

**National Branding and controversies:
the case of internationalisation of Louvre**
MARIE-ALIX MOLINIÉ-ANDLAUER³⁸

This paper aims to explain and to analyse the internationalisation process of the Louvre, understood as its use in international policy strategies.

To do this, after introducing the work on National Branding, the presentation will focus on two aspects. We will explain the mobilisation by the French State of this heritage used to promote a certain idea of the Louvre and France. In short, it is to understand the mechanisms, by questioning more precisely the link between the Louvre and the French State.

The last part, we will examine the paradoxical relationship between Nationalism/Universalism that the analysis of the press on the Louvre shows. It will be a question of going into more detail in the principle of controversies, raising debates about what heritage can represent in the willingness to write a national narrative (Molinié-Andlauer, 2020).

The signature of the bilateral partnership in March 2007³⁹ highlights the French cultural scene, the political stakes and the “in-

³⁸ Sorbonne University and a researcher affiliated to the Research Unit “Mediation-Sciences of Places, Sciences of Links”.

³⁹ Agreement “between the Government of the French Republic and the Government of the United Arab Emirates on the Universal Museum of Abu Dhabi, signed in Abu Dhabi on 6 March 2007”:

ternational relations” dimension of this agreement (Des Cars 2009, p. 59)⁴⁰. These polemics question the interest of the French State in the management and conservation of Heritage, particularly in terms of means (Cachin, Clair, Recht, 2006). They also highlight that International Museums must respond to a geo-strategic and diplomatic state policy by taking a market value (cultural and university institutions, the Louvre and the Sorbonne).

However, International Relations based on National Branding also have an impact on culture, sometimes creating controversies. Thus, the controversies surrounding the internationalisation of the Louvre Museum are on several levels. Moreover, the controversies are also at the level of the debates that question the International deployment of the Louvre Museum to satisfy international relations between France and the United Arab Emirates. This attachment leads to questions about the role and challenges of heritage in the 21st century.

By introducing the Louvre Abu Dhabi as a Universal Museum, the message sent to the museum world from the French side is “we can shift our perspective on the world”⁴¹ and actively participate in rebalancing the circulation of works of art.

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⁴⁰ Interview with advisor to the Louvre's President-Director, conducted in September 2017.

⁴¹ Interview with the AFM's scientific manager, conducted in March 2018.

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