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READING THE SIBERIAN CITY-TEXT: SPATIAL SEMANTICS AND SEMIOTIC POLITICS OF URBAN TOPONYMIC LANDSCAPES IN YAKUTSK (RUSSIA)

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Abstract: The article studies the spatial semantics of Yakutsk's urban text (Sakha/Yakutia, Russia) as a component of the cultural landscape. The research is based on the theoretical approaches of the Tartu-Moscow School of Semiotics, scholarly traditions of post-Soviet cultural (or the so-called "humanitarian") geography, and modern critical studies of toponymy. The authors analyze spatial semantics and controversial elements of political and cultural symbolism of the urban text, which combines indigenous Yakut, Russian, and Soviet cultural components. With more than four hundred toponymic examples, this case study reveals the semiotic structure of Yakutsk toponymic system as a combination of urbanscape symbolization processes. For the first time the article empirically shows, with the help of toponymy in the space of a post-Soviet city, the relationship, interaction, and positioning of the three cultures. In addition, the semantics of toponyms is typologized, which allows to quantitatively, qualitatively, and cartographically describe the process of "writing" the urban text.

Keywords: urban geography; spatial semantics; symbolic landscapes; urban place names; Yakutsk

1. Introduction

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, post-Soviet cities have undergone considerable socio-economic and political transformations. Even though various capitalist policies have modified the composition of revamped and uncharted urban space in major urban centers, the contemporary cultural landscapes contain a plethora of Soviet-era symbolic remnants, including placename systems. Still, however, there is little known about the spatial semiotic dimensions of urban changes and the functions of modified namescapes in new "hybrid" cultural landscapes in various regions of the former Soviet empire. A deeper understanding of these processes requires attention by national "autochthonous" interdisciplinary scientific traditions. In this case, the role of the

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conceptual and methodological approaches of contemporary post-Soviet “humanitarian” geography (in literal translation from Russian) can be profitably considered by researchers. This scholarly tradition adopted a semiotic approach to various representations of space (Basik, 2020), including a toponymic segment of cultural landscapes.

The modern tradition of humanitarian geography is largely based on the theoretical approaches of the Tartu-Moscow School of Semiotics, which was formed in the 1960s and led by Lotman, the author of the theory of complex text comprehension. He proposed the concept of semiosphere (Lotman, 1996, p. 4), defined as “a synchronous semiotic space that fills the boundaries of culture and is a condition for the work of individual semiotic structures and, at the same time, their product.” According to Lotman (1992; as cited in Lavrenova, 2019), the semiosphere, similarly to geographical space, has its boundaries, which serve as a filter for translating the chaos of the outside world into a structured text. The interaction of culture with the surrounding landscape is also semiotic in nature and uses a basic system of codes.

A later understanding of the semiosphere as a concept implies its spatial interpretation as a sphere possessing such qualities as extent and ubiquity. This means that the values which culture communicates to geographical objects, in turn, form the spatial structure of the semiosphere and give it certain substantiality. Meanings are anchored in space, and in relation to the cultural landscape, this allows the use of the “text” metaphor understood in its broad semiotic, culturological, and philosophical meaning (Lavrenova, 2019). According to Toporov (1983, p. 227), “the space is a text”, and the reading of the landscape as a text have been a popular approach among post-structuralist geographers (Duncan & Duncan, 1988). Obviously, the “text” can be corrected and rewritten congruently with historical, political, and social changes.

One of the ways to fill the geographical space with meanings is a toponym. A toponym is a fragment of information that is “compressed” and “packaged” into the name of a geographical feature, and it can act both as a signifier and as a signified. This is particularly noticeable in urban cultural landscapes that have experienced a rapid change of ideologies, which is expressed in the subsequent partial or total renaming of streets, squares, pocket parks, etc. In the pragmatic renaming of geographical objects there is an undeniable archaic perception of the world: the need to renounce, to change names roots in the desire to gain power over the space that previously belonged to someone else. Renaming leads to rearranging the semantic aspects of significant places within the cultural landscape. The semiotic approach to renaming allows “to preserve the unity of material practices of the landscape and its visuality (the signifier), the transforming political (national, postcolonial, etc.) discourse (the signified), and, finally, the localized social practices of living in that place (the meaning)” (Mitin, 2020, p. 104).

In this study, the concept of the “city-text” as a system of urban placenames was used (Azaryahu, 1990; Azaryahu, 1996). This term has been widely applied to the urban toponymic systems by scholars (Crețan & Matthews, 2016; Marin, 2012; Rusu, 2019; Šakaja & Stanić, 2011). It also has been expanded toward monuments (Palonen, 2008). However, this analytical concept reflects not only a specific list of placenames that can be reconstructed by new “authors” but, instead, it “must operate in semiosphere, i.e., be part of the mechanisms of generating and distributing meanings that are constantly at work in the networks of social communication” (Azaryahu, 1990, p. 33).

For the analysis of changes in names, the basic metaphor of the palimpsest can be applied (Azaryahu, 1996; Ferguson, 1988). According to this analytical concept, a place is

likened to an ancient parchment manuscript on which a new text is written on top of an old, erased text that showed through under the new lines as a constant reminder. In the cultural landscape, old and new informational layers invariably intertwine and even compete. As per point of view of Mitin (2018, p. 11),

the palimpsest metaphor, which emerged from a new cultural geography, can be revived with the help of a critical approach as a model encompassing a multi-focal multiplicity of agents, everyday strategies, life practices, and (re-)constructed images of post-socialist cities, characterized by an interweaving of representative and unrepresentative effects.

In the post-Soviet context, there are some recent studies focused on toponymic politics (including works on urban streetscapes) and identity (Ghulyan, 2021; Gnatiuk, 2018; Kaşikçi, 2019; Saparov, 2017). However, they were mainly concentrated in the European parts of the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics ([USSR] including the Caucasus) and Kazakhstan. Yakutia is the largest national republic within the Russian Federation. It has no separatist sentiments and, at the same time, has adopted national identity as a main vector of its development. For our study, we have selected Yakutsk, the capital of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), founded in 1632. As an outpost, it played a crucial role in the development of the North-East of Russia and currently remains one of the major cities of the Far East. Remarkably, the vast Siberian region of Yakutia is still underrepresented in *critical* studies of placenames, though some toponymic works have applied various methodological perspectives, including the semiotic approach (Khokholova et al., 2018; Lavrenova & Filippova, 2019; Mamontova, 2022; Mamontova & Thornton, 2022). The key aim of this paper, therefore, is to explore the spatial semantics of Yakutsk's "city-text" as a component of the cultural landscape. To achieve this, we are trying to reach beyond the boundaries of one theory. Consequently, this paper brings together the elements of two disjointed theoretical approaches: post-Soviet "humanitarian" geography traditions regarding the semantics of cultural landscape as text, rooted in the traditions of the Tartu-Moscow school of semiotics (Lavrenova, 2019) and one of the major themes in critical toponymy (Rose-Redwood et al., 2017; Vuolteenaho & Berg, 2009)—the political semiotic approach toward urban place naming. In examining the interplay between the semantics of place, urban placenames, and politics of naming in the Siberian city of Yakutsk, we are focusing on the spatial semiotic dimension(s) of the toponymic palimpsest. Ultimately, although by no means comprehensive, our paper strives to reveal the potential pathways for critical studies of placenames and spatial semantics of urban symbolic landscapes in Siberian and other underrepresented post-socialist geographical contexts.

This article is the result of the study of urban toponymy, in particular, the names of streets and squares, as an integral part of the Yakut symbolic national landscape. Here we analyze different semantic categories of toponyms associated with history, with the traditional picture of the world, with orientation in space, with the national geography of Yakutia as a whole, which create Yakut linguistic as well as semantic coloring. This distinguishes the urbanscape of Yakutsk from that of the cities of Central Russia, despite the important role of the Russian language in the formation of Yakutsk toponymy, which at the present stage becomes an exponent of the symbolic elements of Sakha culture. Here lies the innovation of our research, since the genesis, structure, and semantics of the urban toponymy of Yakutsk as the basis of the "urban text" have never been studied in a comprehensive and historical perspective before.

2. Data and methods

The region of investigation includes one of the largest cities of the Russian Far North—Yakutsk, the administrative, political, and economic center of the Yakutia (Sakha) Republic (Figure 1). The city had an area of 122 km² and a population of about 322,900 by the end of 2020 (Okruzhnaya Administratsiya Goroda Yakutsk, n. d.). The object of this study is the current toponymic system of Yakutsk as a component of the cultural landscape. Aiming to fill the research gap on Siberian city-text analysis in post-Soviet cultural geography and critical toponymic studies, the following research questions should be addressed:

- What kind of toponymic categories exist in the analyzed city-text, and how do they reflect the political naming practices and discourses and represent a multi-layered urban space? and
- How have the historical and contemporary transformations of urban toponyms affected the semantics of Yakutsk's symbolic landscapes, and what types of new regional identities may they construct?

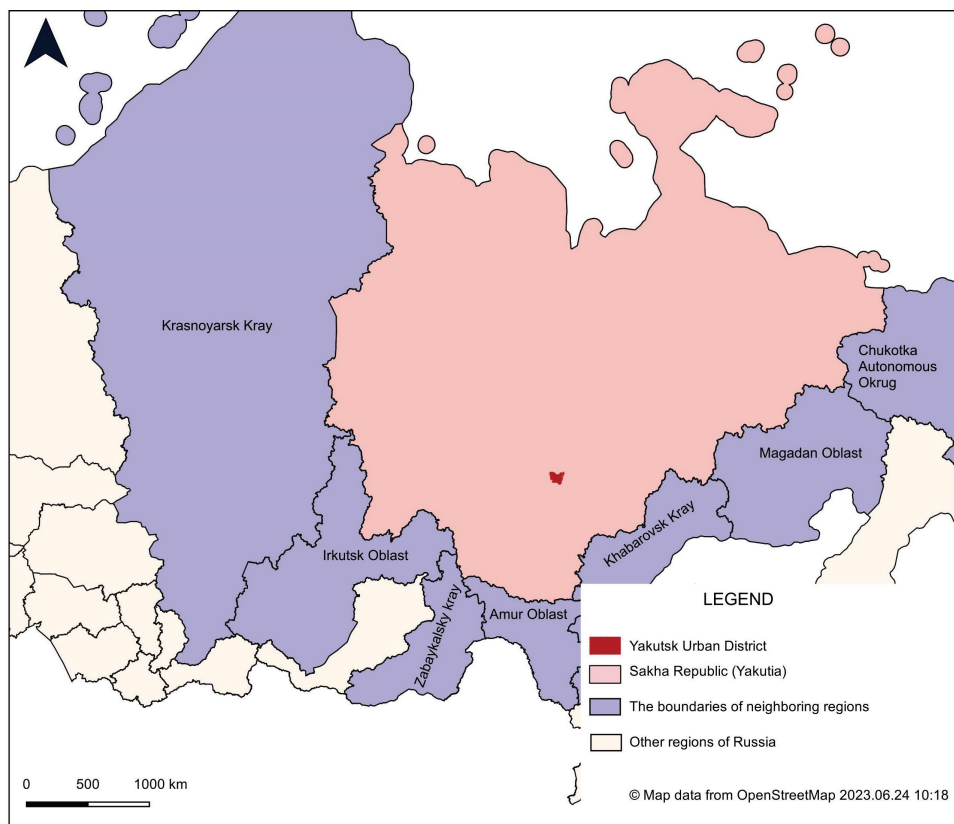


Figure 1. The study area: The city of Yakutsk.

Note. Created by Viktoriya Filippova.

In this paper, a case study approach as one of the most comprehensive research methods in social sciences was implemented (Gerring, 2004). Further, a mixed-method qualitative approach with some elements of diachronic analysis and general quantitative interpretations was integrated. Importantly, the multiple sources of data, including historical documents, cartographic materials, printed media resources, and *in-situ* observations by two authors of this paper from Yakutsk were used to analyze the composition and historical dynamics of urban nomenclature. As a result, 445 placenames have been examined, including 427 street names and 18 names of contemporary residential complexes.

To achieve the goals of this study and answer the research questions, the street names in Yakutsk were classified. The general semantic classification of urban toponyms in this work is based on the examples of the Eastern European urban toponymic studies (Basik & Rahautsou, 2019; Gnatiuk, 2018; Kazakevich, 2011; Stiperski et al., 2011) with some adjustments. Accordingly, the typology includes the following five groups (semantic categories) of names: Anthroponyms (persons), Geography, History, Professional activities and institutions, and Other. Furthermore, the largest and the most diverse groups have been divided into subgroups.

In this paper, we concentrated on *hodonyms*, i.e., the names of streets, while some other elements of the urban toponymic landscape are beyond the scope of this paper (e.g., *hydronyms*, the names of the hydrographic objects; *agoronyms*, the names of the squares; and most of the *ergonyms* such as the names of the factories, stores, shopping centers, entertainment facilities, hotels, etc.). This fact can also be considered a limitation of this study. However, some examples from the overmentioned toponymic classes have been used to illustrate the particular processes within the city-text in the discussion section of this paper.

3. Results and discussion

We start this segment of the study with the taxonomic characteristics of Yakutsk's toponymy, which further will be analyzed and interpreted according to the research goals. As shown in Table 1, the most substantial semantic groups of urban street names in Yakutsk include Anthroponyms, which commemorate names of persons, and Geography; both semantic groups comprise more than 75% of hodonyms. Because of the size, these categories of toponyms are the most variable and can be divided into subgroups (Table 1).

Table 1. Semantic categories of hodonyms in Yakutsk

Semantic categories	Toponymic example	Number of toponyms	Proportion (%), all toponyms
Anthroponyms (persons)	Prospect Lenina (Lenin Avenue)	174	40.7
Geography	Kolymskiy Pereulok (Kolyma Lane)	152	35.6
Professional activities and institutions	Zavodskaya Ulitsa (Factory Street)	76	17.8
History	Ulitsa 8 Marta (8th March Street)	19	4.5
Other	Bezmyannaya Ulitca (Nameless Street)	6	1.4

There are eight subgroups of hodonyms among Anthroponyms (Figure 2), and, as can be seen, Soviet-period personal names dominate in this group. However, created in the 1920s to 1980s, a Soviet segment of hodonyms is also prevalent throughout Yakutsk’s entire toponymic system, reflecting rigid hegemonic “top-down” relationships in the urban semiosphere. For the polysemantic anthroponyms, which can be included in two or more subgroups, we implemented the same approach as other scholars (Basik & Rahautsou, 2019; Stiperski et al., 2011), when the most important accomplishment of the person is considered as a key determinant. Remarkably, in addition to the commemorative anthroponymic placenames, the third-largest semantic group of Professional activities and institutions (a typical Soviet-style construct with featureless names; Figure 3) and the History group (Figure 4) with Soviet symbolic ideologemes (commemoration can appear in various forms in hodonyms)—all of them are part of this Soviet spatial onomastics which overshadows other parts of the semantic spectrum of the toponymic system.



Figure 2. The structure of the semantic category Anthroponyms in Yakutsk.

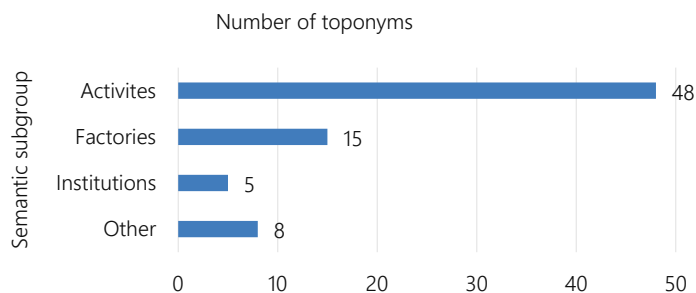


Figure 3. The structure of the semantic category Professional activities and institutions in Yakutsk.

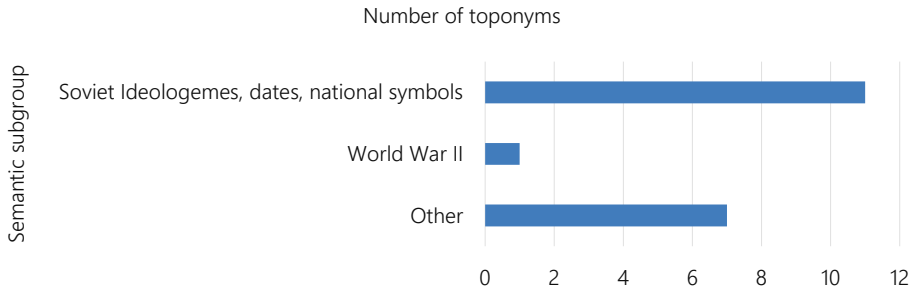


Figure 4. The structure of the semantic category History in Yakutsk.

Geography, the second-largest category of toponyms, comprises five subgroups, with the *locational* and *spatial* types foremost among them (Figure 5). This category of placenames occupies the peripheral zones in the urban space of Yakutsk, indicating directions, spatial relations as well as Yakut and Russian toponyms. Although it seems politically neutral, this group is essential in regional (national) identity construction. The semantic categories Anthroponyms and History are spatially localized in the central parts of Yakutsk (Figure 6). The results of the local and periodic classification of toponymy—the pre-Soviet, Soviet, and post-Soviet eras (see Figure 4) indicate the historical memory of the Soviet heritage and the preservation of the Soviet past in the symbolic landscape of the city. After the collapse of the USSR, the anthroponyms of the pre-Soviet period and rehabilitated Soviet figures who played a significant role in the life of the region—mainly, the names of the Yakut national intelligentsia were inserted in city-text. The category Professional activities and institutions refers to the residential areas of the city, the so-called “working towns” (Figure 7).

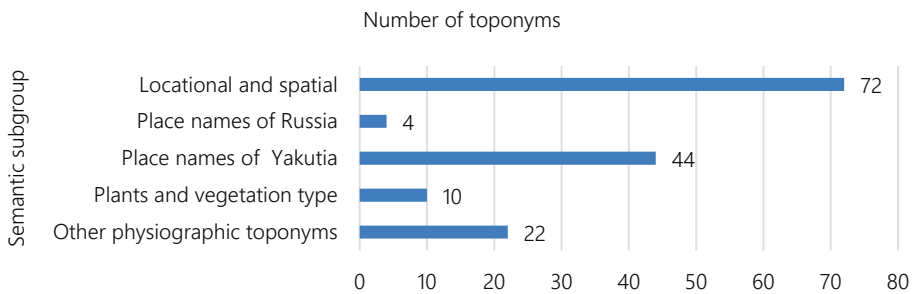
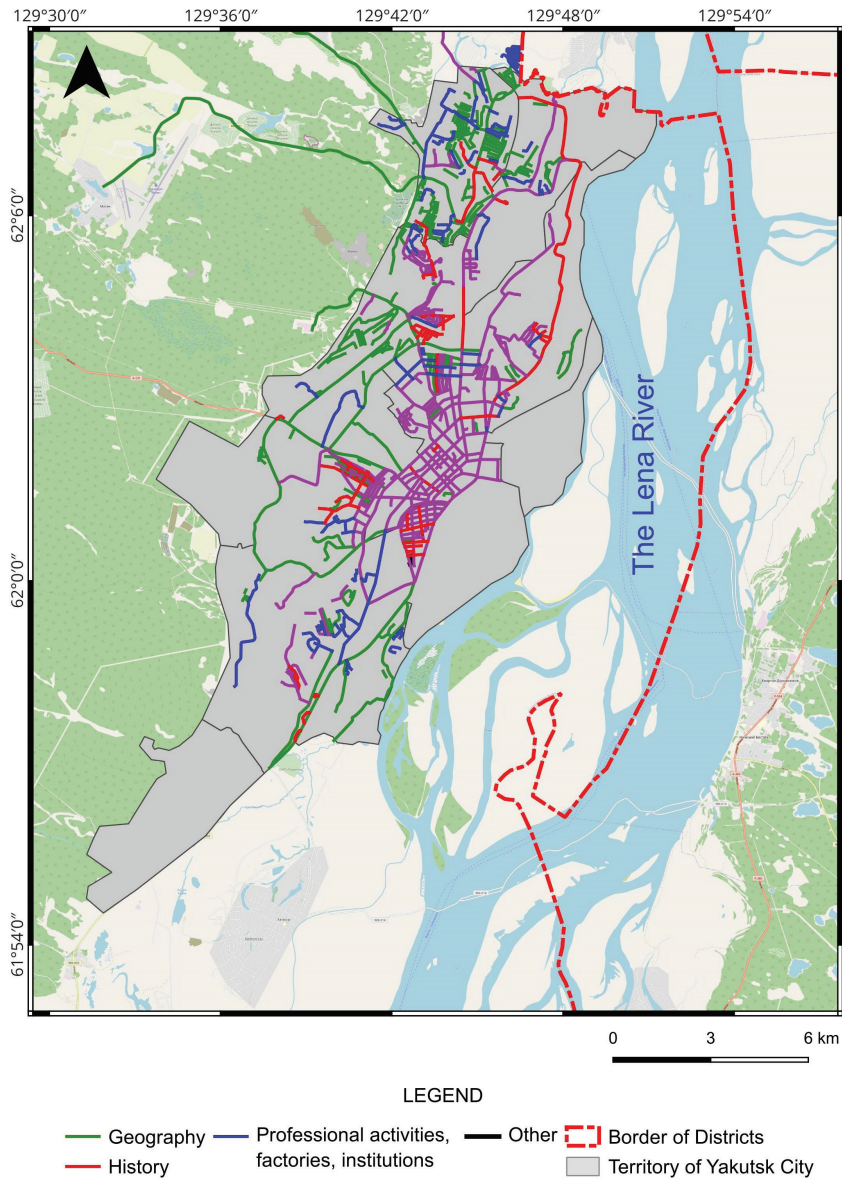
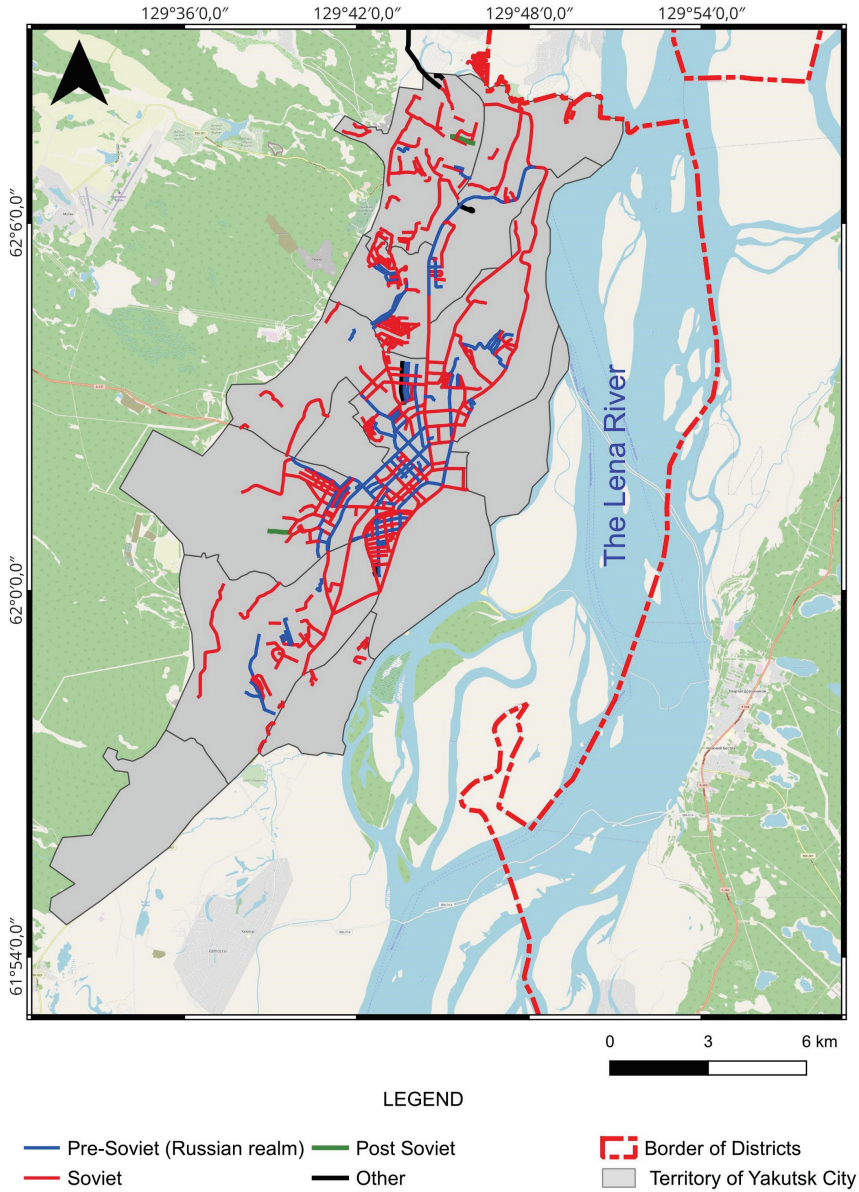


Figure 5. The structure of the semantic category Geography in Yakutsk.



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Figure 6. The spatial distribution of semantic categories of Yakutsk's streets.
Note. Created by Viktoriya Filippova.



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Figure 7. Periodization of Yakutsk's city-text.

Note. Created by Viktoriya Filippova.

As is typical for the Soviet urban centers, there were several “waves” of renaming in Yakutsk (Prokopiev, 2002). According to Gill (2005, p. 480),

a central component of the creation of a new symbolic culture is the renaming of street and place names. These are important because they combine a geographical sense of direction and place with an intellectual, perhaps even ideological, sense of direction and place. The creation of new rituals or the injection of new content into the existing rituals, and even the reworking of the language (through the injection of new words, the changing of the meaning of the existing terms, and the elimination of some words) in order to invest it with a new ethos have all been important to the creation of a new regime's symbolic culture.

The first wave, defined by Marin (2012) as “the Red Wave” for Sankt-Petersburg, occurred in 1917–1925. During this period, the “old” tsarist toponyms were replaced by new, ideologically “correct” names. For instance, the religious name Nikolo-Preobrazhenskaya Ulitsa (St Nicolas-Transfiguration Street) reflected the location between the orthodox St. Nicolas and Transfiguration churches became Ulitsa Trotskogo (Trotsky Street), honoring one of the leaders of the October revolution; Politseyskaya Ulitsa (Police Street) became Ulitsa Sovietskaya (Soviet Street); Kazarmennaya Ulitsa (Barracks Street) became Krasnoarmeyskaya Ulitsa (Red Army Street). During the Stalinist era, many memorial place names were erased and replaced, commemorating another cohort of communists. For instance, Ulitsa Trotskogo (Trotsky Street) became Ulitsa Voroshilova (Voroshilov Street). Interestingly, however, with the end of Stalinism, this street was renamed again in 1964 and became Ulitsa Oktyabr'skaya (October Street, commemorating the October Revolution). The subsequent renaming “cycles” happened in the 1960s–1970s primarily due to the Soviet population censuses, when the list of street names was systematized (e.g., duplicate toponyms were renamed) and in the early 1990s, with the collapse of the communist ideology in the USSR (Prokopiev 2002). Cartographic materials with systematized (ordered) street names were used when dividing the territory into counting plots and when enumerators bypassed residential premises during the census. Notably, the main avenue of Yakutsk still keeps the name of Lenin, and it also has been renamed several times in less than 100 years, starting from the oldest tsarist period name of Bol'shaya Ulitsa (Big Street). Selective remembrance of the past is also typical for various post-Soviet urban centers. Basically, a change of toponym entails a change of identity, and the city-text, in particular, serves as “a field for the inscription of political identities” (Palonen, 2008, p. 221). This is a way to consolidate the social changes that have taken place in the traditional worldview of a particular culture. Spatial-temporal changes in Yakutsk's toponymic system clearly show how “successive regimes inscribed semiotic boundaries in the city-text in order to outcast the founding myths and heroes of the previous regime from official history records” (Marin, 2012, p. 197).

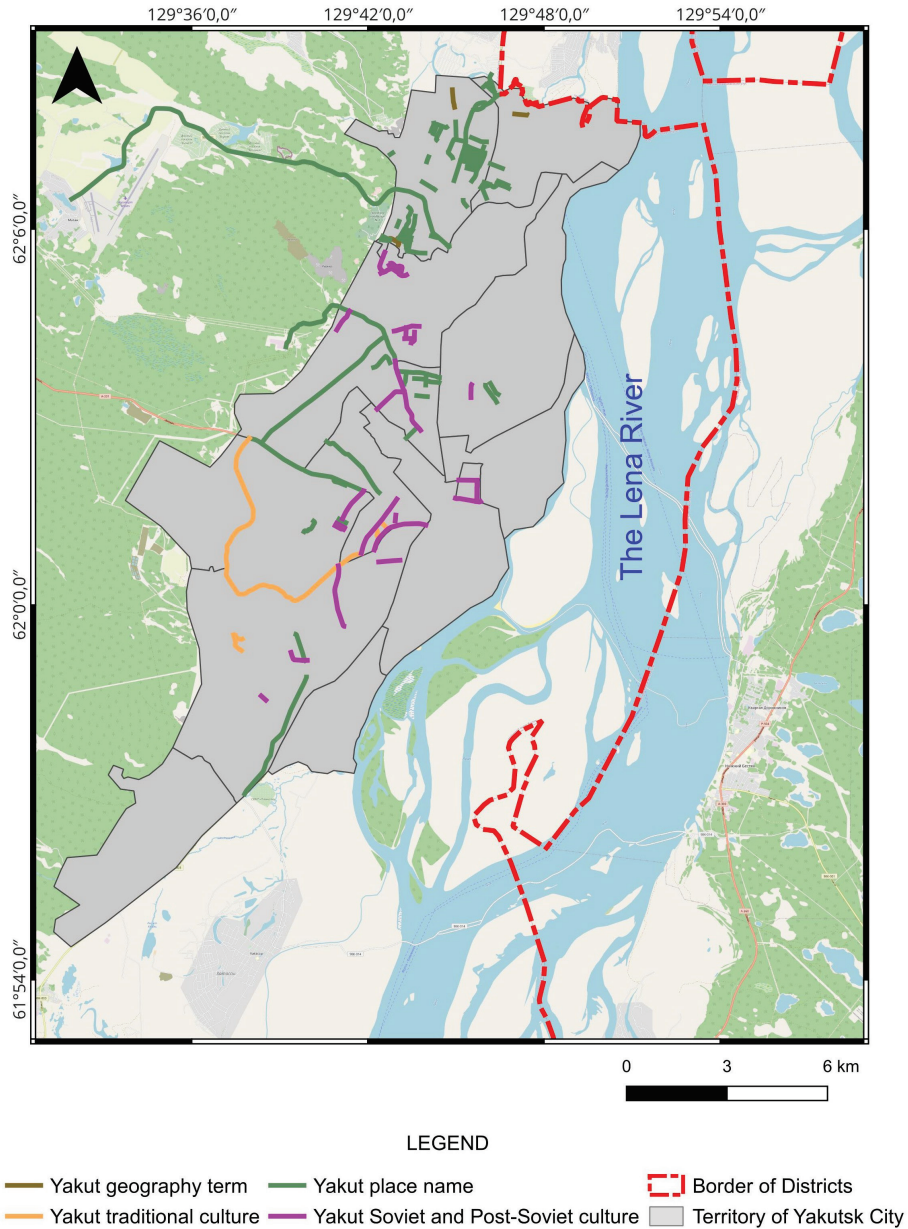
However, the spatial semiotic function of toponyms incorporates constructing a symbolic landscape endowed with regional national Yakut (Sakha) identities. Despite the historical issues, Russification, and persecutions of traditional culture during the Soviet time (Argounova-Low, 2011), the contemporary urban toponymic landscape of Yakutsk emerges as Sakha cultural space. Though Yakutian culture, art, and science persons represent only 11.5% (20 names) in the Anthroponyms semantic category of toponyms, this is a crucial and growing group of urban toponyms in general. For example, Maksim Ammosov and Platon Oyunskiy, the prominent political and cultural personalities, ethnic Sakha prosecuted during the

Stalinists' Great Terror of the 1930s, were commemorated in the names of two of Yakutsk's central streets, a university (M. K. Ammosov North-Eastern Federal University in Yakutsk), a theatre, and Yakutsk airport (these last two both having been named after Platon Oyunskiy). Significantly, in the Geography semantic category of hodonyms, "Yakutian place names" comprise 27.6% of street names (though some also have Russian origin) since the spatial relations of south–north, east–west and, in general, the location of a "place" plays a special significance for the Yakuts in their traditional picture of the world. In addition to the names of rural settlements, amalgamated with Yakutsk, some locational toponyms and traditional cultural toponyms in the History segment of street names create Sakha "place-bound identities" (Vuolteenaho & Berg, 2009), an authentic inscription in city-text.

Remarkably, the ethnocultural transformation of the semantics of the urban symbolic landscape has coincided with the massive scale of internal migration of the ethnic Sakha from rural regions to the capital city of Yakutia. This process is reflected spatially as a "mini-map" of Yakutia that is formed in the northern part of the city, where the streets are named after uluses (districts) of the republic (Figure 8). Undoubtedly, migration "reshaped the urban cultural landscape, making Yakutsk a genuine indigenous regional capital" (Sukneva & Laruelle, 2019, p. 10) and the urbanization of the city is based on the indigenous population, not on Russians "for the first time in history" (Sukneva & Laruelle, 2019, p. 24). Moreover, despite the Russian language dominating the commercial sphere and linguistic landscape of Yakutsk, "the indigenization of branding" with traditional pre-Soviet cultural Sakha symbolic elements constitutes "a sense of 'Sakha-ness' in the city" (Ferguson & Sidorova, 2016, p. 23).

Intriguingly, the residential building names' spatial semantics also reflect this ethnic-branding trend related to national identity. Eighteen analyzed names of new residential complexes in Yakutsk reflect a typical post-Soviet "version" of commercial placenames to increase a property value using a symbolic capital of placenames. This global spatial strategy of neoliberal urbanism is called toponymic commodification and has been considered in the set of recent critical toponymic literature including the post-Soviet cases (Gnatiuk & Melnychuk, 2022; Vuolteenaho & Basik, 2022). Among the typical attractive cosmopolitan brand names like Panorama, Olymp-City (concerning Greek mythology and a "globality" using the term city), or Severnoe Siyanie ("Northern Lights") there are authentic Sakha examples, such as *Serge* ("hitching post," a sacral term for Sakha culture where a horse is a sacred animal) or *Ilge* ("wealth").

According to Azaryahu (2011, p. 30), reading urban placenames as a text must consider "the possibility of ostensible incoherence, polysemy and heterogeneity". Furthermore, as Ferguson (1988) mentioned, although street names do not include all urban text, they provide a "multiplicity of readings". Evidently, the waves of renaming and erasing previous toponymic layers, re-writing new inscriptions in city text both with the elements of national identity and the international market-driven urban "neo-toponymy" create Yakutsk's palimpsest with a unique combination of layers and meanings. In the cultural landscape, the old and new information layers invariably intertwine and even "compete" with each other. In addition to the multiplicity of options for "writing" the text of the cultural landscape, many reading options are created, depending on the polarization of consciousness. They affect the multiplicity of everyday practices of living and the utilitarian use of the place, and at the same time, are born out of them. Semantics, in this case, not only defines pragmatics but also, conversely, changes it.



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Figure 8. Yakut street names in Yakutsk.
Note. Created by Viktoriya Filippova.

The powerful semantics of the Yakut traditional culture, oriented toward nature, transforms natural conditions into the rank of signs fixed in space through indigenous toponyms (Lavrenova & Filippova, 2019). The power of the semantics of Yakut traditional culture, reflected in toponymy, is associated with the fact that geographical names and their depiction on official maps is preserved for centuries, and they subsist along with other names in a multicultural environment. Yakutsk, which arose during the period of the Russian expansion, became a multinational centre with multivariate semantics. However, contemporary indigenization of the urban toponymic system is an indicator of the invisible semiotic processes of “regaining” the symbolic power of traditional culture. Street renaming is the responsibility of the Yakutsk city administration and is regulated by normative legal acts. The renaming of geographical features is much more complicated and is regulated by the Federal Law. The legal bases for geographical object (re)naming, as well as normalization, usage, registration, recording, and preservation of names of geographical objects as a part of historical and cultural heritage of peoples of Russian Federation are established by the Federal Law No. 152-FZ of December 18, 1997 “On Names of Geographical Objects” (Zakon o naimenovanii Geograficheskikh objektov, 1997). Naming and renaming of geographical features is carried out by the Government of the Russian Federation. According to article 10 of the aforementioned Federal Law, names of geographical objects shall be registered and recorded in the State Catalogue of Geographical Names. The State Assembly (Il Tumen) of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), as advised by the Government of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) in accordance with the list and forms of documents established by normative legal acts of the Government of the Russian Federation, submits proposals to assign and change the names of settlements and administrative-territorial units for consideration by state authorities of the Russian Federation. One more indicator is the debates regarding the renaming of Yakutsk to Tuymaada (which in Sakha means a lowland covered with impenetrable forest, a traditional name of the valley where the city is located). Although, in June 2021, the Members of the Public Chamber of Yakutsk unanimously voted against the initiative to rename the urban district of Yakutsk to the urban district of Tuymaada, a member of the Republican State Council, Pavel Ksenofontov, stated that the struggle for renaming should be continued (Nikiforov, 2021). The renaming of geographical objects goes through several stages from local to federal approval. The proposal raised by Ksenofontov on renaming the district administration of Yakutsk was supported by neither local people at a public hearing nor experts, representatives of the Yakut republican branch of the All-Russian Society for the Protection of Monuments of History and Culture. They argued that the city name has been ingrained in the minds of people for four centuries, that it is on all world maps, and it makes no sense to change it. Thus, this precedent did not pass even the first stage of local approval, where the opinions of the local population and experts were taken into account. This toponym has also been encrypted into the urban namescape as the name of the stadium and the shopping centre in Yakutsk.

4. Conclusion

Ultimately, the semiosphere is a natural frame, a condition for the existence and structuring of the processes of semiosis, including those in which space is involved. Semiotic processes have a continuous nature, but the discreteness of the resulting constructs and structures is implied. The psychology of perception of the landscape, as well as individual consciousness and collective, are characterized by discreteness since the entire volume of information exceeds their “capacity”.

The study shows that the semantics of toponyms varies greatly depending on the socio-spatial context in which they exist, especially when it comes to the capital of a large national republic of the Russian Federation. In contrast to post-Soviet republics that separated from Russia, the dichotomy of the developing vector of national identity and the “indelible” Russian and Soviet names of streets, squares, parks, etc., is important here. As the maps show, the city center remains marked by Russian and Soviet toponyms, while national identity begins to sprout on the outskirts, moving toward the center. The predominance of indigenous names on the outskirts can be attributed to several reasons. First, it is related to the legal documentation: it is easier to register new names in documents than to change old established names. Secondly, the outskirts are mainly inhabited by people from rural Yakutia, who prefer Yakut names. This is how national self-determination is expressed in toponymy, changing the semiotic structure of the city’s cultural landscape.

Perhaps the decisive moment in the construction of a multidimensional urban text in Yakutsk is a combination of interrelated politically motivated spatial processes that include political ideologies, markers of ethnic identity, and some elements of “neoliberal” toponymic commodification. These processes reconfigure the symbolic urbanscapes of the post-Soviet Siberian city and form a new semiosphere based on these meanings.

In addition to the many ways of “writing” the text of the cultural landscape, there are many ways of reading it, depending on the degree of polarization of consciousness. They influence the everyday practices of living in and the utilitarian use of a place, and at the same time originate from them. Here, semantics not only determines pragmatics, but, conversely, is changed by it. And the modified Yakutsk toponymicon generates new variants of its reading and use—but this is a subject for a separate study and discussion.

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