City and mega event: transformation of urban structure

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Abstract. A Mega-event is an opportunity for a host city to improve itself, so Mega-events have evolved into a tool for major urban regeneration and transformation. This approach is often at high risk because, together with the undoubted advantages in the development of infrastructure, the city can also receive great losses, for example, in the sphere of cultural heritage. Also, the authors analyze other negative effects, such as the processes of "global urbanization" because the homogenization of architecture that these events leave as a legacy to the city. The paper examines changes in the architectural and planning development of regional centers of Russia where such global events were held: cities in which the 2018 FIFA World Cup was held and also Yekaterinburg (9th SCO summit, 2009), Vladivostok (24th APEC summit, 2012), Kazan (XXVII World Summer Universiade, 2013), Sochi (Olympic Games-2014). The aim of this paper is to assess the potential advantages and disadvantages of mega-events as catalysts of urban change. Both qualitative and quantitative research was used in the research.

1. Introduction

By the beginning of the 21st century strong urban transformations became obvious. They occurred under the influence of globalization forces which resulted in a new type of urban network – “global cities”. However, radical changes of its spatial structure affect most of the cities which are trying to adjust themselves to the demands of globalization. In this connection, changes in the functional component of modern cities and transformation of urban structure can be observed.

One of the new features of the cities, due to the influence of globalization, is arrangement and execution of mega events, also named as “global events”, events of global scale, milestone events, symbolic events, etc. A mega-event is a large-scale, internationally sponsored, public entrepreneurship activity engaging a long-term multi-sector organization within the host city and nation with the double goal of supporting overall local and regional development and advancing universal values and principles to meet global challenges [1].

At present a special group of cities is formed and it is called “eventful cities”. This group includes not only so-called “global cities” (New York, London, Paris, Tokyo, Hong Kong and others), but also the cities of lower rank in the line of global centers-Melbourne (Australia), Seoul (Korea), Durban (South Africa), Avignon (France), Montreal (Canada) [2]. The events provide the city with an opportunity to introduce itself to the world, as “it would like to seem”, to get international fame, be modernized, to improve its architectural appearance by construction of unique structures. Mega events have already become one kind of urban development policy [3].
2. Methods
This article examines changes in urban structure of cities where in recent years mega events were held: Yekaterinburg (the 9-th SCO Summit and the first Summit of BRIC, 2009), Vladivostok (the 24-th APEC Summit, 2012), Kazan (XXVII World Summer Universiade 2013). In addition, the objects under study are Sochi (2014 Olympics), Ufa (meeting of the SCO and BRIC, 2015) and cities which were host FIFA World Cup-2018 (Samara, Saransk, Rostov-on the Don, Sochi, Kazan, Kaliningrad, Volgograd, Nizhny Novgorod and Yekaterinburg) [4]. Among cities, actively exploring the experience of large-scale events, we can mention regional centers, not including Moscow and St. Petersburg, which carry the mission of places of symbolic events as the part of their capital functions. Both qualitative and quantitative research was used in the work.

3. Research
The birth of architecture of “global events” should be counted, starting with the first world exhibition of 1851, in London, for which the Crystal Palace had been built. Since that time, the organization of exhibitions and fairs and erecting of pavilions turned into a separate industry, and many of the facilities built for the exposition, entered the history of world architecture (Pavilion of Konstantin Melnikov at the exhibition in Paris in 1925, pavilion of Miss van der Rohe at the exhibition in Barcelona 1929, pavilions of Frei Otto and Buckminster Fuller, “Habitat-67” of Moshe Safdie at Expo 67 in Montreal, etc). Out of the last big events that caused global resonance in architecture, Expo 2010 in Shanghai can be highlighted.

Other kind of events influencing architectural rebirth of cities are sport events and, above all, the Olympic Games. The Olympics architecture and volume of modifications of cities which host the world’s sporting events have become as spectacular as the competitions and sports records themselves. Suffice to mention the summer Olympic Games in Beijing in 2008, London in 2012 and Sochi in 2014. Recently, increasingly visible is the tendency that one of the main objectives of the preparations for the big events is not only the construction of spectacular architectural structures, but also the overall improvement in the quality of urban environment, its suitability to further daily use. This is particularly evident in Italian city of Turin and Spanish city of Barcelona in preparation for the Olympics and Expo. Thus, mega events and their architecture are the links of the same chain, which in case of concourse of successful circumstances lead to the modernization of the city and improvement of the city image.

In Russia, global events and associated with them “large projects” have been spoken about in recent years when various Russian cities were identified as the venue of summits of Heads of State and major sporting events. In many ways, the adopted “concept of polarized development” contributed a lot to it due to the fact, that such concept means single financial injections in selected cities and regions of our country [5].

However, before proceeding to the analysis of Russian practice, let us look at the peculiarities of large-scale events and corresponding urban transformations in the cities.

Mega events constantly and with increasing speed migrate between cities, moving from one country to another. This is due to general changes in modern society. Our world is the “fast world”, which is characterized by constant changeability. High-speed dynamics of production of mega-events of global significance is the permanent property of globalization. In joint interaction with the modern dominant of visualization where the primacy of the senses belongs to eyesight, in a society there is an ongoing race for emotional impressions, amazing feelings, new experience which develop imagination and strike by visual effects. Therefore, the integral qualities of global events are entertainment, drama, vividness, expressiveness, symbolism, uniqueness. Thus, there is a kind of peculiar action, a performance meant not only for the urban community, but also for the multimillion global audience, which leads to the need of preparation of appropriate decorations. The city becomes a stage for global events, by creating the rich artistical visual environment and the construction of necessary functional infrastructure. For example, the 1992 Olympics gave impetus to the development of Barcelona. In addition to sports facilities and the airport, Olympic village was built for the games, clearing the
former industrial area from storehouses and packhouses. Moreover, the embankment and kilometers of beaches from the fishing village of Barcelonetta to the old port had been erected. In British Birmingham, which positions itself as “eventful” city, the largest in the country architectural objects had been built for organization of international business and scientific conferences. Among them are International Congress Centre (ICC, 1991), National Exhibition Centre (NEC, 1976) for technical and artistic exhibitions and a concert-entertaining complex “The national indoor arena” (NIA, 1991).

We offer to divide global events into the following four main groups:
- sporting (Olympics, World and European Championships, World Universiade, etc.);
- expositional (Expo, a variety of thematic exhibitions, showrooms, etc.);
- political (summits, economic forums, etc.);
- cultural (theatrical, musical, film festivals, carnivals, etc.)

The range of global events is widen every year, thus their classification is expanded. This is due to the manifestations of socio-cultural life in the city, constantly emerging new types of more sophisticated activities.

Each type of events creates its own architectural objects of event-driven infrastructure. For sporting events these are stadiums, arenas, sports halls, for cultural events-these are theatre and entertainment objects, for exhibition events - pavilions, for political events-meeting halls [6]. In addition, common objects for any type of events are the hotels for numerous guests. Construction of essential transport infrastructure (airports, motorways, railways, bridges, tunnels, subways, interchanges) and engineering infrastructure (treatment plants, engineering networks, information management) is of great significance.

We can mention an overall increase of the level of territory improvement stretching along the route of a large event as one of the directions in preparing the city to such mega events. The event route is a special part of the project, the space, requiring improvement of transportation route of the delegations. Exactly along the route new hotels, shopping facilities, high-rise office buildings are constructed, buildings are reconstructed, landscape design techniques are actively used.

Important conditions for the preparation and implementation of mega events are considered to be big investments and long construction period of architectural and infrastructural facilities. Mega event also includes implementation of investment projects, which promise large profits to organizers. For example, in Manchester (England) in 2005 the Festival of festivals, which consisted of seven events, collected more than 0.5 million people; herewith for 1 thousand GBP spent by the organizers, 38 thousand GBP were spent by visitors [7]. In many ways, that is why, the world is constant sharp competition between various cities for the right to host mega events.

Not all of these global projects performed the role of “locomotives” of urban development. As Russian sociologist E.G. Trubina mentions, “major technological and infrastructural projects in general, and related mega-events in particular, quite often have financial catastrophes that generate environmental and social problems, particularly in the less developed countries” [8]. The analysis shows that after the events the main problem is the problem of subsequent exploitation of “event structures” or “heritage” problem. If we analyze the experience of the Olympic Games, there will be a lot of examples where the heritage of the Olympics proved to be unaffordable for the city to be maintained. For example, after the 2010 Olympics in Vancouver, Olympic village could hardly be adapted to as commercial housing, despite the fact that in the reorganization of the Falls Creek district architects chose to appeal to traditional European models: low-rise buildings with small cozy courtyards, little streets, squares, extensive Park zones and outdoor leisure sites.

In Athens from 22 facilities built for the Olympics-2004, only one is currently used, the rest are in deplorable condition. The city is not able to maintain them. Stadium for 20 thousand spectators for tennis competitions is empty, cycling track arena, swimming pool and other sports facilities are not being used. The Olympic village meant for social housing after the Olympics, turned into ghetto. In Turin-2006 Olympic facilities, including the famous “Palasport Olimpico”, built by the project of Arty Isodzaki, today represent “empty boxes”. Here, as in the previous examples, the city failed to
sell apartments in the Olympic village, originally designed as to be commercial housing in the hope that after the Olympics it will be in demand [9].

Global events are officially hosted by the city and not by the state, so the subsequent maintenance of facilities is a heavy burden on city budget. As a result, the city is not only able to profit from this heritage, but hardly finds an opportunity to get rid of it. In the worst case, the heritage objects may become so-called “white elephants”, the maintenance of which may prove to be a disabling burden on the budget of the municipality.

To eliminate such risks, the city, once involved in a network of global events should continue to “catch” those events and “adjust” them to their territory in order to use the created infrastructure efficiently and not to go bust with “heritage” maintenance.

In order to attract global events, cities use different techniques such as a city boosterism, and theories of urban marketing, branding or imagology [10]. The city herewith is considered as a “commodity”, presented to one or other target audiences – business, tourist industry, international organizations, etc. To attract mega events the city authorities must constantly initiate mega-projects, which lead to the construction of major architectural and infrastructural facilities. In its turn the exploitation of these facilities requires non-stop attraction of new and new activities. This continued circulation, large cycle of events require new architectural and engineering ideas, project development and increasing investment for their implementation so as to avoid financial catastrophe of the city budget to maintain the built heritage.

Analysis of the arrangement and execution of mega events held in several Russian cities, led to the identification of related processes of urban revitalization. “Mega-projects”, which are implemented for global events, inevitably make adjustments into planned urban development. Previously developed master plans are not able to consider the possibility of holding such events (often the selection of one or another city is a matter of chance) and anticipate their impact so as to completely include any architectural planning transformation. For example, in Kazan, city master plan, approved in 2007, had to be changed urgently once in 2008, Kazan had been chosen the venue of the Universiade.

Certainly, global events contribute to the rapid modernization of urban planning structure of cities. New functional hubs appear, city skeleton is expanded and new links are formed. Planning structure is being developed in abrupt manner. Among such rapid changes the emergence of new community centers can be mentioned. Thus, in Yekaterinburg, a business center along the embankment of the river Iset has been built; in Vladivostok the development of the Russian island has occurred and the higher educational establishments moved from the city to the island. The vector of architectural and planning development of the city is determined by the nature of the planned events. If it is a sporting event, then among the city's public development there is considerable lopsidedness toward the construction of sports facilities and related infrastructure. For example, in Kazan in the course of preparation for the Universiade 60 objects were involved for competitions, more than half of which were new sports arenas: football stadium “Rubin” with 45 thousand seats; Palace of water sports; Tennis Academy; Wrestling arena “AK bars”; Volleyball Centre “Saint-Petersburg”; Boxing and Table Tennis Center; Rowing canal on Sredniy Kaban Lake and others. In Vladivostok preparations for APEC Summit initiated urban exploration of the Russian island. Golden bridge and Russian bridge as well as Far East Federal University have become major “eventful objects”, located on the island.

Another result is that the city gets to its heritage more or less formed infrastructural elements of mega event. This infrastructure includes elements of external communication-airports, terminals, high-speed link between the airport and the city, other highways serving the routes, junctions necessary to ensure high-speed traffic. Yekaterinburg, Vladivostok, and Kazan received technologically modern airports as legacy from these events. In Yekaterinburg “Koltsovo International Airport” became the largest regional airport in Russia as a result of its reconstruction. A new railway station, aeronautical complex, hotel and business complex “Angelo Airport - Hotel Yekaterinburg” with a Conference Centre and twelve conference rooms are included into airport complex. As a result, Yekaterinburg is linked with more than a hundred cities in the world. The throughput of the airport is
8 million passengers per year, i.e. its passenger traffic is close to air terminal indicators as in Vnukovo (Moscow) and Pulkovo (St. Petersburg) or international airports, such as Stuttgart.

By 2013 “Knevichi” airport in Vladivostok was built on a similar model with the creation of aeroexpress line (air-rail link), providing 55-minute availability to the city. In addition, three bridges, reconstruction of the airport highway – “Sanatornaya” station-Bridge across the Golden Horn Bay, highways of summit objects, complex treatment plants of Southern, Central and Northern planning areas, urban drainage systems and storm water drain were included to the complex of “eventful constructors”.

For the Universiade-2013 in Kazan a full reconstruction of terminals and other airport infrastructure had been made which resulted in its increased throughput as interregional hub up to 5 million people per year. Aeroexpress line was built to ensure the accessibility of the city center and the train station to the airport within 25 minutes. For transportation means of the Universiade radical reconstruction of the highway-road network of the city was made; record number of objects, among which more than 10 transport interchanges, 23 car roads, 73 streets, second stage of subway and light rail line were built or reconstructed. In addition to airports, “global cities” infrastructure includes a chain of high-class hotels. In Yekaterinburg for the reception of Heads of State and official delegations in the framework of the Summit, the construction of the world's best hotels Hyatt, Radisson, Marriott and others was anticipated. Almost 90 hotels were prepared, and as a result, city hotel fund was almost doubled. For the Universiade in Kazan for the reception of tourists and fans several dozens of hotels were built, including such well-known networks as “Park Inn” and “Marriott”. Two five-star hotels of Hyatt-network were planned for the Summit in Vladivostok located on the ship's promenade and Stormy Cape.

An essential element in preparation for global events is the organization of representative development along delegations routes. This includes trade and exhibition complexes, business infrastructure objects (offices), transportation and logistics terminals and centers. Such unique objects as Oceanarium, Conference Center or Opera and Ballet theatre in Vladivostok belong to this category.

Initial plans to bring Yekaterinburg in compliance with international standards assumed the construction and renovation of over one hundred and twenty buildings: hotels, roads, office buildings, skyscrapers, along guest routes. Out of a total list of items planned for the Summit, 80% were to be placed in the Centre of Yekaterinburg and along guest routes and about 10% were to form the shape of the road linking the city with Koltsovo Airport. For the Summit it was also planned to erect eight skyscrapers that were supposed to symbolize the new image of the capital of the Urals as a developing business center. Among them, for example, “Demidov” tower (multipurpose Congress Hall), “Vysotsky” Tower, North Tower complex “The Guardians of the Urals”, as well as shopping malls “Greenwich” and “Park-House” and other buildings, the purpose of which was to give Yekaterinburg a new architectural look corresponding to the status of upcoming events.

Along with the obvious positive effect from modernization of urban infrastructure the problems that arise when preparing for big events must be mentioned. Firstly, it is less controlled mass demolition of historic buildings which are to be substituted by new buildings and infrastructure. In history this phenomenon is called “brusselization”. The term appeared in connection with the massive demolition of historic buildings in Brussels, when preparing for the World Expo 1958. Under the pretext of building “the city of future” entire neighborhoods with historical buildings were demolished and modernist office buildings were built instead. Another distinguishing feature of the Brussels practice is covert project activities, refusal to open competitions and public discussion of projects. These two features of “architectural fit” of the city under the requirements of large events can be noticed in Russian practice as well. It is no coincidence that sports facilities in Sochi and Kazan and Vladivostok are anonymous. The authors of architectural projects are not widely mentioned. The reason is that the procedures for selecting the designers are usually non-transparent, full-scale architectural contests are not carried out or have been carried out not enough professionally, and construction is held with substantial amendments in comparison with original projects [5].
According to experts, the period of 2003-2006 years (the period of preparation for SCO Summit) was marked by a massive demolition of monuments in Yekaterinburg. For example, high-rise building of business center “Antey” was erected in the middle of the traditional Center of Yekaterinburg with low-rise buildings, on the place of the demolished old manor house (House of Falkovskogo). The problem of preserving historic buildings arose due to the implementation of the project of French architectural Bureau of Valode & Pistre for the construction of a business quarter “Yekaterinburg City”. The designers didn't take into account that the site consisted of several monuments of history and architecture, in particular, objects of cultural heritage “farmstead of the first in the Urals grower-breeder D.I. Kazancev: residential house, an orchard”. The most affected from demolition were the streets with objects of environmental development, not under state protection, but which played a significant role in city’s historical image (Rose Luxembourg Street, Radischev street, Hohriakov street, Gorkov street).

In connection with large-scale development in Vladivostok there was also massive demolition of buildings. So, the construction of the bridge required the demolishment of a part of the typical historical center of Vladivostok: a cozy low-rise quarter. The construction of “Hayatt” hotel on ship’s promenade also required demolishment of some objects. Giant construction, coincided with the APEC Summit, uncovered another related problem of urban development connected with the destruction of city development and landscape, panoramas, historical landmarks. Excessively large scale of new structures and their “bulging” in the development lead to “concealment” of prevailing perspectives and panoramas, destruction of the “spirit of place”. “Hyatt” Hotel, built by the Bureau RMJM, changed historical and landscape images the ship's promenade radically. RMJM Bureau was the designer of a number of objects of APEC Summit-2012. Among them there are two five-star hotels, reconstruction of marine façade of Vladivostok, gambling zone “Primorje” in recreation camp Muraviano. It hid the sea from the side of the memorials to the fallen in the Great Patriotic War, Svetlanskaya Street and Great Peter street, squares, thus it destroyed historical environment, which includes views and panoramas of the Zolotoy Rog Bay opening from all the surrounding streets and sites close to the historical and architectural monuments. Cubiform volume of multi-storey hotels overshadowed the promenade space by turning into “backyard” its unique historical ensemble, which consists of the House of the military Governor of Primorsk region, buildings and Museum of Society study of Amur Krai (Russian geographical society), new theatre, triumphal arch of Cesarevitch, Memorial to the victims in WWII, submarine, monuments [11].

Invasion of Summit objects into small-scale fragile historic part of the city, disparate in scale with its surroundings, can be considered as a kind of architectural intervention. Bridge across the Golden Horn Bay violated the perception of urban space, the appearance of the central part of the city clearly losing the engineering construction, audaciously in contrast with current environment. Eagle Hill and Golden Horn Bay itself lost its significance in the urban landscape.

One of the problems is unachievable construction programme of any event due to its gigantism, which could be explained by its intention to solve all the urban problems for a short period of time. Therefore, cities often meet mega events with lots of facilities under construction. In Yekaterinburg, many objects remained unfinished and unfulfilled for SCO Summit. Out of a total list of the Summit objects by the summer of 2009 year five of the eight planned skyscrapers (“The Guardians of the Urals”, “Ural” towers “Tatishchev” and “De Genin”) were not built. Unfinished objects were hidden by advertising banners and false facades. Many status objects such as “Marriott” hotel, shopping and entertainment center “Park House-2”, Tennis Academy of Boris Yeltsin, Chess Development Center “Ural chess Academy”, House of celebrations and events of the Sverdlovsk region, International Exhibition Centre, TeleTower with commercial multifunction Center had not been built by the opening of the Summit.

Skewness towards the erection of objects of representative architecture, of course, is detrimental to the development of social infrastructure, designed for the local population [12]. For example, in the preparatory process for the World Universiade in Kazan implementation of sports projects had been
adjusted to the planned development of the city. Numerous objects of transport infrastructure were “bound” to the Universiade routes and did not correspond fully to the real needs of the city.

And the last thing that should be said about Russian experience in large events have already become apparent, and that is the use of “heritage”. For example, one year after the holding of the SCO Summit in Yekaterinburg, the occupancy rate of hotels in the city was only 25-30% in average [13]. As a result of such undesirable effects in the absence of local (domestic) demand for built infrastructure the city introduces new ideas to attract big events. Thus, the company for hosting the world exhibition Expo-2025 began in Yekaterinburg, which will be attended by more than 37 million visitors. Typical is the theme of Russia, which sounds like “transforming the world: Innovations and better life — for future generations”. In this regard, master plan had been prepared for the construction of the exhibition, which will be situated on the territory of more than 555 hectares. According to the philosophy of the Expo, the international exhibitions Bureau must choose one city which, following the results of the event, will be able to derive maximum benefit for its future development. If EXPO-2025 is held in Ekaterinburg, the Urals capital will inherit a new city, or as the authors of the application call it a “Smart City”. Thanks to the exhibition city expects two to three times more bandwidth for cargo and passenger traffic. For this purpose, in particular, a new international cargo complex at Koltsovo airport is planned. It is also intended to link Koltsovo Airport and Expo-2025 by “high-speed train-aeroexpress” and express bus. The authors of the idea of hosting the EXPO confirm that the city, as a result, will obtain a developed transport infrastructure — roads, a second branch of subway, bridge over Upper-Isetsky pond. In its turn, citizens are concerned about environmental aspects of the planned construction, because the pond is the source of drinking water supply of the city. Heritage of the exhibition will be used as city infrastructure. The Russian Pavilion will be trade and entertainment Expo Museum. Medical center, Sports Centre, Children's Art Centre, a multi-purpose Exhibition Centre and Innovation Centre for children will be remained on the site. The final decision on the host city of the World Exposition will be made in November 2018 year. Yekaterinburg keeps the hope to implement plans on creation of a “smart city” on the basis of global events in life.

4. Conclusion

So, let us indicate changes happening with the cities which were made powerful urban “injections” in the form of rapid construction in preparing to mega events. Firstly, the complexity of urban growth and urban skeleton should be noted. New high-rise dominants appear, overshadowing established city landmarks. However, they do not appear in those places which were assumed in master plans, developed during Soviet period, in accordance with the laws of formation of compositional axes and nodes. Rather, in placing new objects, American model of urban development is visible, defined by the market conditions.

Secondly, figuration of compositional spatial relations in central part of the cities takes place and it is connected with the imposition of new “coordinate grids” to the established planning structure. Objects that define new coordinates of the urban space, require and other hierarchical subordination as well, both between each other and in relation to the last dominants.

Thirdly, the intensity of urban territories development is increased; it is connected with increase in height, development density, service objects. These changes entail an increase in car traffic, moving towards working or service places. At the same time “squeezing” of open public spaces, largely at the expense of which growth of commercial development, takes place.

Fourthly, the system of compositional modules is changed- new objects correspond to globality of cities events by their size.

Therefore, they have large scale and unusual settings for a historic city. New development often resembles “an elephant in a China shop”, which is trying to establish itself in a small - quarter planning grid in urban centers and it sweeps away environmental fragments of cities and architectural monuments.

Let us identify major trends that determine the above mentioned architectural modernization of “eventful cities” in Russia.
1. Dynamics of changes. The main vector of coming changes in urban development is likely to be more opened by its external “supranational” and “suprastate” environment. Due to big events, integrated by global processes, Russian political and powerful authorities try to make the rapid “revitalization” of cities, adapting them to the expected socio-economic changes, including modernization of transport and engineering infrastructure, development of new huge territories, demolition of decrepit buildings or buildings which simply got “under the hot hand” so as to build commercial facilities instead. Tangible obstacle to all large-scale events is typical inertia of urban development processes. City, formed under the Socialist formation, hardly perceives the speed and volume of new construction of important structural elements. Impatience in attempts to modernize leads to obvious conflict of “new” and “old” and to results, the essence of which, is that huge budgetary resources had been put into renovation, but “there is no happiness so far as they say”. City structure must have time to adjust to the new socio-economic relations in a market economy of the consumer society, undergo necessary interim stages of transformation.

2. Problems of city infrastructure. It has become commonplace to say that for sustainable urban development it is necessary to have an established and efficient infrastructure. This situation is even more important for the city, hosting global event. Cities compete in accordance with the standard scale: availability of quality roads, development condition, quality utilities and landscape level of the city. Infrastructure is one of the main starting points related to which the selection of the cities to host global events is being made.

However, in Russian cities, unlike Western and many Asian cities today this crucial basis (urban infrastructure, relevant to international requirements) is not built, which is a sign of unsustainable development and even crisis condition. In Yekaterinburg, Vladivostok, Kazan in connection with preparation to political and sporting events the possibility to modernize infrastructure was taken in preparation for international events; roads and bridges were built, power stations, electric transmission lines, gas pipelines, sewage treatment plants were constructed.

However, when it is alleged that global events are a catalyst for urban development, it should be emphasized that this preference will be given to the arrangement of fragments of the city often to the detriment of comprehensive urban planning. Only those objects are constructed, which can be attributed to the “globalization” infrastructure: airports, linking them with the city, motorways, network of interurban roads, whose configuration is identified in accordance with event routes, tourist infrastructure. Moreover, the construction of high-rise dominant offices, construction of new cultural, trade, exhibition and entertainment centers should be mentioned. In other words, the city is being developed fragmentarily, solving the problems of special places but not the entire territory. And for residents, the most important things are quality of housing, social services, development of courtyards, and comfort of the city environment. However, the mega-projects consume resources that could be used for a really important decision for the city or region.

3. Search for architectural identity. The world's largest centers are similar to each other by their already established global infrastructure. Competition between them goes on the level of identity, it is important to find the features that distinguish a particular city, and attract the attention of the organizers of the biggest events to its singularity. Architectural uniqueness becomes an additional advantage of the city, the heart of the so-called “genius loci”, which can be used to organize large events. Often, however, the construction boom in mega-projects implementation destroys architectural monuments and fragments of the city environment and landscape, which formed the city authenticity. This trend is supported by many leading architects, claiming that “global architecture is much more compelling product than the national one”.

Are the Russian cities under study similar? Of course, not. Each “ingenious locus” is revealed through the attitude of the urban landscape, its scale and stylistic features of buildings that create the architectural identity and individuality of the city. The main manifestations of the national identity of places traditionally are historical buildings, forming a special atmosphere, and temples, which are usually located in the central, gravity points of urban space. “Irregular” and asymmetrical shapes,
unusual geometry of urban spaces are those characteristics that determine the intensity, articulation of architectural urban identification.

Discussion of future changes related to globalization in Russian cities becomes more important than ever. The technology of mega events for rapid modernization of cities is already tested and continues its development. Herewith, we should remember, that the construction lobby in Russia is one of the most powerful ones. The mega event is an occasion to get substantial funding from the State, orders, credits, benefits. Undoubtedly, and in the future, implementation of investments will remain a powerful factor feeding “love for large–scale forms”, which is so typical of our country.

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