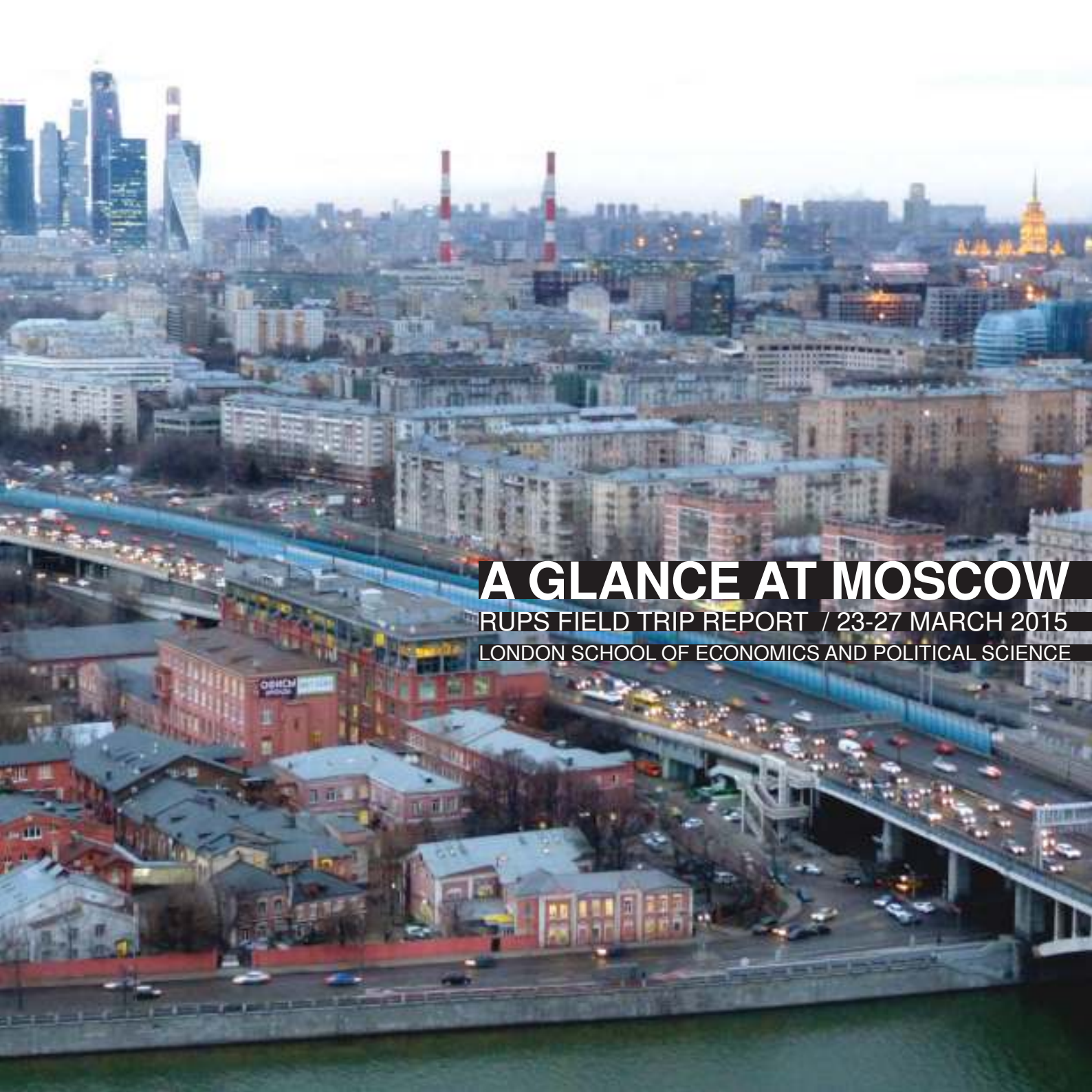

A GLANCE AT MOSCOW

RUPS FIELD TRIP REPORT / 23-27 MARCH 2015

LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS AND POLITICAL SCIENCE

The report "**A Glance at Moscow**" contains the record of views and impressions on the city of Moscow in Russia. These impressions were constructed from a field study conducted between the 23th and 27th March 2015 by students of MSc in Regional & Urban Planning Studies.

The **MSc Regional & Urban Planning Studies** is a strongly focused and internationally based planning programme that has a long tradition in training both people seeking careers in urban and regional planning policy and mid-career professionals. Founded in 1966 by the departments of Economics, Geography and Government, the programme (now housed solely in the department of Geography & Environment) continues a strong interdisciplinary focus challenging students to understand cities and regions from an economic, social and environmental perspective.

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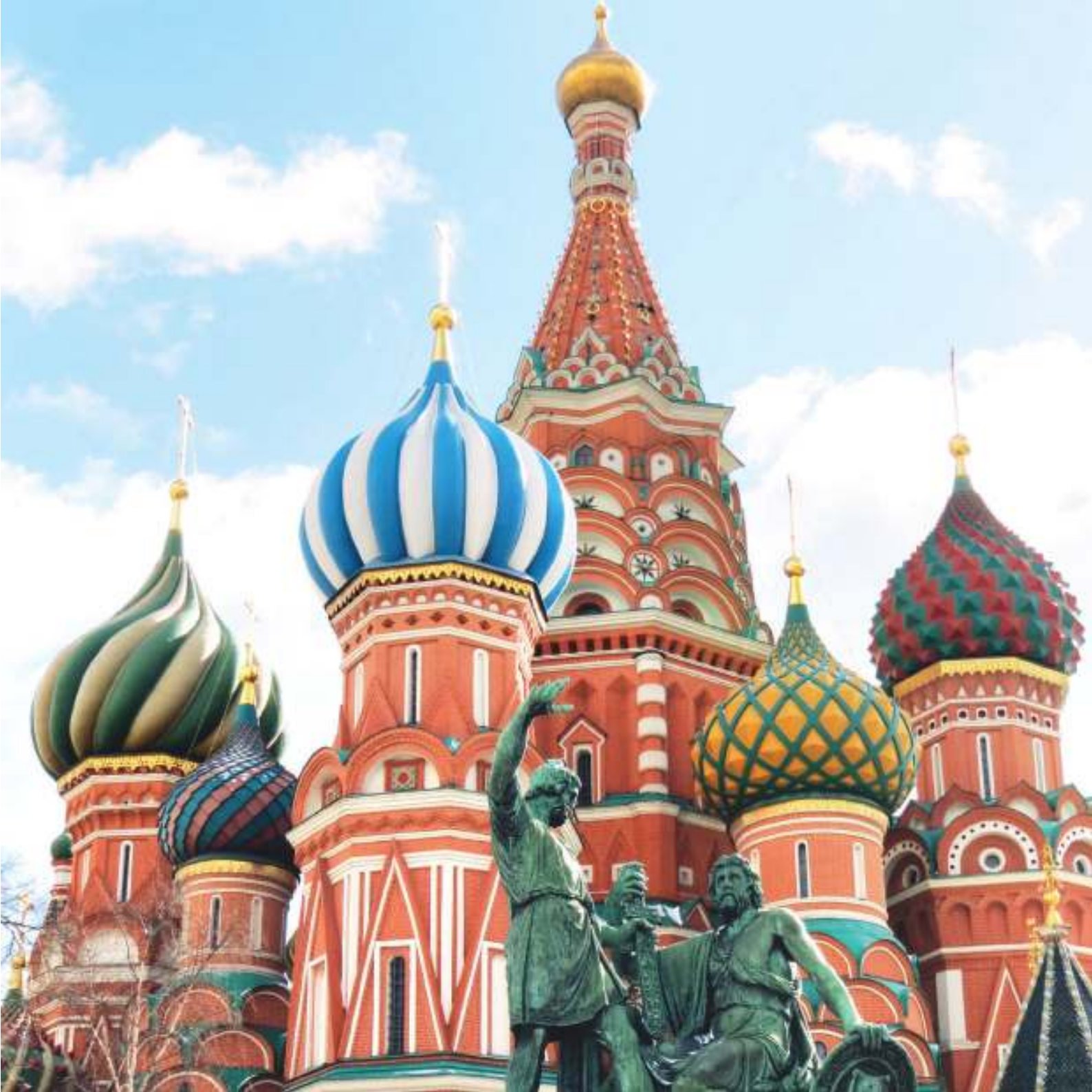
Special thanks to Elena Kuskova, Flavien Menu, Alan Mace, Nancy Holman and all the members of the Planning Society.



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INTRODUCTION

Elena Kuskova

The MSc Regional and Urban Planning Studies at LSE was founded in 1966. In Moscow, and in Russia in general, urban planning evolved as a separate discipline towards the end of the first decade of the new millennium. At this time, a shift in mayoral leadership led to significant changes in the city's environment. Sergey Sobyanin has introduced paid parking in the city centre, the pedestrianisation of several streets, new cycling lanes and bike sharing stations. With the Soviet legacy, much room for improvement and sufficient resources to bring about change, Moscow provides a laboratory for urban planning and has attracted planning experts from all over the world. I believe that Moscow provides a perfect learning opportunity for urban planners and I was happy to see how enthusiastic my classmates were about the trip to Moscow. Even bureaucratic visa challenges and snow at the end of March could not prevent them from completing the intensive 4- day programme that consisted of meetings with academics and planning professionals, as well as walks and site visits.

Being the only Russian in the group, I was in charge of organising the programme for our trip. However, the organisational challenges were significantly eased by the help of my classmates, and for that I am extremely grateful. I would like to thank Flavien Menu for his invaluable help with coordination of the trip's programme, for his ideas and numerous emails, and for the entertaining part of the trip. I would like to thank the Planning Society Executive Committee for taking care of all the administrative issues that they handled so professionally - smoothly and fast!

Our trip would not be successful without the eagerness to help and hospitality from the Moscow side. I thank the team of the Higher School of Economics, Yuriy Milevskiy for the organisation of our visit, Oleg Baevskiy, Petr Ivanov, Maria Sapharova, Michael Blinkin for their presentations and special thanks to Alexei Novikov for the time he dedicated to our learning and for his great introduction to the Moscow planning system.

I also thank the Strelka Institute: Kuba Snopeck and Mila Ilyushina for the fascinating lecture and organisation of memorable visit to Belyaevo microrayon. Thanks also goes to Moscow Chief Architect Sergei Kuznetsov and his colleagues for their insight into the city's architecture projects and Irina Kuznetsova for coordinating the meeting.

Finally, I thank all RUPS students and Alan and Nancy for their interest in the city; for participating in discussions; for their patience and readiness to explore the city; for coping with Moscow's wayfinding system; for their sense of humour and hidden talents that altogether made this trip a wonderful and unforgettable experience!

THE TRIP

DAY ONE: 23 Monday
Introduction & History

Novikov Alexei, HSE Dean of Faculty of Urban Planning
Introduction of the history of Moscow and the recent urban changes in Moscow and Moscow Region

Bus Tour around Moscow
Visit focused on the architecture of the city

DAY TWO: 24 Tuesday
Moscow and New Development Projects

Walk through The Exhibition of Achievements of National Economy (VDNKh), guided by Petr Ivanov, lecturer at HSE and Yuriy Milevskiy, managing director at Novaya Zemlya

Kuznetsov Sergey, Chief Architect of Moscow City
Lecture about historical center, industrial zones, social housing and the last big architectural competition on regeneration of urban areas of Moscow-river
Marina Lepeshkina, Managing Director of Moscow Institute of General Plan
Alisa Belyakova, Chief of Architectural Competition Department
Andrey Gnezdilov, Chief Architect of Institute of General Plan of Moscow

Open discussion about the recent urban changes in Moscow and Moscow Region

DAY THREE: 25 Wednesday
Housing

Kuba Snopek, Strelka tutor and researcher
Welcome discourse, Presentation of Strelka
Lecture on Belyayevo Micro Rayon and about Socialist Housing Complex

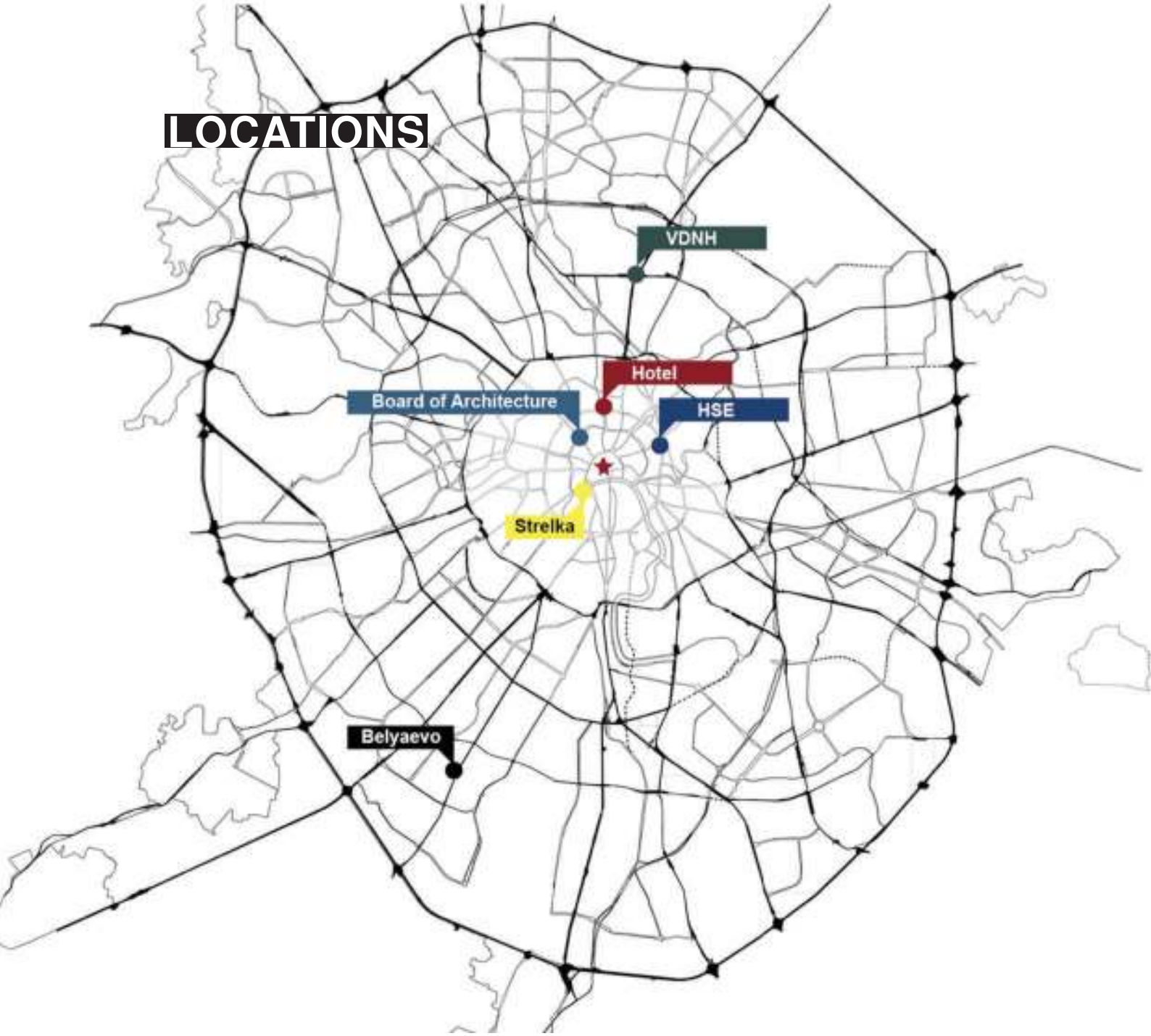
Walk around the Belyayevo Micro Rayon

DAY FOUR: 26 Thursday
Transport & Public amenities

Blinkin Mikhail, Director of Institute for Transport Economics and Transport Policy Studies HSE
Alexei Novikov, HSE Dean of Faculty of Urban Planning
Lecture on Moscow transportation systems and the new challenges in terms of congestion and improvement of the public transport system

Round Table - Final Discussion

LOCATIONS



MOSCOW'S SCENES

PARTICIPANTS

THE GROUP

MOBILITY AND ORIENTATION

MOBILITY IN MOSCOW

Guillaume Pavageau

The Red Square, Belyayevo, the Strelka Institute, VDNKh... We spent many hours of this field trip in Moscow going from one place to another, moving in this city where the metro stations are splendorous, the timing of trains impressively precise and the discipline of the traveling crowd controlled at the end of every set of mechanical stairs; where flow of cars fill rows of lanes creating scars in the urban space; where the exclusive Russian language envelops the whole urban environment. This constitutes the atmosphere within which we experienced the specificities of being mobile in Moscow that at the same time fascinated, annoyed or even amused us.

Mobility is unavoidable in Moscow due to the concentric structure of the city where a great part of the economic activity is concentrated in the centre. More than half of the Muscovite commuters spend more than two hours per day in public transport. The public transport network strongly structures mobility patterns in the Russian capital. Our only experience of this took place in the impressive metro network, within which orientation is not an easy task for whomever is not following the same itinerary from one day to another. Information for orientating yourself is indeed quite rare inside the stations. Signs tended to be banned for the preservation of the historic authenticity of the stations; the Cyrillic alphabet took us back to early childhood, unable to decipher the unknown Russian language. The difficulty of accessibility within this network – which functions precisely to make space accessible – was at the heart of our hesitation, irritation or confusion. Moving around this metro network was definitely central in our experience of mobility in the unknown Muscovite space.

The individual car is the second most important structuring mode of transport in Moscow, with numerous large roads having a strong visual impact in the urban environment and truly shaping the city. But what is even more striking than the existence of 12-lanes roads in a city centre is the fact that this huge road network is the victim of an acute problem of congestion. This is due to high car ownership that has consistently increased from the transition of the Russian economy to capitalism. The car has become one of the preferred symbols of distinction among Muscovites. While the car represents an integral part of the culture of the city, it is also one of Moscow's biggest challenges. The issue of road safety is also particularly significant in Moscow and we did not escape this reality. Our guided tour of the diverse architecture of the city was disrupted by the collision of our touristic coach with a car. This episode allowed us to participate in road congestion and also to discover the composure of the Russian police. We also learned of the tendency of drivers to install cameras in front of their car to record their

ride as a proof of their good driving in case of accident. An unforgettable episode in our trip!

In this car oriented urban space, being a pedestrian in Moscow is hardly restful. The city, characterised by wide prospects, then offers just as many large sidewalks for pedestrians – large enough for some cars to even feel like driving on it – but also numerous underpasses. These remain living spaces, reserved for pedestrians, where they can feel secure, shop and do not need to be on the look-out for cars.

In the end, this experience of mobility in Moscow led us to the question of the strength of the legacy of Soviet urbanism and the space for change in adaptation for challenges. Whether in the metro where the progressive transition to English-speaking communication is engaged, following the example of the more touristic Saint-Petersburg, or in public space with the development of pedestrian streets, cycle lanes and bicycle sharing scheme, following the world trend towards walkable and cyclable cities, only one question then remains: will these trends, even if restrained by the current organisation of space in Moscow, progressively erase the specificities of the experience of mobility in the Russian capital or will the city keep this part of its identity?

AN INVESTIGATION OF MOSCOW TROLLEYBUSES

Ian Cho

Moscow has an extensive public transport network with no less than seven different transport modes. Within this vast and complex transport system, the Moscow trolleybus is considered to be a key transport mode alongside the Moscow Metro and the bus. With a fleet of over 2000 trolleybuses, Moscow has the most number of trolleybuses for any city in the world. How and why has the Moscow trolleybus become one of the lifelines for Moscow's transport network? And where does it stand for the future. This article will seek to investigate the often overlooked but integral form of public transport – the Moscow trolleybus.

The year was 1933. Moscow's first trolleybus was put into service. At the time the Soviet Union (now Russia) was engaged in WWII. As such, much of the public buses were diverted for military purposes. Furthermore, as fuel rationing was in place during the war, any public buses that were left untouched by the Red Army were unable to operate due to fuel shortage. By introducing trolleybuses, powered by electricity obtained from overhead wires, normal services were able to resume, even with the absence of standard public buses. After WWII, the Soviet government found trolleybuses to be a highly reliable form of public transport that can allow the state to save on fuel. During the early 1950s, the trolleybus network was vastly extended across Moscow to enable the trolleybus network to become an integral part of Moscow's transport network. With the advent of hybrid technology and cleaner fuel, this puts to question whether trolleybuses still have a bright future. In many cities across Western Europe, the number of trolleybuses has been in decline as transport agencies are replacing trolleybuses with light rail or hybrid/ Euro V buses. However, in Moscow and much of other Russian cities this has not been the case. There are two plausible reasons for their strong support for trolleybuses: Firstly, with the trolleybus network in Moscow being the largest in the world, there may be a strong attachment by Moscovites to this particular mode of transport. Secondly, as Russia has been and still is one of the strongest leaders in manufacturing trolleybuses, there may be less of a reason to replace trolleybuses for other modes of transport. In light of this, it is highly likely that trolleybuses will continue to play a vital role in transporting Moscovites in the foreseeable future, simultaneously a relic of Russian history and a strong signal of a sustainable urban future.

PERCEPTIONS OF MOSCOW

POWER AND DESIGN

Sara Helmi, Katia Habra, Daniela Alonso

Experiencing Moscow provides a singular feeling of magnitude, planning and symmetry. Given the rich history of Russia, the political, economic and cultural are expressed in the built environment of the capital. As urban planners, we have been challenged in rethinking our perception of the city. Written with our emotions and reflections, the following three pieces illustrate our analysis of Moscow and the interaction between power and space.

City of extremes - Sara Helmi

Political projects and utopia inscribed in urban form is a well-documented subject of urban planning literature. In some cities, feelings & emotions around urban planning is particularly strong, as in Moscow. The first thing to be said about Moscow is the city is disproportionate and extreme. The biggest city in Europe and Eastern-most European capital is spread across 1081 km, experiencing extreme temperatures, crossed by 3 ring roads of 100 km width. It hosts the deepest tube network in the world, counts the largest number of billionaires in the world, and witnessed continuously congested traffic. Avenues are wide, as if they were designed for a parade of tanks. Experience as a pedestrian may be the most impressive – navigating the city is exhausting, crossing large avenue requires often going via underground paths that are veritable maze where you can get easily lost. The tube network, as the road network, is massive and congested at every time of the day or the night; navigating the tube it is challenging.

Moscow is made of several massive obstacles, which create fragmentation in the city. In some places, ring roads consist of 16 lanes that are constantly subjected to congested traffic. It is not only a physical barrier but a visual one too that could be observed from the air or from any point of the view in the city. The Kremlin is also an obstacle in the urban landscape; it is a massive fortress in the city.

The domination of Soviet architecture in the city centre with the official buildings and the monotonous housing seems to be proof of urban planning as a way to achieve the creation of the Homos Sovieticus.

In Moscow, it is easy to feel dominated by the city; mastering the art of navigating it does not come in a couple days, like in other cities. Moscow has been designed to impress you and to show you the power of Russia. The diversity and the mix of classical, Soviet and modern architecture add another feeling to the city. Moscow is, at the same time, an old-fashioned town and a very modern one. You may have hard time finding someone able speak English but you are able to connect to Wi-Fi everywhere. It is as if the weight of urban form was a lost attempt to control a moving society that is now able to play with it.

City of Display – by Katia Habra

For many a tourist, walking around a new city, getting lost in its unknown streets and passages, represents a preferred mode of urban exploration; an opportunity to feel the city, its architecture, its design, its streets, its people, its dynamism. Yet, the promenade experience reaches a whole new level in a "city made for display" such as Moscow ¸ where walking two blocks may well take half an hour of your time.

Display of power and control, display of efficiency and productivity, display of harmony and organisation. Apart from the odd Starbucks or McDonalds, and the change in fashion, one wonders whether the Red Curtain was ever withdrawn from the Russian capital, where a sense of continuation from Gorbatchev's Perestroika glasnost or openness policy prevails. Moscow desires the global city coveted membership, and aims to achieve this goal by sharing with the world its capacity for greatness.

Display is blatantly visible in the exhibition centre of VDNKh Park, where Putin's 2015 Russia still embraces Stalin's 1930s vision of a large and advanced world empire, notably highlighting the USSR's space programme, technological prowess, and entertaining nostalgia about the Soviet era by preserving symbols such as the hammer and sickle in sculpture. The display of power using large, imposing modernist architecture – not only around the city centre's massive square buildings but spread across Moscow – is illustrated by the predominance of the Seven Sisters Soviet skyscrapers in its skyline.

Display not only using physical power, but via a subtle control of population behaviour, is a phenomena illustrated by Moscow's spotlessness. Muscovites take their city's tidiness to heart, and ensure that no waste pollutes their streets and famous metro stations, despite a lack of public waste disposal facilities and a significant number of public transit commuters every day. A display of control and harmony too are visible in the limited use of public spaces, which are rarely utilised for leisure and community gathering purposes by the population, who prefer to meet indoors in ever-crowded restaurants and cafés or in the private premises of the microrayons.

Display, then, does not serve to enhance Muscovites' human experience of their city, but

rather to maximise their efficiency, to organise their appropriation of public spaces, to remind them of the city's history of greatness and power. Indeed, Moscow provides an unusual promenade setting for the urban explorer.

City of rationality- Daniela Alonso

Walking through the streets of central Moscow, it is impossible not to notice its monumental architecture and urban design. The heritage of the Soviet period represents the power of the state; this can be seen in the width of the streets and the magnitude of its public buildings and open spaces. This made me thinking about the following questions: How much public space does Moscow have? What is the relationship between public and private space in the city? And, how have urban design and planning has affected public life? The Moscow streets reflect the capacity of the state to plan the whole city with a very radical and meaningful style. State power, as well as the influence of modern architecture, is presented in Moscow's structure and geometrical composition. What is not so clear is how its citizens have intervened in public space. Here I present some thoughts about urban design and its meanings in the city of Moscow.

What we consider public space is somewhat unclear. This concept tends to be applied to squares, green areas and parks, for instance. Arguably, it also includes streets, sidewalks and all the open areas of the city. According to research by the Russian Institute Strelka (Strelka, Institute for Media, Architecture and Design, 2011. Research Report) about public space, due to Soviet heritage, over 50% of Russian cities constitute 'common areas'. In most other European cities, this percentage is around 25%. In Moscow, more than 60% of the city is considered public space, but it is not clear what is considered as such. Moreover, it also depends on how people use this space.

The issue of scale limits residents within the urban space. The streets are dominated by cars in enormous roads, some of them with six lanes per side, crossing the centre of the city. Although the sidewalks are wide, walking near one these streets was uncomfortable and noisy. The roads are a barrier for pedestrians. The lack of ownership of the public space by the people is clear. There was an absence of civil expression on the streets. Public space is dominated by the repetition

of symbols and shapes, which represent the importance of the state in the public sphere.

In the third day of the trip, we went to visit the microrayon, where most of the Muscovites live. This area is the clearest expression of the modern movement. The design of the residences have a human scale, but from the theoretical ideas of modernism. Again, massive buildings and the reiteration of patterns dominate the built environment. In Belyaeyo, we explored social housing and life within residences. In these spaces in the past, people met and exchanged their ideas and personal visions, as this was probably not allowed on the streets. Most cultural expression happened in the interior of the residence. Although the buildings were a massive production of the state, people started to personalise them. Particularities started to appear, from the interior to the exterior of the residence, as Snopeck Kuba, a Researcher from Strelka, told us in his presentation.

This idea of appropriation and particularization of space is an opportunity in Moscow. Space in the city is the reflection of the historical process. Its geometry and patterns reflect the order and hierarchy in which Moscow was imagined, and the rationality of planning ideas. But now this space has the opportunity to be adapted. How this adaptation is happening, not only has to do with the urban design but also with cultural change and adaptation. How new requirements and visions of a more sustainable city are incorporated is a big challenge for the state, which seems more used to planning from a strong political conviction. But changes are happening and, as we could see, there is a lot of public space for adapting.

Recently, Moscow's urban area boundaries have been expanded by 2,5 times. At the same time, the city is facing transformation due to globalisation, since the liberalisation of the economy, openness to international investments and the desire of the population for a better quality of life. It appears that authorities are willing to adapt; yet, to what extent can they reconcile a monumental control of space with contemporary planning reality? Indeed, there are pressures for change, such as mixed transportation modes, diversification of housing locations and typologies and more community participation in public spaces. Taking into account that its urban fabric is so dense, Moscow needs to find its own creative way to adapt its built environment.

PERCEPTION OF MOSCOW - ATTRACTIONS AND CONTRADICTIONS OF HISTORY AND MODERN

Shutian (Sky) Zhou

If Saint Petersburg permeates Russian grandeur, then Moscow reminds us of Russia's saddest historical period. Nevertheless, the Muscovites have made an abstraction of that history, which is full of attractions and contradictions.

The emblematic Red Square is often considered not only the central square of Moscow, but of all the Russia. Along with the Kremlin and Saint Basil's Cathedral, it is one of the main iconic landmarks and symbols of the largest nation in the world. The Red Square and its surroundings have been closely linked to many of the Russian defining moments in history and politics. For both locals and visitors, this place is the centre of the memories of the communist era. At that time, the name Kremlin was directly referred to the central power of the Soviet Union. Today, the Kremlin is the residence of the president of the Russian Federation and also a grand museum of rich treasures. The Red Square is now as an open museum and a splendid site for different activities, attracting people from all around the world. The Saint Basil's Cathedral - the symbol of Moscow and Russia, standing at the side of the Red Square, is like a candy castle from fairy tale: a contrast to the solemn architectural styles of the other buildings around the Square. Though these come together to present a unique tradition, and tell a story to the world.

Traffic tends to be congested in most metropolitan capitals and Moscow is no exception. Even though some of the streets have even more than eight lanes, and the underground system seems to be extending in all directions, people are still stuck in the traffic, especially during the peak hours. However, in contrast, the secondary and residential streets seemed to be vast, even desolate during most of the daytime. However, at night, the neon lamps and the streetlights are impressive with the crisscross network of electronic wires and the lightning of the traffic flow along the boulevards.

Moscow is a city of strong contrasts: A melting pot of diverse architecture, all existing together with an accute unpredictability. There are a number of grand historical buildings in Moscow. Some people say that Stalin planned the skyscrapers as way to immortalize himself, or at least show the world that Russia was not behind the times. Whether that was the case or not, Stalin and the Soviet Communism are gone, but these buildings that remain at least immortalise our dialogue, if not Stalin himself.

CONTROVERSY, ENGAGEMENT AND THE STATUES OF MOSCOW

Yiqing(Isabella) Jiangcheng

Over the two weeks that I spent in Russia, It would be a lie to say that I did not feel uncomfortable that sometimes the discussion of city planning simply downgraded the Muscovites into a type of ideology - a manifestation of the post-USSR reality that is almost non-human. The lack of public activities or the disutility of cycling in the city? Yes, there are various ways these phenomena can loosely be explained by the residue of the totalitarian era, but let's be honest, it is bloody cold outside most of the year. And despite how we all like to imagine the Muscovites are internally heated by their delicious vodka, they are humans who will be against the idea of putting their hands on a steel handle in temperatures of minus thirty two degrees.

But one thing that I can say with slightly more confidence that is a legacy of the communist regime are the monumental statues that are scattered across the city. It is not a surprise, really, Lenin himself made a plan of conveying communist ideologies through visual public art to the mostly illiterate public in early 1910s. This movement, known as 'monumental propaganda', has created some memorable work of art, including the F. Dostoevsky statue in front of Mariinsky Hospital in Moscow, where the author was born. Lenin believed that to project ideologies onto urban space would enable the citizens to literally see history as they walk around the cities, and thus, to truly understand and celebrate the nation. Now, even after several rounds of ruthless soviet politicians who all enjoyed destruction, this tradition is still vividly apparent within Moscow, from the elegant metro stations, to the nameless parks on our way to lectures, the statutes are everywhere. And of course, some of the most prominent ones have become must-sees for the tourists, such as the impressive Yuri Gagarin statue outside of Leninskiy Prospekt station.

Boym in her book, The Future of Nostalgia, discussed in length on the importance of monumental statues in Moscow. One the one hand, these monuments are essentially being admired innocently as work of art and history. Boym examined the descriptions of the Stalin and Dzerzhinsky statue in Muzeon Park of Arts, which the descriptions were meticulously structured to discharge any political connotation of the art work. On the other hand, however, these statues are equipped with heavy political statement that cannot be disregard. The action of tearing down the statue of Dzerzhinsky in 1991 reflected how a statue was being recognized as the Iron Felix himself, and for the public to deconstruct the statue, was an act to 'kill' and to 'revenge'. And it is hardly irrelevant to rethink on the political role of statues: similar

events happened not so long ago in Ukraine, where a gigantic Lenin statue was destroyed by the public, along with fireworks, music and a raving attitude. But the degree of the political statement seems to vary, especially outside of the post-soviet dialogue. When a gigantic Genghis Khan statue was erected at Marble Arch in 2012, bizarrely in the name of Olympic Games, there was less hostility towards the existence of this warlord-cum-warrior figure in London. However, when I talk about the statues in Moscow, I often receive much more negative feedbacks and a 'well, of course; it's RUSSIA!' attitude. I wonder if this is the result of the aforementioned: our fixation on Russia forever being under the shadow of USSR.

Nevertheless, what I found most intriguing about the statues in Moscow, was their abilities to engage and to interact with the public despite their political agenda. On the first day we arrived in Moscow, we immediately encountered a bronze statue outside of Tsvetnoy Bulvar station. The bronze man was standing beside a vintage vehicle with an open door. That, for many of us, was an inviting sign of our first Moscow photo. Some of us immediately jumped onto the car and that was indeed, as a group we coalesced around this figure, this artwork, and so emerger our first group photograph. With little regarded for who the statue was, or what it stood for, we were drawn in by this piece of public art, enabling an encounter that few other elements of a city allows. Inevitably, a few moments later we were quick to embrace this comedy setting - a man and his car - with genuine enjoyment and excitement. Our ignorance had little bearing this. Later I found out the bronze man was Yuri Nikulin, a beloved soviet actor that has less of a political attitude I would assume, and the statue was moulded on his famous cameo in the movie Kidnapping, Caucasian Style. When I typed his name into Google, there were numerous photos of the Muscovites posing

exactly like us with the bronze. At that point we became involved in a production - and simultaneous consumption - enjoyed by millions across the Russian speaking world and beyond.

Another encounter with the monuments happened during a lazy stroll around Patriarch Ponds. A group of us discovered a series of statues: instead of the usual hardworking people, this art featured what seemed to be mythical creatures. We studied these kind-of-familiar, sort-of-ring-a- bell characters for sometime until one of us noted: 'They are from children's stories!' Quickly, as a result of that brief introduction, we were able to merge our collective memories to a more concrete statement: We had seen these before, we were not wrong - the statutes were extracts from Krylov's fables. They seemed to not only acknowledge the writer's status - a significant figure in Russian literature - but too, these statues acted as a form of communication, allowing for the public to interact with the stories, themselves pieces of Russian history. A contrast

emerged: Whilst we were complaining of the difficulties of being in a city where the English language and culture felt a million miles away, we were quickly able to piece together a jigsaw, familiar to us all, but a central part of Russia's literary history, made possibly only through vague imagery. Art, splendour, monument then, it would seem has the power to cross nation, cross culture and indeed, cross history.

As one of - sometimes the only - art form that allows the public to connect and to communicate in the public sphere with extreme efficiency, stature has certainly raised high levels of political controversy (see Pasquino). One may research forever to try to understand what the monumental statue means to the public: Whether it resembles an icon in the time of state atheism, or it reflects the aesthetic taste of a particular crowd. Whether it offers a glimpse back into a subjective and collective childhood, or it purports the little known but internally significant endeavours in unexpected industries... There is no end to it. So perhaps there is no answer to these questions after all. Is the statue of Dostoyevsky in Moscow automatically more sinister than the James Joyce statue in Dublin? Or do the abstract sculptures in The City resonate more emotions than the relief in Moscow Metro depicting social realism? I don't know. And really, no-one does or can. Because art, public art, regardless of its conception and creation, experiences a new inception with each new subjective consumption of it. Of course there are certainly spaces for us to consider the relationship between public art, the public and the urban environment, but we should not be too fast to draw structural conclusions as to why these relationships come about, and moreover, what they might mean.

At the moment all I can hope is that the eccentric, almost unidentifiable emotion I feel when I encounter a monumental statue will not fade away just yet.

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MODERNISM IN MOSCOW

MODERNISM IN MOSCOW

Agnes Huang, Chungyi(Evon) Li,
Xiayan(Jane) Ma

A landscape can be seen as the symbol of a city's cultural, social and economic characteristics. This makes it reasonable to copy or imitate the urban landscape from one developed city to another developing city, so as to show that the developing city could also be attractive in culture, society and economy. Thus, on the one hand, it is common to find "Triumphal Arch" in India and "Eiffel Towers" in China. To copy famous classic architecture from the Western world could be seen as a way to show that the developing city could also have the same cultural style as the developed world. This "fake" western classic style improves the attractiveness of the developing city for the authorities and even residents. On the other hand, in the age when skyscrapers and glass walls are global symbols of modernity in a capitalist economy, cities in the developing world and developed world alike desire high-rise buildings to demonstrate the city's openness to modernity. Without careful attention, one cannot easily tell whether a view of CBD is in Chicago or Shanghai, New York or Hong Kong. When it comes to the case of Moscow, against the view of Red Square,the famous historical site of the capital city of Russia, a group of skyscrapers with glass walls in various shapes tend to show that the country has been fueled with a new energy of modernity.

The idea of architectural modernism was initiated in the early 20th century after World War I in order to rebuild Western Europe. There are many buildings across the world that followed this modernist design, such as the Hilversum Town Hall in the Netherlands, Barcelona Pavilion in Spain, Villa Savoie in France, and Florida Southern Colleges in America. In Moscow, the most common styles are Stalinist architecture and Constructivist architecture. A typical structure of Stalinist architecture is the main entrance to All-Union Agricultural Exhibition shown in Figure 1. Constructivist architecture is a form of modern architecture, such as the Svoboda Factory Club shown in Figure 2. The so called financial center that we saw during our trip followed the style of post-modernism, which used renewable materials with great height and style. Dubai is a typical city full of modernist and postmodernist architecture. Modernism may promote the economy, make the city lively, provide people with better living conditions, and appeal for a high quality life. But on the other hand modernist buildings may disrupt social and historical heritage and waste of energy because of costly materials and technologies. There are issue with technology, such as the breakdown of escalators in Dubai's Princess Tower due to the height.

Robert Adam has said that architecture can be a mirror of society. Robert Venturi, a pioneer of postmodern architects, has said 'less is a bore', which criticized the monotony and minimalism of modernist architecture and Jane Jacobs

has also criticized the irrationality of modernist architecture. She argues that modernism destroys the natural society to pursue urban renewal and may break down the harmony of a community. Therefore, it leads us to question what the imitation and construction of those postmodern structures in Moscow could bring to the city.

The Moscow Times recently reported that the new developed business centre, Moskva-City, may experience 30~40 percent office rents fall compared to 2014. According to real estate agency Cushman & Wakefield, by the end of 2014, companies occupied only 83 percent of Moscow's 15 million-square-meter stock of office space. The vacancy rate soared to 45 percent in March, 2015. The oversupply of office space and the unstable economic situation (caused by falling oil prices and Western sanctions over Moscow's role in the Ukraine crisis) were considered the two main reasons for the high vacancy rate in Moskva-City. Moskva-City highlights the issues of policy mobility - the difficulty and uncertainty of importing and transplanting ideas. How should cities illustrate the modern? How could cities overcome the challenges of the local? What kind of adjustments are required? How could trendy modernism accommodate local needs? These are the puzzles awaiting planners.

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THE ART OF BELYAYEVO

Marion Lagadic

I cannot remember what first caught my attention when we got off the tube at Belyayevo station. Nothing, probably. Belyayevo looks familiar. It is a modernist neighbourhood like any other, like many others around the world. Plain, generic. Belyayevo is not a place that you fall in love with at first sight. The grey buildings, majestic and tired, are carefully lined up along large avenues that stretch for kilometres. They are connected by large green areas that were unfortunately frozen and muddy on that afternoon of March. I remember thinking how beautiful the place the place must look in the summer.

The Belyayevo-Konkovo Estate was built between 1964 and 1970. More than a neighbourhood, Belyayevo represents a political project, that of Khrushchev; a project of good quality, non- communal housing for all. Belyayevo, in rhetoric, represented progress, it reality, it represented power.

Belyayevo is only an iteration of the same ideal that was cast into concrete all around the USSR. The neighbourhood does, however, set itself apart in ways that are not readily visible. Belyayevo was home to many artists who were part of one of the most influential Russian art movements of the 20th century: Moscow Conceptualism.Moscow Conceptualism can only be understood in context. As underlined by Boris Groys, a writer who lived in the neighbourhood for several years, Soviet society was completely oriented towards the future, or rather towards an image of the future: the communist project. He writes (Groys, 2010:2):

'Everything "present" was automatically experienced as being only transitional, as being something to be used and then eliminated on the way to the radiant Communist future. The true Soviet citizen was somebody living in a total oblivion of the present'.

Similarly, pre-fabricated neighbourhoods like Belyayevo were not built to last. And yet, here they stand. Belyayevo was more than one step towards the Communist ideal of equality and housing for all; it was a space of life, of encounters, of creation. Through their art, the Moscow conceptualists tried to reorient people's gaze from the future to the present, to that very present shaping and shaped by the streets of Belyayevo, where many of them lived.

Kuba Snopek, whom we had the chance to meet at Strelka, offered us an enlightening account of the link between Belyayevo and Moscow Conceptualism. Indeed, the space of the microrayon and of the pre-fabricated housing unit is infused in conceptualist art, through direct references or as an outline on which the work of art rests. Ilya Kabakov based a lot of his work on the space of the apartment, a space that was often depicted as empty, inhabited only by shadows, by an absence, as if 'everything

that could happen ha[d] already happened' (Groys 2010:19). These rooms are, however, still places of hope, as they offer a space for art.

Boris Mikhailov, conceptualist photographer, worked on staged-reality: he produced a lot of portraits of Muscovites he had asked to pose, to try to look their best. The result is often awkward, and produces a certain sense of embarrassment, but also of complicity with the subjects (Groys 2010:139). To mirror to these portraits, Mikhailov photographed a lot the microrayon, from different angles, at different stages of the day. The microrayon too, just like the forced poses adopted by the Muscovites, showed a staged-reality, thriving for functional perfection. The pre-fabricated buildings also appear a bit awkward, severe, but yet, endearing.

If there was only one artist to mention when talking about Belyayevo, it would be Dmitri Prigov. The artist and poet used to call Belyayevo his Duchy, and its streetscape is the armature of his work. On the 2nd of November 2003, Prigov conducted a visit of Belyayevo. He read his poems at various stops, presented the visitors with different anecdotes. Through this tour, Prigov allowed the visitors to see the life and creation that had been happening for decades in Belyayevo, often behind closed doors. He uncovered what made Belyayevo unique (Snopek, 2013:8).

On the 25th of March 2015, it was our turn to discover how unique Belyayevo was. On the large avenue that structures the neighbourhood, our guide, Borya Klushnikov, mentioned a poem that Prigov wrote in 1978, the 'Apotheosis of a Policeman' (reproduced in Snopek, 2010:38):

'When a Policeman stands here at his post An expanse opens up for him

As far as Vnukovo

To the West and the East looks the Policeman And the void behind them opens up

And the centre, where the Policeman stands From everywhere the sight of him opens up From everywhere the Policeman can be seen From the East the Policeman can be seen And from the South the Policeman can be seen Also from the sea the Policeman can be seen Also from the sky the Policeman can be seen Also from under the earth...

But he isn't hiding, is he?'

Belyayevo is in that poem. Its streets opening up towards an infinite horizon, its geometry, its scientific outline, its origin as the product of an authoritarian regime. Belyayevo is poetry, too.

Modernist neighbourhoods such as Belyayevo are, in many countries, associated with a very strong social stigma. They would be dead-ends, often associated with crime and decay. They would represent a failed social project, an eyesore, a past to do away with.

Discovering Belyayevo changed my perception of these neighbourhoods. I now see them as lively places to be valued for what they are, and not only for what they could be.

To Kuba Snopek, the uniqueness of Belyayevo would be such that the neighbourhood should be preserved as it is. However, the main assumption on which preservation policy rests is that only that which is unique should be valued. How is it possible to qualify a whole neighbourhood made of reproducible components and assembled following strict guidelines as unique? Surely the whole paradigm of preservation should be reconceptualised, and the material link between tangible and intangible value acknowledged.

Belyayevo is still characterised by an important social diversity, which is allowed, to a great extent, by the relative uniformity of the built environment, and of access to the main amenities ensured by soviet planning guidelines. There are, however, clear issues with microrayons such as Belyayevo. They were not built to last: Buildings have degraded over the years. How could such a place be renewed without its whole ecosystem being put to the test? How could Belyayevo be preserved without being gentrified and fragmented, or left to decay? These are the challenges or us, as planners, not just in Belyayevo but as we work in, theorise about and ultimately change similar sites across Europe and beyond. It is one which calls for us to be as creative as the artists whom, through their art and their words, allowed us to understand and love the streets of Belyayevo.

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HOUSING

HOUSING IN MOSCOW: THE SOVIET HOUSING IDEAL IN MOSCOW

Felix Volgmann

Life in Moscow does not take place in the centre. Of course, most large companies can be found in the centre; and most trendy bars, shiny clubs, hotels and restaurants as well. The Red Square, the political centre of Russia, and many other key touristic sights are there, too. The central district is where tourists explore, where Muscovites work and where they go out. But it is not where people live. Life in Moscow takes place in the extensive neighbourhoods outside the city centre, where the city houses nearly all of its 12 million inhabitants.

Our trip to Belyayevo gave us a chance to glimpse of one of Moscow's many neighbourhoods – seemingly endless blocks of large prefabricated and monotonous housing, all similar in appearance, if not to say almost the same. Exchangeable. This feature is brilliantly picked up in the 1976 Soviet comedy 'The Irony of Fate, or Enjoy Your Bath!'.

We are all familiar with prefabricated housing from other cities around the globe. However, while in other cities and countries, these housing types are often stigmatised and carry a negative connotation of 'social housing' or 'housing for the poor', in Moscow – fascinatingly – almost everyone seems to live in such apartment blocks. Twenty-five years after the collapse of the Soviet Union, this pattern remains almost the same; alternative housing forms remain scarce. In Moscow of today, we still find the above described tall tower blocks, often arranged in park-like settings. Almost everywhere we walked a large boulevard was in sight. Communal areas, nurseries and preschools can be encountered along the way (though today often not well maintained).

But why is it that we find these buildings dominating the urban landscape in Moscow? What were Soviet planners aiming at when ordering the construction of these standardized blocks?

These housing types are the result of the Soviet ideals of providing every family with its own home and providing for social equality among the society as a whole. In the socialist ideal, cities were not merely about economic growth. The utopian approach to urban life under Soviet rule sees cities as a means to change society. The goal of planners was to transform human behaviour. Neighbourhoods should, by design, encourage social interactions and reduce the individual need for private space.

Many of the objectives that the ideal Soviet city carries sound familiar to contemporary debates in planning. The promotion of high density

apartment housing as opposed to (sub)urban sprawl; the idea of mixed-income communities; the creation of parks and public services in neighbourhoods to enhance the sense of community as a key element in planning new developments.

After spending a week in Moscow, I do not feel entirely competent to judge the success and prevalence of these objectives. However, something that struck me was the impression that there is so little visible economic and social segregation in the city. None of the lecturers and other people we talked to could pinpoint an area that they would refer to as deprived above average or consider a 'slum'.

Digging deeper in this topic after our return, it turned out that there are, to a small degree, some ethnic agglomerations of migrants from Central Asia and the Caucasus, often located near large markets. This is also where social conflicts and clashes between ethnic groups tend to occur. There are also poor districts such as much of Butovo; and prestigious areas such as Rublyovka in the Southwest, where real estate prices are among the highest in the world. Moscow also has more dollar billionaires than London or New York. But in sum, it still seems like the vast majority of neighbourhoods in this metropolis are mostly unsegregated.

Today, most of the prefabricated apartment blocks are in dire need of renovation – a tremendous challenge for a city with 12 million inhabitants. It will be interesting to see to what extent Moscow will follow the development pattern of many "Western Cities" and their economic segregation; or whether it will succeed in reinventing a modern approach to promote the balance between social equity and capitalism.

HOUSING MARKET IN MOSCOW: THE LONGEST PRIVATISATION PROCESS IN HISTORY?

Diana Maria Ramirez Daza

How did the fall of the USSR in 1991 affect the housing market in Moscow? This question was in my mind while walking around Belyayevo, between apartment blocks that look almost identical and between parks and other public spaces that repeat in patterns, as if the whole place was the product of a massive industrial production line. Soviet ideals can still be identified in the design of the urban spaces in Moscow neighbourhoods and even in the impact of the way the city develops today. While the strong Soviet impact on urban planning in the city is very interesting, I will focus on the specific period of transition that the city faced in 1991, with the fall of the USSR.

During the Soviet era there was no such thing as a housing market in Moscow, or in any city of the Soviet territories. A propiska, or residence permit, was issued for every person. This allowed him or her residence in a particular dwelling, including the tenant in either a temporary or permanent rental contract. Most dwellings were publicly owned and others belonged to a particular entity, such as a factory or ministry, which rented particular flats to their workers. It was prohibited to reside in a dwelling without a permit. The propiska linked a person not just to a particular dwelling but also to a city, it was a restriction on migration.

A policy reform was required after the fall of the USSR. In 1991, the Russian Supreme Court declared the propiska unconstitutional – mandating the privatisation of state-owned rental units to registered tenants. All registered citizens were allowed to acquire their dwelling at little or no cost, with the only requirement being to apply for ownership. Even though the federation allowed the municipalities to charge citizens who applied for ‘extra space’, Moscow city decided to follow a ‘no–charge’ model, in order to incentives the swift privatisation process of the housing stock.

The process has been longer and more complicated than initially thought; it is still taking place and producing inadequate results. When the labour market changed and capitalism arrived in the city, its citizens enjoyed differing income levels, and the monotonous, single-modelled dwelling was no longer suitable for the emerging high-income social classes and parts of the working class. In a Western model, the housing market responds to different demands, and the offer is usually as diverse as the preferences of citizens and households. However, walking in Belyayevo, just one of the numerous Moscow neighbourhoods, such choice is not reflected, as the monotonous apartment blocks remain. Even the new developments keep the ‘Soviet architecture’ of the micro rayon style, changing

fabrics, and external appearance of façades but keeping the 'multi–family apartment block' style of development, that can still be found across most Moscow neighbourhoods.

Some factors have discouraged the privatisation of the Moscow housing market, although it may seem hard to imagine in the context of a burgeoning capitalist housing market and the state giving away housing units to renters. The main issue that has limited privatisation has been the strong set of rights that tenants enjoy – such as low maintenance fees and property taxes – which are supposed only to be maintained for a limited time after tenants become owners. There have been other discouraging factors too, such as the differences in housing requirements between skilled and blue-collar workers, the low quality of the units, and the low return in the housing market.

The present scenario is very interesting, and recalling the personal experience shared by Alexei Novikov, Dean of the HSE Faculty of Urban Planning – the very low price that he, just like other millions of former state-owned property tenants, paid to become an owner has now sky-rocketed,

and still, just like him, many highly skilled Moscow professionals continue to live in the units that they once dwelt in as tenants.


M

INSIDE DMITRI PRIGOV'S APARTMENT

Arielle Polaillon

After being introduced to Belyaevo by the Polish architect Kuba Skopek and to Moscow Conceptualism by a researcher for the National Center for Contemporary Arts, we had the privilege of visiting the apartment of the artist and poet Dmitri Prigov on the afternoon of March 25th.

The building was as generic as its neighbours, standing out only by its recent external insulation. Some pigeons were waiting for cats to move away from a water bowl on the ground. We were waiting for the preceding group to come out. No names on the intercom, only numbers. We walked up the stairs to the 6th floor; there again nothing noticeable, right or left door? Difficult to say.

Soon his wife opened the door and the place became more intriguing. The high-spirited personality of the owner was not noticeable at first glance. Prigov's indecipherable drawings, geometric forms and prints covered the beige walls. I felt quite estranged in the place, despite its familiar layout. As I could not make sense of it, I came to think that these prints and objects were simply his way of turning a unit into his private home. To what extent is this disruptive? People like to erect symbolic barriers and protect themselves from extraneous intrusion. His were definitely impassable. I left the apartment, taking off my blue plastic shoes.

People invest in space to make it their own, in more or less tangible ways. Ephemeral, transient, restless disruptions are, by nature, difficult to preserve. The power they resist keeps changing. They can only barely materialise and translate into identifiable objects or subjects. As such, they can only remind us to keep a free spirit.

WORLD CUP

DIRTY GAMES YESTERDAY, DIRTY GAMES TODAY AND A CLEAN, SUSTAINABLE FUTURE:

'1+1 EQUALS 3' DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES IN RUSSIAN HOST CITIES.

Tiffanny Ing

As I am currently watching Toronto unfold the 2015 Pan American Games, I cannot help but wonder at the costs and benefits behind urban mega-sport events. Does the math add up? This is not the first time such thought has crossed my mind. When our tour bus stopped at Luzhniki Stadium—venue for the 1980 Moscow Olympic Games—the area was empty and cold.

"The state is using mega-sport events such as the 2014 Sochi Olympics and 2018 World Cup to symbolize modern power" says Professor Martin Müller at an LSE Cities, Space and Development series presentation. "They are building the 'new Russia'."

It begs to question whether using mega-sport events as catalysts for economic development and political legacy is truly a 'new' strategy. Politico-business elites in developing countries, such as Brazil, China and Qatar, are at the forefront of putting their cities on the world map. Russia is among them.

Planning for whom?

Vertical power-relations favor project decisions made by elites in Moscow. The federal Ministry of Sport, the local organizing committee for the event and private developers form the bulk of the decision-making. Project decisions are often governed by neopatrimonialism. This entails state resources are attributed to the preferences of loyal 'clients'. The social utility of a new stadium for ordinary citizens or taxpayers is forgotten.

Moreover, most mega-sport event organizers involve varying levels of corruption. With the recent headlines of 15 FIFA executives accused of bribery, it comes as no surprise that a host city has to play 'edgy'... And 'edgy' is putting it very politely. Professor Müller summarises more academically: "A weak rule of law is highly beneficial". I agree with him, but I would use the word "flexible", as opposed to "weak" to best describe how local laws are suspended by the state to accommodate an upcoming World Cup.

Paying for Russia World Cup 2018

The 2018 World Cup in Russia is the most expensive World Cup ever hosted. Spending currently stands at $21 billion USD. A total of 11 host cities are being revitalized to accommodate the tournament. Twelve stadiums are being constructed, overrunning the initial stadium construction budget of $2.8 billion to $6.9 billion (and still rising!). This hardly

accounts for the security and maintenance fees that will follow. The numbers do not add up.

In order to meet FIFA specifications, city officials recognize it is easier to bulldoze Luzhniki Stadium and rebuild a new stadium. This, however, was not a solution for the elites of the city. Rather, Officials insisted on preserving the Soviet-era façade and contracting 1200 builders to transform its interior to accommodate 81 000-seats. Does this reflect contemporary Russia reliving its Soviet palimpsest? President Putin has done all in his power to 'unite' his neighbours. It seems the crew is returning to the same table with more seats available.

Moving forward or hardly moving?

The 1980 Moscow Olympics were the first games held in Eastern Europe. It symbolized a new medium of Soviet power on the world stage, only to collapse a decade later. For most of us born in the 90s, this was all unknown to us. We missed out on Reagan, Thatcher and Gorbachev (for better or for worse?). We were too young to have an opinion.

Now, it is 2015. Luzhniki Stadium has once again been selected for the final match of the 2018 World Cup. Is this another "new Russia" or is history repeating itself? When does 'new' become 'old'? In my opinion, everything 'new' must one day grow 'old'.

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WORLD CITY

UNDERSTANDING THE WORLD CITY

Anaïs Asselin

What function does Moscow play in the global race for World City status since the demise of the USSR and the integration of Russia in the global economy? The fascinating process of economic and political restructuring since 1991 invites us to explore the specific tensions at stake in the capital and major city of Russia, gathering about 12.2 million inhabitants: between the ambition to defend and improve its position within the world cities hierarchy and the inconsistencies to this respect, contemporary Moscow appears to be a two-speed capital city.

In order to estimate to what extent Moscow fits with the notion of World City, it is first necessary to consider the theoretical literature on the issue. Nowadays subject of a plethora of literatures, the birth of the notion can be traced to 1915 in Geddes. However, the concept was later redeveloped by Hall (1996), along with other authors, to identify the characteristics of seven cities where trade and business are concentrated. Moscow was thought to be one of these political and financial centres. Rising interests on the relationships between transnational flows of capital, information and people and their consequences on urban scale, originated the "World City Hypothesis" which can be attributed to John Friedman (1986). By relating the structural evolution of the production and labour within cities to their integration into the global economy, he defined world cities as those which gather financial and global capital headquarters, working as nodal points of the world economy. This point enables Friedmann to propose a hierarchy of cities according to the concentration of these entities, and to highlight the tendency towards greater social polarization.

The research framework proposed by Friedmann raised numerous further investigations. Sassen in 1991 popularized the notion beyond the academic field with her comparative study of New York, London and Tokyo as major actors in globalized world markets over national entities. She highlights the double movement and dispersion of economic activities at the global scale on one hand, and the concentration of top-level headquarters and highly specialized service firms seeking for agglomeration economies on the other. These Global Cities are also engaged in worldwide networks, existing only through the interrelation to one another. In her words: "Global cities around the world are the terrain where a multiplicity of globalization processes assume

concrete, localized forms" (Sassen, 2005: 40).

In practice and in a context of worldwide inter-urban competition to attract capital flows, the World City paradigm and its translation into city rankings created mental maps of cities according to "evaluative and normative criteria" (McCann & al, 2013). Robinson (2011) talks about a fashionable framework playing as a "regulating fiction", according to what is seen as desirable and superior. Several scholars investigated on the actors and sectors at the origin of the race towards the World City Status, being the financial industry for D. Harvey, or a "speculative government" for Goldman (2011). Since then, being a World City became, for some city managers, an imperative.

MOSCOW:

A WORLD CITY?

Benjamin Walch

Since “the global city concept is rooted in theories of global capitalism” , applying this concept in the Russian context is questioned by Sarah Hudspith. Might this imply that Moscow could only succeed in becoming a World City once it has erased enough traces of its soviet heritage? Whether this is necessary or not, it appears that Moscow has decided to accept the rules of the game, dismantling its communist heritage and attempting to develop its capitalist features, a key example being the brand new financial district Moscow City.

But still, Moscow is a halfway city, torn between being a capital and a standalone global city. Moscow makes us step back and think of the competition so many world city contenders have engaged in: is standardisation the only way to world city status or should can cities differentiate themselves from the others to succeed, in turn defining new standards? Regardless, whether the value of Moscow’s competitiveness is assessed on usual World City criteria or as a site specific Russian way to World City status, there are plenty reasons to send the applicant back to work. In what follows we consider a few of them.

Moscow, at first, does not feel like a city for tourists. Signs written in languages other than Russian are few and far between, making navigation through the complex underground network a particular challenge, beginning from the arrival at the airport. Whilst some timid signage in English has now started to appear at some stations, these are limited and indeed, easily missed. The attempt to provide free wifi networks in the metro tunnels might have overcome these initial barriers to straightforward tourism, but a lack of political will and ineffective partnerships means that passengers can rarely get such technology working. Once into private spaces however – cafes, bars and restaurants – wifi connections are plentiful, compensating for the absence of on-street maps and council provided navigational assistance.

For residents, the quality of life in Moscow seems to be limited by constant traffic jams and an inherent lack of quiet open spaces around the city centre. Moscow is one of the greenest cities in the world, but this is only true of its endless periphery, expanding for many miles beyond the core metropolis. City officials have now begun to realise how much work needs to be done on this, particularly when considering Moscow alongside more typical world cities such as London, New York and Paris. The large-scale Zaryade Park project that lies alongside the Kremlin, as well as the

river redevelopment exemplify these renewed efforts in creating a livable city, providing residents with the long overdue public realm improvements and green spaces. However, strategic developments can only be considered the first step. Liveability, and the creation of a city for lingering must come through policy and attitudinal change as much as through tangible planning and urban design initiatives.

As for the economy, delays and pauses in the construction of Moscow City's skyscrapers – a result of the global financial crisis – have suggested that Muscovite ambitions rely on fragile foundations. Even now, not all newly built office spaces are occupied. Doing business in Moscow is also subject to serious drawbacks, as for example "the most recent Doing Business ranking by the World Bank places Russia 115th out of 189 countries for investor protection"2.

Furthermore, foreign and local investors in the heated real estate market have to deal with a planning system which is inherently flawed by poorly defined land ownership, inconsistent and variable planning regulations, coexistence and superimposition of hundreds of incremental planning authorities in Moscow, and poor communications and information to the public on the state of current regulations. These, of course, combine to create uncertainty in Moscow, and indeed any development project.

The combination of these three pressing problems in Moscow undoubtedly impede on its attempts to become a world city in the traditional sense. Urban scholars across the world repeatedly discuss world cities as increasingly created for a tourist class, with a public realm and well-designed urban environment that simultaneously follows a template and exudes uniqueness, and subsumed by international economic linkages, where business is penetrable and trade straightforward. Ultimately it appears that Moscow lacks each of these things. However, in scholarly debate these supposedly inevitable characteristics of world cities are, more often that not, reported on with a negativity and caution – particularly where utopian social values and policies are part of the discussion. So whilst Moscow may not be a typical world city, perhaps this is for the best.

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BEYOND MOSCOW

MOSCOW'S INFLUENCE ON CHINA

Yifu Zhu

A centralized post-socialist city like Moscow is conceptualized as an aligned construction to creation with the same archetypes of European cities, but with better results.

We can better analyze contemporary Russia and Moscow in terms of its consequences of massive historical and cultural incidents. The lessons from Moscow are very good ones for Chinese mega cities like Beijing. According to Luhmann (1998), the modern city experiences its future in the form of the risk of deciding and learning. In the dimension of time, the presentation of Moscow refers to a future that is both probably or improbably incurred in the city development of Beijing. The following paragraphs direct a two-sided observation, with a distribution of the modalities of Moscow being lessoned across China that is possible.

Sit (1996) illustrated that the urban construction of Beijing during the 1950s had been "to serve the masses, to serve production and to serve the central government" (p. 91), which was a typical socialist way of city building. Since the new socialist China did not have any experiences with urban construction, the only relevant experience the people could rely on was the development of the USSR. In addition, the initial planning committee denied western planning principles. Therefore, the planning in Beijing had to imitate the Moscow example to generate a socialist urban spatial and administrative structure (Qin & Qi, 2015). It has been argued that the historical transformation of Beijing's future has mostly been based on the shifts in people's decisions.

Guided by the slogan "learn everything from the Soviet Union" (Sit, 1995, p. 84), the most distinctive objective in that period was rapid industrialisation, more specifically, the development of heavy industry. According to Buck-Morss (1995), the city production of Moscow in the early Soviet time generated a new "dream-sleep," this time falling over the Revolution itself. Walter Benjamin criticized this sense of city, labelling it as "the illusion that factory work, which was a characteristic of technical progress, was itself a political accomplishment"(Buck-Morss, 1995).

Regardless, Beijing too started its way of modernisation by learning from the experiences of the Soviet Union. In that period, Chairman Mao and the Chinese Communist Party mostly made the decisive planning decisions. While the socialist way of planning for Beijing's development has boosted its economy and promoted urban construction, the demolitions during the process have also influenced the urban experiences of people in Beijing.

For the postmodern architecture and buildings, according to Buck-Morss (1995), they were committed to enhance cities as a social space, and the virtue was made of the accidental way that cities evolve. Because of several accidents during the 1990s, there were not many efficient urban policies whatsoever. However, the “actionless governance”, to some degree allowed nature to take its course.

It is similar to the Chinese thoughts in Taoism and implicit noninterference. The forms of recent architecture in Moscow are more or less following such ideology with considerations of mixed elements and cultures. Many public squares and community housings are maintained in a relative open environment. On the contrary, the recent development of Beijing is still focusing on big developments, which is still more akin to the traditional socialist ideology than Moscow itself. Clearly then, China’s development is not a case of urban policy transfer, as has become impasse in many cities over recent years. Instead it is the uprooting and replanting of an ideological dream.

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CONCLUDING REMARKS

Nancy Holman and Alan Mace

The RUPS field trip is always an educative experience where we find out so much about a city and our fellow travellers. The contributors to this report reference different aspects of Moscow; landscape, architecture, monuments and mobility. While all cities reflect ideologies Moscow is distinguished for doing so in a particularly overt manner. Here comparisons with Washington DC may be pertinent. However, with the fall of the Soviet Union the danger is to read Moscow as the remains of a 'failed' social experiment. But all cities are both of the past as well as the present, Rome and Mexico DF being obvious examples. The mass housing of the Soviet era may seem ideologically dated but modern Moscow appears to have benefitted from the absence of the extreme segregation of market cities. The Metro system represents a 'dated modernity' built under a different ideology yet provides a highly effective modern public system with a wifi system that London and New York can only dream of. Meanwhile, new ideologies, including Moskva-City, are questioned in the report. Time will tell how new ideologies will impact the city and be adapted by its residents.

We also find out much about our fellow travellers, the flâneur's (a few), karaoke performers (many) and eaters of ice-cream in sub-zero temperatures (several). Most important we found out what good company they are to travel with. Their reflections on the city were stimulating at the time and we are glad that this curiosity is captured here. Finally, we appreciate the enormous amount of work that goes into a successful visit and extend our thanks to Elena as the lead organiser and to those who supported her. We also thank the many experts from Moscow who gave so generously of their time and contributed greatly to our understanding of the city and its people.

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