

Social Networks in Post-Soviet Russia

**Continuity and Change in the Everyday Life of St.
Petersburg Teachers**

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Preface

The origins of this book lie in a comparative project 'Liens, réseaux, sociétés' (relations, networks, societies) originated and coordinated by Dr. Maurizio Gribaudo in 1992 at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, Paris. In this experimental project, which brought together researchers from several European countries, data on personal networks were collected during 1993 in various European cities, among them Paris, Madrid, Helsinki, Turin, Athens, Cagliari and Naples. The research project 'Social Networks and the Special Characteristics of Finnish Culture' led by professor Risto Alapuro at the University of Helsinki, was responsible for the collection of the Finnish network data.

At the time of launching the international project, the Soviet Union had already ceased to exist and the events in post-Soviet Russia were observed in Finland with astonishment and curiosity. It was only natural to decide to include St. Petersburg in our international sample of European cities. After three years, we were fortunate enough to be able to replicate the study in St. Petersburg under the aegis of the research project 'Cultural Inertia and Social Change in Russia'. The richness and variety of the Russian data gradually caught my attention and finally gave birth to this collection of articles.

This book consists of an introduction and five articles which have been published or accepted for publication in various international journals. For the purposes of the book references have been harmonized and some language revisions done. The content of the articles, however, remains unchanged.

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Risto Alapuro has not only been encouraging and inspiring as a supervisor of my thesis but is also the co-author of one of the articles in this collection. Anna-Maija Castrén has helped me throughout the study with her well-argued comments and insights. Maurizio Gribaudo has been a stimulating teacher and opponent in several seminars and meetings during these years. Timo Harmo, a friend and a co-author of another article in this collection, has aided me constantly with his methodological advice and expertise.

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The main part of the work was completed while I was working as a researcher in the projects 'Social networks and special characteristics of Finnish culture' and 'Social change and cultural inertia in Russia' financed by the Academy of Finland. In the final phase of the writing I received grants from the Alfred Kordelin Foundation, The Finnish Cultural Foundation and the University of Helsinki. Kikumora Publications at the Finnish Centre for Russian and East European Studies accepted my book for publication. The Department of Sociology at the University of Helsinki has furnished me with excellent working conditions. I thank all these institutions for their support.

Finally I thank my wife Anu, my daughter Ruut and my son Elja for their love and endurance.

1 Introduction

Socialist legacy in Russian daily life

The articles of this collection examine the nature of daily life in post-Soviet Russia through data on teachers' personal networks in St. Petersburg and Helsinki.¹ The focus is on the socialist legacy in post-Soviet Russia: the tension between the patterns of thought and behaviour inherited from the socialist era and the requirements posed by the emerging new social order. Rather than asking whether socialism still effects the state of affairs in post-socialism it is more fruitful to ask with Christo Stojanov 'What part of the state-socialist system has collapsed and what part of it is still alive under the new conditions' (Stojanov 1992, 218). Instead of macro-level analysis of post-socialist society or theoretical elaboration of transition theories,² however, this question is examined in this study through comparative, empirical analysis of Russian and Finnish individuals and their social interactions in everyday life. This view from below, it is argued, opens up new ways of looking at the current transformation.

The newness of the approach comes from the combination of three features which distinguish it from the bulk of existing sociological literature on post-socialism. First, the focus on ordinary people's daily lives distinguishes it not only from the research on political or economic elites and their reproduction but also from the studies focusing on macro-level events and institutions. Second, the empirically defined notion of personal network both emphasizes the level of social interaction and distinguishes this research from the studies in which the concept of network is used purely metaphorically without empirical reference. Third, this study offers a firm base for comparisons through an explicit juxtaposition of personal networks in post-Soviet Russia with those in Finland, a neighbouring capitalist country.

In short, the uniqueness of the study is due to *a comparative micro-level analysis of networks in post-Soviet everyday life*. By examining the lives of the individuals working at school, a public sector institution, the study also offers a comparative view of the role of the work place and working collective as described in post-socialist factory studies.

In the second section of this introduction I will sketch the background to my study in a brief theoretical discussion of the nature of socialism as 'distorted modernization' and of the importance of social networks in a socialist shortage economy. In the third section I discuss transition theories and the viability of socialist legacy in post-socialism. From the vast body of literature, I will pick up the analyses and case-studies which thematically relate to the articles in this collection by focusing on daily life interaction and emphasizing the importance of social networks.

In the fourth section I evaluate the value added to studies on post-socialist society by the comparative micro-level approach. In the fifth section I discuss the potential of the analysis of personal network formation in comparison with structural network analysis paradigm. The sixth section completes the introduction by pointing out the common thread running through the articles of this collection: the tension between Soviet legacy and new social order in Russia.

What was socialism?³

Socialism as distorted modernization

Most of the theoretical discussion on socialist and post-socialist systems is closely tied to the concept of modernization. According to Reissig (1994, 331), for example, despite all the criticism directed at modernization theories, they still lack rivals in explaining the transformation at the macro-social level.⁴

A particularly interesting attempt to examine the nature of socialism from the modernization perspective is Ilja Srubar's (1991) article on the demodernizing effects of 'actually existing' socialism (reale Sozialismus). Based on the comparative analysis of several Central and East-European countries, Srubar offers an illuminating account of the functioning of socialist society. Due to its comprehensive nature and its emphasis on social networks the article deserves to be quoted at more length here (see also the introduction of the first article in this collection).⁵

According to Srubar, the publicly controlled state and privately owned industry of modern western countries were inverted in real socialism through the communist party's 'privatization of the state' and nationalization of industry. This combination influenced daily-life social relations in many ways. Party power monopoly resulted in a non-transparent state apparatus, the decisions of which could not be predicted by citizens. The employees on every level of the socialist bureaucracy were quick to take advantage of their positions regulating most spheres of the daily life of the average citizen. A position in the bureaucracy represented capital which could be exchanged through personal networks. (Srubar 1991, 420)

In Srubar's view, the socialist shortage economy formed the basic condition for the 'privatization' of the state. In the shortage economy money was necessary but not sufficient for obtaining goods in short supply. In addition, one also needed information about how and where to find goods. This information was obtained through networks which were developed into an alternative distribution system and functioned as a social integration mechanism typical of socialist countries. An atmosphere of mutual benevolence and solidarity emerged out of these reciprocal relations disguising the economic base of the social tie. This solidarity aspect of the networks was, however, limited to those who had something to barter, such as access to socialist property. (Srubar 1991, 420–422)

Despite his emphasis on the shortage economy, Srubar cannot be accused of economic reductionism. It is rather the particular combination of both political and economic features of real socialism

which gave birth to the redistribution networks. These networks, claims Srubar, were tolerated by the party since they compensated the flaws of the shortage economy by diverting people's interests from politics to consumption. In addition, they functioned as a means of control since the party's tolerance of them could always be withdrawn.

Srubar also differs from the totalitarian theorists by showing how citizens' actions in real socialism were not only constrained by the all-encompassing state but also by the social configurations of everyday life. According to Srubar, the mechanism of social integration effectuated through redistribution networks had a profound influence on the individual's social identity. Citizens in real socialism tended to divide the world into the trustworthy 'us' – that is, one's personal network – and potentially hostile 'others'. Instead of general social solidarity, this integration mechanism produced fragmented solidarity within 'an archipelago of networks' and a world view where different moral norms were applied to one's own circle than to outsiders, for whom there was no moral way to success. A neighbour's wealth, for example, was attributed either to his political privileges or illegal activities in redistribution networks. (Srubar 1991, 424–425).

Srubar's basic question concerns the modern nature of real socialism. In his opinion many features of socialist countries – such as the increase in industrial production, the growth of white collar professions and a relative homogenization of income levels – entitles them to be described as modern, though lagging behind western development. However, in terms of normative models for action orientation real socialism lacked both the achievement motivation mediated through money as well as the calculability of individual actions created through positive law. These two basic blocks of social integration of the western modern countries were replaced in socialism by 'premodern' network integration mechanism. (Srubar 1991, 428).

For the purposes of this study it is, first, the tension between modern and pre-modern features of socialist society which makes Srubar's account interesting and important for the study of post-socialism. Second, Srubar describes in detail the relations between the

socialist economic and political system on the one hand and the redistribution networks as a mechanism of social integration on the other, hence creating a theoretical argument for the significance of personal networks in real socialist society.

From the point of view of empirical research on networks, however, Srubar's study raises questions. Drawing on several different studies, his very concept of the network remains metaphorical and in need of redefinition. It is also unclear whether Srubar's redistribution networks refer to *personal* networks anchored around focal individuals or to *categorical* networks (e.g. networks within an organization); what the boundaries of these networks are, etc. Moreover, the emphasis on the redistribution networks of goods and services directs attention to the coping strategies of socialist citizens which, understandably, can not fully account for the sociability either in socialist or post-socialist society.

Despite these critical comments, Srubar has produced a convincing theoretical account of the role of the social networks in real socialism. The first article of this collection originally started as an explicit effort to test his arguments in the post-socialist context. The results lend credence to Srubar's views, confirming that the 'real socialist' mechanisms described by him were in many ways still detectable in post-Soviet conditions.

The importance of personal networks in socialism

Christo Stojanov (1992) shares Srubar's view on socialism in several respects. First, both authors construct a single ideal typical model of socialism.⁶ The emphasis put on the political and economic factors in this model is plausible since the authors have found similar phenomena in real socialist countries very different in terms of their cultural, religious and historical backgrounds. Second, both start with the notion of modernization and end up foreseeing a different kind of post-socialist society from a mere blueprint of the west. Third, and for the purposes of my argument most importantly, both stress the role of

personal connections in the form of 'redistribution networks' (Srubar) or 'social capital' (Stojanov) in socialist society.⁷

Quite in line with these views, Russian sociologist Alena Ledeneva's book *Russia's Economy of Favours. Blat, Networking and Informal Exchange* (1998, see also Ledeneva 1997) – apart from its distinctive contribution – can be read as a detailed examination of the functioning of Srubar's 'redistribution networks' in both the socialist and post-socialist eras.⁸

Ledeneva defines *blat* 'as an exchange of "favours of access" to public resources in conditions of shortages and a state system of privileges' (Ledeneva 1998, 37).⁹ Through *blat* networks public resources were redirected to private uses and to the needs of personal consumption. These relations were often disguised by the rhetoric of friendship, such as 'helping out' a friend or an acquaintance. Typical of *blat* was the misrecognition of the reciprocity of exchanges: the same act of exchange was considered as *blat* when carried out by others but as altruistic help when carried out by the respondents themselves.

As with Srubar's redistribution networks, Ledeneva sees *blat* networks as both vital to the Soviet social order and subversive of it. They were needed in most aspects of daily life in the Soviet Union such as obtaining foodstuffs, train tickets, medical services, study places at university or specialized schools, jobs, cars, and apartments. Most of the restrictions and harshness of everyday life could in fact be avoided '*po blatu*' (by *blat*). Simultaneously, however, these relations corrupted the basis of Soviet morality by showing how some people were more equal than others.

Ledeneva distinguishes *blat* from apparently similar phenomena – e.g. bribery, clientelism and other corrupt practices – by being less morally doubtful and therefore more pervasive. Since *blat* was based on personal relations implying continuity of the relationship and was often disguised as friendly help, it could penetrate areas not accessible to bribery, such as an organisation the members of which resisted bribery for moral reasons. Rather than being exchange for the sake of exchange, it was a particular form of social relationship and mentality based upon certain ethical and cultural codes. According to Ledeneva,

blat was only conceivable in the context of socialist shortage economy and the state-governed system of distribution.

Beside Ledeneva, several other researchers have paid attention to the importance of personal networks in the Soviet era (see e.g. Shlapentokh 1989, Easter 1996, Sik 1988, Lomnitz 1988). The role of networks is also clearly present – explicitly or implicitly – in the wealth of studies of the 'second', 'shadow' or 'informal' economy of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe (e.g. Mars and Altman 1983, Sampson 1987).

The particular significance of personal networks in socialist societies seems to be largely accepted. But what happened to these networks with the collapse of communism? Are they still viable in post-socialist society? This question will be dealt with in the next section, preceded by a brief theoretical discussion on the nature of ongoing changes.

What comes next?

Transition of transformation?

The post-socialist upheaval, several authors argue, is a special case which renders analogies of post-socialist development with transition to democracy in Latin America, Southern Europe or elsewhere inappropriate. First, as noted by Stojanov (1992), the post-socialist upheaval is unique in its secondary nature: due to its history of socialist revolution. Second, in comparison with the transitions in Latin America or Southern Europe, for example, the emergence of post-socialist system is a simultaneous double transformation of economic and political spheres vis-à-vis 'mere' regime changes.¹⁰ Third, the ideological nature of the post-socialist modernization project has a distinct effect on its implementation. Like socialist modernization, this project consists of abolishing the old system and introducing a new one *ex nihilo*, this time capitalism (Stojanov 1992).

Critical of the teleological and unilinear connotations of transition to democracy model, Michael Burawoy notes that there are in fact not only one but several possible *capitalisms* towards which post-Soviet Russia may be heading and suggests the emergence of a 'merchant capitalism' instead of modern capitalism in Russia (Burawoy 1995, 83). Rather than investing in production, this merchant capitalism tries to cream the milk off by maximizing its profits through trade. In looking for models for post-socialist development, Burawoy argues, it might be more fruitful to look to the Japanese model of the state-guided creation of capitalism or the Chinese 'third way', than at shock therapists' text-book capitalism.¹¹

Summarizing the theories of transition, Burawoy and Verdery (1999) divide them into four classes by cross-tabulating them by the path advocated (revolution vs. evolution) and their point of orientation (past or future). The historians and social scientists, they argue, tend to remain focused on the past. Theorists of the collapse of an all-encompassing totalitarian state consider change in total terms, while others stress the evolutionary legacies of the socialist period under such names as path dependency or cultural persistence. The economists, on the other hand, have their eye on the future and the battle is fought between shock therapists and evolutionary economists. While the former want to destroy all the remnants of the Soviet period, the latter stress the importance of a stable institutional environment for the developing markets.

According to these authors, the transition should not be regarded solely in terms of the past or the future. The shift to a market economy is not a linear path (whether evolutionary or revolutionary) but includes simultaneous regressive and progressive dynamics:

Policies emanate from the center and encounter resistance, which reverberates back as unintended consequences demanding correction. Policy and reaction enter into a continual interaction that makes up the process of the transition. This process is therefore not a unilinear one of moving from one stage to the next, as projected in neoliberal plans, but a

combined and uneven one having multiple trajectories.
(Burawoy and Verdery, 1999, 14)

The authors prefer the term transformation to transition and require the comparisons between post-communist and other countries to be explicit. Juxtaposing post-socialist development with ideal-typical text-book capitalism sees transition societies only in terms of deficits and misses their specificity and distinctive dynamics. (Burawoy and Verdery 1999, 15)

The viability of the socialist legacy in post-socialism

Since Srubar's 1991 view presented above focuses on the period of real socialism, the description of the socialist system forms the main part of his analysis. However, in passing he also notes the continuity in the individual's normative action orientations which survive the collapse of socialism.¹² In 1991, Srubar foresaw two future tendencies. On the one hand, with the introduction of market mechanism and the rule of law the functions of redistribution networks may diminish, but on the other, the turmoil may push people more towards their existing networks with their accustomed action orientations, particularly the division of the social world in the trusted 'us' and 'others'. The increase in the private economy may thus occur simultaneously with the conservation of this 'premodern' division of morality. In his later continuation on the same theme Srubar (1994) is even more explicit about the continuing influence of these normative action orientations:

This dual morality of networks and its inbuilt mechanism of social inclusion and exclusion have continued to function after the revolution as the preferred patterns of action and communication. Their effects which, on the one hand, are exclusive, but on the other engender solidarity, are now being amplified by the redistribution opportunities inherent in the new political and economic orders. (Srubar 1994, 209)

While accepting Srubar's analysis of real socialism, Christo Stojanov goes on to analyse the post-socialist transformation in terms of the tension between continuity and discontinuity in its developmental logic. For Stojanov, the continuing importance of the socialist era is not solely 'a matter of inherited structural patterns and behavioral patterns [- - -] We are even more interested in the conditions imbuing these patterns of societal integration with vitality' (Stojanov 1992, 219). He considers that the 'socialist' patterns of behavior between actors not only derive their viability from the 'bottlenecks of system integration' but also give birth to new bottlenecks and self-reproducing cycles which may turn post-socialist transformation 'into an imitation of (re-)modernization' (Stojanov 1992, 225). As an example of these systemic bottlenecks Stojanov offers the contradiction between a need for the stabilization of the economic basis of the emerging democracy on the one hand, and the dependence of the development of the market economy upon state regulations on the other.

In a similar fashion, Michael Burawoy and Katherine Verdery (1999) refuse to consider the shortcomings of the transition as merely socialist or cultural legacies. These legacies, they claim, may seem familiar but have new causes. The actions based on symbols and words familiar from the socialist era may be filled with new senses and used to new ends. In this sense, the post-socialist daily practices, both innovation and reversion, can be seen as much as responses to uncertainties of the unpredictable environment as socialist inheritance or culture.

In sum, the importance of personal connections in post-socialist transformation can be claimed to be dependent on the systemic 'bottlenecks', (Stojanov 1992) or 'dilemmas of simultaneity' (Offe 1996).¹³ It derives its power not only as legacies of the past (if this were the case, they would probably have disappeared) but because they are viable in a situation where the rules of the game are either ambiguous or different from those of modern western society.

On the empirical level Ledeneva's (1997, 1998) observations on the changing *blat* networks in the post-Soviet era illustrate the dualistic

tendency foreseen by Srubar. Ledeneva concludes that while *blat* relations have generally diminished in importance, they have also penetrated new sectors such as business life where exchange of information is essential to success. The decreasing importance of these relations is due to the privatisation and availability of goods and services in the markets. When everything can be freely bought, there is less room for *blat*, which was often oriented towards consumer needs. Similarly, with the privatization of state property, there are less opportunities to grant friends or acquaintances a privileged access to public resources. With the calculating nature of capitalism, the costs of *blat* favours have now become clear to both partners. Consequently, the post-Soviet condition has brought about a rationalization of social relationships separating, for instance, friendship relations from business and narrowing the *blat* circles.

On the other hand, in the emerging private sector *blat* networks are needed to ensure trust and reduce the risks inherent in business transactions. They are also indispensable in post-Soviet business life when dealing with authorities and using intermediaries for introduction and recommendation. Similarly, they are used both in the spheres of state education and in unprivatized state industry where the old ways of thinking and behaving remain important.

In Ledeneva's view (1997) the continuing existence of *blat* has a double relation to the post-socialist economy. While *blat* networks may hinder the generalizing of the money economy due to their non-monetary nature, they may also offer an alternative, functional principle for the emerging new economic structures:

It is thus possible that what from one point of view looks like a wholly archaic set of practices might actually be directly relevant to a market-oriented post-socialist economy. (Ledeneva 1997, 170)

Other empirical studies claiming credence for the continuing importance of networks of informal connections between both individuals and enterprises in post-socialism abound (see Jyrkinen-Pakkasvirta and Poretskina 1994, Stark 1996, Piirainen 1997, Rivkin-

Fish 1996, 1997, Dinello 1998, Rose 1998, Sik and Wellman 1999, Simpura et al. 1999). Endre Sik and Barry Wellman (1999), for instance, not only consider the importance of 'network capital' (connections with people and organizations) greater in socialism than in capitalism but also greater in post-socialism than in socialism. Based on Sik's case studies from Hungary they suggest that network capital offers post-communist citizens both means of coping (e.g. household management of crises and uncertainties) as well as 'grabbing' (in terms of entrepreneurs' seizing the new opportunities):

This is not only because of the inertia of former practices, but because people rationally rely on their already existing behavioral patterns, skills, and heavy investment in network capital. Under postcommunism, both the culture of networking developed during the communist period and investments in network capital are assets that are proving effective for coping with economic troubles and exploiting available opportunities. (Sik and Wellman, 1999, 250)

There seems to be a kind of consensus, then, on the particular importance of social networks in *both* the socialist *and* post-socialist eras. Which methods are best able to grasp the specificity of these networks in present-day post-socialist society? In order to deal with this problem, we need to consider the pros and cons of, first, the comparative micro approach to social research and second, of different social network analysis approaches .

The potential of comparative micro-level research in studies of post-socialism

In this section I offer an overview of the comparative micro-level approach by sketching out first the basic features of the microanalytical perspective and second, describing the possibilities for comparison in micro research. I illustrate the usefulness of the approach in post-Soviet studies with reference to selected empirical studies and to the articles of this collection.

Micro perspective

According to Alapuro (1995) 'micro research' is not a coherent perspective but rather a group of approaches which are sensitive to the observations of individuals and their daily life. The most important common denominator for micro research is its opposition to the study of macro structures. Though sharing some elements with micro sociology, the debate on micro research is closely related and has mostly taken place among micro historians, such as Giovanni Levi (1991) and Maurizio Gribaudi (1987, 1995, 1996, for an overview, see *Jeux d'échelles. La micro-analyse à l'expérience*, 1996).

Microanalysis constructs the argument 'from below' by commencing research with intensive, small-scale study and works its way up towards more general and complex views of society. The explanations are located in the specific historical contexts and demonstrated through narration. Though mostly historical and qualitative by nature, micro research neither completely overlaps with so-called qualitative studies nor rejects the formal methods in social research.¹⁴

The thrust of the micro approach lies in the following two aspects (see Alapuro 1995, Gribaudi 1996). First, by altering the scale of observation it can reveal events, processes and phenomena to which macro-level research is either totally blind or which it tends to conceal in the search for typical cases and generalizations.¹⁵ Second,

microanalysis may assist in deconstruction of the concepts used unproblematically in macrosociological research (see the next section on comparison for a more detailed account).

As noted by Timo Piirainen (1997, 39), emphasis on actors and a qualitative or ethnographic approach is a natural choice for students of post-socialism while the whole social system is still in the phase of formation. It is the anthropologists or ethnographically oriented sociologists who in deed seem to have produced the most interesting recent work on post-socialism, as evident from the studies cited above. Among them, Michael Burawoy and Katherine Verdery started field research in Eastern Europe under socialism and currently invite followers to have an 'ethnographic eye' on the everyday life of post-socialism¹⁶

In this vein Ledeneva's study of *blat* and my study of informal exchange practices (first article in this collection) may be read as criticism of the statistical or economic macro studies on 'second' or 'shadow' economies which do not grasp the essence of the exchange networks based on the logic of personal relations.¹⁷ The existence and role of these networks may only be revealed by a close-up study of their inner logic and function.

Though avoiding some shortcomings of the traditional macro-research, the micro perspective has to face other problems, such as the question of generalizability. How can a limited micro-study hope to refer beyond its own study context?¹⁸ Anthropologists and qualitative researchers have offered different solutions, among them triangulation and Geertzian thick description.¹⁹

Michael Burawoy (1991, 1998) explicitly treats this problem in his description of 'extended case method', the goal of which is to reconstruct and modify existing theories using the technique of participant observation. This technique, claims Burawoy, has been criticized both for its inability to generalize and its micro nature. For generalization, it is argued, one needs a study based on a statistical sample whereas participant observation is deemed to remain within its own limited context.²⁰ The extended case method, however, proceeds by criticism. Thus, even a micro-level study can reliably criticize

totalizing modes of thought, such as the triumphal advance of the market economy in Russia.

Comparative microanalysis

But how can microanalysis be applied to comparisons? What value is added to the wealth of existing macrolevel comparative studies by 'a view from below'?

In the 1990s traditional comparative macrosociology based on the use of Mill's canons in social sciences has been subjected to sharp attacks from distinguished researchers. According to Charles Tilly (1997, see also Allardt 1999), Mill himself considered his methods applicable only to experimental purposes. In Mill's opinion, the multiple causes and the interwoven effects made a mockery of the application of his methods to the analysis of nations and countries. The proponents of such research 'should be sent back to learn the elements of some one of the more easy physical sciences':

If so little can be done by the experimental method to determine the conditions of an effect of many combined causes, in the case of medical science; still less is this method applicable to a class of phenomena more complicated than even those of physiology, the phenomena of politics and history. (Mill 1887; 324, cited in Tilly 1997, 44)

In Tilly's view, the 'Big Case Comparison' based on these canons is fading and the methodological position of 'relational realism' focusing on transactions, interactions and social ties as the basis of analysis is gaining strength in comparative social science.

The comparative microanalytical approach used in this study focuses on the level of daily life social interactions, instead of macrofeatures based on pre-defined categories (such as class, for example) of Russia and Finland. One of the advantages of this perspective is a critical look at the traditional categories of comparative research. It is, for instance, common practice to use occupation, sex, class or education as fixed categories in comparative

analyses. At first glance it seems indeed reasonable to compare Finnish and Russian teachers, for example, by their places in the status hierarchy or class structure of their respective countries. A closer look at the daily life interactions reveals, nevertheless, how the same occupation may function very differently in Russia and Finland in terms of identity construction or precondition for collective action, for example (see the second and third articles in this collection).

Contrary to the macro view on occupations, for example, the comparisons attempted in the articles of this collection between Russian and Finnish teachers are not based on the pre-established status structure, but try to find out what it actually *means* to be a teacher in Russia and Finland. Therefore a macro-level study which takes a common occupation as an unquestioned basis of comparison may commit the error of comparing the incomparable.

Moreover, the comparisons in this collection are not based merely on the observed network structures which in fact remain secondary to the depiction of the *process* of network formation and its embeddedness in daily interaction. The comparisons in this collection do not strictly speaking compare either Russia with Finland, St. Petersburg with Helsinki, or even the networks of the respondents in the two cities (even if all these expressions are used as a shorthand in the individual articles). In the case of informal exchanges, for example (see the first article in this collection), this means showing first how the informal exchanges were rooted in the life history and daily practices of the Russian respondents in a way not found in Finnish data and, second, how the principles of the function of these exchange relations differed from the Finnish ones. Another example is the depiction of the formation of work-centred networks of Russian respondents arising from a complex process of structural, cultural and interactional factors (see the second article in this collection).

The second of the specific advantages of microlevel comparison of personal networks is that it offers a way around the problem of scale. Despite the enormous structural differences between both the Russian and Finnish social systems as well as between the two cities, a comparison at the interactional level may result in deeper

understanding of the transformation process than a juxtaposition of, say, existing or emerging institutional macro structures.

This study focuses on Russian networks. Finnish data is for the most part used as contrastive comparative material and the case-studies are taken from the post-Soviet context. This is partly dictated by the economy of space, particularly as the description of Finnish data would often be negative repetition of the particular patterns, such as *blat*, found in Russian context. However, to fully exploit the potential of the micro approach, future research should also include a more detailed depiction of both poles of comparison.

Analysis of personal network formation

So far I have tried to convince the reader of the particular importance of social networks in both socialist and post-socialist societies and of the advantages of the comparative micro approach as against to macro-level analysis. The purpose of this section is, first, to argue for the use of the notion of *personal* network (consisting of focal individuals and the interconnections between their network members) vis-à-vis the analysis of *categorical* networks (e.g. collegial networks within organizations) in the studies of post-socialism. This section, unlike the previous ones, is therefore closely tied to the discussion on network analysis methodology. Second, though the articles of this collection employ an empirically observable notion of personal network, this study differs from the mostly North American-based structural network analysis paradigm as described by Scott (1991), Berkowitz (1988), Berkowitz and Wellman (1988), Wellman (1988). In this section I try to locate the main differences between the structural paradigm and the approach adopted in the articles of this collection, based mainly on texts by Maurizio Gribaudo (1998,²¹ Michael Eve (1998) and Risto Alapuro (1997).²²

In the structural network analysis paradigm, a social network is presented as a system consisting of nodes and links, and it is the

structural features of this system which are emphasized in the analysis. The nodes may represent individual persons, firms, states or any other meaningful social units. Similarly, the links connecting the nodes may represent any social relation such as friendship, kinship, transfer of goods or belonging to the same board of directors of a firm. According to Wasserman and Faust (1994, 4–7), this 'relational' analysis differs from standard social science research methods by focusing on an entity consisting of a collection of units and their interrelations, instead of attributes of autonomous individual units. In the actual analysis these interrelations among actors are primary to the attributes of actors.

In the structural network analysis paradigm the notion of 'structure' thus refers to the *network* structure. Sophisticated mathematical tools have been developed in order to describe the nature of this structure. Taking the relation, not the category of people as a point of departure, it is argued, network analysis may offer fresh insights into the study of social structure:

Reversing the traditional logic of inquiry in sociology, structural analysts argue that social categories (e.g., classes, races) and bounded groups are best discovered and analysed by examining relations between social actors. Rather than beginning with an a priori classification of the observable world into a discrete set of categories, they begin with a set of relations, from which they derive maps and typologies of social structures. (Berkowitz and Wellman 1988, 3)

The social network may be considered either in terms of the categorical network studied within one organization, for example, or a personal ('ego-centred') network anchored on a particular focal individual. This focal individual ('ego') may be considered as the core of a small social universe around which his or her network members ('alters') are located. It was particularly this notion of personal network which was employed in the studies by the Manchester school anthropologists who, according both to Wellman (1988) and Scott

(1991), played an important role in the development of the social network analysis.

In his critical reading of John Scott's (1991) introduction to structural network analysis Maurizio Gribaudo (1998) suggests a revival of the Manchester school tradition in network studies. While Scott sees the Manchester school's emphasis on ego-centred networks as a step on the way to a 'crucial breakthrough' to more developed methods of network analysis, Gribaudo considers the structural analysts' attention to the graphic representations and statistical indicators to have happened at the expense of reflecting on the nature of networks and social ties.

In opposition to Scott, Gribaudo considers the analysis of ego-centred networks as a methodologically conscious and well-founded solution. Taking personal networks as a point of departure enables us to examine the totality of respondents' social relations instead of, say, structurally analysing the collegial relations within an organization. For instance, an analysis focusing on the collegial ties of Russian teachers and omitting their kin, neighbourhood or informal exchange relations would have neglected important aspects of the teaching occupation in St. Petersburg (see the second article of this collection). It is only in relation to all other social ties that these collegial relations may have been interpreted.

Moreover, emphasizing the systemic structures may draw attention away from the *processes of network formation* (cf. the previous section on micro comparisons):

In the generative approach, a [network] matrix does not offer the key to the phenomena because it is only a fleeting configuration of changing elements. The position of each of its elements and their relative distances may only be explained by starting from the mechanisms which have produced them.
(Gribaudo 1998, 27)

Instead of synchronic studies of a fluid and changing surface of network structure the analysis should be directed towards those social processes which produce the observed, variable forms (Barth 1981).

This kind of observation may open a new way of looking at the construction of social space.

Michael Eve (1998) continues the criticism of the structural analysis tradition by representing the Manchester school not as one step in the linear evolution towards the emergence of structural analysis but as an alternative network analysis tradition. Like Gribaudo, Eve refers particularly to Mitchell's (1969) notes on the importance of networks rooted in individuals and the 'multiplexity' of the networks.²³

Unlike structural network analysts, Eve claims, Mitchell and his associates were not explicitly rejecting references to norms but were interested in studying 'the way in which people may relate to each other in terms of several normative frameworks at one and the same time and how a person's behaviour might in part be understood in the light of the pattern of coincidence of these frameworks or "contents"' (Mitchell 1969, 49). This kind of multiplexity in the sense of belonging to two possibly conflicting orders is in Eve's opinion far removed from structural analysts studying multiplexity in a single ambience (being friends with one's colleague, for example).

If the emphasis on multiplexity was misunderstood by the structural school, the insistence on the networks rooted in individuals seems, in Eve's opinion, to have been simply forgotten, perhaps due to confusion between networks rooted in individuals and the first-order stars of isolate individuals. It was the former which Mitchell had in mind:

[networks] had to be units which branched out from one individual to another – the kind of networks formed in the course of an individual's career (starting in the family, accumulating connections gradually through the neighbourhood, school, various jobs, having access to others through friends, through friends of relatives, etc.). It was only this kind of set of relations which branched out across groups and categories; [- - -], a set of relations within any one sphere (e.g., kinship, religion) or within one group was not the sort of sociological object which the Manchester researchers were

interested in – they believed these were adequately covered by conventional methods of 'institutional analysis'. (Eve 1998)

Eve goes on to criticize data collection by the mainstream analysts from only one ambience or institutional context (such as interlocking directorships) while neglecting the temporal or biographical dimension of, say, the common past of the directors (college friendships, family ties, etc.). In short, Eve stresses the Manchester school researchers' emphasis on 'collecting data outside institutional units, attention to the origin of ties and last, the need to pay attention to the indirect ties which may function behind what at first glance seem to be dyadic ties'.

Risto Alapuro (1997) continues this critique in his treatment of network studies on joint action. According to Alapuro, these studies consider network structure as an intermediate level which may ultimately be derived from or determined by larger, unquestioned structures or categories such as social class. Following Bourdieu, an alternative perspective requires seeing these categories as results of the classification struggle rather than as given:

This critique [of structural network analysis of collective action] emphasizes that the networks are the results of struggle, not the consequences of structural location. Research on social movements should thus pay attention also or primarily to the formation and development of networks. At the same time the cultural processes concerning identity and classification of the social world are analysed more seriously than in structural network analysis. In fact, they become the point of departure of the analysis. (Alapuro 1997, 3)

According to Alapuro, it is important in this kind of analysis that it be prospective, not retrospective. It avoids the fallacy of seeing the actual events as the only possible outcome of what had happened. Instead, following Charles Tilly (1978), the emergence of collective action may be considered as continual 'matching' of actors' self-identities as religious or revolutionaries, for example, with the existing actual social ties between them.

An important corollary of this kind of processual and prospective view of social movements is that the collective identities of structurally similar groups may differ and, even if they do not, they may or may not be transformed into joint action. Instead of seeing the networks only as channels for organizing, the processual analysis should reveal general preconditions for joint action which may either enable or hinder collective organization.

To summarize, the importance of my use of the notion of *personal* networks in post-socialist studies derives from several factors. First, the meaning of the St. Petersburg teachers' collegial relations, for example, can only be understood in the context of all other social ties. Second, analysing personal networks offers an adequate tool both for examining the 'multiplex' meshing of different spheres of life – arguably more important in Russia than in more 'sectorized' modern western society – and for studying the actors' balance between accustomed ways of behaving ('socialist legacies') and the requirements of the new social order. Moreover, they allow for combining the analysis of existing network *structures* with social *processes* through an analysis of the life histories and career trajectories of the individuals in question. A future study of interlocking directorates in Russia would, for example, greatly benefit from the life-historical analysis of the directors' former membership of Komsomol or Party organizations or their use of kin and friendship relations in order to gain their current position. (cf. Eve 1998)

Conclusions: Continuity and change in post-Soviet Russia

Summary of the articles: Soviet legacies or new ways of adaptation? ²⁴

The tension between the patterns of thought and behaviour inherited from the socialist era and the requirements of the new social order is the common thread running through this collection of articles. It is from this perspective that the main findings of the articles are summarized in this section. In what forms does the past influence the post-Soviet present as seen through the perspective of daily life interaction?

The first article in this collection ('Informal Exchange Relations in Post-Soviet Russia: A Comparative Perspective') shows how in 1993 the emerging market economy had not dissolved Russian teachers informal exchange networks. On the contrary, from the very first reading of the 1993 St. Petersburg data it was the frequency and scale of these exchanges which caught the eye. These exchanges were not only necessary for these teachers' daily coping but also provided them with access to public resources in order to gain personal benefits.

The article reveals obvious differences in the informal exchange practices of Russian and Finnish respondents. The Russian teachers not only exchanged more favours, goods and important information with their colleagues but the substance of these exchanges was different and more diverse than in Helsinki: St. Petersburg respondents frequently used their relatives, friends, colleagues or acquaintances in order to informally obtain products or various services (e.g. medical care). Half of them also reported *blat* exchanges. The exchanges in St. Petersburg were more often with colleagues or other work-mediated relations such as pupils and their parents, emphasizing the importance of the post-socialist workplace. In St. Petersburg the informal exchange relations also involved more examples of informal exchange

mediated by a third person, whereas in Helsinki the relations were more dyadic. *Mediation* together with *personalization* (rendering an abstract doctor-patient or parent-teacher -relation as a more multiplex social tie) were interactional strategies employed by Russian teachers in order to compensate their lack of confidence in institutions and in the quality of public services, for example.

This 'post-Soviet networking' continued the Soviet-era patterns of behaviour investing them, however, with new functions and meanings. Unlike during the Soviet era, in 1993 the main problem in St. Petersburg was not the overall lack of products since most of the goods needed could be found in shops.²⁵ The problem for the generally badly-paid teachers was more where to get products cheaper, for example. Collegial networks were also used as 'training' in capitalism: some of the teachers in a St. Petersburg school reported negotiations of putting their money together in an investment fund – finally obviously losing their capital.

Having already noted the importance of the work-mediated relations to informal exchanges in St. Petersburg, I made a further comparison between all Russian and Finnish network members (see the second article in this collection: 'The Social Meaning of Work: Aspects of the Teaching Profession in Post-Soviet Russia'). The findings showed that the significance of work-related ties was not limited to informal exchange relations. These ties were in general clearly more dominant in Russian networks in comparison with their Finnish counterparts. This observation seemed to be in contradiction to the stereotypical picture of the Russians as kin- and family centred people (vis-à-vis the work-centred Finns) and led to a closer comparative analysis of the role of work-mediated relations in St. Petersburg and Helsinki.²⁶

This analysis showed how the St. Petersburg teachers differed from their colleagues in Helsinki in the ways and motives for choosing the occupation and work place, the complexity of their careers, the spatial location of their networks as well as greater mingling of work and other spheres of life.

The Russian respondents' decisions both about choice of occupation and of the school, for example, were affected by their need of circumventing Soviet-era structural constraints including housing shortage or internal migration limitations. Fewer of the Russian respondents had originally had teacher training and several of them had transferred from other professions, while in Helsinki the way from teacher training to the occupation was more direct and self-evident. The Russian teachers, moreover, taught subjects not found in Finnish schools and combined subjects in a way not found in Helsinki (such as handicraft and mathematics). In addition, the substantial majority of Russian teachers lived in the same city district (in Helsinki there was no such connection), some in the vicinity of their school, and as a rule their own children also attended the same school.

This distinctly localized, *multiplex* form of sociability revolving around the school led to a situation where the pupils of St. Petersburg teachers were not only the classmates of the teachers' own children, but also the children of teachers' colleagues, often living in the neighborhood and sometimes involved as middlemen in informal exchanges between the teachers and parents. In case of our St. Petersburg respondents therefore, unlike in Helsinki, it was difficult to speak about a separate professional sphere of life. The depiction of the occupation of Russian teachers necessarily presupposed not only the description of their neighborhood and kin relations but also of their personal life histories. Here, again, the influence of the Soviet past was obvious.

This analysis revealed how the prevalence of work-mediated relations in the St. Petersburg networks paradoxically testified to the relative *weakness* of the teaching occupation in post-Soviet Russia. The findings indicate that work is indeed more important for the St. Petersburg teachers than for their Finnish counterparts but rather as a social milieu providing occasions for socializing, child care and access to informal resources mediated through the work-place. Among other things, this suggests that the teaching occupation in Russia may not function as a base for collective identity in the same way as in highly professionalized Finnish society.

The findings of the two previous articles led to a further inquiry into the relation between social networks, professional identity and the potential for organized collective action (see the third article in this collection: 'Networks, identity and (in)action: A comparison between Russian and Finnish teachers' written with Risto Alapuro).

In studying Russian teachers' participation in associations and organizations traditionally considered as the essence of civil society, conspicuous differences emerged. Unlike Russians, the majority of the Finns were engaged in the activities of formal associations, whereas the bulk of diary notes recorded by Russian respondents referred to their *past* in the Soviet era organizations, such as the Young Pioneer League, Komsomol, etc. Trade union activities which were one of the most common types of joint action mentioned in Finnish diaries, were reported in Russian diaries almost exclusively in relation to the Soviet-style social provisioning, such as organized holiday trips arranged through the unions.

To avoid the fallacy of looking at Russian civil society only in (western) terms of what it is *not*, an attempt was made to depict those elements of Russian teachers' cooperation or challenge which the traditional view of associations ignores. Closer analysis of the St. Petersburg data revealed distinct organized activities linked to recurrent events or celebrations in the school context. These activities were based on the Russian school as a community where solidarity was felt with the actual people known through school, pupils included. Following Charles Tilly's (1978) conceptualization, the observed combination of work-related 'multiplex' *networks* in St. Petersburg (linking different kinds of actors and activities through the school milieu) and the weakly crystallized professional *identity* of Russian teachers were in accordance with the nature of these activities. In Helsinki, however, the people encountered at work were mostly colleagues and the interaction was grounded on occupation-related issues and clear professional identity – a combination in line with the observed organized pressure group activity based on professional interests and a sense of solidarity with the whole profession.

This kind of community orientation in the Russian teachers' activities may be considered an active way of coping in present-day Russia where the ineffectiveness of the state forces people to turn to their networks outside public politics. In the process of democratization, this orientation may, however, result in different forms of collective organization and civil society than those based on standard Western concepts.

Since our data comprised the daily diaries and interviews collected by six St. Petersburg teachers both in 1993 and 1996, an explicit effort at a longitudinal comparison was carried out for the fourth article of this collection ('Continuity and Change in Social Networks of St. Petersburg Teachers, 1993–1996'). In the juxtaposition of the structural aspects of networks (such as size and composition) of six St. Petersburg teachers studied in 1993 and 1996 no abrupt and systematic changes were found. Turning attention from the structural features to the processes of network change however, produced interesting results.

The main part of the fourth article consists of in-depth case analyses of two middle-aged female Russian teachers, both of whom are building their lives on the use of their personal networks in post-Soviet conditions. First I describe how the network of a female rank-and-file Russian teacher who started a part-time job at a travel agency in 1993, is taken over by business-related social ties by 1996. These ties are, however, based on the cultural and social capital accumulated through the Soviet era. This teacher and her fellow workers had been trained as guides in a state-owned travel agency during the Soviet era. According to her, this holds true for most of the newly emerged private St. Petersburg travel agencies, involving a considerable business turnover. A detailed analysis of her personal network showed how it gradually incorporated more and more business-related people and was used in exchanges of business-related information. Nevertheless, though she could manage financially without her job at school, she was reluctant to leave because of the 'more moral' nature of the teacher occupation compared to business life.

Contrasting case is the social life of an Ukrainian-born school principal who may still get by with her traditional 'Soviet-style' networking in 1996, largely because of her formal position at school. This principal, probably a former party member, has developed and maintains a large network of connections which may be turned to for help in case of difficulties. Her position as school principal not only connects her to her pupils' parents from various occupations but also for instance to university deans, which in her opinion may in the future turn out to be useful for her arranging her child's education. Her modest salary is compensated by the opportunity to make long-distance calls for free through an acquaintance, to arrange medical care either through work-related ties or her sister's acquaintances, and so on.

These two individual cases offer insights into the question of socialist legacy. The first teacher's vacillation between new but risky economic structures and the less interesting but more secure and 'moral' school milieu suggest a normative action orientation which hinders her entry to the new economic structures. Simultaneously the examination of her personal network clearly shows how these very structures are based on the Soviet-era social and cultural capital which has acquired new functions or has been put to new uses. The principal, on the other hand, continues her Soviet-style networking, based on her formal position and the nexus of school-related social ties, quite as before. It is even possible to argue that the collapse of the centralized Soviet educational system might have *increased* her positional power since the school may now decide its curriculum more freely, in terms of payable courses, for example.

Main findings of the study and suggestions for further research

The substantial results of this study show, first, the continuing and distinct importance of personal networks in general and of informal exchange networks in particular in the daily lives of post-Soviet teachers. Second, the study reveals differences in the nature and function of the Russian teachers' networks which can be characterized as mediated (since middlemen are used to create trust in mutual exchanges), personalized (since abstract and therefore replaceable social relations are rendered as more personal ones) and multiplex (since the same social tie may include collegial and exchange relationships, for example).

Third, the findings show the relative weakness of the Russian teachers' professional identity. The distinct combination of their work-related networks and weakly crystallized professional identity are in line with the observed community orientation of their organized activities. St. Petersburg 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 in Finland. This community orientation implies potential for a different kind of collective action and suggests that the emerging Russian civil society and democracy may well differ from western models.

All these distinctive features clearly bear the mark of Soviet era patterns of thought and behaviour. They are, however, viable not only because of the inertia of normative value orientation but as active adaptation. They are functional in an era of contradictory, changing or ambiguous norms, systemic tensions and lack of confidence in post-Soviet public institutions.

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 (vis-à-vis metaphorical or structural use of the network concept) and suggests more emphasis be placed on the network formation. In the

fifth article of this collection ('Toward Computer-Assisted Qualitative Network Analysis' written with Timo Harmo) a technical innovation and general outlines for qualitative analysis of personal networks are presented.

The articles also suggest directions for future research. One direction is network research focusing on the role of informal exchange patterns in post-Soviet Russia both in terms of barter relations between enterprises as well as between individual persons. In addition, our 1996 St. Petersburg data also suggests study of the informal exchanges between public sector institutions. One of the Russian schools we studied, for example, had negotiated a contact with a St. Petersburg military hospital including free medical care for the school teachers in exchange for the study place to the children of the hospital staff at the school. This kind of public sector strategy requires more detailed future research.

The second promising area of further research is the role of the post-socialist work-place and labour collective. An explicit comparison of the school-related patterns emerging from the articles of this collection with those carried out in other work-places in Russia and former socialist countries might shed light on the formation of the new post-socialist social order.

Notes

¹ The data was collected through the daily diaries Russian and Finnish secondary school teachers kept on their social relations during a two-week study period in 1993–94. The study was replicated in St. Petersburg in 1996 (see appendix for details).

² For recent summaries of the sociological studies of transformation, see Poznański (1998), Burawoy and Verdery (1999), Róna-Tas (1998), Reissig (1994).

³ The title of this section as well as section three paraphrase the title of the book *What was socialism and what comes next?* by Katherine Verdery (1996).

⁴ For a summary of this criticism, see Harrison (1988) and Sztompka (1993).

⁵ In this section I follow closely Srubar's 1991 text (see also Srubar 1994).

⁶ See also Verdery 1996. Essentially, Verdery's analysis supports Srubar's view by offering a single ideal typical model for the socialist countries and deriving the nature of the socialist system from the combination of the shortage economy and party power monopoly.

⁷ On social capital and Russia, see Rose 1998; see also Róna-Tas (1998, 115). The widely used notion of social capital in relation to studies on post-communism is, however, plagued by its vagueness. Like the concept of network, social capital is mostly used metaphorically without empirical operationalization and may denote either 'connections' in general (see Dinello 1998), 'social relations', or 'social networks'.

⁸ Ledeneva's work is based on 56 theme interviews carried out in Russia 1994–1995. Understandably, during the socialist era, empirical field studies on personal connections were difficult to conduct. The most illuminating

accounts are based on the research on emigrants or carried out by emigrants such as Vladimir Shlapentokh (1989).

⁹ Like many other Soviet terms, *blat* is difficult to translate. Even though the closest English expressions, such as 'pulling strings' or 'using connections' refer to similar mechanisms of arranging things informally through social relations, they neither capture the extent nor the pervasiveness of these practices during the Soviet era. For a comparative view see Lomnitz (1988) and for similar practices in China, see Yang (1989).

¹⁰ See e.g. Burawoy (1995, 79). Bunce (1993) and Offe (1996) add to the list a third transformation related to nation-building. Both national identities and national boundaries are being redrawn and reconstructed in post-socialism.

¹¹ Similarly, in his theory of 'recombinant property forms' in Hungary David Stark (1996) suggests that new forms of property transformation may give birth to a distinctively new East European capitalism. These forms involve 'decentralized reorganization of assets and the centralized management of liabilities' through networks criss-crossing the physical boundaries of individual enterprises and blurring the borders between public and private property.

¹² 'Es ist eine soziologische Binsenwahrheit, dass Wirtschafts- und Herrschaftsverfassung einer Gesellschaft zwar die Lebensführung prägen, dass jedoch da in ihrem Rahmen entstandene normative Erwartungsgefüge und die ihm entsprechenden Handlungsmuster den Zusammenbruch der politischen und /oder wirtschaftlichen Ordnung überdauern und nur einem langsamen Wandel unterworfen sind. Diese lebensweltliche Kontinuität der Orientierung sozialen Handelns liegt der Identitätsbildung und der Identitätserhaltung von Gesellschaften zugrunde. So betrachtet, ist der reale Sozialismus als eine nicht zu eliminierende Phase eines solchen Kontinuums in den mittel- und osteuropäischen Gesellschaften anzusehen.' (Srubar 1991, 415)

¹³ By this expression Offe denotes the same paradox of simultaneous political and economic transformation as Stojanov.

¹⁴ In Giovanni Levi's (1991, 109) view, there is in fact a need to develop new formal methods in micro studies. For an example of such formalization, see Gribaudi (1996).

¹⁵ An example of the way the micro approach may examine the interaction between local and global by altering the scale of observation is Levi's discovery in his book *Inheriting Power: The Story of an Exorcist* (Levi 1988). Levi contributed to the debate on the early presence of capitalism in Italy in terms of impersonal market forces and individualism – based on aggregated data on the great frequency of land transactions – by taking a closer look at the logic of actual, local transactions. Quite similarly Burawoy and Verdery (1999) criticize macro theories for their limited views 'of the interaction and interpenetration of system and life world, macro and micro, global and local'. The creative and resistive processes, they argue, are constructed on the level of people's daily lives where the ethnographic eye is best trained to reach them. Likewise, referring to the studies of civil society Chris Hann (1996, 3, 14) sees a need for ethnographic investigations of the social practices of daily life in the form of what he calls 'civil anthropology'.

¹⁶ Beside the authors already mentioned, the non-exhaustive list of other interesting case or qualitative studies could be continued with the enterprise studies by Simon Clarke's group (see e.g. *Management and Industry in Russia* 1995), the research on maternal health care by Michele Rivkin-Fish (1996, 1997); the study on household survival strategies by Timo Piirainen (1997) and Jussi Simpura et al. (1999) or the anthology *Women's Voices in Russia Today* (1996), for example.

¹⁷ See Ledeneva 1998, 47–52 for its summary and criticism of the studies on the informal economy.

¹⁸ Because of the reach of the personal networks of our Russian and Finnish respondents, our data in fact contains information about more than 3000 daily encounters and 2000 persons encountered in both cities. This does not, however, solve the problem.

¹⁹ For Geertz (1973a, 1973b), generalizing seems to mean rendering an aspect of the culture understandable; to supply words with which both the native and the researcher could speak about the culture in question. This analogy, as Giovanni Levi (1991) and Simona Cerutti (1996, 167–168),

among others, have noted, is vulnerable to criticism. It leaves the acting subjects at the mercy of the homogenous and monolithic cultural text – and the reader at the mercy of the author. Levi (1991) sees the Geertzian method leading to relativism, where the author's interpretation cannot be refuted and criticizes Geertz for forgetting the possibility of multiple interpretation of cultural symbols.

²⁰ In his 1991 article, Burawoy compares the responses given to this criticism by extended case method, ethnomethodology, grounded theory and Geertzian interpretive anthropology.

²¹ See also *Espaces, temporalités, stratifications. Exercices méthodologiques sur le réseau* (1998).

²² Though critical of the structural tradition, none of the three authors deny the merits and substantial contributions of this paradigm.

²³ ' - - a multiplex relationship implies that the observer finds it necessary to consider the co-existence of several different normative elements in a social relationship' (Mitchell 1969, 23).

²⁴ In this section I will draw conclusions from the first four articles of the collection.

²⁵ Allowing for some exceptions such as rare medicine.

²⁶ A similar tendency has emerged in the comparisons between Chinese and US networks, for example, (Ruan 1993, Ruan et al. 1997).

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Appendix 1: Description of the study organization, data collection and method

Description of the study

This study describes the social relations of secondary school teachers 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 social relations for fifteen days. Each evening during this time, they recorded social encounters which contained exchange of significant information and which were not part of their daily routine, in the structured questionnaires (later: 'diaries'). At the end of the fifteen days, they added those members of their networks whom they had not met during the study period but whom they nevertheless regarded as significant to their social lives to the diaries. In addition, a complementary theme interview concentrating on their life course was carried out. 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.

All the 1993 respondents worked in municipal schools. Thirty-one were selected from one school in St. Petersburg and twenty-one from one school in Helsinki. Despite our efforts to find more male respondents, only seven in Helsinki and twelve in St. Petersburg were men. Most of our respondents in both cities were married and had children.

In 1996 the study was replicated in St. Petersburg with twenty secondary school teachers and five psychologists. Of these twenty teachers six respondents, who had also participated in the 1993 study, worked in the same school and the remaining fourteen in another school. For basic details on the respondents and their networks, see appendix 3.

Organization of the study in St. Petersburg, 1993

This section describes the organization of the research carried out in St. Petersburg in 1993. The study was conducted in a similar fashion in Helsinki during the springs of 1993 and 1994 and in St. Petersburg in 1996. The differences between the 1993 study in Helsinki and the 1996 study in St. Petersburg are described in the footnotes

Preparation of the study: finding Russian researchers for data collection and interviews, translating the diary forms, selecting the respondents)

It was indicative of the theme of this study that the 1993 research in St. Petersburg was organized informally through our personal connections with our Russian colleagues. Alexander Etkind, at the time a researcher at the Russian Academy of Sciences in St. Petersburg and a psychologist by training, was the main organizer. He recruited Natalia Ganina, similarly a trained psychologist who actually distributed the diaries and carried out the interviews, through his personal contacts.¹

Selecting and contacting the respondents

Since our effort was part of the larger comparative research project headed by Dr. Maurizio Gribaudi at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, Paris, we planned to select the respondents according to strict common criteria defined by our international group of researchers. The group which carried out similar study in several European cities agreed to select both male and female respondents between 35-45 years of age who were married, had children and were residents of the city where the study was carried out. It soon became

¹ In 1996, the St. Petersburg data was collected by the group of researchers headed by Elena Zdravomyslova from the Center for Independent Social Research, St. Petersburg. The 1993 Helsinki data was collected by Anna-Maija Castrén and Markku Lonkila.

clear that all these conditions were difficult to fulfill simultaneously in St. Petersburg. For instance, the preponderance of women among the teachers in Russia, made getting male respondents for the sample tricky. Similarly, it was difficult to find native respondents because of the city's history of heavy migration. As a result, the criteria were somewhat relaxed.

The next step was introducing the study to the teachers and motivating them to participate. Since participation in the study meant in practice not only an obligation to keep the structure diary for two weeks, an important daily job ranging from half an hour to two hours, but also two separate meetings with the research assistant, the completion of the who-knows-whom matrix, and a thematic interview, we decided to remunerate each respondent for roughly the sum of 10 US dollars. Though a minor cost in the overall study budget, this was more than a Russian teacher's weekly salary at the time².

First meeting with respondents. Distributing the diaries and instructing the respondents

Our Russian research assistant distributed the diary forms to each respondent in a separate meeting. Research assistant and teacher completed the diary (parts 1 and 2, for complete diary forms and instructions in Russian and English, see appendix 2) for that day together. After this had been done, the teacher was asked to write up the diary in the evening and to continue to keep the diary for the next 14 days. We recommended to filling in the diary forms in the evening when all the encounters during the day were still clear in their mind.³

When teacher had completed the 15 day-period he was to fill in part 3 of the diary form. This recorded those social relations which did not

² With the same amount of money we offered our Finnish respondents two movie tickets.

³ Diaries have been used before as research instrument. The methodological experiment carried out by Fredrik Barth (see Barth (ed.) *Scale and Social Organization*. Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1978) is worth mentioning as the predecessor of this study.

occur during the study period but which s/he still considered important. It should be noted that the instructions did not require recording immediate family or kin relations, for example, but reflect the respondents' subjective views on their significant social relationships. The fourth part of the diary forms contained some basic information (such as age, place of birth and place of residence) both for the respondent and her parents.⁴

Collecting the diaries, storing the data on computer and constructing the who-knows-whom matrix

After the two weeks the completed diary forms were collected by the research assistant. The diary data was then stored in a relational data base program in Russian. After storage a 'who-knows-whom relationship matrix' was constructed from the diary data for each respondent with the help of specialized software. This matrix contained both the names of the respondent's network members as well as those persons through whom the respondent and her network members had come to know each other (see below).

Second meeting with the teachers. Completing the who-knows-whom matrix and carrying out the thematic interview

In the second meeting the teachers were asked who, in their opinion, of those in the constructed network matrix actually knew each other, that is, had been in mutual contact. If the network matrix, for example, had included only three persons, Alla, Kolya and Elena, it would have looked like this:

	Alla	Kolya	Elena
Alla	x		

⁴ In 1996, part four was enlarged to include the spouse's parents, and ego's grandparents.

Kolya	1	x	
Elena	1	2	x

In this constructed example we can see, that according to the ego, Alla knows Kolya and Elena (nos. 1 in the first column of the matrix) and that Elena is married to or living in concubinage with Kolya (no. 2 in the second column of the matrix). The matrix is symmetrical, so one only had to fill in half of it.⁵

For each network member in the matrix, the respondents were also asked to indicate whether they had given that particular person medical or financial aid or received it (or both).⁶

During the second meeting the Russian research assistant also carried out a thematic interview on the teacher's life and family history. This included a chronological description of important social events affecting the networks, such as her career as teacher, marriages, social and geographical mobility, etc. according to the following guidelines:⁷

1) Please tell us what kind of routine encounters or conversations (at home, at work or during your leisure time) you excluded from the questionnaire during the two week research period? (The idea of this question was to find out how the teacher had understood and interpreted the instructions, what everyday activities or conversations he or she had left out, etc.)

⁵ In practice, the sometimes huge matrixes (e.g. 50 x 50) were divided into columns and printed out. Understandably, such huge matrixes with their interconnections reported by the ego contained scope both for errors of omission (ignoring actual interconnections) and errors of inclusion (including interconnections which did not take place). In addition, technical problems meant that the construction of matrixes in St. Petersburg in 1993 was done by hand, which rendered the majority of these matrixes unusable.

⁶ Beside these two forms of aid, the 1996 St. Petersburg respondents were also asked about the exchange of 'other kinds of significant aid'.

⁷ The interview was similar to the 1993 Helsinki data. It was modified and enlarged in St. Petersburg in 1996 to incorporate questions on informal exchange and upbringing, for example.

2) *Please describe your average workday. Tell us in chronological order what happens during your waking hours, what you do, whom you meet, at what time, and where, from the time you wake up in the morning till you go to sleep in the evening.*

3) *Please give us a brief description of your life history. We are interested in all the events that might have affected your social network:*

- *where are your parents from, how and where they met*
- *how long did you live in the area you were born*
- *where did you go to school, at what age*
- *did you move during your childhood; if yes, why and at what age*
- *where and when did you study*
- *where and when did you do military service*
- *where and when did you get married*
- *where and when were your children born*
- *where have you worked during your life*
- *when did you move to St. Petersburg*
- *what are your living conditions; how and with whom do you live*
- *Can you think of any other things or events in your life that might have affected your social network?*

Appendix 2: Instructions and questionnaires in English and Russian¹

General instructions: Please indicate as carefully as possible all encounters that are not routine and that include an exchange of significant information. Routine implies such things as brief exchanges of greetings, general small talk about the weather, etc.

A conversation is the clearest example of an interactive encounter we are interested in. Person A says something, person B responds to that response, and so forth. Sitting side by side and watching television or listening to a lecture is not an encounter. But discussing some non-routine subject with somebody during a lecture or television -watching is an encounter.

Attention: The term encounter means all kinds of social contact: personal face-to-face-contact but also other kinds of contacts (letters, fax-messages, telephone conversations, etc.). Please indicate both positive and negative or unpleasant encounters. It is best to fill in the questionnaire in the evening while the encounters are still fresh in your mind.

Encounters at work: Teachers do not have to mention all their pupils. In general all routine classroom activities are excluded. Please indicate only those pupils with whom the relationship has become closer than usual.

Indicate all non-routine encounters or conversations with colleagues that deal with family matters, private affairs, general political or social topics, etc. As to encounters concerning work matters please indicate only those which are non-routine and during which you have exchanged significant information. There is no need to indicate for example those routine encounters or discussions that

¹ These instructions and questionnaires are from the 1996 St. Petersburg study. Save minor changes, they were also used in St. Petersburg in 1993 and in Helsinki in 1993-1994.

have to do with the preparation of classes (e.g. organizing special equipment needed for the class).

Encounters with the family: Please indicate all those encounters with the family over and above everyday family routines. For example breakfasts or other family meals are to be indicated only where some significant subject is discussed.

PART 1

1) Time of the encounter

Indicate the time of the encounter (for instance 09.45). If you do not remember the exact time, please estimate in brackets [20.30].

2) Duration of the encounter

How long did the encounter last? In hours, minutes (for example 1 h 30 m). In the case of letters or other written messages indicate the number of pages. For example, if you have been dining at a friend's house, please indicate the duration of the visit as the duration of the encounter (e.g. 3 h), but if you spent a whole weekend at your relatives' house, indicate in detail those individual encounters that took place during the weekend, and their duration.

3) The first name and the first letter of the family name of the person met

If two persons have identical first names and first letters of their family name, use two letters of their family name with the second person, for example Joe S. and Joe Sm. If you do not know or remember the name of the person met, use a three letter code (e.g. AAA, BBB, CCC). Note: please use the same code throughout the diary so that only one person is referred to by a particular code. If, during the research period, you learn the name of the person, use it but mention the code used before in parenthesis, for example James P. (AAA).

Note: Of the non-routine encounters with your family (e.g. your husband/wife and children), please indicate all members of your

family in detail the first time. Afterwards it is sufficient to indicate in question 3 only briefly "family", when the whole family was involved in the encounter (but please remember to tell us in question 5 what you did or what happened during the encounter). For example if you and your family have had dinner at your friend's house, there is no need to provide separate information on your family members.

4) The initiator of the encounter

If you initiated the encounter, use "M" (=me). If the person with whom you met was the initiator, use "H" (=he or she). If neither of you initiated it (for example you met by accident), use "-". If the encounter is a message left on an answering machine, the person who left the message is the initiator.

5) Content the encounter

Please tell us freely and in detail what you did, what happened or what you discussed during the encounter. Were you for example helping your neighbour to repair his car; asking your mother in law on the telephone what to buy for your father in law for his birthday; asking a friend of yours (who is a doctor) what might cause the cough your son has had for several days, etc.?

6) Place of the encounter or the mode of contact

Where did you meet or what kind of contact did you have? For example home, restaurant, office, home of a friend, letter, fax, etc.

7) Number of people present

How many people were present (including you)? If you do not remember the exact number of people present, make an estimate and put it in brackets. For example you met a friend of yours at an art exhibition by accident where there were approximately 50 people present; put the estimate of the number of people present in brackets [50] and give detailed information about the friend with whom you had the encounter.

PART 2

Note: information required in part 2 is needed only once for each person with whom you have had an encounter.

8) Age

How old is the person with whom you met? If you do not know or do not remember, make an estimate and put it in brackets: e.g. [42].

9) Sex

Indicate the sex of the person with whom you met. Use "M" for men and "F" for women.

10) Profession

What is the profession of the person with whom you met? Indicate the profession that comes to your mind first.

11) Place of residence

Where does s/he live? Indicate the district and town if possible.

12) Place of birth

Where was s/he born? Indicate the district and town if possible.

13) Duration of the relationship

How long have you two known each other? (To know somebody refers here to your first reciprocal contact, e.g. when you were introduced. Use "D" for days, "W" for weeks, "M" for months, and "Y" for years.)

14) Place and/or context of the first encounter

Where did you first meet? Did you meet her or him for example at a party at your friend's apartment, at a school where you both used to work, etc.

15) Who introduced you to each other or how did you meet

If you got to know each other through somebody's mediation indicate the chain of people or other sources involved in chronological order.

Example 1. You have had an encounter with Cecilia C. You have been introduced to her by Bill B., who is Cecilia's colleague and whom you come to know through your colleague Anne A, who is Bill's ex-wife. Indicate the chain:

Anne A. (my colleague) -> Bill B. (Anne A's ex-husband) -> Cecilia C (Bill B's colleague)".

Example 2. You have had an encounter with Tina T. whom you got to know at the school where you both used to work. There were no other persons involved. Indicate: " - "

16) Nature of the relationship

Freely describe your relationship with the person with whom you have had an encounter. A relationship may have many sides. The person with whom you have met is for example a colleague and a dear friend to whom you feel very close; a neighbour with whom you cannot agree on anything and whom you avoid as much as possible; a sister in law whom you meet rarely but with whom you have a friendly and warm relationship; an acquaintance whom you have met in a nearby library but whom you do not really know that well, etc.

17) Closeness of the relationship

Relative to all your other social contacts and relationships, how close would you estimate this relationship to be? Use the scale: 1 = very close, 7 = not at all close.

PART 3

Most people are able to picture to themselves what their 'social network' looks like. A social network is composed of persons who are somehow significant or important to you. You may meet these persons

daily at work, or perhaps only seldom during holidays. They may be your friends, colleagues, neighbours, relatives or acquaintances. You may feel very close to them but the relationship may also be strained or even hostile. However, not all your relatives, neighbours, colleagues, etc. automatically belong to your social network.

In part 3 you are asked to indicate those persons who belong to your social network as defined above but whom you did not meet during the research period. Otherwise part 3 is identical to part 2.²

² In part 4 of the questionnaires (not reproduced here) respondents were asked information of their close relatives.

