

# Layering, Embedding or Ignoring: Interaction of Master Planning With Existing Urban Planning System In Russia

Sofia Borushkina, Politecnico di Milano (2019-22)  
M. Bricocoli (promoter)

Anton Gorodnichev, HSE University (2019-22)  
A. Puzanov (promoter)

abstract: This paper discusses the recent introduction of master planning tool in the Russian system of urban planning. Public authorities claim that under obsolescence and rigidity of the existing system of spatial planning master plans should become an effective solution for urban growth and development. Despite all the attention, published master plans have an unclear legal status and their introduction often results in some degree of overlap and blurring with existing spatial development institutions.

The research critically examines i) how master plans are (not?) being incorporated in existing urban planning institutes ii) the reasons of master planning practice emergence. Going beyond transitional frameworks, the study discusses institutional change in urban planning in a post-socialist city.

keywords: Russia, urban planning, post-socialist cities, urban governance

## Introduction

“For developing cities a general plan becomes an obstacle... a master plan is needed: a spatial vision of the city’s development, not as detailed as required by the current legislation” – commented Khusnullin, Deputy Mayor of Moscow at that time and present Deputy Prime Minister of Russia for Construction and Regional Development<sup>1</sup>. Claiming the obsolescence of the current urban planning system and the necessity to create a new tool for spatial development became mainstream after the presidential instructions to “propose approach for the shift from the general plan towards a document defining the strategic directions of spatial development”<sup>2</sup>.

We consider the changes in Russian urban planning system from new institutionalism framework that provides a tool for exploring the evolution of the institutions, their adaptation to changing external conditions, and actors’ interventions<sup>3</sup>. Particularly significant institutional changes in urban governance and planning systems have taken place in the former socialist cities of Central and Eastern Europe<sup>4</sup>.

The system of spatial planning after the transition period of the 1990s is a mixture of traditional socialist institutions and imported Western ones that “coexist and conflict with each other”<sup>5</sup>. Contemporary spatial planning system in Russia has developed in the mid-2000s as a part of a wider process of reforms and resulted in a new urban planning code adoption in 2004. Urban planning system is now regulated by federal legislation, while the power to develop, approve and implement two main documents – general plans and zoning codes – was transferred to the local governments.

At the same time, a process of deliberate weakening of municipal power – the so-called municipal counter-reform – has begun, when city governments were incorporated into so-called ‘vertical of power’ subordinated to governors appointed by the president<sup>6</sup>. The culmination of this practice were changes in the federal law on local self-government, allowing regions to take away the powers of cities in urban planning<sup>7</sup>.

The existing territorial planning tools do not satisfy regional governments that are actually in charge of urban development. At the same period, urban development was introduced into the federal agenda through city-centric growth narratives and the ‘metropolitan turn’, resulting in the adoption of the so-called National Projects, including among other things housing, urban environment, smart cities, public transport, etc<sup>8</sup>. The unit of spatial planning is agglomeration, not the separate city; major part of National and Federal projects are to be planned and implemented on agglomeration level. The regional governments are now in charge of urban development, while city mayors remain on the sidelines; however, no new tools for planning and managing urban spatial development have been created to help regional authorities achieve development goals. Discussion of urbanized territories management tools has intensified in the public discourse.

Therefore, the interest to alternative urban planning tool, without the disadvantages of a post-transit general plan has emerged<sup>9</sup>. Master plans are used as a city- or agglomeration-level spatial development plans, establishing future vision of urban development. Although the implementation of master plan can go only through traditional planning

documents, the public authorities now have an instrument for analysis and solutions development both at the city and agglomeration level. In this sense, masterplan is a response to the limitations of the established spatial planning system. We conceptualize master plans in Russian urban planning practice as a city-level strategic document that allows public regional and local authorities to work under limitations of the existing urban planning system. This research seeks to develop under-researched empirical topic of urban planning institutions change after the end of the transition period. As we intend to avoid looking for specifically post-socialist expressions of urbanism as exceptional cases, this research contributes to the understanding of contemporary post-socialist city while “splintering the post-socialist urban world”<sup>10</sup>.

To sketch out the main contours of master planning practice in contemporary Russia we employ a legal and institutional analysis surrounding the incorporation of master planning approach. Case analysis of several published master plans gives additional evidence and helps to achieve a comprehensive picture of changing urban planning practice. The paper is structured as follows. Section 2 seeks to investigate the nature master planning practice emergence. In particular, Section 2.1 starts with a discussion of the place of master plans in the Russian urban planning system. Section 2.2 sets up the cases in order to define the key goals, approaches of the created master plans. Section 3 seeks to hypothesise the reasons of this new planning instrument introduction.

## **Towards roll-out of the master-plan**

### Incorporation of master plans in existing urban planning institutions

The term ‘master plan’ in contemporary Russian urban planning practice is usually referred to two types of projects: master plan of the territory or master plan of the city<sup>11</sup>. While the first refers to a conceptual plan of new development or redevelopment of a part of the city, usually financed by a private developer, the latter represents a strategic document for the spatial development of the whole city that can be developed on request of city administration, NGOs, private developers and other actors. This article focuses only on city-level master plans that complement and compete with existing urban planning tools.

The position of the master plan in the modern system of urban planning institutions can be characterized as layering – creation of new policy without the elimination of old one<sup>12</sup>. Although during the 2010s, master plan was viewed as an institution that would replace the general plan, now it rather complements the existing urban planning system and meets its specific objectives. The benchmark for such objectives can be found in the first Russian master plan of the city of Perm (fig. 2), that “disseminated principles formed in other countries through decades” among local professionals, for whom “this way of reflection and discussion on urban development was relatively new”<sup>13</sup>.

In sum, this document was to transmit international best practices and to form a basis for general plan and zoning code; while these ambitious objectives did not have any legal significance, thus they had problems with implementation<sup>14</sup>. Contemporary master plans share the same problems and limitations.

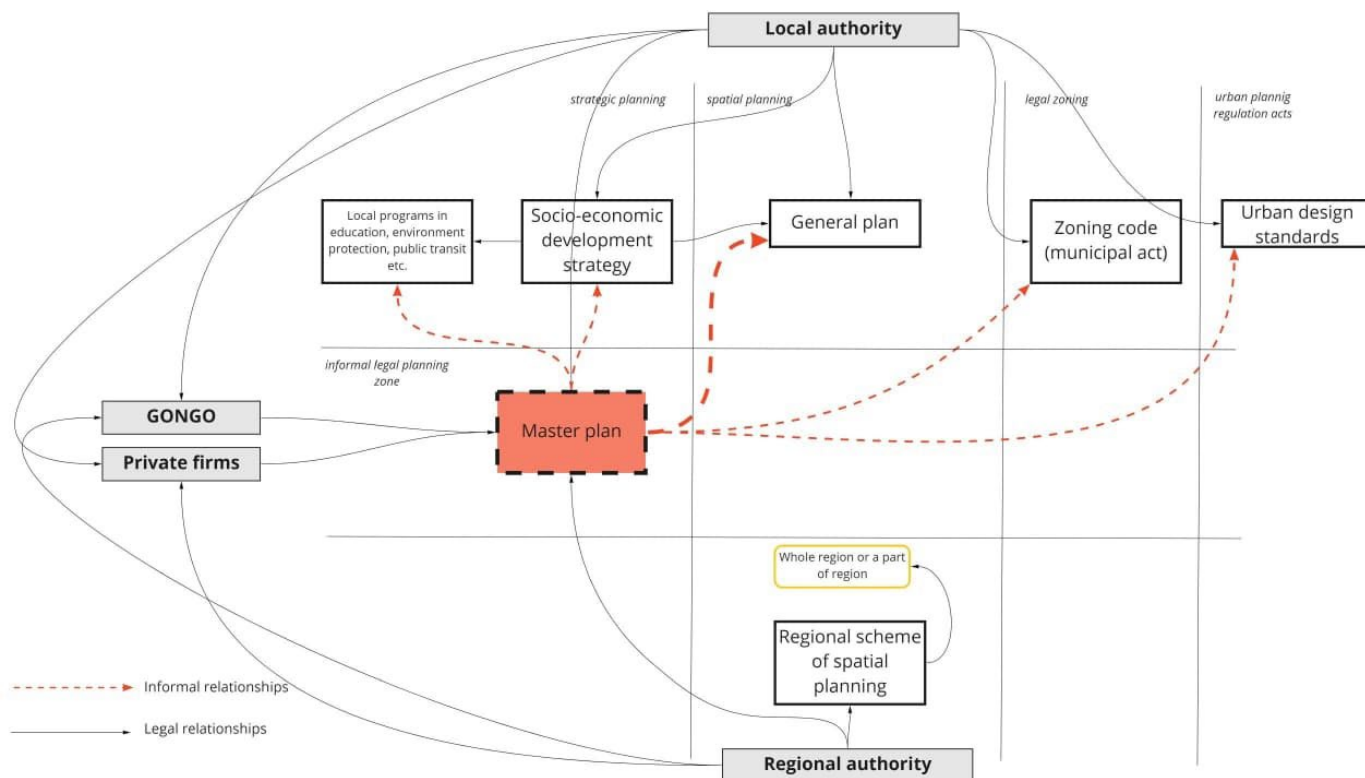
The emergence of an institutional ‘niche’ that the master plan is now filling can be explained through limitations that the major official spatial planning instrument – general plan – has in result of reforming urban planning reforms. First, general plan lacks the goal-setting for urban development; second - implementation plan with relevant timing and stages. Master plan fills in those two gaps.

The spatial development of Russian cities is regulated by several institutions, determined by the main federal laws on urban planning, local self-government, and strategic planning. The key local level document is the Long-term socio-economic development strategy. Long-term document of spatial planning is developed on its basis and is titled ‘general plan’. Urban land use is regulated through indefinite zoning code. General plan, zoning code and strategies are developed for one municipality and approved by the same municipality.

As a result of the metropolitan turn of the 2010s, that gave rise to city-centric economic growth priority, the framework of urban policy became more focused on urban agglomerations giving them priority in the federal planning documents, while the law on agglomerations was never adopted. Some of the examined master plans relate to agglomeration spatial development, although the object of planning itself is not formally defined. Regional spatial development strategies and state programs are too general and cannot directly influence land use and development. Master plan seeks to solve this institutional conundrum.

Today the master plan occupies a peculiar place in the spatial planning system (fig. 1). Legally, this document does not exist while the law on strategic planning in theory leaves the door open to spatial strategies: master plan is a legal, but informal urban planning practice. Since there are no formal mechanisms for its implementation, master plan is being implemented informally with the help of power relations - the real beneficiaries (federal, regional and local authorities), while the official customers can be GONGOs (government-organized non-governmental organizations), developers, development institutions or even a local park. At the extreme, an official or real beneficiary might even not be known.

Although modern Russian legislation does not recognize a master plan as a planning document unlike general plans, zoning codes, urban design standards, socio-economic development strategies and even city budgets, in the last decade master plans have found their niche in the urban planning process. Master plan is considered as



**fig. 1. Urban planning system in Russia. Developed** (by author).

a tool for planning and goal-setting, that forms a basis for further development of general plan and socio-economic development strategy. With a master plan, regional and urban governments seek to produce mid-term 10-year plan. Thus, master plan precedes the development of official planning tools, combining strategic and spatial dimensions.

### Case studies

This section provides an overview of the 16 case study master plans. Fifteen case studies represent the master planning practice established in the 2014-2020 years; however, the clear majority of documents were prepared in the last 3 years when this approach to spatial development became widespread. The only stand-alone case from 2010 is the first Russian master plan of Perm that, despite of its implementation failure, lack of support in architectural and development community and public rejection of the city authorities to use the master plan in 2013, “is still being promoted as a pioneer and a role model for other Russian cities”<sup>15</sup>. Two cases from the Republic of Crimea were also examined as they in fact represent the recent master-planning practice under Russian conditions, law and institutions, while recognized as Ukrainian by the United Nations<sup>16</sup>. The selection does not include the projects developed for the competition for the development of the Moscow agglomeration in 2012, as the statements of the Moscow Mayor’s Office on the upcoming development of the Moscow Master Plan never took place and the project has stopped at the concept stage. The sample of cases covers all open-access city-level master plans, developed since

2010, found by the authors, although it should be noted that, based on press releases, some of the master plans were never published or only design solutions were made public.

Our selection of master plans represents almost every Federal district (grouping of the federal subjects) and cover both central and remote settlements, with different characters/features and history, population dynamics, with population from 10,000 to 1,000,000+ people. The diversity of cases is intended to discuss how the master planning tool in Russia adapts to different origins and tasks. A summary table of the cases is shown in fig. 2; the following paragraphs discuss the key actors involved in the master planning practice, commonalities and distinctions of the cases.

Overall structure and content of the documents reveal no common understanding of the idea of master planning. A typical master plan represents a lengthy document of several hundred pages, with a large amount of both visual and text information. Almost all published documents include a section explaining a master planning concept and the content of this section varies greatly: while some present the document as a collection of ideas from the specialists, architects and activists, others see the master plan as the implementation of national projects or wider strategic goals of the state. Some plans are based on official statistical forecasts, adjusting the urban environment to the expected figures, others develop their own quantitative benchmarks or even ignore the quantitative approach in general. While almost all master plans aim to create a vision

Nº	City, population (2020), year of master planning	Status, Population	Federal Subject	Vision	Approach	Impetus and justification
1	Vladivostok 601,000 ▲ (2017-2018)	Adm. center of the region	Primorsky Krai Far East	Regional center with focus on education, innovative economy and tourism with environment preservation	Stage 1. Opportunities and challenges → Vision and concept → Strategies → Strategic events → International experience Stage 2. Strategic zones	External: initiative of Agency for Home Mortgage Lending (AHML)
2	Yekaterinburg 1,495,000 ▲ (2019)	Adm. center of the region	Sverdlovsk Oblast Far East	City that creates opportunities.	Vision → Principles → Strategic lines → Projects → Implementation Tools	Internal: initiative of the City Government
3	Kislovodsk 129,000 ▶ (2020)	Adm. center of the district	Stavropol Krai North Caucasus	International level multisectoral tourist center, attractive for Russian and foreign tourists and athletes, comfortable and safe for residents and guests	Vision → Directions → Objectives → Components of a successful resort city + Cost estimation, Implementation mechanisms, Roadmap	External: initiative of DOM.RF
4	Magadan 92,000 ▼ (2020)	Adm. center of the region	Magadan Oblast Far East	Mission: ensuring the effective development of the Far Eastern Arctic and national security in the northeastern flank of Russia	Mission → Forecasts → Goals → Vision → Directions → Objectives → Projects → Implementation plan	External: initiative of DOM.RF and regional Government, based on the strategic location at the North.
5	Omsk 1,155,000 ▶ (2016-2017)	Adm. center of the region	Omsk Oblast Siberia	City of choice	Assumptions → Values → Development principles → Goals → Directions → Interventions	Internal: proposals and projects of local urban planners, architects, specialists and residents
6	Perm 1,055,000 ▲ (2010)	Adm. center of the region	Perm Krai Volga	Not expressed explicitly; the strategy is based on a compact city concept	Context → Quality Objectives → Framework for Quality → Specific Strategies → Projects	Internal: initiative of the City Government
7	Svobodny 54,000 ▼ (2017-2018)	Adm. center of the district	Amur Oblast Far East	Svobodny is a city of presidential attention The most comfortable city in the Far East	Forecast (economic development → population → new development) → Goals → Vision → Strategies → Examples/Projects	Federal: status of the city of presidential attention, the need for the development of the Far East
8	Sergiyev Posad 100,000 ▼ (2019)	Adm. center of the district	Moscow Oblast Central	National Spiritual Center	Prerequisites → Vision → Objectives → Interventions → Implementation Tools and Priority Action Plan	External (federal): the need to create a national spiritual center and place its infrastructure
9	Suzdal 10,000 ▼ (2020)	Adm. center of the district	Vladimir Oblast Central	City that proves itself worthy its heritage. Tourist city and reserve of international level, comfortable for life	Assumptions → Vision → Strategic lines → Interventions → Schedule	External (Federal/regional): presidential decree on preparations for the celebration of the 1000th anniversary
10	Feodosia 68,000 ▼ (2020)	Adm. center of the district	Rep. of Crimea South	Important local and international tourist center, in longer term - the center of world tourism, with a unique and cultural heritage	Development in the settlement system → Mission → Objectives → Major and additional lines of development → Recommendations	External (federal): the need for integration into the Russian spatial model
11	Derbent 126,000 ▲ (2019)	City of federal subject significance	Rep. of Dagestan North Caucasus	Slogan: Derbent - Crossroads of Cultures. The strategy is based on a resilient city concept (initially set in the terms of reference of the competition)	Comprehensive capacity assessment → Development concept → Scenarios → Activities and results → Implementation mechanisms	Internal (local/private): the emergence of a stakeholder willing to invest in the development of the city
12	Norilsk 182,000 ▲ (2018-2019)	City of regional subordination	Krasnoyarsk Krai Siberia	World-class Russian metallurgical center and a competence center for knowledge and research in the Arctic.	Assessment → Hypothesis of spatial development → Priority areas → State support → Appearance	Internal (local/private): initiative of the Norilsk Development Agency (municipality and enterprise)
13	Sevastopol 449,000 ▲ (2015)	Federal city	Rep. of Crimea South	Not expressed explicitly; the core of the whole proposal is economic development of the city.	Analysis → Economic forecast → Concept of spatial development → Interventions → Consolidated scheme of proposals → Projects	External (federal): the need for integration into the Russian spatial model
14	Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk 201,000 ▲ (2018)	Adm. center of the region	Sakhalin Oblast Far East	Not expressed explicitly	Analysis and forecast → Concept of spatial development → Scenarios and selection of the optimal scenario → Proposals by directions + Master plan	Internal: initiative of the City Government
15	Irkutsk 624,000 ▲ (2016)	Adm. center of the region	Irkutsk Oblast Siberia	Well-balanced center of one of the most important agglomerations of Siberia Slogan - pragmatic ambitions	Macroscale, megaprojects → The optimal scenario → Forecast → Growth points → Strategies	Internal: initiative of the City Government
16	Naro-Fominsk 65,000 ▶ (2014)	Adm. center of the district	Moscow Oblast Central	Livable City	Principles → Growth points → Strategies → Preliminary indicators	External (regional): program "New look of the cities of the Moscow region"

fig. 2. Cases overview. Developed (by author).

for the long-term development of the city, this vision is not always explicit in the text, while the long-term is usually limited to ten years.

In almost 2/3 of the cases the initiative and control over the creation of the master plan was external, in most cases with the participation of the DOM.RF, federal housing development institution operating in fields of housing, creating a civilized rental market, and improving the urban environment. Creation of master plans under DOM.RF usually means special attention to the city by the federal authorities due to its strategic location, important objects or population size. Other semi-external customers of master plans are private companies operating in a single-industry towns, giving master plan as a certain 'present' to the citizens or GONGOs, usually named as 'Fund for the Urban Development of the City'<sup>17</sup>. At the same time, even in master plans with an external incentive for development, a 'beneficiary' name sometimes appears near the 'customer' name - implying that further work on the master plan implementation will be carried out by the city authorities. In more rare cases, the customers for the development of the master plan are the local government, sometimes also legally covered by another organization - for example, a local park.

The main developer of the master plans is Strelka KB, Moscow-based urban consultancy, however some other Russian companies, mostly located in Moscow or St. Petersburg, also act as contractors for such projects. Most recent master planning projects often involve international

architectural bureaus as collaborators, but despite this local advisors and architects generally develop most part of the project. Despite the fragmented inclusion of international bureaus and consultants in master plan development, most documents include references to the best international practices, and this approach is usually directly enshrined in the terms of reference for the project. The geography of such references is extensive and largely depends on the type of city under strategizing (resort, port, regional capital, northern city, etc.), however, most of the best practices cited refer to Europe (mostly Nordic countries, the Netherlands, Germany, UK) and selected high-tech Asian countries or cities, such as South Korea, Japan, Hong Kong or Singapore.

Unclear status of the document is often referred as an advantage in master plans, allowing more vivid and realistic picture of the future that dry and rigid institutions resist. "Umbrella branding" of master planning is well described in Omsk master plan: "We decided to call it master plan, thereby emphasizing the free choice in the structure, content and methods, since Russian legislation does not contain any requirements for it"<sup>18</sup>. Customers of master plans use non-binding nature of master plans as an easy way out of limiting official urban planning procedures, however some master-plans propose future use of the document in general plans or zoning codes. Other common features of the content of the master plans, including growth- and project-orientation, top-down strategizing and emphasis on beautification are described in the fig. 3.

Growth as the main objective	Although ¼ of the cases examined relate to depopulating cities, master plans encourage/support/ population growth and significant new construction, including residential, assuming that the initiatives will attract new citizens. However pro-growth orientation is not unique among post-socialist cities (Haase et al. 2014), in several surveyed cities shrinkage is a reality and manifestation of growth makes optimistic strategic urban planning documents just 'papers' (Batunova and Gunko 2018). Most master plans for cities with stable or even growing population are also oriented on growth, however some clearly state distinction between 'old' urban planning approach with 'value = quantity' and 'new' with "value = attitude, context, quality" (MLA+ 2017), at the same time proposing ambitious development. Financial rationale and funding sources for activities aimed at growth are not always indicated.
Relationship with existing urban planning tools	Master plans demonstrate three types of relationships with existing urban planning structure: embedding (proposing changes to the general plan and zoning code of the city); conflict (storytelling about outdated approach and barriers) or ignoring (the official spatial planning system is kept out of the equation). In some cases master plans assume even more responsibility intervening into inter-municipal coordination, proposing a change in the boundaries of municipalities
Top-down strategizing	Despite the common claim about the quality of life and attractiveness of the urban environment, regional and even state interests are easily recognized both in the content of documents and in the history of their creation. The national priorities for the development of the Far East and the Far North in cases of Svobodny and Magadan, creation of the All-Russian Spiritual Center in case of Sergiyev Posad has little to do with the mundane reality of locals, while being the core of the master plans. Master plans are even used to spread current ideological and political agenda to the country's contested frontiers in case of Crimean cities, however in such specific conditions the creation of master plans goes to the Russian architectural bureaus: the involvement of foreign consultants and architects is limited by sanctions.
Project-oriented approach	Almost every master plan presents a number of core projects; however their type and approach vary greatly. Mega projects, especially clusters, are common, especially of 'international', 'national' or 'regional' level, from example, development of a scientific and educational campus, industrial park or an airport. Another common type of project is the development of existing or the creation of new public spaces, usually located in the central area. Urban design solutions are usually presented in detail for these areas, sometimes including cost estimates. Less common are long-term strategic projects such as the improvement of existing housing, engineering infrastructure or library network.
Emphasis on beautification	The widely promoted 'comfortable urban environment' concept has taken root in most of the master plans: visualization of public spaces, proposed building architecture and even small architectural forms usually take significant part in the document. The most telling example is Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk spatial development concept where the section titled 'master plan' takes last few pages and contains branding and design solution. This approach was partially established in the first Russian master plan that stated "Unlike a general plan, a master plan more focused on creating an attractive urban environment" (KCAP Architects&Planners 2010). Being an example of re-centralisation and de-institutionalisation (Zupan 2019), 'comfortable urban environment' incorporation into master planning practice allows to achieve key performance indicators set by the federal authorities in the national project or at least show the intention.

fig. 3. Commonalities in master plans (by author).

### Discussion of hypotheses

In the following section, we discuss the reasons of the emergence of this particular tool of spatial development. If a niche for its uprising was prepared by changing power and responsibility balance between state, regions and local government in relation to urban development, the path of its origin can be traced in four accompanying processes: competition for federal attention and funding, shift from framework towards direct interventions, reaction to inadequate urban planning system and 'best practices' approach.

First, in the context of decreasing power and financial autonomy of municipalities, local authorities seek to attract federal attention and funding through overly ambitious megaprojects. Master plans necessarily include a spectacular component, citing one of the investigated document "vision of urban development, better if in pictures"<sup>19</sup>. With limited power and finance at city level, mega projects are considered not as catalysts of activity and growth, but as instrument of attracting attention from the federal government. Most often, the volume of construction and the target indicators of such projects are significantly overestimated, but a demonstrative approach is a necessary condition in the face of competition for attention. Even the terms of reference for master plans development usually include the requirement to attract not only private, but federal and regional finance.

Mega-projects in Russia are generally implemented through direct government intervention while official planning procedures are often cut or neglected, while the visual effect is the core for the "allure of the authoritarian

state"<sup>20</sup>. The mentioned above top-down strategizing, project-oriented approach and growth-oriented planning give additional evidence to this hypothesis. Mega-projects "demonstrate the capacity of an authoritarian state to implement ambitious projects" and thus the power of urban governance under authoritarian urbanism in general<sup>21</sup>.

The second notion involves the shift from framework toward direct interventions in urban development process. After the transition, post-socialist cities started to operate with mostly indirect planning tools creating a framework rather than intervening. These as framework type regulations include maximum density or functional limitation as well as sophisticated taxation<sup>22</sup>. The emergency of master planning indicates the turn to opposite direction: direct management, distrust of the market mechanism and entrepreneurship in city development. Dissemination of the centrally produced idea with partial neglect to legal basis was illustratively demonstrated on the case of housing renovation program spread from Moscow to the whole country<sup>23</sup>. Although the Moscow master plan was never created, the states' interest drives the creation of most of the master plans, as shown in the section 2.2

Speed at which the idea of the master plan reached the elites and is even promoted by them indicates survivability of the socialist approach to urban planning, "still-socialist" characters of urban governance in a post-socialist city<sup>24</sup>. Master planning reveals mutual penetration of socialist practices and authoritarian urbanism.

Third, master plans are developed as a reaction to weakened urban planning system. The end of the transition process

does not mean the end of the institutional change of urban planning. However since the end of the 2000s structure of the Russian economy resembles capitalists ones and the post-socialist import of institutions is finished, the role of public authorities in the urban governance and development is higher than in other post-socialist countries<sup>25</sup>. The institute of master planning can be viewed as a reaction to the substitutes of spatial planning (that is, inefficient and weakened institutions), caused by the adaptation of imported practices to Russian reality<sup>26</sup>. Masterplan is an 'intermediate' institution that tries to replace non-functioning ones. The pretext for its appearance is described by Golubchikov: although general plans existed under socialism, the system of urban planning did not have a legislative status: only reforms of 1900s-2000s have institutionalized the general plan giving it a power to limit and regulate the actions of public authorities and land owners<sup>27</sup>.

Local public authorities and private businesses have successfully overcome the restrictions imposed by new or strengthened old urban planning institutions: the imported institutions were partly substituted, partly rolled back to the pre-reform situation<sup>28</sup>. The Federal Law "On Strategic Planning in the Russian Federation" of 2014 in a sense has streamlined the existing urban planning structure and as well has created a legal opportunity for master planning under the guise of municipal spatial strategies.

Finally, master plans illustrate the wide spreading approach of 'best practices'. 'Best international practices' were introduced to public administration system in 2010s through rational principles of public administration<sup>29</sup>. 'Best practices' approach has influenced Russian system of urban planning and spatial management in general. Orientation on 'best practices' can be attributed to neoliberal forms of city governance<sup>30</sup>.

The growing popularity of master planning is also explained by perception of master plans as international best practices, unlike the dusty and outdated general plans. Another advantage of the master plan is the "presentation" nature of the document, as it is consciously developed for visual perception. While general plans as well possess some cartographic materials, they look unfriendly to non-specialists and attract primarily professional attention.

## Conclusion and discussion

This paper examined changing urban planning practice under the introduction of master planning practice using the conceptual framework of neoinstitutionalism in a post-socialist city. At the first step, we conceptualized master plans in Russia through its role in current legal system and relationship with the existing system of urban planning. However, the new institution of master plan rather complement and layer traditional spatial planning than cancels them, it equips local and regional authorities with new tools for flexible planning, analysis and forecasting.

At the same time, development and implementation of master plans is delivered through legal, but informal power practices. Our case study analysis demonstrated a significant distinction between master plans and traditional institutions. Despite the lack of common understanding and unclear legal status, the developers of these documents benefit from free format and absence of formal requirements. Despite significant differences in content most published documents share top-down and project-oriented approach, focus on visual component and embeddedness in the federal state priorities.

At the second step we develop reasoning for the master planning practice introduction. Our hypothesis suggests several interrelated explanations: the need to create a bright image of the future (megaproject) in order to attract finance and attention from higher levels of government system; fatigue from fine tuning of urban planning frameworks and drift towards direct interventions; Reaction to inadequate urban planning system and allure of 'best practices'. The implementation of new spatial development projects, in particular megaprojects, requires the participation of regional authorities as supervisors, while regions do not have formal tools and institutions for intervention. Master plans become a very attractive way out of this trap: regional authorities control the planning process and are do not formally take any responsibility of the outcomes. Our research shows that the existing spatial planning system is partly inadequate to the challenges faced by Russian cities.

## References

- <sup>1</sup>Marat Khusnullin: general plan becomes an obstacle for developing cities, stroi.mos.ru, 2019 <<https://stroi.mos.ru/interviews/marat-khusnullin-dlia-razvivaiushchikhsia-ghorodov-ghienplan-stanovitsia-tormozom>> [accessed 15 May 2021].
- <sup>2</sup>Extended Session of Presidium of RF State Council, 2018 <<http://www.kremlin.ru/events/state-council/59186>> [accessed 15 May 2021].
- <sup>3</sup>Douglass C. North, *Institutions, Institutional Change and Economic Performance* (Cambridge university press, 1990).
- <sup>4</sup>Kiril Stanilov, 'Urban Planning and the Challenges of the Post-Socialist Transformation', in *The Post-Socialist City* (Springer, 2007), pp. 413–25; Tuna Taşan-Kok, 'Institutional and Spatial Change', in *The Urban Mosaic of Post-Socialist Europe* (Springer, 2006), pp. 51–70.
- <sup>5</sup>Oleg Golubchikov, 'Urban Planning in Russia: Towards the Market', *European Planning Studies*, 12.2 (2004), 229–47.
- <sup>6</sup>Vladimir Gel'man and others, *Local government reform in Russian cities, 1991-2006* (Norma Spb, 2008).
- <sup>7</sup>Aleksei Simoyanov, Anton Gorodnichev, and Anton Vorob'ev, 'Transformation of the regional political regime in Moscow oblast: municipal reform and its impact on the electoral process', *Perm University Bulletin. Series: Political Science*, 13.1 (2019).

- <sup>8</sup>Nadir Kinossian, 'State-Led Metropolisation in Russia', *Urban Research & Practice*, 10.4 (2017), 466–76.
- <sup>9</sup>Strelka, 'The Strategic Master Plan as a Tool for Managing the Future' (Prepared for the IV Moscow urban forum, 2014).
- <sup>10</sup>Sonia Hirt, 'Whatever Happened to the (Post) Socialist City?', *Cities*, 32 (2013), S29–38; Michael Gentile, 'Three Metals and the "Post-Socialist City": Reclaiming the Peripheries of Urban Knowledge', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 42.6 (2018), 1140–51.
- <sup>11</sup>Aleksandr Antonov, 'Master plan. Different documents, different goals' (March architecture school, 2020).
- <sup>12</sup>Jacob S. Hacker, 'Privatizing Risk without Privatizing the Welfare State: The Hidden Politics of Social Policy Retrenchment in the United States', *American Political Science Review*, 2004, 243–60.
- <sup>13</sup>KCAP Architects&Planners, Perm strategic masterplan (Perm, 2010) <<http://permgenplan.ru/preobrazovanie-goroda/>>.
- <sup>14</sup>Tat'jana Gudž, Irina Karasel'nikova, and Nikita Kosolapov, *Zoning. Regulation of urban development. Experience from Perm* (HSE Publishing House, 2020).
- <sup>15</sup>Daniela Zupan, 'Local Debates on global planning Concepts: The compact European City model in Postsocialist Russia-the Case of Perm', *Europa Regional*, 22.1–2 (2015), 39–52.
- <sup>16</sup>General UN, 'Resolution Adopted by the General Assembly on 27 March 2014. 68/262. Territorial Integrity of Ukraine', 2014.
- <sup>17</sup>Antonov.
- <sup>18</sup>INTP Grad, 'Omsk master plan', 2018.
- <sup>19</sup>ANO URALROSPROMEKO, 'Feodosia Master Plan', 2020.
- <sup>20</sup>Nadir Kinossian and Kevin Morgan, 'Development by Decree: The Limits of 'Authoritarian Modernization' in the Russian Federation', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 38.5 (2014), 1678–96.
- <sup>21</sup>Kinossian and Morgan.
- <sup>22</sup>F.E. Ian Hamilton and others, *Transformation of Cities in Central and Eastern Europe: Towards Globalization* (United Nations Univ, 2005).
- <sup>23</sup>Daniela Zupan, Vera Smirnova, and Amanda Zadorian, 'Governing through Stolichnaya Praktika: Housing Renovation from Moscow to the Regions', *Geoforum*, 120 (2021), 155–64.
- <sup>24</sup>G. M. Murawski, 'Actually-Existing Success: Economics, Aesthetics, and the Specificity of (Still-) Socialist Urbanism', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 60.4 (2018), 907–37.
- <sup>25</sup>Anders Aslund, 'Russia's Economic Transformation', in *The Oxford Handbook of the Russian Economy*, 2013; Sonia Hirt, Slavomíra Ferenčuhová, and Tauri Tuvikene, 'Conceptual Forum: The "Post-Socialist" City', *Eurasian Geography and Economics*, 57.4–5 (2016), 497–520.
- <sup>26</sup>Andrew Melville, 'Five Unfulfilled Hopes: Political and Theoretical Expectations of the "Epoch-1989"', in *Dismantlement of the Communism. Thirty Years Later*, ed. by Kirill Rogov (New literary review, 2021), pp. 66–92.
- <sup>27</sup>Golubchikov.
- <sup>28</sup>Eduard Trutnev, 'City and law: the logic of cyclical deployment and folding from the past to the future and from the present to the past of the institutions of legal urban regulation in post-Soviet Russia', *Urban Studies and Practices*, Pilot issue, 2015.
- <sup>29</sup>Alexey G. Barabashev and Andrey V. Klimenko, 'Russian Governance Changes and Performance', *Chinese Political Science Review*, 2.1 (2017), 22–39.
- <sup>30</sup>Neil Brenner and Christian Schmid, 'Towards a New Epistemology of the Urban?', *City*, 19.2–3 (2015), 151–82.