which individuals could trust. Trust in public and social institutions in Russia is the lowest in the world, behind the most advanced countries but also those known for instability like Columbia and Nigeria (Shlapentokh 2006). Thus, responses to neoliberal policies might have to do with a more macro-level interpretation of Russian culture and national identity as it plays out in the village.

Historians and Russian Studies scholars recognize that there are constant contradictions and tensions within Russian identity. Those more ethnographic in their approach see Russian national identity as a process rather than a result, much the same way anthropologists view culture as an ever-changing reality in the lives of individuals and communities (Franklin and Widdis 2004). One element of Russian national identity has been a so-called perpetual identity crisis. This "preoccupation with the problem [of identity] itself" is well recognized in Russia as Franklin notes (2004:27). A contributing factor to this identity crisis is the historical reality of Russian national identity being seen as a tabula rasa, coloured by a process of foreign cultural traditions being injected into the nation (i.e., Byzantine, Scandinavian, Mongol, Germanic, and finally, American) (Widdis 2004). The replacing of traditional communal systems by market-oriented ones follows this history, and prepared the ground for the current discourse and rejection of non-native agricultural systems as being distinctly non-Russian.

A tension between culturally embedded institutions of pre- and post-privatization has resulted in divisiveness between neoliberal logic and agendas and the lived experience of individuals (Ninneto 2005:446). During my

research, village concerns in Moshkino were centred on food, health and community. Olga, a 32-year-old mother, said, "there's all this talk about the market and dividends and growth, but all I see is my own garden and my family and neighbours ... we all wonder how to get through the winter and not starve. Is that privatization?"[15] The unfairness of the reorganization process and the resulting disparity between Russians was blatant to Olga and others for whom trying to eke out a living in "capitalism's austere margins" was a struggle (Colloredo-Mansfeld 2002:114).

The Cultural Institution of Community

Often missing from the postsocialist literature is an exploration of the social and emotional attachment farm workers feel towards their labour. This is not merely a romanticized imagining by journalists or academics, but an expression of the lived experience of many farm workers for whom the village provided all manner of infrastructural and socio-emotional support. In Moshkino, the former collective farm was remembered as a strong and relatively successful farm. Many villagers expressed pride in their involvement with the collective and saw the postsocialist situation as a sort of aberration in terms of cultural and subsistence practices. Yuri, 37, was one such person. One warm summer morning he stood in front of the farm garage. I was asking him about the system of help in the village—how individuals find the assistance they need to gather their hay or do other household garden work. Yuri said that individuals help one another (*drug za drugum*), and families also rely on each another for help. He sighed explaining,

> the *sel'soviet* [village council] used to help us but now everything is falling apart. Before, the head of the sel'soviet was very strict and we liked him. He kept everything in his fist and everything worked. We all had what we needed. Now we only have the potato we grab from the ground and the air we breathe.[16]

Ira, 46, expressed a similar dissatisfaction with the current situation in light of the way things used to be. "We didn't have very much before but we all had enough and the farm was a good place to be. You didn't need anything else if you worked for the farm you had had food and friends, sometimes a little party. Now, it's a shame."[17]

Once the reorganization process was completed, approximately 90% of rural farmland was still held by former state and collective farms and their successor parent farms (Wegren 1998). Some former collective workers were aware that their efforts to hold the community together through shared labour and subsistence were being read in the West as reflections of their inability as individuals to change. However they were not motivated by outside analyses of their situation. Stepan, a pensioner who lost his full-time employment on the farm, said that he reads the newspaper sometimes and cannot believe what they write about farming:

> They always talk about how we need to have stronger results, but they have no idea what my life is like. I barely make it, how do they expect us to increase our work? We always work hard. Ask any person in any village.[18]

Wegren et al., in an article "more interested in the *effect* of reform on different rural actors than on the *effectiveness* of policies to achieve reform goals," found that 60% of farm workers over five regions in Russia considered themselves "losers or absolute losers" in the wake of the reforms (2002:2, 6). For most villagers, the reforms were asking them to reconfigure not only their economic institutions and farming practices, but their very identity.

Far from being romanticized ideas about collectivity, the response of villagers has exhibited a recognition of what Wolf describes as the interactional processes of cultures and communities "as they emerge from sources of power and hegemony" (Yengoyan 2001:ix). In fact Wolf warns against romanticizing peasant communalism as a self-sacrificing altruistic endeavour. Due to its reliance on individual actors the peasant community is a collection of individuals who actually have to be drawn into the same system of mutual constraint. So the collective community in Russia did not "abolish individual striving" but merely strove to control it (Wolf 2001:58). Individualism is one of the ultimate advantages of capitalism (Hayek 2007:68). This is meant to unseat collectivism, but what it ultimately emphasizes is the benefit of individual market competition, which was not an endogenously developed tradition but it was also not unknown in the villages. As Wolf (2001) argued, a focus on rural community does not mean that there are no individual self-interests. Quite the contrary, one recognizes one's self-interests as being part and parcel of collective interests.

In Russia, even with the historic institutional importance of the state in organizing communal rural affairs, the individual maintained a critical presence. The philosophical development of the Soviet individual was necessary so that the group itself was also more advanced (Fitzpatrick 1993:756). The ideal, however, was for individuals themselves to view their own development in the context of the group as a whole. Despite its intent, centralized planning in the Soviet Union failed to eradicate the state's depend-

ence in extremis on individual local producers (Ellman 1979: 66-73; Kideckel 1993).

Nationalism was the impetus for the formation of communalism and the interests of the commune were rhetorically more closely allied with those of the state. Therefore, loyalty to the collective was also loyalty to the state and this connected collective farms throughout the Soviet Union to one vast, great cause. A farm worker's individual identity was thus linked to the state daily through their labour. The way peasants would cleave to "traditional arrangements which guarantee his access to land and to the labour of kin and neighbours" meant peasant economies have often been characterized as illogical and averse to individual competition and acquisitiveness (Wolf 2001:xxii). In order for agricultural privatization to succeed as planned in Russia, the rewards of individualism, and the competition involved have to be accepted, and production increases, rather than the state, must be seen as the vehicle for social welfare improvements.

Rural collectivity, however, could not easily adopt such neoliberal models. Village arrangements combined to form a common ethos among rural dwellers, one that stands in stark contrast to the neoliberal ethos. The traditional Russian practice of "joint responsibility" worked to spread villagers across extremes of wealth and poverty creating a weakened state of being for all but maintaining social balance. All group members, whether it was a work group or a village, "stood surety for all other members in dealings contracted by (or imposed upon) the group as a whole" (Semyonova Tian-Shanskaia 1993:140). Much of the forced historic generosity, labour sharing and scattered agricultural fields were part of this moral economy, as important in terms of physical produce as in terms of emotional subsistence. These communal insurance efforts were part of what made the rural economy, with success in protecting all individuals in a village from severe lack, "more human than the market economy" (Polanyi 1957:163). What was apparent on the reorganized Moshkinskoe farm, was what Worobec describes as the "concern for the equality of burdens and obligations" (1995:20) that make the first institutional level of a neoliberal agriculture so distasteful to villagers. Such an institution lacks the informal but critical depth of local justice, where community members might be focused on household sustenance, but are also aware of keeping the market at arm's length since unlimited involvement in the market threatens a villager's hold on his source of livelihood, namely, other community members (Wolf 1969).

Pride and Emotional Attachment

Williamson's first level institutions—those which are culturally embedded—were at risk in post-Soviet Russia. Despite attempts in NIE to acknowledge the individual, it is anthropologists who have done more to draw out the individual from the institution in the postsocialist context (Allina-Pisano 2008; Müller 2007; Paxson 2005; Pine 2002; Ries 1997; Verdery 1996). Part of this disciplinary success arises in recognizing the agency of actors and their creativity, especially in times of flux. While some researchers admit going to Russia expecting to find a "continuation of the age-old mechanisms of a collectivist lifestyle" (Kharkhordin 1999:2), I actually first went expecting to find the budding growth of small business owners and individual farmers but instead found the collective. My fieldwork experiences forced a clear recognition of a decision-making level outside of the strict confines of the neoliberal market. This was the realm of the emotional economy.

The emotional economy is an economy of subsistence and an economy of feeling (Heady and Gambold Miller 2006). It is where the value of one's work effort is weighed not only by its potential for earning profits, but also by its profits in social cohesion and manoeuvrability. Between the former collective workers in Moshkino, there are still traditional "feeling rules" (Hochschild 1983:56) that act as a template for establishing and maintaining the sense of entitlement or obligation that influences community emotional exchanges. These "rules" within the emotional economy tell us how we "should" be feeling in relation to our livelihood and those with whom we work. They help guide us in understanding the possible outcomes of our social interactions. In economic terms, the way individuals then capitalize on social relations can, in some situations, become correlated with economic capital, as Bourdieu (1985) points out. Labour-related behaviour can be substantially influenced by individual emotional reckoning much in the way Nussbaum (1999) highlights the importance of emotions in the efficacy of development projects and the way such projects are implemented at the level of traditional cultural institutions. Emotions such as shame, guilt, pride and joy are critical movers in individuals' decision making on all levels, including the economic.

In this vein, the difficulty experienced by Moshkino villagers was both emotional and economic. The effects of post-Soviet economic restructuring and political upheaval forced a renegotiation of the rural individual's emotional place in the wider national milieu and within the village itself. The commitment to community institu-

tions that followed is complexly interwoven. It is somewhat path-dependent, certainly historical, and also a product of responses to the reforms themselves. Despite the importance of Soviet propaganda in creating cultural institutions, the attachment to the collective of other farmers and villagers is not necessarily a by-product of successful planning. This kind of rural communal coherence has been seen before. Among hacienda workers in Mexico, Wolf argues that they "abdicated much personal autonomy in exchange for heightened social and economic security," which was provided by the group and the paternal owner (2001:130). Existing in the "margins of capitalism," as rural agricultural workers often do, creates an environment of community cohesion and concern. In a space where capitalist individualism can cost you your crops and livelihood, consideration for those nearby makes sense. This mutual support among members can make "diffuse groups an extraordinarily important phenomenon in a society founded on communal pressure" (Kharkhordin 1999:321). In China, there have been successful reform outcomes where public–private institutions have maintained national pride while instigating economic profitability *and* stimulating social connectedness. Labour recruitment companies which help place rural women as domestic labourers in urban homes also develop the women's *suzhi* (Hairong 2003). This suzhi helps bridge the individual's socio-emotional needs with the modern market demands as it "marks a sense and sensibility of the self's value in the market economy" (Hairong 2003:494). Preserving some sense of traditional collectivism facilitates the successful engagement of these women in market transactions that might otherwise feel unnatural.

Even in more historically capitalist settings farming has retained the socio-emotional code of conduct prevalent in more informal face-to-face economies. Exchange and abiding support with those around you means that everyone's behaviour can be monitored and kept in check. Salazar describes the importance of maintaining this "all-pervasive personalism" in 20th century rural Ireland because it "lubricates the junctures of an otherwise cold and distant monetary exchange" (1995:181). Village residents are sensitive to what they have experienced as being a more emotionally supportive institutional system. It is morally difficult to take advantage of someone you see day in and day out. It is not unheard of, it just has the potential to make life unpleasant.

Cohesiveness in agricultural communities also arises from a shared pride in ones labour, labour that is often not valued in urban centres. Farming is hard work, but any government, whether communist or capitalist, must encourage farmers to keep growing food. The propaganda of how important farming is to the health and wealth of a nation belies events such as Farm Aid concerts which have been designed to help American farmers who are in economic distress.[19] In this context, it is important to point out that the modernization of rural life in the U.S. and Canada has had socio-emotional results shockingly similar to the distress expressed by Moshkino residents. For example, in rural Oklahoma, Ramírez-Ferrero (2005) identifies pride as the most salient dimension of the moral and emotional life of farmers. Pride is wrapped up in cultural valuations of land, family farming, and hard work. However, structural changes in the 1980s challenged this moral and emotional order resulting in an alarming spike in the number of suicides among Oklahoma farmers. Initially attributed to simple economic hardship, Ramírez-Ferrero shows how agricultural restructuring ("modernization") brought about important social and cultural changes that frayed the basic structures of social support existing in the past, leaving farmers wrestling with emotionally crushing challenges to their pride, and often turning to suicide.[20] In Moshkino, the rate of suicide has not increased, but levels of apathy and unhappiness arguably have. Alcoholism—always a problem—has soared in rural Russia with more deaths from alcohol poisoning than ever before.[21]

The attachment villagers feel to their work, as both a site of employment and earnings and a locus for emotional integrity and well-being, is part of the embeddedness of village institutions. That complex union between the village economy, social networks and labour should not be mistakenly characterized as a stagnant, fixed relationship. Embedded simply implies interwoven and connected. This scenario was also true in Bulgaria where Creed (1998) found that villagers' employment activities were a central feature of their individual personal identity. Thus, the reorganization process was met by an attempt "to use socialism to domesticate capitalism" thereby maintaining important "symbiotic" relationships between individuals and parent farms (Creed 1998:277).[22] After reorganization, 87% of Moshkino villagers were still tied to the parent farm through formal or informal agreements with farm director Ekaterina.[23] Ekaterina commented frequently on the strain between trying to build a profitable farm and taking care of the villagers who "gave their lives to the collective."[24] I often wondered why Ekaterina did not strike out on her own with her experienced and hard-working husband. When asked how long she intended to be the director at the Moshkinskoe farm, she laughed and replied, "longer than I'd like, I'm sure, but as long as they [pensioners] need me."[25] Ekaterina could easily become an independent farmer, as she possessed the social and

cultural capital that would enable her to manoeuvre in neoliberal agricultural institutions. However, she felt that it was important "to help those who couldn't manage to farm independently due to psychological and material problems."[26] It was common for postsocialist managers, especially older ones with long-term ties to the village and farm employees, to try to maintain care of those relying on them (Humphrey 2002; Koester 2000; Wegren et al. 2002). Ekaterina's rationalization may sound too altruistic to be true, considering the opportunities for self-advancement provided to managers on reorganized farms, but there are also undeniable burdens of her choice, which were quite apparent to me. She had put aside her potential for substantial individual gain as a private farmer to ensure the health and well-being of the community.[27] If anything, her ability to keep the farm together and functioning helped maintain the embedded nature of work, social networks and personal fulfilment.

The interconnectedness of social networks and individual contentment is not just a characteristic of the Soviet collective or rural culture but is also a salient feature of human life in general; one that is sought by workers in all manner of industries. When it is lacking, individuals express being genuinely unhappy (Boym 2002; Freedman 2007; Humphrey 2002). In Russia, those whose work history consists mostly of communal labour on the collective have expressed concerns over the lack of interconnectedness that seemed to accompany privatization. These individuals tend to "gravitate towards the pole of traditionalism," which is why so many farms appeared to be operating more or less as they had been before reorganization (Buchowski 2003:18).

At one village meeting in 2002, there was a discussion about helping the pensioners collect their hay and other supports Ekaterina should offer villagers whether they technically worked for the farm or not. A few were grumbling about the time it takes to help everyone with their personal harvest when 47-year-old Sveta said, "we have already lost our collective. We were a strong one. We shouldn't lose the life of our village too."[28] Her fear, like that of many others, was that the mutual care that typified the village would be cast aside in the wake of market reforms. This paternalistic organization of the collective as the primary social and economic safety net went hand in hand with the Socialist state's agenda to, as Ashwin notes, "cultivate work as the 'basic unit' of individuals' lives" (Weiner 2007:32). Villagers rightly feared the "redefining of common pool resources as commodities" as well as the redefining of social welfare networks as employment relationships (Allina-Pisano 2008:5). The interactions between individuals were thus thrust under a microscope as villagers examined the strength of their previous ties and the necessity or desire for redefinition.

Despite the general resistance to private farming, some villagers have elected to take the risk and break out on their own. Two former farm workers in Moshkino decided to use support being offered to individual farmers and attempt to make it without the help of the parent farm. Private farmers were initially able to access loans to help meet the substantial start-up costs facing them, but much of the promised, continued government support never materialized. Nevertheless, some have succeeded. Indeed, in a survey of 800 village households Wegren et al. (2002) found that private individual farmers earned more, had acquired more in the way of durable goods, enjoyed a greater sense of job security and considered themselves "winners" in the privatization process more than any other rural residents. However, the reality is that private farmers are still a minority in most places in Russia. While reorganized collective farms, or corporate farms, make up 80% of farms in Russia, only 10% are individual private farms.[29]

Only one individual farmer in Moshkino persisted between my initial period of fieldwork in 1997-98 and my follow-up research in 2002. Oleg had started to farm, trying to draw on the support and help of his brother nearby, but he found that after his first year, he had doubts about his choice and his ability. He was relatively young, only 34, when the farm privatized, and had a wife and two young children. His wife was one of the few who worked outside the village in a grocery store ten kilometres away.[30] Oleg went to the regional agricultural restructuring office and asked about support. They offered to help him write a business plan to present to the bank in order to get a loan for private farmers. He wrote the business proposal, or as he put it, "I put down exactly what they told me to and nothing more," and within a couple of months he was granted a loan.[31] With the money, he could purchase a harvester and several of the smaller implements that he required to do his work. He was focusing on potatoes and a combination crop including soy that was being encouraged because he could sell it for livestock feed to some of the larger farms in the area. Oleg said that initially he enjoyed his work and felt hopeful. However, soon he felt "very alone" and could not keep up with the work without additional help and machinery. He complained about the sheer amount of work in farming alone but also noted that "throughout the day it is not just that I need more hands to help, but that I spend all day by myself working. It makes the work mere drudgery and thus the work feels harder." His older brother, who still worked for the Moshkinskoe farm, would offer help on occasion but

worked hard for the parent farm and like most villagers, still had to put in a substantial amount of time working in his own household garden.

By the time of my research in 2002, the percentage of total food production in Russia contributed by household gardens was 54%.[32] Over 85% of the villagers I interviewed were attempting to increase productivity in their personal gardens primarily for personal consumption. By relying on his brother's assistance, Oleg was asking him to devote less time to his household garden without being able to provide any substantive remuneration except future promises. Oleg had to sell all of his crops if he hoped to make any profit, and most villagers plant a substantial number of potatoes and therefore would not benefit from receiving more as in-kind payment. Oleg began to sense that his brother was not willing to help him and this created a temporary rift between them. Eventually, Oleg decided to ask Ekaterina if he could come back to the farm. He explained,

> When I went to the [farm] office I was not feeling good. I felt like they would see that I couldn't do it, that I was weak somehow, that they might think I shouldn't be allowed back since I had left. I only wanted to try to make it, that is what we were told to do [in reorganization]. Ekaterina was very nice. She did not make me feel ashamed. It was a short conversation, but she said I could come back to my old job.[33]

Fortunately for Oleg he was able to sell his harvester to a farm not far away and pay back most of his high-interest loan immediately.

Tatiana was the other private farmer in Moshkino and remains an anomaly as the only person earning all of their income from independent endeavours. She is 45 years old and attended the agricultural institute in Nizhnii Novgorod. When the Soviet collective was being reorganized in 1994, Tatiana and her tractor driver husband decided to stay with Ekaterina and work on the Moshkinskoe Joint Stock Company farm. Tatiana was an agronomist on the collective and under Ekaterina she became the chief agronomist of the new farm. After one year, she decided to leave the farm because she felt as if she was still working for a collective and she wanted to work for herself. Having been part of the management sector, Tatiana had an advantage on the path to success. She had more social and cultural resources than most people in the village. These include education, elevated knowledge about the institutional systems involved in large-scale agriculture, and an elevated reputation due to her previous position as the collective's agronomist. All of this gave her what some might argue is the mental acuity necessary to move into individual farming while others, uncertain and unconvinced, remained with the collective.[34]

Tatiana has established herself as a rural entrepreneur but she and her husband live a rather socially isolated life in this small village. They were never present at any larger gatherings I attended and they are even estranged from Tatiana's mother, sister and cousin in the village.[35] Tatiana is also the object of mistrust and envy in the village. She and her husband do not help their kin with farm work but they do help neighbours who ask. However, they ask them to pay in cash or reciprocal labour—something many saw as necessary to bring to my attention because it transgressed the traditional value of mutual aid by adding cash to the equation. Buchowski similarly argued that entrepreneurs in rural Poland have become "detached" from the community (2003:19). Like Tatiana they could be categorized as the "dispossessed," people who Humphrey describes as "falling outside the primary unit of society" (2002:25), in this case the former collective farm.

Interviews with villagers always illuminated their behavioural disposition towards collective farm work versus farming alone. This "disposition" is not a factor of human nature, but rather a temperament resulting from a history and cultural ethos valuing the collective institution of agricultural labour and social cohesion. Mikhail Ivanovich, a 47-year-old farm worker, said that "farm work is work you do with others" and to work alone is "like eating alone, it just doesn't feel right."[36] This perception of work and competition, and the value assigned to these culturally defined notions, are important factors informing individual responses to reorganization. Williamson's ideas behind NIE stressed that these behaviours are part and parcel of a larger response and that "it is not uncertainty or small numbers, individually and together, that occasion market failure but it is rather the joining of these factors with bounded rationality on the one hand and opportunism on the other that gives rise to exchange difficulties" (1975:7).

Nadia, a 77-year-old pensioner, told me that she felt "stronger and safer" as part of the collective and that she could never make it on her own as an independent farmer without the support of others. She did not even consider leaving the parent farm because, "together our village is stronger, but alone, we are weak."[37] While the economic costs of not belonging to a social network are more severe for the elderly, even younger people have been reticent to shift to a neoliberal system. Nadia's 27-year-old grandson, Sasha, told me that if he wanted to farm alone, he could. "I am young and I can make my way, I am sure. But what am I supposed to do with my family? My parents

and my grandmother still rely on Ekaterina's farm and I have my first child to think about now. I can't take chances, even if I wanted to."[38]

The results in Moshkino have created a kind of neoliberal collective—a farm that operates under basic market principles but maintains the labour and socio-emotional support structure of the traditional collective farm. Since, in broad terms, the market is functioning, these hybrid forms could be read as a way to strengthen neoliberal reforms rather than a strike against them.[39] This is even more valid if one assesses the socio-emotional gains in the village with the economic ones. Weighing profit potential is a standard feature of neoclassical economic theory and even NIE, but maximization can, and often does, veer into the emotional. Taking your labour out of the collective farm in order to farm independently might mean future fiscal gains, but the certain emotional toll of this break could easily outweigh those possible gains. The reduction of risk in leaving an unstable Joint Stock Company farm to manage your own labour and income increases the risk of social rebuking or the "embourgeoisement" of private farmers Szelényi (1988) describes in Hungary. Some will not take that emotional risk.

Considering the magnitude of the historical and cultural institutions facing reformers it is surprising that more efforts were not made to maintain collectivism. As part of a rural economy, agricultural endeavours are even more a "social construct and a cultural experience" (Salazar 1995:5). Whether one considers the Russian case or other experiences of rural transformation, the scenario has nearly always been similar: the market cannot replace the cultural institutions upon which villagers rely. In Russia, transformations continue, but even more in a neoliberal vein. A *New York Times* article described the unthinkable: "the business of buying and reforming collective farms is suddenly and improbably very profitable" (Kramer 2008). As world food prices soared, some entrepreneurial businessmen saw the millions of hectares of arable but fallow land in Russia as money waiting to be harvested.[40] The article notes that the trend appears to be to further consolidate large portions of Russia's available land to create factory "cluster" farms. Infrastructurally, this is more easily done since most farms remained collectively structured but there is still the problem of the rural population. Kramer (2008) notes that some investors interested in corporate farming in Russia have "resorted to hiring psychologists to untangle the village culture and determine how best to instill a work ethic." Another investor argues that giving higher salaries to individual farmers is not the way to motivate them, but one should instead give them "rewards emphasizing the team nature of the work." Even in light of a potential new phase of instituting neoliberalism in the village, the individual in the collective cannot be forgotten.

Conclusions

As the literature and my research demonstrate, the complexities of the postsocialist rural economy go far beyond material circumstances and constraints. Classic economic theories of capitalism are inadequate for analyzing contemporary postsocialist events, which present an array of hybrid economies, fluid and multifaceted, neither collective nor fully integrated into the neoliberal market. In fact, it seems that while some may steadfastly maintain that Russia has fully integrated into the market (Åslund 1995), in fact the post-Soviet context could be the best example of what Gudeman has called "what it means to be human in the making of material life—conflicted and torn between community and market" (Colloredo-Mansfeld 2002: 129). While this paper does not attempt to offer suggestions for a better way, it is intended to illustrate that in the age of neoliberalism there are still important diverging voices. Certainly many of those voices would probably love to join the choir of market success, but they have made clear with their actions that the market was not made for everyone. Considering the historical and cultural foundations of Russia, the market of the West just does not seem to fit well in the emotional economy of the village. This emotional economy is not only embedded in traditional peasant societies, it is embedded in *all* societies. All economies, not only those in a postsocialist context, have a moral component and an emotional system of valuation both of product and of process. In situations where the potential profits from maintaining the emotional and social valuation systems outweigh those that might result from neoliberal market competition, communities will not risk losing traditional validation systems. This is heightened in rural institutions where direct personal involvement in the market has been slow to develop and traditions of communal cohesion provide familiar cultural scripts for labour and well-being.

Collectivism in Moshkino is easily read as failure; failure to adapt, failure to adopt and failure to competitively engage the market. Ekaterina's farm is still operating and the number of workers she can continue to pay each year has decreased from nearly 100 when I first met her to just under 40. She had tried to adjust her farming strategies overall in order to make a greater profit, but she does not pay dividend rent for access to land shares that all the farm workers have entrusted to her, nor has she been able to increase wages enough to pull her workers out of poverty. What she has managed to do is make sure

her workers, and especially the pensioners in the village, have access to domestic animals, occasional products and the socio-emotional support system the farm provides. Neoliberal "failures" such as these might actually translate into local institutional and socio-emotional successes. Perhaps the two are not mutually exclusive.

The NEI analysis is not comprehensive, and in fact despite a nod to the culturally embedded institutional level which supposes individual actors, the model is still fraught with shortcomings due to its inherent lack of a comparative approach. Nevertheless, the systems or levels of analysis that exist in NEI show that institutional changes can come at one level and not spread into the other levels without the right conditions. It is unlikely that private farming will surpass large corporate farms, household garden production or imports at any time in the near future, despite legal frameworks allowing for the buying, selling and cultivation of land individually. While there are winners in the Russian neoliberal market, those who were weak in the Soviet period remain weak after privatization.

While the neoliberal model has been successful in creating markets and market-behaviour in many non-Western contexts, in Russian villages we seem to find a challenge. Given the history of communalism, in practice and in propaganda, villagers have opted to resist market behaviours that risk destroying their culturally embedded work structures. Whether greater attempts to embrace the market would eventually benefit farm workers, they have not left behind their institutionalized socio-emotional support systems. Not for lack of wanting a better life, these villagers maintain their symbolic horizontal structures in favor of a vertical neoliberal model. Privatization was intended to break up large state and collective farms and redistribute land into the hands of individual farmers who would then compete in a rural market. Instead, most of the farms were renamed, re-registered and remain in the hands of the many, collectively.

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Notes

1 Throughout my fieldwork, I conducted semi-structured and informal interviews with village residents, farm workers, farm managers and local authorities. I also collected surveys gathering data on basic household demographics, land use, property and subsistence.

2 See Jessica Allina-Pisano (2008), especially chapters 2 and 3, for a detailed rendering of a similar situation in the Black Earth region.

3 Interview 14 July 2002.

4 See "O poryadke reorganizatsii kolkhozov I sovkhozov" (*Zemlya I lyudi*, no. 2, January 10, 1992, pp. 1, 3) for discussion of Yeltsin's signing of this resolution.

5 Fieldnotes 26-28 October 1997.

6 Interview 26 October 1997.

7 Eight workers relocated, two were fired, and two quit but still live in Moshkino.

8 The figures in Table 1 do not reflect the many villagers who have informal contracts with Ekaterina and are still receiving some in-kind support.

9 Many analyses correlate the percentage of rural inhabitants to successful marketization of the economy (fewer rural inhabitants and lower agricultural share of the overall employment index meaning higher income per capita after privatization) (Lerman 2007). This correlation is not so simple when one considers the rural population rate of other countries such as Ireland (40%), Finland (39%), Netherlands (34%) or the United States (20%) and Canada (20%) (United Nations Department of Economics and Social Affairs, Population Division 2009).

10 Interview 8 February 1998.

11 See for example the writings of Alexander Herzen (1995) and Pyotr Chaadayev.

12 Interview 27 September 1997.

13 Rudnyckyj (2009) gives an example of how neoliberal market reform in Indonesia was bolstered due to its combined effort to transform workers into more responsible and dedicated religious subjects while also training them to be more productive factory workers. In this setting, the emotional economy is enacted in a spiritual reform that finds success in "reconfiguring work as a form of worship and religious duty" (Rudnyckyj 2009:105).

14 Allina-Pisano (2008:56) borrows ideas of ontogeny from Gould (1977) in describing the post-socialist situation and how the lives of individuals were meant to change in accordance and in step with broader economic and social infrastructures.

15 Interview 28 July 2002.

16 Interview 16 July 2002.

17 Interview 22 July 2002.

18 Interview 9 March 1998.

19 In 1985, I attended the first of these concerts which "defend[ed] and bolster[ed] family farm centred agriculture. By strengthening the voices of family farmers themselves, Farm Aid stands up for the most resourceful, heroic Americans–the family farmers who work the land" (Farm Aid N.d.).

20 Suicide among farmers is more far-reaching than we imagine. Chandarkar (2007) illustrates the economic and social stress felt by farmers by pointing to more than 5000 suicides between 1997-2007 in Andhra Pradesh, India. In Ghana, tomato farmers were committing suicide in astonishing numbers in 2007.

21 Russia, historically, has one of the highest alcohol consumption rates in the world, a rate which increased after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Between 1990 and 1994 the rate of alcohol-related deaths in Russia quadrupled (Pridemore and Kim 2006:230). In addition, while rates of suicide in Moshkino have not increased, Russia currently has among one of the highest suicide rates in the world.

22 "Parent farms" are the reorganized collective or state farms still operating communally.
23 Based on the author's 2002 survey data.
24 Interview 5 August 2002.
25 Interview 21 July 2002.
26 Interview 21 July 2002.
27 It should be noted that Ekaterina certainly received some personal gains. She was able to travel to the U.S. and to other European countries to tour personal farms during the first wave of privatization and she had access to local goods and services due to her position. However, living as she did, under close scrutiny by her neighbours and colleagues, she did not appear to have risen too far above the others.
28 Interview 28 July 2002
29 *Rossiia v tsifrakh* (Moscow: Goskomstat, 2008), p. 445.
30 My research in 2002 clearly showed that those who had someone in the household employed outside of the village were faring much better economically.
31 Interview 21 July 2002.
32 *Rossiia v tsifrakh* (Moscow: Goskomstat, 2003), p. 207.
33 Interview 2 August 2002.
34 See Gray 2003 for a similar account of individual strategies.
35 Their absence from village gatherings could be attributed to the fact that so many villagers are still involved with the collective farm and gather not only as neighbours, but also as co-workers. In addition, in 2002 Tatiana began shifting her practices to buying processed foods wholesale and selling them in the village and throughout the local area. This moved her and her family even further away from local labour and social practices.
36 Interview 22 July 2002.
37 Interview 24 January 1998.
38 Interview 27 January 1998.
39 See for example Sharma's (2006) description of an Indian government initiative on women's empowerment and how the NGO model was enacted by individuals in a hybrid way that worked for local cultural institutions and government traditions of social welfare.
40 These entrepreneurs, taking advantage of a new reform allowing foreigners to own agricultural land, came from both in and outside of Russia and include hedge fund managers, Russian oligarchs and Swedish businessmen.

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