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Short Communication

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Heritage Preservation Under Sustainable Development and Community Inclusion: Semiotic and Discursive Mapping of Saint Petersburg

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Abstract

The policy of representing a World Heritage site has always been the prerogative of the government. However, modern social and technical agents are becoming more and more important participants in the discussion, defining the policy of communication in the political space. There was a need to identify and understand new communicative and discursive principles and requirements. Having explored all sorts of different sociological methods over the past five years through a program called “St. Petersburg through the eyes of young people” we have analyzed more than 1000 artefacts on heritage preservation, community inclusion, urban identity, culture and discourse. The city code developed within UNESCO on the basis of cultural values can be found in the naive representations of the students in their images who have incorporated this ideology through contact with the city and through learning. We show the opposition of the discursive and the non-verbal in the representations of the city. Theoretical review confirms the relevance of these trends: The context/environment influences heritage and its revitalization, while finding new uses and repurposing heritage has a stimulating effect on the environment and its development. Created discursive map can be used to highlight individuals’ and the community’s values, on which its place identity is based and which carry fundamental cultural meanings and interpretations. Similar research projects and maps show mapping as a tool that can be easily used in city planning and that can act in cooperation with residents, which is a way to realize community inclusion in city politics.

Keywords: *Urban identity, Cultural heritage, Semiotics, Discourse, Mapping*

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Thanks to digitalization and the spread of social networks in particular, many processes within the life of the city, such as the interaction of government and society, non-institutional communications, have gone faster. They can be described as networks of interactions of various social actors, including technical agents.

Networks dictate their own conditions and shape people’s practices. By practices, we understand a routine type of behavior consisting of several elements, including several necessary levels:

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- Forms of bodily actions.
- Forms of mental actions.
- Things and their use.

Background knowledge in the form of understanding, emotions and motivations.

Practices related to urban identity, like all others, change from within and gradually. For city government, practices need to be tracked and matched to promote community inclusion in urban planning.

In the course of the study, we studied practices, social networks, geotags, and representation of the city by young people for five years (a total of 1000 artifacts). Sociological methods were applied including discursive analysis. Discursive analysis allowed to reveal the ideological content of representations.

Discourse, according to Foucault, is texts and activities that have an effect, are imprinted in memory and construct the imaginary. Behind the representations of the imaginary are values and ideologies, which form the identity of the citizen. The semiotic consideration of the city as a text then receives a social dimension. We view the city semiotically as a text.

This report presents: mapping of city presentations by young people and identified value practices. Semiotic analysis, which implies oppositions, helped to arrange representations in different coordinates of meaning and reading values (Figure 1).

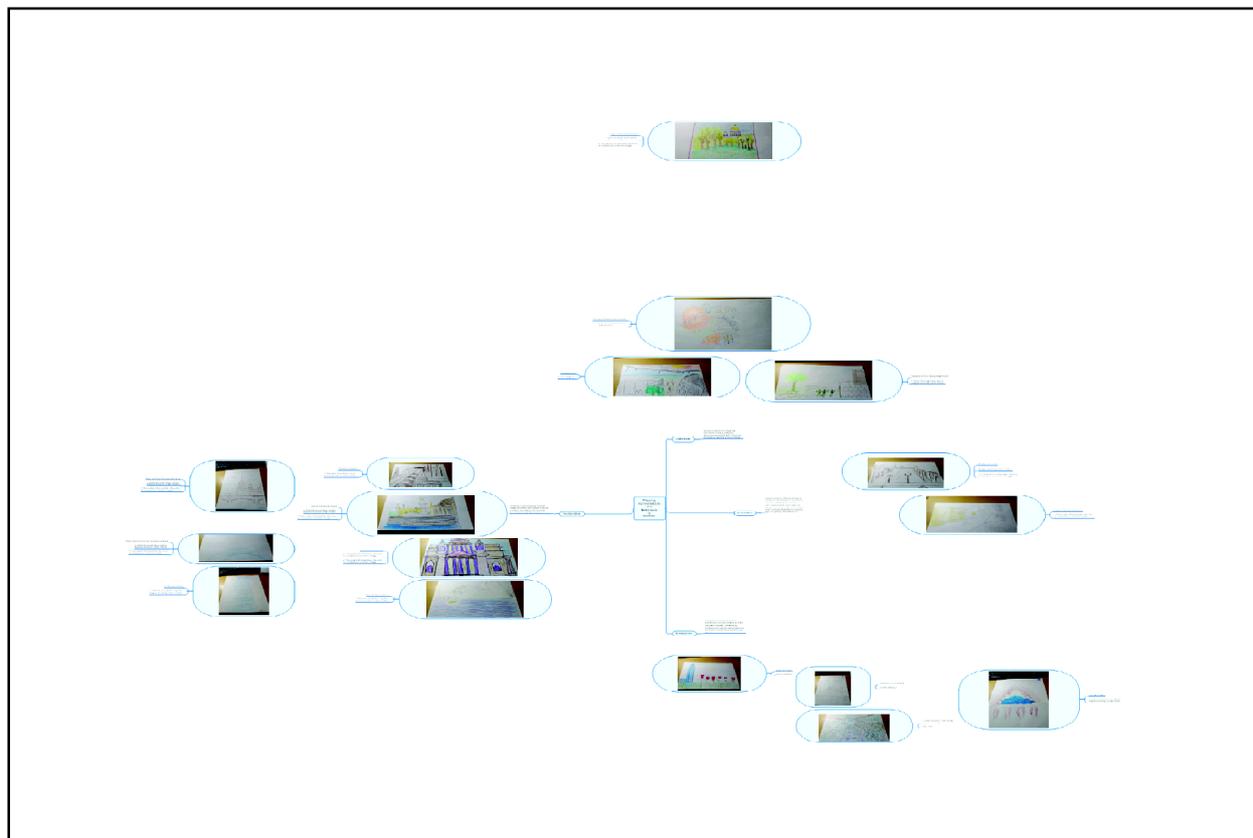


Figure 1: This is a Map of City Presentations by Young People and Identified Value Practices

Source: Author

In total, about 50 oppositions were considered. Different angles and theoretical approaches, theories gave us different visions of practices. In addition to sociological theories, we attracted the tools of psychology considered psychological approaches as well.

Here are meta-needs according to Jung's analytical psychology. We also considered profiling, the concepts of Gestalt psychology and Gestalt therapy, the fundamental principles of Lacan's analytics.

Here is a mapping by meta-needs.

- On the left is the traditional perception of the city, in terms of stereotypical urban representation and identity.
- On the right—changes—tells stories that happened to the authors in the city.
- At the bottom—collectivism—presents the social relationships of people, animals, nature.
- At the top is individualism, mental concepts are presented.

Important opposition in the interpretation of the representation of the city—mental and discursive concept, verbal versus body sensation, experience, and non-verbal.

It is a comfortable space—Port Sevkabel—non-verbal feeling and memory. People are here.

This is a discursive representation that reflects the key at different levels of understanding and social reflection important symbols of the city and power: the embankment, the arrow of Vasilyevsky Island, the flag, the tower of Gazprom.

We are constantly following the new research of Lev Manovich's Instagram, which maps the interests of the population by geolocation. Places of interest in cities should be taken into account in urban planning. This is another community involvement in urban planning policy.

These are four concepts confirming the status of a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and it is also what interests' tourists after this list. In the representations of young Petersburgers, there are practically no criteria 3 and 4—epochal events that are interesting to tourists (revolutions), famous personalities. Although the first two criterias are presented in many drawings. Instead of historical events in representations, you can find local events. Instead of celebrities—street musicians, artists and people of different professions (sailor, freelancer).

Finnish researchers for urban planning studied the memories of the citizens of Helsinki about the places where they live and move on transport, and found important values—for example, contact with nature in the city is very important and is perceived as space and time of rest. The same hidden orders of values were found and the same thing we have—contact with water—walks along rivers and canals, along embankments—is perceived as a holiday and rest in the city and the nearest suburb on the Gulf of Finland.

We agree that man constructs a place, in particular its social aspects and consequences, with his life strategy. By developing the methodology of discursive mapping, it is possible to reveal the emotions, attitudes and memories of the inhabitants much more deeply and thus make the invisible city visible.

WOS papers over the past five years on the keywords “heritage and urbanism” ($n = 345$) offer a holistic view of heritage in line with sustainable development ideas.

The most cited papers emphasize the need to study and preserve urban heritage, as well as to create high-quality, comfortable public spaces that will contribute to the strengthening of cultural and local identity.

Heritage and Development Interface

Context/environment influences heritage and its revival, while at the same time the search for new applications and heritage repurposing stimulates the integrated development of the environment has a stimulating effect on the environment and its development.

Many historic cities in the modern world can move from industrial and information economy to cultural economy, adopting the concept of new urbanism, in particular, improving pedestrian accessibility and planning zones of comfortable pastime. Our studied youth most often offers to organize spaces for work and leisure without cars, such as New Holland or Sevkabel.

The contribution of ordinary citizens to new practices of use and management, vision and reassessment of traditional heritage is important.

The place is inextricably linked to cultural values tested by generations of human interaction, and therefore a careful approach to existing inherited structures is needed, which will give “a sense of continuity, clarity, significance and coherence – important values that go beyond aesthetic satisfaction.”

Scientific papers over the past five years of Web of science on the keywords “heritage semiotics” ($n = 151$) show the productivity of using semiotic tools to analyze visual content.

We analyzed the recurring keywords of these papers, identified using the big data scientometric research tool: history, culture, identity, tourism, heritage, semiotics.

As a methodology of analysis, semiotic schemes of Charles Peirce and semiotic mapping within binary contrasts are most often used in papers.

A number of doctrines of the theory of discourse about the three “tricks” or tricks in the organization of the narrative, the “trilingualism of St. Petersburg” (Markov, 2020) are productive for further analysis of the images of the city, which are statements, both professional and naive, but “infected” with the “Petersburg text” and containing the values of the material and intangible heritage of UNESCO World Heritage Site.

We consider semiotic, discursive analysis and mapping of projections of the imaginary a promising way to identify the specific features of OWH, its influence, determining values, driving motives—even if all these phenomena at first glance seem “invisible” to mass social reflection, for example, images of historically distant phenomena (coats of arms, soldier’s uniform of 1812)—is a marker of a certain traditional value, cultural continuity and identity that, in turn, potentially determines behavior for heritage preservation and social inclusion.

Intangible heritage also include ways of perceiving material heritage—urban myths, legends, stable reputations, cultural associations, etc. All this also needs to be fixed and preserved.

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