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Oct 11, 2022 by [Nicholas J. Cull](#), [Simon Anholt](#)

People, Places, Power | Season 2, Episode 45: Bridging the Gulf: Reputation and the Gulf States ^[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, branding indices, transnational issues and much more.

Season 1: [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](#) | [Ep. 9: Culture: Decorative or Useful?](#) | [Ep. 10: Can Individuals Make a Difference?](#) | [Ep. 11: Migration Nations](#) | [Ep. 12: Credible India?](#) | [Ep. 13: The Bad Image](#) | [Ep. 14: Populism](#) | [Ep. 15: Oh, Canada!](#) | [Ep. 16: Digital Disruption: New Technology & Soft Power](#) | [Ep. 17: Japan at the Crossroads](#) | [Ep. 18: Scotland's Next Step](#) | [Ep. 19 Public Diplomacy and Place Branding](#) | [Ep. 20: The Talent Trade: Who's Looking for Einstein?](#) | [Ep. 21: France: Trouble at the Top?](#) | [Ep. 22: Systems and Structures: Organizing Public Diplomacy](#) | [Ep. 23: Trust: The Linchpin of Reputation](#) | [Ep. 24: Nordics: The Saga of Success?](#) | [Ep. 25: The Media: Friends or Foes of Country Image?](#) | [Ep. 26: Israel: Branded by Conflict?](#) | [Ep. 27: Afghanistan](#)

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Episode 45: Bridging the Gulf: Reputation and the Gulf States

This episode considers the reputation of the Gulf and its most prominent actors including not only the nation states like Saudi Arabia, Qatar and the UAE but city-state actors like Dubai. First, Simon makes the case that the Gulf is a case of a region's pre-existing negative image dominating perception of constituent parts. He doubts the efficacy of most responses in the circumstance. The conversation includes the perception of Saudi Arabia intimidating and the unlikelihood that the FIFA World Cup in Qatar will help that country's image. Nick raises the positive case of the Abraham Accords as an example of realities changing behind the image. The pair agree that initiatives from the region are frequently impressive but are undermined by a lack of connectivity. Nick suggests that the problem may be the lack of interest of regional royal families in genuine change. He points to particular cases of human rights abuse and royals placing themselves above the law as flaws. Simon argues that there is a fundamental failure of people in the region to understand the values of others and vice versa. The Gulf remains unbridged.