

The Louvre Abu Dhabi Project: A New Arm for France's Cultural Diplomacy in the Persian Gulf Region?



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**« Pourquoi c'est si important, un nom bien choisi ?
Un nom, c'est par là qu'on découvre un endroit, pas
vrai ? C'est le visage qu'on présente au monde. »**

Colson Whitehead, *Apex*

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in the Persian Gulf Region?**

Statement of Authenticity:

I hereby certify that this paper is my original work
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Abstract

This paper deals with the Louvre Abu Dhabi that is a new universal museum established with France's assistance in the United Arab Emirates to be opened in 2013. Through the three-fold lens of soft power, place branding and cultural diplomacy, this essay examines the French engagement in this unprecedented and outstanding cultural cooperation venture and its impact on France's image and interests.

The French participation in the Emirati venture appears to be in tune with France's continuous and long-standing commitment to the international cultural relations as a major component of its foreign policy. Through the conduct of this project, France pursues its international cultural objectives. On the one hand, it is a way of promoting French culture and spreading its influence in the United Arab Emirates. On the other hand, this remarkable cooperation project represents a cultural bridge between the civilizations.

Furthermore, the Louvre Abu Dhabi may have politically and economically beneficial knock-on effects for France in many ways. The Louvre Abu Dhabi is notably a remarkable means of branding France's image. In addition, the Louvre Abu Dhabi is a striking illustration of the deployment of France's soft power and even smart power in the Persian Gulf region.

However some critics voice concerns about the instrumentalization of French cultural legacy and institutions for political ends and they underline that France's image may somewhat be negatively impacted by the Louvre Abu Dhabi venture.

The paper ends with recommendations for the future conduct of complex international museum cooperation project, by advocating the need to build a strong and independent governance structure in which multiple stakeholders and notably cultural professionals could develop and implement a coordinated and strategic policy.

Keywords: Louvre Abu Dhabi – French cultural diplomacy – soft power – place branding – international cultural relations – intangible assets – museum franchising

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Appendix 1 The French Culture: One of the Foremost Players in the World of Culture
Appendix 2 The Main Actors of France’s Cultural Diplomacy’s System

List of Abbreviations

AFAA	–	Association Française d’Action Artistique (French Association for Artistic Action)
BRIC	–	Brazil, Russia, India, China
DGCID	–	Direction Générale de la Coopération Internationale et du Développement (Directorate General for International Cooperation and Development)
DMF	–	Direction des Musées de France (Directorate of Museums of France)
GATT	–	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
GDP	–	Gross Domestic Product
HRW	–	Human Rights Watch
UAE	–	United Arab Emirates
UNESCO	–	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
US	–	United States (of America)

CHAPTER 1: Introduction

In March 2007, the French government made an historic deal with the government from the United Arab Emirates (UAE) which paves the way for the establishment of a museum named “Louvre Abu Dhabi” on Saadiyat Island. According to this cultural cooperation agreement, France will help the UAE to launch and develop one of its four new museums located on this island in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi which aspires to become one of the world’s new culture capitals. In exchange of € 1 billion, France’s assistance consists of providing museum expertise, the creation of several exhibitions, the loans of hundreds of artworks from its national collections and the 30-year rent of the Louvre name (Ministère de la Culture et de la Communication 2007).

By being the first deal of its kind worldwide, this bilateral cooperation agreement raises numerous transdisciplinary and interdisciplinary issues in the fields of culture, economics and politics. More specifically, the Louvre Abu Dhabi project brings up the concern for the impact that cultural institutions in general such as museums and particularly artworks and intangible cultural capital (including brands and expertise), may potentially have on cultural, political, diplomatic and economic issues.

First of all, it is noteworthy that an increasingly greater attention has been paid to the vital role that culture and cultural ventures play in international relations. The matter of culture in international affairs has largely been considered as “low politics” and an issue of secondary importance among some circles of the political scientists’ community. However, the recent work of some scholars and the flourishing of publications dealing with the issues related to the impact of culture on international relations illustrate the rising interest in this question.

Recently, the significance of culture in world politics has been underlined by former US Assistant Secretary of Defense Joseph Nye Jr., who defines it as one of the main sources of soft power (Nye 1990; Nye 2004a; Nye 2004b; Nye 2004c; Nye 2006 and Nye 2008). Furthermore, the publication of several reports on the topic of cultural diplomacy or public diplomacy reflects the increasing concern for this issue. In 2007, British think tank *Demos* published a paper entitled *Cultural Diplomacy* whose subtitle “Culture is a central component of international relations. It’s time to unlock its full potential...” makes the growing interest in the essential role of international cultural relations clear (Bound et al. 2007)!

Furthermore, the very nature and dimension of the Louvre Abu Dhabi project constitute one of the hugest contemporary challenges of France's cultural diplomacy. France is renowned as one of the most active practitioners of cultural diplomacy in the world, it forming a long-standing and major element of France's foreign policy. Indeed, the French foreign cultural policy system has, over the past 125 years, dramatically evolved into its present form and nowadays represents a remarkable but *challenged* structure. Based on old and strong foundations, the French cultural diplomacy system stands out from other cultural diplomacy systems.

France devotes significant economic means to its cultural actions abroad. These actions cover a wide range of activities (from the promotion of the French language to the subsidization of exports of audiovisual productions) and they are carried out by a vast, worldwide network of cultural centers and institutes as well as Alliances Françaises (de Raymond 2000 and Lombard 2003). In addition, France's concern for international cultural relations issues is particularly noticeable in the debates related to cultural issues that took place in the multilateral arenas. In her capacity as advocate for the concepts of cultural exception and cultural diversity at a global level, France has indeed been playing a key role in international cultural issues.

However, some recent reports and articles note that the French cultural diplomacy system is on the wane and has been going through a profound crisis (Daugé 2001; Djian 2003). France has been facing problems, notably with adapting its cultural network to the post-Cold War world organization and to the new context of globalization. Additionally; it is difficult for France to increase its cultural influence and its soft power, or even to maintain them, against the rising power of China and India which are very active in terms of cultural diplomacy.

It is worth noting that France embarks on this outstanding cultural cooperation project, the Louvre Abu Dhabi, with a country that is gaining a significant foothold on the international stage and with which it maintains excellent diplomatic and economic relations. The UAE is certainly a small country, but this rich oil-producer aspires to become an international cultural capital. In addition, France undertakes the Louvre Abu Dhabi challenge at a time when its commercial, political and economic relations with the UAE - a significant strategic partner due to its location, its economic development and its resources - are growing in intensity.

In this general context, the development of the Louvre Abu Dhabi project seems *a priori* to be a boon for France in several ways. As an exceptional and remarkable project, the museum may be a way for France to reinvent and revive its cultural diplomacy. In addition to its inherent cultural nature, the Louvre Abu Dhabi may represent an important component of France's international affairs toolbox. It may bring significant benefits to France in terms of interests and image.

However, France's engagement in the Abu Dhabi venture has been harshly criticized by some politicians and art professionals. The opponents to the project underline that the Louvre Abu Dhabi project may somewhat negatively affect France's image and interests.

This controversy over the Louvre Abu Dhabi project prompts me to explore the intricate implications this outstanding cultural project may have for France's cultural diplomacy and soft power. Therefore I have chosen the following problem formulation:

Does the establishment of the Louvre Abu Dhabi enhance or damage France's cultural diplomacy and France's soft power?

In order to investigate my problem formulation I have come up with the following sub-questions:

- What are the cultural, political, diplomatic and economic issues involved in the Louvre Abu Dhabi project?
- What France's interests may the Louvre Abu Dhabi contribute to achieve?
- To what extent does the Louvre Abu Dhabi impact France's image?

CHAPTER 2: Methodology

In the following chapter, I will present my methodological considerations. I will firstly shed light on the reasons for which I chose the topic of the Louvre Abu Dhabi Museum project as it relates to French foreign policy for my master thesis. In continuation, I will delimit the scope of my investigation. Next, I will give some definitions for the core vocabulary of my thesis. Furthermore, I will give an overview of my conceptual framework followed by a presentation of my empirical considerations. In addition, I will also highlight the analytical approach I intend to employ throughout the thesis. The chapter ends with a brief outline of my project.

I will first say a few words about my personal background because I think that it may throw some light on the reasons for which I am interested in the relevant and intellectually stimulating topic of my thesis as well as on the motives for the original approach I choose to deal with my paper. I have studied for three years in a French Business School where I graduated in Management Science and I have notably studied marketing. Besides, I interned at the National Maritime Museum, as I was very intrigued to know how a cultural institution works. As part of my studies at Aalborg University, I also conducted an internship within the French cultural diplomacy network, at the French Embassy in Washington, D.C. I decided to complete this internship as I am keenly interested in how arts and culture may have a crucial role to play in international relations.

I was actually underway with this internship, when I heard about the Louvre Museum project in Abu Dhabi for the first time in March 2007. I then heard about the large scale of the project, the sharp debates about it as well as the related and interconnected implications it has in political, cultural and economic domains. In brief, this project combines some disciplines I have been interested in since the beginning of my higher education. While the bitter controversy over the Louvre Abu Dhabi project has been most notably aroused within the cultural professionals' circle, I thought that this new project would be an intellectually stimulating topic for my thesis, situated, however, within the scope of the international relations' discipline.

2.1 Definition of Central Concepts

In the following part, I wish to introduce the key concepts I will employ throughout my thesis. In order to do so, I will discuss the meaning of these main terms, I will particularly underline how they are related one to another and I will define these terms as I intend to use them for the purpose of my thesis. The main terms I will employ throughout my thesis are *soft power*, *culture*, *place branding* and *cultural diplomacy*. Nevertheless, it may also be useful to first provide some background on *diplomacy* and *public diplomacy* in order to have a better understanding of cultural diplomacy. Defining *public diplomacy* is all the more important as it is the crux of the matter that links soft power and cultural diplomacy. Hence, the list of terminology includes: culture, soft power, culture, diplomacy, public diplomacy, cultural diplomacy or foreign cultural policy, branding.

Soft power

Soft power is a term coined by Joseph Nye, former Dean of the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, in his 1990 *Bound to Lead* (Nye 1990). Since then, Nye has developed this concept in several articles and books, and notably *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (Nye 2004a). Nye defines soft power as “the ability to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion or payments. It arises from the attractiveness of a country’s culture, political ideals and policies” (Nye 2004a: x). Nye also underlines that soft power resources tend to be considered as intangible assets (Nye 2004a: 7). In other words, soft power is the ability of an actor to obtain what it wants in the international environment because some of its intangible assets – its culture, its policies, or its values, or the combination of these three elements – make it attractive for the other actors.

It is commonly stated that soft power is more and more important in the global information age (Melissen 2005: 2). This context also arouses an increasing concern for soft power in the international relations discipline. We will further develop the concept of soft power in the theoretical framework of my thesis.

Culture

Culture is a term employed in a variety of senses. In *Economics and Culture*, David Throsby gives a precise definition of two senses of ‘culture’ (Throsby 2001: 3-5). In fact, these two meanings correspond to the two ways I intend to use the term ‘culture’ throughout my thesis.

On the one hand, Throsby adopts the anthropological and sociological approach of culture. He broadly defines culture as “a set of attitudes, beliefs, mores, customs, values and practices which are common to or shared by any group” (Throsby 2001: 4). On the other hand, Throsby refers more narrowly to culture as “certain activities that are undertaken by people, and the products of those activities, which have to do with the intellectual, moral and artistic aspects of human life” (Throsby 2001: 4). This definition embraces a wide range of activities such as the language and arts (architecture, music, literature, dance, visual arts and so on). These two definitions are not mutually exclusive and somewhat overlap each other. Artistic production and language are indeed some of the characteristics which are expressions of a way of life and which also shape group identity.

For the purpose of this thesis, I will mainly apply this latter definition, describing culture in the narrow sense with two major exceptions. I will refer to the broad definition of culture when I refer to cultural diversity and Huntington’s clash of civilizations.

Diplomacy

Each dictionary and textbook on the subject, each diplomatic researcher and practitioner has its own definition of diplomacy. The *American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* defines diplomacy as “the art or practice of conducting international relations, as in negotiating alliances, treaties and agreements” (American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language 2004 quoted in Dictionary.com). Plenty of other definitions of diplomacy exist and stress either on its main purpose, its agents, its chief function (Melissen 2005: 4) or on its channel. Furthermore some definitions narrowly consider diplomacy as “putting of foreign policies into practice” via “political contact between governments of different nations” (Snow and Brown 1996: 486 quoted in Tiederman 2004: 4). It is worth noting that new actors, such as international organizations and non-governmental organizations, have also recently developed diplomacy. The former view of diplomacy exclusively as a practice between sovereign states is consequently out-of-date, or at least no longer sufficient.

Nicholas Cull, from the University of Southern California's Center on Public Diplomacy, gives a general definition of diplomacy, encompassing all kinds of actors and all the potential goals pursued through it. Nicholas Cull broadly defines "diplomacy as the mechanisms short of war deployed by an international actor to manage the international environment" (Cull 2007a: 6). He specifically states that "traditional diplomacy is international actor's attempt to manage the international environment through engagement with another international actor" (Cull 2007a: 6). As mentioned above, diplomacy is no longer the monopoly of governments; international organizations, non-governmental organizations and non-state actors also practice diplomacy (Cull: 2007b: 4:00).

Another recent trend is the growing recognition of the significant role played by the foreign publics in international relations. Foreign public opinion has indeed gained influence on the events and the conduct of foreign policies through the development of mass media and new technologies of information and communication (Melissen 2005: 3). We are moving away from a world where diplomacy was primarily concerned with relations between a small number of states' representatives to one where 'ordinary' people somewhat influence the formation and execution of state's foreign policies. International actors, diplomatic practitioners and academic researchers then focus on how international actors may interact with foreign publics in a positive way in order to have a favorable context for the advancement of their own interests. This field of study and practices in international relations is called public diplomacy. We will go further on this concept in the following section.

Public Diplomacy

According to Cull, public diplomacy is a subset of diplomacy which may be defined as an "international actor's attempt to manage the international environment through engagement with a foreign public" (Cull 2007a: 6). Thus, this definition identifies the main distinction between public diplomacy and traditional diplomacy. Traditional diplomacy is operated between the representatives of states, or other international actors. On the other hand, public diplomacy targets the general public in foreign countries.

With respect to soft power, public diplomacy is a closely related concept but it is not the same thing. According to Cull, public diplomacy "can be the mechanism to deploy soft power" (Cull 2007a: 9). Public diplomacy is, indeed, one key instrument of soft power, as it revolves around how a country may use neither military means nor economic

threats but rather its attractiveness in order to influence the behaviors of others and advance its national interests as well as its own goals. In other words, public diplomacy is the practical expression of the use of soft power (Australian Senate 2007:16).

Public diplomacy encompasses a wide range of activities. According to Wyszomirski et al., public diplomacy rests on two major components: information policy and cultural diplomacy (Wyszomirski et al. 2003: 1) On the other hand, Cull states that public diplomacy includes five core components of activity which are closely related and somewhat overlap each other. These five elements are: listening, advocacy, cultural diplomacy, exchange and international broadcasting. Cull also notes that it is not possible to combine all the five components at the same time. Consequently, various states have put forward one particular component of public diplomacy in their approach. In the case of France, this salient element is “cultural diplomacy” (Cull 2007a: 20-21 and Cull 2007b: 12:00). Hence, this concept of cultural diplomacy is very much used both in the official publications and reports of the French authorities in charge of diplomacy and by scholars, while the concept of public diplomacy is rarely employed in the case of France.

In this section, we have clearly defined the terms of diplomacy and public diplomacy. Additionally, we have highlighted that public diplomacy is a practical manifestation of soft power. We have eventually established that cultural diplomacy is somewhat a subset of public diplomacy. We turn to the exploration of the concept of cultural diplomacy, and to the discussion of its meaning as it is in turn subject to various definitions.

Cultural Diplomacy

According to Nicholas Cull, “[c]ultural diplomacy may be defined as an actor’s attempt to manage the international environment through making its cultural resources and achievements known overseas and/or facilitating cultural transmission abroad” (Cull 2007a: 15). As a subfield of public diplomacy, the practice of cultural diplomacy indeed shares the same goal as the one pursued by public diplomacy, which is to create a positive international environment for the conduct of the actor’s objectives. Cultural diplomacy’s scope of activity specifically corresponds to the promotion of the quite large field of cultural industries and artistic production as well as the support to the dissemination of the language abroad.

As cultural diplomacy is a subset of public diplomacy and public diplomacy is a practical manifestation of the use soft power, it may be asserted that cultural diplomacy is also a way of wielding soft power. Hence, cultural diplomacy is an element of a country's foreign policy toolbox which can deploy the country's soft power to advance the national objectives and to improve in turn the attractiveness of the country.

With respect to the practice of cultural diplomacy by states, it may be noted that the terminology varies from one country to the next, as each country regards different objectives, has different structures to conduct this policy and employs a different set of activities (Lending 2000: chapter 1, paragraph 3). In their multi-country comparison about the practice of cultural diplomacy, Wyszomirski et al. note that several countries alternatively refer to this as *international cultural relations* or *international cultural policy* (Wyszomirski et al. 2003: 9). The term of *foreign cultural policy* may also be added to this list of terminology as it is employed as such by Norway (Lending 2000). With respect to France, Wyszomirski et al. mention that cultural diplomacy is the term employed to refer to the promotion of French culture overseas (Wyszomirski et al. 2003: 9). When we peruse the literature from French diplomatic historians and the official publications from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs about France's policy regarding the promotion of its culture abroad, we however realize that the term of *action culturelle extérieure* (that we can translate into "foreign cultural action") is also very much used (Dubosclard 2002: 25). It is notably illustrated by the title of one of the key books dealing with France's policy regarding foreign cultural issues: *L'action culturelle extérieure de la France* written by Jean François de Raymond (de Raymond 2000). French diplomat historian Alain Dubosclard notices that there are some slight differences between 'foreign cultural relation' and "cultural diplomacy"¹.

¹ Alain Dubosclard notes that French scholars mainly use the term 'foreign cultural action' rather than 'cultural diplomacy'. He also mentions that French and Anglo-Saxon scholars may have a slightly different view of what cultural diplomacy is. Dubosclard notices that the distinction between foreign cultural action and cultural diplomacy concerns the scope of activity. According to Dubosclard the term 'foreign cultural action' refers to the international cultural activities supported by the state and led by all kind of actors, while cultural diplomacy only embraces the international activities laid down by the state and carried out by its agencies or its cultural network (Dubosclard 2002: 25). Hence, the concept of foreign cultural action encompasses a larger scope of activity than cultural diplomacy does. Some scholars even include the actions operated in the field of sciences and technology into their definition of foreign cultural action (De Raymond 2000: 7). As these aspects are not related to the Louvre Abu Dhabi Museum project, the fields of sciences and technology will however not be included in my definition of foreign cultural policy.

Notwithstanding these nuances and those between **cultural diplomacy**, **international cultural policy** and **foreign cultural policy**, I intend to employ these expressions throughout my thesis in the same broad sense which is formulated above by Nicholas Cull. In other words, foreign cultural policy and cultural diplomacy refer to the set of cultural activities deployed by an actor – mainly a state – overseas in order to create a positive climate and advance its national goals. We will develop the different goals a state seeks to pursue through the development of a foreign cultural policy below in the conceptual framework section.

Place Branding

“Place Branding” or “Nation Branding”, as it is also referred, or to a lesser extent “Cultural Branding” (Tomalin 2004) is an emerging field of theory and practice which stands at the intersection of several different disciplines: marketing, international relations, tourism, media and communication studies, etc. There are many opinions on what it is. Generally speaking, place branding refers to the application of marketing strategies and techniques to the promotion of a place’s image (mainly a country, but also a city or a region) in order to get benefits for this place in a wide range of activities such as the increase of incoming investment or trade exports, but also the achievement of political and diplomatic goals.

Within the framework of my thesis, I will mainly focus on a limited scope of place branding, the one which is related to the concept of public diplomacy. Branding is gaining a significant foothold in the field of public diplomacy. Indeed, Nicholas Cull mentions that “public diplomacy makes increasing use of concepts [...] derived from marketing – especially place and nation-branding” (Cull 2007a: 7). We notice this close link between public diplomacy and branding both among the practitioners and among the academics. In practice, it is notably illustrated by the appointment of former J.W. Thompson² Chairperson Charlotte Beers to the post of Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs under the Bush administration in 2001 (Tiedeman 2004: 3). In the academic field, it is worth noting the creation of the journal entitled *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy* in 2004. The Managing Editor of this journal is Simon Anholt, one of the main thinkers of the concept of place branding.

² J.W. Thompson is one of the world’s largest advertising company.

For the convenience of discussion, I will mainly employ the term of place branding rather than nation branding throughout my thesis, understood to mean the applications of brand strategies and marketing tools by governments or by the institutions of a state for the promotion of a nation's image in order to advance national interests, whether they be political, economic or/and cultural objectives.

Having defined the main concepts I will employ throughout my thesis, I will turn to delimit the scope of my investigation in the next section.

2.2 Scope of Investigation

This paper is an attempt to obtain an in-depth comprehension of the Louvre Abu Dhabi project within the framework of French cultural diplomacy. The aim of this study is not to test any existing theory, but rather to contribute with additional knowledge to the topic under investigation, i.e. cultural diplomacy. The exploration of the Louvre Abu Dhabi project implies the investigation of some aspects pertaining to three main areas: the field of public or cultural diplomacy, the French foreign cultural action in particular, as well as the practice of place branding.

By focusing on the Louvre Abu Dhabi project, this thesis hence intends to gain new knowledge about several different fields. On the one hand, this study aims to provide a better understanding with the role of museums in cultural diplomacy and in international relations in general, which is a very rarely studied topic in international relations. On the other hand, the aim of this investigation is to bring new knowledge about the practice of place branding in the field of public diplomacy. Furthermore, the in-depth analysis of this original project will contribute to bring a deeper insight into the French cultural diplomacy. Besides, the exploration of the Louvre Abu Dhabi project will shed light on the United Arab Emirates which is a rarely-handled country in international relations.

Though this study seeks to highlight the role of museums in cultural diplomacy and international relations by examining the Louvre Abu Dhabi project, it does not intend to develop any existing theories in this field. Indeed, the approach I choose in this thesis does not enable the generalization of the main findings of my investigation. In order to do so, it would have been necessary to compare the Louvre Abu Dhabi project with other practices pertaining to museums in the field of international cultural relations, such as international exhibitions carried out through the international cooperation of several museums. It was tempting to do such studies. However, I assessed that a comparative study between the

different ways a museum may use to act in international relations would first require the realization of the Louvre Abu Dhabi project and the collection of visitors' experience and opinions of its exhibitions.

Additionally, the comparison of the Louvre Abu Dhabi project with other similar projects is not possible... as there exist no similar project! The Louvre Abu Dhabi is indeed unique. While the Guggenheim Foundation certainly franchised its name and launched its first museum branches abroad in the 1990s, this venture concerns a private organization, whereas the Louvre Museum is a government-owned museum and the French state is in turn strongly involved in the project taking place in Abu Dhabi. Hence, it would be difficult to draw some comparisons between the process of the Guggenheim museum's internationalization and the carrying out of a Louvre Museum abroad. It would nevertheless be interesting to compare the repercussions these projects would have on the soft power of their country of origin, i.e. the Guggenheim Foundation with regard to the United States and the Louvre Abu Dhabi with regard to France. However, such a comparative study would only be possible just after or even a few years after the opening of the Louvre Museum in Abu Dhabi, as the use of soft power and notably the practices in the field of cultural diplomacy have a diffuse and non-immediate effect.

In sum, a comparative approach, analyzing the Louvre Abu Dhabi project in conjunction with other international cultural projects – either the organization of international exhibitions or the franchising of museums – would be a very interesting way of dealing with the Abu Dhabi project. However, I consider that such a perspective would be more appropriate after the Louvre Abu Dhabi has opened in 2013, as this would enable a focus on the different or similar outcomes that the various actions of museums may produce in the field of international relations.

In continuation of the definition of the main terms and concepts employed throughout this thesis and the delimitation of the purpose of my investigation, I will now proceed to the presentation of the build up of the thesis starting with the framework for investigation

2.3 Considerations about the Framework for Investigation

In this part, I will explain what the purpose of my framework for investigation is, how it is built, why it is built as such and which literature I use for it.

My framework for investigation aims to present the elements necessary to address the question posed in the problem formulation. This framework for investigation revolves around two considerations: it develops both the key concepts related to my subject and the context in which the topic under examination takes place. Thus, on the one hand, I will outline the concepts of soft power, branding and the role of foreign cultural policy in international relations in order to gain an *a priori* understanding of the question under discussion. On the other hand, an overview of the context in which the Louvre Abu Dhabi project takes place will provide us with the necessary background to comprehend the full details concerning the topic under investigation.

I will first and foremost employ the concept of soft power. Though it is a well-known concept, it is still a less-studied topic in international relations. I will give a general presentation of the concept of soft power. I will do it succinctly in order to devote more effort to focus on the role of culture as a source of soft power. Indeed, this aspect of soft power is the most relevant to my study. For this section, I have mainly reviewed the work of Joseph Nye who coined this concept and developed it in numerous works, from *Bound to Lead* written in 1990 (Nye 1990) to *Soft Power: the Means to Success in World Politics* published in 2004 (Nye 2004a) and through many articles and other books.

The second main conceptual framework I have chosen to employ throughout this thesis is the concept of place branding with a focus on museum branding. In this section of my conceptual framework I summarize the main ideas and theories of this emerging discipline by reviewing several articles which are mostly issued from the journal of *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy*, whose managing editor is Simon Anholt. I also refer to Niall Caldwell's article *The Emergence of Museum Brands* to build the section on the concept of museum branding (Caldwell 2000). I decided to choose the paradigm of place branding since I considered that the place branding hexagon – a model framed by Simon Anholt – fits with the Louvre Abu Dhabi. The Louvre Abu Dhabi indeed encompasses the “export brand” and “culture and heritage” facets of the place branding hexagon. To a lesser extent, it also matters with the aspects of “foreign policy” and “tourism”.

Finally, the third main concept I discuss in the conceptual framework is the role of foreign cultural policies in international relations. This discussion about the set of goals a country may pursue through its international cultural policy will help me to explore and analyze what French cultural diplomacy seeks to achieve through the project in Abu Dhabi. This conceptual section about the role of foreign cultural policies in international relations is all the more original as there are only few publications which seek to define a precise taxonomy of the issues related to the practice of foreign cultural policy. Indeed, I read several reports about the practices of international cultural policies in several different countries around the world. These reports are either multi-country comparison studies (Wyszomirski et al. 2003 and Bound et al. 2007) or government papers (Lending 2000 and Australian Senate 2007). Most of these publications shed light only on some objectives a country may achieve through cultural diplomacy, but they do not precisely define the set of goals a foreign cultural policy may pursue. However, Alain Lombard does so in *La Politique culturelle internationale: Le modèle français face à la mondialisation* (Lombard 2003). Lombard frames a taxonomy of the purposes a country may pursue through the implementation of an international cultural policy. In the section dealing with the role of foreign cultural policies in international relations, I will then develop the taxonomy provided by Alain Lombard and illustrate it with the examples given by the other reports.

After having discussed the conceptual framework, I will turn to the contextual framework. In order to investigate the Louvre Abu Dhabi project, which is a new, large and original project for French cultural diplomacy, I will first outline the French cultural diplomacy itself. I will do it by highlighting its two main priorities which revolve around the notions of *influence* and *solidarity*. For this section, I have mainly used reports and documents from the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the works of French academics. The main authors in this field of area are the diplomatic historians Jean-François de Raymond (de Raymond 2000) and Alain Lombard (Lombard 2003).

The last component of my framework for investigation will shed light on the environment in which the Louvre Abu Dhabi project will take place. In this section, I will give an overview of the United Arab Emirates and I will notably focus on the relations this country has with France. Such a look at the United Arab Emirates will provide me with thorough information that can assist in comprehending what France seeks to achieve through the implementation of this bilateral cultural project. It is all the more important to present the United Arab Emirates as it is a less-studied country in international relations.

Indeed, only few books deal with the United Emirates or the other small monarchies of the Persian Gulf such as Oman, Qatar, Kuwait and Bahrain. However, these countries are very interesting topics of investigation. They have undergone some major changes and a remarkable modernization this last couple of decades. They have gained an increasingly important role in the world economy as they are some of the main oil-producers in the world. Nowadays, they face significant challenges, notably concerning the diversification of their economies and the slow process they have engaged towards democratization. The main books dealing with the United Arab Emirates and the other Persian Gulf states are *The Making of the Modern Gulf States: Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and Oman* by Rosemarie Said Zahlan which is relatively out-of-date as its last version dates back to 1998 (Said Zahlan 1998) and *Monarchies du Golfe: Les Micro-Etats de la Péninsule Arabique* edited by Rémy Leveau and Frédéric Charillon published in 2005 (Leveau and Charillon 2005). Besides these books, the main sources of information used throughout this section issue from France's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the press release concerning the agreement between the UAE and France about the Louvre Abu Dhabi project (Ministère de la Culture et de la Communication 2007) and the reports from the Parliament (Balkany 2007).

2.4 Considerations about the Analytical Approach

My analysis is built up around three main issues. In my first section *Purpose of France's Participation to the Louvre Abu Dhabi Venture* I start with an in-depth exploration of the motives which prompted French authorities to engage in the Louvre Abu Dhabi project. Next I focus on the impacts of this tremendous project on France's image. I finish with a section on the implications of the Louvre Abu Dhabi for France's soft power.

Both conceptual and contextual frameworks will function as the underlying basis for my analysis of the Louvre Abu Dhabi's impact on France's cultural diplomacy and soft power. In addition, I extensively use the transcripts of parliamentary discussions and the remarks of both the proponents and detractors of the Louvre Abu Dhabi project published in the newspapers. I also use the lampoon written by French academician Jean Clair entitled *Malaise dans les Musées* (Clair 2007b).

As well, it is important to mention that I had the opportunity to have an interview with Ms. Louma Salamé, PR of the Agency France-Museums in charge of the Louvre Abu Dhabi project. Though this meeting was very informative, I did not put the transcript of

this interview in this paper for several reasons. On the one hand, it is due to the lack of time since this interview occurred late May 2008. On the other hand, this interview corroborates many points that I observed during my extensive research for this paper. Additionally, some pieces of information will be certainly more helpful for the oral exam.

However, I wish I could have met some persons in charge of the Louvre Abu Dhabi project at the Louvre Museum or the officials in charge of France's international cultural actions at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Culture and at the Louvre Museum. It would have certainly improved my analysis.

2.5 Project Outline

This paper starts with an introduction (chapter 1) to the Louvre Abu Dhabi project and to the cultural diplomacy's issue. A chapter about the methodological section follows (chapter 2). Next, I will discuss the conceptual and contextual framework that underlies the analysis (chapter 3). In continuation, I will proceed to the analysis where I will explore and discuss my problem formulation (chapter 4). Following I will develop some recommendations with respect the further development of museums' large-scale international actions (chapter 5). To sum up, I will present my conclusion on the positive and negative effects of the Louvre Abu Dhabi on France's cultural diplomacy and soft power in terms image and interests (chapter 6).

CHAPTER 3: A Framework for Investigation

In the following chapter I will highlight both the key concepts related to my subject and the context in which the Louvre Abu Dhabi takes place. This will provide us with the necessary background to investigate my problem formulation. First, I will shed light on the notions of soft power and place branding as well as on the purpose of an international cultural policy. Then, an overview of the context surrounding the development of the Louvre Abu Dhabi will be presented.

3.1 A Conceptual Framework

This section will introduce the key concepts I will employ throughout my thesis. I have first and foremost chosen to give an overview of the concept of soft power. Next, this section includes elaborations on the concept of place branding. Eventually, the objectives that countries may pursue through the implementation of an international cultural policy will be discussed.

3.1.1 Soft Power

This section will provide a necessary literature review concerning soft power, since this concept is at the core of my problem formulation. I will first develop the definition formulated in the above methodological section. In order to do so, I will constantly feature the main facets of soft power in juxtaposition to the main aspects which characterize hard power. Indeed, soft power and hard power are closely linked concepts, constituting the head and tail of the same coin, as it were, they may be considered the two types defining power in international relations. Then, I will focus on the sources of soft power. I will conclude this section by presenting the limits of soft power and the critics which has been formulated against this concept.

3.1.1.1 The Prominence of Hard Power and the Emergence of Soft Power

As mentioned in the methodological section, the concept of soft power, which was coined by Joseph Nye at the time of the end of Cold War, refers to the capacity of getting others – nations, individuals or others entities – to want the outcomes you want. Soft power is basically about one specific type of power in the realm of international relations. Power in

international relations, in turn, refers to the capacity to affect the behavior of other actors in order to get the outcomes one wants. For a long time, this capacity has only referred to the possession of and the ability to use military forces and economic leverage, also called hard power.

This prevalent consideration of power in international relations as only economic and military might may be explained by two factors. First it may be caused by the predominance of the Realist school of thought in international relations theory. Indeed, Realism basically focuses on the state as the principal actor in international relations, and its pursuit of its national economic, political and military security as well as its survival. Consequently, military might and economic strength are perceived by Realists as two key elements in their approach.

The second cause comes from the definition of power and how this concept is used. Power resides both in the concept of ability and of control. On the one hand, power means the ability to do things. On the other hand, power may also be defined as having the capabilities to exert control over others in order to get them to do what you wish (Nye 2004a: 1-2). Based on these two assertions, power, in Joseph Nye's words, means "the ability to influence the behaviour of others to get the outcomes one wants" (Nye 2004a: 2). However, it is worth noting that, in its limited, popular conception, the notion of 'power' is truncated such that it only encompasses a partial meaning, that of 'power resources.' This shorthand for 'power' refers only to the possession of a subset of resources, such as population, natural resources, economic size and military forces, i.e. a country's basic sources of hard power available to exert control over others, while failing to grasp the more comprehensive implications of power (Nye 2004a: 3). Obviously, a definition of power based on such an incomplete inventory of the resources able to "influence the behavior of others to get the outcomes one wants" neglects the entire arsenal available to the practitioner of soft power. Yet it is this flawed meaning that stands in for the concept of 'power,' with its intrinsic meaning of 'hard power,' and which finds currency in the discourse of international relations.

Joseph Nye starts from this pre-eminence of the concept of hard power in international relations to shed light on his concept of soft power. Nye notes that considering power only as 'possessing the resources to influence the behavior of others' is a narrow and flawed definition. Indeed, the application of this definition encounters problems to explain concrete examples. In fact, several examples such as the Vietnam War illustrate the paradoxical fact that actors with the larger tangible power resources do not always get what they want – in the

case of the Vietnam War, the USA did not succeed in winning in spite of its considerable military and economic means (Nye 2004a: 3). Thus, Nye asserts that having tangible power resources does not guarantee getting the desired outcomes (Nye 2004a: 3).

Furthermore, Nye highlights that the context in which power is at play is crucial (Nye 2004a: 4). An identical power resource will not have the same effect dependent upon the different contexts in which it may be employed.

In addition, Nye underlines that power is not only a matter of resources, but it is also about the motivations and the acts – in other words, the behavior – of the protagonists which were intended to be influenced (Nye 2004a: 2). The alteration of the target's behavior is not only affected by the tangible resources, which generate economic influence and military force, but it is also accomplished through intangible assets which somewhat create a feeling of attraction or its opposite, viz. repulsion.

In his overall thinking about power, Joseph Nye underlines that power is a complex two-fold notion, which actually relies on the two distinct aspects of behavior and resources. The notion of power refers both to the ability to obtain outcomes you want (behavioral aspect of power) and to the possession of resources that are usually associated with the ability to reach outcomes you want (resource aspect of power) (Keohane and Nye 1998: 86). Nye puts forward a broad approach to the concept of power which may be defined as the ability to affect the behavior of others to get the outcomes one wants. In the framework of this definition of power, Joseph Nye sheds light on the fact that there are two types employed to affect the behavior of others and thus to obtain the desired outcomes. Apart from the use of hard power, the preeminent aspect in international relations, an actor can achieve its goals through the attraction, also called soft power by Joseph Nye.

In the next section, we will see in which behavioral and resource aspects these two concepts differ.

3.1.1.2 Hard Power and Soft Power: Two Different but Complementary Concepts

By considering power as the ability to affect the behavior of others to get the desired outcomes, Joseph Nye notes that there are basically three different ways to exert power: coercion, inducement and attraction. Indeed, you can affect the behavior of others by commanding or coercing them with threats. You can also pay them to get the desired outcomes. Eventually, you can get what you want from the others through attraction (Nye 2004a: 2). In international relations theory, the two first ways are commonly encompassed in

the term hard power while the third way refers to the classification soft power. In other words, soft power is the ability to influence the behavior of others in order to obtain the desired outcomes, since the others understand you or even admire you. On the one hand, the others may consider that what you do is legitimate and adhere to your attitude. On the other hand, they may be appealed by what you are and what you do.

With respect to the behavioral aspect of the concept of power, hard power is the ability to get others to do what they would not do otherwise through threats and rewards, while soft power is the ability to get desired outcomes because others want what you want. In other words, soft power is the ability to shape the preferences of others through conviction and persuasion. Simply put, hard power tends to be associated with the coercive side of the behavioral power continuum, while soft power, rather, rests on a co-optive behavior (Nye 2004a: 7).

In terms of resources, hard and soft power also rest on different kinds of assets. Hard power rests on the use of military force and/or economic might while soft power mainly rests on the appeal of one’s culture, values and policies, which I will develop below (Nye 2004a: 5-6).

Simply put in striking terms, soft power is about “the battle for hearts and minds”, while hard power deals with the mix of “economic carrots and military sticks” (Keohane and Nye 1998: 86). These different options between hard and soft power as they may be plotted within the overall framework of power in international relations, may be synthesized in the following figure.

Figure 1: Power Spectrum

Power: The ability to affect the behavior of others in order to get the outcomes one wants					
Type	Hard				
Definition	The ability to change what others do				
Behavior					
Source	<table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Force Sanctions</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Payments Bribes</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Institutions</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Values Culture Policies</td> </tr> </table>	Force Sanctions	Payments Bribes	Institutions	Values Culture Policies
Force Sanctions	Payments Bribes	Institutions	Values Culture Policies		

Source: Adapted from *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (Nye 2004a: 8)

As summarized by this figure, hard power and soft power are two related concepts which differ in many aspects. However, hard power and soft power are to be considered as two

different but complementary notions rather than two opposite and exclusive ones. Indeed, soft power and hard power share the same goal but rely on distinctive behaviors and means to reach this goal. Their purpose is to obtain the result that others do what one wants, but the nature of the behavior and the tangibility of the resources they imply are different (Nye 2004a: 7). In international politics, Joseph Nye considers that neither should states exclusively rely on hard power, nor should they only rely on soft power. In order to reach their foreign policy objectives, states should effectively combine hard and soft power. This ability to combine both kinds of power has been called “smart power” (Nye 2006: paragraph 12). This complementarity between hard and soft powers is also illustrated by the following quotation from Senator Fulbright, who set up the Fulbright scholarship³:

“In the long course of history, having people understand your thought is much greater security than another submarine.” (Fulbright quoted by Bound et al. 2007: 15)

By this quotation, Senator Fulbright means that you do not have to resort to more coercive or inducement means, when you can instead get others to understand you or even admire you because they came and studied in your country. Joseph Nye also notices that you do not have to spend as much on sticks and carrots to move others in your direction, when others shape their preferences or define their interests in ways consistent with yours (Nye 2004a: x). Simply put, power rests on a bright mix of hard and soft resources.

In the following section, we will shed light on the three main resources which generate soft power.

3.1.1.3 The Soft-Power Resources

As mentioned in the definition formulated in the methodological section, a country’s soft power mainly arises from three resources: its culture, its political ideals and its policies.

First of all, we will focus on how culture may generate soft power. As mentioned in the methodology section, culture is both a set of values and practices which are shared by a society and the artistic and intellectual manifestations which are produced by this complex and original mix. Cultural manifestations embrace various and numerous intellectual, moral and artistic activities such as literature, music, education, etc. The quality, richness and the wealth of cultural activities may appeal to foreigners and arouse their admiration. In addition,

³ The Fulbright scholarship is one of the most successful instruments of American soft power, as this educational grant has been giving the opportunity to thousands of foreign people to study in the United States, and it has also been sending thousands of American people abroad.

Nye acknowledges that a country may largely benefit from its culture, when this one conveys values which are considered as universal and which are shared by others (Nye 2004a: 12).

A distinction may be made between highbrow culture, such as art and education, which appeals to elites and lowbrow culture which refers to mass popular entertainment. Both may produce significant soft power, though mass popular culture is often disdained. However, it is a mistake to interpret this disdain as grounds for dismissing popular entertainment, which, in fact, seduces a large global audience. Indeed, mass culture is spread all over the world through new technologies of information and communication (Nye 2004b: 45). With respect to highbrow culture, it is worth underlining that education and academic exchanges are some of soft power's key elements. Indeed, foreigners who study abroad explore the local culture and then, come back to their home country with a greater appreciation of their host country's culture. They somewhat represent informal ambassadors to the country they have visited. Additionally, decision-makers who have studied abroad may be influenced by their journey and education that they followed abroad. In their subsequent careers as decision-makers and opinion leaders, their choices and decisions may continue to gravitate along the same lines as the interests of the country which welcomed them as students (Nye 2004b: 42-45).

The second main source of a country's soft power is the government's policies at home and abroad. A country which implements a domestic policy morally consistent with its foreign policy (and vice-versa), and both acting for the welfare of humans and society reinforces its soft power. Conversely, either a domestic or foreign policy which appears to be arrogant, repressive, or indifferent to the opinion of others may undermine a country's soft power (Nye 2004a: 14).

Thirdly, another potential source of soft power is the political values a government advocates in both his domestic and foreign policies. A country which champions ideals such as democracy, human rights and peace reinforces its soft power (Nye 2004a: 14). For example, some countries not generally considered to constitute global loci of power, like Norway and Canada, have enhanced their soft power by defining their foreign policy to include the advocacy of attractive causes concerning universal values and ideals such as peace and/or respect for the environment (Nye 2004a: 9-10; Batora 2005).

In short, the culture of a country, its ideals and its policies are the main sources of its soft power. In the next part, I will present an overview of the main critics concerning soft power.

3.1.1.4 Limits of and Critics about Soft Power

Since Joseph Nye first defined the concept of soft power in *Bound to Lead*, some scholars and political leaders have kept criticizing or even denying the concept of soft power.

In his 2004 article entitled *The Decline of America's Soft Power* (Nye 2004c), Joseph Nye reports that former Defense Secretary of Bush Administration, Donald Rumsfeld declared that he did not know what soft power was (Nye 2004c: 16).

Some authors such as Niall Ferguson argue that soft power is “too soft.” Their point is that some people may have an affinity for and feel attracted to the cultural products of a country; but these people do not necessarily bring about any positive political effects for the country in question (Ferguson 2003: 21).

Other authors such as Javier Noya challenge Nye's dualistic view about hard power and soft power. They consider that soft power is not a type of power, since any resource – including military capabilities – may generate attraction. Indeed, Javier Noya mentions the example of the use of a country's military means in the case of humanitarian aid as arousing legitimacy, thus potentially inspiring a feeling of attraction for the country deploying such military capabilities (Noya 2006).

Ultimately, it is worth underlining that another limit to the notion of soft power in international relations is that is difficult to measure. As Joseph Nye notes, it is said that it is quite easy to measure hard power in quantifiable terms such as economic growth or military might, but it is more difficult to measure soft power, as it is largely based on intangible assets and has diffuse and long-term effects (Nye 2006: paragraph 6).

Nye responds to these critics. To those who object to the very existence of the concept of soft power, Nye argues that these skeptics of soft power have such a viewpoint because they only allow a narrow definition of power, considering it only in realist terms and restrictively associating it with command and control. They believe that attraction and popularity are minor factors and should not then guide the implementation of a foreign policy (Nye 2004a: 15 and Nye 2004c: 16). Nye insists on the importance of soft power in international relations by using the example of the failure of the Bush Administration, while Donald Rumsfeld was Defense Secretary, to garner popularity abroad for its foreign policy, which neglected the aspects related to soft power (Nye 2006).

To those who consider that soft power is not a type of power either because it is too soft or/and because even military capabilities may be soft power resources, Nye responds that power in general implies both the resources at play but also the behavior of the protagonists; Nye adds that the environment in which power is in action is also a key element. Indeed, it is

not because people enjoy the cultural products of a country that they adhere to the political actions of this country. Cultural resources may help to produce soft power; but in order to do so, the behavior of the people who enjoy these resources must generally be that of attraction (Nye 2006). With respect to Javier Noya's criticism, Joseph Nye insists on the fact that the effectiveness of a power resource depends on the context in which it is employed. Therefore, what could be associated with a hard power resource, such as the exercise of military might, may turn out to be a source of soft power, if it is employed in a context which makes it attractive, as in the case of the humanitarian aid (Nye 2006).

Finally, Nye refutes the assertion that soft power cannot be measured. He does so in two ways: both that there *are* reliable indicators for the resources employed by and the effects of soft power, but also that, if the effects of soft power are questionable, due to their intangible nature, the measurable effects of hard power are likewise elusive. Of course, the traditional resources which underpin hard power are easily measurable; economic growth and military stockpiles represent major indicators to evaluate the hard power resources of a country. However, one can also take stock of soft power's *armory*, examining a combination of several indicators, such as the export of audiovisual programs and educational exchanges, may provide significant information about a country's soft power resources. The effects of soft power on the receiving end can likewise be quantified via public opinion polls. However, strategies of hard and soft power rely not only on the resources available to be mobilized, but also depend on the behavioral aspect and on the context in which they are activated. Due to the unpredictable nature of these intangible variables, the concrete effects of wielding hard power are by no means definite. In this way, Nye asserts that whatever shortcomings in measurability soft power may suffer from apply equally to hard power (Nye 2006).

In sum, this section has shed light on the term 'soft power,' which was created by Joseph Nye to define the importance of the quality of attractiveness occurring in a relation of power. The term 'power' has long been restrictively defined in terms of possession of resources or capabilities and only associated with the notion of hard power, while the behavioral aspects and the importance of attraction have been largely dismissed. Soft power and hard power are inextricably linked, as their common purpose is to affect the behavior of others but they differ in the nature of the behavior and in the resources. A country's soft power mainly relies on its culture, its values and its policies as well as the context in which these assets are deployed. A country whose culture and ideals convey values which may be considered as universal and whose policies reinforce its credibility abroad is likely to be an attractive country.

3.1.2 Place Branding

In this section, I wish to gain a deeper insight into the concept of place branding by presenting the views and thoughts of the main writers in this field. As mentioned in the methodological part (see **section 2.1**), place branding – which means the management of a place’s image through marketing tools, strategies and campaigns in order to advance political, economic and cultural interests – has recently become a buzzword in the discipline of public diplomacy. It has indeed recently gained a significant foothold both in the practice and in the thinking of public diplomacy.

I wish to introduce this concept as it will be at the heart of the matter in the analysis of the impact of the Louvre Abu Dhabi on France’s image. Though the national brand “France” is not directly displayed, it is affected by this tremendous project in the United Arab Emirates. In fact, such an international venture spreads the Louvre museum’s fame, but also the country’s image, as the Louvre is a government-owned museum and is one of most salient cultural attributes of which France’s so-called ‘brand image’ is made up. In addition to the vehicular role of the Louvre name, the Louvre Abu Dhabi is a significant component of France’s brand image, since it hosts France’s culture and heritage and therefore it somewhat represents French cultural tourist attractions. To a lesser degree, it also reflects France’s foreign cultural policy.

Among all the kinds of places, museums have remarkably engaged in the process of branding. I will discuss the components which shape a museum brand in order to apply it to the Louvre brand throughout my analytical section.

In order to sharpen my understanding of the concept of place branding, I will first present a classification of positions on place branding. In continuation, I will offer an overview of the main goals that branding techniques may contribute to the attainment of for a place. Next, I will shed light on the key stakeholders and attributes of a place which are at play in shaping a place’s brand image and which thus represent the characteristics that place branding techniques may influence in order to enhance the reputation of the place in question. Eventually, I will focus on the particular notion of museum brand.

3.1.2.1 Taxonomy of Positions on Place Branding

The recent emergence of the issue of branding to promote a place, such as a country or a city, has raised a controversy among the circles of academics, business people and politicians. They debate about whether a nation or any other kind of place can be promoted by using the branding techniques which are employed to promote a corporation. Hlynur Gudjonsson, a brand manager for Icelandic USA, Inc distinguishes the different positions on branding and classifies them in three groups: the Absolutists, the Royalists and the Moderates.

According to Gudjonsson, the Absolutists are those who consider that the techniques of branding can and should be used to brand nations, just as may be done for a corporation or a product. They believe that a nation is similar to a product. By nature, both a product and a nation are the creation of a series of changes and thus their respective identity can be altered or reinvented by modifying some of their features. In this viewpoint, a nation strives to position itself among other nations, as a corporation does among other corporations (Gudjonsson 2005: 283-284).

Quite the reverse, the Royalists are those who believe that nations cannot be altered by resorting the tools of branding. They believe that a nation has a holistic nature and cannot therefore be altered by using the brand strategies and tools. They consider that nations cannot be owned and be fully controlled; nations are beyond and above the regular human interventions such as those which are at play in the branding techniques employed to shape the image of a corporation or a product (Gudjonsson 2005: 283-284).

Situated between these two drastically opposed paradigms, the Moderates are those who think that a nation cannot be branded, but its government and its institutions can employ the tools of branding to advance its interests and notably, to strengthen its national industries and its national corporation brands (Gudjonsson 2005: 283-285).

After having proposed a classification of positions on the practice of place branding, which will be very helpful for the analysis of the different discourses about the Louvre Abu Dhabi project, I will now highlight the main reasons which explain why more and more places undertake place branding in order to improve their reputation.

3.1.2.2 The Goals that Place Branding Enables to Achieve

In recent years, places have increasingly engaged in grooming their image and reputation through the application of marketing and branding techniques. Reputation and image matter more than ever in a world considered as a very competitive global marketplace. In this context, marketing and branding tools turn out to be a powerful force for places to position themselves on the map and to differentiate themselves from one another.

The point of departure of the place branding concept is to consider that the brand image of a place represents a tremendous potential source of benefits for the place in question. The brand image of a place is regarded as a valuable asset for the place, as it may *per se* create value for the place (Anholt 2004b: 5). Indeed, the brand image of a place conveys a combination of attributes which is peculiar to the place; these embedded attributes may trigger a positive emotional perception in people's mind. Put in marketing terms, this is about the place's brand equity which refers to this outcome generated by the brand image of a place and which would have not been produced if this place would have had a different image (Kotler and Gertner 2002: 250).

Place branding aims to create an additional positive emotional value about the place in question in people's minds through the association of this place with a complex combination of characteristics. In other words, place branding strives to convince people that the place in question is superior to others by enhancing perception of quality that people have about a place.

Places have primarily resorted to branding techniques in order to advance economic interests such as boosting their companies' exports (Gudjonsson 2005, Van Ham 2001; Van Ham 2008: 129), or more generally supporting their economic development. These economic outcomes may include the increasing the influx of tourism, the attraction of both bright talent and foreign direct investment, the improvement of the private-sector competitiveness and therefore the stimulation of economic growth (Teslik 2007). Beyond economic imperatives, place branding may also impact many other aspects of a place. It may help a place to improve its image or to enhance its international political influence (Van Ham 2001; Van Ham 2008).

I turn now to the overview of the main attributes of which a place's brand image is made up.

3.1.2.3 The Stakeholders and the Main Elements of Place Branding

Place branding involves all the protagonists of the place – the political leaders, the governmental and public organisations, the private sector and the civil society – and relies on a wide-ranging set of factors and their intricate combinations. These characteristics may be classified in one or several of the six following categories: export brands, foreign and domestic policy, investment and immigration, culture and heritage, people and eventually tourism. The associations of these six attributes form the so-called place branding hexagon (see **Figure below**).

Figure 2: Place Branding Hexagon



Source: Anholt 2004a: 215

When developing and implementing a branding strategy, a place aims to positively shape its brand image through a coordinated policy that commonly embraces several of these six dimensions. I will succinctly look at each point of the hexagon and describe how each of these areas impacts a place brand.

Export Brands

The commercial brands and companies which are exported by a place represent a prominent vector for the place's identity, culture and reputation.

Commercial brands enjoy a large exposure and they therefore have a strong impact on consumer's mind. People's view of a nation from where commercial brands originate is largely formed by its perception of these commercial brands (Anholt 2002: 233).

The impact of export brands on the reputation of a place has been a key issue in place branding literature: the concept of export brands has notably been at the root of the concept of place brand and the concepts are strongly linked. Indeed, the impact of commercial brands on the image of a country has been extensively dealt with by Simon Anholt in his 1998 article entitled *Nations-brands of the twenty-first century* (Anholt 1998) which may be considered as the first article about place branding.

The idea that some local, regional or national brands or companies are flag carriers for the places they come from is derived from a marketing concept called the country-of-origin effect. This term refers to the impact that a product's provenance may have on the consumer's perception of the product and how companies tend to play with the origin and use it as a significant element of the product's name (Anholt 1998). Simply put, the country-of-origin effect is about the effect of "Made in" on consumers. In turn, a country's image is altered by these associations that people make between the commercial brands and the name of a country. The names of some corporate brands evoke certain values that consumers connect to the qualities of the country where these brands come from. Anholt notes that these reciprocal associations between certain brands and their country of origin can evolve into a complex relation in which it is hard to define whether the perception of a particular characteristic results more from the brand itself or more from its provenance (Anholt 1998: 397). In other words, the images of both brands and states tend to merge in people's minds, becoming one strong association in which both terms – i.e. the name of the corporate brands and the name of the territory entity – are interchangeable (Van Ham 2008: 4). In many ways, BMW is Munich, BMW is Bavaria, BMW is Germany and vice versa.

However, it is worth noting some challenges to the influence of corporate brands on the shaping of a country's image. Anholt gives the example of what he calls the "cuckoo brands" (Anholt 1998: 396). A cuckoo brand refers to a company originating from country A but deciding to adopt a name sounding as though it comes from country B because consumers associate more positive values to the products coming from B, and therefore perceive the

products with B-sounding names as being superior to those coming from A, based solely on the qualities their names convey (Anholt 1998: 396).

It may also be argued that the increasing number of mergers and acquisitions as well as the internationalisation of companies' capital may blur people's perception of the companies' provenance. For instance, people may believe that the luxury perfumeries Marionnaud are French. But this company created in France in the 1980s with shops located in more than ten countries was bought by Chinese businessman Li Ka-Shing Chairman of Hutchinson Whampoa Limited in 2005 (Doumayrou 2005).

Moreover, it is interesting to observe the practices of re-branding that some companies develop in the context of globalisation. Indeed some transnational companies decide to reshape their identity in order to fit with their numerous and various markets. In this re-branding process, companies tend to diminish the aspect of their country's provenance or even to make it completely disappeared. For example, the former Compagnie Générale des Eaux underwent a profound alteration of its image in the 1990s and its new identity under the name Veolia does not reflect its French provenance anymore.

Anholt notes that export brands only give a partial, restrictive and somewhat distorted view of a place to other people, as they largely play with clichés and stereotypes (Anholt 2002: 233). But the place's image relies on other key features which should be developed and put forward by the place so as to achieve an enriched and more sophisticated and attractive place's image. In this sense, promoting and representing culture constitute a crucial component for forming an elaborated place-image.

Culture and Heritage

Culture and heritage play a vital and comprehensive role in the process of enhancing a place's brand image (Anholt 2002; Anholt 2004a: 215 and Anholt 2004b: 9). Culture encompasses a very vast scope, from the very short and distant contact that people may experience through media communications to the long-term cultural immersion which enables a deeper exploration and understanding of the concerned place's culture. The protection and the promotion of heritage as well as the organisation of cultural events showcase the skills, the intellectual qualities and the values of the place's people; this presentation of both past and contemporary cultural achievements arouses admiration, trust and respect and then contributes to enrich the brand image of the place in question.

Tourism

Tourism is often the most visible component of the six attributes forming the place branding hexagon (Anholt 2004a: 215). This point of the hexagon is also the one which usually receives the hugest allocation of government outlay (Anholt 2004a: 215). Places are engaged in a very intense competition for tourists' attention. Places invest more and more in numerous, varied and high-quality attractions to cater for and care for tourists well, preferably and better than the other places. Being an attractive tourist destination for a place is undoubtedly a way of enriching its image.

People

The population of a place is a decisive element shaping the perception of strangers on the image of the place in question. The way each citizen interacts either at home or abroad with foreign people has an impact on how the latter perceive the whole population of the place and the place itself in general (Anholt 2004a: 215). Each citizen is, in essence, a brand ambassador of the place where he comes from.

Foreign and domestic policy

Just as it is for a country's soft power, foreign and domestic policy is a key element for the brand image of a country. The way a state acts both at home and abroad has a strong impact on how foreign people – and notably businessmen, political leaders and tourists – picture the concerned country (Anholt 2004a: 215). In the practice of place branding, the political leaders of a geographical location need to take domestic and foreign decisions which are aligned with the other attributes shaping the territory entity's image and which are also intended to be perceived as being "good" by foreigners. In other words, one of the six key components shaping a place brand is about the issue of good governance, i.e. how competently a place is governed. But it is also related to issues concerning the respect of human rights, the efforts deployed for upholding peace, and so on.

Investment and Immigration

The ability of a place to be a magnet for investment and immigration is a crucial aspect for its brand image (Anholt 2004a: 215). Places where the political and economic situation is propitious for investment and opportunities for obtaining an excellent educational qualification are good enjoy a very good brand image. Consequently, places compete with each other by each making efforts to be and to promote themselves as being a place where it

is pleasant to live and to work or successful and profitable to invest. Being and looking like a place attracting talent and funds enhance the reputation of the concerned place.

In this section, I have presented the major features which characterize the brand image of a place. In what follows, I will shed light on the characteristics of museum branding.

3.1.2.4 The Practice of Museum Branding

As Senior Lecturer in Marketing Niall Caldwell and Former Chief Executive of the *Réunion des Musées Nationaux* Philippe Durey note, the museum sector has undergone profound changes in the past couple of decades (Caldwell 2000; Durey 2001). From a past typified by the cliché of outmoded cultural temples hosting artworks displayed in dusty galleries under pallid lights, which were only visited by a small number of elite, today museums, notably the largest ones, have evolved into modern cultural centers, hosted in new or renovated buildings, which organise ambitious exhibitions and welcome a larger and larger public year after year. This dramatic transformation has been driven by numerous motives, some of whose are in tune with the primary missions of a museum. Indeed, this change was intended to improve public access to the world's cultural heritage as well as to attract more funds to further develop new scientific projects and more ambitious exhibitions. But it is worth noting that new functions have been added to the core mission of the museums through this major revolution. In addition to their inherent cultural function, museums have become important players in the tourism sector, notably by earning significant revenues and by driving indirect economic benefits for the tourism sector of the city, the region and even the country in which its is located.

Along with this modernization, the museum sector has become a competitive field. Museums vie with each other to attract funds so as to purchase massively on the art market – and notably to acquire the most prized artworks – and to invest in the renovation of their buildings or the construction of new facilities (Caldwell 2000; Durey 2001). In this context of modernization and competition, the issue related to the museum's image and its perception by people – either visitors or business and political decision-makers – has increasingly gained in significance. In the same vein as it is for a place, the brand image of a museum is an additional valuable asset for this institution. By conveying the intricate combination of intrinsic attributes shaping the museum's identity, the brand image of this institution may represent a significant source of benefits for the museum in question. To put it in different words, the museum's prestige represents a decisive factor to attract an increasing number of visitors and sponsors who are a more and more important source of income. Simply put, the

museum's prestige greatly matters to keep on further developing the museum activities. Museum leaders are aware of this strategic importance taken on by the image of their institutions. Thus they strive to bolster their institution's fame by applying branding and marketing techniques to some of the key attributes shaping their institution's image; the museum's collection, its name awareness, its building, its location and its recognition in international media may be considered as some of these major components influencing the reputation of a museum (Caldwell 2000 and Durey 2001).

As the reputation of a museum results from the intricate combination of these various factors, the branding strategy adopted by the museum's leaders to enhance the reputation of their establishment is a complex and coordinated plan which integrates transverse actions aiming to strengthen these crucial characteristics.

Name awareness is a vital element for the value of a museum brand, referring to what degree the museum name is familiar to people. Is the museum's name unknown to people? Or does it mean something quite vague to them? Or does it instantly trigger recognition in people's mind? Obviously, a high level of name awareness is an essential attribute for a strong brand image. The higher the level a museum's name awareness is, the higher the number of visitors or people intending to visit the museum in question will probably be (Caldwell 2000: 29 & 32). Interestingly, the museum's name awareness may turn out to be a significant issue for the place branding field. Thus, the museum's name awareness has been at the core of one of the most striking cases of place branding through the establishment of a Guggenheim branch in Bilbao and the franchise of its name to this new museum. By being the central attraction of Bilbao's redevelopment as a cultural centre and a tourist destination, this project substantially contributes to bring life and economic vitality back to the Basque city and its surrounding region (Bergère and Osmont 2008). This has meant all the more a rapid regeneration for Bilbao since the museum hosts a part of the high-quality collections of and enjoys the internationally well-renowned name of the prestigious New York parent museum. In other words, Guggenheim's fame has been a tremendous asset for Bilbao; it has been one of the most salient attributes driving a significant number of visitors to the Basque city. It has beyond doubt assured that Bilbao has captivated a wider audience than it would have been the case had its new museum not benefited from the name recognition and support of an internationally prestigious museum. Besides, it is worth noting that this kind of international initiative, the opening of a museum satellite, undoubtedly increases the parent museum's level of name awareness overseas (Caldwell 200: 32).

The building itself plays a prominent role for the brand value (Caldwell 2000: 33). The architecture of the museum's edifice represents an experience in itself for people, either those who visit the museum or those who have had exposure to the concerned museum through the media. The museum's structure draws people's attention and makes an impression on them. People may like or dislike the building; but, in any case, they notice the architecture of the building and they strongly associate it with the museum. People recognize the architecture of a museum as an important characteristic of the museum's visual identity. Therefore, the architecture has a strong impact on people's mind and how they perceive the museum. It is then necessary for museum's leaders to pay particular attention to the condition of the building as well as to the renovation works of the edifice or to the design of extensions. The more original and outstanding the architecture of a building is, the increased number of people will easily identify and remember the museum hosted in it. In other words, the high-profile architecture of an institution is intended to increase the visibility of this institution in the landscape of competing museums. It is worth observing that the most notorious museums built in the 20th century possesses an iconic and outstanding architecture designed by world-famous architects (also called starchitects) such as the New York's Guggenheim Museum designed by Frank Lloyd Wright, the Centre Pompidou in Paris by Renzo Piano and Richard Rogers⁴ or the above-mentioned case of the Bilbao Guggenheim designed by Frank Gehry. In some cases, it is also interesting to note that the architecture of the museum may be as world renowned – perhaps even more-so – as the collection it hosts! To a certain extent, this is the case of the Guggenheim Bilbao, since the edifice, designed by Gehry, draws most of the attention which focuses on the recently-built Basque museum (Caldwell 2000: 32). Even the oldest museums have engaged in the venture of enhancing their architecture in order to enjoy a remarkable structure through the renovation of their building or the extension of their facilities. For instance, the British Museum's edifice has recently been enhanced with the construction of a glass dome (Caldwell 2000: 33).

The location of the museum plays a significant role for its image. The district in which the museum is located and its surroundings may affect the image. Since the museum is a tourist destination, its district and the surroundings are expected to be an attractive area equipped with a very good public transport system and excellent facilities, which both host the tourists and supply these tourists with surrounding attractions such as theatres and sports arenas or stadiums. The image of the museum is enhanced to the degree it is well positioned.

⁴ Though Piano and Rogers were almost unknown when their project was chosen for the Centre Pompidou.

The collection itself is an integral part of the brand value. Indeed, a high-quality collection with a certain number of masterpieces represents a key element for a museum's fame. For instance, the prestige of Musée d'Orsay and the Art Institute of Chicago mainly relies on their outstanding and extensive collection of impressionist paintings. And we may wonder whether the British Museum would enjoy such a great reputation without the Rosetta Stone or the Elgin Marbles?

Finally, the recognition of the museum in international media has a strong influence on the image of this museum. Though the previous-cited attributes greatly help a museum to draw media attention, the capacity of a museum to gain recognition from international media is *per se* a key feature for the improvement of the museum's image. The more attention from international media the museum captures, the better and greater the image of the museum internationally.

3.1.3 The Objectives of an International Cultural Policy

We notice a recent increasing interest in the role played by culture in international relations. This growing concern for culture notably arises from the observation of increasing and unequal cultural exchanges. Additionally, the debates about Samuel Huntington's clash of civilizations and about cultural exception in 1993 GATT negotiations as well as the emergence of Joseph Nye's soft power contribute to a rising attention to culture in international relations. These recent questions add on to the historical issue about the intertwining of the assertion of power with the spread of cultural influence abroad (Lombard 2003: 14; Bound et al. 2007: 15). In this context, several scholars focus on the study of why and how states have developed an international cultural policy, also called cultural diplomacy.

In his 2003 book entitled *Politique Culturelle Internationale, le Modèle Français face à la Mondialisation* (Lombard 2003), Alain Lombard asserts that states implement international cultural policy to seek to four objectives. As mentioned above, the goal which is primarily pursued by states through cultural diplomacy is to extend their influence around the world. Secondly, states consider that the implementation of an international cultural policy is a source of economic prosperity. Thirdly, states believe that an international cultural policy may bring about a more peaceful world. Lastly, carrying out an international cultural policy contributes to the promotion of cultural diversity (Lombard 2003: 41).

3.1.3.1 International Cultural Policy as a Way to Spread its Influence Abroad

The first development of international cultural policies in the late 19th century, as well as the ancient tradition of rulers exchanging gifts of arts is primarily motivated by the question of prestige. Indeed, states consider that the setting up of international cultural relations aims at extending their influence around the world, or at least obtaining the respect of other states (Lombard 2003: 42). By organising cultural events abroad such as concerts, exhibitions or conferences, a state showcases the knowledge, the creativity and the diversity of its artists and intellectuals. This elite represents the whole nation and the display of its talent then conveys both the image and the values of the nation. In 1785, Thomas Jefferson already noticed that states could gain influence and recognition from culture:

“I am an enthusiast on the subject of the arts. But it is an enthusiasm of which I am not ashamed, as its object is to improve the taste of my countrymen, to increase their reputation, to reconcile to them the respect of the world and procure them its praise.” (Thomas Jefferson quoted by Schneider 2003: 1)

Thomas Jefferson’s observation⁵ signifies that culture could provide states with the means to play a role on the world stage and brings about positive assets such as respect and even admiration.

However, influence may turn out to be negative in some cases. The influence exerted by one state on another may be too strong and may harm the interests of the dominated state or may undermine its culture. This influence is then perceived as cultural imperialism and engenders repulsion from the dominated country towards the influential country. This unequal situation in the cultural dialog among the states results from the growing unbalanced cultural flows among the countries. As this situation of unequal cultural exchanges may be offset by economic measures, we notice that the search to assert economic interests and the exertion of influence through international cultural relations are linked (Lombard 2003: 46-47).

In brief, the question of spreading its influence to the foreign countries is the first and main reason for implementing an international cultural policy. However, this issue is more and more connected with the pursuit of economic gains.

3.1.3.2 International Cultural Policy as a Way to Reach Economic Prosperity

The pursuit of economic gains has recently become a significant reason for the states to implement an international cultural policy.

On the one hand, cultural industries are burgeoning and developed countries’ economic growth partly rests on this key sector. Implementing an international cultural policy aims to boost the exports of cultural goods (Lombard 2003: 47 and Wyszomirski et al. 2003: 2). On the other hand, the international cultural policy serves as a platform to advance economic interests, which are not necessarily related to the cultural industries. International cultural relations project a positive image of the country abroad and enhance the context of trade negotiations in general (Lombard 2003: 50).

⁵ This quotation issues from a letter written by Thomas Jefferson, Minister to France at that time, to James Madison, the “Father of the Constitution.”

In short, international cultural policy has recently acquired trade-related aspects. Through cultural diplomacy, states seek to achieve economic goals. Cultural diplomacy directly and indirectly contributes to the economic development of a country, by promoting the export of cultural products and also by furthering trade opportunities in general.

3.1.3.3 International Cultural Policy as a Way to Build a More Peaceful World

By developing international cultural relations with other nations or in multilateral institutions, states aim at bringing out a more peaceful world.

Bilateral or multilateral international cultural relations provide the states with a better understanding of others and an awareness of the differences which exist between them and the neighbors. In the 1945 UNESCO Constitution, it was already mentioned that cultural exchanges may bring about peace.

**“The purpose of the Organization is to contribute to peace and security by promoting collaboration among the nations through education, science and culture in order to further universal respect for justice, for the rule of law and for the human rights and fundamental freedoms which are affirmed for the peoples of the world, without distinction of race, sex, language or religion, by the Charter of the United Nations.”
(UNESCO 1945: Article I.1)**

UNESCO has kept on emphasizing the key role played by culture in the pursuit of peace in the last couple of decades. UNESCO coordinates the activities of the “Decade for the Promotion of a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World”, which the United Nations General Assembly launched as an opening to this new century and millennium. In the 2001 UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity and the 2005 UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, the UNESCO affirms that cultural relations are a crucial factor to advance the objective of international peace (UNESCO 2001: 11-12; UNESCO 2005: 1 & 3).

However, international cultural relations may also be perceived as a source of tensions and may even lead to conflicts rather than to peace. In his 1993 article, entitled *The Clash of Civilizations?* (Huntington 1993), Samuel Huntington emphasizes that cultural differences may generate tensions and even conflicts:

“It is my hypothesis that the fundamental source of conflict in this new world will not be primarily ideological or primarily economic. The great divisions among humankind and the dominating source of conflict will be cultural. Nation states will remain the most powerful actors in world affairs, but the principal conflicts of global politics will occur between nations and groups of different civilizations.” (Huntington 1993: 22)

In Huntington’s prism, the cultural differences and the increasing interactions between peoples of different civilizations may be the primary source of conflicts. However, it is hard to imagine that the development of international cultural relations based on respect for different cultures would cause such tensions and so propitious a chance for the outbreak of conflicts (Lombard 2003: 59). Consequently, it is crucial for states to carry out international cultural policy based on respect and mutual understanding. Such an international cultural policy would foster a dialogue of civilizations rather than a clash of civilizations.

In sum, the development of international cultural relations is the best guarantee of peace. However, cultural differences may generate misunderstanding between peoples and may then cause conflicts. By carrying out international cultural policy based on respect for different cultures, states contribute to the development of a better mutual understanding and trust. By doing so, states also foster the intercultural dialogue among nations and civilisations.

3.1.3.4 International Cultural Policy as a Way to Foster Cultural Diversity

The fourth objective of international cultural relations is the promotion of cultural diversity, which is “the common heritage of humanity” (UNESCO 2001: Article 1) This objective is more difficult to comprehend as it is more abstract than the three above-mentioned goals.

International cultural relations contribute to the mutual improvement of each culture. Indeed, they enable peoples to share their plurality and discover other cultures. Additionally, cultures meet, mingle and morph through the development of international cultural relations. These exchanges further the creativity and the innovation of each culture (Lombard 2003: 61).

However, unbalanced cultural flows may cause negative effects on cultural diversity. The unequal situation of cultural flows may harm fragile and marginalized cultures. Additionally, a preponderant domination of cultural exchanges by one culture may lead to the uniformization and standardization of culture around the world (Lombard 2003: 63).

In brief, the implementation of international cultural policies benefits the cultural diversity in the world. However, the unbalanced cultural flows may provoke a loss in cultural biodiversity.

3.2 A Contextual Framework

This section aims to present the context surrounding the development of the Louvre Abu Dhabi project. This is an essential section since it provides thorough background information which will be essential to the investigation of my problem formulation, i.e. whether the Louvre Abu Dhabi project positively or negatively impacts France's cultural diplomacy and soft power.

First, I will focus on France's cultural diplomacy. Then, I will give an overview of the United Arab Emirates with which France engages in order to develop a new universal museum. In continuation, I will shed light on the France-UAE relationship. I will end with an extensive presentation of the project itself.

3.2.1 An Overview of French Cultural Diplomacy

This section takes a look at France's cultural diplomacy with the objective of providing an in-depth background to this topic, since this issue is at the heart of my problem formulation.

This section is built up around the two main priorities of France's foreign cultural policy, which in turn revolves around two large concepts: influence and solidarity. From an historic perspective, promoting the tremendous French cultural wealth (see **Appendix**) and spreading France's influence overseas have been the primary missions of the French cultural diplomacy. However, these missions have gradually been built upon by two recent objectives: fostering cultural dialogue and enhancing cultural cooperation. The promotion of cultural pluralism and diversity is an overall objective which somewhat encompasses the three former goals (Lombard 2003: 86-87).

By successively presenting the main lines of the French foreign cultural policy, this section also highlights the salient features which characterize the French cultural diplomacy system, which turns out to be a very peculiar model⁶, in comparison with other countries' cultural diplomacy systems. Cultural diplomacy is an age-old and fundamental element of France's foreign policy. In this regard, France is commonly recognized as a precursor in the field of cultural diplomacy. In addition, French cultural diplomacy differs from other countries' cultural diplomacy systems by the high ambitious goals it pursues, the very voluntarist state policy it implements and the very complete strategy it develops with regard

⁶ By "model", I do not mean an example to follow, but I refer to a complex system with its own characteristics.

to both the geographical areas and the fields of actions. All these characteristics of the French cultural diplomacy will then be developed throughout this section.

First, I will shed light on the objective of promoting France's cultural wealth abroad and spreading its influence overseas by tracking back the evolution of the French cultural diplomacy from its origin to the mid-20th century. Then, I will present the objectives of fostering the cultural dialogue and enhancing the cultural cooperation which emerged after the Second World War.

3.2.1.1 Promoting French Culture and Spreading French Influence

Expanding France's influence overseas has been a fundamental motive for France's international cultural actions since the very early beginnings of these initiatives.

Although the early institutionalization of French international cultural relations dates back to the establishment of the first Alliances Françaises⁷ abroad in 1883, the nascent beginnings of France's international cultural relations are commonly dated back to the King Francis I, the Patron of the Arts and the Father and Restorer of Letters, in the 16th century. In 1535, Francis I and his ally Suleiman the Magnificent, Sultan of the Ottoman Empire signed a treaty which granted complete religious liberty to the French and protection over all the Catholics in the Levant as well as the right to practice French language and French culture in the Ottoman Empire (Lombard 2003: 71; de Raymond 2000: 15-16).

Since the 16th century, France has increased the interaction between culture and international relations. France has long embedded its international relations on the prestige of its arts and culture, particularly during Louis XIV's reign. The Sun King indeed considered that France must not only have achieved a political and military dominance in Europe, but also a cultural one. As symbols of power and a way of influencing foreign countries, Arts and Culture were then part of foreign policy (de Raymond 2000: 16).

Two somewhat close concepts emerged from these early beginnings and have long characterized France's cultural diplomacy ideology: the notions of "*rayonnement*" and *messianism*. Like the sun, France intends to "radiate" to the other parts of the world, especially through its culture. This willingness to spread its cultural influence is notably due to France's belief that it has a particular role to play in the world (Lombard 2003: 81; 207).

During the Age of Enlightenment, this close link between French culture and politics is illustrated by the cases of French intellectuals and artists who were invited to the courts of

⁷ The Alliance Française is a non-profit private organisation whose mission is to foster the diffusion of the French language and culture abroad. This association is composed of a headquarter based in Paris and a worldwide network of independent establishments (Foundation Alliance Française 2008).

European leaders. For example, Voltaire visited Frederick II, King of Prussia and Diderot was invited by Catherine II, Empress of Russia (Lombard 2003: 71 and de Raymond 2000: 17-18). Napoleon continued in the same vein as the earlier French leaders by contributing to the influence of French culture abroad (Lombard 2003: 71 and de Raymond 2000: 18-19).

In the late 19th century, the foundation of the Alliance Française in Paris and the creation of its first cultural establishments abroad are the signs of the modern French cultural diplomacy. After its defeat against Prussia in Sedan and the end of the Second Empire in 1870, France wanted to show its will of preserving, consolidating and expanding its influence overseas notably through the promotion of the French language (de Raymond 2000: 19).

During the First World War, the French state increased its involvement in support of international cultural actions, as cultural influence and the power of information played a significant role in the conflict.

After the First World War, French authorities developed significant means to improve France's cultural diplomacy apparatus. Foreign universities give an impetus to the creation of the first French cultural institutes overseas. Their mission was to foster academic exchanges and university cooperation between French universities and foreign ones, as well as to showcase French culture and promote the French language (de Raymond 2000: 20). Besides, the *Association Française d'expansion et d'échanges artistiques* is created in 1922. This association will become the French Association for Artistic Action, also known as AFAA (Association Française d'Action Artistique) in 1934. Its purpose is to organize cultural manifestations overseas (de Raymond 2000: 21).

During the inter-war period, the French cultural diplomacy apparatus is thus considerably strengthened by the creation of both the AFAA and the network of cultural institutes abroad. Henceforth France's clout is conveyed overseas through the promotion of the French language and the organization of cultural manifestations overseas.

After the Second World War, the policy about France's international cultural actions overseas underwent a remarkable development for thirty years. Just after the Second World War, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs implemented a new apparatus to conduct its international cultural activities abroad; the Directorate General for Cultural Relations was founded in 1945 and Cultural Counselors were appointed in the Embassies from 1949 (de Raymond 2000: 22). Decolonization and De Gaulle's presidency changed France's policy about cultural actions abroad. France maintained close cultural relations with its former colonies, but these relations assumed a new shape. Henceforth, France developed cultural cooperation relations with these independent countries (de Raymond 2000: 22-23). Due to President de Gaulle's ambitious

view about France's place in the world, France implemented a sound policy with respect to the cultural actions overseas. On the one hand, France significantly increased the means to spread the French language abroad, since it promoted the French culture. On the other hand, France gradually extended its international cultural relations to the fields of sciences and technologies (de Raymond 2000: 23 and Lombard 2003: 75).

In the 1980s, the French cultural diplomacy system underwent new major changes, spurred by a report about foreign cultural relations written by Jacques Rigaud for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1979 (Rigaud 1979). Rigaud recommended reforms, of which most would be set up in the 1980s. Rigaud notably advocated that France should widen its openness to foreign cultures and significantly employ the available new technologies of information and communication. In the 1980s and 1990s, France invested significant means in its audiovisual presence worldwide. In addition, it set up new structures and new models to welcome foreign cultures. For instance, the cultural seasons model was implemented: each year, one country is invited to be the focus of a series of exhibitions and events (Lombard 2003: 77-78).

At the dawn of the 21st century, the French cultural diplomacy's system is a huge apparatus with a wide-ranging and worldwide action. However, this model is going through a crisis, as it is reported by several publications (Daugé 2001; Djian 2004). In the context of globalization, the tremendous development of advanced communication systems and the increasing internationalization of cultural industries have profoundly challenged the role states play in the foreign cultural relations. As the French foreign cultural relations apparatus significantly relies on the involvement of the state, this system has been particularly affected by the above-mentioned dramatic changes the world has undergone in recent decades. Furthermore, the means employed by the French cultural diplomacy apparatus have been challenged. On the one hand, the French cultural diplomacy system has been squeezed by budget cuts (Daugé 2001: 10; Djian 2004). Although France is one of the countries that allocates the largest amount of economic resources to cultural diplomacy, this budget is relatively trifling to accomplish such an ambitious, large-scale and widespread action. On the other hand, the worldwide cultural network turns out not to fit the new context and shape of the world order. The geographical deployment of the institutes is questioned and these structures of French cultural diplomacy are somewhat considered as no longer appropriate to the context anymore (Lombard 2003: 100). With respect to the means of the France's foreign cultural actions, it is eventually worth noting that the increasing number of operators contributes to a relative unwieldiness of the French cultural diplomacy apparatus (Lombard

2003: 100-101). In other words, it is increasingly difficult for the French cultural diplomacy's apparatus to conduct its global and large-scale action. Due to the combination of the financial cuts and the increasing numbers of issues to deal with, the French state should redefine a clear strategy with geographical, social and sector-based priorities (Lombard 2003: 101). Hence, the French cultural diplomacy system embarks on a profound reform of its organization and its missions at the turn of the century.

In sum, France's international cultural policy has been profoundly altered after the Second World War; and this change is notably represented by the fact that France increasingly takes the field of cultural cooperation into consideration.

3.2.1.2 Fostering Cultural Dialogue and Enhancing Cultural Cooperation

As mentioned above, the objective of enhancing cultural cooperation has been increasingly taken into consideration during the last 60 years. Decolonization has prompted France to further develop its initiatives in the field of cultural cooperation. Then the successive reforms and notably the most recent one that the French cultural diplomacy system has engaged in, put forward this new main line of France's international cultural action.

The salient point of the abovementioned reform of the French cultural diplomacy system is that its main apparatus has been reshaped and the scope of its activities extended so as to respond to the dramatic changes of the international context and to take into account the increasingly significant cooperation issues. Indeed, the main administrative structure of the French cultural diplomacy integrates the entities which used to be in charge of the cooperation domain (Lombard 2003: 78). Its new name *Direction Générale de la Coopération Internationale et du Développement*⁸ (DGCID) in itself reflects this new organization and set of priorities (North 2003: 1). Though the word 'culture' is not present in the name anymore, cultural action remains a significant pillar of the French cultural diplomacy system. The modern French foreign cultural policy relies on two pillars: cooperation and cultural action.

The DGCID outlines the mainstreams of France's new foreign cultural policy. Cultural diversity and the promotion of the cultural industries overseas are placed at the core of French foreign cultural policy, as they are two major issues in the context of globalization (Lombard 2003: 102-103). In addition, the DGCID frames a clear strategy which puts forward some major priorities in its field of activities. Though the DGCID does not abandon any activity, it

⁸ Directorate General for International Cooperation and Development

focuses its action on the promotion of French ideas abroad, the implementation of development aid programs, its participation in the education of foreign elites and the strengthening of the French audiovisual presence worldwide (Lombard 2003: 104; North 2003).

Furthermore, the other significant step in the restructuring of the French cultural diplomacy is the redefinition of the role of the state in its conduct. The French state intends to develop a more flexible cultural diplomacy system, by resorting to autonomous operators (Lombard 2003: 105). This reshaping of the French cultural diplomacy system has led to the creation of CulturesFrance, the new agency in charge of international cultural exchanges. This new operator which was created in 2006 results from the merger of the French Association for Artistic Action and the Association for the Dissemination of French Thinking (Ministère des Affaires Etrangères 2006c). Through this restructuring, the French state seeks to have a unique but strong operator which covers a broad field of activities – from the promotion of French culture abroad to cultural cooperation – thus to gain a greater efficiency in its foreign cultural action. Besides, the cultural network of French institutes has also been affected by this modernization of the French cultural diplomacy system

It is also worth noting that French international cultural policy's intention to foster cultural diversity is also illustrated by the significant role France plays at a global level. France advocated the concept of cultural exception at the 1993 GATT negotiations, and then for the notion of cultural diversity. The concept of cultural exception states that cultural goods are different by nature from other goods and then they should be treated as being not like other forms of merchandise in trade (Tardif and Farchy 2007). With respect to cultural diversity, France played a key role in negotiation and adoption of the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Diversity.

In brief, this section has highlighted that France's foreign cultural policy rests on a two-fold purpose. On the one hand, French cultural diplomacy aims to increase France's cultural influence by promoting the French language, bolstering the presence of French artists and their works overseas, strengthening its position in the intellectual life and debates abroad, supporting cultural industries abroad and fostering the export of cultural goods as well as enhancing its presence in the audiovisual sector worldwide. On the other hand, France's international cultural policy aims to foster cultural dialogue and to assist the cultural development of other countries, by acting as a host to foreign cultures and artists, by supporting artistic creation in foreign countries, by offering its assistance and its expertise in

the field of cultural policy and cultural engineering to other countries. Thus France intends to help foreign cultures to maintain and develop their own artistic creation. This intention is also expressed and strengthened by France's viewpoint about the promotion of cultural diversity for which France advocates in the multilateral arena such as the UNESCO.

The presentation of these objectives has also enabled the shedding of light on the salient characteristics of the French cultural diplomacy system: its age-old foundations, the important role played by the state and the tremendous apparatus which conduct this policy. For several centuries France has managed to successfully evolve this system in pace with the political, economic and technological changes undergone by the world. Indeed, the French cultural diplomacy system has created new operators to deal with a broader field of activities, to reach more people in an increasing number of countries. French cultural diplomacy has become a system based on a very active state and the expenditure of significant means in pursuit of numerous ambitious goals. However, the context of globalization has challenged the characteristics of this system. In the first decade of the 21st century, France intends to lay the foundations of its cultural action abroad on a new basis and it seeks to pursue new goals such as the promotion of cultural dialogue.

3.2.2 The Environment of the Louvre Abu Dhabi Museum

This section outlines the environment in which the Louvre Abu Dhabi project takes place, by taking a look at the United Arab Emirates. This section aims to have a better comprehension of this small and rich country where the first Louvre Museum branch will be settled. Hence, this section intends to develop an in-depth background about the political and economic situation of the UAE as well as the relations this Persian Gulf country has with France. By doing so, this section will provide me with the necessary knowledge to explore and analyze which of France's interests the Louvre Abu Dhabi Museum may contribute to achieve.

This section starts with some general information about the United Arab Emirates. Then, it focuses on the bilateral relations France has with the United Arab Emirates.

3.2.2.1 The United Arab Emirates

This section will shed light on the main geographical, demographical, political and economic characteristics of the United Arab Emirates.

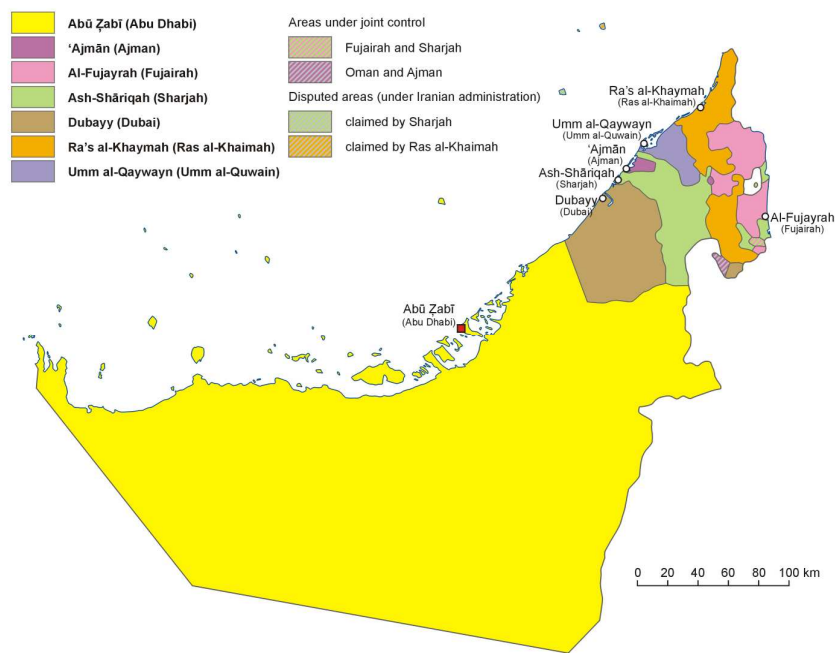
The United Arab Emirates is a Middle Eastern federation of seven emirates that became independent in 1971. The UAE is situated in the southeast of the Arabian Peninsula between Oman and Saudi Arabia and bordering the Gulf of Oman and the Persian Gulf. The UAE area is estimated to be 82,880 square kilometers. The seven emirates, in order of size are Abu Dhabi where the national capital Abu Dhabi is located, Dubai, Sharjah, Umm al Qaywayn, Ajman, Al Fajayah and Ras al Khaymah (Library of Congress 2007: 1-3).

Figure 3: Location Map of the United Arab Emirates in the Middle East Region



Source: Adapted from Worldcountries.info (undated)

Figure 4: Administrative Map of the United Arab Emirates



Source: Wikipedia.org (2007)

The UAE has around 4 million inhabitants with a large population of non-nationals. An estimated 20 percent of the population is comprised of national citizens while the non-nationals constitute approximately 80 percent of the population. These foreigners mainly come from other Arab countries as well as Pakistan, India and Bangladesh (Library of Congress 2007: 5). A large part of this expatriate population lives and works in substandard conditions without any civil rights (Library of Congress 2007: 13-14). Numerous practices related to discrimination against the Asian migrant population and non-respect of their rights have been noted by international non-governmental organizations and foreign institutions such as the Human Right Watch (Human Right Watch 2008) and the U.S. Department of State (U.S. Department of State 2007).

The United Arab Emirates may be considered as a loose federation, since each above-mentioned emirate has its own ruler and has considerable powers (Library of Congress 2007: 19; U.S. Department of State 2007: section “Government”). With respect to the rule of the federation, the constitution establishes the main institutions: the Supreme Council of Rulers, the Presidency, the Vice-Presidency, the Premiership, the Council of Ministers and the Federal National Council. The rulers of the seven emirates constitute the Supreme Council of Rulers which is the highest federal authority. In accordance with the Constitution, the Supreme Council of Rulers elects the President and the Vice President of the federation for

five years (Library of Congress 2007: 19; U.S. Department of State 2007: section “Government”).

The United Arab Emirates recently underwent a change among its leaders. In 2004 Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahayan became Ruler of Abu Dhabi Emirate – the largest, most populated and richest emirate of the federation – and also President of the federation. He succeeded to his father Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan who was the first and only UAE President until he died in 2004 (Library of Congress 2007: 19; U.S. Department of State 2007: section “History” paragraph 6). The UAE Vice-President and Prime Minister is Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktum who is Ruler of Dubai Emirate, the commercial center of the federation. He succeeded to his brother Sheikh Maktum bin Rashid Al Maktum when he passed away in 2006. Although non-official, the allocation of positions in the federal government reflects the political and economic influence of each emirate and it is *de facto* hereditarily ordained. As the clan ruling the richest and largest emirate, the Al Nahyan clan of Abu Dhabi *de facto* inherits the Presidency of the Federation while the Vice Presidency and the Premiership have always been held by the Maktum clan, which rules Dubai, the second richest emirate of the federation (Library of Congress 2007: 20; U.S. Department of State 2007: section “Political Conditions” paragraph 1). Along with this smooth transition of power to a new generation of rulers, it is worth noting a recent step towards democracy through the organization of the first-ever elections in 2006. However, these elections only concerned half the members of the Federal National Council which is merely a consultative body (Library of Congress 2007: 20; U.S. Department of State 2007: “Political Conditions” paragraph 3).

The UAE has a very flourishing economy. The UAE’s GDP per capita is one of the highest in the world. As mentioned in the appendix, it reached \$ 38,600 in 2006. The UAE’s GDP reached \$163 billion with an annual growth rate of 9.4% in 2006 and a substantial trade surplus which attained \$35.942 billion. The Emirates of Abu Dhabi and Dubai are the two economic motors of the United Arab Emirates. They provide approximately 80 percent of the UAE’s income (Library of Congress 2007: 8).

The UAE economy is mainly based on the oil and gas sector, which accounts for around one third of total GDP (Library of Congress 2007: 10). The UAE has huge oil and natural gas reserves, containing almost eight percent of the world total of crude oil reserves and has the fifth largest supply of natural gas in the world (Library of Congress 2007: 10). These oil and natural gas reserves are mainly situated in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi (Library of Congress 2007: 10). Based on the oil and gas resources, the UAE has developed its industrial and manufacturing sector, notably the heavy industries. The industrial sector produced

approximately 54 percent of the GDP and employed around 36 percent of the workforce in 2005 (Library of Congress 2007: 10-11). Besides the manufacturing activities related to the process of oil and gas, the UAE has also expanded the industrial sectors needing a large input of energy in the production process such as aluminum. Due to the abundance and low cost of oil and gas resources, the government-owned company Dubai Aluminum is very competitive and is one of the world's top aluminum producers (Library of Congress 2007: 11).

Although the Emiratis' supplies in oil and gas will last several decades, the UAE has already adopted an economic strategy based on the diversification of its sources of revenues, particularly the tourism sector. The services sector accounted for an estimated 40 percent of the GDP and employed approximately 60 percent of the total workforce in 2005 (Library of Congress 2007: 12). The Emirate of Dubai which has only small oil and gas reserves has largely diversified its economy, having developed a booming services-based economy, which notably encompasses the sectors of tourism, financial services and telecommunications (Library of Congress 2007: 8). In the Emirate of Dubai, the tourism earnings exceed the oil revenue (Library of Congress 2007: 13). The Emirate of Dubai has been investing in some tremendous attractions. It hosts the Burj Al Arab which is the world's tallest hostel. Other grandiose projects, such as the artificial islands named the Palm Islands and the World Islands, are being built. In a similar vein, the Emirate of Abu Dhabi has also started to diversify its economy. The considerable revenues gained from oil and gas exports enable Abu Dhabi to invest into the development of some great tourism projects such as the Saadiyat Island⁹ which will become the cultural district of the UAE's capital by hosting several museums, including the Louvre Abu Dhabi Museum (Chrysafis 2006).

Thus, the United Arab Emirates has taken the path of the sustainable economic development, which also includes some substantial efforts to improve the educational system. One quarter of the UAE's federal government spending is devoted to education (Library of Congress 2007: 6). The UAE also attracted some foreign universities which established campuses in the UAE. For instance, the French University La Sorbonne opened a campus in Abu Dhabi in 2006 (Library of Congress 2007: 7).

With respect to foreign relations, the UAE is faced with a politically tense environment (Leveau 2005), as it is surrounded by several regional powers, including Iran, Iraq and Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia and the UAE maintain very close relations and both

⁹ It literally means the Island of Happiness in Arab.

countries are members of the Gulf Cooperation Council¹⁰. But, the UAE is consequently dependent on Saudi Arabia due to its large area, the size of its population and its significant economic and military means (Leveau 2005: 15-16). UAE-Iran relations are very tense, in particular because of a territory dispute over three islands in the Strait of Hormuz. In 1992, Iran unilaterally took control over these three islands, having formerly been shared between the two countries (Library of Congress 2007: 4). After Iraq's attempt to annex Kuwait in 1990, the UAE has developed a close military relationship with select foreign countries for the purpose of its security. Though the USA remains the central military partner of the UAE, the UAE has sought diversification in security assistance by negotiating defense cooperation agreements and military contracts with other Western countries, and in particular France (Library of Congress 2007: 24).

In sum, the United Arab Emirates is faced with numerous and various challenges. It has undergone a remarkable development and modernization based on petroleum and gas exports. These exports still play a vital role in the economy. However, the Emirati economy is becoming less dependent on oil and gas resources through the successful diversification of its sources of revenues. Indeed, the UAE uses the significant earnings provided by oil and gas exports in order to drive the expansion of the non-oil sector and primarily the tourism in the thriving emirates of Abu Dhabi and Dubai. These two emirates are the two predominant emirates because of their sizes, their populations, their oil and gas wealth as well as the vitality of their services sectors. The UAE also emphasizes the improvement of its educational system, notably by hosting the campuses of foreign universities. In spite of its economic well-being as well as some small steps of political opening towards democracy and some advances in the protection of human rights, the UAE is still plagued by numerous issues concerning the violations of human rights and the non-democratic form of its government. Located in a very tense region, the UAE plays a vital role in the affairs of the Persian Gulf region, notably through the GCC, despite being a small country. Surrounded by regional powers, the UAE has offset its military weakness by developing military cooperation with several different countries, including France.

¹⁰ The Gulf Cooperation Council is a regional organisation regrouping six Gulf Countries: Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and United Arab Emirates. It aims to strengthen a greater political, social and economic cooperation between these six countries (Leveau 2005).

3.2.2.2 The UAE-France Relationship

The United Arab Emirates and France enjoy a strong and friendly relationship since the creation of the Emirati federation. These long-standing and excellent bilateral relations are notably based on a strategic partnership which encompasses all the fields: politics, economy, defense and culture. The two countries have even recently pushed this close cooperation forward.

The political ties between the two states are strong as attested by the intensity and frequency of mutual official visits between political leaders of each country. In the last few years, several official visits of French leaders to the United Arab Emirates took place, and vice versa. President Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan made an official visit to France in July 2007, while French President Sarkozy visited the UAE in January 2008 (Ministère des Affaires Etrangères 2008; Khaleej Times¹¹ 2007 and Khaleej Times 2008). Additionally, France and the UAE have a strong convergence of views on a vast majority of regional and international issues (Ministère des Affaires Etrangères 2006a).

With respect to the economic and trade sector, the commercial relations between the UAE and France are also very good and trade exchanges keep growing. The UAE is France's top economic partner in the Middle East and the Emirati market represents the foremost outlet for French exports in the Middle East. Indeed, French exports to the UAE accounts for approximately one third of France's total exports to this region of the world (Balkany 2007: 9). Additionally, French investment in the UAE has been multiplied by four from 1992 to 2003 to reach €608 million that year, which corresponds to one quarter of France's total investment in the Middle East (Ministère des Affaires Etrangères 2006a). In turn, the UAE is a strategic partner for the French economy, as a major oil producer and a principal trade hub for re-exports to Asia and to the other Gulf countries. The dynamism of these trade exchanges notably relies on significant contracts in aeronautics. These intense economic relations got a new impetus with a civilian nuclear cooperation accord that French President Sarkozy signed during its recent visit in the UAE. This agreement is a first step towards the construction of a nuclear power plant and it implies three major French companies of the energy sector (Smith and Ferguson 2008).

Apart from expanding their economic relations, the two countries greatly enhanced their cooperation in the field of defense during this recent visit of President Sarkozy to the UAE. Indeed, France and the UAE signed a deal about the establishment of a French military

¹¹ The Khaleej Times is an English language newspaper published in Dubai.

base in the UAE (Bennhold 2008). This accord much boosts the strong military cooperation that the two countries have long developed, as it was mentioned in the previous section. To a larger extent, this agreement considerably strengthens the bonds between the two countries. In addition, it is a significant step for each government. On the one hand, France will be one of the first Western countries other than the USA, to have a military base in the Gulf (Bennhold 2008). Though this installation will be relatively small, France thus gains a foothold in the Persian Gulf. This military project thus reflects France's intentions to play a greater role in this geopolitically strategic region, and to generally maintain its key place on the international stage (Stracke 2008). On the other hand, this mutual decision to set up a permanent French military presence is in line with the foreign military policy of the UAE government. Indeed, this policy consists in insuring its national security by getting the protection of foreign partners, since the UAE is militarily weak, as it was mentioned in the previous section.

France-UAE cooperation is not confined to the areas of trade and defense, but it is also increasingly taking place in the educational and cultural domains. The UAE aspires to become a regional heart with regard to education and culture. More generally, the UAE aims to become a prominent actor in the world, notably by being a platform for international dialogue and cultural understanding. In order to reach these objectives, the UAE turns to France for getting assistance in the development of cultural and educational projects. On the one hand, the French-Emirati cooperation in the field of education has resulted in the formation of several partnerships between universities of the two countries. The most striking project has been the establishment of a branch of Paris Sorbonne University in the UAE. On the other hand, the cooperation between countries in the cultural domain has brought about some outstanding projects. Apart from the Louvre Abu Dhabi, the capital of the UAE recently hosted the first annual edition of the international art fair ArtParis-AbuDhabi (Debailleux 2007). This significant event springs from a partnership between the Abu Dhabi authorities and ArtParis, which is one of the largest international art fairs held in France. Not only has Abu Dhabi developed partnerships with French institutions and French local authorities, but Dubai moreover has ventured into a tremendous cooperation with them. Indeed, Dubai City intends to build a new district in the image of Lyon, which is the second largest French city. Based on a deal between the two cities, this project will strive to recreate the spirit and the image of Lyon in Dubai, by featuring the famous characteristics of the second largest French city (Sciolino 2008). Lyon is notably renowned as important place for French gastronomy, for the silk and textile industry as well as for being the birthplace of cinema. The main organizations of the French city will be involved in this initiative. Thus, the Paul Bocuse

Institute, a symbol of the typical Lyon gastronomy, the Museum of Textiles, the universities and even the football club Olympique Lyonnais will certainly be prompted to create a subsidiary in the Emirati city (Scilino 2008). These exceptional projects very much enhances the cultural and educational French presence in the United Arab Emirates, which also includes two Alliances Françaises and four *Lycées Français* that are the French educational institutions abroad (Balkany 2007: 9).

In brief, France and UAE have maintained excellent and long-standing relations over decades. This bilateral relationship recently gained increasing momentum and is developing into a strategic partnership in all the fields, including the political, economic, military and cultural spheres. France particularly contributes to the admirable development of artistic, cultural and educational centers in the UAE, of which the Louvre Abu Dhabi is an important component. The next section will provide a detailed presentation of the Louvre Abu Dhabi project.

3.2.3 Presentation of the Louvre Abu Dhabi

In this section, I will present the key aspects of the agreement signed by France and the UAE about the establishment of a museum named Louvre Abu Dhabi on Saadiyat Island.

In March 2007, the government of France and the government of the UAE signed an agreement about the creation of a universal museum in Abu Dhabi. The conclusion of the deal had been finalized almost two years after the first discussions and negotiations started at the initiative of the UAE. In the summer 2005, Sheikh Sultan bin Tahnoon Al Nahyan, Abu Dhabi Tourism Authority Chairman, expressed his wish for a partnership with the Louvre Museum for the construction of a museum on the Saadiyat Island in Abu Dhabi (Ministère de la Culture et de la Communication 2007: Fiche 3). As mentioned above, Saadiyat Island is a gigantic project that Abu Dhabi plans to develop so as to become an international cultural capital and a world-class tourist destination. This island will host tourist and leisure facilities divided into five different districts, including a vast and spectacular cultural district. A Guggenheim Museum satellite, a Biennale Park, a Maritime Museum, a National History Museum and a Performing Arts Center will notably be established in this cultural district (Universe in Universe 2007). Sheikh Sultan bin Tahnoon Al Nahyan's wish is fulfilled by securing this 30-year, unprecedented cultural accord, which announces France's wide-ranging and strong involvement in the establishment of a 24,000-square-meter universal museum designed by famous French architect Jean Nouvel¹² and will be named Louvre Abu Dhabi (Ministère de la Culture et de la Communication 2007: Fiche 2). The significant French participation in this project mainly revolves around three main issues. In addition to the name of one of its most famous cultural institutions, France will contribute to the project by providing the Abu Dhabi museum with expertise and art works (Ministère de la Culture et de la Communication 2007).

The Louvre Abu Dhabi will be a universal art museum¹³ which is expected to open in 2012 or 2013, with an initial gallery of 2,000 square meters. This area will be gradually expanded to reach a final 6,000 square meter area devoted to the permanent collections and a further 2,000 square-meter area for temporary exhibitions (Ministère de la Culture et de la Communication 2007: Fiche 2).

¹² Jean Nouvel notably designed the Arab World Institute and the Quai Branly Museum in Paris as well as the future Copenhagen Concert Hall. In 2008, Jean Nouvel awarded the Pritzker Prize, which is considered as the "Nobel Prize for Architecture" (Pogrebin 2008)

¹³ A universal art museum embraces artworks from a large scope of different regions and eras.

During 10 years, these galleries will benefit from artworks from the French collections; especially from the Louvre, loaned on a long-term basis by the Agence France-Museums which is the overseeing body responsible for most aspects of Louvre Abu Dhabi project. However, individually these artworks may not be loaned for a period exceeding two years. Consequently, there will be a continual rotation of loaned artworks in the Louvre Abu Dhabi. Initially, 300 loaned works of art will be exhibited in the Louvre Abu Dhabi. The number of artworks on loan will gradually decrease over time as the Louvre Abu Dhabi will progressively accumulate its own collection. Thus, only 250 loaned artworks will be on display after 4 years and 200 from the seventh year up to the tenth year after the opening of the museum (Ministère de la Culture et de la Communication 2007). In addition to this long-term display of artworks, the Agence France-Museums will provide the Louvre Abu Dhabi with four temporary exhibitions a year for 15 years (Balkany 2007: 14).

The French participation will mainly be taken in charge by two legal entities: the Louvre Museum and the international agency for French museums called Agence France-Museums and created in August 2007.

The Louvre Museum is one of the most famous museums in the world. With 8.3 million visits in 2007, the Louvre Museum is the best-attended museum in the world, ahead of another French museum, the Centre Pompidou which hosted 5.5 million visits that year (Ministère de la Culture et de la Communication). For more than two centuries, the Louvre Museum has been hosting the art treasures of the national collections. It embraces a large scope of regions and eras, from archaeology to fine arts. The Louvre Museum collection is grouped into eight departments, including a department of Islamic Art which was created in 2003. In 2006, the Louvre Museum is said to have 445,000 works of art, but only 35,000 of them are on display in its 68,000 square-meter galleries. It is worth noting that the Louvre Museum acquired 202 new pieces that year. Additionally, more than 1,400 of its artworks were on loan to other museums while it hosted 1,000 loaned works of art from other museums in 2006. We also notice that the Louvre Museum hosted 17 exhibitions that year, including four major exhibitions. Finally, it is interesting to underline that the Louvre Museum's budget amounted to around €190 million in 2006 (Ministère de la Culture et de la Communication 2007: Fiche 4).

The Louvre Museum is a key actor in the establishment of the universal museum in Abu Dhabi, as the latter will use the name of the former and a large part of the artworks which will be on display in the UAE will come from the most visited museum in the world. However, the main operator in the Louvre Abu Dhabi project is, in fact, the recently created

Agence France-Museums. Former Executive Director of Centre Pompidou, Bruno Maquart is the Executive Director of the Agence France-Museums. This agency is made up of a dozen major public cultural institutions including the Louvre Museum, the Palace of Versailles, the Pompidou Centre, the Musée d'Orsay, the Guimet Museum and the Quai Branly Museum (Cerisier-ben Guiga 2007; Agence France-Museums 2008). The agency comprises of a governing body and a scientific committee. The distribution of powers in these institutions is relatively well-balanced. The Louvre Museum has certainly a significant weight in these structures, but it does not have a dominant position. On the one hand, it gets three out of eleven votes in the governing body of the Agence France-Museums while the five other stakeholders of the agency (the Quai Branly Museum, the Musée d'Orsay, the Pompidou Centre, the Bibliothèque Nationale de France¹⁴ and the Réunion des Musées Nationaux¹⁵) have each a vote. The last three votes go to three persons who are collectively appointed by the other members of the agency on the recommendation of the Ministries of Finances, Culture and Foreign Affairs. On the other hand, the Louvre Museum appoints three out of the nine members of the scientific committee. Three persons are appointed by the Ministry of Culture and the last three persons are collectively appointed by the other stakeholders of the agency (Balkany 2007: 11). It is worth noting that the government keeps acting as a regulating authority of the museum field. It has no direct power in the international agency; but it is represented by three members in the governing body of the Agence France-Museums and it appoints three members of the scientific committee. Moreover, it is important to underline that all the stakeholders of the Agence France-Museums are government-owned cultural institutions (Balkany 2007: 11-12)

Though the Agence France-Museums is expected to look for new international development opportunities in the coming years, its current principal mission is to implement the cooperation agreement signed in March 2007 between France and the UAE (Agence France-Museums 2008). Hence, this new operator is in charge of steering and overseeing the development of the whole project from its conception to its achievement. This includes the building's construction, the elaboration of the museum's scientific policy and cultural programming, the organization of the loans from the French collections, the development of an acquisition strategy as well as the staff management (Ministère de la Culture et de la Communication 2007: Fiche 2).

¹⁴ This is the National Library of France

¹⁵ This is the Union of National Museums, representing a group of 35 museums, whose goal is both to enhance the collections of the museums and the quality of the public services these ones offer (Durey 2001: 9).

The agreement about the Louvre Abu Dhabi represents a sum of €975 million over 30 years, of which €425 million will go to the Louvre and the further €550 million will be paid to Agence France-Museums. Abu Dhabi will spend €400 million to attach the prestigious Paris museum's name to its universal museum on Saadiyat Island for 30 years. The further €25 million correspond to a direct donation to the Louvre to renovate a wing of the Pavillon de Flore which will be named after the first Emirati President Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan. The Agence France-Museums will receive €550 million for its whole action in the development of the Louvre Abu Dhabi. Indeed, an amount of €165 million will be paid by the Emirati authorities for the management advice provided by the agency. In exchange for art loans, the agency will receive €190 million that it will redistribute to the museums from which it loaned the works of art. The additional fee of €195 million corresponds to the organization of the annual exhibitions. Besides, the UAE will spend €40 million every year to build its museum's own collection (Ministère de la Culture et de la Communication 2007: Fiche 2; Cerisier-ben Guiga 2007: 17-18)

CHAPTER 4: Analysis of Louvre Abu Dhabi's Impact on France's Image and Interests

In the following chapter I wish to investigate whether or not the Louvre Abu Dhabi project enhances French cultural diplomacy and enables France to advance its own interests in the Persian Gulf, a strategic region. I will therefore employ my conceptual and contextual framework so as to discuss and analyse my three main areas of investigation: the objectives France's foreign cultural policy, the strategy of branding France and France's soft power.

Section 4.1 will explore the underlying reasons for France's engagement in this gigantic project and the repercussions the Louvre Abu Dhabi has on France's foreign policy and cultural diplomacy interests. **Section 4.2** will explore to what extent the Louvre Abu Dhabi venture turns out to be a way of branding France and it will find out the positive and negative effects of this practice on France's image. Eventually, **section 4.3** will examine how France's soft power is at play in the implementation of the Louvre Abu Dhabi and in turn how this project impacts on France's soft and smart power.

4.1 Purpose of France's Participation to the Louvre Abu Dhabi Venture

In this section, I seek to explore both which are the reasons for the engagement of France's authorities along with its cultural institutions in the Louvre Abu Dhabi and how this project may affect France's interests and its cultural policy. In order to do so, I will present and discuss the motives which drive the French authorities to accept the UAE's request of assistance in the establishment of a new universal museum on Saadiyat Island, by relying on the arguments advanced by the proponents and opponents to the project. I will also explore to what extent the purpose of France's participation in the Louvre Abu Dhabi venture is in line with the principles underpinning France's international cultural action.

First, I will shed light on the cultural purpose that French authorities put forward as the primary motive of their engagement in the Louvre Abu Dhabi project. Then, I will explore the political and economic interests which may be expected to be achieved through the Louvre Abu Dhabi. Eventually, I will give an overview of the criticisms that the opponents to the Louvre Abu Dhabi project mention with respect to the motives of France's engagement in the Louvre Abu Dhabi venture.

4.1.1 Motives of a Cultural Nature

In this section, I wish to analyse to what extent the Louvre Abu Dhabi contributes to the missions of France's foreign cultural policy. As mentioned in **section 3.1.3**, countries engage in cultural activities with other countries for the purpose of attaining cultural, diplomatic, political and economic objectives. Specifically, France's foreign cultural policy aims at spreading France's influence overseas, but it also emphasizes promoting cultural diversity all over the world and enhancing cultural cooperation with foreign governments and operators (see **section 3.2.1**).

At first glance, France's participation in the Louvre Abu Dhabi project seems to be in tune with the main line of its cultural diplomacy, since this venture is said to strengthen the French cultural influence, to represent an unprecedented and remarkable action of international cultural cooperation as well as to promote the cultural diversity.

4.1.1.1 The Louvre Abu Dhabi: a Way of Spreading French Cultural Influence

As described in **section 3.2.1**, spreading French cultural influence worldwide represents one of the underlying principles of and one of the crucial objectives for France's foreign cultural policy. In parliamentary discussions about the Louvre Abu Dhabi project, the Minister of Culture at that time Renaud Donnedieu de Vabres emphasized this essential aspect, by pointing out that the further dissemination of France's cultural influence and splendor overseas is a key element of France's international cultural policy (Donnedieu de Vabres 2007a). Furthermore, the Minister of Culture also reminded that bringing beneficial effects to French cultural presence worldwide is one of the main functions of the French museums. In fact, he mentions that in addition to strive to the preservation and the promotion of the natural and cultural legacy of mankind, "French museums have the duty of contributing to spread France's cultural influence"¹⁶ (Ministère de la Culture et de la Communication 2007: Annexe) on the national territory and overseas.

In this regard, Donnedieu de Vabres clearly means that the participation of the French state and its main cultural institutions in the Abu Dhabi venture reflects this ambition of strengthening the French cultural presence worldwide when he declares after the signing of the Louvre Abu Dhabi accord that "we want [French] culture to radiate to parts of the world

¹⁶ My own translation.

that value it” (Donnedieu de Vabres quoted in USA Today 2007). As an exceptional ambassador for French culture, the Louvre Abu Dhabi is indeed a fantastic way of projecting a positive image of the country and expanding French influence in the United Arab Emirates and in the whole Persian Gulf region in general. The Louvre Abu Dhabi project shows France’s capabilities of implementing huge and remarkable cultural projects. France’s 30-year participation in the establishment of the Louvre Abu Dhabi represents a great and unique opportunity for France to display in the long term its world-class and prestigious collections as well as the experience, the talent, and the know-how of its high-skilled and respected curators and cultural professionals in the management of cultural institutions.

In brief, the Louvre Abu Dhabi represents a tremendous project for France to spread its cultural influence in the Persian Gulf region. In the following section, I will show that the Louvre Abu Dhabi project is intended to fulfill the second key objective of France’s cultural diplomacy which is to further develop the practice of cultural cooperation with foreign actors.

4.1.1.2 The Louvre Abu Dhabi: a Way of Further Developing Cultural Cooperation

By accepting to meet the UAE’s request for assistance in creating a new museum on Saadiyat Island, the French government is fully aligned with its principle of enhancing its cultural cooperation with foreign countries which intend to develop their cultural sector.

As mentioned in **section 3.2.2.1**, the UAE seeks to diversify its economy and the Emirate of Abu Dhabi has already laid the foundations of its new economic policy, by devising a perfectly integrated development strategy with substantial investments in the educational, cultural and tourism sectors. Indeed, Abu Dhabi’s ambition is to become a remarkable cultural center in the Persian Gulf region. In order to reach this objective, Abu Dhabi authorities have already attracted foreign universities to set up outposts in the emirate and have planned the gigantic Saadiyat Island cultural undertaking described in **section 3.2.3**. In this respect, it is worth underlining that France already engaged in cultural cooperation projects with the UAE when it lent its support to the Persian Gulf state for the development of its educational field by accepting to launch a branch of Paris Sorbonne University in Abu Dhabi (see **section 3.2.2.2**). France’s participation in the project of a new museum in Abu Dhabi illustrates the fact that there is a true logic of cooperation between France and the UAE with respect to the educational and cultural field.

France undertakes this unprecedented and tremendous cultural cooperation initiative in order to make up for the UAE's lack of experience and knowledge in the field of museum. The French expertise will partly contribute to the UAE's cultural and economic development and to increase the role that this small Persian Gulf will play on the world art scene. In this venture, France assists the Emirate of Abu Dhabi in creating its own universal museum in several ways. On the one hand, France will provide the Emirati cultural professionals with assistance and training in the best practices in the general management of cultural institutions and more specifically in the field of restoration, curatorship and exhibition design. On the other hand, France supplies the Emirate of Abu Dhabi with advice and expertise in the acquisition of its own art collection and how to develop a coherent and sound acquisition policy. France's cooperation paves the way for an enriching environment which is very conducive for the high-standard education of the Emirati generations to come, who may in turn nurture and treasure this favorable environment. The long-term objective of France's engagement in Abu Dhabi is to see the emergence of a strong and very competitive Emirati cultural sector with a world-class museum and a generation of high-skilled cultural professionals to the forefront of museum management techniques.

In sum, France's engagement in the Louvre Abu Dhabi is a significant cooperation initiative with high-ambitious objectives. This project is in line with a strong cultural cooperation strategy developed with the UAE. In the following section, I will show that the promotion of cultural diversity is also a central issue to the Louvre Abu Dhabi venture.

4.1.1.3 The Louvre Abu Dhabi: a Way of Promoting Cultural Diversity

The Louvre Abu Dhabi is an outstanding initiative for the promotion of cultural diversity.

This above-mentioned close and profound cultural cooperation between France and the UAE might turn out to be the opportunity for France to get an important ally to its causes pertaining to international cultural issues such as the promotion of cultural diversity. By training the Emirati cultural professionals, France might indeed succeed in conveying to them its values and ideas with respect to cultural concerns. In other words, French cultural professionals might make their Emirati partners aware of some issues such as the importance of protecting the world cultural heritage or the promotion of cultural diversity; and they might

therefore convince these foreign cultural decision-makers and practitioners to support France's viewpoints in international debates, such as the promotion of cultural diversity¹⁷.

Through its willingness to establish a new museum with the assistance of a foreign country, the Emirate of Abu Dhabi demonstrates its keenness to open to other cultures and especially the French legacy.

Additionally, the very nature of the Louvre Abu Dhabi promotes cultural diversity. Indeed, the Louvre Abu Dhabi is intended to be a universal museum, i.e. a museum hosting artworks from different cultures and eras. In other words, cultural diversity will be fully perceived in the Louvre Abu Dhabi through the showcase of artworks coming from different cultures and the organization of exhibitions spanning all historic periods.

In brief, the Louvre Abu Dhabi may be considered as a potent challenge for the promotion of cultural diversity.

In sum, this section has highlighted that France's engagement in the establishment of a museum in Abu Dhabi is aligned with the motives of influence and solidarity which drive its foreign cultural policy. On the one hand, the participation of the agency France-Museums along with the national French museums in this unprecedented undertaking in Abu Dhabi contributes to enhance France's image and French culture in this geographical area. On the other hand, this engagement in the Louvre Abu Dhabi venture illustrates the objective of taking part in cooperation actions and helping foreign countries in the development of their cultural sector that France pursues. Eventually, the Louvre Abu Dhabi project represents an original project to promote the idea of cultural diversity. In the following section, I will shed light on the political and economic ripple-effects that the Louvre Abu Dhabi may contribute to bringing to France.

¹⁷ It is noteworthy that the UAE has not signed the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions yet, though it is a very active country with respect to UNESCO issues (UNESCO 2008).

4.1.2 Political, Diplomatic and Economic Beneficial Knock-on Effects

In this section, I wish to shed light on the political and economic gains which may be achieved through the Louvre Abu Dhabi. Its participation in the Louvre Abu Dhabi venture may help France to attain some diplomatic and political objectives. Additionally, economic benefits may be derived from this tremendous cultural project.

4.1.2.1 The Louvre Abu Dhabi: A Peace-Making Instrument

France has become involved in supplying expertise to the Emirati authorities in the establishment of a universal museum in Abu Dhabi so as to advance the noble objective of better understanding between civilizations and the achievement of international peace. Simply put, France believes that the Louvre Abu Dhabi may represent a platform for dialogue among cultures and therefore function as a peace-making instrument.

As we mentioned above, the Louvre Abu Dhabi will host works of art from diverse cultures and different historic periods. This cultural diversity inherent in the collections of the museum is intended to be the origin of a cultural dialogue and a rapprochement of civilizations between the West and East. Former French President Jacques Chirac lyrically mentions this crucial political and somewhat philosophical role that the Louvre Abu Dhabi may play:

[The accord about the Louvre Abu Dhabi project] is a landmark event [...] for a certain idea of the world, which the United Arab Emirates and France want to promote together. It is the concept of a world [...] which realizes that the clash of civilizations is the most dangerous trap of our times and wants to promote dialogue between peoples in a spirit of openness, tolerance and respect.” (Chirac 2007)

In other words, the Louvre Abu Dhabi project is intended to further strengthen the international dialogue and to represent an important stage in the rapprochement of and better understanding between civilizations.

The Louvre Abu Dhabi does not only contribute to reach far-reaching political objectives such as providing meeting points for Western and Eastern cultures and endeavoring for peace, but it also plays a significant role in France-UAE diplomatic relationship. The following section will explore to what extent the Louvre Abu Dhabi project may represent a powerful symbol for France-UAE friendship

4.1.2.2 The Louvre Abu Dhabi: a Way of Enhancing the Relations with the UAE

The Louvre Abu Dhabi plays a significant role in the French-Emirati relationship. It is both a way of recognizing the very good connections the two countries have developed in the last couple of decades and it is a clear and sound signal for further strengthening these political ties in the future.

On the one hand, UAE's demand to France for assistance in the establishment of a universal museum and France's positive response to this request are tokens of the excellent and friendly relations the European country and the Persian Gulf monarchy have built so far (see **section 3.2.2.2**).

On the other hand, France shows its willingness to maintain and even increase these long-lasting, intense and close ties with the UAE through the signature of an unprecedented 30-year accord regarding the Louvre Abu Dhabi's establishment and its involvement in this huge and long-term project. Indeed, this cultural cooperation initiative *de facto* implies a continuous and significant commitment from the French state, the operator France-Museums and its government-owned museums, especially the Louvre for an exceptionally long period.

Furthermore this important milestone in France-UAE bilateral relationship encourages further partnerships between the political leaders of these two countries, since it contributes to create a convivial environment of mutual trust and respect which is suitable to such developments.

In brief, the Louvre Abu Dhabi may enable France to attain political objectives, in addition to its inherent cultural mission. Not only may the Louvre Abu Dhabi serve as a driving force in the construction of a peaceful world, but it also reinforces the political and diplomatic ties linking France and the UAE. In addition to producing cultural and political outcomes, the Louvre Abu Dhabi may bring economic benefits to France that I will develop in the following section.

4.1.2.3 The Louvre Abu Dhabi: a Source of Economic Gains

France's participation in the establishment of a new universal museum in Abu Dhabi generates direct and indirect economic benefits for France in several ways.

On the one hand, the agreement about the Louvre Abu Dhabi will bring a huge sum of nearly €1 billion to the agency France-Museums, the Louvre Museum and the museums taking part in the loan of artworks. This huge amount of money will be used to fund the development of new, large-scale cultural projects in France such as the construction of a

common conservation center or the refurbishment and extension of various museums (Cerisier-ben Guiga 2007: 17-18).

On the other hand, the Louvre Abu Dhabi project may bring economic ripple-effects to France. First of all, the Louvre Abu Dhabi may play an essential role for driving an influx of tourism toward France. By giving a glimpse of French art collections and the quality of French museums to its visitors, the Louvre Abu Dhabi may prompt tourists from the Persian Gulf region or those visiting Abu Dhabi to go and visit France. Moreover, the Louvre Abu Dhabi may positively affect France's commercial and industrial interests in an indirect way. In the same vein as it is for the political relations, the Louvre Abu Dhabi project may enhance the environment in which the business relations between French and Emirati companies and peoples take place. By presenting a positive image of France and its keenness to assist the UAE with the development of the latter's cultural sector, the Louvre Abu Dhabi may make it easier for French companies to develop their activities in the UAE. In other words, the Louvre Abu Dhabi as a symbol of mutual trust and respect between France and the UAE may help French companies to close deals with the UAE's companies and authorities and to boost their exports in this small and rich Persian Gulf state.

In sum, France may derive significant economic and commercial benefits from its engagement in the Louvre Abu Dhabi venture.

In brief, this section has shown that in addition to its primary cultural function, the Louvre Abu Dhabi may play a key role in the diplomatic, political and economic fields. It may somewhat help France to achieve its political objectives and contribute to its economic interests. However, some critics challenged the cultural grounds on which France's engagement in the Emirati venture relies, denouncing the exploitation of France's art treasures for economic and diplomatic ends. In the next section, I will shed light on this controversy over the motives which prompted the French authorities to engage themselves along with their cultural institutions in the construction of a new universal museum on Saadiyat Island.

4.1.3 Controversy over the Motives Underlying France's Engagement in the Abu Dhabi Venture

The underlying reasons for France's engagement in the Emirati venture, i.e. the cultural grounds on which this involvement relies are a major bone of contention in the general debate concerning the Louvre Abu Dhabi project. Some politicians and cultural professionals are not convinced by and challenged the arguments advanced by the French authorities when the latter have explained why they positively responded to the UAE's request for a deep cultural cooperation toward the establishment of a new museum in a major cultural district.

Without neglecting the economic ripple-effects and the political and diplomatic dimensions of the Louvre Abu Dhabi venture, the French authorities emphasize the importance of such a project for the cultural dialogue and the rapprochement of civilizations. But the decision of French authorities to assist the UAE with the establishment of a new universal museum on Saadiyat Island aroused reactions of surprise and doubt, as well as a protracted series of criticisms in the media (Cachin et al. 2006) and later in the French Parliament¹⁸ (Bloche 2007; Rogemont 2007; Ralite 2007: 2205-3307; Tasca 2007: 3304-3305). The opponents to the Louvre Abu Dhabi are concerned about how relevant it is to develop such a large-scale cultural project in such a small-sized and not very well-known state as the UAE. The huge amount of money¹⁹ the Agency France-Museums and the French museums taking part in the project are to receive in exchange for their supply of expertise, the organization of exhibitions and the loans of hundreds of artworks also represents a decisive factor in the emergence of this controversy questioning the true nature of France's engagement in the Abu Dhabi venture.

In different ways, the critics to the project complain that the Louvre Abu Dhabi is a money-making scheme serving France's political and economic interests but not being aligned with any cultural objective.

For example, some commentators imply that France's involvement in the Louvre Abu Dhabi project is part of a strategy solely aiming to reach political and economic objectives when they over-simplify by exclusively describing the UAE as a rich state, a major oil

¹⁸ It is worth noting that the French Parliament was not involved in the Louvre Abu Dhabi project until September 2007, six months after the intergovernmental agreement which paves the way for the establishment of the Louvre Abu Dhabi had been signed.

¹⁹ It is also interesting to underline that the supporters of the Louvre Abu Dhabi refers to the money earned from the cultural cooperation agreement as "a contribution" offered by the UAE to the Louvre and other French museums while the opponents talk about "fees" paid to the French institutions.

producer and one of the major customers for French industries' products, be they luxury, aeronautics or armaments.

Moreover, French authorities are charged by many critics such as art historian and Professor Didier Rykner and Former Minister of Culture Catherine Tasca of using the national museums and the national cultural heritage for conducting political and commercial interests. During the parliamentary debates, Catherine Tasca expresses her point of view:

“The appealing veneer of the dialogue of civilizations is only an alibi which cannot hide the very true logic behind this project which is first and foremost of a financial nature.”²⁰ (Tasca 2007)

By saying so, Catherine Tasca considers that the Louvre Abu Dhabi project is primarily driven by financial and diplomatic motives and she decries that the cultural grounds are only a pretense.

Other critics who are fiercely opposed to the French government's initiative go further in their attack. On the one hand, some opponents argue that the agreement about the Louvre Abu Dhabi is a payoff for former military and industrial contracts that the Gulf state and France had signed in the previous decade. France is indeed a major supplier for armaments, as mentioned in **section 3.2.2.2**. On the other hand, curator Jean-René Gaborit, former head of the sculpture department at the Louvre, denounces the fact that the deal about the Louvre Abu Dhabi Museum paves the way for further commercial and military contracts:

“Why gloss over the fact that [the Louvre Abu Dhabi project] takes place in an overall political, economic and military negotiation, whose goal is to get some contracts of fighter planes for French industry?”²¹ (Gaborit 2007)

In other words, Gaborit suggests that the Louvre Abu Dhabi would be a decisive factor for and have a direct impact on the signatures of military and economic accords. The announcement about the establishment of a military base and new industrial contracts signed between France and the UAE might be considered as an extra argument in support of Gaborit's stance. However, it is somewhat distorted and then inaccurate to establish a strong connection between the Louvre Abu Dhabi agreement and the abovementioned signature of the accord regarding the establishment of a French military base in the UAE (see **section 3.2.2.2**). As mentioned above, the Louvre Abu Dhabi has an undeniable impact on the climate in which the French-Emirati relationship takes place; though, this effect is limited.

²⁰ My own translation

²¹ My own translation

In brief, French authorities are charged with employing their national cultural institutions and their nation's artistic legacy as a trade-policy instrument and a political tool. The opponents to the Louvre Abu Dhabi venture complain that the true logic underlying this project primarily follows financial and economic considerations and the cultural reasons are only a pretext.

4.2 The Louvre Abu Dhabi: a Way of Branding France

In this section, I wish to explore the Louvre Abu Dhabi's impact on France's image and interests through the place branding paradigm. I seek to investigate whether the Louvre Abu Dhabi venture promotes or hinders France's brand image. As mentioned in the methodological section, I consider that the Louvre Abu Dhabi project encompasses four out of the six points of France's branding hexagon. Indeed, it includes the "export brands" facet of the place branding hexagon, the "culture and heritage" component, and to a lesser extent the "tourism" element as well as "foreign and domestic policy" point.

I will successively analyse the effects of the Louvre Abu Dhabi on France's brand image according to each of these four characteristics. I will particularly emphasize the export of the Louvre brand, as this issue has been the focus of attention. On the one hand this element has been very much coveted by the Emirati authorities to add prestige to their plan; on the other hand, the renting of the Louvre name has raised a biting controversy in France. In the case of the Louvre Abu Dhabi, it is all the more interesting and relevant to focus on the issue of the Louvre name, since the Louvre is a government-owned museum and thus the branding of its name in such a venture abroad entails the whole country's image.

4.2.1 The Use of the Louvre Brand in the Abu Dhabi Project and its Impact on the Image of "Brand France"

In this section, I wish to specifically investigate whether the branding of the Louvre name to the UAE enhances or damages France's brand image.

In order to do so, after a preliminary remark concerning the name of Abu Dhabi universal museum project, I will then shed light on what makes the Louvre brand so valuable. Following, I will focus on the connection between the Louvre brand and France's image. I will finally analyze the positive or negative effects that the "export" of the Louvre brand to the Emirate of Abu Dhabi may cause to France's brand image.

4.2.1.1 A Preliminary Remark about the Name of Abu Dhabi's New Universal Museum

First of all, it is worth paying particular attention to the fact that the new universal museum on Saadiyat Island will bear the name of the Louvre. It may be considered as odd, since only a part of the artworks that will be displayed there will come from the Parisian museum. Bearing in mind that other French museums will likewise provide the new Emirati museum with numerous works of art. Impressionist paintings will mainly come from the Musée d'Orsay, pieces of Asian art from the Guimet Museum, and so on (see **section 3.2.3**). Therefore, the name of the new Abu Dhabi universal museum might as well have been "Museum of France's collections" or something else in this vein.

It is quite easy to guess and understand the motives which prompted the UAE authorities to request from the French authorities and the Louvre leaders the right to use the world-famous Parisian name for their own museum. The Emirati leaders did yearn to obtain this right, since the use of the Louvre brand may dramatically benefit their country in terms of image, tourism and economic spillover effects. As the case of the Bilbao Guggenheim has shown (Evans 2003; Bergère and Osmont 2008), this kind of museum-name licensing practice is a spectacular and effective way for a place to draw public and media attention, to enhance its image and to position itself on the world art stage.

But it may also bring about significant effects for the party which accepts to sell the right to use its name, i.e. the Louvre and France in the case of the Abu Dhabi project, as we will see below. I will throw light on the value of the Louvre brand and explore what shapes the Louvre's international fame.

4.2.1.2 The Louvre: a Brand of Immense Value

In this section, I will study why the Louvre Museum enjoys such an outstanding international reputation with the criteria expressed in **section 3.1.2.4**: the name awareness, the collection, the architecture of the building, the location.

The Louvre has over the past 200 years evolved into its present form and its multiple functions. Of course, the Louvre is one of the most remarkable museums in the world hosting an exceptional collection. In addition to this inherently cultural facet, the Louvre Museum plays the role of tourist attraction, being one of the predominant tourist destinations in Paris and in France. But the Louvre also represents a worldwide outstanding brand. This tremendous international reputation relies on a complex composite of factors; some of these

noteworthy features are the Louvre name's awareness, its collection, its architecture, its location and the da Vinci Code phenomenon.

The Louvre Name's Awareness

The Louvre enjoys a very high level of name awareness. Its name is internationally renowned and it is attached to certain thoughts and mental pictures either related to its architecture, some of its masterpieces or to other attributes. The Louvre's great name awareness is reflected by the fact that many associations and images are instantly called to people's minds by just mentioning the Louvre name.

The Louvre's Collection

The Louvre's wide-ranging and high-quality collection plays a predominant role in the establishment of its international reputation. In fact, the Louvre displays around 35,000 works of art out of its 445,000 pieces contained in its whole collection, which spans the Western, Islamic, Oriental and Egyptian culture from the Antiquity up to 1848. This collection includes some of the most famous masterpieces in the world such as the Winged Victory of Samothrace, the Aphrodite of Milos, the Code of Hammurabi and... the Mona Lisa, of course! These masterpieces have a strong impact on potential visitor's mind. People around the world are eager to see these masterpieces. It is worth noting that more than two-thirds of the Louvre's attendance is made up of foreign visitors to France (see **section 3.2.3**). Since they convey the museum's prestige and they are decisive factors to attract people, these masterpieces represent some outstandingly valuable assets for the Louvre's brand image.

The Louvre's Architecture

The architecture of Louvre's site is a prominent key feature of the museum's brand image. The Palais du Louvre is in itself a splendid architectural landmark. This edifice, which has undergone dramatic alterations over the last eight centuries, is a large, impressive and magnificent building. It is a splendid architectural work. The addition of a glass pyramid over the Napoleon Courtyard (designed by the architect Pei) in the 1980s was a striking event for the Louvre's brand image. Indeed, this pyramid is both part of and the emblematic feature of the so-called Grand Louvre project²² (Louvre 2008). The glass pyramid contributes to add

²² The Grand Louvre project is an ambitious and tremendous modernization plan which was launched in 1981 and it is still ongoing with the construction of a new gallery designed by Rudy Ricciotti and Mario Bellini in Courtyard Visconti, which is intended to house the new Department of Islamic Art. This new extension is scheduled to open in 2010 (Louvre 2008).

value to the Louvre museum's brand image, since it represents the symbol of a modern museum and it has rapidly become a strong element of the museum's visual identity.

Simply put, the architecture of the Louvre Museum is part of the museum's identity and represents a major asset for its brand image. The recent alteration of the Louvre's site has reinforced the international standing of the Louvre Museum's reputation.

The Louvre's Location

The Louvre Museum's location undeniably affects the value of its brand. As the German weekly magazine *Der Spiegel* notes: "It doesn't seem possible to have a Louvre without Paris, as much as Paris just wouldn't be Paris without the Louvre" (*Spiegel Online* 2007). The Louvre Museum truly enjoys a great position in the French capital: it stands on the very chic Right Bank and specifically on the central and attractive "historical axis"²³. The idea of elegance and sophistication are called to people's minds by the mention of the name "Right Bank", as this name refers to the district nearby the Seine on the northern side of the river that embraces the famous streets of fashion and luxury shops such as Avenue des Champs Elysées, Place Vendôme, and Avenue Montaigne. By being located on the historical axis, the Louvre is in a delightful situation, just next to lively and attractive districts and close to a park – the Tuilerie Gardens – which connects it with the world's famous Champs Elysées avenue. The Louvre is thus not far from many tourist destinations and cultural attractions.

In brief, the Louvre is very well-positioned. Its high-standard surrounding has a positive impact on its global brand image.

The Da Vinci Code's Phenomenon

Finally, it is noteworthy that the international standing of the Louvre Museum's brand image has recently been further enhanced due to the global *Da Vinci Code's* phenomenon. The Louvre and its most prominent masterpiece *Mona Lisa* are at the heart of the plot of the *Da Vinci Code* which is an internationally best-selling novel written by Dan Brown, and its eponymous blockbuster screen adaptation directed by Ron Howard. The image of the Louvre's famed *Mona Lisa's* – both literally and figuratively as a detail of *Mona Lisa's* painting is on the book cover and on most of the movie posters – has been conveyed throughout the world by the huge international success of both the book and the movie. This extensive indirect publicity and the development of related special offers such as a *Da Vinci*

²³ The *Axe historique*, i.e. the historical axis, refers to a line of streets and squares which host landmarks and tourist attraction. Here are some of these places: the Place de l'Etoile with the Arc de Triomphe on the top of the Champs Elysées; the Champs Elysées avenue and its famous fashion shops; the Place de la Concorde with the Obelisk, the Jardin des Tuileries; the Louvre.

Code Tour programme (Carvajal 2006) have undeniably reinforced the site's global reputation. The Da Vinci Code phenomenon is even considered as one of the reasons for the increasing number of visitors over the last couple of years (Selles in CBC.ca).

In sum, the Da Vinci Code provided the Louvre Museum with the exceptional opportunity to improve its already well-established international visibility.

Reject to the Idea of "Brand Louvre"

However, the concept of a 'Louvre brand' may be totally rejected. Such is Jean Clair's thinking on the matter. In his recent lampoon entitled *Malaise dans les Musées*, the former director of the Picasso Museum in Paris emphasizes that a museum's name, specifically the Louvre, is a proper name which refers to a singular entity and takes root in a unique past (Clair 2007b: 64-65). In sum, Jean Clair depicts a museum's name as a sanctuary which cannot be the vulgar object of a financial transaction (Clair 2007b). In this sense, Jean Clair's deep seated hostility to the idea of treating a museum's name as a brand may be considered as embodying the Royalist standpoint in the taxonomy of positions on place branding, as it is described in **section 3.1.2.1**.

In brief, the Louvre Museum possesses an outstanding global brand image. This international reputation has been built gradually and it results from a complex combination of factors. The salient features which shape this global brand image of the Louvre Museum are the high level of its name awareness throughout the world, the high-profile silhouette of Pei' pyramid in front of the Louvre Palace's façade, the great quality of its collection along with the world-renowned status of some of its masterpieces, as well as its location in an attractive area and the exceptional Da Vinci Code media phenomenon. However, a noteworthy standpoint criticizes that the Louvre name may not be considered as a brand and thus may not be traded. I will now turn to the analysis of the connection between the Louvre's reputation and France's brand image.

4.2.1.3 The Louvre Brand: a Major Asset for France's Brand Image

In this section, I wish to highlight to what extent the Louvre's brand image represents a key component of France's brand image.

As mentioned by the Jouyet-Lévy²⁴ report²⁵, France possesses a broad portfolio of cultural brands (Ministère de l'Economie, de l'Industrie et des Finances 2006: 105), the most remarkable of which is certainly the Louvre brand. The Louvre brand represents an outstanding element of France's brand image, since it is a brand of immense value, as mentioned above, and there is a strong association between France and its world-famous museum. In fact, there is a long and intimate relationship between the Louvre and the French nation.

The first reason is of historical nature. Indeed, the Castle of the Louvre which then became the Palace of the Louvre has been the residence of Kings of France over centuries. As the royal dwelling, the Louvre was the actual seat of political power and France's diplomacy (Louvre 2008 and Ministère des Affaires Etrangères undated).

Additionally, it is noteworthy that the Louvre Museum is an integral and striking part of the whole nation's identity, since it is a government-owned museum and it houses an immense part of the French national collection. On the one hand, the Louvre Museum is a remarkable symbol of France's peculiar cultural policy as enacting a public service. On the

²⁴ In 2006, the French Minister of Finance and Economy Thierry Breton commissioned Maurice Lévy and Jean-Pierre Jouyet to chair the Committee on the Intangible Economy whose task was to think about and to write a report on the Intangible Economy. Jean-Pierre Jouyet was the Head of the Audit Department of French Public Services at the Ministry of Finance and Economy. Maurice Lévy is the CEO of the advertising and communication company Publicis.

²⁵ A section of this paper deals with the place of French cultural sector in the intangible economy (Ministère de l'Economie, de l'Industrie et des Finances 2006: 103-107 & 122-123). Firstly, it is assessed that France has a tremendous potential of cultural intangible assets. Though many French cultural institutions enjoy an international reputation and make efforts to enhance it, it is however noted that these intangible cultural assets are largely underused. Then, the paper presents the crucial role of cultural brands and the importance of the image of "Brand France", but only from an economic standpoint. Thus, the report mentions the economic benefits that France's cultural establishments and the country in general may expect to gain from a better management of their brand internationally; but it somewhat neglects the diplomatic and political ends which may be fulfilled through the practice of cultural branding and the development of a nation branding strategy to a larger extent.

The report emphasizes on the fact that French cultural establishments may draw great financial advantages from the practice of cultural branding. This practice – and particularly the sale of the right to use their name to foreign establishments – may indeed provide an additional substantial source of revenues for the French cultural institutions that they need so as to compete with other major cultural institutions on the international stage.

Thus, the committee on the intangible Economy came up with the following recommendation. It advocates for "[enhancing] the influence of French museums by giving them the option to sell the rights to the use of their name under very stringent conditions. [...] Several French museums boast exceptional reputations that are still largely underexploited. The country's major museums should be encouraged to develop a policy of enhancing their international brand prestige by offering to sell rights to the use of their name in the countries with the most dynamic cultural environments, similar to the policies adopted by the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao [...]" (Ministère de l'Economie, de l'Industrie et des Finances 2006: 123)

other hand, the international scope of its collection, its initiatives abroad and its worldwide reputation make the Louvre Museum an excellent ambassador of France to an international audience. Furthermore, it is worth noting that there is even a direct correlation between the Louvre's reputation and France's image; the latter is in turn enhanced, when the former one is further developed.

In sum, this section has shown how strongly the Louvre brand and France's brand image are associated with each other and it has pinpointed that the former may impact the latter. It may then be asserted, borrowing the above-mentioned *Der Spiegel* article's wording and swapping the place-name 'Paris' by 'France,' that it doesn't seem possible to have a Louvre without France, as much as France just wouldn't be France without the Louvre. Simply put, the Louvre brand is an essential asset for the image of "Brand France". In the next section, I come to the heart of the investigation about the impacts of the Louvre brand's use in Abu Dhabi on France's image.

4.2.1.4 The Effects of the "Export" of Louvre Brand to the UAE on France's Image

In this section, I will analyse whether the practice of renting - or branding - the Louvre name to the Emirate of Abu Dhabi enhances or damages France's brand image. France's brand image in the UAE is *de facto* affected greatly by the presence of the Louvre brand in the Persian Gulf state, since the identification of these two brands are strongly connected, as mentioned above. Therefore I will investigate which benefits the practice of Louvre branding may bring or which side-effects it may cause. In order to weigh the pos and cons with respect to the branding of the Louvre name, I will express and analyze the arguments of both the supporters and the critics of the project. I will also advance and discuss an issue regarding the lack of respect for human rights in the UAE, which has been largely neglected in the media and in the parliamentary debates.

The Positive Impacts of the Louvre Brand's Use in the UAE on France's Image

France's brand image, as perceived in the UAE, may reap benefits from the presence of the Louvre brand in Abu Dhabi in some way.

Just as the "traditional" commercial and industrial brands of French companies, such L'Oreal and Total, the presence of the Louvre brand in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi may contribute to France's image in the Persian Gulf region. In fact, those French companies' brands that are exported to the UAE potentially impact the minds of the Emirati people and their

perception of France's image, since these brands carry and convey France's major national characteristics to the UAE. As one of the salient cultural assets of France, the Louvre brand will therefore play a great role in the process of shaping and promoting a strong and attractive image of France in the UAE via its outstanding presence on Saadiyat Island. To put it differently, the Louvre brand will be a prominent and potent means by which the Emirati people and foreign people visiting the UAE form their views about France's identity.

But it may also be considered that the Louvre name plays an even more important role than the one played by common commercial brand. Unlike any common commercial and industrial brand, the Louvre – and cultural brands in general – possesses an additional emotional facet and a powerful symbolic aspect due to its cultural nature. Therefore these two inherent components of the cultural brands impart them – and the Louvre in particular – a stronger impact on people's perception of France's image than any one of the commercial brands enjoys. Due to the inherent emotional and symbolic dimension of the Louvre name, the practice of franchising it to the UAE represents a striking act on the part of France. In this regard, Former Minister of Culture Renaud Donnedieu de Vabres underlines that:

“Granting the use of the Louvre name to Abu Dhabi is a token of trust, respect and friendship that France expresses beyond the UAE to all the Arab countries.”²⁶ (Donnedieu de Vabres 2007b)

In other words, the renting of the Louvre name to the UAE is a meaningful symbol: it has great significance and it shows that France holds the UAE in high esteem. Embodying a remarkable expression of France's regard for the UAE, the decision to transfer the Louvre name to the Emirate of Abu Dhabi contributes to the enhancement of France's image in the Arabian world.

The Louvre brand is all the more a valuable asset for France's image in the UAE since it will have a remarkable and exceptionally long exposure in the Arabian Peninsula country. By granting the right to use the Louvre name to the UAE for one of their new museums for a 30-year period, the French authorities have secured an outstanding and long publicity for their most famous cultural brand, which represents a tremendous and potent vector of France's national image.

In brief, the export of the Louvre name to the UAE is a very powerful way of enhancing the national image. By conveying French national characteristics to the UAE and representing a unique symbol, use of the Louvre name is a crucial factor in the process of forming peoples' perception of France's image. However, the franchising of the Louvre brand

²⁶ My own translation

to the Emirate of Abu Dhabi is decried by some opponents to the Abu Dhabi venture, which I will develop in the following section.

The Negative Effects of the Louvre Brand's Use in the UAE on France's Image

This section explores to what extent France's image may negatively be affected by this practice of Louvre branding in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi.

On the one hand, the renting of the Louvre name to the UAE for a tidy sum of €400 million may damage France's image, since this franchising practice is considered by some detractors, including Jean Clair, as a further step toward the commodification of cultural goods. The licensing of the Louvre name to the UAE consequently goes against France's idea of cultural exception, which is a key component of France's international cultural policy and which represents a great source of beneficial effects for France's reputation internationally.

On the other hand, the issues related to the non-respect of the human rights in the UAE and its possible negative impact on the Louvre's reputation and France's brand image will be dealt with.

- **A Further Step towards the Commodification of Culture?**

In his above-mentioned book, Jean Clair decries both the fact that museums are currently embarking on what he considers a dangerous trend of commercialization, citing as evidence the franchising of the Louvre name to the UAE (Clair 2007b). Jean Clair believes that France's participation in the Abu Dhabi venture is primarily driven by economic motives. He vehemently criticizes the fact that the marketing and economic fields have been gaining a significant foothold in the museum sector. Indeed, the detractor complains that the Louvre is being turned into a vulgar brand name for economic ends through the licensing of its name to Abu Dhabi. Jean Clair starts its criticisms of the Louvre name's franchising to the UAE by referring to the above-cited Jouyet-Lévy report on the intangible economy (Clair 2007b: 54-56). He notices that the ideas advanced in this report dramatically alter the concept of the museum itself and the functions that a museum is intended to carry out (Clair 2007b: 55). Noting that the report puts forward the significant economic advantages France may draw from the franchising of its museums' names, Jean Clair suspects that museums have become regarded as a common instrument merely to be exploited for commercial ends (Clair 2007b: 54-56). In addition, he complains that such a practice of licensing demeans the museums' standing. Indeed, Clair implies that the museums' names are being rendered devoid of their symbolic meaning and emotional value, since it are being treated as a mere commercial brand (Clair 2007b: 55).

In other words, Jean Clair harshly criticizes the practice of franchising the museums' name, since he considers that the nature of museums is negatively affected by this kind of practice that reinforces the economic and commercial aspect of museums to the detriment of their inherent and primary cultural dimension.

Such, in Clair's opinion, is the case of the Louvre in Abu Dhabi. In fact, Jean Clair complains that the licensing practice of the Louvre name to Abu Dhabi authorities is an exploitation of the Louvre name for a commercial purpose, which clouds the Parisian museum's identity and mission (Clair 2007b: 64-65). Additionally, Jean Clair decries that the Louvre is being debased by being franchised to the UAE, since the Louvre name is used as a vulgar brand similar to any "traditional" industrial and commercial brand (Clair 2007b: 64-65).

In sum, Jean Clair denounces the practice of franchising the museum name. It damages the museum identity, as the museum's primary component – its name – and its cultural function are altered in a negative way by pecuniary goals. In his view, this kind of practice represents a significant further step in the process of increasing commercialization seen operating in the museum world. The renting of the Louvre name to the Abu Dhabi universal museum is a striking example of this trend towards the commodification of culture. Jean Clair suggests that the case of the Louvre in Abu Dhabi somewhat reflects the fact that France also yields to exploiting the name of its cultural institutions for economic ends.

By expressing this critique about the increasing commercialisation occurring in the museum world and by implying that France henceforth takes part in this process through the renting of the Louvre name to the UAE, Jean Clair raises a potential point of contention in France's international cultural policy with respect to its position concerning the cultural exception. Indeed, the practice of franchising the Louvre museum name may somewhat be considered as being antagonistic with France's position about the cultural exception.

For a couple of decades, France advocates for the cultural exception. As mentioned in **section 3.2.1.2**, France believes that cultural goods are different from other goods and they should therefore be treated differently in trade-related issues. As being one of the main advocates for this cause, France enjoys a very good reputation on the world cultural stage. However, the franchising of the Louvre name to the UAE may challenge this reputation. As Jean Clair and other detractors notice, the museum's name which used to be considered as a sacrosanct element will henceforth be treated and traded as a common brand. The renting of the Louvre name for an immense amount of money may therefore be interpreted as a remarkable illustration that France no longer considers that cultural goods are different from

other traditional goods as it used to claim. In other words, the franchising of the Louvre name to Abu Dhabi gives the impression that France tends to think that cultural goods are not so “exceptional” after all.

In brief, it is noteworthy that France boasts a good image with respect to cultural issues internationally through its position as advocates for cultural exception; but the rent of its most renowned museum's name in exchange of a huge amount of money may in turn impact negatively this standing.

- **A Brand Image Tarnished by the Human Right Issues?**

In addition to the cultural exception issue, the practice of franchising the Louvre name to the UAE may negatively impact France's image in another way, that being related to the human rights issue.

Surprisingly, it has never been mentioned, neither in the newspapers nor in the parliamentary debates²⁷ that there is a possible risk that the Louvre image may be smeared due to the fact that its name is rented to a museum built in a non-democratic country where some aspects related to the human rights are not respected.

As mentioned in the **section 3.2.2.1**, some international non-governmental organizations and foreign institutions report the discrimination against and the non-respect of the rights of migrant workers in the United Arab Emirates. In its capacity as an advocacy organization for these human rights issues, HRW expressed its concerns about the exploitation of and the non-respect for international labor rights of migrant workers taking part in the construction and maintenance of the new gigantic projects of Saadiyat Island (HRW 2007a; HRW 2007b). HRW warned the persons and authorities in charge of the Louvre Abu Dhabi project for the French part – Henri Loyrette, Chairman of the Louvre Museum, and the Ministry of Culture and Communication – about this issue (HRW 2007a). The violations of human rights of people working in the construction of the Louvre Abu Dhabi might seriously stain the Louvre reputation. By association, France's image would in turn be damaged. HRW recommends that “the French Ministry of Culture should take all necessary steps to prevent the exploitation of migrant labor at the Louvre Abu Dhabi” (HRW 2007a). HRW goes further and advocates that “the Louvre should establish an independent and transparent oversight committee to monitor labor practices at the Louvre Abu Dhabi” (HRW 2007a).

²⁷ It is worth noting that the debate at the National Assembly was, introduced by one of the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Rama Yade, who is however ... the Undersecretary for Human Rights.

It is noteworthy that neither the French authorities nor the Agency France-Museums overseeing the Louvre Abu Dhabi project have commented on this issue yet. But, one can speculate that the Agency France-Museums very likely had the opportunity to converse with Sarah Leah Whitson, the Middle East Director of Human Rights Watch. And they probably insisted on the need to respect workers' rights in their discussions with the Abu Dhabi officials just as Frank Gehry had in connection with the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi, according to City Journal (Miller 2008). One can guess, with a reasonable amount of certainty, that it is very likely that the Agency France-Museums is aware of this situation and will soon issue a statement about some measures taken in order to ensure that workers on the Louvre site are not exploited and will have their rights respected. In this manner, the reputation of the Louvre and France's own image would be protected against the risk of being tarnished. But as of yet, no official statements have been forthcoming from the Agency France-Museums on this matter.

After having extensively dealt with the issue concerning the Louvre brand and the effects of its presence in Abu Dhabi on France's brand image, I turn to the exploration of the Louvre Abu Dhabi's impact on France's image through a second facet of the place branding hexagon: culture and heritage.

4.2.2 The Louvre Abu Dhabi: an Exceptional Way of Representing France's Culture and Heritage

In this section, I wish to investigate to what extent the Louvre Abu Dhabi affects France's image by promoting France's culture and heritage in the Abu Dhabi. By its very nature, the Louvre Abu Dhabi has a significant impact on France's brand image with respect to the place branding hexagon's facet of "culture and heritage".

As already mentioned in **section 4.1.1.1**, the Louvre Abu Dhabi is an exceptional showcase for France's culture and heritage, since it provides a continuous and remarkably long-lasting display of its national collection on a rotating basis. Simply put the Louvre Abu Dhabi represents France's culture: it shows how much France cares for the preservation and promotion of its cultural legacy and it exhibits France's cultural wealth and diversity. By doing so, the Louvre Abu Dhabi arouses comprehension, admiration and respect for France in the UAE. In sum, the Louvre Abu Dhabi acts as a striking cultural ambassador for France in the Persian Gulf region and it contributes to enhance France's image in this area.

However, some critics claim that France's reputation may somewhat be damaged by the manner in which France loans artworks from its national collection to the Louvre Abu

Dhabi project. In the same vein as they do concerning the franchising of the Louvre name (see **section 4.2.1.4**), the detractors decry the fact that France and its museums exchange art for money²⁸, which is seen as a signal that France is engaging in the commodification of cultural goods. Critics also point to the fact that the loan of this significant number of artworks is driven by economic motives and not by a sound scientific project. Jean Clair expresses his opposition to the loan of artworks from the French museums to the Emirate of Abu Dhabi thusly:

“To lend works of art which belong to the national collections for economic ends and as part of irrelevant scientific projects in very unlikely places is a mockery. By doing so, France will ruin its reputation.”²⁹ (Clair 2007a)

In other words, some critics complain that the French museums' loan to Abu Dhabi is not based on a scientific project; but this loan turns out to be a mere commercial use of masterpieces of France's cultural legacy. The detractors underline that it is undignified for France and its museums to be perceived as trading art for money.

After having shed light on the “culture and heritage” facet of the Louvre Abu Dhabi project, I will turn to its “tourism” aspect which is actually strongly connected with the facet of “culture and heritage”, as culture and heritage represent a major source for tourism

4.2.3 The Louvre Abu Dhabi: an Appealing Tourist Outpost for France in the UAE

Though the Louvre Abu Dhabi is an Emirati museum and tourist attraction, it is also a valuable tourist asset for France. The Louvre Abu Dhabi is a tremendous way of promoting France's brand image of appealing tourist destination in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi and the surrounding region. In fact, the presence of the Louvre brand along with the artworks from the French collections on display contributes to create positive impressions about France in the museum visitors' minds. The Louvre Abu Dhabi visitors can associate France with the idea of an outstanding cultural tourist destination. By being a sort of representation for French museums in the UAE, the Louvre Abu Dhabi may contribute to drive visitors from the UAE to France, as it is already mentioned in **section 4.1.2.3**. In sum, France does not earn any

²⁸ It is noteworthy that in most of the cases, museums loan their artworks to each other free of charge. It is relatively exceptional that a museum receives loan fees for lending its artworks. For example, it is the case when the museum which demands the artworks is not part of the network of mainstream museums or is located in a faraway city (Cerisier-ben Guiga 2007: 10). And it is not so uncommon that a museum receives loan fees when they lend a large part of their collections; this may happen when the museum closes for renovation.

²⁹ My own translation

direct economic revenues from the attendance of the Louvre Abu Dhabi, but it gains great indirect benefits in terms of notoriety and tourism attractiveness.

Quite the contrary, some critics denounce that visitors of French museums will be negatively affected by the Louvre Abu Dhabi venture. These detractors indeed point out the fact that French museums will be deprived of some of their masterpieces for a relatively long period. This will in turn deprive visitors of French museums of the pleasure of looking at and admiring these works of art (Cachin et al. 2006).

However, the supporters of the Louvre Abu Dhabi project underline that the number of artworks which will be on loan at the Louvre Abu Dhabi is a very minor part in comparison with the whole number of French collections' artworks which are lent abroad every year. Indeed, French museums' participation in the Louvre Abu Dhabi only represents the loan of 300 artworks per year while 30,000 works of art from French museums are displayed on loan in foreign institutions every year (Cerisier ben-Guiga 2007: 9).

In the following section, I will focus on the analysis of positive and negative impact that the Louvre Abu Dhabi may have on France's brand image in terms of foreign cultural policy.

4.2.4 The Louvre Abu Dhabi: an Illustration of France's Foreign Cultural Policy

In this section, I wish to explore to what extent the Louvre Abu Dhabi impacts France's image through the "domestic and foreign policy" facet of the place branding hexagon. Since the Louvre Abu Dhabi is a tremendous international cultural project for France, it somewhat represents France's foreign cultural policy and then affects France's brand image.

On the one hand, it may be argued that the Louvre Abu Dhabi strengthens France's foreign cultural policy and thus contributes to enhance France's brand image, since it is a striking example of France's willingness to develop cultural cooperation initiative. In other words, the Louvre Abu Dhabi remarkably illustrates the fact that France is inclined to assist other countries with the development of a strong cultural sector, which is positively perceived. Additionally, the Louvre Abu Dhabi is the illustration of how important France considers its relationship with the UAE, as it is mentioned in **section 4.1.2**. The Louvre Abu Dhabi reflects and reinforces the excellent foreign relations France has with the UAE, and therefore France's image in the UAE is even more enhanced.

On the other hand, some critics consider that the Louvre Abu Dhabi shows that France's international cultural policy is changing in a negative way. As already mentioned in **sections 4.2.1.4 and 4.2.2**, the opponents to the Louvre Abu Dhabi venture decry the fact that

either the renting of the Louvre name or the loan of artworks coming from French museums may give the impression that France yields to the increasing commodification of cultural goods. Therefore France's international standing as advocate for cultural exception and cultural diversity may be negatively affected.

4.3 The Soft Power Implications of the Louvre Abu Dhabi

In this section, I wish to investigate to what extent the Louvre Abu Dhabi and the aspects related to the concept of soft power are mutually intertwined. In other words, I seek to examine the mutual implications that France's soft power and the establishment of the Louvre Abu Dhabi have for each other. I will first explore to what extent France's soft power is at play through the undertaking of the Louvre Abu Dhabi venture. Then I will explore how France's soft power is in turn affected by the Louvre Abu Dhabi project. Finally, I will further extend my investigation and analyse to what extent the Louvre Abu Dhabi is an integral part of the deployment of France's smart power in the United Arab Emirates and its surrounding area.

4.3.1 The Louvre Abu Dhabi project is France's Soft Power at Work

The Louvre Abu Dhabi project is a remarkable illustration of France's soft power at work, as Anna Somers Cocks explicitly underlines in her article published in *The Art Newspaper*, entitled *The Louvre's Loans to Abu Dhabi are Soft Power in Action*. In this article, Somers Cocks frames the following observation:

“When Abu Dhabi and Qatar and Dubai start to want museums and libraries to collaborate with our universities, this is our opportunity to exercise soft power” (Somers Cocks 2007)

Thus, Somers Cocks notes that the willingness of Emirati authorities to work with French authorities and museums in order to display artworks from French collections and to use the name of a French museum implies that France's soft power enters in action.

In the case of the Louvre Abu Dhabi, it is indeed important to note that the Emirati authorities made the first move to contact the French authorities and to inquire about the opportunity to launch a cultural cooperation project. This behaviour *de facto* proves that the Emirati political leaders admire and feel attracted by French cultural institutions. In other words, it may be asserted that the willingness of Emirati political leaders to host artworks from French collections and to collaborate with French museums reflects the appeal of French cultural legacy and museums.

Simply put, French culture generates attraction and it impacts the preferences of Emirati leaders in a way that is positive for France's interests, since the Emirati leaders wish to exhibit French cultural heritage in their own country.

4.3.2 A Way of Increasing France's Soft Power

The Louvre Abu Dhabi may in turn contribute to enhance France's soft power. In fact the establishment of the Louvre Abu Dhabi provides France with the opportunity to exert its attraction not only to the Emirati leaders but also to spread it to the UAE's population.

Along with the branch of the Paris Sorbonne University, the Louvre Abu Dhabi plays an essential role in conveying French values towards the Emirati people and in inducing them to adhere to these values. Through their major role in the education of Emirati students, these branches of French institutions indeed represent a remarkable device to win the hearts and minds of the UAE's future political and economic decision-makers. In other words, the attractiveness and soft power that grows out of the Louvre Abu Dhabi may make important present but also future contributions to French policy objectives, since it shapes the Emirati preferences in tune with France's own interests.

In addition, the Louvre Abu Dhabi is a tremendous means of combating negative impressions about France in the UAE and to even enhance France's image among the UAE's population.

In sum the Louvre Abu Dhabi is a remarkable cultural ambassador for France and a significant source of soft power.

4.3.3 Wielding France's Smart Power

The announcement regarding the establishment of a French military base in Abu Dhabi provides a new perspective to look at the place of the Louvre Abu Dhabi in France's foreign policy as conducted the United Arab Emirates and its surrounding area. France is indeed wielding its smart power in this strategic region and the Louvre Abu Dhabi is an integral part of this comparatively elaborate and sophisticated strategy developed by the French state. By creating a military base in the United Arab Emirates, France deploys what is traditionally considered as hard power resources. In this way, France makes use of all the resources available to it in its foreign policy toolbox, as applied in the Persian Gulf region. Henceforth, France has at its disposal a wide-ranging scope of behaviour and may resort to the co-opting way or the coercing way according to the situation, though the coercing way and hard power should only be employed as a last resort. Through the combination of hard and soft power,

France may succeed into managing the Persian Gulf environment in a way that it is favourable to France's interests and thus advance its own goals.

In short, this section has shown that French culture's power of attraction was at the origin of the Louvre Abu Dhabi project. Then, it has been proved that France may in turn gain substantial soft power from this venture. Finally, this section ended with the analysis that the Louvre Abu Dhabi is a major component of France's complex strategy which aims to make hard and soft power work together, hand-in-hand.

CHAPTER 5: Prospects about the Place of French Museums in France's Cultural Diplomacy

In this section, I wish to present an outlook for the international work of French museums and its implication for France's cultural diplomacy. I will set out some recommendations with respect to this issue. Taking into consideration the false notes which occurred in the development of the Louvre Abu Dhabi project, these prescriptions could help the French government and cultural institutions to strike a fine balance in the relationship between culture and politics. Therefore, this may in turn change the discontent of some cultural professionals into support for the further development of large-scale and long-term international actions of French museums following the model of the Louvre Abu Dhabi venture.

5.1.1 Meeting an Increasing Demand for Cultural Cooperation Projects in the Museum Field

As the British think tank Demos notes, emerging powers, such as the BRIC and Persian Gulf countries, understand the importance of culture, since they perceive cultural attractions both as an increasingly essential element of their economies and as a way of establishing their position on the world stage (Bound et al. 2007). Therefore these countries are very much eager to develop partnerships with governments and/or cultural institutions from the Western countries so as to host a branch of these world-famous museums. It has been mentioned that, in their willingness to establish new museums, these rising powers notably request France's assistance so as to be supplied with French expertise in the museum field, the loan of artworks coming from French collections and the right to use the name of a French institution. In some articles and parliamentary reports it is indeed noted that the State of Bahia in Brazil solicited the Musée Rodin (Musée Rodin 2006: 35; Balkany 2007: 7) and that the Chinese megalopolis of Shanghai approached the Centre Pompidou for the creation of a branch museum in one of its renovated neighborhoods, though some legal problems hinder the execution of this latter project (Pedroletti 2007).

It is vital for France to accept to take part in such cultural cooperation projects since it is in line with the foundation of its foreign cultural policy and its primary objective of further developing cultural cooperation. It is all the more important since the BRIC and Persian Gulf countries are increasingly significant actors on the world stage, and, moreover, some political

and economic concern, are also at stake in this issue. As it may be possible with the UAE through the Louvre Abu Dhabi venture (see **section 4.1.2**), France's engagement in a significant museum cooperation project with Brazilian or Chinese authorities may turn out to be a means of renegotiating and strengthening its relationship with these emerging powers in the world arena. In other words, the international actions of its museums and the promotion of its cultural legacy overseas represent for France a way of repositioning itself and adapting itself to these current changing times in which new powers are rising and shaping a multipolar world.

In order to manage these new kinds of complex international actions in which museums are now engaged, it is necessary that French authorities develop and implement a strategy as well as create a structure in charge of this issue.

5.1.2 The Need for the Creation of an Operator Responsible for International Actions in the Museum Field

In this context of increasing demand for complex museum cooperation projects, it appears to be crucial for France to launch an operator responsible for responding to these demands and for overseeing the carrying out of these projects.

On the one hand, the mission of such an operator would be to consider the requests from foreign countries for a museum cooperation project. The operator would assess the cultural interests of these requested projects; it would also look at how to fully realize the potential political and economic knock-on effects which may be derived from these ventures. On the other hand, this body would also be in charge of monitoring the development of such projects by exploring new opportunities for museum cooperation projects and by coordinating these projects. In addition, one aspect of the role that such an operator would play would be to prompt museums to conduct a part of their international work in a way which contributes towards France's international priorities.

In sum, the French government should create an operator whose mission focuses on the international actions of French museums. In order to do so, the French authorities could follow the model of CulturesFrance (see **3.2.1** and **Appendix**). In the same manner that CulturesFrance operates on behalf of the theater, performing arts as well as the visual arts, the French government should create a new operator in charge of promoting the cultural legacy of French museums overseas and providing assistance with developing the expertise of foreign cultural professionals in the museum field. This body could be created from scratch or could be based on an existing organization whose status, structure and mission would be altered.

The Directorate of Museums of France (DMF) could shoulder this responsibility. Indeed, the scope of intervention of this organization, which is a service of the Ministry of Culture, encompasses “the international collaborations in all the fields related to the activity of museums” (Direction des Musées de France undated). In addition, the DMF took part in the preliminary visits to the UAE which prepared the intergovernmental agreement signed in March 2007 (Ministère de la Culture et de la Communication 2007: Fiche 3).

Besides, the Agency France-Museums could also assume the role of the operator driving the collaborative international actions of French museums. It seems that it was even the primary idea underpinning the creation of the agency and the role that its first executive director Jean d’Haussonville advocated for this main body in charge of the international actions of French museums (Noce 2007). The scope of intervention of the Agency France-Museums had, however, been narrowed down to the specific but vast project of the Louvre Abu Dhabi after Christine Albanel was appointed to the post of Minister of Culture in May 2007.

In spite of this turnaround in the mission of the Agency France-Museums, the French government should build an effective governance system by launching an operator that would be specifically dedicated to the international work of French museums. Of course, this new operator should not intend to interfere in the international strategies and actions that some museums – mainly the major ones – have been developing and implementing for many decades to organize important international exhibitions with foreign partners and to loan and borrow artworks, and so on. This new operator would be a supplementary and useful body in France’s cultural diplomacy apparatus. It would enable the conduct of unprecedented, complex, large-scale and long-term actions, mustering multiple stakeholders and artworks coming from different institutions.

Ultimately, it is also worth noting that the creation of such an operator may paradoxically appease the critics concerned with the instrumentalization of France’s cultural heritage for political ends. Certainly this operator would be under the more or less direct authority of the Ministry of Culture and/or the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, but it would provide certain clarity about the development of museum cooperation with foreign countries by sharing its plans and communicating about its strategy. In fact, the establishment of an operator would help to develop a better understanding of the relationship between the cultural logic underlying the engagement of French authorities and institutions in remarkable projects abroad and the political and economic beneficial aspects they expect to realise. Whereas France’s engagement in the Louvre Abu Dhabi was accused of being largely dependent on the

choices and the good will of the French President and the top-ranking authorities from the Ministry of Culture and the Louvre Museum, French cultural diplomacy would gain in transparency and thereby credibility through the creation of an operator driving museums' international actions. In other words, the prospective creation of a flexible and relatively independent coordinating body would pave the way for consultation between political decision-makers and cultural professionals and would thereby ensure that the international work of French cultural institutions is not instrumentalized

Along with this suggestion about the restructuring of France's cultural diplomacy apparatus with respect to the museums' international issues, I recommend that the cultural professionals should be integrated both better and further upstream in the political decision-making process related to the conduct of museums' important international actions such as the Louvre Abu Dhabi.

5.1.3 The Need for a Better and More Upstream Integration of Cultural Professionals in the Policy-Making Process

Regarding the Louvre Abu Dhabi, the discontent of cultural professionals is partly fueled by their experience of a lack of information disseminating from the French authorities or, at least, a lack of consultation with them. As mentioned just above, the Louvre Abu Dhabi was negotiated by President Chirac and highly-placed cultural authorities while the cultural professionals were kept away from the negotiations; neither had the members of French Parliament any say in the matter before the signature of the intergovernmental agreement. This way of dealing with the Louvre Abu Dhabi has been extensively criticized, even by the supporters of the project (Daugé 2007: 3309).

The best way to avoid causing a stir in cultural circles would be to integrate them in the earlier phases of the project. Generally speaking, the French government should incentivise cultural professionals and other stakeholders to debate about the prospective international museums' projects through the organization of commissions. These commissions could gather various cultural professionals of the museum field, members of the French Parliament, the leaders of the above-suggested operator, diverse cultural diplomats and so on. Their mission would be to define the main lines of France's policy with respect to the museums' collective actions overseas. These commissions could also discuss the cultural logic behind the possible development of a museum cooperation project as well as the political and economic interests connected to this venture.

It is worth noting that another significant advantage deriving from the involvement of cultural professionals in the decision-making process is to manage to get the relationship right between politics and culture.

In this respect of further engaging cultural professionals, Bruno Maquart's invitation to Jean Clair to organize an exhibition at the Louvre Abu Dhabi (Maquart in *Esprit Critique* 2007) represents the best response to convince skeptics and detractors of the legitimate merits of the Louvre Abu Dhabi and is a first step towards the further integration of the cultural professionals in the development of museums' collective, significant and complex international work, which should be decided and driven by a flexible and independent operator.

CHAPTER 6: Conclusion

This chapter concludes the investigation of the Louvre Abu Dhabi project. Based on the preceding analysis and recommendations, this chapter presents an attempt at answering the stated research questions.

The Cultural, Political, Diplomatic and Economic Issues of the Louvre Abu Dhabi

In addressing the first subquestion, it is worth noting that the Louvre Abu Dhabi has multiple implications for France's cultural diplomacy, which encompass the fields of culture, politics and economics.

The Louvre Abu Dhabi represents an unprecedented cultural cooperation venture. Taking part in the establishment of a new high-quality cultural institution, to be endowed with the latest and best museum practices, is an exciting cultural and scientific challenge for French cultural institutions and professionals. Through its participation in the Louvre Abu Dhabi venture, France seeks to pursue the objectives of its foreign cultural policy, which are to strengthen its cultural presence in the strategic Persian Gulf region and to endeavor to promote the cultural dialogue between civilizations.

In addition, the Louvre Abu Dhabi may bring significant political, diplomatic and economic benefits to France. This cooperation project contributes to seizing the moment at a key point in the French-Emirati relationship, since it is embarked upon at a time when political, economic and commercial relations between the two countries are growing in intensity. The Louvre Abu Dhabi project may provide a safe and convivial setting for further cultural, economic and political partnerships between stakeholders from both countries.

However, some critics decry that the Louvre Abu Dhabi project is driven by political and economic motives. They point to the instrumentalization of France's art treasures for diplomatic and economic ends.

The Impact of the Louvre Abu Dhabi on France's Image

With respect to the research subquestion related to the impact of the Louvre Abu Dhabi on France's image, it can be said that the Louvre Abu Dhabi may be a good cultural ambassador for France. The Louvre Abu Dhabi may turn out to be a tremendous way of raising France's profile to a high level in the United Arab Emirates and its surrounding region. The use of the

valuable brand “Louvre,” which is strongly connected to France’s image, plays a crucial role in the branding of France’s image.

However, some opponents to the Louvre Abu Dhabi claim that the Louvre Abu Dhabi may damage France’s image and notably France’s reputation as advocate for cultural exception and cultural diversity. The authorities in charge of the Louvre Abu Dhabi should take these criticisms into consideration and they should make sure that the reputation of the Louvre and France’s image are not tarnished by human rights issues.

Impact of the Louvre Abu Dhabi on France’s Cultural Diplomacy and France’s Soft Power

The Louvre Abu Dhabi gives a new impetus to France’s cultural diplomacy, which had otherwise been on the wane. The Louvre Abu Dhabi is indeed an outstanding way for France’s foreign cultural policy to attain its objectives of both fostering cultural cooperation with foreign countries and spreading French influence.

Moreover, the Louvre Abu Dhabi represents a remarkable instrument for France to exercise its clout in the United Arab Emirates and the Persian Gulf region. The Louvre Abu Dhabi is indeed part of a more elaborate and sophisticated strategy which aims at ensuring France a significant and influential role in this strategic region.

Though the Louvre Abu Dhabi is unique of its kind, France is already thinking beyond the Louvre Abu Dhabi to develop other somewhat similar large-scale cultural cooperation projects mustering the work of different stakeholders. However, France should build a strong governance system to coordinate these international ventures so as to draw the whole political, diplomatic and economic benefit from the use of its flagship institutions’ fame, art treasures and expertise overseas.

Further Research

This paper has dealt with multiple issues related to place branding, smart power, and the outstanding cultural development of the United Arab Emirates, as well the impact of museums’ international actions on a country’s interests and image. It would be interesting to further investigate these different issues.

Thus, this essay may pave the way for further exploration of the role that intangible assets, such as institutions’ names and works of art, may play in international cultural relations, as well as the economic and political implications of their use in such cultural cooperation projects.

It would also be interesting to focus on how the United Arab Emirates seeks to gain a significant foothold on the world stage through the development of its cultural sector and the employment of place branding techniques.

In the following years it will be noteworthy to have a look at how the Louvre Abu Dhabi and Guggenheim Abu Dhabi evolve and to compare their impacts on Abu Dhabi's interests and image with the effects that Guggenheim Bilbao has had for the Basque city.

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These appendices aim to provide additional information with respect to France's cultural diploma. This contributes to a better understanding of the French cultural diplomacy. Nevertheless, these elements are not crucial for the investigation of my problem formulation. I will first shed light on France's tremendous cultural potential. Then I will give a short overview of the main players acting in the French cultural diplomacy's system.

Appendix 1 The French Culture: One of the Foremost Players in the World of Culture

This section presents some aspects of French culture which contributes to France's leading place on the world cultural stage. I will only present some characteristics of the French cultural wealth, while I could have exhaustively listed all the French intellectuals, musicians, filmmakers, actors and actresses, architects, whose impact is making itself felt all over the world, like CulturesFrance's³⁰ response to the recent European edition Time's cover *The Death of French Culture* (Cultures France 2008; Time Magazine 2008).

France's cultural standing rests on its tremendous cultural heritage, its language, its talented artists, its cultural industries, its prestigious institutions, its international media and its capacity to welcome other cultures.

It may firstly be pointed out that significant France's place in the world of culture comes from its rich cultural past. Indeed, works of the mind by French intellectuals and artists such as Molière, Hugo, Zola, Monet, Debussy, Camus, Foucault, have made key contributions to the world cultural heritage and to the exploration of human existence for centuries now.

Nowadays, French artists are still world class in all the cultural fields: literature, film acting, theatre, classical music, etc... As some critics point, the international impact of these contemporary artists is certainly not as important as the one exerted by the abovementioned intellectuals and artists, but this may be caused by the emergence of and competition with artists and intellectuals from countries which are new actors on the world cultural stage. Additionally, these critics about the decline of French culture on the world stage are contradicted by the vitality and the success overseas of French artists and French cultural industries. After those in English, French creative works such as films and books are globally the most widespread (Ministère des Affaires Etrangères 2007: 8). It is worth noting that the eclectic creativity and great vitality of cultural works produced by French artists are

³⁰ CulturesFrance (former AFAA) is the agency of the ministries of Foreign Affairs and Culture and Communications responsible for international exchanges

stimulated by public subsidy. French state has indeed a longstanding commitment to the support to artistic creation and cultural production.

In addition, the French language is a key asset for French culture. It is one of the few languages spoken on all five continents. It is also a working language for major international and regional institutions, such as the United Nations, the Olympic Games and the European Union.

France's prestigious cultural institutions such as the Louvre, Versailles, Musée d'Orsay strengthen France's role as a player in the world of culture. The Louvre is the best-attended museum and one of the most famous museums in the world. In 2006, the Louvre was visited by 8.3 million people, of which two third of foreigners (Ministère de la Culture et de la Communication 2007: Fiche 4). The quality and quantity of France's historic collections and the global reputation of its cultural institutions consolidate France's place in the global cultural environment. In this case again, it is important to underline the prominent role of the French state in the cultural sector as these abovementioned cultural institutions are government-owned museums.

French international audiovisual operators contribute to France's cultural presence worldwide. France is one of the few countries to have both international radio station and television channel. The French international radio station named RFI (Radio France Internationale) ranks third among international radio stations (Ministère des Affaires Etrangères 2007: 8). Additionally, France recently launched its international television channel which is named France 24. The French-speaking channel TV5 also conveys French culture abroad. These audiovisual operators are highly funded by the French state.

France's capacity to act as host to foreign artists and foreign cultures enhances French culture's attractiveness on the world stage. By supporting and showcasing foreign productions as well as fostering the international cultural dialogue, France projects a positive and attractive image of an open culture overseas. In numerous cases, these initiatives are taken or highly supported by the French state through the Ministry of Culture, Cultures France or the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, such as the cultural seasons³¹.

In brief, culture is one area where France is still a giant in global terms. France's exceptional cultural heritage, the creativity of its contemporary artists, the vitality of its creative industries, its international media, the reputation of its cultural institutions, the

³¹ France honours one country or one region every year, by inviting this partner to present its culture through a series of coordinated exhibitions and cultural events. This wide-reaching operation enables the development of strong bilateral relations between France and the concerned partner as well as between the institutions of both countries (Bound et al. 2007: 89).

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French language and its policy fostering the international cultural dialogue are the key assets for French culture's global presence. French cultural talent can be found working all over the world. Likewise, leading figures from overseas practice their arts in France. This section has also pointed out that the French state has significantly been involved in the cultural sector either by supporting a wide array of cultural activities and by providing this cultural sector with a significant support to the promotion abroad.

Appendix 2 The Main Actors of France's Cultural Diplomacy's System

As the French cultural diplomacy covers a wide range of activities, its structure is large and complex. In this section, I will only focus on the main actors responsible for the French cultural diplomacy. This includes the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the worldwide network of French cultural establishments, the Ministry of Culture and some major operators.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs

The highest authorities of the state, i.e. the President and the Prime Minister, may certainly intervene in the definition and conduct of the French foreign cultural policy, but it is mainly the prerogative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Lombard 2003: 120-121). In fact, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs distributes 82 percent of the total amount devoted for the French cultural action abroad (Lombard 2003: 124). The Ministry of Foreign Affairs laid down the policies which are carried out through the DGCID. Indeed, the DGCID supervises and coordinates the actions of several major operators, an extensive network of 154 cultural services of French embassies and consulates abroad as well as a vast network of cultural establishments overseas. In turn, I will focus on this network of cultural establishment abroad.

The network of French cultural establishments abroad

The network of French cultural establishments overseas is an important component of the French cultural diplomacy's system, as it comprises of more than 140 French centres and institutes and 280 subsidized Alliances Françaises. The overall aim of these institutions is to promote the French culture abroad. These cultural establishments notably pursue this objective through their initial role which is to teach the French language. Their role is also to provide information about France and to organise cultural events (de Raymond 2000: 98; Daugé 2001: 7-9; Lombard 2003: 181-188).

The abovementioned crisis the French cultural diplomacy's system went through at the turn of 21st century mainly affected the network of French cultural establishments overseas. On the one hand, the cultural establishments' scope of activity has been reshaped so as to be adjusted with the challenges of a new globalized world. Apart from promoting the spread of French culture worldwide, the French cultural establishments overseas strive to foster the cultural cooperation and the dialogue between the civilizations. These establishments are to initiate new cultural projects overseas, as well as provide their expertise and support to these new actions (Lombard 2003: 178-179). However, both Lombard and Daugé note that the French

cultural network lacks of financial means and its human capital needs to be enhanced (Daugé 2001; Lombard 2003: 193-205).

On the other hand, the geographical locations of Instituts Français and Alliances Françaises should also be readapted in order to be in line with the new challenges France is facing in the world. The French cultural is certainly worldwide spread, but the geographical location of its establishments is uneven and does not fit with the contemporary stakes. The French cultural network is relatively dense in Europe but its presence in Asia is minor (Daugé 2001: 20; Lombard 2003: 171-174). Hence, the French cultural network should be extended in this continent, but not to the detriment of its presence in Europe.

Ministry of Culture and Communication

Though Ministry of Culture and Communication keeps playing a minor role in the field of international cultural activities, in comparison with the one played by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Culture and Communication has increasingly been involved in the French international cultural relations since the 1980s (Lombard 2003: 134).

Through its Department for European and International Affairs, the Ministry of Culture and Communication intervenes in the fields in which the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' action does not or does only partially cover. For example, the Ministry of Culture and Communication deals with the cultural issues in the multilateral arenas such as the UNESCO to advocate for cultural diversity. It is also responsible for the promotion of foreign cultures in France (Lombard 2003: 136-139). In addition, it is worth underlining the remarkable international activity of the cultural institutions supported by the Ministry of Culture and Communication. Indeed, these great institutions such as the Louvre Museum or the Musée d'Orsay have long developed relationship with foreign institutions (Lombard 2003: 134 & 140). However, Lombard mentions that these relations do not shape a coordinated strategy and he advocates that

[...] one of the main tasks of the Ministry of Culture and Communication should be to prompt [the government-owned cultural establishments] to increasingly take part in the international cultural exchanges, by granting them a more flexible legal statut.³² (Lombard 2003: 141)

³² My own translation

The Ministry of Culture and Communication and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs strives to work closely together. The two ministries are notably the regulatory authorities of the recently created operator CulturesFrance that I will present below.

The development of many operators, in particular CulturesFrance

The French cultural diplomacy's apparatus comprises several operators. The positive aspect of these structures is that they are autonomous and they enable system to be more flexible and to gain in efficiency (Lombard 2003: 141). However, the French cultural diplomacy's system has long been composed of small operators, each of them being in charge of one specific field. In that case, the operators may be relatively weak and only have limited means. Additionally, the whole system may lack of consistence (Lombard 2003: 142). For example Lombard notices that the AFAA's scope of activities, i.e. the promotion of French culture overseas in the field of performing and visual arts, was too restricted, its structure was relatively weak and its budget was too low (Lombard 2003: 155). France has recently been restructuring some of its operators. For instance, France is preparing the creation of the holding France Monde which will be to gather all the operators in charge of the audiovisual sector: RFI, TV5 and France 24 (France 24 2008).

The most striking reshaping in the French cultural diplomacy's system is the abovementioned establishment of CulturesFrance. In fact, this restructuring leads to the creation of a strong and unique operator responsible for international cultural exchanges which bridges the French cultural institutions, the French establishments abroad and the French artists with the foreign ones. CulturesFrance's intervention policy revolves around three major issues which include the ones encompassed by the AFAA, but is completed by new fields of competency. Firstly, CulturesFrance seeks to promote the French creative arts abroad in the fields of theatre and performing arts, visual arts, architecture as well as books and the written word, notably through a close cooperation with the cultural network. Secondly, the new operator acts to enhance foreign cultures in France, notably by organizing the cultural seasons. Eventually, it intends to provide its expertise in cultural engineering for local and foreign partners (CulturesFrance 2008; Ministère des Affaires Etrangères 2006).

In brief, both the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Culture and Communication are the decision-makers of France's international cultural policy. However, the Ministry of

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Foreign Affairs has the primary responsibility. It manages its cultural program activities through the DGCID which works largely through two sets of organizations: the operators and the vast worldwide network composed by cultural institutes, cultural centres and Alliances Françaises. The French cultural diplomacy's system has undergone major recent changes. It intends to become more flexible and develop new missions, especially in the field of cooperation. The French cultural diplomacy's system also prompts news actors such as the museums to take part in the international cultural policy.