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# The soft power of big art

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## ABSTRACT

The aim of this dissertation is to demonstrate what a powerful instrument culture can be. In order to prove that cultural institutions may play a relevant role in international relations, this paper focuses on the role of cultural institutions in the exercise of the so-called soft power. Soft power is a term used in international relations theory to describe a power which does not rely on military force or threat but rather on attraction and persuasion. According to this theory, political power can achieve its own economic or political interest taking advantage of its intangible assets, of which culture is maybe the most important one. Therefore, this dissertation intends to outline to what extent cultural institutions contribute to the exercise of soft power. However, the dissertation does not take into considerations various types of cultural institutions but focuses on museums which are maybe the most important cultural institutions in relation to soft power. This happens especially if the museum is government-owned and showcases artworks which recall the history and express the ideas of the country that hosts it. If we take the Louvre Museum as an example, we can recognize the contribution of the museum to the identity of the nation since the museum, as we know it, was created during French Revolution in order spread Revolution's ideas and allow common people to enjoy the artworks which belonged to the elite. So, a museum is not just a place where art is displayed, but is more. It is the place where the national identity takes form and that embodies national values; the ultimate expression

of the culture of a country and of its love for culture. Therefore, this paper outlines to what extent museums can contribute to the soft power of a nation. In order to shed light on the role that museums might play in the exercise of soft power this paper analyses a case study in the framework of concepts that are connected to the soft power dimension. The concepts which are used to explain the implications of soft power in the Louvre Abu Dhabi project are cultural diplomacy and place branding. Cultural diplomacy is a concept that describes the capacity of a political actor to manage the international environment by means of its cultural resources; while place branding is a concept that has recently become important in international relations whereby place or a nation, similar to a brand of a company, can improve the international perception of its image and enhance its reputation. These concepts are deeply linked to one another and to the soft power dimension. On the one hand, cultural diplomacy can be viewed as a subfield of soft power, a strategy that enables a nation to wield and exert it; on the other hand, place branding is viewed as a method which can help to implement a cultural diplomacy strategy and, considering that it can help a nation to build a good reputation on the international stage, it contributes also to the achievement of the soft power, since a nation can exert its soft power on if it is positively perceived by the international community. In the interest of ensuring the full comprehension of the concept of soft power and of the concepts related to its implication in the project, this paper entails a section which provides a basic knowledge of concepts such as culture, diplomacy and power. Anyway, it is important to mention that this paper provides the analysis

of the museum impact on soft power of a nation in relation to the phenomenon of museum satellites. More specifically, the paper seeks to explore the role played by museum satellites across the national borders. The phenomenon was started by the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation with the opening of a museum branch in Bilbao. However, it has not remained a unique case since, due to the success of the Bilbao branch, the Guggenheim as well as other museums planned or already opened their satellites in different parts of the world. Similarly, the French government has decided to build a satellite of the Louvre museum abroad. In order to better investigate to the role of museums in wielding and exercising soft power, this dissertation explores the establishment of a Louvre Museum branch in the Middle East, in an attempt to determine the impact of the museum on soft power of nations which have launched the project. The Louvre Abu Dhabi project which is discussed in depth is the establishment of the first satellite of the Louvre museum across national borders. The museum is located in the United Arab Emirates, more specifically in Abu Dhabi, which is either capital of Emirati Federation and of the homonymous Emirate. The museum was born out of an intergovernmental agreement signed in 2007 between French and Emirati government. Under the presidency of Jacques Chirac, the French government agreed to help the Emirati government in the creation of a universal museum, which aspires to become a bridge between the East and the West. According to the agreement, the museum of Abu Dhabi is entitled to bear the name of the Louvre for a period of thirty years. In addition, within this period the Louvre museum will provide its

expertise in the field and lend its artworks, in order to provide to the brand-new museum enough time to develop its own collection and know-how. The project is particularly profitable for France since the agreement stipulates that the Emirati government must give to French museums an amount of approximately one billion euros. The Louvre museum, which is the first beneficiary, and other French institutions contributing to the loan of artworks and transmission of know-how, will receive huge sums that will be used to improve facilities and services of French museums. However, precisely because of the large economic gains, the Louvre Abu Dhabi project has been harshly criticised by prominent personalities of French art world, which have claimed the lack of project's coherence with museums' mission and its commercial purposes, declaring that the museum was designed to merely replenish the funding of the French Ministry of Culture. Anyway, the genesis of the museum is quite different; the proposal of a Louvre satellite in the United Arab Emirates has come directly from the Emirati government. The museum arises from the United Arab Emirates government desire to push the economy of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi in a different direction since the country is trying to reduce its reliance on the oil economy. The Emirati government hopes that a famous and important name such as the Louvre can ensure the success of the Abu Dhabi satellite, in order to increase Abu Dhabi tourism sector and more generally that of the country. The museum is designed to be international and aims to be universal, by displaying artworks of different ages and styles, so that the museum is not the reflection of the local culture but that of the world.

Moreover, the Louvre Abu Dhabi project is linked to the competition whereby the United Arab Emirates and other countries of the region, especially Qatar, are doing anything to prove which country is the best. For this reason, the United Arab Emirates undertakes major initiatives and projects such as indeed, the Louvre Abu Dhabi Museum. Through the project, the country desires to show its power, which is not based on the strength of its military apparatus or on the wealth of its economy, but on the beauty of its attractions. Beyond this, the museum is aimed at giving a more favourable impression of the country across borders. With an investment of approximately 1 billion euros, the United Arab Emirates clinch an international window through which it can showcase its tolerance and open-mindedness. The museum serves to reshape the image of the country in order to attract people and investments but also to allow the United Arab Emirates to gain a foothold in the international arena. So, on one hand, the museum enables the United Arab Emirates to enhance the reputation of the nation, on the other to increase the importance and the influence of the country in the region and across borders. Anyway, despite the Emirati government effort made to improve the reputation of the country through the museum, the project has been surrounded by controversies. The Emirati companies responsible for the construction of the museum have been accused of human rights violations of migrants workers, while the Emirati government has been considered accountable for failing to stop that from happening. In addition, apparently the funding used to finance the construction of the museum have been drawn from an investment fund which collects the

revenues resulted from the sale of weapons, because foreign country are obliged to pay a sum when selling arms to United Arab Emirates. As regards the impact of the project of France's soft power dimension, the Louvre Abu Dhabi museum contributes to increasing the presence of the French institutions in the country and more generally in the Middle East. The presence of French institutions in the United Arab Emirates is key to enhance the influence of France in the Federation and reduce the influence of the United States, which has been for a long time the western country with the greater presence on the territory. However, the museum is not the first sign of French presence in the Emirati territory since France and the United Arab Emirates enjoy a long-standing relationship. In order to outline the strength of French-Emirati ties, the paper illustrates the relations of the two partner countries in the field of education, culture, defence and energy. Besides the spread of French institutions, by means of which France is capable of increasing its influence in the Middle East, the project enables France to benefit from the revenues of the agreement and of other economic gains related to the increase of the tourism sector in France. In fact, the Louvre Abu Dhabi museum has been considered one of the factors which have brought the Louvre museum to reach its all-time high number of visitors. Therefore the paper investigates on the soft power dimension of both countries by means of the key concept of cultural diplomacy and place branding. Although these two concepts are deeply intertwined, the paper puts particular emphasis on the cultural diplomacy perspective as related to the French dimension of soft power, highlighting how the French

government is quite familiar with the use of cultural asset to improve its foreign relations and achieve its interests. In support of this, the paper entails a section of the history of French actions of cultural diplomacy. Although the cultural diplomacy facet is prominent, the paper also outlines the connection between place branding perspective and French soft power dimension, considering the museum as a mean to strengthen the brand of the nation. As regards the Emirati soft power dimension, the stress is on the place branding perspective. Therefore, the paper outlines the impact of the project on the Emirati soft power dimension in relation to the concept cultural diplomacy but with a particular focus on the role of the museum in building the reputation of the nation, presenting also the outcomes that the application of branding techniques has generated or will contribute to achieving in the future. In fact, there is some evidence that thanks to the museum, the tourism sector of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi has increased significantly and in future years, thanks also to the development of other cultural projects, it will increase even more; contributing considerably to the overall GDP of the Federation. The prominence of role played by the museum within the framework of the soft power of the two partners countries is expressed through the joint statement agreement signed by French and Emirati government after the opening of the Louvre Abu Dhabi museum. The successful collaboration between the two partner countries has brought them to consolidate its relations by undertaking further joint activities. In fact, with the statement agreement France and the United Arab Emirates renew their commitment to continue the cooperation in the cultural

sector and decide to start to collaborate also in other fields. It is important to mention that some of the joint projects contained in the agreement have been launched before the opening of the museum because from the signing of the agreement in 2007, the French-Emirati cooperation has intensified. Thus, on one hand the statement agreement confirms the commitment of the two partner countries to the initiatives already in place, on the other hand the agreement sets the new goals that France and the United Arab Emirates aim to achieve together. The paper provides full details of the initiatives in the field of education, culture and heritage, economy and investment, environmental cooperation, security and defence, environmental and space cooperation. In sum, The Louvre Abu Dhabi museum is not just a place in which artworks from different parts of the world are displayed, a place which in the future can fill the cultural gap between the West and the East; but is a tool of soft power. The museum allows both France and the United Arab Emirates to increase their power and influence; it is an great asset in terms of image and, at the same time, it entails major economic benefits and political developments, because enables the two countries to strengthen their relations and start new joint actions.

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## Introduction

The subject of my dissertation is the role played by cultural institutions in international relations. In particular, I will focus on the role played by museum on the international stage since museums more than other institutions can at the same time contribute to the formation and be the expression of national identity. The scope of the investigation is to unveil the intrinsic political value of museums in an attempt to discover the instrumental role played by museum institutions in wielding soft power. The term soft powers is a concept used in international relations which indicates the ability of a political actor to attract and co-opt other political actors by means of intangible assets, of which culture is perhaps the most effective one. Soft power has the ability to generate benefits for a political actor, without using coercion or payments; it enables the creation of a favourable ground for negotiations and enables the political actor to extend its sphere of influence. Considering museums as the ultimate expression of culture, this dissertation intends to outline to what extent they can contribute to the soft power of a nation. In order to investigate on the instrumental role of museums in the exercise of soft power, a case study has been chosen. The case study that will be analysed in the following pages is the construction of the first branch of the Louvre museum in the United Arab Emirates. Resulted from an unprecedented intergovernmental agreement signed by France and the United Arab Emirates in 2007 and opened ten years later, the Louvre Abu Dhabi museum has been often described as a tool for French soft power. The motivations that led me to the choice of this case lie in the fact that, from my standpoint, this major cultural project symbolises the disruptive political nature of culture. Culture has a great potential in terms of power which, however, it is traditionally underestimated. Thus, in my opinion, it is peculiar to see how French and Emirati governments, through this project, were able to unlock culture potential in order to exert soft power and achieve everything that it implies. The establishment of the Louvre Abu Dhabi museum could serves as a

model of how nations can use their cultural heritage to increase their power and could inspire other international actors to give culture a more prominent role in their foreign relations. In order to investigate the Abu Dhabi museum may, and to what extent may, play a role in the exercise of soft power, I decided to concentrate also on concepts related to the exercise of soft power. One concept fundamental to understand the soft power dimension of the Louvre satellite is the concept of cultural diplomacy. Cultural diplomacy differs from soft power since the former is an instrument of the latter. Thus, it was important to consider the museum in the framework of cultural diplomacy. Moreover, considering soft power as the power of attraction, it is no wonder that the soft power of an international actor relies on its reputation and the way of an international audience perceives it. Therefore, I believed was important to put the case in relation to the concept of place branding. Place branding is a concept that combines marketing with international relations. In place branding nations are seen as brands and the place branding strategy is responsible for shaping the image and determining the reputation of the nation. Considering the above, I will consider the Louvre Abu Dhabi museum also in the framework of place branding, in an attempt to determine its contribution to cultural diplomacy and, consequently, to soft power. Analysing the case in these frameworks, an attempt is being made to determine what kind of possible effects the Abu Dhabi venture may lead to. A specific section of the work will thus be dedicated to the implications of those concepts in the Louvre Abu Dhabi project, within the perspective of determining the objectives that the project will enable partner countries to achieve in the future. However, the formulation of possible effects will be purely hypothetical, because it will be based on the application of concepts to the case and because it is about further developments. Anyway, besides the possible future outcomes, the work will provide also a section that will illustrate the tangible effects that the project has generated so far, with a particular focus on the economic sector and political dimension. This section is key to the dissertation because, highlighting the results enabled by the project,

it will prove the importance of the role of the Louvre Abu Dhabi museum in the exercise of soft power of nations which established it. The work is divided in four chapters. In the first chapter, the core notions of soft power, place branding and cultural diplomacy will be explored in details, along with a special focus on French cultural diplomacy tradition. Furthermore, the first chapter will also include a section dedicated to the basic notions that will be employed during the explanation of core notions, in order to facilitate the understanding of the latter ones. Then, the second chapter will contain a general overview of the Louvre Abu Dhabi project in order to provide a basic knowledge about the components of the projects. Thus, the second chapter will focus on: the genesis of the partnership, the relation between the countries, the environment of Louvre Abu Dhabi Museum and its collection and a special insight on French-Emirati relations. The third chapter, as briefly mentioned before, will contain the implications and possible effects the project may produce in relation to the core concepts of the work. Lastly, the fourth chapter will include the tangible positive effects produced by the project so far, along with a section dedicated to the criticism of the Louvre Abu Dhabi museum. As regards the sources, since this is a project recently developed, the large majority of information about the project have been retrieved from newspapers, academic papers and institutions websites. Whilst, with regard to the definition and deepening of core concepts, the information about the works were mainly retrieved from the works of Joseph Nye, Simon Anholt and Nicholas J. Cull.

# **Chapter 1**

## **Definition of concepts**

The first chapter of this dissertation is essential since outlines the fundamental concepts that will be employed throughout my work. This chapter is dedicated to the construction of the framework of concepts related to the soft power dimension of the Louvre Abu Dhabi project. The following chapter is essential since deepens the concept of soft power which is key to the work. Moreover, the chapter also introduces and deepens the concepts related to soft power, of which we will later illustrate the implications within the project, and that will be later applied to the case study, in an attempt of determining the future outcomes that the construction of the museum will enable to achieve. Thus, in this chapter the concepts of place branding and cultural diplomacy will be explored. However, before introducing the core concepts of the work it is necessary to also to provide some knowledge of the basic notions on which the central concept are based. Therefore, the first section of the chapter will outline those basic concepts crucial to fully understand the central ones.

### **1.1 Basic concepts**

Since later will be shown how the construction of the Louvre Abu Dhabi museum constitutes an opportunity to exert soft power through nation branding and cultural diplomacy, it is important to provide an appropriate knowledge of these concepts which represents the central concepts of the work. However, these notions will never be completely understood without a preliminary study of concepts which underpin them. For this reason, in the following paragraphs, the basic concepts of my thesis will be outlined. This first

section will presents definitions of basic concepts such as culture, diplomacy, public diplomacy and power, which are essential for the understanding of central concepts that will be explained in greater detail in the second section of the chapter and that constitute the theoretical framework of the work.

### 1.1.1 Diplomacy

The Cambridge dictionary defines diplomacy as «the management of relationships between countries» (Cambridge Dictionary); while the Oxford dictionary defines it as «the profession, activity, or skill of managing international relations, typically by a country's representatives abroad» (Oxford Dictionaries). Further definitions can be added to these as every dictionary, academic or researcher in the international relations field can provide its own definition of diplomacy. Definitions can differ from one to another; since every definition can highlight agents or channels of diplomacy, rather than its purpose. Traditionally, diplomacy is considered as «the art and practice of conducting negotiations and maintaining relations between nations» (US Department of State). However, given that beyond countries, the diplomatic process might also involve other actors such as international organization or non-governmental organization, all definitions presented above seem to be outdated nowadays. Thus, in order to provide a better and more contemporary definition of the subject, it would be better to consider diplomacy as an instrument by which a state (or, by extension, an organization or individual) attempts to achieve its aims, in relation to those of others, through dialogue and negotiation (Business Dictionary). Another issue that challenges the traditional view of diplomacy is the importance of the foreign public opinion. With the advancements in the technological sector, new forms of information and communication emerged, allowing almost everyone to express an opinion about facts, events and policies. Although it does not always occur, the foreign public still has the capability to affect government's action and influence the

decision-making process in the field of foreign affairs. Therefore, an important shift might occur: diplomacy could no longer be exclusively related to states' representatives actions but also to the impressions of a foreign audience, considering that the public opinion might somehow influence government's decision in defying foreign policies. For this reason, the foreign public opinion is now challenging the role of traditional diplomacy and gaining a significant foothold in international relations. Thus, international relations academics and researcher are now studying the way in which international actors could possibly engage with the foreign public opinion, in order to create a positive environment for the achievement of their goals. This kind of study is known as public diplomacy. Further details about the subject will be outlined in the next paragraph.

### 1.1.2 Public diplomacy

According to Nicolas J. Cull, director of the Master's in Public Diplomacy program at the University of Southern California, the term in its modern meaning was used for the first time by Edmund Gullion, Dean of the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University. In 1965, Gullion founded the Edward R. Murrow Centre of Public Diplomacy (Szondi, 2008). In one of the early brochures of the Murrow Centre, public diplomacy is reported as follows:

*Public diplomacy . . . deals with the influence of public attitudes on the formation and execution of foreign policies. It encompasses dimensions of international relations beyond traditional diplomacy; the cultivation by governments of public opinion in other countries; the interaction of private groups and interests in one country with those of another; the reporting of foreign affairs and its impact on policy; communication between those whose job is communication, as between diplomats and foreign correspondents; and the processes of inter-cultural communications (Cull, 2006).*

On the other hand, in his work *Public Diplomacy: Lesson from the past*, Cull defines public diplomacy as «an international actor's attempt to manage the

*international environment through engagement with the foreign public»*” (Cull, Public Diplomacy: Lessons from the past, 2009). From this definition, the main difference between traditional and public diplomacy emerges: while traditional diplomacy concerns the dialogue between states’ representatives or other international actors, public diplomacy addresses the engagement an international actor might have with the general public of a foreign country. Although it may be equated to the concept of soft power, public diplomacy and soft power are not the same thing. As Cull observes public diplomacy can be a “mechanism to deploy soft power” (Cull, Public Diplomacy: Lessons from the past, 2009). In fact, same a soft power, public diplomacy doesn’t operate through coercion or economic means but use country’s attractiveness to influence foreign public opinion. Thus, public diplomacy is *de facto* a core component of soft power. In his work, Cull goes on by identifying the core approaches to public diplomacy. The approaches he identified are: listening, advocacy, cultural diplomacy, exchange and international broadcasting. According to Cull, it is not possible to use all of them at the same time; hence, every country applies just one approach. In the case of France, when speaking about public diplomacy, we usually refer to the cultural diplomacy approach, because it is the one that the country applies most. For this reason, when we talk about France, scholars and even French diplomatic authorities employ the term cultural diplomacy in their research or report rather than employing the term public diplomacy (Cull, Public Diplomacy: Lessons from the past, 2009). In this section the concept of diplomacy and public diplomacy have been defined. Consequently, the link between soft power and public diplomacy has been outlined along with the public diplomacy’s key approaches. As a result, the concept of cultural diplomacy can be considered as a branch of public diplomacy; this concept will be explored in the next section.

### 1.1.3 Culture

This paragraph will shed some light on the concept of culture. In correspondence to the word Culture, the Oxford English dictionaries present us two meanings. On one hand we can find culture as «The ideas, customs, and social behaviour of a particular people or society». On the other, culture is described as «the arts and other manifestations of human intellectual achievement regarded collectively» (English Oxford Living Dictionaries). Even though these definitions belong to two different spheres of interest, the former to the anthropological field, while the latter is closer to the artistic one, they can somewhat overlap; given that the artistic production can shape the identity of a population but also be the expression of a specific group's beliefs, traditions and way of living. However, even though both definitions are valid, they do not fully embody the concept of culture as well as it will be intended later on. Therefore, there is a need to provide a more complete definition of the subject. A better definition, which in some way is the sum of the previous ones, can be found in the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity. In the Declaration, culture is defined as "set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual, and emotional features of society or a social group, and that it encompasses, in addition to art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs (UNESCO, 2001). This definition perfectly represents the concept of culture which will then be crucial to explain the concept of cultural diplomacy.

### 1.1.4 Power

The notion of power is not easy to define. As Professor Joseph Nye once wrote «*power is also like love, easier to experience than to define or measure, but no less real for that*» (2004) (Goodreads). Broadly speaking, however, power can be best

described as «the ability to influence the behaviour of others to get the outcomes one wants» (Nye, 2004). Power plays a leading role in international relations. Indeed, according to the famous realist thinkers Hans J. Morgenthau, international politics could be seen a struggle for power. The concept of power is central in the Realist thought. Realist thinkers consider power as the ultimate states' objective and see the economic and military strength of a state crucial to the achievement of the ultimate goal. So, according to the Realist thought, power find is purpose through strength or threat (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2017). However, theories recently emerged have shown the duality of the concept of power, which cannot be exclusively exerted by means of force or threats but also through other resources. For this reason, the traditional concept of power has been called “hard power” while the new one, which does not implicate the use of coercion or payments, it is called “soft power”.

## **1.2 Central Concepts**

The second section of this chapter introduces the notions of soft power, place branding and cultural diplomacy. These concepts are crucial to my work, considering that their implication in the establishment of the Louvre Abu Dhabi Museum will be further explained. In order to complete the theoretical framework of my work, every concept will be first defined and then further investigated with the support of literature on the topic. First, the concept of soft power will be outlined, analysing its source and the its difference with the so called “hard power”. Then the notion of place branding will be introduced, investigating on its dimensions and possible profits, with a particular focus on museum branding process. Lastly, the concept of cultural diplomacy will be explained along with the potential objects it eventually permits to achieve. Then a short summary of the history of French cultural diplomacy will follow, highlighting how Cultural diplomacy has almost become a French tradition.

### 1.2.1 Soft power

The term soft power refers to a concept used in international relation to describe «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, 2004). The term soft power was coined by Joseph Nye Jr., Professor of International Relations at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. Nye used the term for the first time in an article appeared on the Atlantic Monthly. (Nye, 1990) He further used the term in his works *Bound to Lead: the changing Nature of American power* (1990) and *The Paradox of American Power: Why the World's Only Superpower Can't Go it Alone* (2002). Then in 2004, he chose to dedicate an entire book to the deepening of this concept and published *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*. Thus, Professor Nye is still considered the main expert of soft power concept. Often and incorrectly confused with the practice of official diplomacy, soft power refers to non-state, culturally attractive factors that may predispose people to sympathize with a foreign culture based on affinity for its products, such as the American entertainment industry, schools and music (Nye, 2006). The notion of soft power deals with the ability of an actor to achieve its goals without using coercion or economic measures. Thus, soft power is a specific way of exerting power.

#### 1.2.1.1 Soft power vs. Hard power

Traditionally, this ability is related only to the use of what we now call “hard power”. Nye identifies three different ways of exerting power: coercion, inducement and attraction. An actor can influence the behaviour of the others employing military means or threats; can pay to make the others do what he wants or, eventually achieve the desired goal through attraction (Nye, 2004). The first and the second way are key features of hard power while the third

refers to soft power. Hence, hard power is a coercive power and implies the use of military forces or economic measures in order to achieve the aim pursued. For a long time, this consideration of power has been preeminent in international relations. This view of power strictly related to military might and economic strength was probably caused by the massive influence of the Realist school of thought in the international relations realm. The concept of power is central in the Realist thought. Realist thinkers consider power as the ultimate states' objective and see the economic and military strength of a state crucial to the achievement of the ultimate goal. On the other hand, the definition of power itself, strengthened the concept of power as exercise of military forces and economic means. Power can be seen as the ability to act but also as the possession of capabilities or resources that can influence outcomes (Herlory, 2008). The latter definition, specifically ties the possibility to influence the others to the possession of resources. The resources to which reference is made are tangible assets such as large population and territory, extensive natural resources, economic strength, military force, and social stability (Nye, 2004). Thus, according to this view, the power of a country depends on how many and how large the resources of the country will be; the more the country has, the stronger it will be. Thanks to this, the concept of power seems to be measurable and predictable. There are however, several resources that are not considered by this definition because of their intangibility. Considering this, the definition of power based on resources appears incomplete, as not all the possible resources are considered. Indeed, the definition overlooks all the resources taken in to account by soft power scholars and practitioners. Moreover, Nye state that this outlook of power is quite paradoxical, because countries best equipped with large power resources do not always get the outcomes they want. In support of his assertion, he presents the Vietnam War as an example. Although the United States had more resources than Vietnam, it still lost the war. Indeed, Nye states that having power resources does not guarantee to get always the outcome desired (Nye, 2004). Furthermore, Nye explains that the

context in which power is exerted is also important. He further emphasises that power is not only about resources, but also about motivations and acts. Context, motivations and acts play a key role in the selection of what kind of resources have to be employed. There are two types of resources that can be employed to influence the behaviour of others; an actor can achieve his goals through tangible or intangible resources. For tangible resources we mean military or economic resources, while intangible resources are all those assets that can create a feeling of attraction. Military and economic resources are encompassed in command power, while attraction is related to co-optive powers. In fact, as Nye asserts:

*Command power - the ability to change what others do - can rest on coercion or inducement.  
Co-optive power - the ability to shape what others want - can rest on the attractiveness of one's culture and values or the ability to manipulate the agenda of political choices in a manner that makes others fail to express some preferences because they seem to be too unrealistic* (Soft Power: the means to success in world politics, 2004)

Coercion and payments are not always necessary; the ability of creating a feeling of attraction in the others can be a much more powerful way to obtain the outcome you want. As Nye explains: when you can get others to admire your ideals and to want what you want, you do not have to spend as much on sticks and carrots to move them in your direction. Seduction is always more effective than coercion (Nye, 2004). When is preferred to use attraction rather than coercion or payments, soft power is at play. Thus, soft power the ability of an actor to achieve its goals without using coercion or economic measures given that the others appreciate or admire you. In other words, the others can do what you want if they recognise the legitimacy of your attitude or, more simply if they admire who you are and how you behave. Although soft power and hard power seem to be to opposite aspect of the notion of power, Nye affirms that, despite they involve different means and applications, these aspect are complementary rather than opposite or exclusive. Indeed, this two aspects can be combined to create what Nye calls “smart power” (Nye, 2004). To sum up,

hard power and soft power are two different ways of exerting power. Hard power is the ability to get from the others the desired outcome using threats and rewards, while soft power rests on an intangible attraction that persuades the others to go along with your purpose without any explicit threat or exchange taking place (Nye, 2004). In the following paragraph the main sources of soft power will be outlined.

#### 1.2.1.2 Sources

This section presents the main sources of soft power and focuses on how they can generate it. As mentioned before, Nye asserts that the attractiveness of a country arises from culture, political ideals, and policies. Given that the attractiveness of a country is the core component of the exercise of soft power, the sources of attractiveness of a country are de facto sources of soft power. The first main source of a country's soft power is its culture. As already mentioned, culture can refer either to the ideas, customs, and behaviours shared by a specific group, or to the arts and other manifestations of human intellectual achievement. The artistic production of a country, along with the activities linked to it, contributes to shape the image of the country abroad. The variety and the quality of the cultural activities may determine visitors' attraction to the country. In fact, a country that offers a numerous high-standard cultural activities is more likely to be admired by foreign people than a country with low quality or limited cultural initiatives. Furthermore, Nye states that when a country is able to express universal values shared by others through its culture, it may benefit from it. (Nye, 2004). On the basis of the user, it is possible to identify two different levels of culture: high culture, which encompasses activities such as literature and art and is directed to the elite, and popular culture, which deals with mass entertainment. Although largely criticized by intellectuals who see it as an anesthetizing and apolitical opiate for the masses,

popular culture can produce significant soft power. In support of this, Nye observes that this disdain for popular culture is misplaced since the critics view it merely as providing mass entertainment rather than information and thus they believe has a little political effect. However, this is not true; popular culture can produce a huge political effect. In fact, although popular entertainment often implies commercialism, it also portrays the values of the country to which it belongs, that may or may not appeal to the foreign public. Dismissing popular culture means to lose an opportunity to attract a wider audience since, also thanks to the new information and communication technologies, popular culture can be globally spread (Nye, 2004). With regard to high culture, it is important to stress the role played by education. There is some evidence that people who study abroad or have the chance to experience mobility programs tend to assimilate customs and tradition of the country which host them and, once they come back in their home country, show some admiration for the culture of their host country. On the other hand, they may become a sort of representative of their home country, conveying their own culture to the locals. Moreover, as Nye reports, a learning experience abroad may also influence or even shape ideas and action of leaders and decision-makers who, during their academic career, had an experience of studying abroad (Nye, 2004). The second source of a country's soft power rests on its internal and external policies. A government that chooses to implement trustworthy internal policies designed to protect the welfare of its society and completely in line with its external policies boosts its soft power. On the contrary, if the government of a country chooses to implement, either internally or abroad, policies that seem to be unreliable or applies domestic policies less or not coherent at all with its foreign policies, then it may weaken its soft power (Nye, 2004). The last main source of soft power that has to be taken into account regards the political ideals that a government can express through its domestic and foreign policies. As Nye observes values can be attractive and some are more attractive than others. In particular he refers to those values recognised as

universal and that are shared by a large number of people. Indeed, he says many values like democracy, human rights, and individual opportunities are deeply seductive. Hence, a government which is able to advocate, preserve and ensure ideals like democracy, human rights or peace, is a government that bolsters its soft power. In support of this assertion, Nye proposes Norway as a case. Norway is a country which is not generally seen as a global power; yet in the past years had the ability to engage in the peace-making process in several countries such as Philippines, the Balkans, Colombia, Guatemala, Sri Lanka, and the Middle East. In so doing, Norway has enhanced its soft power, because the peacemaker role leads to associate Norway with values shared by other nations(Nye, 2004). To sum up, this section has provided a better understanding of the concept of soft power which was first introduced by Joseph Nye to illustrate the ability of an international actor to influence the behaviour of the others. In other words, soft power is an expression of the capacity to persuade the others appealing to them. Indeed, this also outlined how important for a country is to be attractive in the international realm. Moreover, it has also shown how, for a long time the concept of power has always been associated with the concept of hard power and determined by the possession of military and economic resources. In addition, this section has also analysed the relation between soft power and hard power which are not opposite, but rather complementary concepts and that, if a country combines them, it is possible to create the so called smart power. Lastly, culture, political ideals and policies, which constitute the three main sources of soft power, have been mentioned and analysed, in order to demonstrate how relying on these sources a country is able to exert and enhance its soft power. In the next section the concept of place branding will be further investigated.

### 1.2.2 Place branding

Place branding, also known as nation branding, is a new concept that involves several fields of interest: marketing, communication, public diplomacy and international affairs. This concept is it relevant for my dissertation, since it the Louvre Abu Dhabi represents both an opportunity for the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to reshape its image and determine its brand and an occasion to strengthen the brand France. There is no single definition about the place branding concept. Generally speaking, place branding can be defined as «the application of consumer marketing techniques to countries in order to improve their image» (Anholt, 2008). The concept was first introduced by Simon Anholt, founder of the journal *“Place branding and Public Diplomacy”*, who referring to the idea of nation brand in 1996, observed similarities between the reputations of countries and brand image of companies (Anholt, 2010). Using the brand concept as a starting point, Anholt outlined how reputation of countries and brand images behave at the same manner and are fundamental to the progress, prosperity and good management of those places (Anholt, 2011). According to Anholt, a brand can be seen through three different perspectives. First, a brand may relate to the designed identity of a product, namely its logo or packaging; secondly, it can cover the culture of the organisation behind the product; and thirdly, it can refer to the product’s or corporation’s reputation in the minds of its target audience (Anholt, 2011). The latter is the one employed by Anholt for his interpretation of the place branding concept. However, Anholt recognized that there is some confusion about the branding mechanism because people usually think about branding as a set of techniques which can be applied to directly build or improve the brand image of a product. A corporation can build a brand mainly through product development and marketing but in the end it is not through this means that succeeds to create a brand image. It is not a matter of techniques but reputation. If people try a product and find it good, they will start to talk about the quality of that product. Consequently, that product will have a good reputation that will spread among non-users who will

start to buy it because of its good reputation. In this way, the product will have a powerful brand image capable of increasing the value of the corporation. Therefore, reputation seems to be one of the key factors of business success. Thus, in the words of Anholt:

*Good products and services produced by a good corporation acquire a positive brand image, which eventually reflects on the corporation and becomes its principal asset. Similarly, good products, services, culture, tourism, investments, technology, education, businesses, people, policies, initiatives, and events produced by a good country also acquire a positive brand image, which eventually reflects on the country, and perhaps also becomes its principal asset (Beyond the Nation Brand: The Role of Image and Identity in International Relations, 2011)*

The positive impact that good products and services of a country can have on a country's image can be found in Anholt's first work under the notion of nation brand image. Later on, Anholt recognized that the also the use of the term "brand" in this notion can create confusion because it still tends to be related to the branding process present in the commercial sector. For this reason, he decided to replace the term nation brand and coined the term "competitive identity", in order to underline the fact that "national image has more to do with national identity and the politics and economics of competitiveness than with branding as it is usually understood in the commercial sector (Kim, 2012). More specifically, place branding it is a matter of defining the identity of a country and design the image that it wants to show to the world. For these reasons, it is a huge mistake to reduce the place branding process to a mere promotional campaign; it is not just marketing but a tool to deploy soft power. The image of the country should be attractive for its citizens but, mostly, for the visitors. It can be understood as:

*the sum of beliefs and impressions people hold about places. Images represent a simplification of a large number of associations and pieces of information connected with a place. They are a product of the mind trying to process and pick out essential information from huge amounts of data about a place.' (Kotler & Gertner, 2002)*

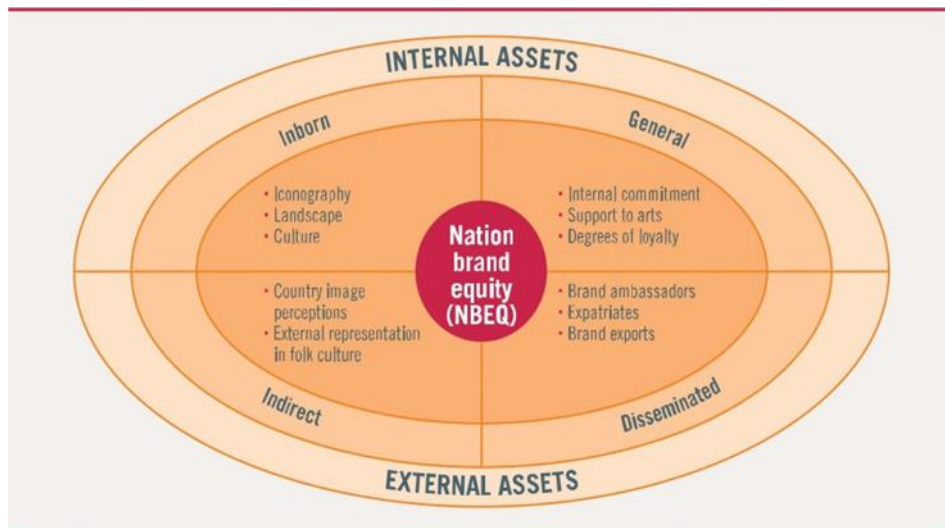
The design of the image may result from the associations of ideas that people create when thinking about a specific country. Associations of ideas in people's mind can be triggered by various factors related to the country such as political situation, sports performances, celebrities or personal experiences. In other words:

*A place-brand strategy is a plan for defining the most realistic, most competitive and most compelling strategic vision for the country, region or city; this vision then has to be fulfilled and communicated (Clifton & Simmons, 2004)*

Once the place branding strategy has been developed, it has to be communicated through any possible channel. Communication should be coherent because, in a globalised world, the competition between places to draw some attention is at the highest level; as places compete with other places for the share of people, resources and business. However, in order to discover whether or not a place branding strategy implemented by a country is successful, it is needed to assess the perception that people has about that country and consequently the value of the brand. In the commercial sector the component which contributes to give value to the brand is called brand equity and expresses the strong market position of the brand. To simply put it brand equity can be defined as «the assets and liabilities related to that brand and which form its value» (Cotîrlea & Morar, 2014). However, it can be defined both from a financial perspective, in which the brand value is determined by its economic assets, and from a customer-based perspective, in which the value of the brand is determined by the degree of awareness as well as opinions of customers about the brand. The customer based perspective, in particular, has been discussed at length and therefore, there is no single definition about the concept. According to Keller brand equity «occurs when the consumer is familiar with the brand and holds some favourable, strong, and unique brand associations in memory» (Keller, 1993). While for Aaker, brand equity represents «the whole of assets and liabilities related with a brand, its name and symbols, which is added to or subtracted from the value provided by a product

or service to a company and/or its customers and consumers» (Aaker, 1991). The perspective taken into consideration when speaking of nation branding is customer's one. Similarly to commercial brands, nation brands do have brand equity and it can also be assessed. Since it is no single definition of the concept of brand equity, especially when applied to nation branding, there is no single model to analyse it. We will now see what is perhaps one of the famous models to analyse nation brand equity, the model of Dinnie. Professor Keith Dinnie defined nation brand equity as «the tangible and intangible, internal and external assets (or liabilities) of the nation» (Dinnie, 2008).

**Figure 1 : Dinnie's model**



Source Nation Branding: Concepts, Issue, Practice (Keith Dinnie)

In his model, nation brand equity can be measured on the basis of its sources. Dinnie recognised two categories of sources: internal and external. He classified internal sources in inborn and general assets, while external source in indirect and disseminated. Inborn assets encompass iconography, landscape and culture, while nurtured assets include internal commitment, support to arts and loyalty. On the other hand, external sources include indirect and disseminated assets. Indirect assets are the perception of county image and the portrait of the country in popular culture, while disseminated assets include brand

ambassador, expats and brand exports (Baruca, 2010). Ensuring internal assets and monitoring external assets is key to give value to the brand. In other words Brand equity encompasses all those assets that contribute to create a positive attitude towards the nation. It is important to note, since will be later mentioned, that the concept of strength of the brand can be also assimilate to nation brand equity. The strength of the brand is another concept borrowed from marketing that might be defined as “the strength of consumer demand for a brand, relative to its competitors” (BrandFinance). When applied to the nation we cannot see such a difference between the concept of equity and strength since the strength of the brand is determined by the its equity, is the measure in which does brand equity assets create an attractive environment for an international audience. The business evaluation and strategy consultancy Brand Finance has established some criteria to assess the strength of nation brand. The evaluation of the nation brand strength is analysed on the basis of country performances in three categories: goods and services, society and investment. The first category includes openness to tourism, market size, and trade rules; the second encompasses elements as quality of life, corporate ethics, corruption, and cultural image; the third is about talent retention, use of technology, R&D, taxation, and regulation (Desjardins, 2018). A nation brand is strong when records a high score in all of the three categories. In other words, a brand is strong when has a reputation capable of attracting people, investment and trade. Strength and equity differ from the value of the nation brand. Since the latter is expressed in money terms, it can be defined as on the value of the nation in the market, which is the amount of money someone should pay to buy the nation (Prophet, 2016). Due to the complexity of the concept there are several index and rankings which measure nation brand perception and assess place branding performances. Brand Finance provides every year a reports in which rank both the most valuable and strongest nation brands. Another valid report is the Country Report, released by the consulting company FutureBrand, in which every year we can find Country Brand Index (CBI). CBI classifies and

ranks countries on the basis of the strength of their international attractiveness. This ranking (see **Figure 2**) is based on the collection of quantitative data from around 3,600 opinions-formers and frequent international business travellers and tourists. A country is evaluated on the basis of its value system, quality of life, business potential, culture and heritage and “made in”, namely perception of brands made in a specific country. FutureBrand uses an Hierarchical Decision Model (HDM) in order to analyse data and determine how the image of the country is perceived by key audiences. The HDM analysis takes into consideration seven areas: Awareness, Familiarity, Associations, Preference, Consideration, Decision/Visitation and Advocacy. Moreover, the company also takes advice from the consultation with a panel of experts in policy and governance, international relations, economics and trade, international law, national security, energy and climate change, urban and regional planning, immigration and the media. These experts are the added value of the evaluation since can offer a unique perspective to the

**Figure 2: FutureBrand Chart**



Source: FutureBrand Country Index 2014-15

analysis of the country or regional assessment (FutureBrand, 2013). Even though the evaluation systems mentioned so far are both valid and contribute significantly to the follow-up of the subject, it is important to mention what is probably the most influential ranking system of nation brands: the Anholt-GfK Roper Nation Brands Index. Beyond the creation of his journal “Place branding and Public diplomacy” and several other works related to the topic, Anholt is also founder and director of the National Brand Index (NBI), a global annual research who measures and evaluates the effect of branding strategies on countries image. As reported on the National Branding index website, the index mission is to “help governments, organizations and businesses understand, measure and ultimately build a strong national image and reputation. It measures the power and quality of each country brand image by combining the following six dimensions: exports, governance, people, investment and immigration, tourism and culture (Gfk, 2016). The next section will investigate on this six dimension and their characteristics.

### 1.2.2.1 Dimensions

**Figure 3: The branding hexagon**



Adapted from nation-brands.gfk.com

In the National Brand index, the six core dimension of place branding are represented as an hexagon (see **Figure 3**). These six areas encompass all the component of a country may involve in its branding process. In order to enforce a branding strategy that may shape positively the image of the place, it is needed to create a policy that involves all or most of the six dimensions. I will now proceed to illustrate in more detail each dimension, starting from the export one. The NBI defines the export dimension as the public's image of products and services from each country. There is some evidence that corporations and brands exported gain significant relevance in the transmission of culture and identity of the country to which they belong. Some corporations and commercial brands became so iconic that for consumers' minds is impossible not to associate them with their country of origin. Hence, the country of origin tends to be considered as an attribute of commercial brands and corporations which can influence consumers behaviour. Conversely, due to this close relationship between the brand and the place where it comes from, commercial brands can have an impact on the reputation of the country. The idea that commercial brand can have some effects on country's image has been discussed by Anholt in his article *Nations brands of the twenty first century*, which is universally considered as the first article to deal with the place branding concept. The association that consumers make between product's brands and their country of provenance can alter the perception of the consumer to such an extent that he will not be able to distinguish if a particular characteristic is the resulted from the brand or from its country of origin. Thus, in some way the brand become synonym for the country of origin and vice versa (Anholt, 1998). This strong brand-country link originate from a concept called country-of-origin-effect. This concepts indicates a psychological effect that describe how consumer perceptions, preferences and choices can be affected by the provenance of the product. With regard to the marketing field, companies seek to communicate country-of-origin-effect and develop strategies in which use it as feature of the product. In other words, country-of-origin-effect is about the

impact that the “Made-in” has on consumers. It’s important to underline that almost all corporate are aware of the influence that country’s image can have on their brands, but not all commercial brands come from country which have a positive image. Thus, companies which come from countries with a negative or weak image take names which appear to come from countries with positive image in order to alter the consumer’s perception who, due to the similar sound, will associate positive qualities to the name of the corporate and, in so doing, the corporate will benefit from qualities that do not belong to it. This strategy is called “cuckoo branding” and Anholt defines it as “not only ill-advised, but also immoral” because. «the brand image of a country belongs to that country, it gives it a competitive edge» (Simms, 2008)). The export dimension of place branding is also challenged by the globalisation phenomenon. Nowadays, corporates are highly internationalised; companies can take part in joint ventures, merge, acquire or be acquired. Thus, it is really difficult for the consumer to identify the exact provenance of a product. In addition, the globalisation process has also brought some corporations to re-brand themselves. To put it simply, corporations decide to put apart or even eliminate distinctive elements of their country of origin in order to better adapt to several different markets. Despite the important impact that export brands may have on country’s image, Anholt observes that brands can offer to the consumer a limited and sometimes misleading vision of a country because often firms rely on stereotypes (Anholt, 2007). The second dimension crucial to the creation of the country image is its governance. The governance of a country deals with the public opinion about national government competency and fairness, as well as its perceived commitment to global issues. Therefore, as with soft power, government choices in terms of domestic and foreign policy and its capacity to advocate universal values are key for branding the country. In order to contribute to creation of a notable country’s image, governments have to adopt domestic and foreign policies mutually coherent, that can be perceived also as morally consistent by the foreigners, because the behaviour of

a government has relevant effect on how foreigners consider the country. Along with internal and external policies, governments have also to show some concern and commitment for global problems. The third dimension of the place branding hexagon refers to immigration and investment. This third component is defined as the power to attract people to live, work or study in each country and how people perceive a country's quality of life and business environment. In this case the image of the country is shaped by its favourable economic condition and the level of its education system. A country with a profitable business environment is more likely to attract investment, as well as a country with an high-standard education system is more likely to attract talented individuals. For these reasons, countries undertake to create a propitious economic environment and a rich educational offer in order to increase their reputation. The fourth dimension of the place branding hexagon is culture. The concept of culture is defined as the global perception of each nation's heritage and appreciation for its contemporary culture. The cultural heritage and the contemporary culture of a nation can massively contribute to enrich a place brand image. The conservation and enhancement of heritage along with the initiatives taken in cultural sphere reveal the intelligence, abilities, and beliefs of people living in a specific place. Showing both past and present cultural accomplishments, stirs esteem and regard within people and, therefore has an impact on brand image's improvement. According to Anholt, culture is one of the most significant components of the hexagon; it can influence and support the other brand components and affect nationals' and visitors' perception of the country (Masjutina, 2016). The fifth dimension presented in the brand image hexagon regards tourism. The tourism dimension is defined as the level of interest in visiting a country and the draw of natural and man-made tourist attractions. Among the place branding dimensions, tourism can be considered the most evident one because of its competent marketing force and the provision of government spending. However, the nature of this dimension is more complex than it seems. In order to enhance the image of a nation, tourism

should be carefully aligned with the other dimensions. Only in this way, it can achieve its full potential and serve as a flagship for branding the nation. Lastly, the sixth dimension of the brand hexagon is people. This dimension is described as the population's reputation for competence, openness and friendliness and other qualities such as tolerance. It has a quite relevant role in influencing the foreign people's view of perceiving the image of a country. The manner in which citizens of a nation behave within the country and abroad with strangers has a strong potential effect on the way strangers consider the population of a country and the country itself. Thus, every citizen can be considered a sort of brand ambassador, who has the potential to influence in a positive or negative way the image and the reputation of the place where he comes from.

#### 1.2.2.2 Potential Benefits

In light of the above, it is quite clear that nations with a good reputation and image can have some benefits as they are perceived as positive. Thus, a place branding strategy represents for countries a great opportunity to get benefit since national image is considered as a valuable asset which itself can contribute to value to the nation. Today, in order to craft the brand image of their country, governments can rely on the expertise of consulting agencies. Recently, the request of consultancy on place branding strategies has significantly increased due to the achievements of some countries as a result of the application of place branding campaigns. In fact, there is some evidence that, if well adopted, a good place branding strategy can really change both the internal confidence and the external performance of a place, as places like Ireland, New Zealand, Spain, Bilbao, Bangalore and Liverpool have shown (Clifton & Simmons, 2004). Although it is becoming increasingly important for policymakers, place

branding has just recently drawn the attention it deserved. Despite the newfound popularity of the subject, the application of branding strategies to countries' image has started a long way before, precisely around the 2000s. It all started with Simon Anholt, the policy advisor who pioneered the place branding field, asked to shape Croatia's national brand, when the country began to consider to join European Union. The Croatian government wanted to reshape the image of the country, concerned with still being associated with the Balkan conflict that experienced years before. Croatia aimed to portray itself as a democratic state with a promising market economy and a peaceful Mediterranean atmosphere. Anholt's experiment ended quite well. In 2005 Croatia set its record for tourism, hosting around ten millions of visitors. Consequently, tourism industry revenues grew significantly and had a substantial impact also on Croatian economy since the tourism industry represented about 21% of the Croatian GDP (Masnata, 2006). Unfortunately, Croatia joined European Union only in 2013, so more than a decade after Anholt's consultancy. But, in the meantime, it became one of the top tourism destination, capable of generating every year sky-high revenues. For this reason, Croatia became a symbol of what effects place branding may generate and it is often quote as an example in place and destination branding studies. As can be seen from the Croatian case, place branding can produce benefits in several fields. By enhancing their images, countries can gain advantages in political and economic fields. On one hand, place branding allows nations to attract talents and investment, support exports, increase tourism and, therefore to boost the economic growth of a country. On the other hand, it allows a country to increase its influence in international politics, to obtain relevant role in international affairs or to be considered with greater regard on the international stage. An example of the impact nation brand image can have is given by Anholt and regards European Union membership. He observes that when discussing the applications of potential member states, the European Commission, consciously or not, takes into consideration the brand image of the

applicant state and if it might contribute or not to the brand image of European Union. Moreover, Anholt sees in place branding a tool for the equal distribution of wealth as branding adds value to products and the place that produce them. However, the problem is that branding is used only by nations of the so called first world to increase the wealth they already possess, but if it was used by those countries which do not belong to the first world, the gap between wealthy and poor countries could be really reduced. To use the word of Anholt:

*During the last 100 years or so, much of the wealth of rich countries has been generated through marketing. These skills should now be transferred to poorer countries, and so help them graduate from being mere suppliers of low-margin unbranded commodities to brand owners and branded places in their own right (Clifton & Simmons, 2004).*

Although western countries are principal users of place branding strategies, it does not mean that they use it just to get richer when they are already considerably wealthy. As was mentioned before in the case of Croatia, place branding can also serve as an instrument to regenerate the image of a nation and subsequently bring prosperity to that nation. Something similar happened to Bilbao which saw his economy flourishing after the construction of a branch of the Guggenheim museum. As was said before, culture can support the other components of place branding and for this this reason is one of the most significant one. Culture can be spread through different means but, perhaps, the most evident and important are museum. As for place branding components, the value of a museum's image might become a valuable asset and add value to the image of the nation. Therefore, since the impact of the Louvre Abu Dhabi museum will be later presented, it is important to discuss in more details the impact that museums can have on the image of a nation and what kind of benefits they may bring. This process goes under the name of museum branding and will be further investigated in the next paragraph.

### 1.2.2.3 Museum Branding

According to the International Council of Museums (ICOM) Statutes “a museum is a non-profit, permanent institution in the service of society and its development, open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment for the purposes of education, study and enjoyment” (ICOM, 2007). Today museum, cannot rely only on their exhibitions. Therefore, they became fully fledged cultural hubs, hosted in lavish palaces or visionary buildings which compete each other to display the most famous artists or the most precious artworks in order to attract a larger audience. This modernization was triggered by the economic crisis, the digital innovation, the changes in social communication; but also, as regards museum institutions owned by governments, by the cut of public funding dedicated to them, which prompted museums to reinvent themselves. In addition, it is worth noting that in this globalised contest the museum field has become very competitive. In order to ensure their sustainability, museums aim to reach the highest number possible of visitors since is both part of their mission and a source of substantial incomes (Timpson). However, in order to achieve this goal, museum compete with each other to obtain donations or sponsorship in their support, to offer a modern and innovative venue to exhibit the most talented artists and famous masterpieces. Since the museum field has become very competitive, the perception of people about museums has gain a relevant foothold. As for country, the brand image of a museum can contribute to add value to the brand equity of the nation where is located and can generate several benefits both for the museum and the country. Most of all, enhancing their images with branding application, museums can increase their revenues, engage more stakeholders, boost the museum experience, viability and values. Additionally, museum can play a key role in tourism as they might generate significant revenues and, in so doing, indirectly bring profit to the tourism industry of the country. Museum directors perfectly know the importance of branding in ensuring the

sustainability of a museum. For this reason, they try to apply branding strategies to some fundamental aspects of museum's image which can influence its perception by people: name awareness, location, building and international media recognition. A successful museum branding strategy enhances every key factor of the museum's image. The first component is maybe the most important one as name awareness indicates people's familiarity to museum's name. Clearly, a museum with a high degree of name awareness will consequently have a powerful brand image. In fact, if the museum is well known, it will be more likely that it will welcome a large number of visitors. High museum name awareness may also contribute to a successful place branding strategy as it was in the case of the Guggenheim of Bilbao. Opened in 1997, the Guggenheim Bilbao museum, designed by Frank Gehry, is the first satellite of the Guggenheim Museum of New York, created by the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation. The establishment of the museum was part of the land reclassification strategy adopted by the Basque government in partnership with the Guggenheim of New York. During the 1980s, the city's heavy industry was in crisis. Unemployment rate increased to 25 % and the terrorist group ETA struck the city by murdering three police officers with a car bomb in 1989. In addition to this, the Nervión river environment was highly polluted, due to traffic gridlock and ratty warehouses. There was the need to breathe new life in the city and to make the economy prosper again. Today, the Guggenheim of Bilbao is the landmark of the city and of the Basque region; the symbol of a city that was able to reinvent itself after the decline of heavy industry. Although subject to criticism, the investment of 195 million of euro made by the government for the establishment of the museum paid off. In the years after its opening, the museum has been able to bring city with only 350,000 inhabitants almost 20 million of visitors. The project and its knock-on effects have created more than 5,000 local jobs, generated €650 million of additional revenue for the Basque treasury and created collaboration between the Guggenheim and 140 located in the region. The beneficial impact generated by the project was

unprecedented and now goes under the name of “Guggenheim Effect”. The Guggenheim effect became a subject of study and also an example that many attempted to emulate but with little success. However, the impact of the museum would not have been the same without the Guggenheim’s name; the museum’s fame and international prestige were crucial to attract a wide public to visit a city almost unknown. In the light of the above, it is quite evident that the Guggenheim Bilbao became a valuable asset for the whole Basque country; added value to country image and generated benefits. Moreover, being a satellite of the Guggenheim of New York, it contributed to increase the fame of its parent institution (Alison, 2014). The second source of value for museum image is the building in which it is located. Less result-driven than name awareness but still useful for tourism, the architecture of a museum’s building is capable of captivating people and encourages them to visit the museum. The building is probably the most evident feature of a museum. People can easily recognise a museum because they associate to its name the architecture of its building. The architecture of the museum, appreciated or not, makes an impression on people and has a great influence on their minds. Thus, museum directors have not to overlook architectural issues as the condition of the building or its design may potentially increase the number of visitors. In order to survive in the competition with other museums, the architecture of the building has to be astonishing and iconic; this is the only way a wide audience will recognise and keep in mind which museum is located in the building. In fact, there is some evidence that some of most famous museums of the world are hosted in iconic buildings designed by star-architects: like Frank Lloyd Wright in the case of Solomon Guggenheim of New York or the above-mentioned Frank Gehry, who designed the Guggenheim of Bilbao. A star-architect can also contribute to the renovation of a part of a museum, as it occurred with Jean Nouvel tasked with the project of an extension of the Reina Sofia Museum of Madrid. Sometimes it happens that some museums are more notorious for their the building than for their collection. This in some way also

applies to the Guggenheim of Bilbao since the building and the installations that surround it may be perceived as more attractive than its collection. An example of that is, indeed, Jeff Koons' Puppy located outside the Bilbao Guggenheim Museum (see Figure 4).

**Figure 4: Jeff Koon's Puppy outside the Guggenheim Bilbao**



Source: Guggenheim Bilbao museum's website

The statue is a White Terrier of eleven and a half meters, completely covered by plants, which create a three dimensional vertical garden (Vertical Green, 2017). Not vital, but still significant is the role played by the location of the museum. The area in which the museum is located may influence its image. The museum should be located in an area capable of attracting tourists and provide an excellent tourism experience; it has to be well connected in terms of transportation and hospitality structures and should have some attractions in its surroundings. The quality of the position of the museum affects its image. The fourth component of the museum image is its collection. The possess of an internationally renowned collection including prestigious and rare pieces of art

as well as the most awarded artworks, adds value to the reputation of the museum. A collection of masterpieces, especially of famous artist, can attract a large audience; just think about how many people every year visit the Louvre only to see the Gioconda or the Venus of Milo or about how many visitors the Reina Sofia museum welcomes just because of Picasso's Guernica. Lastly, the fifth component of a museum image is the international media recognition. Undoubtedly the other components play a vital role in enabling the museum to be noticed and recognized by the international media, but the esteem in which a museum is held by the international media is itself a component crucial for the enhancement of the reputation of the museum. The higher the level of international media recognition is, the better the museum's image will be.

### 1.2.3 Cultural diplomacy

There are several definitions about the concept of cultural diplomacy. The most symbolic and famous is perhaps the one given by Dr. Milton Cummings Jr., former chairman of political science department of John Hopkins University. Cummings defined cultural diplomacy as "the exchange of ideas, information, art, and other aspects of culture among nations and their peoples in order to foster mutual understanding." From this first definition, it is possible to notice that the objective of cultural diplomacy has been confined in the promotion of understanding among nations and, therefore, its ultimate objective seems to be an intercultural dialogue that enables people from different nations to know, appreciate and respect other people's culture. Richard T. Arndt observed that this exchange of cultural aspect is not managed by the government but is something that happens naturally; people from different countries meet and exchange customs and points of views on a daily basis. The talent of good diplomats lies in shaping and channelling these cultural exchanges in order to produce some advantage for the government they represent (Lenczowski,

2008). Even though featured with a noble purpose, this first definition shows this political power implication to a very limited extent. Thus, cultural diplomacy might be better defined by using Cull's words, 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, 2009). In this second definition given by Cull, it is possible to understand the political implication inherent in the concept. Being a subset of public diplomacy, cultural diplomacy has the same objective: the creation of a favourable environment in a foreign country for the achievement of an international actor's goal. More specifically, the Institute for Cultural diplomacy reports:

*Cultural diplomacy may best be described as a course of actions, which are based on and utilize the exchange of ideas, values, traditions and other aspects of culture or identity, whether to strengthen relationships, enhance socio-cultural cooperation, promote national interests and beyond; Cultural diplomacy can be practiced by either the public sector, private sector or civil society (Institute for Cultural Diplomacy).*

If cultural diplomacy is a subfield of public diplomacy and public diplomacy is a mechanism to deploy soft power, then cultural diplomacy can be considered as well a way to exert soft power. An evidence of that is given by the role played by culture within the Cold War. In a war, which was never really fought on a traditional battlefield, the two superpowers, US and Soviet Union, used cultural diplomacy as a weapon to expand their influence globally and, particularly, in Europe. The conflict was fierce, the two superpowers tried to demonstrate their superiority through traditional artistic activities, such as fine arts, ballet and music, but also showing the strength of some characteristics features of their cultures, such as science, technology, education and way of living. These activities were largely promoted by mass media that were also the principal means by which political ideas were channelled. In the end, American culture resulted more captivating than the virtuous one claimed by Soviet

Union. Therefore the US was able to consolidate its global influence and proved to have an alternative source of power to rely on. So, cultural diplomacy can be a useful tool for a country to advance its interest abroad and to promote the country itself. Moreover, cultural diplomacy can also foster foreign cooperation and, in so doing, enhance national security. Through its activities, cultural diplomacy is able to provide to a country information about foreign political ideas and approach towards the country's political system itself. It is a unique source of information that is able to give insights that often embassies cannot provide, as the information are not give by political officers but by people who attend cultural activities. The force of cultural diplomacy lies in its own activities, since the activities itself are perceived as authentic by people who attend them and not as a part of a strategic scheme tasked with the spread of political influence. Thus, with no politics involved, people will be more likely to take part in the activities, without being aware of the positive political outcome their participation will produce. Cultural diplomacy action encompasses a wide range of activities targeted with the promotion abroad of a country's culture. These activities not only include the display of any form of art but also show the peculiarities of a country's culture in terms of political thought, science progress, technology innovation, traditions, beliefs, lifestyles, business, charity, entertainment, communication, education, etc., and the different means used to express them. Besides being an important tool of soft power, cultural diplomacy is not taken into great consideration when speaking of strategies to foster foreign cooperation and improve national security. The reason of the underestimating of its importance comes, once again, from the traditional way in which power is conceived. Along the lines of what happens with soft power, when it comes to national security discourse, government officials usually prefer to rely on traditional tools of hard power in order to counter a possible threat. Government officials usually neglect the strategic dimension of cultural diplomacy while, just recently, have recognised some strategic importance to public diplomacy in the national security discourse;

even though it was restricted to a mere role in support of traditional instruments of warfare. Despite the lack of consideration in the national security discourse, there are several goals that cultural diplomacy eventually enables to achieve. The next paragraph will explain these potential goals in greater detail.

#### 1.2.3.1 Potential goals

As stated above, cultural diplomacy might be an useful tool for countries to advance national interest abroad and promote the country itself. By organizing some cultural events abroad, a country can extend its influence and perhaps gain the respect and admiration of a foreign audience. Cultural activities organized abroad show the variety of a country's talents, which through their works give, whether consciously or unconsciously, a portrait of their country itself and express its principles and beliefs. The communication of national ideals and traditions through cultural action might have a positive effect of a foreign public; as for place branding, this process might add value to the reputation of a country and, consequently, result in the improvement, or even consolidation, of the relations with the foreign country which hosted the cultural event. However, sometimes cultural events could be perceived not as independent from the government but as a part of a government plan. In that case, especially when countries have not the same degree of cultural development, the influence on one country on the other could be perceived as too intense. Therefore, the response of the foreign audience towards the ideas expressed through culture will not be favourable, since the expression of another country's culture might be interpreted as an attempt of domination through cultural means. Taking advantage from the positive image expressed through its culture, the government of a country might ride the wave of

opportunity to advance its national interest that, in most of the cases, have an economic nature. Once the relations have been improved or consolidated, it is more likely that a country will try to have some benefits in terms of trade or business. Moreover, it is worth noting that, besides the fact culture diplomacy action may lead to business opportunities, the development of cultural activities per se could enrich the economy of a country. In fact, through the trade of cultural products, the cultural industry of a country could increase and, consequently its economy will do the same. In addition to the possible effects cultural diplomacy can generate in terms of economic revenues and political influence, as has already been mentioned, cultural diplomacy could also be useful in the promotion of foreign cooperation and improvement of national security. Despite, as mentioned before, in those field the application of cultural diplomacy is generally quite not considered by governments, the United Nations agency UNESCO has not the same advice. UNESCO truly believes in the power of cultural diplomacy which sees as an instrument to preserve peace and promote cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue. Since its constitution in 1945, UNESCO aims at promoting cooperation in the cultural field in order to maintain peace. In fact, the Constitution of the organization reports as follows:

*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)

If nations start to collaborate in the cultural field, creating joint projects or institution, this collaboration will lead them to the improvement of mutual understanding and promote future relations at all levels. The exchange of views and ideas between nations with different cultural heritage will produce more favourable condition for the preservation of peace. The mutual understanding generated by cultural exchanges will also encourage intercultural dialogue,

which in turn will promote cultural diversity. In order to encourage cultural diversity and peacekeeping, UNESCO takes part or even launches several initiatives dedicated to these issues. The organization joined the initiative “Decade for the Promotion of Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World” launched in 2001 by UN General Assembly. In the same year, UNESCO released the Universal Declaration of Cultural Diversity, followed by the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expression in 2005. This Convention established the International Fund for Cultural Diversity, with the aim of fostering sustainable development and reducing poverty in signatory developing countries.

#### 1.2.3.2 History of French cultural diplomacy

Although most countries underestimate or even fail to deploy it, cultural diplomacy facilitates social and political engagement with foreign countries. If there is one nation that has learnt this lesson it is France. Political action through cultural means can be almost considered as a French tradition. France has a long and consistent history of cultural diplomacy, it has always promoted its cultural sources and transmitted them abroad in order to obtain international standing and keep its prominent place in the field of culture. French cultural action abroad can be divided in three periods. The first one covers the years from 1883 up to 1940 and was characterised by the creation of a network of institutions abroad, such as Institut Francais, Alliance Francais Committes and French high school. In the second one, from 1945 until the end of the 1970s, France enhanced its cultural policy abroad through the creation of the General Directorate of Cultural, Scientific and Technical Services and the establishment of a Cultural section in any French embassy around the world. These two periods of French cultural diplomacy can be categorized as phases of

“radiation” (fr. *rayonnement*), since the main activity of French cultural policy focused on the expansion in foreign territories through the establishment of cultural institutions. The phases of radiation were characterised, indeed, by a strong presence of French institutions abroad which appeared totally independent from the French government and unrelated to economic or politic interests. The institution gave the impression of having a pure cultural purpose. The activities they carried out were limited to the diffusion of French language and literature with the aim of showing the alleged superiority of French culture. However in 1978 the efficiency of French cultural action was called into question by Jacques Rigaud. In his report about foreign cultural relations, Rigaud expressed his concern about French foreign cultural relations listing those, in his opinion, were the weaknesses of French cultural action. Rigaud thought French cultural action was unwilling to foreign cultural initiatives, too attached to the memory of a magnificent past and unwilling to invest in technological innovation. After Rigaud’s report, France recognised the necessity to keep up with the present and start thinking about the future. So, throughout the 1980s several reforms and investments have been done. France developed a new approach towards foreign cultural player and invested significantly in new technologies, especially the audio-visual ones. This new period started approximately in the 1980s and is still on going. It still involves the activity of French institutions abroad: today, France can still rely on the presence of 98 Institute Francais and about 800 Alliance Francaise but with a slightly different attitude. Firstly, institutions, especially the Institut Francais, tried to diverge from the decentralised model and to adopt a centralised one, which would have reduced the role played by embassies in the diffusion of culture. For this reason, after various attempts, it was decided to keep the old model. Besides an attempt to change the institutional apparatus, this period saw also France investing in technologies and professionalization, in order to raise the quality of skills of cultural agents operating abroad and create more engagement with foreign cultural actors. Secondly, France displayed the value of its cultural action in the

global arena supporting cultural diversity issues in international agreements. Since 1993, France spoke in favour of adopting measures capable of ensuring cultural diversity. In fact, during General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs (GATT) negotiations, France was the first proponent of the “cultural exception” policy, a measure intended to guarantee that cultural goods would not have been traded in the same way of commercial ones. Later on, France newly sustained the formulation of measures for cultural diversity supporting the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expression, adopted by UNESCO in 2005. In addition to the protection of cultural diversity in international agreements, France also fostered cooperation and enhanced its cultural relations with other nations through multilateral and bilateral agreements. The construction of the Louvre Abu Dhabi museum, as a result of a cultural cooperation agreement between France and United Arab Emirates, indeed proves the success of French action in creating new projects and engaging with emerging cultural players. Moreover, in the implementation of the Louvre project, France had also the chance to show to the world its excellent know-how and experience of the museum field. This new period of French cultural diplomacy can be categorized as a phase of influence, due to the openness towards foreign cultural activities in order to expand French influence. The emphasis in this phase is not on the construction of a network of institutions abroad that celebrate and diffuse French cultural tradition, but on intertwining or improving relations with other international actors in the cultural field. Through the cooperation in cultural initiatives with other countries, France has the opportunity to create a favourable environment to collaborate with countries also on other issues or, eventually, to advance its interests in other sectors with the purpose of gaining some benefits. Aiming at the expansion of French influence, the most recent French cultural diplomacy has proved to be more ambitious, rapid and definitely pragmatic than it was before. Nowadays, France can still rely on the presence of institutions all around the world tasked with the transmission of French culture but, besides

the presence in foreign territories, it can also count on new approaches such as welcoming and promoting foreign artists and students, advocating for cultural diversity and exporting its expertise in the museum field. In so doing, it will maintain a prominent role in the cultural field, recognised by the whole international community and continue to successfully expand its sphere of influence.

## Chapter 2

### Contextual framework

Museums can be considered as transnational actors since for years have engaged in international exchange of artworks. Recently, their role in international relations has become more prominent due to the phenomenon of museum satellites. A museum satellite is a branch of the museum located outside the country where the original museum is set. The Museum exports pieces of its collections and expertise across the borders creating a new museum institution bearing the name of the main one. The Louvre Abu Dhabi museum is indeed a satellite of the Louvre of Paris. The first museum which it is said to have pioneered this field is the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation of New York. Through the years, the Guggenheim has established satellites in Bilbao, Berlin, Las Vegas and many more are under construction such as the satellites of Helsinki and Abu Dhabi. This sort of franchising strategy of the Guggenheim was initiated in 1988 by the then director Thomas Kren, due to the financial problems the museum was facing at that time. The first step of this strategy was the opening of a satellite in Bilbao. As already mentioned in section 1.2.2.3, the impact of the Bilbao satellite was very favourable for the country. Anyway, the construction of the Bilbao satellite produced also positive for the parent institution in New York; so successful that the Guggenheim expanded its network of satellites in Berlin and Las Vegas. However, these two new institution were not successful as the Bilbao one. Although the Guggenheim satellites have not always succeed as expected, we have to give credit to the Guggenheim that has paved the way to a phenomenon which changes the role of museums in transnational activity, giving them a more active part on the international stage. The factors leading to the opening of museums satellites can be multiple. First of all, the opening of a museum branch across borders constitutes both an expedient for museum to replenish its funding and an

opportunities for the hosting country to take advantage from the presence of museum satellite to boost the economic sector. Moreover, if the museum institution which is going to establish the satellite is government-owned, as in the case of the Louvre, the satellite also brings commercial benefits to national funds dedicated to the cultural sector. Then, as already seen with Guggenheim of Bilbao, a museum satellite is not only an occasion for branding the museum, but also a chance for branding or rebranding a country. Lastly, from a political perspective, a museum satellites contributes to foster cultural dialogue and encourages cooperation between countries which take part to the establishment of the satellite (Goff, 2017). All the purposes above mentioned have somehow contributed to the establishment Louvre Abu Dhabi museum, which is the first satellite of the famous Louvre museum in the Middle East and outside French territory. The Louvre Abu Dhabi Museum results from the collaboration between France and the United Arab Emirates. The Emirati government had the idea to develop a major cultural institution and decided to rely on the expertise of the French museum institution. Resulted from an intergovernmental agreement, the Louvre Abu Dhabi museum might play a significant role in the development and exercise of soft power for both France and the United Arab Emirates. Therefore, this chapter aims at providing a general background about the Louvre Abu Dhabi project. The first section of this chapter, will focus on the intergovernmental agreement, by investigating its terms, providing an overview of the negotiations that led to the signing and introducing the stakeholders of the project. The second section will present the Museum per se, by describing its structure and location and exploring its collection. The third section will describe the environment in which the museum is established, portraying the key features of the United Arab Emirates. Lastly, the fourth section will shed light on the Emirati - French relations, with a special focus on their cooperation initiatives.

## **2.1 The Agreement**

This section is dedicated to the deepening of the intergovernmental agreement that led to the construction of the first Louvre museum branch in Abu Dhabi. First, going through history, a synthesis of the negotiation process will be provided. Secondly, I will present the terms and conditions of the agreement. Thirdly, a brief illustration of the institutions which have been entrusted with the development of the project will be given.

### **2.1.1 History of negotiations**

On March 2007, under President Jacques Chirac, France and United Arab Emirates (UAE) signed an important cultural cooperation agreement, aimed at the establishment of the Louvre Abu Dhabi museum. After several negotiation meetings held in 2005 by the two governments, the agreement was finalised on March 6 by the Minister of Culture Renaud Donnedieu de Vabres and President of the UAE Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan who met in the grand ballroom of the Emirates Palace, the most luxurious hotel in Abu Dhabi. President Jacques Chirac was not present at the meeting but sent his personal message to Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan. The message said: «This event will be a milestone, not only for our two countries, whose relations are so friendly and so confident, but for a certain idea of the world, that the United Arab Emirates and France want to carry together.» (Van Egmond, 2017). The message of the French president epitomized the willingness of the two countries to start a new project: the creation of the first universal museum of the Arab world. Bringing together the East and the West, the two governments thus, enhance their relations and aim at the reconciliation of two distant worlds. This bilateral agreement is the first of its kind. The agreement stipulated that France government would have assisted the United Arab Emirates to design and build the first universal museum outside the West. Despite this noble aim, the UAE had to make a significant financial investment to reach the goal. In

fact, the provision of works from Louvre's collections and from other French museums, the advice, the expertise, the organization of temporary exhibitions and the right to use the name "Louvre" cost them around € 1 billion euro. Being one of a kind, the partnership between the two countries triggered several critiques. In the French art world, the deal at first sparked controversy with some senior figures in the museum world warning France risked "selling its soul" (Chrisafis, 2017). On December 13, 2006, the newspaper *Le Monde* published a debate among three important figures of the art world: Françoise Cachin, Jean Clair et Roland Recht. The article was titled "Les musées ne sont pas à vendre", namely "Museums are not for sale" (Van Egmond, 2017) (Cachin, Clair, & Recht, 2007). After the signature of the agreement of March 6th, the construction site was launched. The new Minister of Culture Christine Albanel followed its progress, laying the foundation stone. A few months later, the new President Nicolas Sarkozy had to deal with the project. With Sarkozy's contribution however, the relation with the Emirate partner has gone beyond the cultural field to become closer to the defence domain. After a first trip in 2008, in 2009 he claimed to give priority to the Gulf countries. In May, he inaugurated the first French joint military base abroad for half a century intending to mark the commitment of the country in this strategic region (Chrisafis, 2017). The French president also intended to implement the sale of Dassault Rafale aircraft to the UAE authorities. He snatched a promise to sell about sixty fighter jets, but the Franco-Emirian relations on the subject go through ups and downs. Lately, the negotiations were restored by for President Hollande and his Minister of Defense Jean-Yves Le Drian. These commercial and diplomatic tensions, however did not affect the development of Louvre Abu Dhabi project; as well as reports from the NGO Human Rights Watch, denouncing, in 2009, the conditions of work on the site, had no impact. The obstacle to the long march towards the completion of the museum comes from elsewhere. Works suspended in 2011 for more than a year and a half, due to the global economic crisis and to the Arab spring (Van Egmond, 2017). They

restarted in 2013. Postponed several times, the opening was finally announced on September 6, 2017. After ten years of controversies and delays, on November 11, 2017, the Louvre Abu Dhabi museum was finally opened to the public. On November 8, an opening ceremony was held and the museum was first unveiled. The French President Emmanuel Macron, His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President, Prime Minister of UAE and Ruler of Dubai and His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces, took part in the Opening Ceremony. The French President hailed the new museum as an example of how beauty can «fight against the discourses of hatred»; while His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, in his inaugural speech defined the Louvre Abu Dhabi Museum as «a unique and icon masterpiece that Abu Dhabi is adding to the heritage of the humanity». Furthermore, during his speech, he went on to say: «Louvre Abu Dhabi is an architectural masterpiece [...] a cultural icon and an artistic platform that combines East with the West» (Chrisafis, 2017).

### 2.1.2 Terms of the agreement

The Louvre Abu Dhabi Museum venture is the result of an innovative initiative. Signed on March 6, 2007, the bilateral agreement between France and the UAE is designed to create the first universal museum of the Arab world. From an international stand point the agreement is exceptional and has no parallel. Firstly, because it is the first time that two countries commit themselves to create a national institution. Secondly, because it has never happened before that the Louvre museum has agreed to associate its name to a museum outside the French territory. Thirdly, because the most important French cultural institutions are working together for the first time, within Agence France-Museums (AFM) (Goumbault, 2017). The agreement, in fact, stipulates the participation of twelve major French museums, reunited under the umbrella of

Agence France-Museums. In order to underline the visible universal ambition of this project and the role of French expertise in the design, the new museum will be authorized to bear the name of "Louvre Abu Dhabi" for a period of thirty years. The terms and conditions of use of the name are the subject to a specific application agreement to protect the quality of use of the name and brand "Louvre". This agreement provides for strict conditions regarding the use of the name and the brand "Louvre", particularly with regard to derivatives. The financial impact of this agreement for the Louvre Museum and the other French museums participating in the project is not irrelevant. The Louvre Museum will be the main beneficiary, since in addition to the € 400 million for the right to use its name, will also receive € 25 million sponsorship that will be used for its own development (Cerisier-ben Guiga, 2007). Added to this are:

- € 190 million divided between the institutions participating in loans of works in the permanent galleries over a period of 10 years;
- € 195 million euros over 15 years for the museums participating in the organization of temporary exhibitions;
- € 165 million euros over 20 years in compensation for the expertise of Agence France-Museums.

In total, it is therefore an amount of approximately 1 billion euro over thirty years, which will be paid directly by the Emirati authorities to the French museums participating to the project. Thanks to Emirates funds, the cultural institution will be able to start major initiatives intended for the preservation of artworks from their collections and also to renovate their facilities.

### 2.1.3 Agencies

The Louvre Museum alone could not carry this project. Being given that the future museum should cover periods subsequent to those covered in the collections of the Louvre, as the contemporary period, or civilizations that are not represented, like Asian art, it was decided to involve other institutions in

the project (Cerisier-ben Guiga, 2007). The agreement therefore provides for the creation by France of a particular organization, an international agency of the French museums, called Agence France- Muséums. Bringing together the State and the main French museums, the agency has been responsible for implementing this project. The legal form chosen for this agency is that of simplified joint stock company. The Ministry of Culture explained the reason behind the choice claiming that the formula of the "public institution" would have not allowed to associate several establishments; a pooling of economic interest would have required amendments to the statutes of all the partner institutions and would not have been very suitable anyway. While strictly controlling the conditions of entry or exit of associates, the simplified joint stock company gives great freedom to choose its own operating procedures. It will thus allow to entrust an important role to a scientific council composed by qualified personalities (Cerisier-ben Guiga, 2007). Established on July 11, 2007, under the bilateral agreement signed by France and UAE, Agence France-Muséums is an agency that encompasses 12 public cultural institutions that hold a share of the capital. The cultural establishments involved are:

- The Louvre Museum;
- The Pompidou Centre;
- The Établissement public of the Musée d'Orsay and the Musée de l'Orangerie;
- The National Library of France (BNF);
- The Quai Branly museum;
- The Réuniondes Musées Nationaux - Gran Palais;
- The Museum and National Domain of Versailles;
- The Guimet National Museum of Asian Arts;
- The École du Louvre;
- The Rodin Museum;
- The National Domain Of Chambord;
- The Opérateur du patrimoine et des projets immobiliers de la culture

The distribution of voting and representation rights depends on that of the contributions (Agence France-Muséums, 2017). The Louvre alone holds 115 of the 335 shares, a little more than third of all, and each of the eleven other institutions owns 20 shares. The Louvre also benefits from a special weight within the board of directors: out of a total of 11 votes, he has 3, five other institutions have one vote each (Musée du Quai Branly, Centre Georges Pompidou, Musée d'Orsay, Réunion des Musées Nationaux, Bibliothèque Nationale de France). The last three voices belong to independent individuals; these are appointed by collective decision of the partners on the proposal of three different ministers respectively Minister of Culture, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of Finance. The Agency has also as a scientific council to oversee the ethics of scientific and cultural projects. It must be consulted on all loan and exhibition programs as well as on the distribution of financial compensation paid to museums. It also issues an opinion on lists of works likely to be loaned. It is composed of 9 members, three of whom are appointed by the Minister responsible for culture, three by the Louvre Museum, and three by collective decision of the associates. Finally, a general director, appointed for a renewable period of three years by the governing body, after a consultation with the Minister of Foreign Affairs and with the Minister of Culture, has extensive powers to act on behalf of the company. The control of the company is provided by an auditor (Cerisier-ben Guiga, 2007). In 2008, AFM signed a service agreement with its Emirati partner listing the service that the agency will provide over a 20-year period. As stipulated by the intergovernmental agreement on March 6, 2007, the Agency is fully funded by the authorities of United Arab Emirates (Etablissement Public Du Musée Du Louvre, 2014). Agence France-Muséums is responsible for providing advice to the creation of the museum and for providing the expertise of the French cultural institutions. In this task several areas are involved:

- Definition of scientific and cultural objective;

- Assistance on issues such as museography, signage and multimedia projects;
- Organization of loans from French collections and temporary exhibitions;
- Advise on the creation of a permanent collection;
- Definition of the audience policy.

As on the French side we have AFM tasked with the creation of the museum, even on the Emirati side we can find a special institution committed to the project. Abu Dhabi Tourism and Culture Authority is the local institution that helped AFM in the process of implementation of the project. Abu Dhabi Tourism and Culture Authority is the institution in charge of the international promotion of the city as a cultural destination. The authority carries several activities with the aim of attracting visitors and investments. Moreover, is tasked with preserving culture and heritage, protecting archaeological and historic sites and developing museums. In addition, TCA encourages intellectual art and supports artistic and cultural event held in the capital. Last but not least, the authority coordinates several stakeholder in order to improve touristic and cultural standards of the Emirate. (Etablissement Public Du Musee Du Louvre, 2014)

## **2.2 The Museum**

This section intends to give information about the Louvre Abu Dhabi museum structure and artworks. First, the architectural design of the structure will be presented; then, a description of the location which host the museum will follow. Second, the collection of the museum will be will be illustrated with particular regard to the artworks lending mechanism.

### 2.2.1 The Venue

The Louvre Abu Dhabi museum was designed by the “starchitect” Jean Nouvel and built on Saadiyat Island. Saadiyat island, namely the Island of Happiness, is a natural, 27-km<sup>2</sup> island located in the middle of a virgin lagoon. Jean Nouvel’s design will offer future visitors a high-impact architectural and museum experience that fosters dialogue between cultures. Jean Nouvel wanted his building to have «a form that matches its function as a sanctuary for the most valuable works of art» (Etablissement Public Du Musee Du Louvre, 2014). The Louvre museum complex extends for 64,000 m<sup>2</sup>; 6,000 of whom are dedicated to the permanent collection and 2,000 m<sup>2</sup> to temporary exhibitions.

**Figure 5: rain light from the dome of the Louvre Abu Dhabi museum**



Source Atelier Jean Nouvel

Two-thirds of this complex are covered by a huge dome of 180 meter in diameter, which provides shade and reduces the energy consumption of the museum. Material used for the construction of the dome are capable of reflecting the light in pale colours and to avoid the absorption of heat. The

dome was designed by taking inspiration from the architecture of mosque, mausoleum, caravanserai and madrasa, but has a contemporary style. Pierced with openings to look like palm leaves, it resembles a geometric lace. The dome is pierced in such a manner that the daylight can be captured without letting in too much sun. The geometric template is repeated in different sizes on ten distinct layers. The complex arrangement of the layers is conceived to delicately filter the sun like a rain of light, (see **Figure 5**) in order to create an effect of contrast between light and, which reflects the tension between light and shadows in the country. Moreover inside the museum, a water channel was build. The channel, inspired by the ancient falaj system of Arab engineering, runs through the museum recreating the atmosphere of a little oasis (Etablissement Public Du Musee Du Louvre, 2014).

**Figure 6: Saadiyat Island plan**



Source: Archhistdaily wordpress.com

Beside the Louvre Abu Dhabi museum, the island will be the venue of other cultural institutions designed by other star architects (see **Figure 6**) The island

will also host the Sheikh Zayed National Museum designed by Norman Foster, the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi Museum, with the architectural design of Frank Gehry., the Maritime Museum designed by Tao Dao and the Abu Dhabi Performing Arts Centre By Zaha Hadid (Fairs, 2007). In addition, the island will also host the Manarat al Saadiyat, that translated means "place of enlightenment", a big cultural centre that will organizes cultural activities for the local community. Next to Manarat al Saadiyat it will be possible to visit the UAE pavilion designed by Norman Foster (Visit Abu Dhabi). Thus, Saadiyat Island will serve as cultural district of the city. The establishment of the cultural district will help the Emirates to transform his capital in a cultural destination and to reshape the cultural scene in the Middle East (Etablissement Public Du Musee Du Louvre, 2014). In close proximity to the cultural district will be built a luxury residential complex, hotels and golf courses, designed to accommodate tourist who will come to visit the capital and its cultural hub (Visit Abu Dhabi).

### 2.2.2 The Collection

The Louvre Abu Dhabi museum is not a mere copy of the French Louvre; instead, it is a unique universal museum, the first in the Arab world. The collection of the Louvre Abu Dhabi museums will combine works from its own developing collection with loans from French collections. Its original museography will explore the relation between cultures and civilizations that, at first glance seems to be distant by time and geography. As reported on the museum's website:

*museum galleries tell the story of humanity in twelve inspiring chapters. Each chapter focuses on shared themes and ideas that reveal common connections throughout humanity. The works on show range from prehistoric artefacts to contemporary artworks. The art on show comes from the museum's collection alongside many masterpieces on loan from some of the most world-renowned French museums (Louvre Abu Dhabi Museum, 2018).*

The exhibitions will present universal themes and common influences with a view to display the similarities that a shared human experience can create, beyond any cultural, geographical or historical difference. In the interest of achieving all the above, an acquisition committee was created. The committee composed by TCA Abu Dhabi and Agence France Museum members has the task of examining proposal and monitoring the acquisition process (Etablissement Public Du Musee Du Louvre, 2014). Within the works selected for the collection, you can find paintings by Bellini, Jordaens, Caillebotte, Manet, Gauguin, Magritte and a paper collage by Picasso, never exhibited before. In addition, an Italian gold and garnet fibula from the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC and a gold Iranian bracelet made 3000 years ago will be displayed. The collection is multidisciplinary and encompasses every medium: from paintings and sculpture to gold work and tapestry (Louvre Abu Dhabi Museum, 2018). The collection is conceived to be international; besides the works from Middle East and the West, it includes also works from Africa and Asia. The agreement provides that France will lend to the universal museum of Abu Dhabi works from French collections for a period of ten years. During this period, the United Arab Emirates will be able to acquire works to build its own national collection. Beyond these ten years, only the works of Emirates collections will be exhibited in the permanent galleries of the museum. In addition, France will organize for fifteen years four temporary exhibitions per year (one large, one medium and two small). The number of objects loaned by the French side will decrease gradually: 300 works upon the opening of the museum, then 250 in the 4<sup>th</sup> year and 200 in the 7<sup>th</sup> year. Thus, the commitment of France will go down until that the Louvre Abu Dhabi will acquire total autonomy (Etablissement Public Du Musee Du Louvre, 2014). In order to situate the importance of the collaboration with the Louvre Abu Dhabi, it should be noted that only 35 000 works out of 445 000 owned by the museum taking part in the project are now exhibited. In addition, each year the Louvre Museum acquires between 200 and 300 works of art. Finally, more than 1400 works are lent each year by the Louvre Museum to

other museums, in France and abroad. This allows the Louvre to receive about one thousand works from other museums. Considering these data, contrary to the claim of some sceptics about the project, it is quite clear that there is absolutely no risk of depriving visitors of the major French museums of an excessive number of major works. The loan of 300 works from several museums will not empty the galleries of France museums. In any case, France will maintain strict control over loan of works. It will be impossible, for example, to lend the Mona Lisa or the Venus of Milo. Indeed, works such as those related to the history of France of which you cannot deprive the public and those whose fragility forbids displacement will not be allowed to leave the Louvre Museum. Each loan will be made exclusively on a voluntary basis, under the control of the scientific council and will be the subject of a particular convention, in accordance with the rules of national museums with regard to loan. Each work will be loaned over a period between six months and two years, possibly renewable, except for special objects, in particular the works on paper and textiles that could be lent, in accordance with to international standards, for shorter periods. In the event of a risk to works security, France will be able to proceed to the immediate repatriation of all the works lent. Lastly, guaranties are provided for the withholding of loaned works (Etablissement Public Du Musee Du Louvre, 2014) (Cerisier-ben Guiga, 2007).

### **2.3 The Environment**

By focusing on The United Arab Emirates, this section intends to illustrate the environment in which the first Louvre Museum branch is located. This section will provide a general background of the country, giving information about the Emirates economy, political conditions, demography, foreign relation and strategies for the future development of the country.

### 2.3.1 The United Arab Emirates

Become independent on 1971, the United Arab Emirates is a federation of seven emirates located in the southeast end of the Arabian peninsula, between Oman and Saudi Arabia, bordering both the Persian Gulf and the Oman Gulf. The federation also shares maritime borders with Qatar to the west and Iran to the north.

Figure 7: Geographical location of the United Arab Emirates in the Middle East

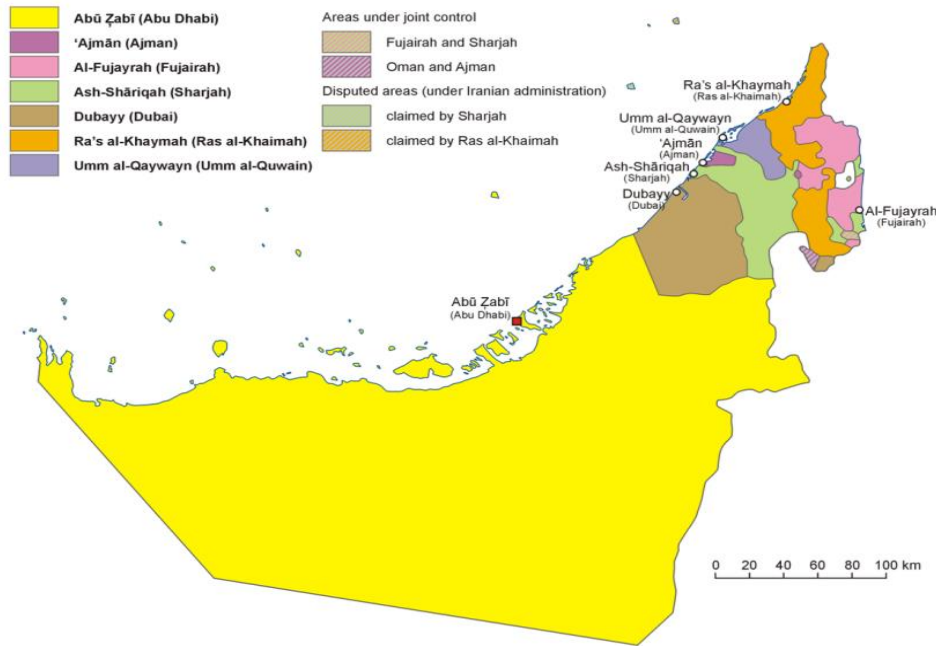


Source: Adapted from Atlantisisc.com

According to the UN, the federation is largely populated by approximately 9 million of inhabitants. Others estimate that the population is lower, around 5

million; but do not take into account the large population of non-nationals, which are estimated to constitute the 90% of the total population. The largest group of non-nationals are South Asian (58%), followed by other Asian (17%) and Western expatriates (8.5%) (World population Review, 2018) (Chamber of Commerce of the United States of America). Administratively, the UAE is a loose federation of emirates, each with its own ruler (United States, Department of State, Bureau of Public Affairs, 1985). The Emirates which form the federation are: Abu Dhabi, Ajman, Dubai, Fujarah, Ras al-Khaimah, Sharjah and Umm al-Quwain (U.S Department of State, 2009-2017)(Metz, H. C. & Library Of Congress. Federal Research Division., 1994). The emirate of Abu Dhabi, which holds 94% of the oil reserves and represents 73% of the territory, is the political and economic keystone of the Federation (Cerisier-ben Guiga, 2007) (New world encyclopedia, 2018). Thus, it is no coincidence that Abu Dhabi City, the capital of the Emirate, it is also the seat of the UAE's government. While Dubai, the country's most populated city, serves as an international aviation and maritime trade hub. At the crossroad between Europe, Russia and Africa, Dubai is almost a mandatory crossing point for air transport and sea freight (Cerisier-ben Guiga, 2007). In 2014, as the Telegraph reported, Dubai International has soared past London's Heathrow to become the world's top airport for international travel, riding a boom in long-haul flights between Asia and the West (Anderson, 2015). A new giant airport was also built in the south of the city, as well as a port (Cerisier-ben Guiga, 2007). The UAE is a federal sovereign absolute monarchy. The constitution establishes the positions of President and Vice President, each serving 5-year terms; a Council of Ministers, led by a Prime Minister (head of government); a Supreme Council of Rulers; and a 40-member Federal National Council, a consultative body whose members are appointed by the emirates rulers (Metz, H. C. & Library Of Congress. Federal Research Division., 1994).

Figure 8: Administrative map of the UAE



Source: Wikipedia.org

Recently, the UAE faced a change in its leadership positions. Since the federation was born, the Emir of Abu Dhabi Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan served as president of the UAE. After his death in 2004, his eldest son Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan took his place as both Emir and President of the UAE, while his half-brother, Sheikh was designated as Crown Prince and Chairman of the executive council of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi. Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum is currently the UAE Prime Minister and Vice President. He is also the Ruler of Dubai Emirate, which is the economic centre of the country. He was ordained when his brother, Sheikh Maktoum bin Rashid Al Maktoum, died in 2006 (Etablissement Public Du Musee Du Louvre, 2014). Even though is not officially stated, it is clear that the distribution of leadership roles within the government is influenced by the political and economic power of each emirate and that the allocation of each role, especially the major ones, is determined by inheritance (Metz, H. C. & Library Of Congress. Federal Research Division., 1994). With respect to foreign relations, The UAE joined the United Nations and the Arab League and has established

diplomatic relations with more than 60 countries, including the US, Japan, Russia, the People's Republic of China, and most western European countries. It has played a moderate role in the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), the Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OAPEC), the United Nations, and the Gulf Cooperation Council. In 1990, after the invasion of Kuwait conducted by Iraq forces, the Federation tried to protect itself relying on the Gulf Cooperation Council, the United States and the other Western allies. The UAE maintain a friendly and long standing relation with the United States. Since its independence in 1971, the UAE have always had US support, especially in the field of security, due to the private commercial ties on oil. The strength and the quality of the relation between these two country increased in the aftermath of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. In 2002, the US and the UAE launched a strategic partnership dialogue covering virtually every aspect of the relationship. The UAE has been a key partner in the war on terror after September 11, 2001 (U.S. Department of State, 2017). With regard to the economic sphere, the Federation has a very prosperous economy with a high per capita income and a sizable annual trade surplus (Central Intelligence Agency, 2018). According to the International Monetary fund, the GDP is set to increase from the \$377 billion recorded in 2012 to \$474.2 billion this year (Halder, 2013). The economy of the country is still mainly based on the oil and gas sector as the Federation owns the world's seventeenth-largest natural gas reserves and the world's seventh-largest reserve of crude oil (97.8 billion barrels), holding more than 7 % of the world total crude oil reserves (World Energy Council, 2016). Gas and oil reserves, allowed the UAE to create heavy industries Even though the economic sector will still rely on oil and gas resources for several decades, the Federation has planned to diversify its economy. The Federation's strategic plan for the next few years focuses on economic diversification, promoting the UAE as a global trade and tourism hub, developing industry, and creating more job opportunities for nationals through improved education and increased private sector employment

(Cerisier-ben Guiga, 2007). It is clear that a significant investment in the cultural field has been done. Along with the newly established cultural district in Abu Dhabi, the Emirate of Dubai also plans to establish its own cultural district. The diversification plan, indeed, includes initiatives in the cultural field, but also involves other domains. Since 2008, the UAE committed to modernize its education system by changing obsolete teaching methods and providing new education structures and facilities. The improvement in the education field it is clear also from the presence of international schools, about 507 in 2016 (Keeling, 2016), and technical and special education centres (Embassy of United Arab Emirates, 2018). The UAE could show the progress achieved so far at the World Expo 2020 that in fact will take place in the Emirates. World Expos can be a catalyst for economic, cultural and social transformation and generates legacies for the host city and nation (Lighthouse, 2013).

## **2.4 Emirati - French relations**

This section is dedicated to the relations between France and the UAE with the purpose of better understanding the partnership between the two countries. The United Arab Emirates has a long history of privileged relations with France in several fields. This long-standing relation was fostered by the willingness of UAE authorities to diversify their partners and offset the influence of the United States in region. Since it became independent in 1971, the UAE had very close economic relations with French companies. Indeed, many French companies, like Total, are there implanted for a long time in the Federation. Today, the UAE absorbs one-third of French exports to the Middle East and is France first customer in the region, far ahead of Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Israel and Iran. Besides the economic area, the two countries developed very solid relations in other fields like education, culture, energy and defence. This section will display the cooperation initiatives undertaken by France and the UAE in

above mentioned fields (United Arab Emirates Ministry of Foreign Affairs & International Cooperation, 2018).

### 2.4.1 Education

The cooperation in the education field is very active. The number of students learning French is growing significantly: approximately 50,000 students in 176 schools to whom is taught as a second or third language. A French department was created in 2004 at the Faculty of Arts and Sciences at Al Ain University. The French education network in the UAE is composed of four schools: the Lycée Louis-Massignon and the Lycée Théodore-Monod in Abu Dhabi, the Georges Pompidou High School in Sharjah and the International French High School of Dubai. About 3,600 students are enrolled in these four institutions. In addition, there are Francophone schools, founded by Lebanese nationals who have just joined the network of the secular mission and two French alliances are located in Abu Dhabi and Dubai. Major projects have been launched on cooperation through the promotion of higher education in France with regard to university cooperation through the promotion of higher education in France, the diffusion of French expertise and know-how and the training of specialist doctors. In 2006, several higher education institutions have been established in the United Arab Emirates with the support of the UAE authorities. Paris-IV-Sorbonne University opened a branch in Abu Dhabi in September 2006. The INSEAD and HEC business schools have established in Abu Dhabi, as well as the ESMOD fashion school in Dubai. Cooperation actions are also carried out in the archaeological field; in archaeological sites of Al Ain, Fujairah and Umm el Qaiwain (Cerisier-ben Guiga, 2007).

## 2.4.2 Culture

After the signing of the bilateral agreement for the construction of the Louvre branch in Abu Dhabi, which can be considered as flagship project of the partnership in the cultural field between the countries, French and Emirati governments continued to have a prosperous dialogue and to take cultural initiatives. An example of this continued collaboration is given by the “Emirati - French cultural programme”. Before the Louvre opening of November 2017, The United Arab Emirates and France reaffirmed their strong and long-lasting friendship through the launch of the “Emirati - French cultural programme”. Created in honour of the upcoming inauguration of the museum, the programme celebrated, the successful cooperation between the two countries in the cultural field. From March 2016 to March 2018, several events have been organized with the aim of highlighting youth talent and expertise from both countries. The programme started with the concert of the Gustav Mahler youth orchestra, which performed original Emirati - French compositions, and continued with the show of the Equestrian Academy of Versailles, which brought thirty horses to perform in Al Ain an equestrian choreography created by Bartabas (Institut Français). In addition, a theatre company with the Conservatoire national supérieur d’art dramatique was formed. Abu Dhabi Tourism & Culture Authority (TCA Abu Dhabi), the French Embassy and the Institut Français worked together for the creation of this theatre company with the intent to promote and lay the groundwork for the emergence of experimental theatre in the UAE. On February 2017, the company performed four shows titled “I Am My language” at Manarat Al Saadiyat on Saadiyat Island in Abu Dhabi (Badih, 2018). Furthermore, on November of the same year, the French productions company Groupe F prepared a special pyrotechnic show for the inauguration of the Louvre Abu Dhabi while, a month later, “Co-Lab: Contemporary Art and Savoir-faire” project was launched. Co-Lab project is a contemporary art exhibition, still on display at the Louvre Abu Dhabi,

which results from the collaboration between UAE-based artists and four French manufactures (Embassy of France in Abu Dhabi, 2017).

### 2.4.3 Defence

In 1975, France and the United Arab Emirates have signed a defence agreement. From then on, the cooperation in the defence field has intensified especially for what concerns the military equipment supply. Throughout the years after the 1975 defence agreement, UAE's government has shown the intention to not rely exclusively on United States for military supply but to diversify its military suppliers. For this reason, UAE government decided to buy 380 Leclerc tanks and about 60 Mirage 2000 warplanes from France (Cody, 2009). Today, France is a leading military supplier to the Gulf stat; it has supplied about half of the UAE military's equipment. In 2007, after French presidential election, the newly elected president Nicolas Sarkozy declared in a white paper on national security the importance of the Persian gulf region. In the white paper, President Sarkozy stated that the Gulf area was not only crucial to France's security but also for that of the world. In so doing, Sarkozy made a shift in national security strategy, that was based for a long time on the engagement of traditional African allies. The decision to look beyond Africa also fits Sarkozy's desire to be a more active strategic partner of the United States. In 2009, President Sarkozy flew to the UAE in occasion of the inauguration of the so- called "Peace Camp", the first French permanent military base in the Persian Gulf region. The new French military base can host up to 500 French troops and includes a navy base, an air base and a training camp. As part of the new base arrangements, Sarkozy signed agreements with Abu Dhabi's rulers updating defence accords that date from 1975, essentially pledging France's assistance to the UAE during crises (BBC News, 2009). Today, there is a broad convergence of views on the regional

issues between the two countries which continue to collaborate in the defence fields by signing significant contracts in the field of aeronautics and military equipment (Cody, 2009).

#### 2.4.4 Energy

Recently, France and the UAE have made a commitment to cooperate also in the field of energy. Along with the Russian Tenex, French company Areva will supply the first nuclear power project based in the United Arab Emirates. Inaugurated on March 2011, Barakah Nuclear power plant is expected to be operational in 2020 and to supply up to a quarter of the UAE electricity and save approximately 12 million tons of greenhouse gas emissions a year. French company Areva will provide the fuel for Barakah plant by supplying uranium concentrates. In addition, the company will also provide conversion and enrichment services (Power technology). In addition, France and the UAE signed to nuclear cooperation agreement on the 14<sup>th</sup> December 2016. A French delegation was sent to Vienna to sign the agreements on behalf of the French government. The delegation included Philippe Corr ea, Director of the Institut national des sciences et techniques nucl aires (National Institute for Nuclear Science and Technology - INSTN) and Marc-G rard Albert, Director of International Affairs of the Institut de Radioprotection et de S uret  Nucl aire (Institute for Radioprotection and Nuclear Safety-IRSN). The French delegation was received at the Embassy of the United Arab Emirates by His Excellency Ambassador Hamad Al Kaabi, Permanent Representative of the United Arab Emirates in Vienna. The first agreements was signed by Mr Corr ea, on behalf of INSTN and Ambassador Al representing the Federal Authority for Nuclear Regulation of the United Arab Emirates (FANR). The agreement stipulates that the French INSTN is committed to contribute significantly to the training of UAE local inspector. INSTN commits to provide theoretical and practical

training, alongside capacity building in the field of nuclear safety. The second agreement, was signed between the IRSN, represented by Marc-Gérard Albert, and the FANR. The agreement is complementary to the initial arrangement of 2013 and provides for its implementation. On 2013, IRSN and FANR have undertaken prosperous exchanges in several scientific and technical fields. Taking in to consideration the collaboration started in 2013, the IRSN commits to take the cooperation to next level, by implementing and extending new activities in those fields. Among IRSN implementing initiatives, there is the launch of an R&D programme in the field of environment and the specification of training modules for Emirati nuclear regulators (Permanent Mission of France to the United Nations and the International Organizations in Vienna, 2016).

## Chapter 3

### Theory into practice: concepts and future developments

This chapter is dedicated to the application of concepts, which have been mentioned before, to the case study of my dissertation. In this chapter we will try to analyse what kind of impact the establishment of the Louvre Abu Dhabi museum might have both on France and the United Arab Emirates. We will try to find answer to this subject using the concepts of soft power and place branding. First we will see how the concept of soft power is related to the building of the museum in the Emirati, trying to determine what kind of effects the project might generate both for the France and the UAE. Then, we will try to investigate on the project through the lenses of place branding, in an attempt to define the role played by the museum in the branding process of France and the UAE. The effects, related to both concepts, will be identified generally and in the abstract, mainly as the possible outcomes that the Louvre Abu Dhabi museum might produce. The concrete outcomes of the project, instead, will be outlined in the last part of my work that will be, indeed, dedicated to the deepening of tangible effects, in an effort to prove how soft power is at work, since cultural diplomacy and place branding facets of the project can create benefits and opportunities for both countries .

#### 3.1 Soft power implications

The first section of this chapter tries to outline to what extent the concept of soft power is involved in the establishment of the Louvre Abu Dhabi Museum. The analysis of soft power implications will be presented both in relation to France and United Arab Emirates. Since cultural diplomacy is a one of public

diplomacy's approaches and public diplomacy is a mechanism to deploy soft power, we will consider cultural diplomacy as an instrument of soft power. The two concepts are deeply intertwined: if soft power is the ability of an international actor to attract and persuade another international actor, in a way that the former might advance its interest or achieve its purposes; cultural diplomacy is the action that enables to achieve the stated objectives, by means of cultural assets. In support of this, it is worth noting that culture is one of soft power main sources and cultural diplomacy is the way in which this source is being used. By fostering its cultural heritage and transmitting its culture overseas a country has the ability to influence another international actor and benefit from it. Thus, we will now focus on the role played by the Louvre Abu Dhabi Museum in wielding and exerting soft power. First the role of the museum in the exertion of French soft power will be presented, then a focus on the role of the museum in the affirmation of UAE soft power will follow.

### 3.1.1 French Side

The fact that for France the Louvre Abu Dhabi museum is a tool to wield soft power it is not a secret. When searching for sources in support of this argument, we can find many international publications which present the Abu Dhabi project as an instrument for France to spread its influence in the Middle East. This common opinion about the topic results probably from the speech held by President Macron during the inauguration of the Museum. The French President started his speech celebrating the beauty of the museum about the power of beauty which is both an ambition and motivation to build a better future: « Beauty is an education in itself, because it prompts us to aim higher, to go beyond ourselves and our condition» and also to create dialogue between civilizations: «It builds a bridge between continents which some people today

would like to divide; it builds a bridge between the generations». The President went on by saying that, even though France is well accustomed to lend its artworks and build museums, the Louvre Abu Dhabi is completely different because: « In reality we have nothing more urgent to do, nor more important, than to promote culture, education, beauty and what seems to us to express the highest degree of humanity». Then he continued underlining how the Louvre Abu Dhabi has also the power to change the future of the country:

*That this museum has emerged in Abu Dhabi is very meaningful for France; today you're at the epicentre of this world of accelerating globalization. You're at the crossroads of the Western and Eastern worlds. You face towards Europe as much as towards the Arab world, India and China. You're the pivotal point between the European, African and Asian continents. You're at the heart of the geopolitical tensions shaking the world. You have a stake in these hugely complex civilizational and religious challenges, but also in the crucial climate crises that are gripping us (Embassy of France in London, 2017).*

Afterwards, President Macron stressed also the importance of the project for France: «it's these masterpieces from so many continents and eras, collected and sampled here in this way. And doing this here has very special meaning». To conclude Macron remarked the role played by France in the promotion of culture: «France knows it must maintain its position in this dialogue of cultures, in this outreach of art and heritage» and affirmed how the museum represents «very special link between our two countries» (Embassy of France in London, 2017). The inspired speech of the French president leaves a little room for imagination; the Louvre Abu Dhabi Museum constitutes a powerful symbol of the French presence not only in the UAE, but also in a complicated area such as the Middle East. It is an occasion for France to contribute to the development of the country and take credit for it; by sharing its artworks, the country has the opportunity to show the strength of its cultural diplomacy. The soft power subtext of the speech becomes even more relevant if we consider the political atmosphere before the inauguration of the museum. The whole speech can be read as the expression of France's pledge to co-opt other nations through

softness as opposed to the aggressive foreign policy of United States President Donald Trump. In fact, Macron's speech occurred in the aftermath of President Trump reacting to North Korean provocation related to nuclear weapons. With his famous «do not try us», President trump gave a warning, that sounded more like a threat, and reiterated its commitment to counter provocation with military force (BBC News, 2017). Moreover, the reference made to climatic crises can be seen as a critic of Trump's way line of thought on global warming (Zaretsky, 2017). In fact on June 2017, so just few months before Louvre Abu Dhabi inauguration, President trump announced that the United States would have withdrawn from the Paris climate accord due to its terms, considered unfair for the whole United States (Gagliardi, 2017). Therefore we might say that the Louvre Abu Dhabi opening constituted an opportunity for President Macron to criticize President's Trump harsh approach in foreign policy and proposing France ability to persuade as an example of the effectiveness of soft power. Moreover, it constituted also an occasion for France to be the voice of a policy of conciliation and cooperation, which prefers the use of dialogue instead of threat. However, president Macron presence to the inauguration also sent out of how a soft approach can lead to benefits of hard power, since after the inauguration the French president visited French naval base in the UAE. The French naval base gives some evidence of the benefits soft power may generate. It was built in 2009 when Sarkozy taking advantage of the relationship with the Emirati, which was strengthened by the Louvre agreement signed in 2007, expanded French military influence in the Emirati and consequently, in the Middle East. During his visit President Macron, even though great supporter of the soft power approach, didn't hesitate to underline the importance of French military presence in the country and the fact that, if necessary, France might give military help in the region. In so doing, he showed how France has the ability to use soft power to also reinforce its hard power (Zaretsky, 2017). Beyond being an opportunity to show a certain capacity to exert to soft power, the Louvre Abu Dhabi Museum also enabled France to take UK's position of

most influenced country of the world. The major cultural initiative of the Louvre Abu Dhabi Museum along with the sophisticated political approach, new elected President Macron, in which culture is a primary task, allowed France to reach the first position in Soft Power 30 Index, international ranking of most influent nations (The National Business Review, 2018). It is a matter of fact that the Louvre Abu Dhabi project had a significant impact in achieving this objective. This view is widely shared especially by British personalities belonging to art world and politics which, after seeing UK lose its leading position in soft power, considered the project as a missed opportunity for their country. They blamed the British politicians for this, affirming they were not able to promote British cultural resources for the benefit of the country. Above all, they recognised they have lost a chance to use their cultural institutions to have political and economic benefits in the region, which on the contrary France will be able to do. Moreover, they were concerned that the presence of France in the Emirati, now strengthened by the building of the Louvre Abu Dhabi, will undermine the British influence in the UAE and in the region. In fact, they believe that it is impossible to preserve a strong connection with the Emirati without sharing cultural assets and, since France is favoured on this front, having besides the Louvre several other education institutions, including the Sorbonne, present in the territory, they are scared that the UK might lose an old and powerful ally such as the UAE. Further to this, British personalities active in the museum sector were particular disappointed by this missed opportunity because, if only the UAE had asked to UK to start a cultural partnership, the export of one of the many British museums could have led to considerable earnings which could have been invested in cultural economy and particularly in the museum sector, which in 2017 was dramatically affected by the cut in public funding of the previous years (Corkery, 2017). Although British concerns might sound quite excessive they are not unfounded. Thanks to the revenues from the French-Emirati agreement, France will not only be able to invest in new creative initiatives but also to improve cultural institutions within the

country. Furthermore, British influence in the UAE might actually be weakened since Macron during his speech proposed in underhand way to introduce the study of French language in the Emirati (Zaretsky, 2017). It seems that UAE government representative liked the proposal of the French President and are planning how to include French language as a subject in public schools (Zaatari, 2018). In so doing, English language, which is the most widely spoken language after Arabic, might lose its role of second language of the UAE (Chepkemioi, 2017). To conclude, we can affirm that the Louvre Abu Dhabi Museum is the proof of French excellent and long-standing cultural diplomacy, a tool that enables France to wield and increase its soft power. The Museum gives the opportunity to France to increase its presence and influence in the Middle East and weaken the influence of other international actors in the region. It allows France to be promote dialogue and peace in the region, thus acquiring greater political weight in the international arena. It seals the strong relationship between France and the UAE and favours further collaborations, maybe in other fields, that could bring benefits and profits to both parties.

### 3.1.2 Emirati Side

The Louvre Abu Dhabi museum is a huge joint project that aims at the promotion of the arts and cultural dialogue in the Middle East. However, from the very beginning it was quite evident that the project was not made only for art's sake and noble purposes. The Louvre Abu Dhabi represents a fundamental stage in the revitalization plan of the country which aspires to become the most significant wielder of soft power in the region. According to the political scientist Alexandre Kazerouni, the reasons behind this project are to be found within the context of the second Gulf war. In an interview released to the French newspaper Le Monde, Kazerouni explained the facts which have lead

the UAE to be aware of the potential that art has in foreign policy. It all started with the Kuwait exposing to US congress the crimes against children committed by Iraqi soldiers. Whilst lately it turned out to be just a subtle strategy to trigger US military action in the area, Kuwait's report led to the exhibition of Kuwait's national museum collection in the United States. The exhibition was a great opportunity for Kuwait to send a political message, because the artworks depicted it as a country that stands up against barbarism. Kazerouni observes that this was the exact moment in which the UAE realized that art or, more accurately culture as a whole, owns a significant power. The UAE authorities understood that in order to be relevant in the world it is necessary first to be relevant to the West. In order to get the attention of Western countries it is important to deal with public opinion and to gain its support. However, being a Gulf country does not facilitate the achievement of this objective. Since all Gulf countries are frequently associated with Islamic extremism in public imagination and sometimes, have also been accused of financing Islamist terror cells like ISIS, they do not have such positive connotation in public opinion; but rather are viewed with suspicion. Nevertheless, as Kazerouni explained, the UAE had the urge to interact with public opinion and in particular with those artist and intellectuals, who partly shape it. Every museum or foreign university helps the nation to engage in cronyism with Western cultural elites (Kazerouni, 2017). From then onwards, the UAE started a soft power strategy making massive investments for the development of the cultural field, which find their ultimate expression in the Louvre Abu Dhabi venture. Besides the need for international recognition, there is another factor that drives the UAE to demonstrate its soft power and is to be found in the rivalry with the other states of the Gulf, especially with Qatar. The two nations have almost the same background, they both: became independent in 1971; are energy suppliers; are wealthy countries; have flagship carrier airline companies, promote themselves as a touristic destination; sponsor football teams and sport events. It is quite evident that it is not easy for the UAE to become the most significant wielder of

soft power in the region, when dealing with a competitor who has the same means and resources to succeed. The smouldering rivalry that has resulted in a competition for soft power has its origin in the dispute between Qatar and the other countries of the Gulf, which over the years did not stand the behaviour of Qatari royals, the way in which Qatari television Al-Jazeera depict them and Qatari relationship with Iran. Therefore, the bad blood between Gulf nations and Qatar has turn into a display of supremacy. So, the UAE and Qatar engage in a never ending competition in which each country tries to show that is better than the other. The race for soft power supremacy reached its peak in 2010,when Qatar was chosen as hosting country for the 2022 FIFA World Cup, news that made the UAE even more jealous of its rival, since it is well know that the UAE loves football (Sly, 2018). But the Qatari success did not frighten the UAE which, in 2013, squared things after being selected to host the Expo 2020 in Dubai (The Express Tribune, 2017). At some point the race between the two countries seemed to be ended, apparently with the Emirati overtaking Qatar. However, this apparent overtake did not resulted from a well-planned soft power strategy but came from a diplomatic crisis. On June 2017, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Egypt and Bahrain charged Qatar with support for terrorism. The bloc, led by Saudi Arabia, accused Qatar to finance terror cells. The initiative was designed to bring Qatar to interrupt any relations with Iran, Saudi's first opponent. As expected, Qatar denied any allegation, so the bloc started to threaten it with a possible embargo. In order to avoid it, Qatar would have to fulfil the bloc's request, including the suspension of relations with Iran. However, Qatar refused to fulfil the requests and so the nations of the bloc proceed to the implementation of the embargo which, apparently, is still ongoing (Il Post, 2018). This sort of ostracism against Qatar provides the UAE with a plenty room for manoeuvre for reasserting itself as hegemonic soft power in the region. In the light of the above, it is worth noting that the Louvre Abu Dhabi Museum constitutes an essential component in the race for soft power supremacy engaged by the two countries. Its inauguration on November 2017,

just few months after the embargo, allowed the UAE to overshadow its rival and to be in the spotlight of the international stage. The museum, which has been often defined as a bridge between civilizations, it is also said to reflect the reputation of the country, which affirms to be tolerant and open, and desires to establish peace through the region (Carvaja, 2017). Thus, it is a cultural diplomacy tool that enables the Emirati to wield soft power in the region. Similarly to what happens with France, the Abu Dhabi museum is a major cultural asset that the UAE want to show to the world, in order to express its openness to Western countries. However, considering the role of the UAE in Qatar crisis, it is a matter of fact that there is some discrepancy between words and facts. Anyway, this will not prevent tourists to visit the museum, foreign companies to import in the Emirati or Western countries to make deals with the UAE. On the contrary, after the Louvre Abu Dhabi museum opening, it is more likely that the country was subject to a massive touristic flow and started new trade negotiations and projects with other countries. Therefore, the fact that, even after the crisis, the UAE had its reputation still intact and was still able to achieve its interests, is evidence of the extraordinary soft power of the museum. In other words, the museum, being within the framework of cultural diplomacy, through its attractiveness allows the UAE to engage with other countries, to benefits in other fields and to expand its influence in the region. Therefore is UAE soft power deployed by cultural diplomacy. The Louvre Abu Dhabi Museum was just the tip of the iceberg, since more soft power tools are coming. The UAE is now completely aware of its ability to exert soft power and for this reason decided to go for an upgrade. In fact, the government has decided to create a Soft Power Council with the aim of the creation of a strategy to increase the soft power of the nation. The strategy is part of the more general national development plan, Vision 2021, designed to make the UAE one of the best countries in the world, by the 50th anniversary of the birth of the Federation (United Arab Emirates Vision 2021) (Salama, 2018). The strategy planned by the council was lunched on September 2017, on the occasion of the

Government's Annual Meetings. The fundamental pillars which underpinning the soft power strategy are:

- The development of a unified direction for various sector including economy, humanities, tourism, media and science;
- The promotion of the country as a gateway to the region;
- The establishment of the country as a regional capital for culture, art and tourism;
- The establishment UAE's reputation as a modern and tolerant country that welcome all people from across the world (The Official Portal of the UAE Government, 2018).

Furthermore, the strategy also sets out the fundamental elements of UAE's public diplomacy, which are: humanitarian diplomacy, scientific and academic diplomacy, national representative diplomacy, people diplomacy, culture and media diplomacy and economic diplomacy. The purpose of the strategy is to strengthen the reputation of the country abroad by emphasizing its identity, heritage, culture and UAE contribution to the world. For what concern UAE's soft power action in terms of culture and heritage, at the beginning of February 2017, a meeting about cultural cooperation was held at the Louvre Abu Dhabi Museum. The Future culture retreat, so has been called, was organized by the Ministry of Culture and Knowledge Development and brought together diplomats, media leaders, business entrepreneurs, policy-makers and experts of the cultural sector to discuss about the possible creation of a global cultural development programme. During the meeting's sessions, several ideas for encouraging cultural activity in the UAE have emerged, as well as the Federation desire to enhance the relations with the others countries through cultural cooperation actions. Thus, the UAE's plans to strengthen the role of its cultural attaché in embassies abroad and to engage in more cooperation project with UNESCO. There is already some evidence of the efforts of the country to collaborate with UNESCO, since the UAE joined the organization in the rebuilding of Iraq's Mosul's Grand Al Nuri Mosque, destroyed by terrorist organization ISIS in 2014. Noura Al Kaabi, UAE's Minister of Culture and

Knowledge Development, declared that the rebuilding of the mosque in collaboration with UNESCO was an effort to reverse the damage done by ISIS to the image of Islam (The National, 2017). A week after the meeting, the Ministry of Culture and Knowledge Development also announced the institution of a fund for cultural development under its supervision. The fund will support UAE's cultural activity and promote cultural projects all over the Federation. At the same time, the government released the news that, in the framework of cultural diplomacy, that the Ministry of Culture and Knowledge Development will also create and manage a "Creative Industries Contribution Index". The initiative will be useful both to determine the cultural initiatives in which it is worth investing and to show to prove that cultural industry is crucial to UAE's economic diversification plan, since it can contribute to the economic growth of the country (Magpie media, 2018). In conclusion, through the appeal of the Louvre Abu Dhabi museum, the UAE has the capacity to expand its influence in the region, overtake rivals such as Qatar in the race for soft power supremacy and gain a more important position on the international stage; this is how soft power is at stake.

### 3.2 Place Branding implications

Museums, more than other institutions, have played a significant role in branding a place or a nation. A museum can serve as brilliant brand symbol. Indeed, a museum with a relevant fame plays a role to constitute people's image of a city and leads to tangible benefits for the city or country that hosts it. The Guggenheim museum in Bilbao provides a significant example of this phenomenon. With the establishment of the Guggenheim of Bilbao, the economy of the Basque regions has flourished. Thanks to the tourism that the museum has brought, now the city has a better reputation and the quality of the life of the citizens has been improved (Go & Govers, 2011). Through the

application of a branding strategy, a country may define its image with the aim of establishing an international reputation. In this section, we will see the role of the Louvre Abu Dhabi museum in the process how nation branding, in an attempt to determine which can of outcome might result from the involvement of the museum in the branding process of both countries.

### 3.2.1 Reshaping Emirati image.

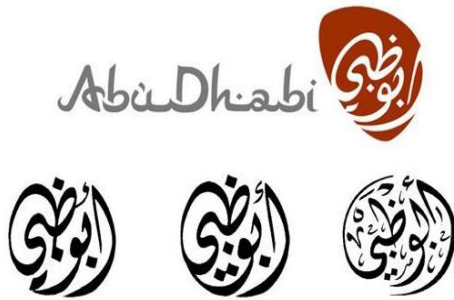
Place branding could be a crucial element to reshape the image of those countries which experienced a rapid economic growth but are not, due to lack of time, capable to align national values to the economic development. Being an emerging leader on the international stage, place branding, or better nation branding, could also helped the UAE to reshape its global image. The first challenge a country has to face when branding it is to eradicate stereotypes and prejudice that usually collective imagination feels to it. Thus, it is necessary to create an image capable of expressing the quality of country's resources, in order to avoid that stereotypes and prejudice characterise negatively the country and, in so doing, prevent other countries to have relations with it. In the case of the UAE, the Federation has long been seen as a country with a significant wealth derived from oil sales; but this wealth has always been perceived as privilege of a few and not well distributed among population. Moreover, in the collective mind, the Federation was often viewed as a retrograde country, with no respect for human rights and no tolerance towards diversity. In other words, the issue is that the country was featured with the Arabic cliché and not with its own Emirati identity. A proof of this is given by the fact that, after almost five years from the 9/11 attack, the US government, which had assigned the management of US ports to the Emirati DP World company, had to stop the collaboration with Dubai's port operator, due to the

negative US citizens' reaction to this news (Balakrishnan, 2015). Then, public's opinion perspective about UAE soon became an issue for the Federation authorities, which started the branding process of the nation, with the aim of ensuring it a better future. However, it is not easy to convince people to change opinion about something; especially when prejudice is deep-rooted, an engagement on all fronts is needed. Although the goal is not easy to achieve, the presence of country-based companies increases the chance to succeed in branding the nation. Country-based companies are key to nation branding success because of the "halo effect" they can generate. In marketing, halo effect is a concept used to illustrate positive customer's approach to a company's product, after having a positive experience with other products supplied by the same company (Kenton, 2018). Similarly, the halo effect might be employed also in the branding nation process. If a customer perceives positively country-based brands, it is very possible that he or she will have a positive attitude towards the nation where they come from. In this way, the image of the nation will be improved, free from the stereotypes traditionally associated with it. Country-based brands capable of generating the halo effect can also be called "halo brands" (Balakrishnan, 2015). Halo brands can serve somehow as national brand ambassador and the way in which they are perceived can have an impact on the reputation of the nation. Furthermore, the halo effect constitutes an helpful instrument for the conservation of national reputation in time of crisis, important also for the UAE because of its geographical position. The Middle East has long been scene of clashes thus, whilst not directly or actively, the UAE might suddenly be surrounded by civil wars, assaults and other similar issues, that could jeopardize the reputation of the country for years to come. Luckily for it, the Federation can rely on several country-based brands, which could contribute to uphold country's reputation in case of crisis. The most famous country-based brands are, with no doubt, the two flag carrier airline companies: Emirates and Etihad Airways. Even cultural initiatives organized in partnership with country-based brands have a positive impact on the reputation of the

nation. The UAE hosts several sports events, mainly supported by its flag carrier airline companies, the most popular are: Abu Dhabi Gran Prix, Dubai Duty Free Tennis Championships, Abu Dhabi Golf Championship, Dubai Marathon and Dubai International Parachuting Championship (Balakrishnan, 2015). However, the initiatives are not only related to sports, but also to arts and entertainment like the Dubai International Film Festival, the Emirates airline Festival of Literature and the Emirates airline Dubai Jazz Festival (Emirates ). Furthermore, there is also a positive impact on the image of the nation resulting from main sponsorships in football world, since both Emirates and Etihad sponsor several major league teams, such as AC Milan, Real Madrid and Manchester City (Balakrishnan, 2015). Thanks to these initiatives and sponsorships, UAE's brand now is in the 20th place in nation brand's rankings published by the brand business valuation consultancy Brand Finance (Nair, 2018). Around four years ago there was already the groundwork for a good outcome, since the UAE was at the 2th place of CBI ranking dedicated to tomorrow leading's country brand of for the year 2014-2015 (FutureBrand, 2015). Today, UAE nation brand is worth about \$707 billion and is ranked as 3th strongest nation brand in Brand Finance ranking; an astonishing result considering that nation branding activity started only about 40 years ago (Nair, 2018) (Anderson, 2017). The first branding action was made approximately at the beginning of the 1980s and focused on the branding of Dubai. Today, Dubai is still the most famous city of the Federation; the one that immediately comes to people's mind when thinking about the UAE. Dubai branding strategy arose from the necessity to support economic interests of the Federation in the region. The economy of the city and of the whole Emirate needed to be diversified, due to the possible shortage of oil resources, that the Emirate would have probably met in future years (Zeinaddine, 2017). So, UAE government decided to invest in the establishment of new companies in the field of services. First of all, as a result of US sanctions imposed on Iran in 1979, Dubai was soon able to reach a proper level of economic independence, by substituting for Iran's port. Then, in

1985, the Jebel Ali Free Trade Zone was implemented by making Dubai one of the largest re-export centres of the world. Secondly, the government decided to invest heavily in infrastructures, developed aviation and urban networks and constructed world record breaker buildings, such as the Burj Khalifa and the Dubai Mall, which became symbols of the city and, even today, are visited every year by people from all around the world. In fact, these spectacular and futuristic building have happened to grow tourism sector; Dubai soon became a cosmopolitan and cutting-edge city, one of the top travel destination of the world. On 2017, indeed, the city welcomed around 15.79 million of travellers and ranked fourth in MasterCard Global Destination Cities Index, international ranking about the most visited cities of the world (MasterCard Engagement Bureau , 2018). The growth of the tourism sector was facilitated by a well-functioning flight network. In a very short time the first airport of the city, Dubai International, became one of the busiest airports of the world ; in fact, only in 2011, it has welcomed about 46.28 million of passengers (Airport Technology). For this reason, the government has plans to enlarge the airport infrastructure, by building an additional area of Dubai International and expanding Al Maktoum, the second airport of the city (Cornwell, Arnold, & Barbuscia, 2018). Known all over the world as the “city of superlatives”, Dubai became the most visited city of the country and also its emblem (Goldman, 2012). However, Dubai is the capital city of the Emirate of Dubai and not of the whole UAE. Dubai’s popularity has long overshadowed the real capital city, which is Abu Dhabi. Therefore, the rulers of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi, that also represent the majority of UAE ruling class, decided that something had to be done in order to restore the prestige Abu Dhabi was entitled to. Abu Dhabi’s

Figure 9 Abu Dhabi Emirate logo



Adapted from Our Abu Dhabi

Emirate branding strategy was implemented quite late in comparison with that of Dubai. It all started at the beginning of the 2000s with the establishment of the Office of Brand of Abu Dhabi, designed to create a branding strategy for the city and the Emirate (Zeinaddine, 2017). The first step of the Office was the creation of a strong visual identity for the brand of the nation. A logo was created as well as a slogan that could encapsulate the attitude of the Emirate. The logo, created by the Office with the help of M&C Saatchi agency, reflects the Emirate's tradition, history and heritage (Clinton, 2010). The shape of the red brand mark (see **Figure 9**) recalls the traditional dhow sailing boat and is formed by the Arabic version of the name of the Emirate. The font used for the letters pays tribute to Arabic calligraphy, while the use of colours such as sand, grey and red, was inspired by elements of Abu Dhabi's heritage and landscape (Our Abu Dhabi, 2017). The slogan, also created in collaboration with M&C Saatchi agency, is "travellers are welcome" and was transmitted on different communication levels, both in the country and overseas, in order to revitalise the image of the Emirate (Zeinaddine, 2017). The new image of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi, as well as that of its capital city, was designed to be completely different from the image of the Emirate and city of Dubai. In fact, Abu Dhabi's authorities wanted to represent the Emirate as a place of stillness, tradition-bound but open to innovation and tourism. Abu Dhabi was meant to be not only the capital city of the country and Emirate, but also the cultural capital of the region, appealing to international travellers but still loyal to national roots. In this way it would have been possible to make Abu Dhabi the cultural beacon of the country and restate its status of capital city. Moreover, as it happened for Dubai, Abu Dhabi needed to create new financial sources as an alternative to oil economy. For all the

above reasons, in 2011 a blueprint for the improvement of the Emirate, called Abu Dhabi Plan was designed and then implemented. Abu Dhabi Plan encompasses 25 goals and 83 programmes intended to their achievement, with the ultimate aim of enhancing some elements vital for the growth of the Emirate, which are: social and economic development, government affairs, infrastructure, environment, security, justice and safety (Our Abu Dhabi, 2017). Among the stated programmes, it is worth noting that we can find reference to culture on more than one occasion. Culture can both be the object of the goal or serve as a mean to achieve it, given that some programmes are dedicated to its improvement or promotion, while others use it for tourism development. The fact that the Emirate decided to rely on culture to increase tourism sector is not a case. Culture is maybe the most important component of branding, since it can positively affect other branding components such as tourism. Moreover, investing in culture means also projecting a better country reputation because the international community recognizes the value of those country capable of preserving their cultural heritage and innovating in the cultural sector. Thus, culture serves both to increase tourism, as well as economic benefits that flow from it, and to build a better reputation for the country, showcasing the best it can offer. Considering the overall framework, we can now analyse the impact of the Louvre Abu Dhabi museum on the UAE brand image. The Louvre Abu Dhabi museum is a tool to improve the image of the city, of the Emirate and, by extension of nation. It brings added value to UAE reputation and gives a positive connotation to its image. The Louvre Abu Dhabi brings several benefits to country's image: firstly, the fame of Louvre gives to the UAE more prominence in the global arena; secondly, the universalistic aspect of the museum gives the impression that the UAE is tolerant towards cultural diversity; thirdly, the museum helps to eradicate stereotypes associated to the country, showing a nation open to dialogue and cooperation; lastly, the museum portrays the vision of the country along its willingness to move on from oil age. The museum also brings some benefits to the image of the city:

since the international dimension of the project Abu Dhabi, subjected to global exposure, will no longer be overshadowed by Dubai's popularity and, in this way, it will finally be able to enjoy its role of capital city. Moreover, having the name of its Parisian mother institution, the Louvre Abu Dhabi might also enjoy the halo effect. It is quite possible that nationals or foreigners, who previously visited the French Louvre and had a positive experience, will be willing to visit the Emirati satellite, thus increasing the tourism flow to the Emirate. Even if it carries the name of a French institution, being the outcome of a bilateral agreement and considering the French expertise in the field, the Louvre Abu Dhabi appears as an high-quality French-Emirati product and this impacts positively on international public's mind and reflects on their opinion about the UAE, which is finally favourably featured. In sum, the Louvre Abu Dhabi museum is an important element in the process of branding UAE. The museum characterise the city and the Emirate of Abu Dhabi as a cultural corner of the Federation; contributes to the growth and diversification of Abu Dhabi economy and, subsequently of the nation. It allows the UAE to give substance and increase the reputation of the country, building and projecting a positive image abroad. Thanks to it, the UAE gain the visibility required to be favourably perceived by other international actors and be in a more relevant position on the international stage.

### 3.2.2 Branding France

Branding the nation means to implement a strategy capable of defining and transmitting to the public a positive image of the nation. The perception of the nation that international public has is the focus of the strategy, because it determines the reputation of the nation. Reputation is an intangible resource that can affect nation's interests whether positively or not. Enjoying a good

reputation means having more chance to advance nation's interest of any kind. However, in order to benefit from a good reputation, first it is necessary to produce an image of the country, that might be recognised as attractive by people all over the world. And this is precisely where nation branding comes in, it turns reputation into an asset that generates value for the nation and enables it to promote its economic and political interest. In the case of France or better of the brand France, we have to take a step forward because branding France does not mean to determine a reputation from scratch. France already enjoys a well established reputation that contributes to give value to its brand. Today, France's nation brand is one of the most valuable of the world. As reported by Brand Finance, on 2017 its value increased of 27% compared to the previous year (Brand Finance, 2017). For this reason, is ranked as the 6th most valuable nation brand of the world. It is worth noting the peculiar role played by stereotypes in shaping French image. Contrary to what happens with the Emirati, the reputation here takes advantage from the stereotypes and cliché usually associated to France and French people. In public imagination France is usually perceived as an elegant and romantic country, great supporter of arts and creativity. It is viewed as the country of fashion, literature, wine and poetry, where iconic cultural institutions, such as the Sorbonne and the Louvre are located. Professor Jean-Noël Kapferer observed that stereotypes have a huge potential for favourably depicting the country. So, in spite of promoting itself on the basis of self- definition, it would be better for France to adopt them, because they may serve to achieve a greater goal. In fact he affirms that:

*France is a country of science, which strives to promote the progress of humanity beyond our borders, and it is in our interest to continue to be seen this way. Our advantage is the internationalization of our schools and universities as well as overseas recognition of our major cultural icons (the Louvre, the Sorbonne, and so on). If the Germans represent quality and reliability, and the Italians panache and charm, the French remain a mix of creativity and seriousness, technology, and inventiveness (Kapferer, 2012)*

Since brand France is among the most valuable nation brands, French policymakers have probably listened to Professor Kapfefer advice. However, although stereotypes maybe in some way have initially helped the promotion of country's image, it is more likely that the success of Brand France results from a well-managed combination of elements that Anholt identifies as place branding core dimensions. With an esteemed value of 3 trillion dollars in 2017, the value of Brand France appears as to be the result of a balanced mix of exports, tourism, culture and governance dimensions. The reputation of the country is still solid: French products, particularly those cosmetics and fashion-related, are among worldwide bestsellers; France is on the top in world tourism rankings; and its museums are ranked among the most visited attractions in the world, with the Louvre at the top of the list (Museum EU - The European Museum Network). These data do not surprise since exports, culture and tourism have generally contributed positively to country's reputation and added value to nation brand. What is unexpected is the role recently played by governance in giving value to nation brand. Apparently, France's perception has been enhanced by the so called "Macron effect". It seems that Macron's administration had a positive impact on nation image, which is also reflected in country's economy and consequently made the nation brand more valuable. In fact, on 2017, thanks to the Macron effect, French economy recorded its best performance since 2011 and the nation brand reached the above mentioned value. However, despite its immense value, the nation brand is not among the world's strongest ones, it is not even ranked in the top ten. Indeed, also in 2017, French brand strength decreased by 1,7%, moving from 79 % to 77.3% within one year (Brand Finance, 2017). The reasons behind the asymmetry between the value and the strength of France's nation brand have both domestic and external nature. As Christophe Alaux, Deputy Director of the Public Management Institute at Aix-Marseille University, stated in 2016 France's nation brand weakness lies in the mismanagement of the appeal of the country, because country's appeal is a capital and its assets have to be valued in order to

meet public expectations (Place Brand Observer, 2016). Another weakness was found in the incapacity of the country to attract tourism and investment, that is not the result of an inefficient government management, but it has to do with an external threat. As a consequence of the November 2015 Paris attacks, the strength and the overall value of French nation brand dramatically decreased, especially in because of the inability to attract tourism and talents. Terrorism fear has led undeniably fewer and fewer people to search for a job or live in France or just to travel to France or visit Paris. French capital was the one most damaged by the fear of new attacks: Compared with 2015, on 2016 the capital experienced a loss of around 1.5 million visitors and a drop of 6% in hotel bookings, while the Louvre visitors dropped by 15% (Bloom Consulting, 2017). Considering the success of French nation branding, its solid reputation and brand value it is important now to consider which role the Louvre Abu Dhabi has in branding the image of the nation. The Louvre Abu Dhabi museum would be entitled to carry the name of the Louvre for thirty years as resulted from the agreement between France and the UAE. The lending of Louvre's name is key to the success of its Emirati branch, since the mother institution international prestige will help the Louvre Abu Dhabi museum to attract visitors. The Louvre, anyway, is not only a French museum internationally known because of its remarkable collection and an iconic architecture, but is also a vibrant part of French identity. An evidence of this, can be found in French history. Since its opening in 1973, the Louvre contributed to the building of national identity. The first museum's exhibition, organized by French revolutionaries, was intended to celebrate freedom, equality and wealth through paintings that in the past belonged to royals, and wanted to offer to French citizens the possibility to accede to cultural knowledge and recognise themselves as members of a civilized and powerful nation (Poulin, 2010). Then, the fact that the museum is owned by the government and hosts a large part of French artworks, makes the tie between the nation and the museum even more solid. Beyond this, the nation and the museum are consistently connected also in collective mind: we

cannot help but think about the Louvre when speaking about France and vice versa. This happens because not only because the Louvre is strongly associated to French identity, but also because it contributes to shape the image of the nation in collective mind. It is worth mentioning that this mechanism of association of the brand with the nation occurs also with commercial brands that contribute to define the image of the country in people's mind. If we think, for example, about the fact that the country is internationally perceived as elegant, we can attribute this conception to the strong influence of French fashion brands on public imagination. We might define this phenomenon as a sort of "halo effect" since, in this case, is not country image to have an impact on the brand, but the brand that has an impact on it. Because of the strong link between brands and nation and the capability to affect country's image, we can think of brands, or better halo brands, as country ambassadors. Thus, if we think of the Louvre in terms of brand, it is quite obvious that it has the ability to represent the country in a remarkable way. It is the only institution able to completely embody those values that France wants to transmit abroad: sophistication, love of art and devotion to culture; it is the symbol of French culture par excellence. In the light of these considerations, the Emirati parent institution has also a deep effect on brand France. It is the house of French identity in the Middle East, a showcase that represents the country and displays its cultural knowledge and expertise. It is a French corner that contributes to illustrate French values and features through the exhibition of its art, and uses the name of French most famous museum in order to increase museum's prestige and consequently, that of the nation. In so doing, it will be possible to influence in a positive way the perception that people, in the region and abroad, have about France and therefore enhance the reputation of the country. Moreover, it is also an opportunity to show the appeal of the country and attract tourism, talents and foreign investment and, consequently increase the strength and value of the brand. To sum up, the Louvre Abu Dhabi Museum benefits to nation brand and reputation. The Abu Dhabi venture constitute a

key element in the promotion of French nation brand, it contributes to spread the Louvre's name, increase its fame and, by extensions, promotes the country where the museum belongs and promotes a positive perception of it. Then, beyond the diffusion of Louvre's name, the Abu Dhabi venture also is crucial to the consolidation of France's brand image because, displaying French culture and heritage, it also allows to promote tourism in France and, consequently contributes actively to the value and strength of the brand.

# Chapter 4

## Effects of the project

As already mentioned in the previous chapter, this fourth chapter will outline what kind of concrete consequences the signing of the agreement of the Louvre Abu Dhabi Museum brought both to France and the United Arab Emirates. This chapter seeks to outline the tangible effects generated by the agreement which not only can be seen as the results of an attempt to brand the nation and to exert soft power, but also as the benefits triggered by the process of nation branding that allows both nations to enjoy a greater level of soft power. The impact of the project will be presented first in terms of economic gains and then in relation to the political and diplomatic outcomes that the agreement enabled to achieve.

### 4.1 Economic gains

The aim of this section is to present, with the support of data when it is possible, the economic gains which the establishment of the Louvre Abu Dhabi museum generated for both countries. First, we will try to summarize the economic benefits that France will have from the construction of the Louvre satellite in Abu Dhabi. Thus, we will proceed to revise the sum French institutions and so by extension France will receive as compensation for their participation in the project. In addition, we will also see what kind of impact the opening of the Abu Dhabi satellite had on the performance of its parent institution in Paris. Then, we will see the effects produced by the museum from the Emirati perspective. We will focus on the impact of the project on the tourism dimension in the UAE, with the support of some figures relating the tourism inflow of the museum and more generally of the tourism sector in the

UAE. Moreover, we will also try to estimate what kind of impact the project will have on Emirati touristic sector in the future

#### 4.1.1 France's economic gains

If we revise the bilateral agreement that launched the Louvre Abu Dhabi project it is quite obvious that from an economic stand point France was the country which benefitted greatly from the construction of the museum in the UAE. According to the intergovernmental agreement main French museums, which are owned by the government, will receive large sums as a compensation for their participation in the process of development of the museum. Certainly, the institution that will have more economic benefits is indeed the Louvre museum. The Louvre will receive 400 million euro for the 30-years lending of its name to its Emirati satellite. On expiry of the period of 30 years, the Louvre Abu Dhabi museum will not be entitled to carry the name of the Louvre anymore. Moreover, the Louvre as a member of AFM and one the museums which agreed to lend their artworks to the Louvre Abu Dhabi, will receive additional revenues. In fact, the agreement stipulates that the UAE government will pay until 2026 to AFM an amount of approximately 165 million, as a compensation for its expertise. In addition, around 190 million will be divided among museum who will lend their artworks for permanent exhibitions over a period of 10 years; while for the organization of temporary exhibitions will be provided 195 million over 15 years, of which 75 million to be divided among lending museum and the remaining 120 million, will be given to AFM which will organize temporary exhibition on behalf of its Emirati partner. Furthermore, an the UAE government will also donate to the Louvre an additional sum of 25 million as a sponsorship. Thanks to the incomes of the agreement, French cultural institutions will have the necessary budget to start projects intended to the conservation of their artworks and improvement of

their structures. On one hand, it will be possible to finance the creation of a common reserve centre in the suburbs of Paris. This will serve to accommodate works kept in stock by the Louvre Museum and other museums in the capital, such as the Musée d'Orsay, threatened by the centennial flood of the Seine. This would make it possible to shelter a large number of works from reserves, today stored in floodplain or in conditions often deplorable, to release the Flore pavilion, where the restoration workshops are currently located, to be able to accommodate works and the public and to constitute a great centre devoted to the conservation, restoration and research. The agreement also provides that the rooms of a floor of the Flore Pavilion will bear the name of a prominent personality of UAE. This exceptional contribution could also make it possible to complete the Grand Louvre project, which started with the construction of the pyramid in 1989 and that continues with the opening of a new department of Islamic Arts. Indeed, some parts of the palace, such as the square courtyard, which have not yet been renovated, could be. Finally, the money raised could also be used by museums to finance new investment projects to enrich their collections by restoring or acquiring new works (Cerisier-ben Guiga, 2007). Besides, the incomes resulted from the agreement, it is important to mention that the impact of the Louvre Abu Dhabi museum also led to the increase of Louvre's profits. The Abu Dhabi satellite was considered one of the main factors which brought the Louvre museum to record an unprecedented number in of visitors. In 2018, the Louvre museum had 10.2 million visitors, an increase of 25% in comparison with the previous year (Musée du Louvre, 2019). Considering this, we might assume that in the future the French government will have a large budget to invest in the improvement of its cultural institutions in the development further cultural initiatives that might significantly contribute to the growth of its cultural economy and, by extension, of the economy of the whole country.

#### 4.1.2 Tourism in the UAE

Tourism plays a major role in the process of economic diversification of the Emirati. UAE government has heavily invested in building attractions with a view to boost the tourism sector and, in so doing reduce the reliance on oil sources. According to the report of World Travel & Tourism Council, the direct contribution of the Travel & tourism sector to UAE GDP was approximately 18,825,600 million dollars, accounting for the 5.1% ; while the total contribution of the sector to UAE GDP was of 41,950,500 million dollars and accounted for 11.3% of the GDP. The World Travel & Tourism Council forecast for 2018 an increase of 5% of direct contribution in total GDP and an increase of 4.9% of total GDP (World Travel & Tourism Council, 2018). Considering these data, we can affirm that the successful outcome of UAE tourism sector in 2017 was also triggered by the opening of Louvre Abu Dhabi Museum, which somehow reshaped the tourism scene in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi and all over the UAE. In fact, thanks to the museum, for the first time Abu Dhabi came on the international stage as UAE top cultural destination and was able to significantly contribute to the growth of the tourism industry. A little less than two months after the opening of The Louvre Abu Dhabi Museum, the Emirate of Abu Dhabi witnessed a significant increase of touristic inflow. Tourists within the country and from all over the world came to Abu Dhabi to visit the new museum in the heart of the cultural district of the capital. The increase of visitors of the museum caused also a boost of the whole touristic sector, since either hotel and shopping centres experienced a strong attendance. In addition, this growth created also more touristic connection with UAE most famous tourism destination, which is Dubai (Rahman, 2017). The data released by the Abu Dhabi Department of Culture and Tourism (DCTA) show that only in the month of November, the number of hotel guests overnight increased by 16% year-on-year. The Emirate's hotels, which are 162, welcomed around 444.636 travellers, of which 121.130 were nationals and 322., 506 came from abroad. The number of guests, in fact, did not only increase in the region of the capital, but

also in other regions of the Emirate. Al Alain region, with only 20 hotels, recorded a growth of 10, 7%, while the region of Al Dhafra, with its 11 hotels grew by 15,3 %. Up until November 2017 the number of hotel guests overnight in the Emirate increased by 9% in comparison with the previous year. For this reason, Abu Dhabi authorities hoped to achieve the goal of 4,9 million visitors by the end of 2017. Actually, the goal was not met but almost reached with a number of 4.88 million visitors throughout 2017 (Abbas, 2017). Visitors who most travelled to the Emirate came from China which, with an increase of 60%, establishes itself as the fifth tourism source of the country, behind India, Saudi Arabia, the UK and Oman. According to the latest research by Colliers International, the number of Chinese tourists travelling to the GCC countries is expected to increase 81 per cent from 1.6 million in 2018 to 2.9 million in 2022 (Sadaqat, 2018). With respect to Europe, the UK continues to be Emirate's biggest European source of tourism, while visitors from France increased massively, growing by 61% (Ireland, 2018). On the basis of 2017 data, the representative of Abu Dhabi Department of Culture and Tourism expected to reach a number of 6 million visitors by the end of 2018, and it very likely that this will happen since in the six first months of 2018 the Emirate has been visited by two million tourists, recording a 5% growth compared with the first six months of the previous year. Figures released by DCTA also show that the number of hotel guests overnight in June 2018, increased by 6% in comparison with the same month in 2017. During the month of June, the 162 hotels of Abu Dhabi Emirate hosted 339,592, recording an increase of more than 19,000 compared with the previous year (Bridge, 2018). The Louvre Abu Dhabi Museum continued to be a powerful tourism asset. In fact on November 2018 the DCTA announced that, in the first year of its life, the museum has been visited by one million people. It is worth noting that the museum had a significant impact on local and national community: UAE residents choose the museum as their favourite destination, a place where they can gather with friends and family. Emirati nationals have the highest number of repeated visits

and are the second nationality among resident ones, which most frequently visited the museum. The UAE residents account for 40% of museum's total visitors, while the remaining 60% is made up international visitors, especially France, Germany, UK, US, China and India, that is the country with the highest number of visitors. The great success of the museum is not only the result of an astonishing venue and a universal and impressive collection. Certainly, this success is triggered by national and international visitors curiosity about the new branch of the Louvre, but is also the result of several initiatives such as concerts, workshops, school guided tours, film screenings and talks, which were held in the museum all over the year (Khaleej Times, 2018). The museum is just an example of how major cultural attractions can drive tourism to the Emirate and contribute to the economic growth of the country. However, it represents just a minimum part of the cultural district that will attract many more visitors in the future. Saadyiaat island will be, as mentioned before, also the location of other prominent cultural institutions. Beyond these institutions, the island will also host luxury resorts, hotel and apartments that will help the development of tourism, hosting the tourist which will come to the island to visit its cultural attraction. Thanks to the cultural district, Saadiyat island will become the major cultural asset of the UAE which will contribute to the growth of tourism industry. With the increase tourism industry, the tourism sector will consequently contribute significantly to the growth of the country. In fact, the World Travel & Tourism council estimated that by 2028 the total contribution of Travel Tourism sector to the GDP will account for 10,6% (World Travel & Tourism Council, 2018). So, the Louvre Abu Dhabi museum marked the beginning of the growth of Abu Dhabi tourism sector and will also enable tourism to play a more relevant role in the economy of the Emirate and of the whole country.

### 4.1.3 The dark side of the project

Despite the enthusiasm of French and Emirati government for the creation of an unprecedented collaboration in the cultural field, the project entails a dark side, which has not perhaps been discussed so much. First of all, the building of the museum seem to have been helped by resources resulting from sale of weapon. The French intellectual Alexander Kazerouni, who dedicated his book “Le miroir de Sheikhs” to the new cultural institutions in the Middle East, outlined how the institution of the museum reflects Emirati Crown Prince Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan desire to undercut the middle class from the decisions of the state, concentrating power within its control and taking a step towards autocracy. Despite it is often described as initiative undertake by Chirac government in 2005, the idea of the museum actually came from the Emirati Crown Prince and his brother minister of information and culture Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan. From the very beginning the Crow Prince knew he had the financial resources to develop the project and at the same time to become independent from state funds. In fact, to finance the project he used the legacy that his father Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan left him before dying. This legacy is called Offset Program Bureau (OPB) and it is an investment fund, established in 1992, which contains and administers the amount of money foreign governments are obliged to invest when selling weapons to the UAE. The money of OPB fund allowed the Crown Prince to establish another fund: the Mubadala investment fund. The creation of this new found gave him independence from sovereign funds like the Abu Dhabi Investment Authority, the Abu Dhabi Investment Council, the International Petroleum Investment Company, which are controlled by his uncle and current UAE president Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan. As clearly stated by its general director Khaldoun Khalifa Al Mubarak, the fund is deeply committed to the process of economic diversification of the country and sees in culture a powerful mean to achieve this objective. The fund, with an estimated value of

125 billion dollars, had already contribute to the education development of the Emirate, financing the two international universities of the capital, Sorbonne Abu Dhabi and New York Abu Dhabi. In the case of the Louvre Abu Dhabi, the funding of the project was also provided by the Mubadala fund, but not in an evident way. It is important to mention that even though the project of the museum was assigned to Abu Dhabi Tourism and Culture Authority (TCA), the Mudabala fund contributed to the project, by purchasing part of TCA's shares in Tourism & Development Investment Company (TDIC), which is the development arm of TCA. The money resulted from arms sale, being transferred from OPB to Mubadala fund have thus financed the building of the museum (Cruz, 2018). This act of patronage, can be read as sheikhs' attempt to keep the power within their family and to limit the involvement of bureaucracy in the decisions of the state. According Kazerouni, current ruling class' tendency to fear and limit the power of bureaucracy and middle class, stems from the events of Iranian Revolution. When religious middle class took over power in Iran, all over the Middle East sheikhs started to doubt about the loyalty of their respective middle class and began to remove middle class members from positions of power. The fear of middle class taking over the country was also fuelled by the Arab Spring of 2011 which, in the case of UAE, has pushed royal family to keep the project of the Louvre definitely under its control (Cocks, 2017). In sum, UAE ruling class used the money resulting from fees on arm sale to implement the project of the Louvre Abu Dhabi museum, made the control of the cultural institution its exclusive domain and keep power within the royal family. In addition to this dark facet of the project it is worth noting that the government of the UAE was also harshly criticized because the way in which workers have been treated during the construction of the museum. According to the Human Rights Watch, during the construction of the museum migrant workers human rights have been violated. The NGO released three reports denouncing the violation on human rights on the site, starting from 2007 until 2014, when the NGO staff has been prevented from

entering the country. In the report release on 2015, which drew some attention of the international community upon the issue, the Human Rights Watch denounced several violation of migrant workers' rights: unsafe working conditions leading to workplace accidents and deaths, passport confiscations, appalling living and housing conditions, extremely low wages, or sometimes non-payment of wages. Moreover, the so called "Kafala" sponsorship system gives employers enormous power over their employees, while migrant workers have no right to association and to bargain collectively on their working conditions. The conditions of the workers have been also denounce through the press. In an article by Vice magazine, a journalist who managed to sneak her way into the site, collected the witnesses of migrant workers employed in the construction of the project. In the UAE, the population is composed mostly by foreign people while the citizens accounts for 10% of total residents. The population is divided between "expats", formed by professional, and "migrant labour", formed by the working class. These foreigners can spend in the UAE their entire life but they will never get Emirati citizenship. The UAE is not the symbol of respect for human rights, people can be easily deported, in fact here are a lot of cases of workers that have disappeared. Despite the disappearance and the fear of being deported, migration to the UAE are constant. Most of the migrants, which form the working class, come from countries such as Bangladesh, Pakistan, India. These workers are fortune seekers: they move to the UAE to escape war or just to make money to send back to their family, in order to ensure to their sibling a better future. Desperation and the promise of a good wage leads this people to give large sums of money to recruiters who promise them to provide a well- paid job in the UAE. The point is that nearly always migrant workers cannot afford to pay the recruitment fees, so they decide to empty family savings, give land in exchange or, in most of the cases, have recourse to loan. Once the recruitment fee has been paid and they have moved to the UAE, most of the time they find out there is no job waiting for them. When finally recruiters find them a job, they discover that it is not what

they expected, it is not what recruiters promised them. Migrants had to pay around \$1000 to get a job paid around \$376 a month, but in the end they receive a wage ranging from \$150 to \$300, so it is impossible for them to pay off the loan asked for recruitment fee and to send back money to their family. To make matters worse, they cannot find another job or leave the country because their boss confiscates their passport so there is no escape, they are forced to work. Migrants workers find accommodation into labour camps often located in the middle of the desert far from the city. The living conditions in the camps are horrible: poor hygiene, no air conditioning and no window, in a country where the heat can reach 40°C. Even the Saadyat Accommodation Village, which has been described as the camp with the highest living standards, does not provide better living conditions. Despite the fact that they could be deported, migrant workers still have the strength to stand up for their rights. A lot of strikes have been organized, around 100 took place from 2011 until 2014, especially by workers employed by Arabtec company, with the aim of obtaining a salary increase. Anyway, despite workers efforts, these strikes rarely work out. It is important to mention that in UAE the formation of unions is forbidden by law and strikes are considered illegal. In 2013, for example, Arabtec employees went on strike both in Dubai and Saadyat Island. Police tried to stop the strikes threatening workers to send them back to their home countries. Weeks after the strike around 1000 participants to the strikes had their visas cancelled. Arabtec promised to increase the wages but never actually did it (Crabapple, 2014). In fact, as observed by International Labour Organization Committee of experts, in 2016 employers still confiscated passport of migrant workers and there were wages not paid. Thanks to the commitment of Human Rights Watch and International Labour Organization and to the attention the press drawn on the issue, there were some positive developments. Numerous decrees and resolutions regarding the protection of migrant workers' human rights have recently been enacted. Now it is mandatory for employers to adopt Labour Ministry standard employment contracts; and the

“Kafala” sponsorship system has been reformed now, in case of contractual breach, workers can legally break their work contract unilaterally, without being deported. The International Labour Organization has also started, in collaboration with the government, a training program for labour inspectors with a special focus on the protection of migrant workers’ rights. However, today is really difficult to verify whether or not the legal measure adopted are respected, since just few workers advocates from their rights and activists have been silenced. In addition, NGOs and press members are not able to enter in the country anymore, so literally no one has updates about the effective enactment and respect of legal measures and the actual working and living conditions of migrant workers. Therefore, the Louvre Abu Dhabi museum appears like an high art project which had to be built at any cost; even with no regards for working and living conditions of employees of construction site. It is the result of years of human rights violation and both the UAE and France can be considered responsible for this. If on one hand the UAE government did not protect workers and allowed exploitation, on the other France’s indifference has some way helped it. Furthermore, France’s lack of concern about migrant workers’ rights goes completely in contrast to the French long claimed attitude to stand against violation of human rights and demonstrate even better the importance of the museum in the framework of French soft power, since France probably preferred to look the other way in order not to jeopardise the success of the project. The last element of the dark side of the project is the criticism by French museum personalities of France’s involvement in the project. In an article, which became a sort of manifesto for most museum personalities, the art historians and curators Françoise Cachin and Jean Clair, along with the art historian Roland Recht, criticized the project of the Louvre Abu Dhabi Museum accusing French government to contribute to the commodification of French heritage. The article, published on the newspaper Le Monde in 2006, underlined how government and municipalities financial support was essential to keep French museum management free from commercial pressures. Moreover,

Cachin, Clair, Recht provided a comparison between US museum system, which was entirely supported by private financing, and the French museum system which, despite the presence of norms allowing patronage, was still depending on public financing support. They also stressed that unlike the US, which always exported its museum collection and is proud of its entertaining products, in Europe museum are institutions with an education role, which take great care and give value to their collection. To conclude, the three authors expressed their concern about the future of museum management expressing deep disappointment for the lack of consideration for museums figures in the process of museum franchising, which could help in shaping more ethical and fruitful innovation. Taking the Louvre Abu Dhabi museum as an example, the three figures of the museum world blamed the Louvre for selling its name and collection for money at the expenses of its visitors who will not be able to enjoy its full collection (Pisa, 2011). Two years later, in 2008, Jean Clair expressed again his opinion about the Louvre Abu Dhabi Museum in his book museum crisis "Malaise dans le musées". He defined the Louvre as "a fee-charging entertainment park", "an open-air shopping mall", "an international airport of art" because it did not give value to artworks but it is was merely made to replenish the fund of Ministry of Culture. According to him, the Abu Dhabi branch did not embody museums' mission to preserve, enrich and pass on to future generation the artistic memory of a country (Briglia, 2017). To sum up, despite the beneficial effects, which the venture generated for both parties in terms of economic gains, the museum divided the public opinion. So, if on one hand was subject to celebration, on the other hand was subject to criticism. However, the fact that the dark side of the project did not find enough space on international press can mean that either France and the UAE had the ability to hide the dark side of the museum from significant international exposure, or that the international press was much more interested in reporting the bright side rather than the dark side of the museum. Unfortunately, we do not possess enough data to prove if these assumptions are true and which one really

occurred. For this reason, we can only stay in doubt on the occurrence of these assumptions, but still with the knowledge that the projects entails an almost globally unknown dark side.

## **4.2 Political and Diplomatic dimension**

This section aims to identify what tangible effects the signing of the intergovernmental agreement of 2007 had on the political and diplomatic level. Since the agreement fostered cooperation in other field, in the following paragraphs the joint initiatives undertaken by the two countries will be outlined. More specifically, we will discover the joint statement agreement France and the UAE adopted after the opening of the Louvre Abu Dhabi museum and which some way represents a turning point in the Emirati-French relationship.

### **4.2.1 Joint statement agreement**

As mentioned before, cultural diplomacy, as an act of soft power can lead to several side beneficial results, since cooperation in the cultural field consolidates the relationship between countries and can lead them to cooperate also in other sector. In the case of the Louvre Abu Dhabi Museum, the cooperation undertaken by France and the UAE to implement the project was such a success that the two countries decided to sign an agreement in which both government commit to continue their cooperation in different fields. In occasion of the opening of the Louvre Abu Dhabi, both contributed to strength the Emirati-French relation in the cultural field and to take the relationship between the two countries to the next level. In fact, after the meeting of President Macron with His Highness Shaikh Mohammad Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice-President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai,

and His Highness Shaikh Mohammad Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces, the two countries celebrated their relationship signing another cooperation agreement. Even though most of the joint projects entailed by the agreement, were already set up after the signing of Louvre Abu Dhabi agreement and during the development of the museum, France and the UAE nevertheless decided to reconfirm and extend the initiatives they undertook together with the signing of an issue statement agreement. The agreement is the expression of French-Emirati common vision, which sees cooperation as a mean to construct a better world. In the agreement France and the UAE commit themselves to take joint actions in several fields which are education, culture and heritage, economy and investment, environment and fight against climate change, space, security and fight against terrorism and defence cooperation. The next paragraphs, thus, will explore in more details the actions that both countries plan to start or continue to implement in every field (United Arab Emirates Ministry of Foreign Affairs & International Cooperation, 2017)

#### 4.2.1.1 Education

This paragraph shed light on the joint actions that will be undertaken in the field of education, which are: the construction of a roadmap, the introduction of French language in Emirati schools, the training of Emirati judges and the extension of Lycée Théodore Monod. First, the countries decide to give value to Paris-Sorbonne Abu Dhabi university which, despite its presence in the UAE, never fully exploited its potential in order to help the UAE in achieving the goals related to education. For this reason, from 2018, Paris Sorbonne Abu Dhabi University will be responsible for the creation of a roadmap for water security. Since UAE population is constantly growing, in the future water consumption will increase, so it is important to find a solution able to preserve

water and avoid mismanagement. Thus the roadmap will serve to create a legal framework able to define the legal status of water in the country. The framework will provide to private companies best practices for the correct management of water and will explain the responsibilities of legal authorities upon the issue, in order to ensure that there will be enough water to meet the future demand (Zacharias, 2018). Secondly, France and the UAE planned to reintroduce the teaching of French language in public schools. In September 2018, UAE government announced that the first part of the plan of reintroduction of would have been launched in several schools of the country. Moreover, France and the UAE planned also improve the teaching on French language in private schools and implement a programme for the improvement of teachers training (Zaatari, 2018). Thirdly, the two countries decided to implement an actions dedicated to the improvement of legal authorities. Therefore, the Ecole Nationale de la Magistrature will help the Abu Dhabi Judicial Department in training Emirati Judges. For two years, the trainers of Ecole Nationale de la Magistrature will be committed to help Abu Dhabi in the creation of an excellent training programme. French trainers will gather with their Emirati partners and support them in the selection of candidates and definition of academic program. Moreover, they will also help them to improve their methods and indicate analytical techniques specific for judges (Dajani, 2016). Lastly, the countries planned to work on the extension of Lycée Théodore Monod. The Tourism and Investment Company, announced that a second campus of Lycée Théodore Monod will be built on Saadiyat island. The campus will be around 33,000 square meters and will host any school grade, from kindergarten to high school, and will be the first French school on the island (The National, 2016).

#### 4.2.1.2 Culture & Heritage

For what concerns the field of culture and heritage, in the issue statement agreement France and the UAE confirmed their contribution to the ALIPH fund, signed a cooperation agreement on cultural dialogue and consolidated their partnership in the cultural sector with the UAE donation to Institut du Monde Arabe. First, the two countries renovated their commitment to ALIPH fund. The ALIPH fund, which name stays for International Alliance for the Protection of Heritage of Conflict Areas, was first proposed in December 2016 in Abu Dhabi during the International Conference on Safeguarding Endangered Cultural Heritage in Conflict Areas. The conference resulted in the signing of Abu Dhabi Declaration, in which the international community committed to create an international support fund for programs dedicated to safeguard of cultural heritage, and intended to develop an international refuge network for endangered cultural property. Then the fund was effectively launched by French President Francois Holland and UAE Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Saif Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, during Donors' conference held at Louvre Museum on March 2017. The conference was a success, since representative of countries, foundation and private donor who attended it, promised to give its contribution to the fund. France committed to donate around \$30 million, while the UAE \$15 million; both have already disbursed around 30% of total pledged sum. In addition to France and UAE contributes, Saudi Arabia donated \$20 million, Kuwait \$5 million, Morocco \$1.5 million and Luxembourg 3 million Euros. An additional \$1 million was donated by a private donor (The Gulf Today, 2017). Among the projects that will be financed by ALIPH fund, there is one initiative proposed by France for the reconstruction of sites such as Nimrud site in Iraq and Palmyra site in Syria. In addition, the projects will also be responsible for the removal and conservation of cultural items damaged by conflicts. Furthermore, after the Donor's conference, UN Security concept adopted a resolution, drafted by France and Italy, for the safeguard of heritage in conflict crisis. Resolution 2347 is the first

UN resolution aimed at the protection of heritage in conflict areas and contains recommendations intended to prevent illicit trafficking (IIC, 2017). Later on in October of the same year, the foundation board of the fund had a meeting in Geneva to revise ALIPH statute and regulation. During the meeting the board recognised the importance of the partnership with UNESCO and defined its non-voting member status. It is important to mention that the fund had the support of UNESCO from the very beginning. The director-general of UNESCO was involved in the project since the conference of Abu Dhabi and appointed a UNESCO representative for the board of the fund (UNESCO, 2017). Beyond the confirmation of their dedication to the ALIPH fund, French and Emirati governments signed another cultural cooperation agreement intended to foster and enhance the cultural dialogue between their countries. The agreement was discussed in the framework of Emirati-French cultural dialogue and was signed by UAE Minister of Culture and Knowledge Development, Noura bint Mohammed Al Kaabi and French Minister of Culture Françoise Nyssen (United Arab Emirates Ministry of Culture & Knowledge Development, 2018) (Badih, 2018). The agreement aims to consolidate the cultural dialogue between the countries through initiatives with a focus on literary dimension. Lastly, UAE government pledged to donate 5 million Euros to the Institut du Monde Arabe. The donation is as a reward for the excellent work done by the institution which, from the moment it was created, had a pivotal role in the promotion of dialogue between the Arab world, France and Europe (United Arab Emirates Ministry of Foreign Affairs & International Cooperation, 2017).

#### 4.2.1.3 Economy & Investment

With respect to the field of economy and investment, the two countries decided to create an investment platform and to set up a French-Emirati business forum. Moreover, France decided to choose mobility as theme for French exhibition to Dubai Expo 2020. First of all, in occasion of the inauguration of the Louvre Abu

Dhabi Museum, Mudabala Investment Company, the strategic investment fund of UAE Crown Prince, signed a Memorandum of Understanding intended to the creation of an investment platform with CDC International Capital, subsidiary of Caisse des Dépôts Group dedicated to direct investments and sovereign wealth funds, and Bpifrance, owned both by Caisse des Dépôts and the French government and dedicated to financing companies. The platform's investment capacity accounts for 1 billion euros and is intended to ensure private and direct investments in French economy. 500 million of the total invested capacity will be invested in French technology and innovation sector. Bpifrance and Mubadala will invest in start-ups and more experienced technology companies by means of direct investments and venture capital funds. The companies on information and communication technologies, biotech, green tech and other fast-rising technology sectors. The other part of the investment capacity, the remaining 500 million euros, will be dedicated to the expansion of the joint investment fund "FEF" created by CDC International Capital and Mubadala in 2014, with an initial investment capacity of 300 million euros. The "FEF" fund was launched with the purpose of helping French companies with a great potential. The initial sum of the fund was committed in long-term investments in healthcare, education, elderly care and real estate. The new investment platform will encourage French companies and to generate risk-adjusted returns. The favourable French macroeconomic outlook in France, resulted from the increase of large-scale infrastructure and real-estate projects within the Greater Paris project and in view of the 2024 Olympic Games, along with positive the boost of French technological sector, will enable to create furthers opportunities for fruitful long-term investments (Reuters, 2017) (Mubadala). Secondly, France and the UAE decided to establish a business forum with the view of promoting exchanges between French and Emirati small and medium-sized enterprises. The forum is chaired by two presidents: France is represented by Frederic Sanchez, President of the network of French entrepreneurs MEDEF, while the UAE is represented by Majid Saïf Al Ghureir,

President of the Dubai Chamber of Commerce and Industry. The French-Emirati business forum first meeting was held in Dubai in parallel with the Louvre Abu Dhabi museum inauguration. During the opening of Louvre Abu Dhabi museum, President Macron took the opportunity to announce that the theme chosen for French exhibition to the Dubai Expo 2020 was “mobility”. During the opening, the French government had also the opportunity to confirm the participation to the Dubai World Expo. In fact, Minister of State for International Cooperation and Director general of Dubai Expo 2020 Bureau, Reem Al Hashimi and France’s Commissary General for Expo 2020 Dubai signed the contract of participation to the event.

#### 4.2.1.4 Environmental issues

With respect to environmental and climatic issues, the UAE confirmed its intention to participate to Paris World Climate Summit on December 2017 and to join the International Solar Alliance, initiated on the basis of an initiative proposed by France and India during 2015 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP21). Moreover, both France and the UAE recognized the prominent role of International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), located in Abu Dhabi, in the production of renewable energies in the Arab region. IRENA, in fact, maximized the potential of Arab region’s renewable energy sources such as wind and sun, and for this reason is to be seen as an example. Thus, the two countries announced their commitment in the creation of projects aimed at the development of renewable energies (IRENA, 2016). In addition, both countries stressed also the importance of the work of IRENA in implementing decarbonization strategies, which contribute considerably to the fight against climate change.

#### 4.2.1.5 Space cooperation

France and the UAE took further joint actions also in the field of space cooperation. The two countries will continue the cooperation initiated in 2015 with a Memorandum of Understanding signed between the Centre National d'Etudes Spatiales (CNES) and the UAE Space Agency (UAESA) and as a development of the contacts established by the CNES with the Mohammad Bin Rashid Space Centre (MBRSC). Furthermore, CNES Yves Gall announced that CNES will open a representation office in the UAE that will improved CNES-UAESA partnership began with the Memorandum of Understanding. The two space agencies will exchange their know-how and work closely on projects. Among the joint projects on the agenda, there is one project dedicated to Earth observation satellite for the monitoring of climate change (Space Daily, 2018). Furthermore, the two countries signed a declaration of interest for the establishment of a Space Global Climate Observatory, in the framework of Paris World Summit in December 2017. The Space Climate Observatory (SCO) will constitute a strategic contribution to the Space 2030 Agenda defined under the UNISPACE+50 processes, which are being pursued under the leadership of the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA), within the framework of the United Nations Committee On the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS). Further, the Space Climate Observatory (SCO) will represent an invaluable contribution to the Global Space Partnership, providing opportunities to humankind to address even more effectively the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals. Lastly, the Space Climate Observatory (SCO) is part of one of the most important goals of COPUOS, which aims at strengthening international cooperation towards 'low-emission and resilient societies. (Office for Science & Technology of the Embassy of France in the United States, 2017)

#### 4.2.1.6 Security & Defence

An absolute priority of the cooperation between France and the UAE is the fight against terrorism. The two countries pledged to enhance the collaboration against radicalization and extremism and to continue to take action in the framework of the International Security Alliance against organized crime, which was previously established in Abu Dhabi on February 2017. Beyond France and the UAE the Alliance sees the participation of Italy, Senegal, Bahrain, Morocco and Spain, which decided to join forces to combat against organized and transnational crime. The alliance will serve as a forum in which members will be able to share best practices and know-how, exchange training principle and methods and compare different kinds of organized crime. The objectives of the International Security Alliance are to the creation of prevention methods in an attempt to achieve sustainable security and stability for member countries and strengthen the security and improvement of their people. The alliance also increase cooperation opportunities on security issues between members, in order to obtain security in member countries and a safer world (The UAE Minister of Interior's General Secretariat, Security Media Department, 2017). Beyond that, the UAE took part to the international conference on fight against the financing on terrorism organized by French government on April 2018. During the conference, participating countries had the opportunity to listen to experts in the fight against the financing of terrorism and in the end were asked to endorse a common statement (France Diplomatie, 2018). To conclude, France and the UAE also enhanced their partnership in the field of defence. In the framework of the strategic development of Emirati naval forces, the UAE decided to purchase two multi-mission "Gowind" corvette combat-type. The two corvettes will be built by the French high-tech company Naval group in partnership with Abu Dhabi Ship Building Company. Naval group was chosen among other companies such as the Italian Fincantieri, the Dutch company Damen and the French company CMN. The ships will be equipped with the Thales combat management system

by Tactical, the Raytheon Evolved Sea Sparrow Missile and Exocet missiles built by MBDA (Tran, 2017).

## Conclusion

This dissertation has tried to highlight the role of cultural institutions in international relations. The aim has been exploring the role of museum institutions in the development and exercise of soft power, through the investigation of the Louvre Abu Dhabi Museum project. The project has been illustrated in all its parts: from the agreement that spawned the museum up to its collection, in the interest of providing a substantial knowledge of the Louvre Abu Dhabi project, which has been necessary to contextualize the concrete effects arising from the establishment of the museum. In order to prove to what extent the museums serves as an instrument of soft power the project has been investigated in two different frameworks: place branding and cultural diplomacy. These two concept are some way intertwined since the application of branding techniques has recently gained a significant foothold in cultural diplomacy studies. However, as far as possible, we have tried to divide these concepts and consider the project in two different frameworks. From this analysis has emerged that the Louvre Abu Dhabi museum has a significant role in the exercise of soft power of nations, both within the perspective of place branding and cultural diplomacy. From a branding perspective, the project is an occasion for France to give value and strength the national brand; the museum increases the fame of the Louvre and enhances the reputation of the nation. While for the UAE the project is a crucial component to reshape the image of the country and encourage a more favourable global perception. Assuming that the project enables the nations to improve and consolidate their image through the display of culture, there is no doubt that the museum contributes to the exercise of soft power of nations, because it improves their capability to get what they want through attraction. In fact, thanks to the opening of the Abu Dhabi satellite, the UAE has been able to reshape its image, depicting Abu Dhabi as the cultural heart of the country in order to make a better impression on the international audience, which is fundamental to develop a tourism market able to play a significant role in the process of economic diversification. On the other hand, the project could contribute to the growth of tourism sector in France, which has been partially proved by the fact that the Abu Dhabi satellite has been recognized between the factors which have lead the Louvre museum to record the greatest attendance ever in 2018. From a the perspective of cultural diplomacy, the project has enabled the consolidation of French-Emirati relation, the enhancement of

France's position in the international arena, the expansion of France influence in the Middle East and has given to the UAE the opportunity to show its soft power to neighbouring countries and gain a significant foothold on the international stage. From this perspective the role played by the museum in the exercise of soft power is even more evident. If cultural diplomacy is the attempt of an international actor to manage the international environment through its cultural assets and can be viewed as an instrument of soft power, then The Louvre Abu Dhabi museum is the asset used by France and the UAE to manage the international environment and thus is an instrument of soft power. An evidence of the soft power dimension in this respect is represented by the fact that the project has enabled France to extend its presence in the UAE and so its influence in the region and it has lead France to take UK position in soft in soft power rankings. As regards the Emirati, the museum represents just a component of the broader soft power strategy planned by the Emirati government in order to become the first soft power nation in the region and benefit from a greater respect at the international level. Furthermore from an economic standpoint, the museum allows France to enhance its cultural sector, since the agreement provides enough funding to make improvements to cultural institutions. However, more than this the museum has strengthened the French-Emirati relation and has led the two countries to undertake further joint project in other fields. The issue joint statement agreement, which entails the joint activities that the two countries have undertaken or are going to undertake, is the ultimate expression of the role played by the museum in the exercise of soft power. The agreement, signed thanks to the French-Emirati collaboration for the museum, marks the consolidation of the partnership between the countries which and allows them not only to act in its own best interest but also in the interest of the whole world, since the two nations have pledged to several cooperation activities.

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