

3. NAMES AS CARRIERS OF IMAGES

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Geographical names are the links that are forged by the inhabitants of an area with topographic objects (farms, fields, mountains) around them, and as such they form a part of the identity of these local inhabitants.

Helleland (2008) calls this ***Landschape identity***, defined as the unity between persons and the landscape they experience in given circumstances. When a person/inhabitant hears a name, he immediately recognizes this and has associations with this particular name. During a lifetime, through media or through education they will also get immediate associations with other geographical names, e.g.:

- Paris: The name of the French capital has associations with light and freedom (French revolution)
- Name pairs like Karl Marx stadt / Chemnitz or Leningrad / Sankt Peterburg have political connotations, as different political groups might go for one or the other of these names.

To quote Helleland, place names form a part of one's identity both as linguistic terms and as identifiers of one's environments. As such, place-names may be used to bring forth a wide range of mental and emotional associations - associations of time and space, of history and events, of persons and social activities, of oneself and stages in one's life.

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