The articles of this dissertation examine the everyday life in post-Soviet Russia through the analysis of personal networks. The focus is laid on the socialist legacies in post-Soviet Russia: the mixtures and tensions between the patterns of thought and behaviour inherited from the socialist era and the requirements posed by the emerging new social order.

The comparative data on personal networks of secondary school teachers was gathered in spring 1993 in St. Petersburg and during the springs of 1993 and 1994 in Helsinki. Forty teachers in St. Petersburg and thirty-eight in Helsinki kept a diary of their important social relations for fifteen days. In addition, a theme interview was carried out and a who-knows-whom matrix of the personal network members was constructed for each respondent. In 1996 the same study was carried out in St. Petersburg with twenty teachers, six of whom had also participated in the 1993 study, and five psychologists.

The substantial results of this study show first, the continuing and distinct importance of personal networks in general and of informal exchange networks of goods, services and information in particular in post-Soviet teachers' daily life. Compared to Finns, the study reveals differences in the nature and functioning of the Russian teachers' networks and show the relative weakness of the Russian teacher's professional identity. The observed combination of their work-related networks and weakly crystallized professional identity are in line with the 'community orientation' of their organized activities. Russian teachers' solidarity seems to be rather directed towards actual members of one's own school community - pupils included - than in an abstract manner towards all practitioners of the same profession as is the case in Finland. This community orientation implies potential for a different kind of collective action and suggests that the Russian civil society may differ from Western ideals.

Methodologically, this study shows the potential and advantages of a comparative micro-approach. It argues for the use of an empirically defined notion of personal network in studies on post-socialism and suggests more emphasis to be placed on network formation.