

RESEARCH NOTES.

LEARNING FROM SHABOLOVKA

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Urbanism is about research, experimentation, and dialogue. It is the art of posing the right questions about the urban environment, and the science of making the tools to discover relevant answers.

The mindset underpinning practical urbanism is no longer dominated by intentions, professional intuition, and visionary concepts alone: Prior to the actual design and planning work, urban designers must now conduct thorough contextual research and intensive quests for analytical insights.

These developments in the field of urbanism provide a fundamental basis for the two-year Advanced Urban Design Master's program, developed by the Higher School of Economics Graduate School of Urbanism and the Strelka Institute.

For this reason, Anastasia Smirnova, the academic supervisor of our program, and Theo Doitingner, founder of TD Architects, created the "Learning from Shabolovka" workshop. It focused on contextual analyses of Shabolovka Street in central Moscow, the hub of one of HSE's busiest campuses. The structure of this four-week workshop had several focuses: conceptualizing and posing inquiry questions, field research, data creation/collection, and finally, the presentation of its findings.

Intensive field research of Shabolovka Street was essential for the workshop, as it was the main source of overall research data. Surveys and analyses of doors facing the street, the density of outdoor and indoor lighting, and the ways that coffee-to-go is purchased on the street represent new types of urban data and "urban devices" of a high explanatory power.

The collection of this data alone, even without the subsequent research, represents the extraordinary value added by this group of workshop participants.

The abstracts below summarize the workshop's main findings by six groups of bright and talented students, each with its own research story and amazing results.

Read and enjoy.

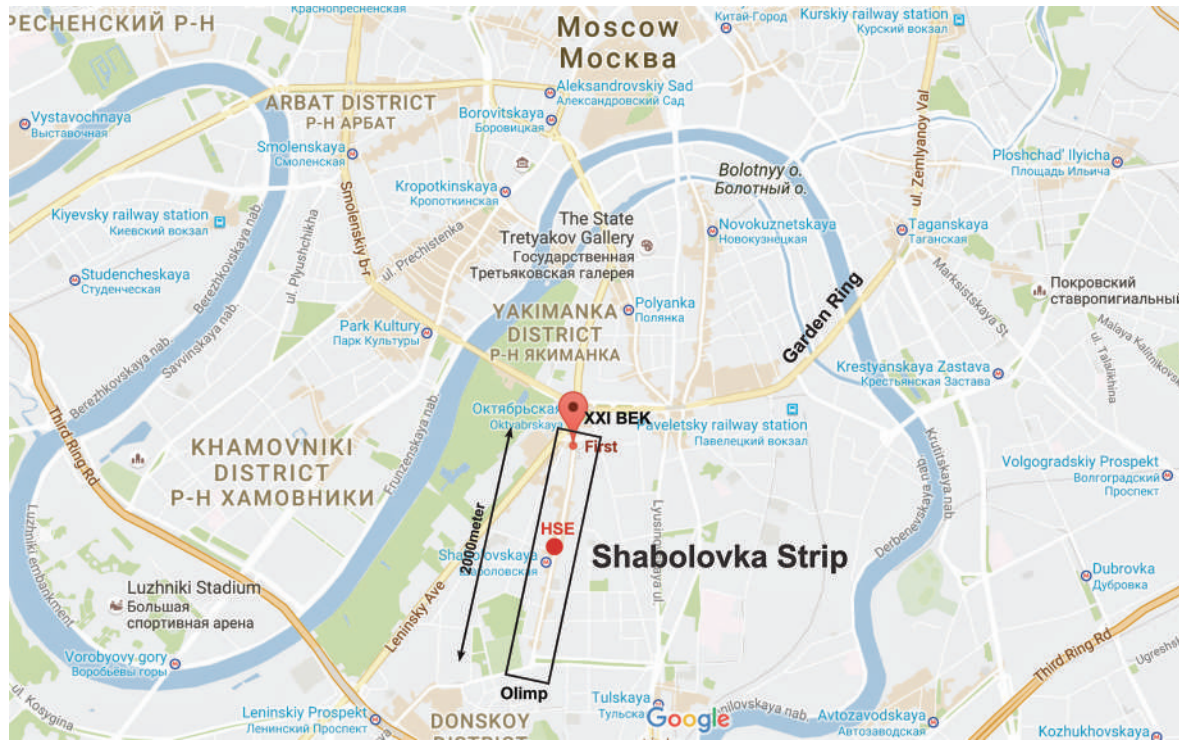
Alexei Novikov,

Dean of the Graduate School of Urbanism

Learning from Shabolovka

The Higher School of Economics (HSE) has operated a campus in a former silk factory at 26 Shabolovka Street since 2012; and during this time, about 3,500 HSE students and staff members have significantly impacted the neighborhood and its surroundings.

In order to gauge this impact, for four days in October 2016, twelve students from the Advanced Urban Design Master's programme analyzed Shabolovka by mapping the street's physical and social features as a strip (*Fig. 1*). They divided themselves into six research groups and formulated basic research questions regarding three aspects of the given area: buildings, infrastructure and people. Then, by examining and comparing their accumulated research data, the groups were able to monitor the Shabolovka campus's influence on the area and societal life of Shabolovka Street.



Map data©2016 Google

Fig. 1. Shabolovka Street is located next to the Garden Ring and borders Moscow’s center

Approach

A city, viewed as a whole, is complex, and analytic research serves to manage this complexity without reducing our overall comprehension. For this study, “Learning from Sbolovka,” we narrowed the complexity of the Shabolovka neighborhood to a 2000-meter strip, from a three-dimensional neighborhood to a one-dimensional area. This method allows us to take a specific sample from the city and helps us to compare this sample with other ones. Through superposition and cross-referencing correlations between samples, we can then find new insights into the nature of Shabolovka. The strip is a tool: It allows urban scientists to receive comparable analysis of urban conditions quickly. The outcomes and value of the research, however, depend on the parameters — that is, on the questions asked.

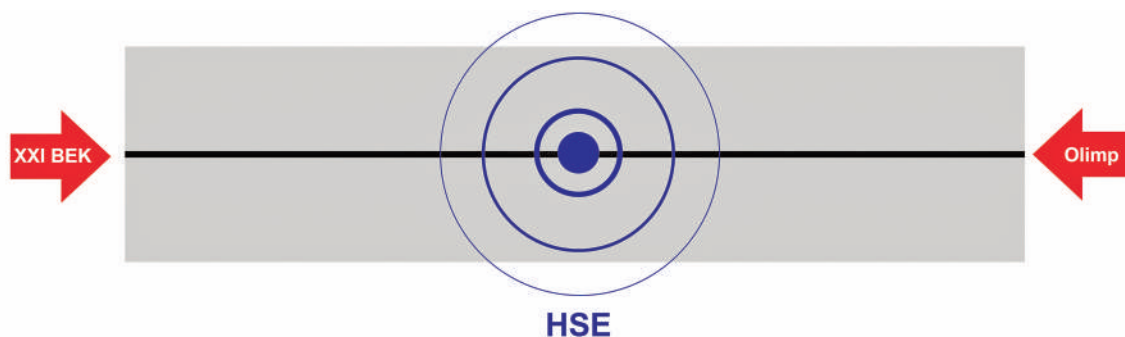


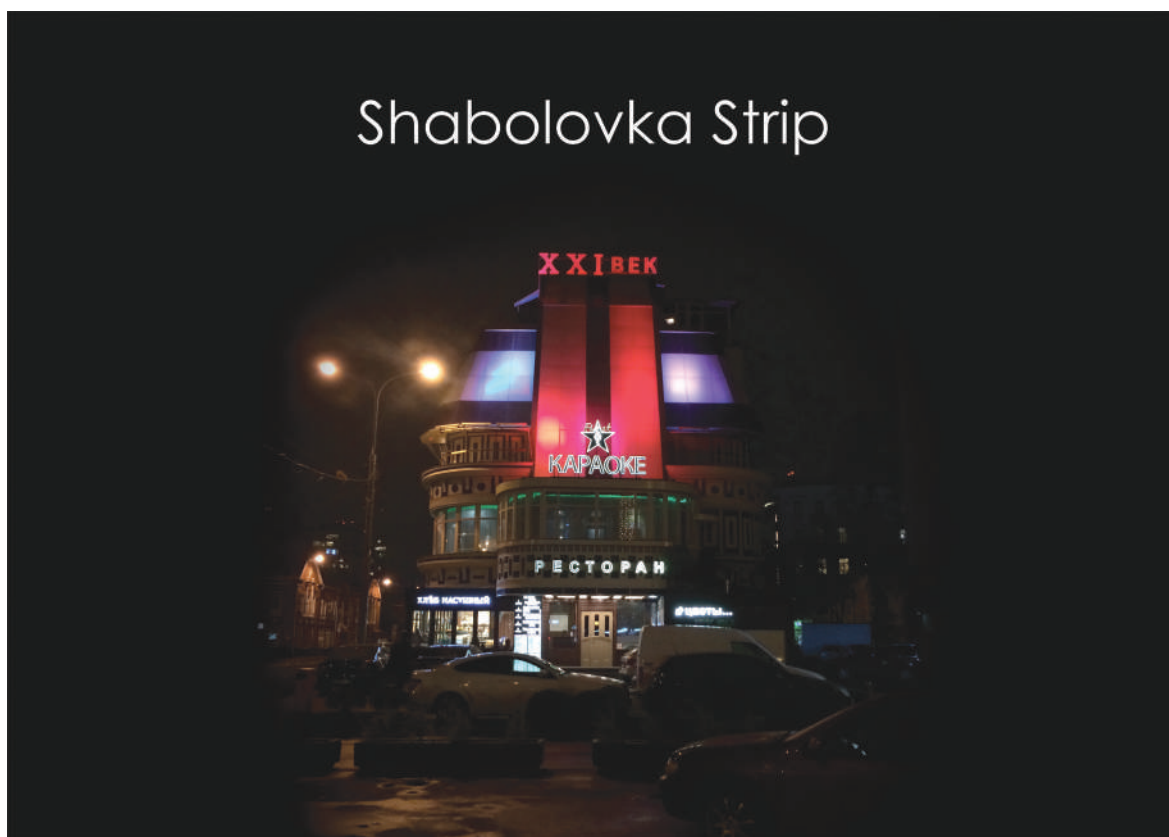
Fig. 2. Reduced complexity of Shabolovka neighborhood to a 2000 meter long strip

Parameters

Parameters add the scale-units to the strip and make the strip operational as a spatial research tool. The six teams that investigated the Shabolovka strip introduced such parameters as doors, lighting, clusters, operating hours, public-private statuses, coffee consumption, and daily regiments in order to acquire insight into three categories: building, infrastructure, and people. Following their respective parameters, each team developed a unique dataset for the strip. The illustrated analyses and interpretation of these datasets offer an interesting snapshot of the Shabolovka strip that goes beyond the investigated topic, shedding new light on the economic, social, and cultural reality of the area.

Conclusion

In order to bring further meaning into this investigation and the research attained, two additional steps need to be taken. First, it is necessary to complete and evaluate the set of spatial parameters; and second, it is also necessary to accumulate comparable datasets from other cities and strips around the world. Comparability depends on the position of the strip within the urban fabric. If approached thoroughly and with care, “Learning from Shabolovka” can grow into a much larger spatial-research project and develop the strip tool as an urban-research method and type of spatial litmus-test. The beauty of the strip tool lies in its simplicity and openness, which allow us to incorporate big data and small data alike.



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Fig. 3. The entrance to twenty-first-century Shabolovka Street

Theo Deutinger, Marina Sapunova

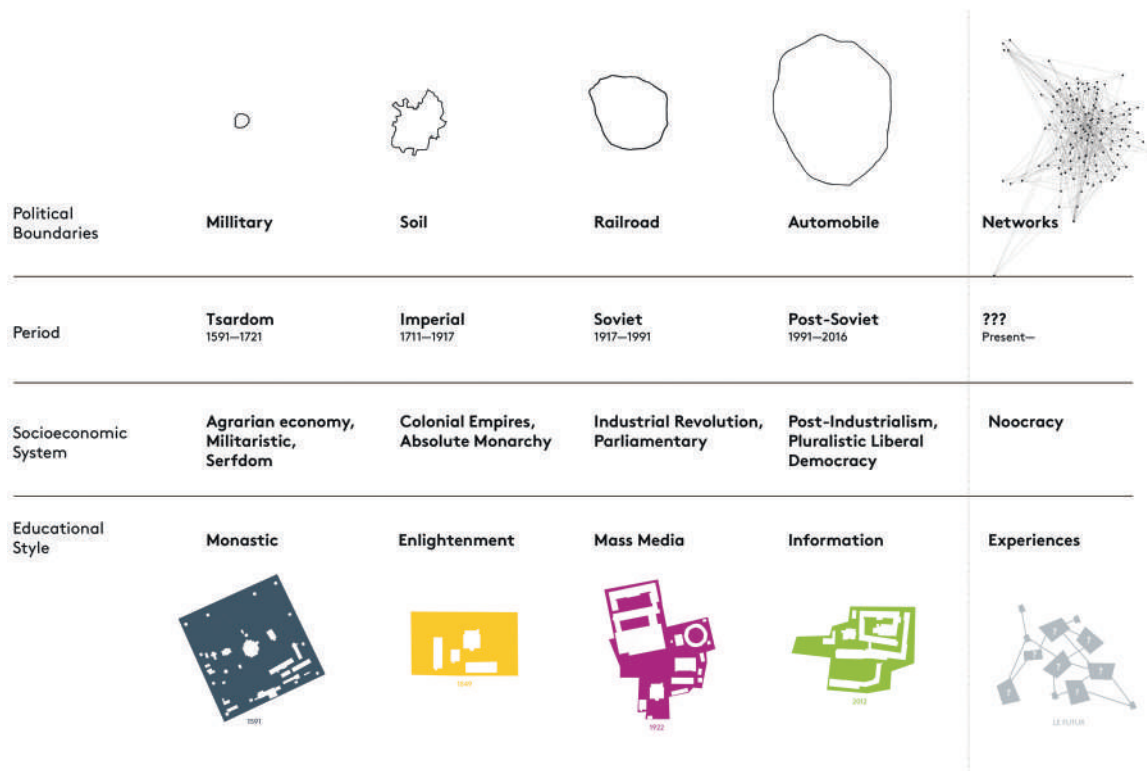
Multi-narrative anchors

A better understanding of the development potential of the Shabolovka HSE Campus requires an investigation into the broader axes of time as well as space. By framing the area in a historical context (Fig. 4), we can see how periods of economic and ideological paradigms have shaped the area, also known as the Donskoy district. It is possible to trace the evolution of many structures along the strip by understanding the effects of the evolving socioeconomic systems. As the country moved from Czarist-era to Soviet, then to post-Soviet, life in the area has moved from agrarian to industrial, and then to post-industrial (Fig. 5).

The area's development began with the founding of the Donskoy Monastery in 1591 and was then shaped by the road from the village of Shabolovo to Moscow. Wooden churches and houses sprang up in the seventeenth century along the route. As the area expanded outwards from the center of Moscow, major development took place when multiple industrial facilities began lining the street. After the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 and during the Russian Civil War, the Shukhov tower went up near the strip, and the area became the hub of a state-run media cluster. The number of manufacturing facilities near Shabolovka also increased significantly during the Soviet period, giving rise to additional housing and facilities for workers, which became another crucial element that defines the identity of the area. During this period, many pre-revolutionary facilities — especially churches —



Fig. 4. The development of the Shabolovka District over time
(<http://retromap.ru/>)



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Fig. 5. Multi-narrative anchors

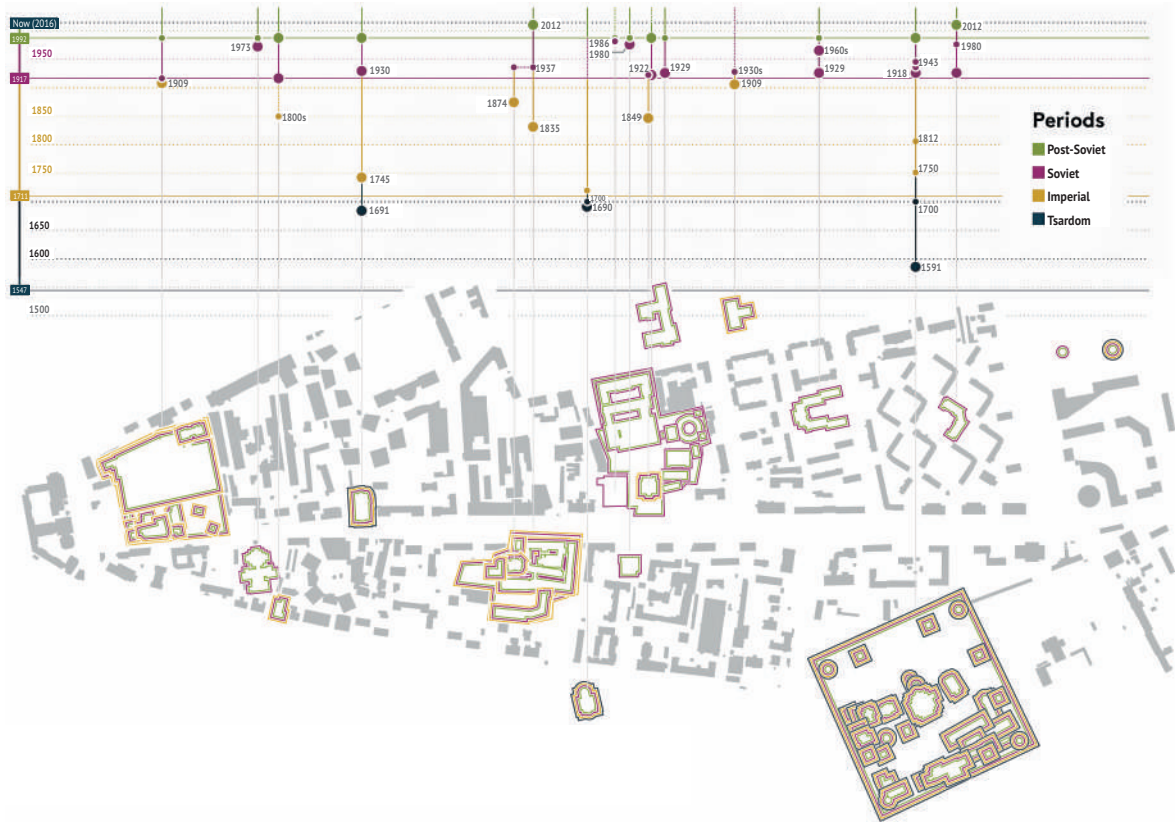
were converted to meet the new needs of the Soviet state and neighborhood. In the post-Soviet era, key changes in the neighborhood have been brought about by the the relocation of factories to areas outside of Moscow and with the re-conversion of churches to their original functions.

Another shift in the district came with radical changes in education. The monastic form of education was replaced by Enlightenment methods, which were in turn followed by modern institutions relying on mass-media and information. The rich histories of these archetypical educational institutions can be found around the Shabolovka area.

As society and economies now move from more traditional forms of education towards social and political networks, it is no longer enough to see the role of an institution as simply a “provider of information.” In this new economy, diverse experiences and narratives become ever more valuable.

From a cultural standpoint, some buildings in the area can be classified as “anchors” for keeping their appearance or functions through time. In fact, upon closer inspection of their history, these “anchors” reveal multiple layers of narratives and transformations shaped by the cultural forces of their times. The brightest example of such metamorphoses is Donskoy Monastery. After more than three centuries of monastic existence, in the 1920s, it was turned partially into the Anti-religious Museum of Art. In 1934, it became the Museum of Architecture, which contained fragments of demolished Moscow churches, including from the original Cathedral of Christ the Savior. Some of the other monastery buildings were used as schools, a leather-goods factory, an architectural workshop, and research and design institutions. During the Second World War, the monastery’s congregation funded the manufacturing of tanks, and some of these tanks were brought to the monastery as a monument in the 1990s. At the same time, it regained its religious functions.

Donskoy Monastery is an example of the area’s diverse history. In this context, HSE should identify and target places and actors for collaboration that provide the most varied collection of narratives and experiences, as well as traditional educational institutions. This will not only reveal the many hidden layers of history of the neighborhood: it will also allow for the creation of a cultural network in which HSE can take the role as the main knowledge hub and facilitator.



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Fig. 6 Multi-narrative anchors over space and time

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Perfect-mix

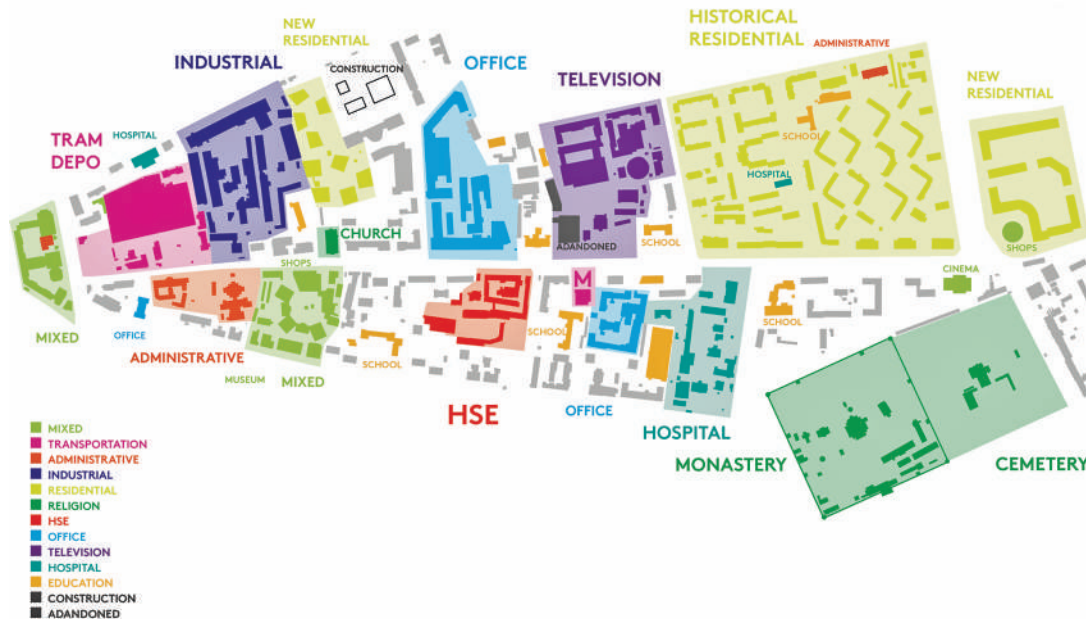
The neighborhood that has formed along Shabolovka Street demonstrates a long history of self-sustained living. It began in the late seventeenth century, when the Donskoy Monastery and the first settlements were built. The area around Shabolovka Street provided its residents with everything from a place to be born to a place to be buried — a perfect cradle-to-grave neighborhood. At the beginning of the twentieth century, this concept, which we now call sustainable living, was re-implemented through the ideology of constructivism. Factories, housing, schools, medical centers, a television station, and a transportation hub developed in the area to enrich diversity and to meet the many needs of its inhabitants.

New developments, including the HSE campus, have recently transformed the street and the neighborhood at a rapid pace. So we must ask: Does Shabolovka still give us all that we locals need?

As a first step, we filtered out functional clusters (Fig. 7) from the neighborhood and compared the space they occupy with the amount of people who use them every day (Fig. 2). While some, like the metro station, occupy only 3.600 m², others, like the monastery, shape big mono-functional areas of 197.500 m² that can even be defined as a solid quarter. One recognizes the extreme differences in usage: 1.600 people/100m² at the metro station to less than 1 person/100m² at the monastery. Thus clusters have to be measured in both units: surface and frequency.

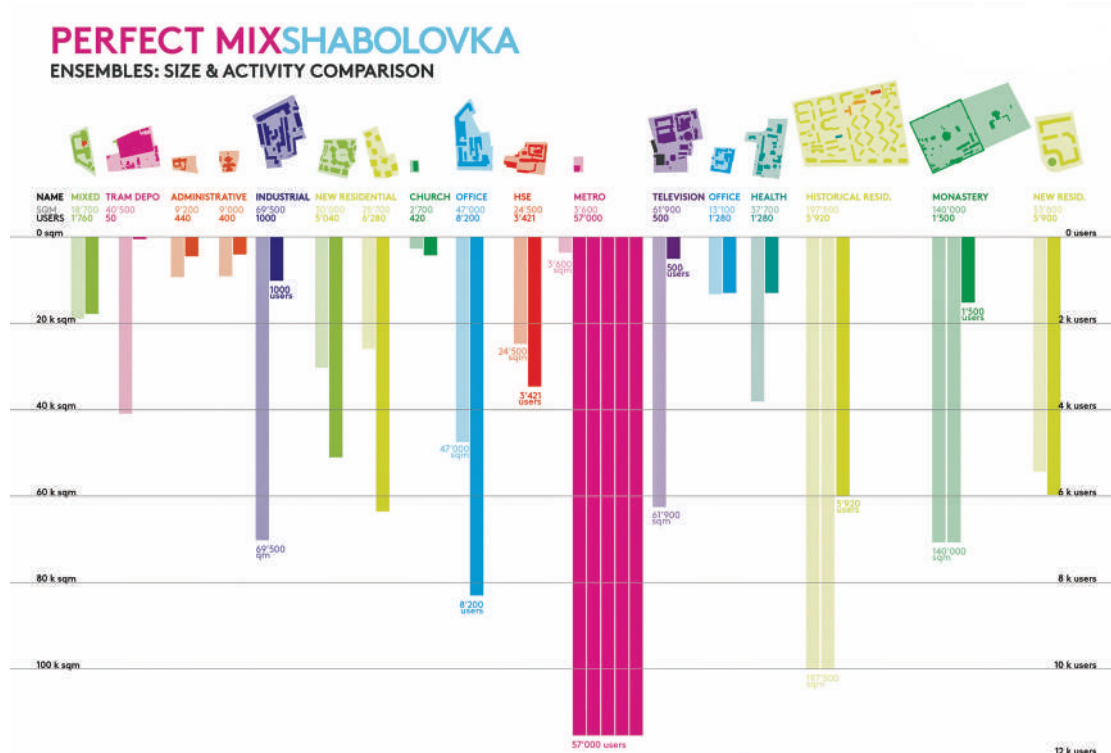
Filtering out the clusters along Shabolovka and investigating their function and frequency demonstrate that the street is still mixed-use (Fig. 7). However, new developments show that there is a tendency to replace functions that maintained this status with more and more housing; and this places the sustainable mixture of the neighborhood at risk of becoming mono-functional. Shabolovka Street comprises a highly unique mix of functions that is hard to achieve, easy to destroy, but simple to save.

PERFECT MIX SHABOLOVKA
ENSEMBLES: FUNCTIONAL DIAGRAM



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Fig. 7. Functional clusters



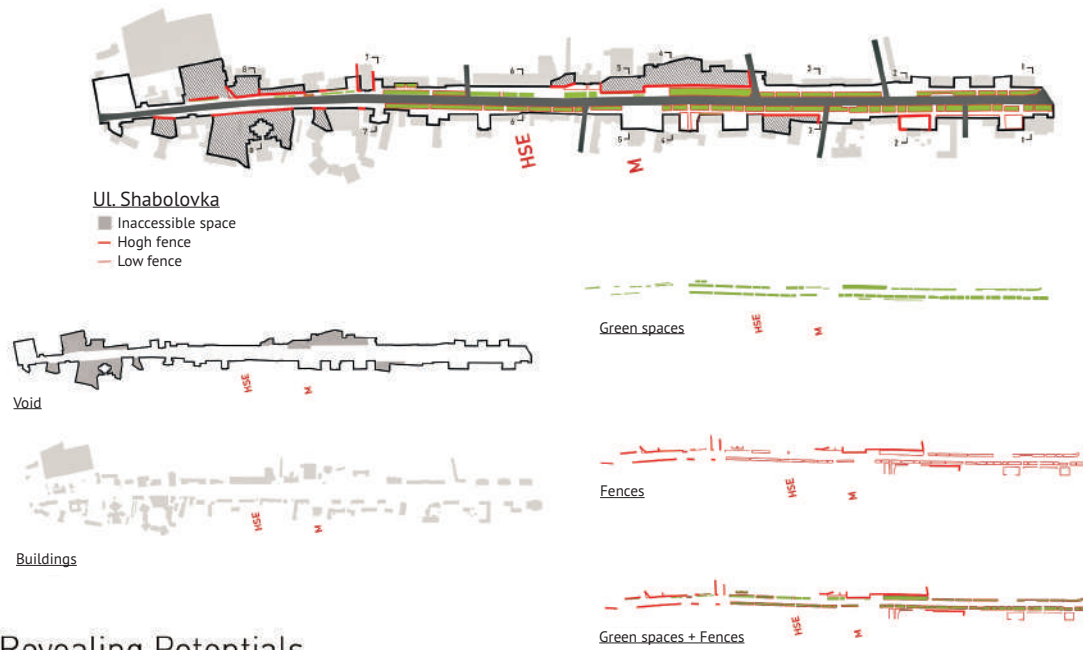
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Fig. 8. Cluster sizes and activity comparison

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Revealing potentials

Our initial interest was to record how the diverse nature of Shabolovka is reflected in its public spaces (Fig. 9 and 10). Our observations led us to conclude that it is not. Rather, there is a strong dichotomy between the diverse activities of Shabolovka Street and the monotony of its public realm.



Revealing Potentials

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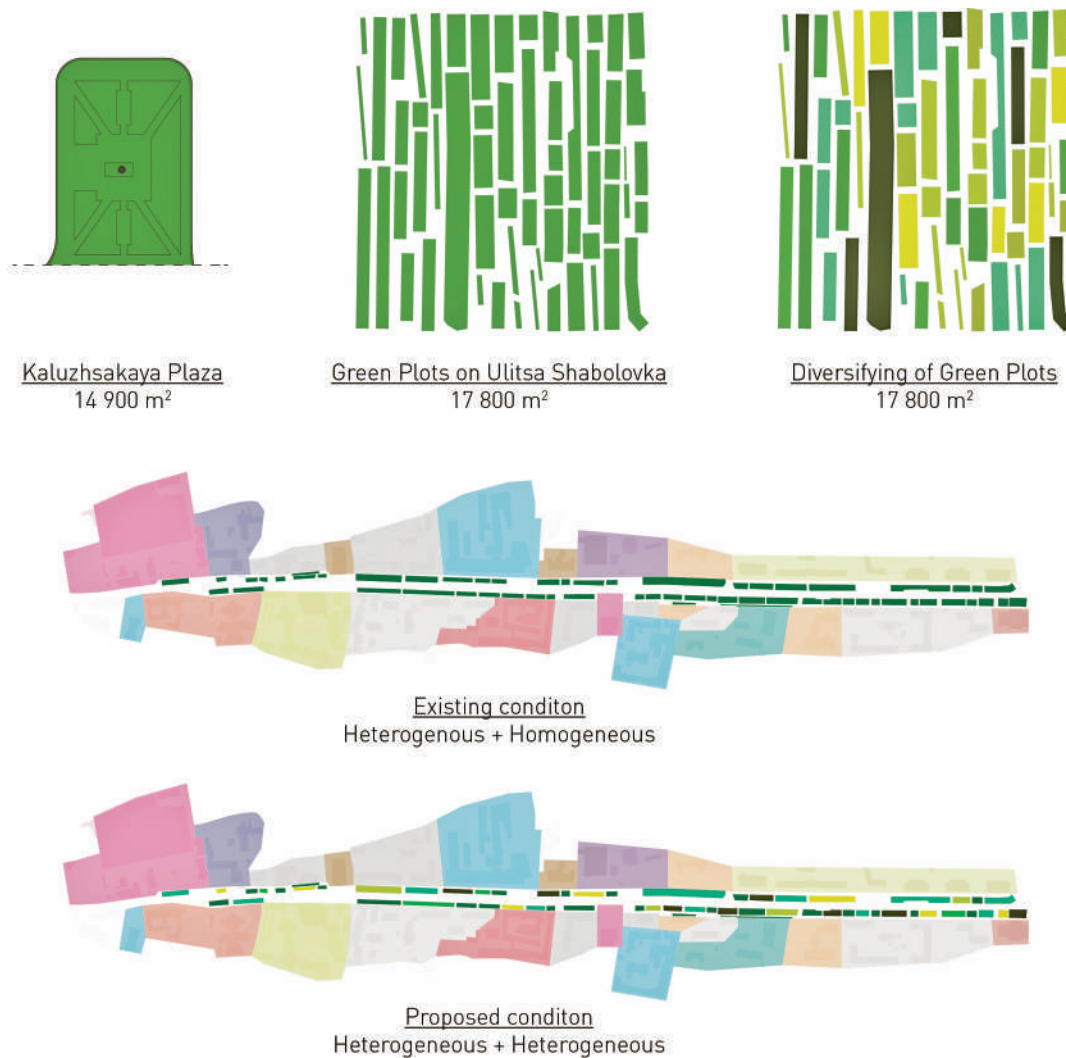
Fig. 9. Public spaces mapping



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Fig. 10. Public spaces mapping

We used the exercise to reveal potential spaces within the public realm that could be used to resolve this paradox. We recognized that Shabolovka has a multitude of spaces that can be used more consciously and efficiently. In total, it has over 17,800 m² of green area dividing the pedestrian footpaths and the road. This green area does not constitute a coherent space; it is divided into individual plots. These plots are consistent throughout the entire street, regardless of how the character of the street changes. Currently, 70 percent of the plots are fenced, none of them are programmed, and they are not distinguished from each other (Fig. 12). We believe that the green plots should not be rendered as homogenous; instead, they should reflect the heterogeneous nature of Shabolovka (Fig. 11). This does not mean that every single one of them needs to be programmed or developed; rather, we are interested in developing a framework in which the plots assume a role in promoting the heterogeneity of the area.



Revealing Potentials

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Fig. 11. Heterogeneous versus homogeneous



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Fig. 12. Fenced public spaces

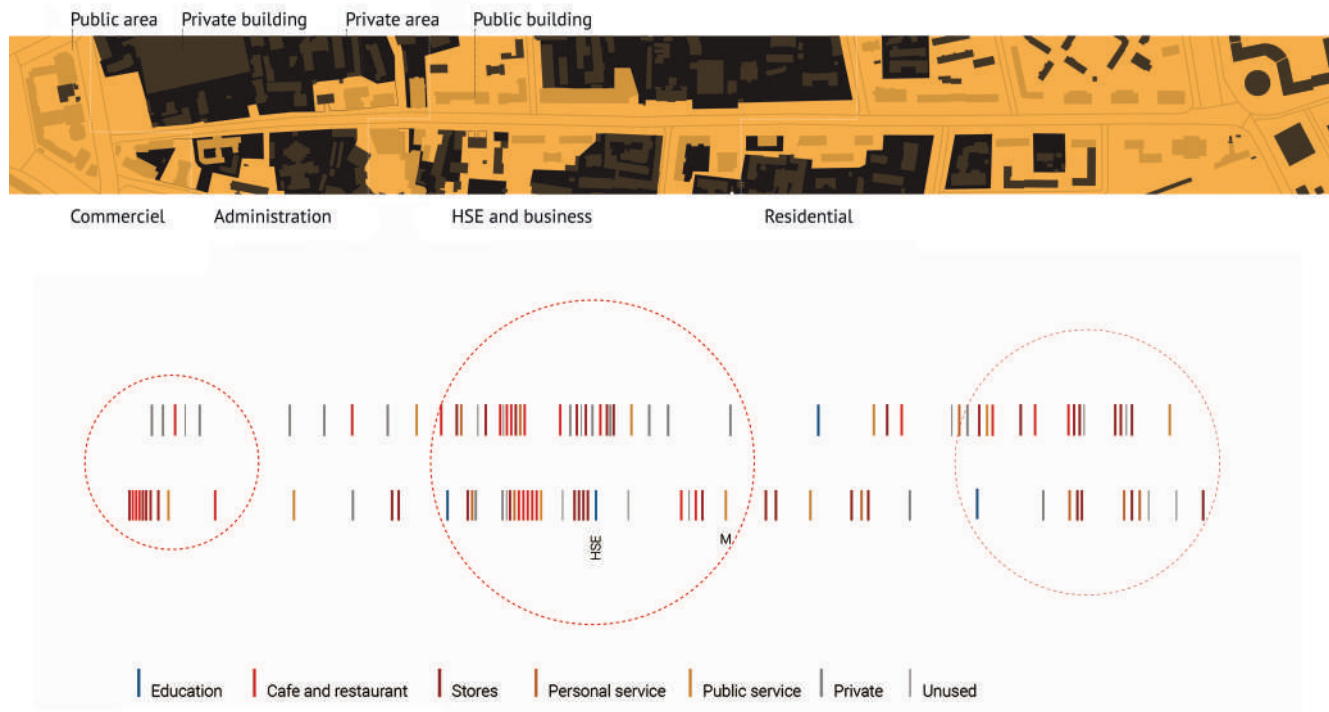
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Door mapping

The door is a building's most important impression at street level. It is always in between: in between the public space of a street and the inner space of an office/university/cafeteria/etc, in between cold and warm, and in between outside and inside. Collecting data about each door on the Shabolovka strip, we wanted to find the metrics that measure the openness and accessibility of the street and its services to people. We assume that the following three parameters are the most relevant:

- the door's physical accessibility
- the level of the door's transparency (in terms of materials)
- the intensity of the street lighting at night around the door

Out of the 116 doors along Shabolovka Street, 70 percent are publicly accessible and 30 percent are private. From our initial research, we could define three types (*Fig. 13*): residential, administrative, and the HSE/business area near the Shabolovka metro station.



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Fig. 13. Door mapping

It became clear (*Fig. 13*) that the highest frequency of accessible doors are located near HSE and the two nearby metro stations (Oktyabrskaya and Shabolovskaya). From this, we conclude that HSE together and business clusters can have a stimulating impact on the commercial activities around them.

All three types have a particular ratio of glazed and unglazed doors. The HSE and business area are mostly glazed and transparent (around 70 percent). However, the HSE door is an exception (*Fig. 14 and 15*). It does not clearly show the great significance of the university facility, concealing its presence on the street.

The nighttime image of the street underscores these conclusions (*Fig. 16*). The highest level of illumination clearly highlights the most active part of the street: the HSE and business zone. Within this zone, however, the HSE entrance marks a black spot on this bright and inviting street's surface.

As a well-established university, there is no doubt that HSE hopes that its campus will play a significant role in the public life of Shabolovskaya. However, its security policy is in stark contrast to this ambition. There is an apparent contradiction between high security and openness to the street. We think it is important for the university to re-think the position, policy, and meaning of its front door. A logical first step would be to replace the current design of the door with a more welcoming and inviting one.

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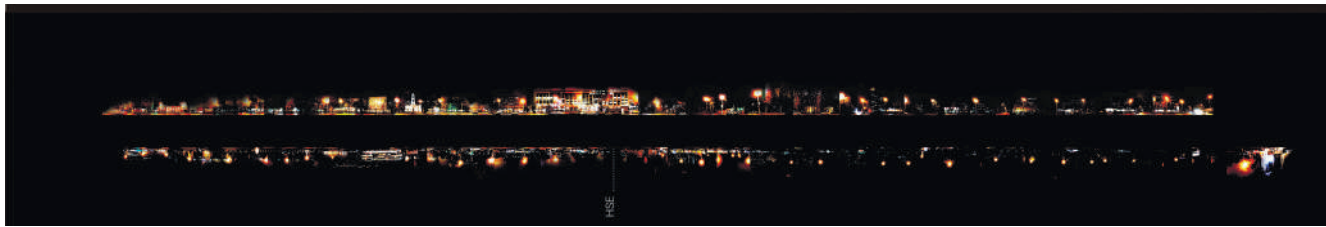
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Fig. 14. Door data collection and analyses



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Fig. 15. The HSE door, the Ministry of Internal Affairs door, and the police station door



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Fig. 16. Illumination of Shabolovskaya

The rhythm of Shabolovka

The public life of a street depends upon the services it provides. We began by assuming that we could discern a pattern of what is central and what is peripheral along the street by analyzing working hours and capacities of businesses and institutions (the number of people per unit of time).

The rhythms of activity (*Fig. 17*), as we call it, show us that the center is concentrated around the metro, HSE campus, and the several business centers that are located on the street. The area has a high density of facilities ranging from restaurants and shops to schools, offices, and public transportation. Most of these facilities are small and have low capacities. The periphery, on the other hand, consists of fewer professional facilities, but ones with larger capacities, mostly serving vast residential areas. In the center, a majority of the facilities have a capacity of fewer than ten people, and serving them only for a short period of time. Along the periphery, a cinema has a capacity for 851. The small facilities in the center are reinforced by an office space with a capacity of 10,888 people and the HSE campus with a capacity of 3,500.

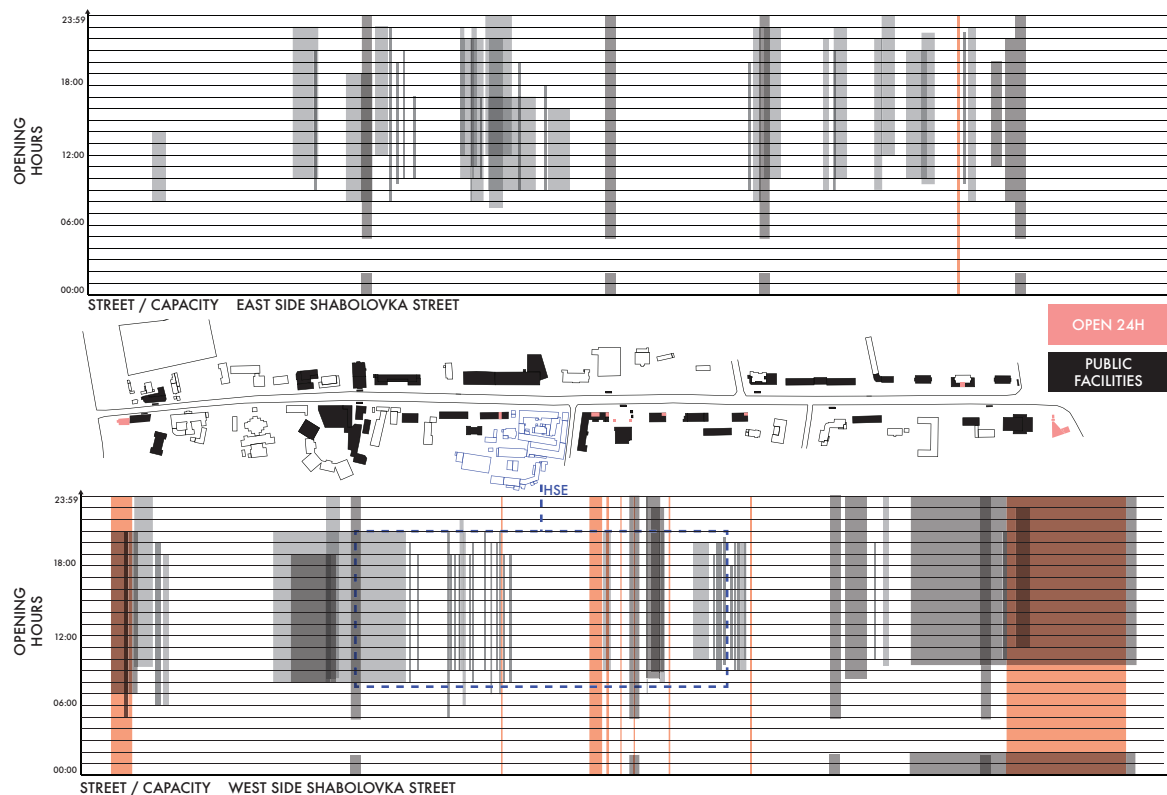


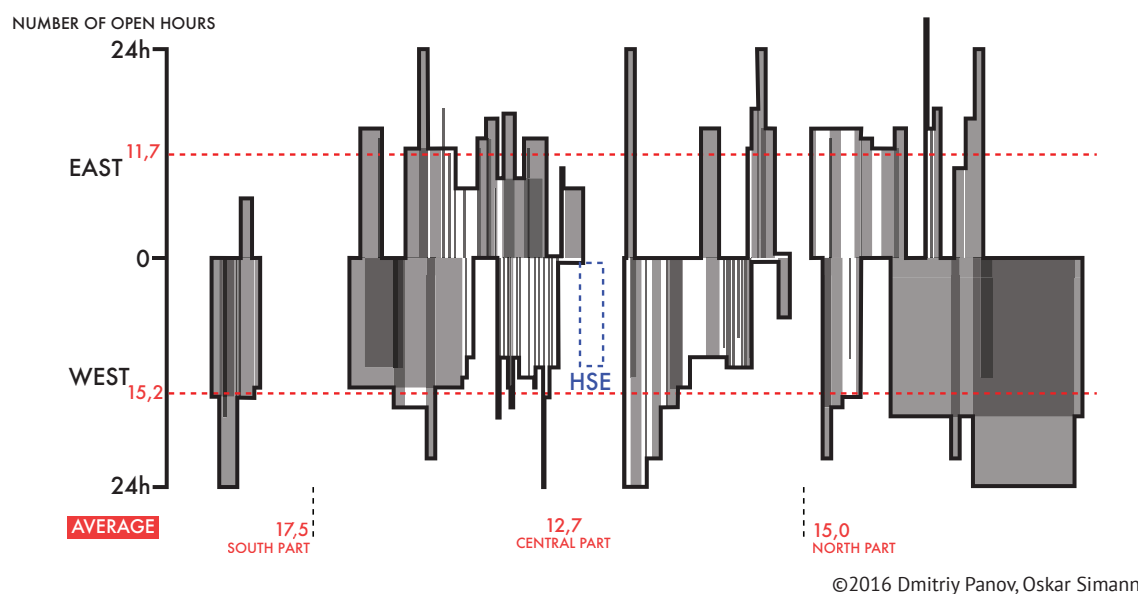
Fig. 17. Working hours and capacity

Source: Field research data.mos.ru.

The impact of the HSE campus is unquestionable. Situated in the central part of the street, it leaves a huge gap in the dense and active street fabric. As the campus itself is not public, it gives little to the street life and seems like a pause in the street's activity (Fig. 18). On the other hand, its students are interacting with the other activities of the street. In spatial terms, the campus takes from the center; but in terms of people, it gives.

The natural continuation of this project would be to conduct mapping with the same methodology on other Moscow streets and in cities all over the world to prove the hypothesis of the centrality index. From the current graphs, we can draw some conclusions on the differences within the street, but a larger understanding would only come after seeing Shabolovka Street's position in comparison with others.

We can assume that a pattern of a street closer to the Kremlin would show fewer activities, but much higher capacities: The GUM department store, for example, would certainly be off the charts. Elsewhere, say, on a street in Sweden where owners have to pay higher wages for night shifts, we would probably see no twenty-four hour activities at all.



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Fig. 18. Number of open hours

Greater data give us a more precise picture of what the pattern of a street is in the central, historical, and business areas of a city versus its peripheral streets. Revelations of this nature from other streets would certainly shed new light on Shabolovka Street's character.

Dmitriy Panov, Oskar Simann

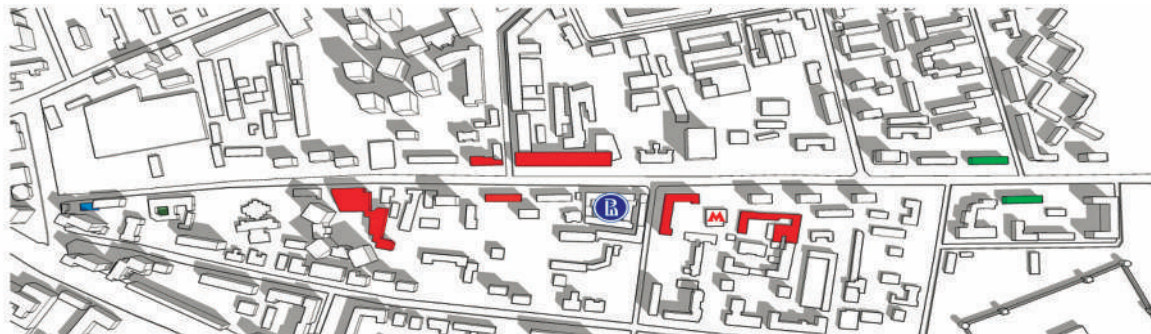
Coffee talks

Originally brought to Russia by Peter the Great, coffee has been gaining traction as a popular drink. Russia's emerging coffee culture reveals the patterns at the bottom of its cup: a glimpse into potential futures and directions in society. Research shows that within Russia, two-thirds of coffee-consumers are located in Moscow and St. Petersburg, revealing coffee's relation to an urbanized and increasingly interconnected world, with internationally-oriented and cosmopolitan consumers.

Moving on from the slow coffee of the past, the culture of to-go coffee has moved at a speedy pace, while the tea culture of Russia remains a constant element of daily life, especially in domestic settings. A look at Shabolovka Street can provide insights into society, as we examine how its coffee culture operates throughout urban space.

Coffee serves critical functions in urban environments and can be read as a social barometer in several ways that provide a glimpse into local culture and wider global tendencies. It also highlights a spectrum of an emerging type working in the knowledge-economy within the mostly tea-centered Russia.

Investigating the coffee establishments of Shabolovska Street around the HSE campus, we see that there are seventeen coffee establishments that offer coffee to go. Naturally they spread in clusters along the strip accordingly to three functional superstructures (Fig. 19).



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Fig. 19. Coffee-to-go locations

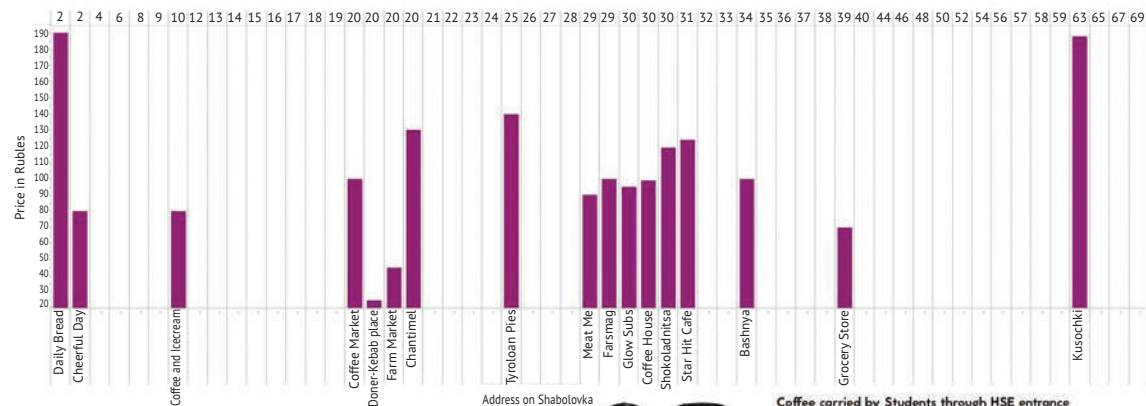
The coffee establishments are concentrated near the metro, central business areas, and the HSE campus, but there is also coffee offered at both ends of the street. Coffee comes at a variety of prices, ranging from 25 rubles to 190 rubles. The average price of coffee in the area is 101 rubles, compared to 170 rubles throughout Moscow, indicating that this area is oriented towards serving students and daily users.

There are only two coffee franchises in the area, and larger global brands such as Starbucks are missing from the neighborhood, which reflects a more local character in the coffee establishments. The cups of coffee also have a more international orientation, with 60 percent offering menus in foreign languages. However, HSE is not among them. At the same time, students support neighborhood coffee establishments, and through short interactions, tend to brush shoulders with neighborhood residents (Fig. 20, 21).

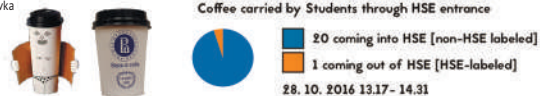
COFFEE TO GO PRICE BASED ON LOCATION

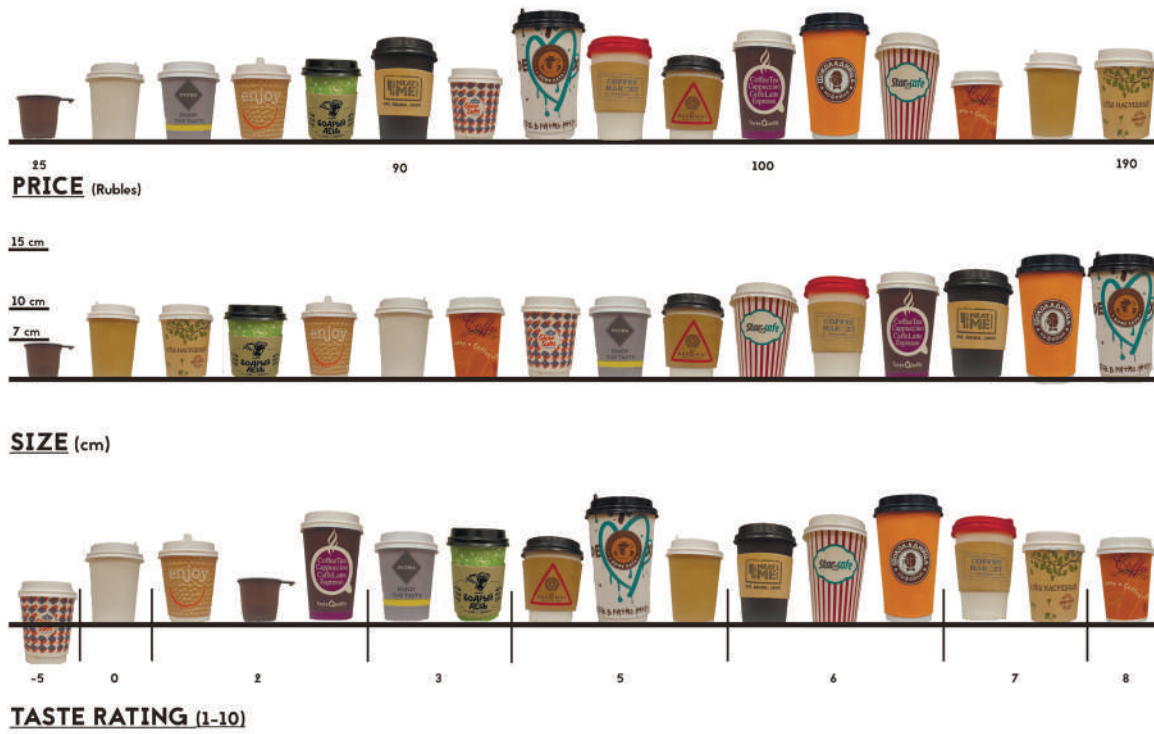


COFFEE BY STREETVIEW



PRICE FOR SMALL AMERICANO ACCORDING TO LOCATION





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Fig. 20–21. Coffee-to-go analyses

Through our observations of coffee establishments around Shabolovska, we are interested in examining the potential of coffee cups and cup sleeves as mediums for communication, awareness, and identity in the neighborhood.

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