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Oct 01, 2021 by [Nicholas J. Cull](#), [Simon Anholt](#)

People, Places, Power - Episode 21: **France: Trouble at the Top?** ^[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 Elizabeth Islas USC M.A. Candidate of Specialized Journalism (2021), and features Cull and Anholt in weekly discussion on international reputation, foreign policy and related issues along the way. Future episodes will further cover specific nations, building trust and more.

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Episode 21: France: Trouble at the Top?

This episode looks at one of the strongest soft power images: that of France, noting that it has displayed a downward adjustment at the top of the Nation Brands Index in recent years. Simon considers the strengths and weaknesses of the French image, with governance and people showing up as weaknesses. Nick reflects on older ideas of France and the impact of the colonial legacy on perceptions of the country. The conversation settles on the performance of Emmanuel Macron as a leader, his difficulties during the pandemic and the poor international reception of statements on Islam. Yet despite missteps, he is favorably compared to Boris Johnson, whose erratic policies seem bound to wound if not kill the goose that lays the golden egg of British soft power.