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People, Places, Power | Season 2, Episode 33: What's in a Name? Renaming Places as a Strategic Gambit ^[1]

Note from the CPD Blog Manager: This post features the podcast *People, Places, Power* co-hosted by CPD Faculty Fellow [Nicholas J. Cull](#) and *Good Country Index* founder [Simon Anholt](#) and features their weekly discussions on international reputation, foreign policy and related issues along the way.

Season 2 launched in May 2022 and covers nation-ranking indices, the impact of COVID-19 on national images, the "country-of-origin effect" and much more.

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Episode 33: What's in a Name? Renaming Places as a Strategic Gambit

Inspired by media reports of the Turkish government attempting to assert the Turkish spelling of their name, this episode considers strategies of naming/renaming/spelling. Turkey's move is discussed in the context of its history. Simon suggests four categories of renaming: the post-colonial shift to a more authentic local name as with Swaziland/Eswatini or Madras/Chennai; the attempt to be more memorable because one's name is insufficiently distinct as when Slovenia considered Alpe-Adria; the power play as when a regime rebrands key places (as with Astana/Nursultan); and the names of historical revival such as Israel. Nick argues that part of Czechoslovakia's problem in the mid-20th century was the lack of resonance around its name. Simon notices that some languages have changed names while others keep older names longer. Italians still call Beijing "Pechino" (the equivalent of "Peking"). Simon recalls the process by which Pakistan invented its name. Nick muses on whether some countries actually need a name change. Simon raises the issue of countries with multiple names (including the UK) and counties retaining a definite article in their name.