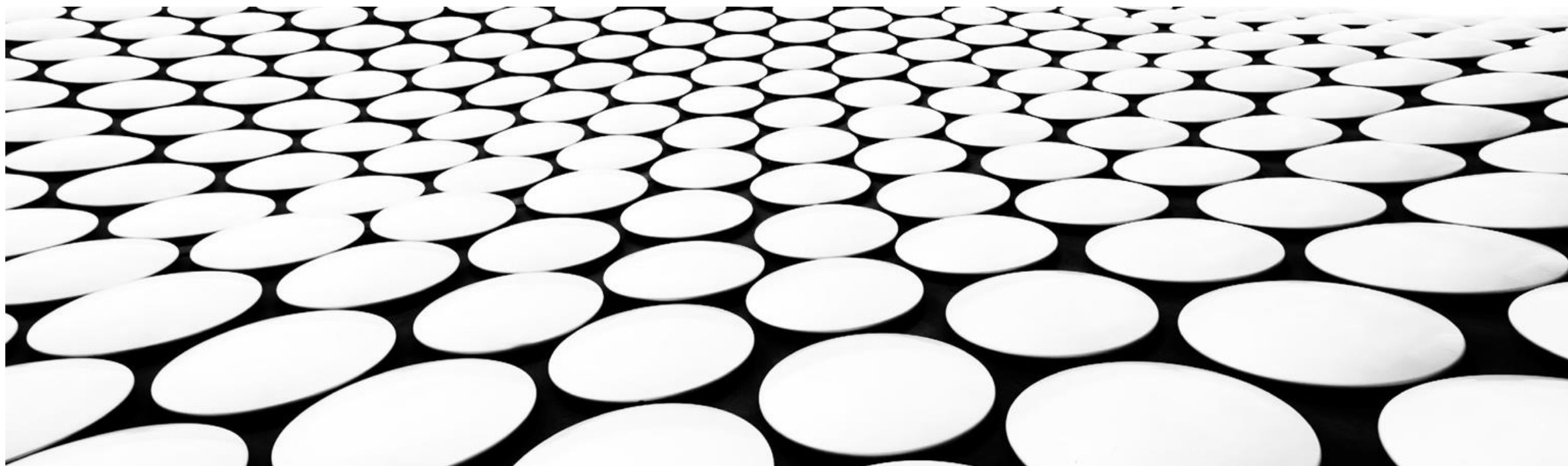
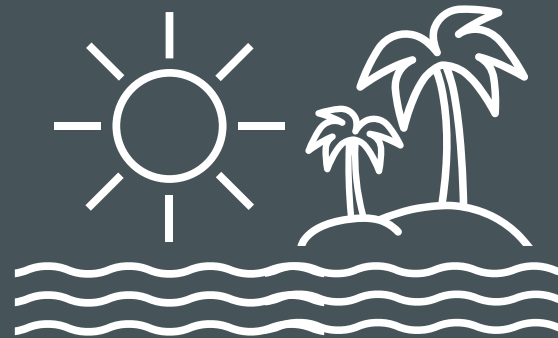

Geographical names standardization supporting national development

CARIGEO webinar, 31. AUGUST 2021



2b. Setting the scene

Peder Gammeltoft (email: peder.gammeltoft@uib.no)



THE BASICS

- a. Definitions
- b. Why standardize?
- c. Language
- d. Identity
- e. Power



DEFINITIONS

- i. Geographical names (GN) = place-names = toponyms
 - ii. GNs are applied to mappable areas as points, lines or polygons
 - iii. A named place may have exact or fuzzy extent
 - iv. GNs are verbal expressions that denote natural features,
cultural features and administrative units
- in a wider definition, may include buildings and points of interest



WHY STANDARDIZE GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES



Which Caribbean geographical name is this? - [ˌkjuːraˈsau]

- Cure-a-sow ?
- Kura Sau ?
- Kjoorasau ?
- **Curaçao !** (also *Kòrsou* [ˌkɔrˈsou] in Papiamentu!!)

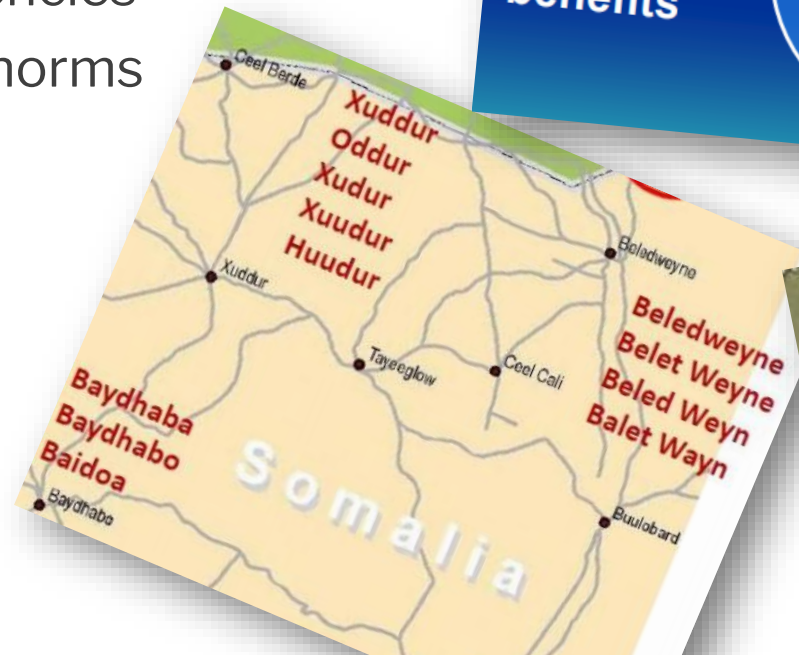


- How would I know how to spell it, if I didn't know what the standard form is?
- How can I know what the standard form is? - Through education!!

WHY STANDARDIZE GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES?

An authoritative national infrastructure:

- Clarity, consistency and conservation
- Avoid confusion and mistakes
- Control over emergencies
- Adhering to written norms
- Nation-defining
- Identity-creating



WHY STANDARDIZE GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES?

- Standardization must include all official languages in the country
- Also include acknowledged minority languages
- Standardization according to national legal definitions
- Consider including international language forms?



WHY STANDARDIZE GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES?

In UN resolution I/4d, on multilingual areas, it is recommended that, in countries in which there exist more than one language, the national authority as appropriate:

- (a) Determines the geographical names in each of the official languages, and other languages as appropriate;
- (b) Gives a clear indication of equality or precedence of officially acknowledged names;
- (c) Publishes these officially acknowledged names in maps and gazetteers.

A PART OF LANGUAGE

- Geographical names are a natural part of our language.
- A GN may be borrowed from one language into another, e.g. Latin *Colonia Agrippina* > Germ. *Köln*, Eng. *Cologne*
- May vary from language to language (Wien - Vienna)
- May have multiple forms in one language

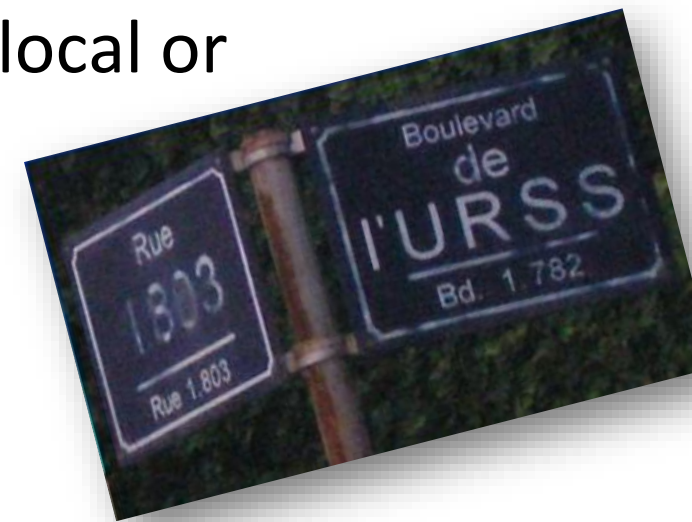
→ A GN management system must be able to cope with more than one name for a place.

- parallel names
- principal name - alternative name(s)
- historical names



A PART LANGUAGE: Spelling?

- How to standardize GNs, especially when there is more than one established spelling?
- Can official standards help (esp. for words in names)?
- Should national standards always apply, or are e.g., local or traditional spellings allowed in some cases?
- The spelling of geographical names should be:
 - treated individually
 - treated by linguists (included in case-handling routines)



IDENTITY

- Geographical names are part of a nation's intangible cultural heritage (UNESCO convention).
- Of special importance to minorities.
- Their names are often invisible



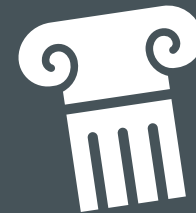
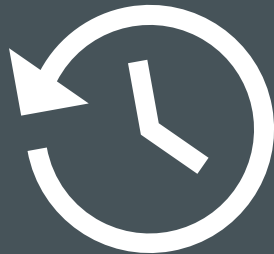
IDENTITY AND TRADITION

- Geographical names are coined and used by people.
 - Owned by the people as a collective
- Many GNs are old – deeply rooted in history – and should be safeguarded. If interpreted, they tell us stories from the past.
- People identify with the GNs they know, and react to changes. GNs are part of our common tradition; the public have the right to voice opinions.



3. The significance and benefits of geographical names – language, culture, history, tourism

Johnny Grandjean Gøgsig Jakobsen (email: jggi@hum.ku.dk)



THE VALUE OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES

Distinctive place names have a practical function helping us identifying specific places in a linguistic context (oral or written)



THE VALUE OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES



Distinctive place names have a practical function helping us identifying specific places in a linguistic context (oral or written)

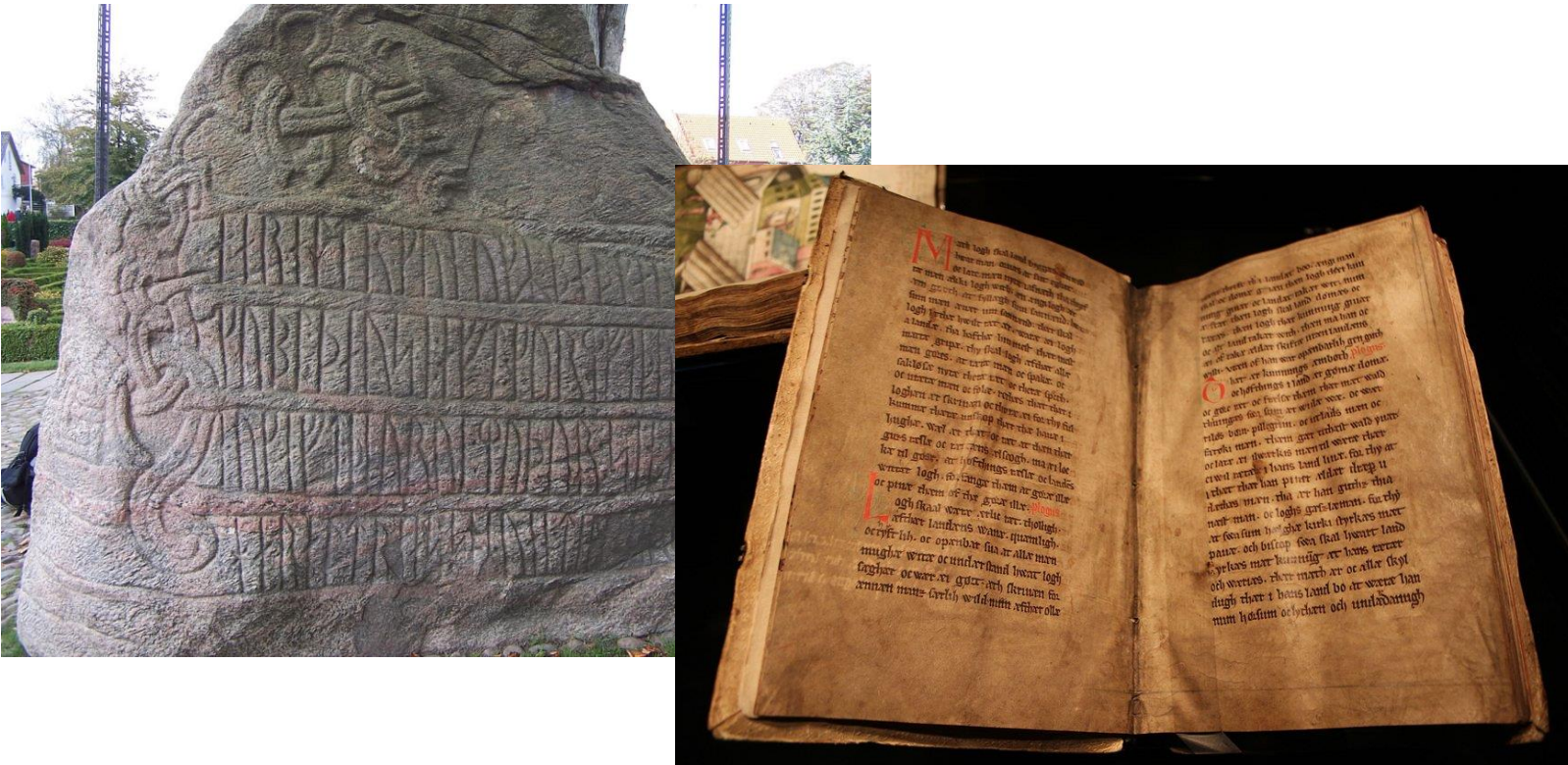


THE VALUE OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES

But place names are also an important element within language itself
- for instance as a source to language history in pre-historic times

THE VALUE OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES

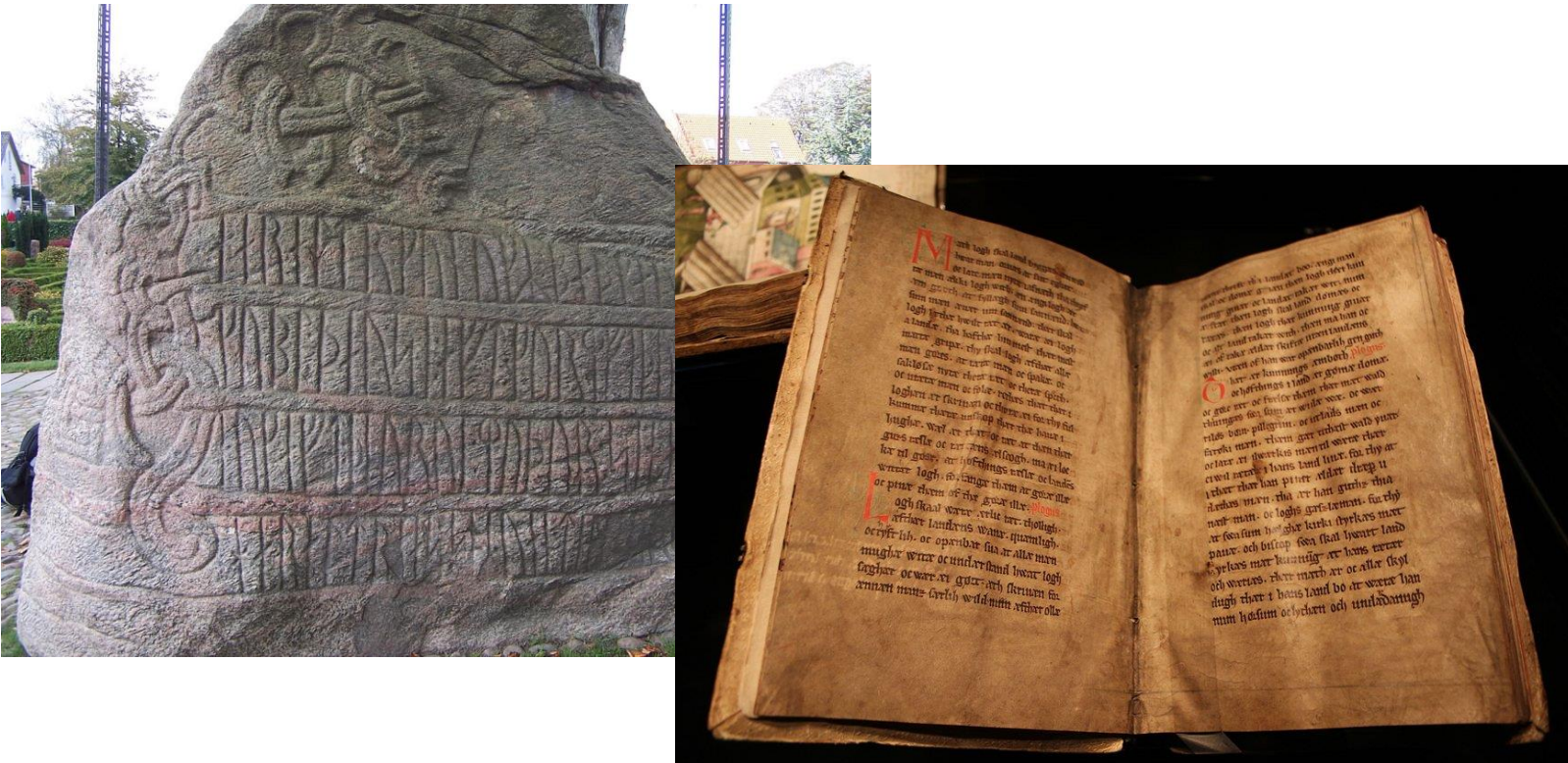
But place names are also an important element within language itself
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In Denmark:
Hardly any written sources in Danish language from before 1241, virtually none before 800

THE VALUE OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES

But place names are also an important element within language itself
- for instance as a source to language history in pre-historic times



In Denmark:

Hardly any written sources in Danish language from before 1241, virtually none before 800

...except for place names!

THE VALUE OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES

In Denmark:

c. 1000 place names from before 800

+ another 3000 from before c. 1250

- which make place names a vital source to ancient Danish language,
- both in terms of vocabulary (word elements used in names)
- and grammar (how word elements are inflected and coined in names)



THE VALUE OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES



May also provide insight to historical matters
(e.g. society structures, religious practices, etc.)
otherwise unknown to us

Denmark:

Several place names – like Odense and Vojens – derives from *Odin's vi* ('sanctuary of Odin'), suggesting a more widespread and organized veneration of the Norse god Odin in Denmark (before 1000) than otherwise known



THE VALUE OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES

May also provide insight to historical matters even into contemporary people's beliefs, feelings, attitudes, and ambitions



Greenland

Developed by that intrepid real estate magnate Erik the Red, who rightly thought the name would attract more settlers.



THE VALUE OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES

Place names are not just practical and ‘neutral’ identifiers of places, they are a vital element of our language (both historically and present) and living tokens of our society, culture and collective identity

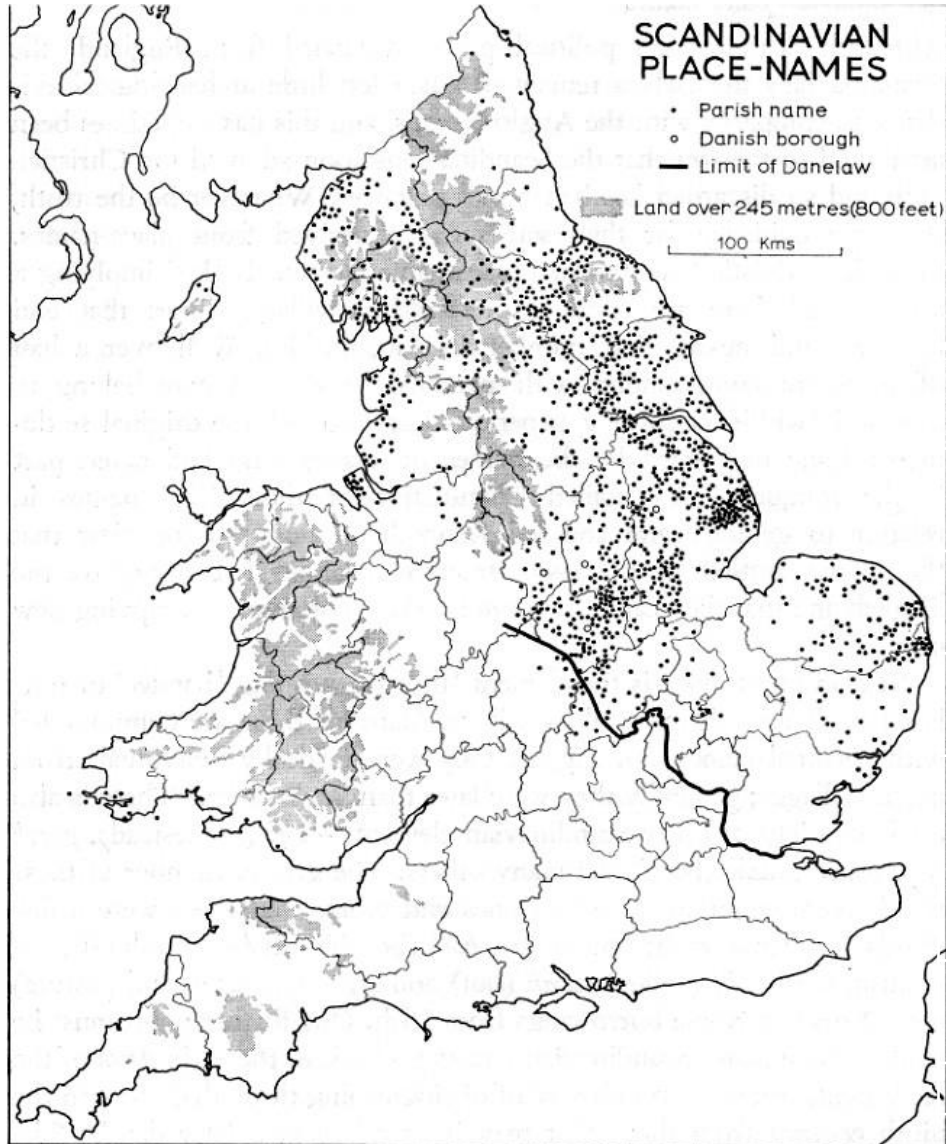
- which makes it highly important to protect our ‘place-name heritage’

THE VALUE OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES

Place names are a particularly interesting feature of what happens when different languages and cultures meet/clash



Case: Scandinavian settlement names in Danelaw England



**Old Norse
(in Middle English)**

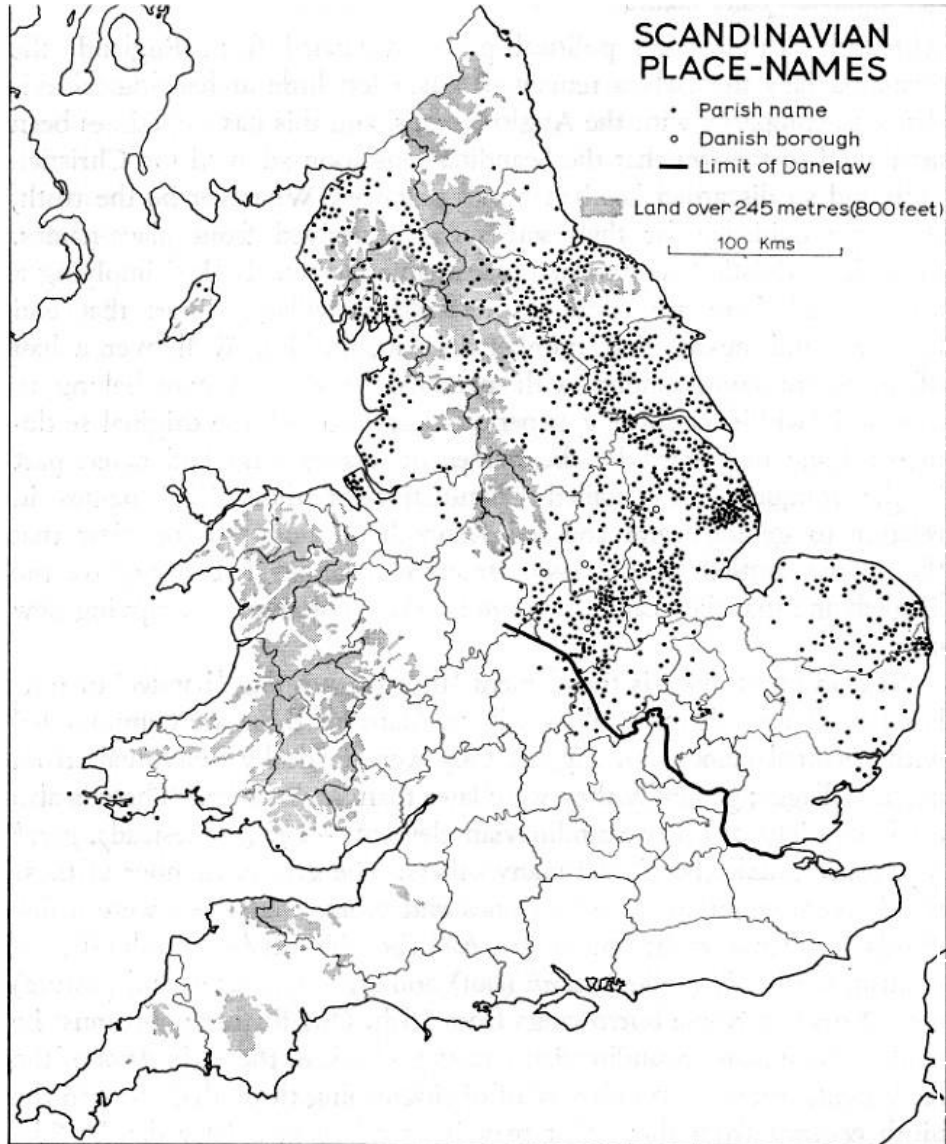
- bý
- thorp
- toft
- thwaite
- holme
- beck

**Anglo-Saxon
(Old English)**

- ton
- ham
- ing
- wic
- ley
- leigh
- hurst
- field



Case: Scandinavian settlement names in Danelaw England



**Old Norse
(in Middle English)**



-bý

-thorp

-toft

-thwaite

-holme

-beck

**Anglo-Saxon
(Old English)**



-ton

-ham

-ing

-wic

-ley

-leigh

-hurst

-field



Case: Scandinavian settlement names in Danelaw England

- **Normanton**, ^{🇬🇧} OE *northman* + OE *-ton*, “the Norwegian’s village”
- **Grimston**, ^{🇩🇰} ON *Grimr* + ^{🇬🇧} OE *-ton*, “Grimr’s village”
- **Grimsby**, ^{🇩🇰} ON *Grimr* + ^{🇩🇰} ON *-by*, “Grimr’s village”
- **Saxby**, OE/ON *seaxe/saksar* + ^{🇩🇰} ON *-by*, “village of the Saxons”
- **Ingleby**, ^{🇩🇰} ON *englar* + ^{🇩🇰} ON *-by*, “village of the English”
- **Denby**, ^{🇬🇧} OE *dene* + ^{🇩🇰} ON *-by*, “villages of the Danes”



Not just the presence of ‘foreign-language’ place names by itself, but also the names’ actual contextual meaning, coining and hybrid combinations provide unique insight to the reality in which they were formed

Case: Colonial place-naming in the Caribbean



- Completely new name: **Ay Ay** (Taino 'river') > (Isla de la) **Santa Cruz** (St. Croix, USVI)
- Full continuation: **Charlotte Amalie** (St. Thomas, DK) > **Charlotte Amalie** (St. Thomas, USA)
- Translation: **Santa Cruz** (Spanish) > **Sainte-Croix** (French)
- Linguistic adaption: **Sainte-Croix** (French) > **Sankt Croix** [kroys] (DK) > **Saint Croix** [kroy] (USA)
- Parallel naming: **Saint John** (English) // **Sankt Jan** (DK)

Case: Post-colonial place-naming – to change names or not?

US Virgin Islands (Danish West India),
sold from Denmark to USA in 1917

- Completely new name: **Dansk Vestindien** ('Danish West India') > **US Virgin Islands**
- Full continuation: **Charlotte Amalie** > **Charlotte Amalie**, **Christiansted** > **Christiansted**,
Frederiksted > **Frederiksted**
- Parallel naming for numerous street names



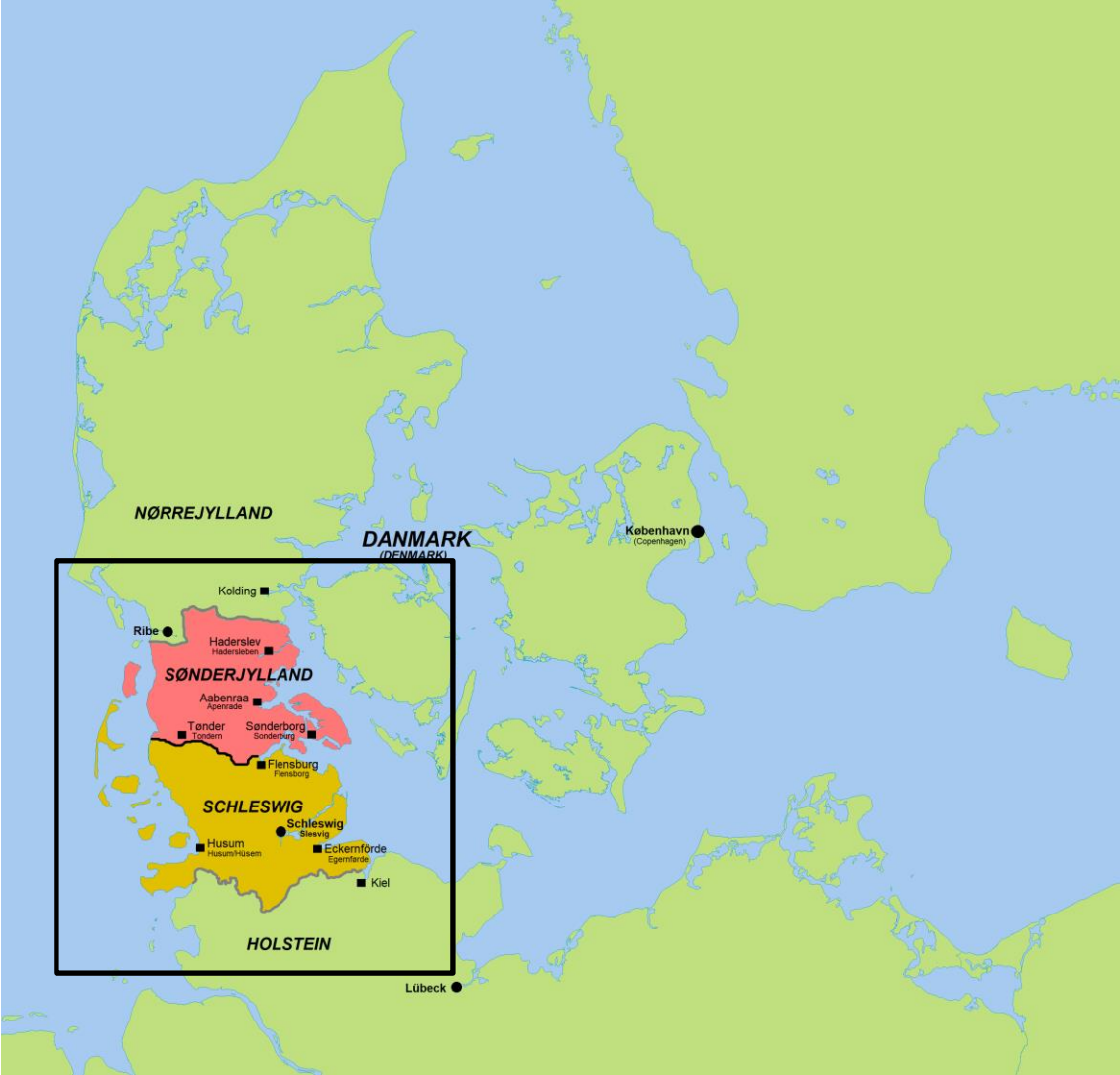
Case: Post-colonial place-naming – to change names or not?

**US Virgin Islands (Danish West India),
sold from Denmark to USA in 1917**

- Argument for change: Negative colonial connotation; difficult pronunciation; obscure meaning
- Argument for continuation: Cultural heritage; attraction for tourists ('colonial tourism'), both from mainland USA (exotic feature?) and Denmark (recognition of names as well as signs)



Case: Danish-German parallel naming in Schleswig borderland



Case: Danish-German parallel naming in Schleswig borderland

- Danish-German borderland duchy since 13th cent.
- Subject to the Danish realm, but with own laws
- Linguistic mix (Danish, German, Frisian)
- Schleswig Wars 1848-50 and 1864
- All of Schleswig part of Germany 1864-1920
- Northern Schleswig returned to Denmark 1920
- Parallel naming for numerous place names



Case: Danish-German parallel naming in Schleswig borderland

- Parallel names (in Danish and German (+Frisian)) for numerous places
- Some German and Danish names ‘fabricated’ after 1864 and 1920
- Choice of formal name follows border
- UN recommends acknowledgement of minority place names
- Other arguments: Tourism; ‘Borderland identity’
- Introduced in Germany, problematic in Denmark



Case: Danish-German parallel naming in Schleswig borderland

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4. FRAMEWORK OF EFFECTIVE NAMES STANDARDIZATION

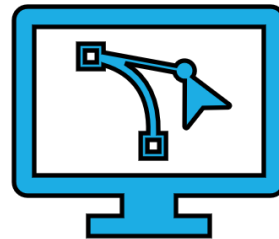
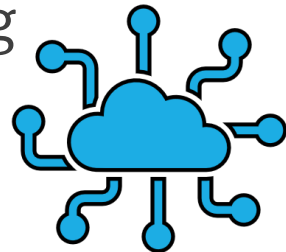
Peder Gammeltoft



FRAMEWORK OF EFFECTIVE STANDARDIZATION

3. Framework of effectiveness

- a. Legal requirements
- b. Administrative requirements
- c. Scientific backing
- d. IT backing



FRAMEWORK OF EFFECTIVENESS

3. Framework of effectiveness

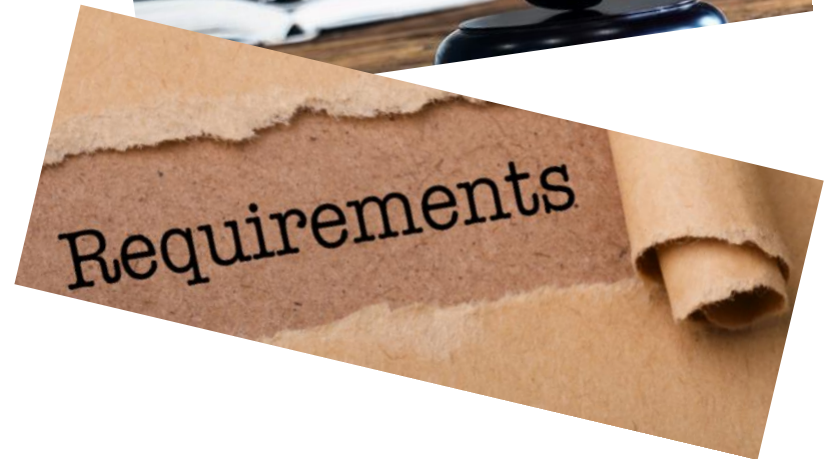
a. Legal requirements

i. Law

- What is the objective of the law?
- Who does the law comply to?
- How should the law be carried out?
- Who is in charge of carrying out the law?

ii. Legal requirements for

- Decision making
- Scientific backing
- Dissemination

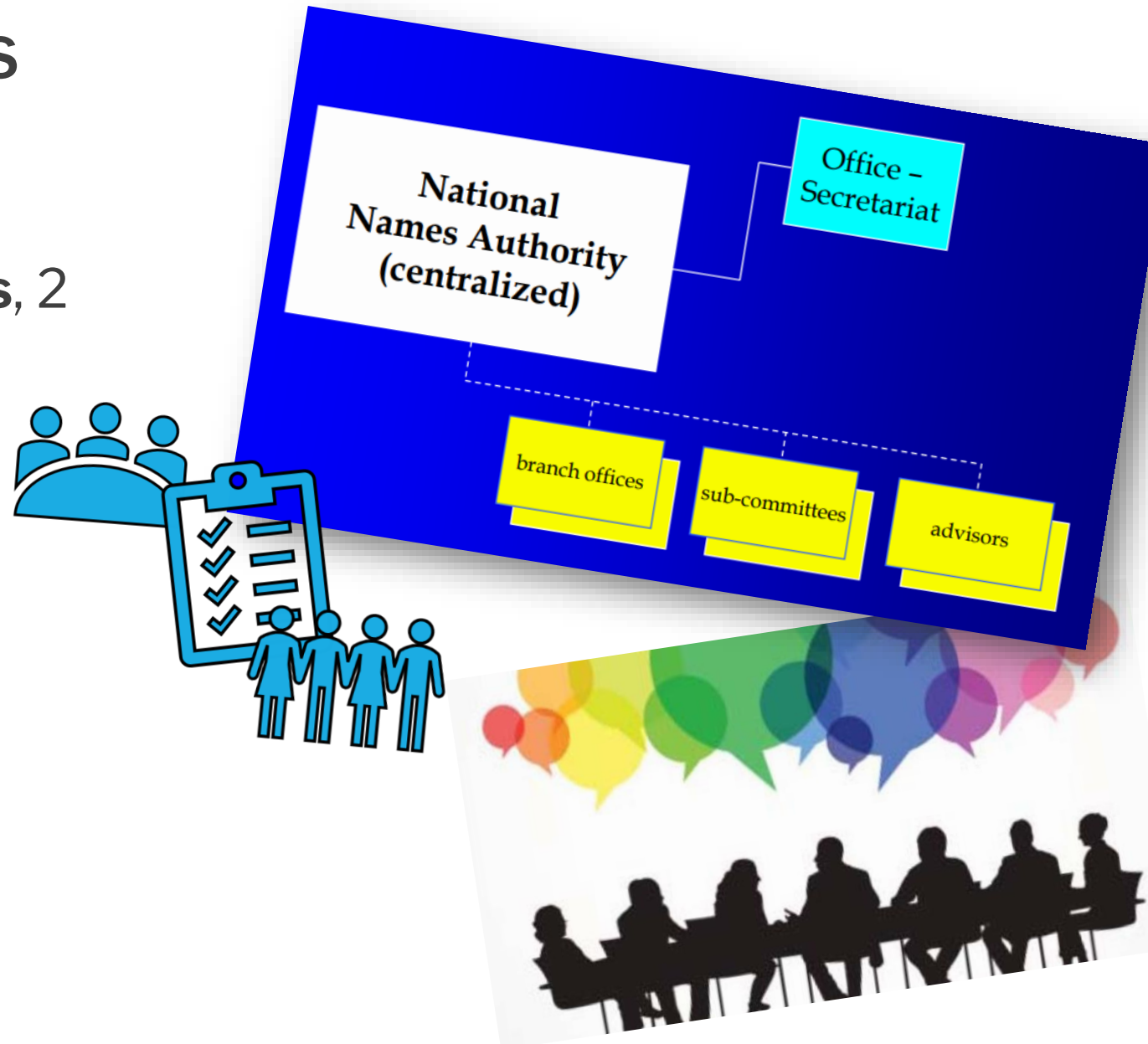


FRAMEWORK OF EFFECTIVENESS

3. Framework of effectiveness, 2

b. Administrative requirements

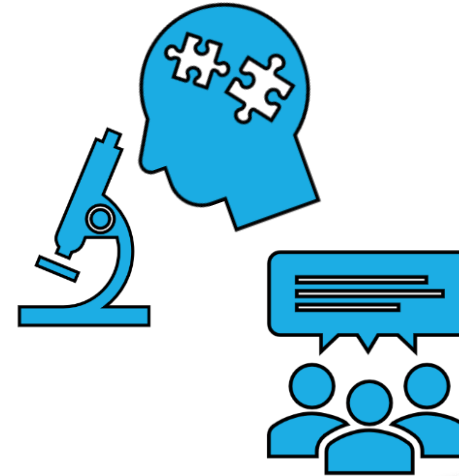
- i. Committee
 - Responsibilities, size, composition
- ii. Secretariat
 - Function, responsibilities
- iii. Workers (database populaters)
 - Education, responsibilities



FRAMEWORK OF EFFECTIVENESS

3. Framework of effectiveness, 3

- c. Scientific backing, either
 - i. Expert group
 - Representation of all official languages
 - Mainly linguistic, some cultural geography
 - ii. Dedicated research group
 - Associated a university?
 - Associated an agency (e.g. Language Council)
 - iii. Position in relation to Committee
 - Representation in the committee
 - Entire group, or representatives?



FRAMEWORK OF EFFECTIVENESS

3. Framework of effectiveness, 4

d. IT backing

i. Programmers

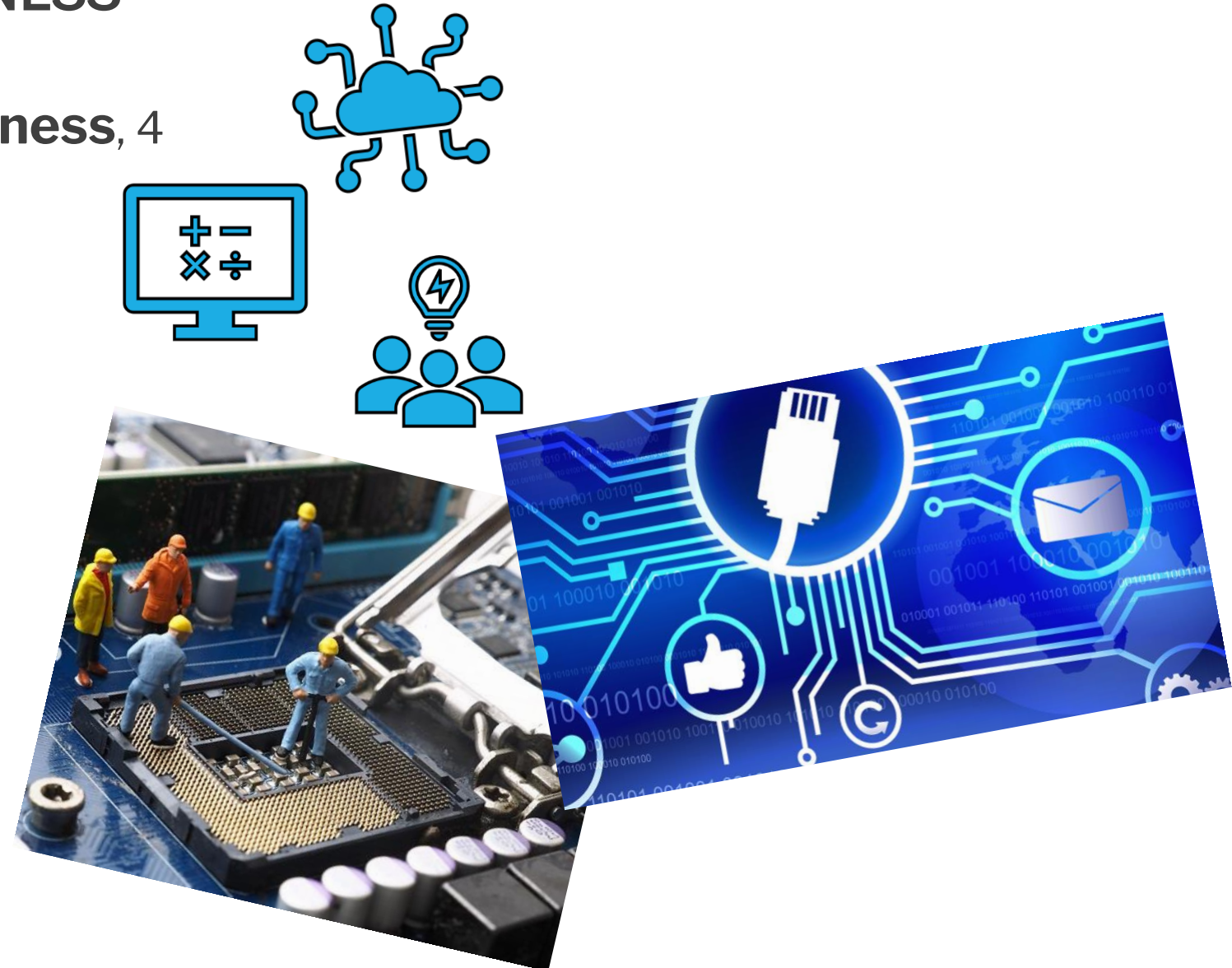
- Create system
- Implement revisions

ii. Maintenance

- Make sure servers are up
- Keeping underlying software updated

iii. Front end developers

- Front end programming
- UX (User eXperience) tests



5. LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS

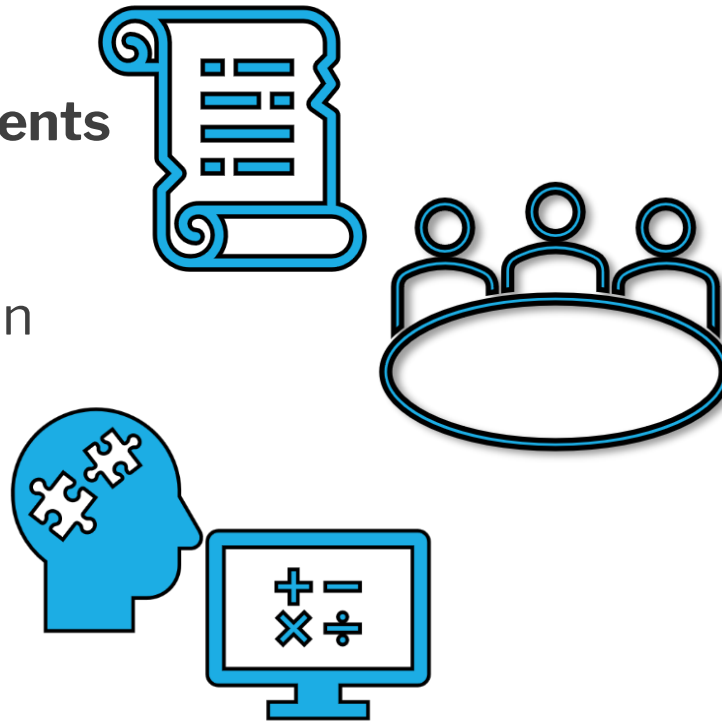
Peder Gammeltoft



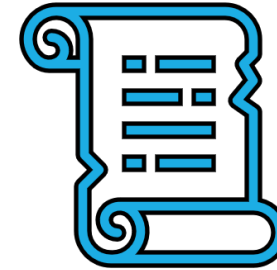
LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS

4. Legal and administrative requirements

- a. Geographical names law
- b. Geographical names administration
- c. IT-department



GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES LAW, background



- UNGEGN bulletin 55 (2018) on legislation on geographical names.
11 member states present their GN regulation, much variation:
 - Law, geographical name committees, often bound by detailed regulations
 - Sweden: rules for good practice in geographical names matters:
https://www.lantmateriet.se/contentassets/41a7acabed464c519755771a3b760b84/ortnamn_och_namnvard_nr6_engelsk.pdf
- A GN law should be concise and clear in its purpose.
- NB! Multilingual states need more regulations, as do states without a well-established spelling.

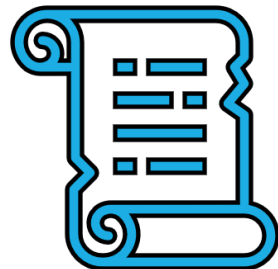
GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES LAW

1. Definition of place & name

2. Objective of the law →

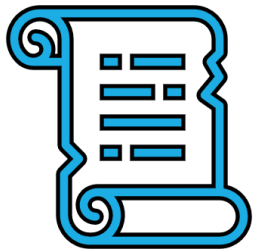
(Examples from GN laws):

- Safeguard geographical names as linguistic cultural heritage
- Give them a suitable written form
- Contribute to the dissemination and use of geographical names
- A nation's official languages should be applied in multi-lingual areas



3. Coverage

- Language(s) →
 - Official languages and minority languages should be safeguarded, according to legal definition
- Geographical area →
 - Areas included and excluded
- Who the law applies to (official/private) →
 - The law applies to, e.g.:
 - a) state,
 - b) regions, and
 - c) municipalitiesdecide on geographical names
 - Applicable to public organizations
 - Applicable to schoolbooks



4. Who has responsibility for geographical name decisions?

1. Different bodies may decide different types of names, e.g.
 - a. **government** (names of national interest, eg. administrative areas and national parks).
 - b. **state** (names of common interest, e.g. villages, state roads, rivers, lakes, names used by state institutions/companies)
 - c. **regions/self-governing area** (for matters which are delegated to them)
 - d. **local government** (e.g. street names, local areas)



5. Standardization/inclusion process

1. How to include new geographical names or correct mistakes?

Case handling procedures that include

- a. Who can ask for a name to be corrected/included?
- b. Who starts the case (e.g. decision-making body, GN secretariat)
- c. Routines for public hearing
- d. Routines for linguistic scrutiny (in all relevant languages)
- e. Decision

2. How to complain about decisions

- a. Who can complain?
- b. Who handles complaints?

Example:

Note from the public: “Wrong name on map. We don’t say X, we say Y”

Local administration: A GN is spelled in different ways. What is the correct spelling?

Hearing process:

- The relevant institution (e.g. secretariat or decision-making body) prepares an announcement including the necessary information about the case.
- The case is published for official hearing
- The results are sent to group of experts, who give a recommendation on the right name and/or spelling.
- The decision-making body makes their decision
- If no complaint: The name is published and registered in the geographical name database

5. Standardization/inclusion process, 2

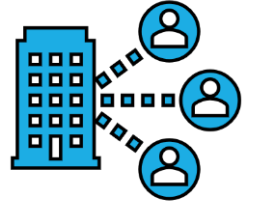


Public participation in geographical name matters:

- Address and email address for the public to contact the relevant authorities
- Crowd-sourcing and name collection (digital and name lists)
- Apps where people can register GN and report mistakes
 - <https://www.rettikartet.no/>

Public participation matters!

6. Dissemination



1. Routines for announcement of standardized names
 - where decisions are usually published (papers, digital channels etc.)
1. All GN decisions entered into the geographical names register/gazetteer/database
2. There should be public access to the GN register/gazetteer/database
 - <https://www.norgeskart.no>



Requirements for a law (or regulations) - checklist

1. Objective and coverage
2. Definitions
3. Standardization (spelling) rules
4. Who starts a case
5. Who has the right to decide
6. Announcement and public hearing
7. Linguistic counselling
8. The use of standardized geographical names
9. Complaints
10. Geographical name register/gazetteer/database

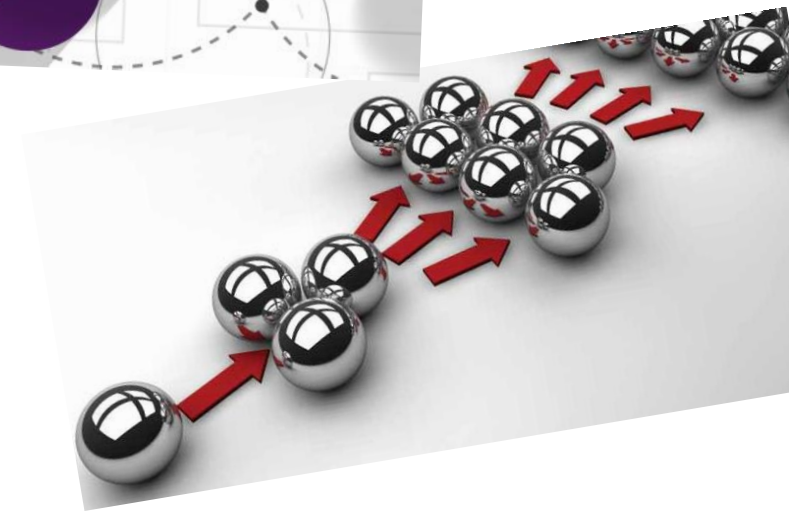
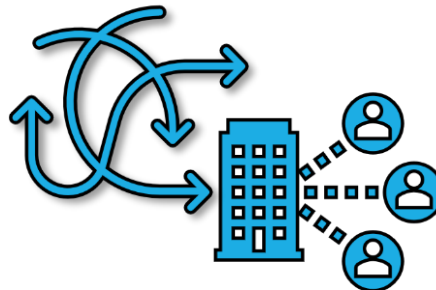
LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE FRAMEWORK

6. Legal and administrative framework, 3

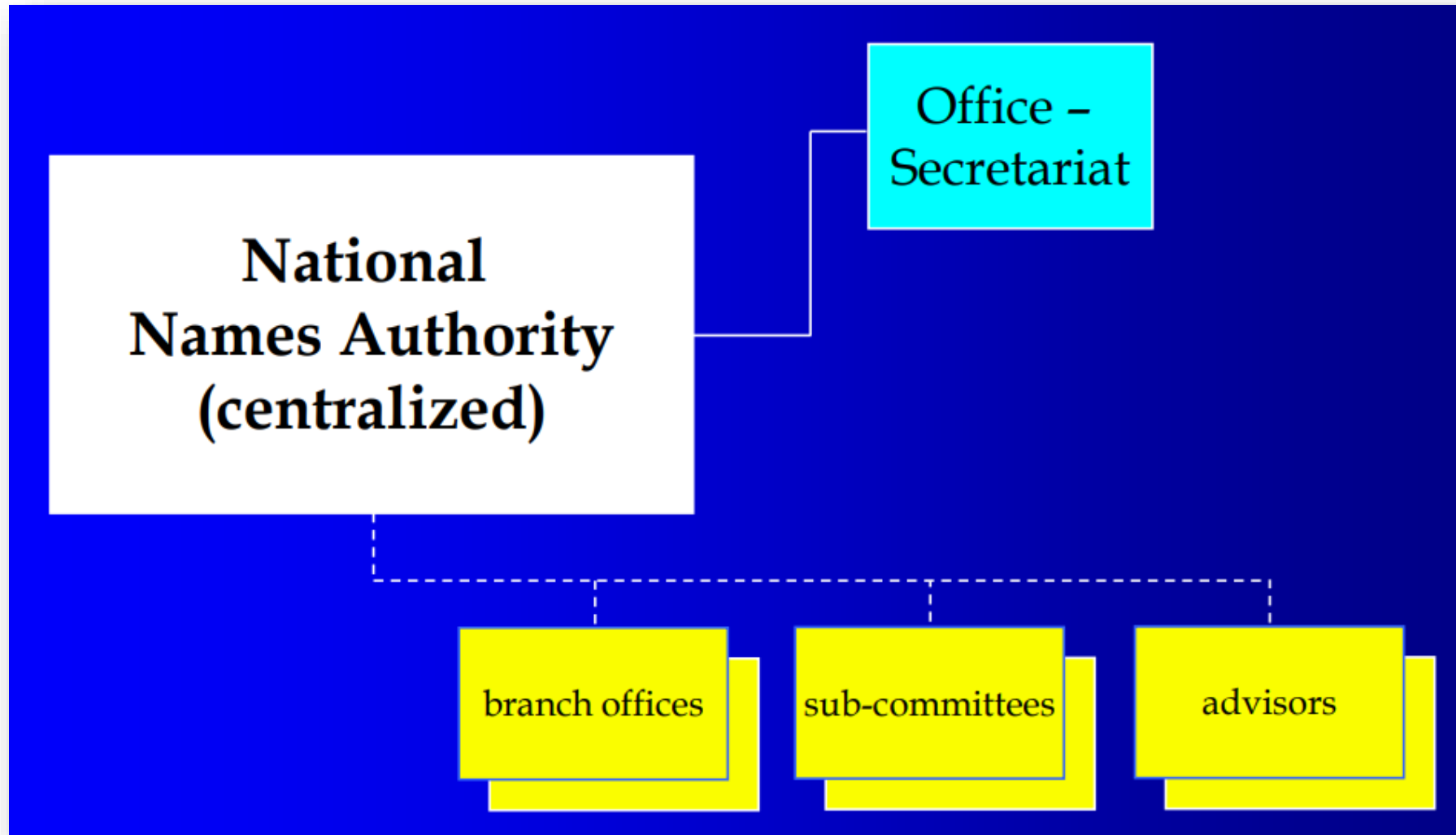
b. Geographical names administration

i. Practical administration

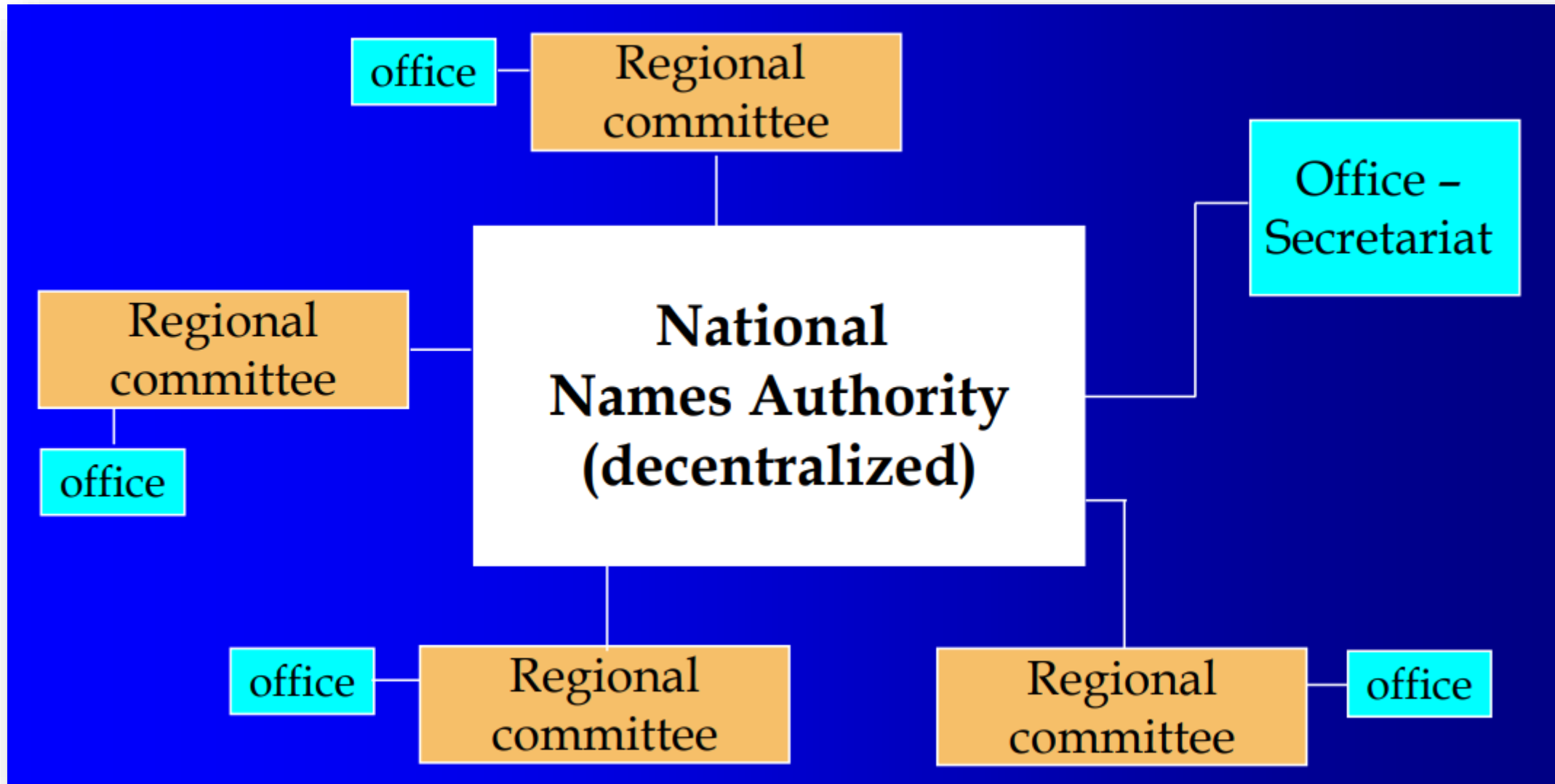
1. Handling cases
 - Making sure case material is complete
2. Keeping records
 - Archival function, minute-taking
3. Calling meetings
4. Handling decisions
 - Ensuring decisions are delivered to relevant parties for execution
5. Dissemination of decisions
 - Public publication
 - database registration



Centralized National Names Authority



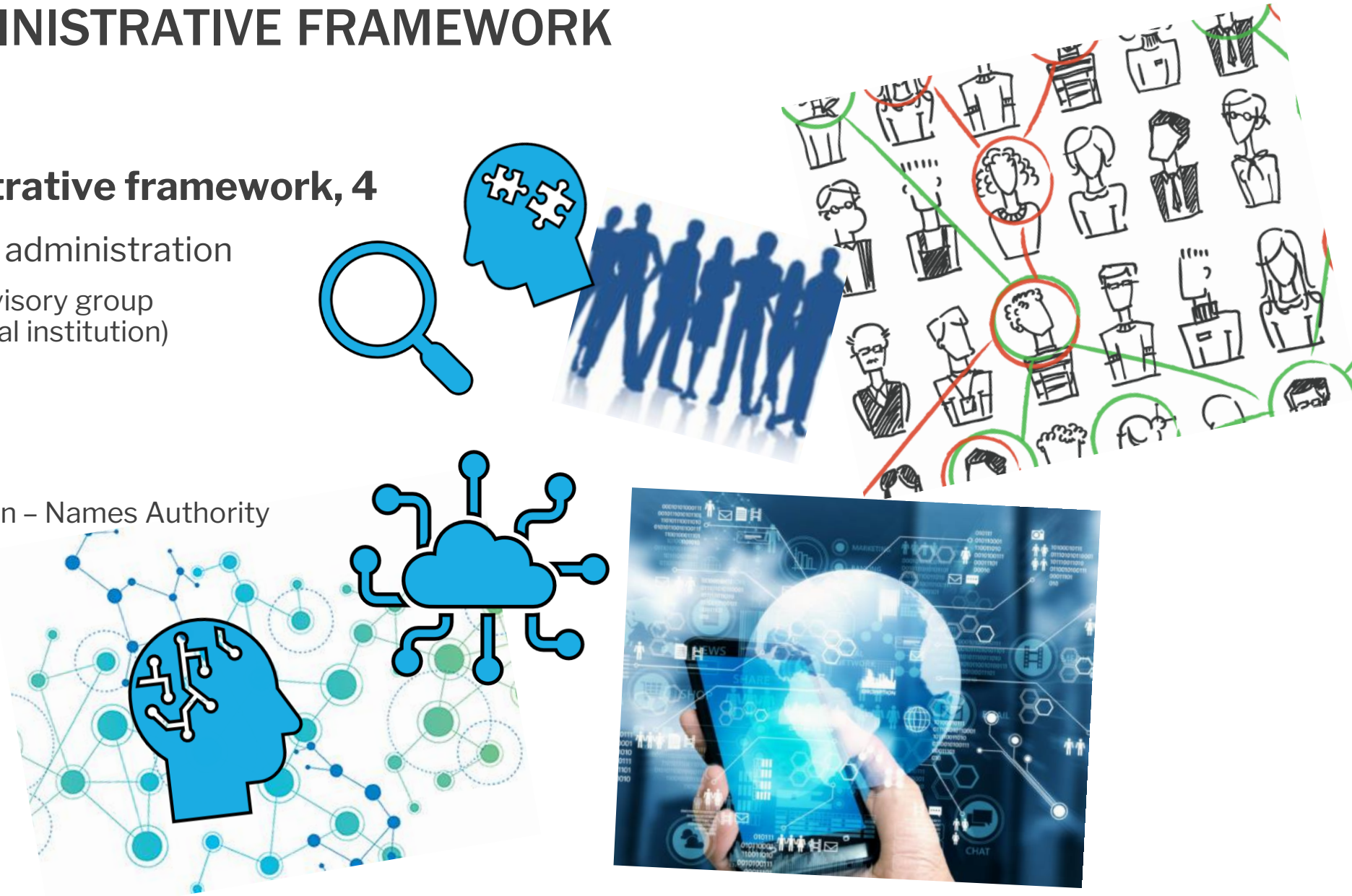
Decentralized National Names Authority



LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE FRAMEWORK

6. Legal and administrative framework, 4

- b. Geographical names administration
 - ii. Group of Experts/Advisory group (Anchored or individual institution)
 1. Scientific scrutiny
 2. Principles of revision
 3. Reporting advice
 - iii. Decision making organ – Names Authority
 1. Evaluation
 2. Deliberation
 3. Decision
- c. IT-department
 - i. Development
 - ii. Maintenance



6. EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION AND AWARENESS RAISING STRATEGIES

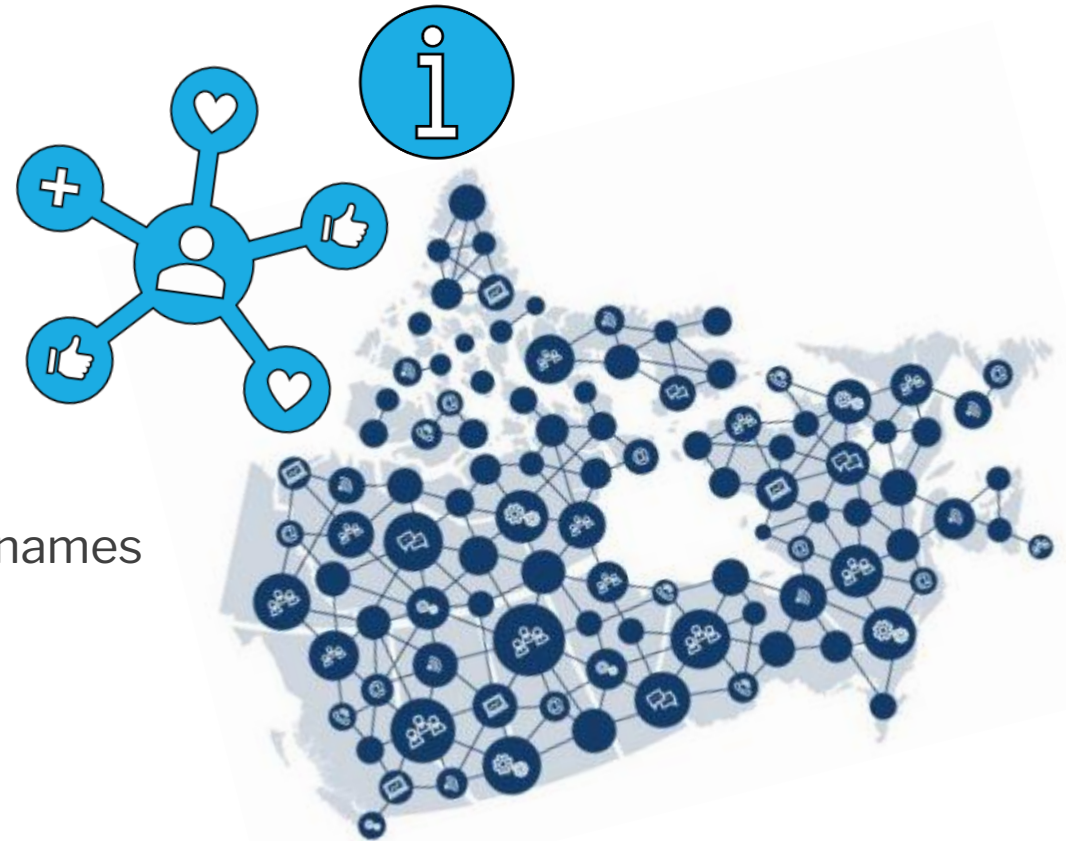
Peder Gammeltoft



NETWORK AND INFORMATION

5. Network and information

- a. Information about geographical names
 - i. Official medium for decisions
 - Announcing GN changes in legal publications
 - Geographical names information distributed through relevant government institutions
 - ii. Dedicated home page?
 - Fixed place to raise awareness of geographical names
 - Keep updated infor about legal matters
 - Announce changes to geographical names
 - Archive of geographical names changes
 - iii. Social media?
 - for spreading news and raising awareness



NETWORK AND INFORMATION



5. Network and information

b. Problem solving - getting help from one's networks

i. Naming issues

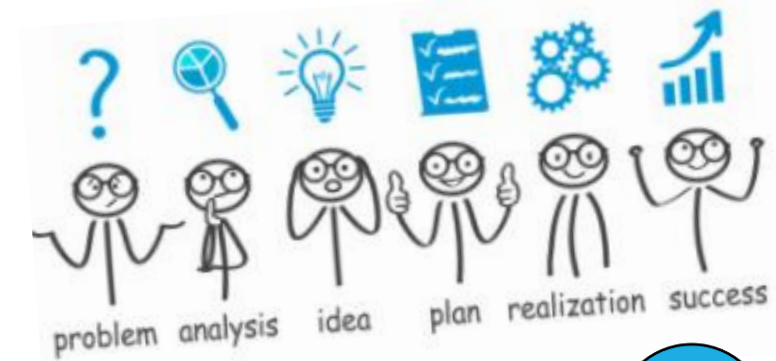
- Knowledge about local names and local naming traditions
- Help seeing behind the naming issue itself

ii. New naming guidance

- Networks can provide help and inspiration
- Networks can provide data

iii. Conflicts where geographical names plays a role

... next page



NETWORK AND INFORMATION

5. Network and information

- b. Problem solving - getting help from one's networks
- iii. Conflicts where geographical names plays a role

“It is axiomatic to state that many of the problems associated with political and cultural toponymy have the events of history as their root cause. [...] History has left us a legacy of ongoing toponymic disputes and problems. Yet although history provides the origin of these difficulties, it does not tell the whole story. There is a more proximate cause of our present-day problems, namely the lenses and filters we have applied in our approach to that history. [...]. And whereas the facts of history cannot be altered, we are able – if we wish – to modify or reappraise our perceptions and perspective, and accordingly our memory. Memory is therefore a crucial component in toponymy, one which a toponymist can usefully study for its own sake, both in broad brush and in close detail.” ([Paul Woodman 2016](#))

- Is the name the problem, or is there something underlying?
- Can the name issue be solved in isolation or not?



NETWORK AND INFORMATION

5. Network and information

c. Cooperation

i. With state / Governmental affiliation
(department)

ii. With NGOs

iii. With the people

iv. International

1. [UNGEEN](#) - participation by state appointment

2. [UN-GGIM](#) - participation by state appointment

3. [ICOS](#) - participation by relevance



The International Council
of Onomastic Sciences

WRAP-UP AND DISCUSSION



EXAMPLES OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES MANAGEMENT

- **Norway, toponymic guidelines:**
<http://www.kartverket.no/Documents/Kart/Stedsnavn/Toponymic-Guidelines-for-Map-and-Other-Editors-Norway.pdf>
- **Sweden, good place-name practise:**
https://www.lantmateriet.se/contentassets/41a7acabed464c519755771a3b760b84/ortnamn_och_namnvard_nr6_engelsk.pdf
- **Sweden, toponymic guidelines:**
https://www.lantmateriet.se/contentassets/41a7acabed464c519755771a3b760b84/toponymic_guidelines_2007_61.pdf
- **Denmark, toponymic guidelines:**
https://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/UNGEGN/docs/11th-uncsgn-docs/E_Conf.105_26_CRP.26_9_Toponymic%20Guidelines%2011th%20UNCSGN.pdf
- **Ukraine, toponymic guidelines:**
<https://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/UNGEGN/docs/Toponymic%20guidelines%20PDF/Ukraine/Verstka.pdf>
- **UNGEGN geographical names organizations:**
<https://unstats.un.org/unsd/ungegn/nna>
- **UNGEGN Bulletin:**
<https://unstats.un.org/unsd/ungegn/pubs/#bulletin>
- https://unstats.un.org/unsd/ungegn/pubs/Bulletin/UNGEGN_bulletin_55_revised.pdf

EXAMPLES OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES MANAGEMENT

- **Sweden: Good Place-name Practice:**

https://www.lantmateriet.se/contentassets/41a7acabed464c519755771a3b760b84/ortnamn_och_namnvard_nr6_engelsk.pdf

- **New Zealand official home page on geographical names** <https://www.linz.govt.nz/regulatory/place-names>

- **Estonia Place-name Act (in English):** <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/en/eli/ee/529052014008/consolide>.

- **Tasmania Place-name Act** <https://dppwe.tas.gov.au/land-tasmania/place-naming-in-tasmania/place-names-act-2020>

Geoportals:

<https://www.norgeskart.no/>

Moldova geoportals:

- <https://geoportal.md/en/default/map#lat=189581.520149&lon=201247.630418&zoom=5&layers= base18, base19>

- <https://moldova-map.md/mapstore/#/viewer/openlayers/157>

Useful periodicals:

- [Onoma](#) (subscription)

- [Review of Historical Geography and Toponomastics](#) (Open Access)

- [Names](#) (subscription)



THANK YOU!

REQUIREMENTS FOR A LAW

1. Objective and coverage
2. Definitions
3. Spelling rules
4. Who starts a case
5. Who has the right to decide
6. Announcement and public hearing
7. Linguistic counselling
8. The use of standardized geographical names
9. Complaints
10. Geographical name register