

## Official urban naming: cultural heritage and identity

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### 1. Urban naming

In modern cities official naming normally forms part of urban planning. The names are decided by politicians, following special procedures and hearings. Urban names are made according to certain naming principles and criteria, and they often contain words for 'street', 'road', 'square', 'market place', 'harbour' etc. Cultural heritage and local tradition are often included in the naming principles. The semantic content of many urban names reflects historical traditions, events and various cultural aspects of the city and its surrounding district, sometimes also of the nation and the international community. Urban toponyms are supposed to give identity to the city and its inhabitants, and form part of the urban culture. The cultural dimension may also apply to the linguistic form of the names.

Official urban naming is different from common naming of places. Toponyms from an area are normally made by common people living there in connection with working processes and daily life, reflecting local traditions, whereas street names are decided by politicians, reflecting their values and preferences. Some urban names have very little or no connection with local history and tradition; they represent the outside world, the national and international scene, and cultural values that the politicians intend to integrate into the city's life.

In many cities there are, however, official names which are made like other toponyms, by ordinary people, names referring to topographical features, local traditions, activities, etc. Some of them represent the oldest layer of the city's names, and were used as toponyms before a street name committee gave them formal status. When cities nowadays expand to rural districts, place-names that already exist in the area are often integrated among the official names of streets, roads and squares, due to an official naming policy of building on local tradition.

In addition to the official urban names there are unofficial ones, used by people living there. The unofficial names are normally used in the local dialect, often with an element of humour, sometimes as an alternative to an official name. One example from the old labour quarters of Stavanger (Southwest-Norway) is *Ølklemma* /'ø:lklemə/ 'the beer trap', a place where one could buy beer and liquor, "at that time a Sodome", according to a local writer (Henriksen 1953, 90). Another example from this part of the old town is *Lygarsgata* /'ly:garsga:də/ ('the liar's street'), named after a man with the nickname *Lygar* 'the liar' (Berntsen 1939, 45–46).

Some official names are used in the local dialect in a grammatical form which differs from the official norm. This may apply to gender, definite form and composition. Examples from Stavanger are: *Torget* (neuter), pronounced /'tɔrjɔ/ (feminine), *Søregata* (*e*-composition), pronounced /'sø:raga:də/ (*a*-composition) and *Holbergs gate* (indefinite form), pronounced /'hɔlbersga:də/ (definite form).

## 2. Cultural heritage and identity

The strong link between cultural heritage and memory on the one hand and identity on the other has in recent time been emphasized by researchers as well as official city councillors and planners. Especially within tourism the concept of cultural heritage has become very popular. Some researchers who have tried to explain this phenomenon and the reason why collective identity and cultural memory have become so important, take the view that this is due to an identity crisis in the post-modern era (Bauman 2000, Krogseth 2007).

Krogseth (op. cit., 59–63) points out that three aspects signify individual and collective identity: "Continuity, coherence and individuality". These three aspects constituting the concept of identity are exposed to serious threats in the post-modern era, i.e. the danger of "changeability, fragmentation and standardisation". Krogseth underlines, however, that this tendency is met by various compensating counter-reactions, among them re-traditionalisation.

Cultural heritage and memory deal with our relationship to the past and the relevance and implications of the past for the present. According to Krogseth op. cit., 63, it is important to create a living dissemination of the past and our cultural heritage, and establish continuity and identity creating connection lines to the stories and

experiences of the past. The search for cultural heritage and back to the roots-experiences is a result of a development where we are torn up with the roots and have become split and uniform. Dissemination of our cultural heritage is a necessary base for identity.

### **3. The *Stavanger 2008* cultural programme: heritage and identity**

As appointed European capital of culture in 2008—together with Liverpool—by the European Commission, Stavanger and the neighbouring city Sandnes have made strong commitments to promote cultural heritage and identity in years to come. This is expressed in the goals, values and vision of the *Stavanger 2008* cultural programme. The vision is expressed through the concept “Open port”, which can be understood both in its English sense ‘open harbour’ and in its Scandinavian meaning of ‘open gate’: “Open Port—openness towards the world—is about challenging the region and its people to be even more open and inclusive towards each other, art, ideas and opportunities”. With their own tradition and history as a starting point, Stavanger and Sandnes wish to incorporate values and ideas from the whole world and thus form the future.

The objectives for Stavanger 2008 are expressed through several bullet points. One of them mentions an aspiration to contribute to “cultural curiosity and tolerance”. Another point emphasizes enhancement of “regional identity and pride”. Five values have been set for how the cultural capital should to be developed and applied, among them “cultural heritage and development”.

### **4. Official names and naming principles in Stavanger and Sandnes**

The vision, values and objectives of Stavanger 2008 may be seen in relationship with different aspects of urban life and culture. One area of interest is official place names. How does the official naming—the names and the naming criteria—match the vision, objectives and values of Stavanger and Sandnes as capitals of culture? In what way is cultural heritage and identity reflected in the cities’ official names, with regard to the three mentioned aspects: continuity, coherence and individuality. How is the special character of the two cities



and their inhabitants reflected in the names, regarding historical development, society, everyday life, culture, attitudes and language? In this context it is relevant to study the linguistic content and form of existing names, as well as the values, culture and identity that politicians intend to promote through the official naming.

In the official toponyms of a mediaeval city, like Stavanger, one expects to find several historical layers, reflecting the development of the city—in this case from a religious centre in early mediaeval times, a see (bishopric) with a monastery and cathedral, to a modern international city and oil capital. The street names are believed to reflect different stages of development, including a change of mentality and attitudes throughout the generations, e.g. with regard to social classes, the role of men and women, and the local language versus the written standard.

#### 4.1. Naming process and naming principles

In major Norwegian cities the *official* naming of streets, roads, squares etc. dates back to the mid 19th century. However, quite a few of the names were made in mediaeval times. Bergen established a street name commission in 1822, Oslo in 1847 and Stavanger in 1861 (Stems-haug 1985, 140). The commission in Stavanger evaluated the existing names of streets, narrow passages, squares etc., and suggested new names where those were needed (Næss 1967). From 1861 to present day politicians have regularly, in accordance with the development of the city, made resolutions giving new names to streets, squares, urban areas etc., and deciding the linguistic form of the names.

The city council has also made resolutions about the naming procedures and principles to be followed. The inhabitants of an area are invited to suggest names. There is a strong recommendation to use place names that already exist in an area where street names are needed. The council of the city area is invited to give its opinion on the names, and two national name advisers evaluate the written form of the names. The final decision is made by the city's street name council. Similar procedures and naming principles are followed in Sandnes. The official street name register of Stavanger presently contains approx. 1750 names, and that of Sandnes 800 names.

With a population of almost 190,000 Stavanger and Sandnes now form Norway's third largest urban area, next to Oslo and Bergen,



however, with a higher growth of the population per cent than the two bigger cities (Helle et al. 2006, 500). There are only 15 km between the two city centres. In 1960 the boundaries of Stavanger and Sandnes were expanded, including areas that belonged to neighbouring municipalities (Hetland, Madla, Høyland and Høle).

#### 4.2. Mediaeval times

A number of official names in Stavanger date back to mediaeval times—to *civitas Stavangrensis* (Helle 1975, 131). The name *Stavanger*, Old Norse *Stafangr*, is often mentioned in written sources from that time. It consists of the elements *angr*, signifying 'fjord, bay', and *Staf* 'stick, pole', probably describing the bay which nowadays is called *Vågen*, and the straight headland on the eastern shore, called *Skagen* (Særheim 2007, 216). The name *Skagen*, meaning 'straight headland', is also mentioned in mediaeval sources (*de Skaganom* 1296). Today it denotes a street alongside the bay. In mediaeval times this street was called *Nedregata*, 'the lower street', while the present *Kirkegata* ('the church street') was called *Øvregata*, 'the upper street'.



Fig. 1. Reconstruction of Stavanger approx. 1300. The model is made by Reza G. Ghoumi. Photo: Museum of Archaeology, University of Stavanger.

Some names refer to mediaeval—often religious—institutions. *Olavskleivå* ('steep road'), *Olavstrappa* ('stairs') and *St. Olavsgata* refer to a mediaeval St. Olav monastery on this site. *Kannikbakken* ('steep road') and *Kannikgata* are linked to the property of the canons of the city's cathedral, St. Svithun's church, built in the 1120s. *St. Svithuns gate* contains the name of the saint and patron of Stavanger, Svithun, a bishop in Winchester (approx. 800). *Pedersgata* and *Pedersbakken* refer to St. Peter's church and a connected hospital, founded in 1270 by king Magnus Lagabøte (the 'law-reformer'). The hospital is mentioned in *Hospitalgata*.

The see of Stavanger was founded in the 1120s, probably 1125, which is recognized as the founding date of the city. This institution is reflected in names like *Bispebrygga* ('the bishop's pier') and *Bispebadegård* ('the bishop's farm'). *Biskop Njåls gate* and *Biskop Reinalds gate* mention two mediaeval bishops. The mediaeval cathedral school is referred to in the name of a brook, *Skolebekken*. Even old field names are represented among the names from the old town: *Arneageren* ('Arne's field'), linked to the farm *Arnegard* (j *Aarne gardhe* 1404), i.e. 'in Arne's farm'; the Norwegian preposition *i* 'in' was usually written *j* in mediaeval times.

Street names referring to mediaeval times and institutions from that period are important historical links and contributions to a collective memory and consciousness of the city's oldest history. However, several names found in written sources from that time are not included among the official street or area names. This especially applies to farm and habitation names, e.g. *Nasargard* 1302, *Katlaregardr* 1298, *Bratrenom* 1342, j *Simunar garde* 1354, j *Ingimundargardi* 1362, j *Stæins garde* 1383, j *Suaddagarde* 1379, j *øfra Krikenom* 1431, *Kocs hws* 1530 (Helle 1975, 150–153). If these and other names from the same period, e.g. *Grimsåkeren* and some other field names, had been included among the official names, these places and institutions would also have been part of the common memory and the names would have been signs of continuity.

Sandnes, which at present is one of Norway's fastest growing cities, was founded in 1860. The name signifies 'sandy headland'. The urban area of Sandnes and Stavanger has expanded into former farmland where farming has been continuous since the Bronze Age. Some of the oldest toponyms, especially settlement names, from the two cities probably date back to that period. The names are important

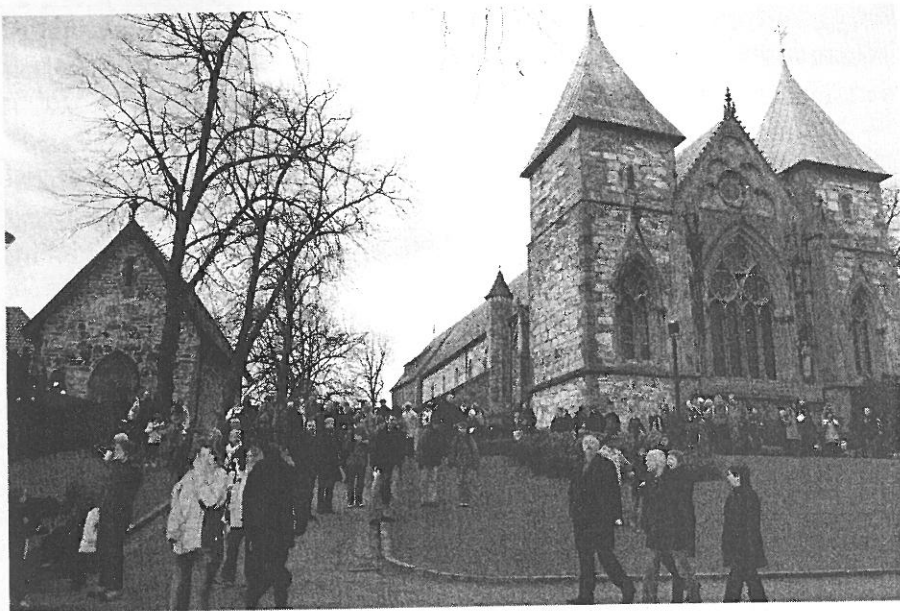


Fig. 2. Stavanger Cathedral (St. Svithun's Church) and The Bishop's Chapel. The photo was taken on January 12<sup>th</sup> 2008, the day *Stavanger 2008* was officially opened. Photo: Inge Særheim.

connecting links to the past and signs of very old and continuous habitation and activity in the area.

#### 4.3. Topographical features

A number of street names include a topographical name—e.g. the name of a lake, stream, bay, headland, islet, bog or mountain. Some of these names are quite old, much older than the street or road. They give an impression of the landscape before it became part of the city, e.g. *Valberggata* (*Valberget* probably means 'the falcon's mountain') and *Øvre Holmegate* (*Holmen* means 'the islet', earlier called *Kuholmen*, signifying that cows used to graze there).

When the two cities expanded into areas that earlier belonged to neighbouring municipalities, many topographical names from these new areas were included in the street names, e.g. *Snarehaugen* (a hill where birds were caught in snares), *Rustå* (a grassy slope), *Kjervastadveien* (containing the name of a farm, *Kjervastad*, from the Iron Age),



*Dreggjavikveien* (a bay where boats used to be anchored), *Giljarhaug-gata* (a hill where one would be looking for fish), *Iglemyrveien* (a bog with leeches; earlier used in medicine).

Some of these names refer to activities and working processes within farming, fishing, sailing etc. They contain words and grammatical forms that are typical of the old dialect. This way of naming is in accordance with the recommendation to use already existing names when naming new streets, roads and urban areas. The names are historical links and contribute to increased consciousness of the past and knowledge about local tradition, and thus to the creation of cultural identity.

#### 4.4. Activities and traditions

A number of activities and traditions are mentioned in old road and street names. The names often refer to communication, travel and transport. Some mention the direction: *Hetlandsgata* and *Gamle Somavei* are old roads to the farms of Hetland and Soma, while *Strandgata* leads to the harbour and boathouses by the fjord (*Straen* 'the strand'). *Buseneset*



Fig. 3. View of Torget ('the marketplace') and Vågen ('the bay'), Stavanger. The photo was taken on January 12<sup>th</sup> 2008. Photo: Inge Særheim.

is a headland where one could earlier get on a boat or ferry (Old Norse *búza*) to cross the fjord. *Laberget* is a rock by the sea where one used to load and unload the goods. *Tjodveien* is the old road for the common "people". *Torget* and *Timianstorjå* are names of old market places, the last one referring to the herb thyme, while *Rosenkildegata* contains the name of an old trade firm, the House of Rosenkilde.

Old handicraft and trade are mentioned in several street names: *Kiprå* and *Bøkkersmauet* refer to coopers, *Høkkergata* to hucksters or hawkers (small grocer), *Garvergata* to tanners, *Skreddersmauet* to tailors, *Seilmakergata* to sailmakers, *Smeaheiveien* to blacksmiths and *Pottemagerstraen* to potters. Sandnes was founded on pottery and brick works, which is the background of several names, e.g. *Simonsbakken* (includes the name of an old potter), and *Altonagata*. The brickyard *Altona* is named after workers from Altona (Hamburg) who moved to Sandnes and took part in this industry.

Several street names in Stavanger refer to old shipping industry: *Skippergate* (sailors), *Verven* (shipyard), *Steinkargata* and *Dokksmauet* (both refer to docks). Rope was manufactured in *Banevigsgata* (ropery). Even the oil industry is mentioned in younger names: *Heidrunveien* and *Staffjordveien* (containing names of oil fields in The North Sea).

Some area and street names describe farm land and traditions within farming: *Løkkeveien* (*løkke* 'paddock, enclosure', situated in the outskirts of the old town), *Kjelvene* (*kjelve*, a local word for 'meadow'), *Vodlaveien* (*voll* 'meadow'), *Ækreveien* (*ekre* 'meadow'), *Revheimsslåttå* (*slåtte* 'hayland'), *Midtåkerveien* (*åker* '(corn)field'), *Molkeholen* (a hill where the cows were milked), *Markageilen* (a cattle track), *Skjeneholen* (a hill where the cows used to run on warm summer days to get away from flies), *Dugane* (cultivated piece of land, used to be bog), *Torvbeen* (small piece of land where peat was cut).

The names describe various parts of old town life, culture and traditions. *Skansegata* is situated by the old battery of the harbour. *Steilebakken* and *Tjuvholmen* are old places of execution. *Brønngata* refers to a public well in the street, *Badehusgata* to a public bath, and *St. Hans gate* to an old assembly place for celebration and bonfire on Midsummer Day. *Asylgata* is named after an institution, an asylum, where small children from labour homes were well taken care off while their parents were at work. *Klubbegata* is named after a—still existing—institution, a club where men from the upper and middle classes used to meet for drinks and conversation.

Several names are connected with religious life, e.g. with congregations, denominations and missionary work, reflecting that Stavanger is regarded as the centre of the Bible belt and missionary work in Norway: *Misjonsveien* (site of the oldest Norwegian missionary organization), *Brødregata* ('brothers', a religious group connected with the Herrnhut-movement), *Stiftelsesgata* (a home for poor orphaned girls, run by a religious group called 'haugianarar', lead by Hans Nielsen Hauge), *Emmausveien* and *Vaisenhusgata* (a property and home for orphaned, run by the local home mission).

The official street names reflect different stages of the development of the two cities and give information about many aspects of labour, culture and daily life in the city areas. The content of the names gives an impression of great diversity. They might promote consciousness and knowledge about local history and culture and help create identity among the inhabitants.

#### 4.5. Commemorative names

A number of streets and squares are named after people, mostly persons who have had an important position in one way or another. Approx. 390 names of streets, etc. in Stavanger are so-called commemorative names, comprising the names of 370 different persons. Quite often—but not always—the persons have had some connection with the city. They normally represent the upper classes, i.e. senior state officials, or they come from the middle classes, the business community. The selection of people chosen to be represented in the official names illustrate the values of the society, at least among people in important political positions.

Very few streets are named after women; in Stavanger only 50 streets, while 338 are named after men. Before 1940 only two streets were named after a woman. In the 1970s and 80s, however, the representation of women improved considerably, e.g. with eight streets named after women and eleven after men in the 1980s.

Among the 49 women chosen only 13 have had a strong link to Stavanger and the nearby region, i.e. 26,5 %. Most of them belong to the national scene, e.g. arts and culture (Sigrid Undset), science (Botaniker Resvoll), sports (Sonja Henie), the royal family (Kronprinsesse Märtha) and mediaeval history (Åsta kongsmor). The situation for the men is slightly different. 113 of the 318 men represented have had a



strong link to Stavanger and the region, i.e. 35,5 %, being outstanding persons within enterprise, business, politics, education, culture and social life. One gets the impression that there are more prominent figures to choose between among men than among women. But this difference is obviously due to values and attitudes with regard to gender. The merits of men have through the generations been regarded as more valuable for society than the contributions of women.

It is also interesting to study the use of titles in street names containing the name of a person. The title of the person is included in several names to show an important position, either prior to the full name, e.g. *Consul Sigval Bergesens vei* (consul), or to the surname: *Losoldermann Natvigs vei* (master of the pilots at sea), *Rektor Steens plass* (rector—headmaster—of the cathedral school). This type of naming is in accordance with attitudes to gender in the last part of the 19th century: Men from the upper and middle classes were spoken of with a title (mentioning the profession or education) and the name. Women were spoken of with their surname—for a married woman the surname of their husband—and an initial *Fru* or *Madam*, i.e. 'Mrs.', depending on social class. This underlines their weak position in society and their dependence on men. Unmarried women were spoken of with their surname and an initial *Frøken* or *Jomfru*, i.e. 'Miss', depending on social class. The difference in addressing and speaking about men and women in the last part of the 19th century may be studied in realistic novels from this period, e.g. by the authors Arne Garborg and Alexander L. Kielland (Særheim 2001, 171–173, 2006, 38–39).

In the 50 street names from Stavanger containing a woman's name only two of the persons (4 %) are mentioned with a title: *Botaniker Resvolles gate* and *Dr. Martha Persens gate*. The situation for men is quite different: 52 men (16,3 %) are mentioned with a title. This difference is obviously due to the different values and attitudes concerning men and women, but it is also due to the fact that very few streets were named after women before 1950—the use of titles was more common in earlier generations.

In many street names the personal name is used without a title: *Eilert Sundts gate* (scientist from Stavanger) *Henrik Steffens gate* (European philosopher and writer, born in Stavanger), *Bolette Wieses gate* (a woman who started a school for girls), *Oscar Mathisens gate* (speedskater), *Robert Scotts gate* (English polar explorer).

Sometimes only the surname is mentioned: *Obstfelders vei* (poet from Stavanger), *Seehusens gate* (wealthy business man in Stavanger, born 1619), *Nordbøgata* (local sailor and business man, born 1789).

In a few examples only the first name of the person is mentioned: *Klasaskjeret*, *Gitlesmauet* and *Finklasmauet*, i.e. *Klas*, *Gitle* and *Finkel*. The names are made in the same way as normal names, in accordance with the dialect. Another example is *Tidesmauet*, where the first part of the surname, (*Jacob*) *Thideman*, is adjusted to the local language.

A special—archaic—type of commemorative names includes the word *minne* 'memory': *Haugvaldstadminde*, *Karlsminnegata*, *Engelsminnegata*. The first element of *Ledaalsgata* is made up of the last letter of the names of the owner of this property, Gabriel Schanche Kielland, and his wife Johanna Margreta Bull.

Streets are also named after historical persons, e.g. from the Viking and Mediaeval Ages: *Magnus Lagabøters gate* (a Norse king 1263–1280), *Leiv Eirikssons gate* (discovered Vinland approx. 1000), *Erling Skjalgssons gate* (a Viking chief from the district), *Ogmund Finnssons vei* (a national leader from the district). Even Norse gods are represented: *Balders gate*, *Tors gate*, *Friggs gate*, *Frøyas gate*, as well as persons in literature (fiction): *Skipper Worses gate* (Kielland), *Veslemøyveien* (Garborg), *Peer Gynts vei* and *Mor Åses vei* (Ibsen).

#### 4.6. Group naming

In the 1960s and 70s, when the area and population of the two cities expanded, it was common to name groups of streets with similar semantic elements, e.g. words or names representing birds, animals (on land and in the sea), plants, geology, astronomy, Norse mythology, folklore, sports, ships, military defence, history, local traditions, farming, fishery, actors and scientists. Most often the names had no link to history or tradition in the area. It was argued that it would be easier for the police, ambulance and fire squad to find the locations when the street names in the area had a similar semantic content. A new problem was created, however, because identical street and road names were found in many towns and municipalities, which made it even more difficult for the rescue squad to find the right locations.

In some cases new constructed names were chosen instead of already existing names, e.g. names containing names of actresses (*Lalla Carlsens gate*, *Ragna Wettergreens gate*) and mountain summer farms (*Lauvastølveien*, *Nystølveien*) in an area with a number of local toponyms referring to farming, e.g. *Jonsvoll*, *Gjetarshaugen*, *Skultahagen*, *Berghagen* and *Hestahagen*. In this case the politicians did not follow the naming principle to use place names that already existed in the area.

Another way of naming roads and streets in a group which presently has become quite popular, is the use of the same name element, often an already existing toponym, a key name, e.g. *Dusavika* ('bay with calm waters'), and different endings: *Dusavikhagen* ('enclosure'), *-kroken* ('hook'), *-krossen* ('crossing'), *-marka* ('farmland'), *-stien* ('path'), *-svingen* ('curve'), *-tunet* ('yard') and *-veien* ('road').

#### 4.7. The local language—the dialect

As a result of the dialect movement in Norway, which started in the early 1970s, and the growing understanding of the relationship between toponyms and local identity, as well as the intention to base urban naming on already existing place names, more elements from the local dialect have been introduced in the official names of Stavanger and Sandnes during the last 20–25 years. Typical local words are used, e.g. endings like *-geilen* ('narrow road, path, cattle track'; *Folkvordgeilen*), *-been* ('small piece of land'; *Hansabeen*), *-foren/forane* ('wet piece of land', cf. English *ford*; *Madlaforen*, *Forane*).

Special grammatical endings in the dialect are used in some names, e.g. definite feminine nouns ending in *-å* (instead of *-a*, which is the national norm): *Larsamyrå* ('the bog of Lars'), *Austrevigå* ('the eastern bay'), *Sandgåådå* ('the sandy path'), *Madlatuå* ('the hilltop on the farm Madla'), *Skolebryggå* ('the pier by the school'). Other feminine nouns are written in accordance with the national standard, with an *-a*: *Langgata* ('the long street').

Pronunciations typical for the dialect but different from the standard language are marked in some names: *Valbergjet* (*-berget*, 'the mountain'), *Ulvaryggjen* (*-ryggen*, 'back'), *Tostenbakken* (the personal name *Torstein*), *Høkkergata* (*høker*, 'hawker, small grocer'), *Vibestraen* (*-stranden*, 'harbour with boathouses'), *Sandalsloen* (*-lunden*, 'grove'), *Kvednaholen* (*Kverna-*, 'mill'), *Vodlaveien* (*Volla-*, 'meadow'). There



is, however, some inconsistency also on this point. The same word sometimes has different forms in different names: *Kvednabergjet–Kvernevik* (*kvern*), *Vibemyr–Vipeveien* (*vipe* 'lapwing'), *Hatleveien–Hasselveien* (*hassel* 'hazel'), i.e. the first mentioned in accordance with the dialect, the other one with the national standard.

Some names are composed in accordance with the dialect, e.g. with *-a* in names like *Jensahagen*, *Lassakroken*, *Kleivatrappene* and *Markaholen*. There is, however, inconsistency also on this point. In some cases the same—or similar—name elements have different forms in different names: *Ulvaryggjen–Ulveveien* (*ulv* 'wolf'), *Thorsstraen–Thorsesmauet* (*Thorsen*, a surname), *Sundtagårdsveien–Sundtebakken* (*Sundt*, a surname), *Husabøåkeren–Husebøhagen* (*Husabø*, a farm name), *Klasaskjeret–Klausegata* (contain male names, *Klas* and *Klaus*).

Some old grammatical forms are used in some names, in accordance with the form of the toponyms in the local language. *Skredbakka* and *Hagabakka* contain an old case ending *-a* of the word *bakke* 'hill, slope'. Words and grammatical forms that reflect old Danish influence are also kept in some names: *Sølyst*, *Bjergsted*, *Rosenli*; in Norwegian *Sjø-* ('sea'), *Berg-* ('mountain') and *\*Rose-* ('rose').

Elements from the local dialect are used in the official form of the names in order to show that the names are part of the inherited local culture. Thus the names serve as connecting links to the past and the old culture of the area. The names represent continuity as well as individuality, due to the fact that the dialect is unique. It is characteristic and different from other Norwegian dialects.

## 5. Conclusion

The urban names—and naming—in Stavanger and Sandnes give an impression of great diversity with regard to historical background, semantic content and grammatical form of the names. The origin and content of many names reflect historical traditions, events and various cultural aspects of the cities and its surrounding district, sometimes also of the nation and the international community. The street names reflect different stages of the development of the cities, of mentality and attitudes. The cultural dimension also applies to the linguistic form of the names. The official street names are connecting links to the past and signs of continuity and coherence with regard to settlement,

activities and culture in the area. The names also represent individuality, due to the fact that they are unique and contain linguistic elements that are characteristic for the cities.

With the exception of inconsistency in parts of the street name material, and some examples where constructed names have been chosen instead of the names that already existed in the area, the official names in Stavanger and Sandnes seem to help promote cultural curiosity and create regional identity, and thus match the values and goals of the Stavanger 2008 cultural programme. The names represent cultural heritage and development, and might contribute to creation of cultural identity and the vision of open ports.

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**Summary: Official urban naming: cultural heritage and identity**

In modern cities naming forms part of urban planning. The naming principles often reflect cultural aspects like heritage, local tradition and identity. Official urban names are links to the past and signs of continuity and individuality, with regard to settlement, activities and culture in the area. As appointed European capital of culture in 2008, Stavanger (Southwest-Norway) and the neighbouring city Sandnes have made commitments to promote cultural heritage and identity. The official names of the two cities give an impression of great diversity. They reflect historical traditions, activities, events and development of mentality and attitudes, as well as characteristic features in the local dialect. With some exceptions the names seem to help promote cultural curiosity and create urban and regional identity, and may thus be said to match the values, goals and vision of the Stavanger 2008 cultural programme.

**Resumé: La nomination officielle urbaine: patrimoine culturel et identité**

Dans les villes modernes, la nomination est une partie de la conception de la ville. Les principes de nomination reflètent souvent des aspects culturels comme le patrimoine, la tradition locale et l'identité. Les noms urbains officiels sont des liens avec le passé et des signes de continuité et d'individualité, relativement au peuplement, aux activités et à la culture. Désignée capitale européenne de la culture pour 2008, Stavanger (au sud-ouest de la Norvège) et sa voisine Sandnes ont pris des engagements pour promouvoir le patrimoine culturel et l'identité. Les noms officiels des deux villes donnent une impression de grande diversité. Ils reflètent les traditions historiques, activités, événements, l'évolution des mentalités et des attitudes, autant que les traits caractéristiques du dialecte local. En dépit de quelques exceptions, les noms paraissent contribuer à promouvoir la curiosité culturelle et créer une identité urbaine et régionale, et peuvent ainsi correspondre aux valeurs, buts et vision du programme culturel de Stavanger 2008.



**Zusammenfassung: Offizielle Namengebung innerhalb städtischer Siedlungen – kulturelles Erbe und Identität**

In städtischen Siedlungen der Moderne ist die Namengebung Teil der Stadtplanung. Dabei reflektieren die Benennungsprinzipien oft kulturelle Aspekte wie historisches Erbe, Traditionen und Identität des Ortes. Die offizielle städtische Namengebung ist ein Verbindungsstück zur Vergangenheit und ein Zeichen von Kontinuität und Individualität, in dem sich Besiedlungsgeschichte, Wirtschaftsaktivitäten und kulturelle Bedeutung des Gebietes spiegeln. Als designierte europäische Kulturhauptstädte 2008 haben Stavanger (Südwest-Norwegen) und seine Nachbarstadt Sandnes diverse Schritte unternommen, um die gemeinsame Identität und das kulturelle Erbe beider Städte herauszustellen, denn die offiziellen Städtenamen suggerieren den Eindruck einer großen Unterschiedlichkeit. Sie reflektieren historische Traditionen, Tätigkeiten, Ereignisse und die Herausbildung von Haltungen und Mentalitäten ebenso wie charakteristische Züge des lokalen Dialekts. Von einigen Ausnahmen abgesehen, scheinen die Namen dazu beizutragen, das Besondere der örtlichen Kultur herauszustellen und fundieren damit eine städtische und regionale Identität. Man kann also davon ausgehen, dass sie die Werte, Ziele und Visionen des Kulturprogramms Stavanger 2008 verkörpern.