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Oct 22, 2021 by [Nicholas J. Cull](#), [Simon Anholt](#)

People, Places, Power - Episode 9: Culture: Decorative or Useful? ^[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](#). The podcast is produced by USC Master of Public Diplomacy 2021 alum Anna Podkowski and features Cull and Anholt in weekly discussion on international reputation, foreign policy and related issues along the way. Future episodes will cover migration, populism, the role of individuals and more.

Previously: [Ep. 1: Biden's America](#) | [Ep. 2: Brexit Britain](#) | [Ep. 3: In Search of the Good Leader](#) | [Ep. 4: The European Union](#) | [Ep. 5: What Price Monarchy?](#) | [Ep. 6: Cities and International Image](#) | [Ep. 7: Mega Events? Buyer Beware.](#) | [Ep. 8: Germany: From Pariah to Paragon](#)

Episode 9: Culture: Decorative or Useful?

This episode probes one of the core elements of national image and reputation—culture—and

asks how a nation state can best incorporate it into its foreign policy. Cases include countries with magnificent cultures but weak images such as Iran and countries whose cultures are admirable but disconnected from contemporary relevance like Greece. Simon and Nick discuss the cultural element as a missing dimension for Ukraine in 2014 but a saving grace for Mali in 2012. The cultural relations approach of the British Council is advanced as a model, and the current state of UNESCO is bemoaned. In the final analysis, Nick and Simon agree that it isn't enough just to be admired for one's culture; the nation state needs to do something to address the world's shared problems. With great soft power comes great responsibility.