

## 4. NAMING HABITS AND CHANGING ATTITUDES TO NAMES

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Personal names are definitely influenced by trends; one year parents may call their children after the newly born royal prince, the next year after a famous popstar. In naming places similar trends may be observed, although these trends usually take longer periods of time.

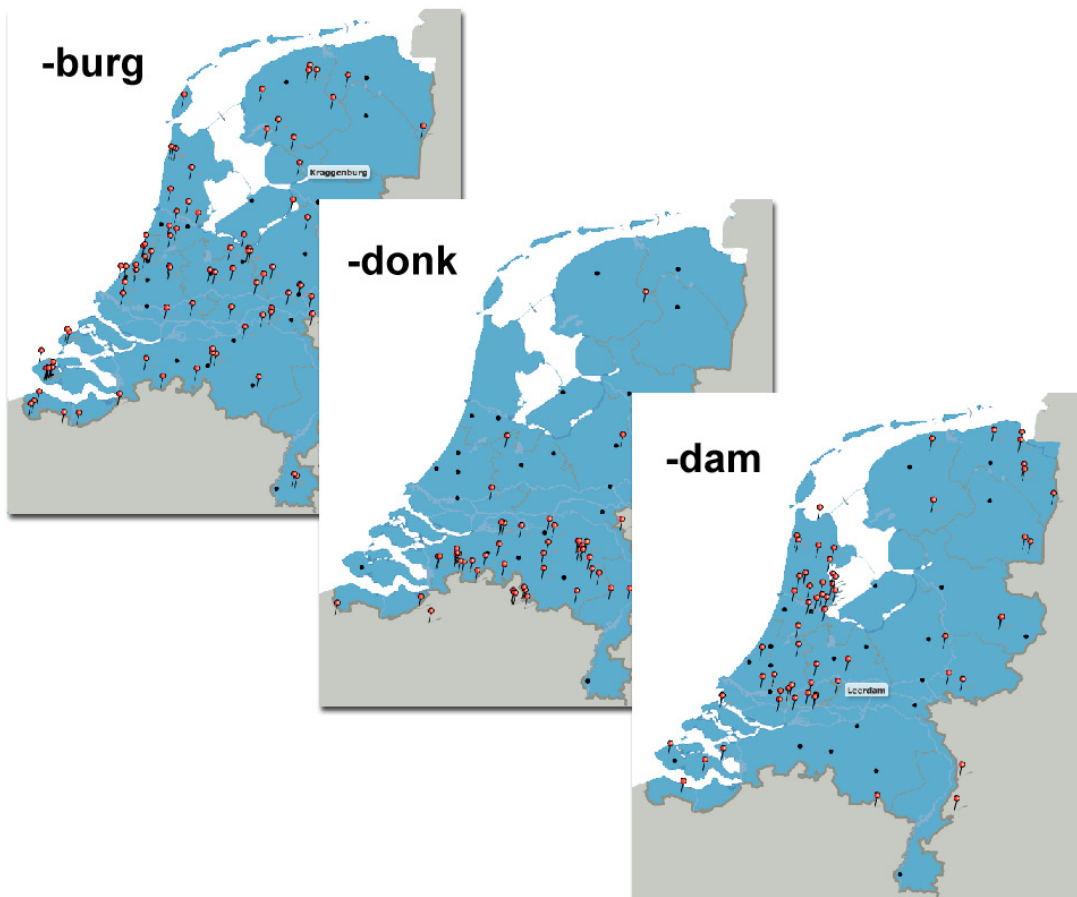
Naming is often done by analogy: new names are given on the same pattern as already existing names in the area with which the name-givers are familiar. This is one of the reasons why certain name types tend to occur with greater frequency than others in particular areas.

Another way of giving geographical names is to transfer existing names to new entities in order to compare them with or to commemorate the original place, through the process known as **baptism**. People are commemorated as well in many geographical names.

In some cases, the written geographical names may tell us in a general way about the **time spans** of settlements. For example, Blok, in referring to Dutch-speaking parts of Europe, indicated that: names ending in:

- burg** or **-ingen** were recorded in the period of the **7th-9th** century; names ending in
- donk** were recorded after the **10th** century; names ending in
- kerke** were recorded in the period from the **12th-13th** century; and names ending in
- dam** were recorded after the **13th** century.

See image below for spatial distribution of placenames containing respectively -burg, -donk, and -dam.



Source: [Atlas van Nederland](#)

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