

Films as French Soft Power: The Case of Thailand

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An Independent Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements

For the Degree of Master of Arts in European Studies

Inter-Department of European Studies

GRADUATE SCHOOL

Chulalongkorn University

Academic Year 2020

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ภาพยนตร์ในฐานะอำนาจละมุนของฝรั่งเศส: กรณีศึกษา ประเทศไทย

น.ส. สร้อยสุดา นีวร

สารนิพนธ์นี้เป็นส่วนหนึ่งของการศึกษาตามหลักสูตรศิลปศาสตรมหาบัณฑิต  
สาขาวิชายุโรปศึกษา สหสาขาวิชายุโรปศึกษา  
บัณฑิตวิทยาลัย จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย  
ปีการศึกษา 2563  
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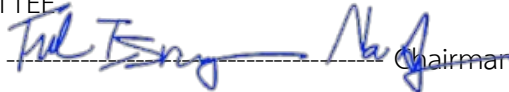
Independent Study Title      Films as French Soft Power: The Case of Thailand  
By                                      Miss. Soisuda Niwon  
Field of Study                      European Studies  
Thesis Advisor                      Assistant Professor BHAWAN RUANGSILP, Ph.D.


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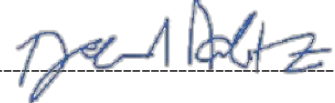
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สร้อยสุดา นิวร : ภาพยนตร์ในฐานะอำนาจละมุนของฝรั่งเศส: กรณีศึกษา ประเทศไทย (Films as French Soft Power: The Case of Thailand) อ ที่ปรึกษาหลัก : ผศ.ดร. ภาวรรณ เรืองศิลป์

ภาพยนตร์ไม่ได้เป็นเพียงอุตสาหกรรมวัฒนธรรมที่สร้างผลประโยชน์ทางด้านเศรษฐกิจและวัฒนธรรมมากที่สุดเท่านั้น แต่ภาพยนตร์ยังถือเป็นอำนาจละมุนชนิดหนึ่งเนื่องจากรัฐใช้ภาพยนตร์เป็นตัวแทนในการเผยแพร่ วัฒนธรรม อารยธรรม และสิ่งที่ดึงดูดใจของประเทศ ตลอดจนสร้างการรับรู้เชิงบวกต่อสาธารณชน ประเทศฝรั่งเศสก็ได้ใช้อำนาจละมุนผ่านทางภาพยนตร์ โดยกระทรวงการต่างประเทศและกิจการยุโรปได้แต่งตั้งสมาคมฝรั่งเศสและศูนย์ภาษาและวัฒนธรรมฝรั่งเศสให้เป็นตัวแทนทางวัฒนธรรมเพื่อเผยแพร่ภาษาฝรั่งเศส วัฒนธรรม และอารยธรรมของฝรั่งเศสสู่สาธารณะในต่างประเทศ ส่งผลให้ประชาชนมีภาพลักษณ์ที่ดีต่อฝรั่งเศสและรักษาความสัมพันธ์ทางการทูตที่แน่นแฟ้น ดังตัวอย่างกรณีของประเทศไทย การศึกษานี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อทำความเข้าใจนโยบายวัฒนธรรมต่างประเทศของฝรั่งเศสที่มีต่อประเทศไทย และทำความเข้าใจว่าภาพยนตร์เป็นอำนาจละมุนของฝรั่งเศสในประเทศไทยได้อย่างไร โดยตั้งคำถามในการศึกษาว่ารัฐบาลฝรั่งเศสส่งเสริมวัฒนธรรมและสินค้าทางวัฒนธรรมของฝรั่งเศสอย่างไรเพื่อสร้างการรับรู้เชิงบวกต่อฝรั่งเศสในประเทศไทย โดยมีสมมติฐานคือรัฐบาลฝรั่งเศสพยายามสร้างการรับรู้เชิงบวกต่อฝรั่งเศสในสายตาของคนไทยโดยใช้ภาพยนตร์ทั้งภาษาฝรั่งเศสและต่างประเทศ ผลการศึกษาสรุปว่าฝรั่งเศสใช้อำนาจละมุนผ่านนโยบายวัฒนธรรมต่างประเทศโดยใช้ภาพยนตร์ที่ใช้เป็นเครื่องมือในการสร้างการรับรู้เชิงบวกต่อฝรั่งเศสในสายตาของคนไทย นโยบายวัฒนธรรมต่างประเทศของฝรั่งเศสดำเนินการในประเทศไทยผ่านหน่วยงานภายใต้กระทรวงยุโรปและการต่างประเทศ กล่าวคือ สมาคมฝรั่งเศสแห่งประเทศไทยเป็นตัวแทนจัดกิจกรรมทางวัฒนธรรม เช่น เทศกาลภาพยนตร์ ชั้นเรียนภาษาฝรั่งเศส ตลอดจนนิทรรศการศิลปะและแฟชั่นเพื่อเผยแพร่วัฒนธรรมวัฒนธรรมฝรั่งเศสและความเป็นฝรั่งเศสให้กับประชาชนชาวไทยตั้งแต่ปี พ.ศ. 2455 ภาพยนตร์เป็นหนึ่งในเครื่องมือในการใช้อำนาจละมุนของฝรั่งเศสผ่านทางสมาคมฝรั่งเศสในประเทศไทยเพื่อเพื่อกำหนดแนวความคิดและการรับรู้ของคนไทยที่มีต่อประเทศฝรั่งเศส และภาพยนตร์ส่วนใหญ่มีเนื้อหาที่ส่งเสริม การเปิดกว้างยอมรับ ความหลากหลายทางวัฒนธรรม ความเสมอภาค และประชาธิปไตยของฝรั่งเศส

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## 6384012620 : MAJOR EUROPEAN STUDIES

KEYWORD: French film soft power culture France Thailand

Soisuda Niwon : Films as French Soft Power: The Case of Thailand. Advisor:  
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The film is not simply the most profitable cultural industry, but it is also considered the most powerful tool of "soft power. As "soft power," film is used by the state to promote its culture, civilization, and positiveness of the country as well as forms the positive perception to the public. In the case of France, the Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs has appointed Alliance Française and French Institute as cultural representative to promote the French language, culture, and civilization to the public in oversea. As a result, people have a positive image of France and maintain a solid diplomatic relationship, as exemplified by the case of Thailand. This study aims to understand French foreign cultural policies towards Thailand and understand how films serve as an instrument of soft power of France in Thailand. It is questioned how does the French government promote French culture and cultural goods to create a positive perception of France in Thailand. The hypothesis is that The French government tries to create a positive perception of France in the eye of the Thai public by using films, both French and foreign. The study concludes that France exercises its soft power in Thailand through its foreign cultural policies according to which film is used as a tool to form a positive perception of France in the eye of the Thai public. France's foreign cultural policies are conducted in Thailand through an agency under the Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs, in this case the Alliance Française. The Alliance Française of Bangkok organizes the cultural events such as film festivals, French language classes as well as arts and fashion exhibitions in order to introduce French culture as well as the Frenchness to the Thai public since 1912. Film is one of the tools of French soft power and employed by the Alliance Française to shape the ideas and perceptions of the Thai audience of France. The richness of genres and themes of the films selected by the AF to be screened in Thailand represents openness, multiculturalism, equality and democracy of France.

Field of Study: European Studies

Academic Year: 2020

Student's Signature.....*Soisuda Niwon*.....

Advisor's Signature.....*Bhawan Ruangsilp*.....

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my great appreciation to Professor Bhawan Ruangsilp, Ph.D , my research supervisor, for his valuable guidance, enthusiastic encouragement, constructive critiques, and tangible suggestions during the planning and developing of this research work. Her willingness to provide her time so generously has been very much appreciated. She plays the important role to inspire me for doing this. I would also like to thank to Miss Malaurie Carras and Miss Pornpimon Thedthong, Assistant of department of culture & artistic activities, Alliance Française Bangkok. Last but not least, I wish to thank my family and friends for always beside me, supporting, encouraging, and helping me either work or mentality. I found the precious moments while working on this study which made me know how lucky I am. There are also many people who I did not mention but they deserve to be acknowledged and thanked. The pleasure is all mine for having all of them. Not only me, but also them helped me conduct this study.

Soisuda Niwon

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# Chapter 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Importance of the topic

France, one of the most prominent nations in the European Union, is globally reputed by the French language, culture, and civilization, supposed as "artist," "luxurious," and "sophisticated." The French culture, including French gastronomy, cinematography, and theater, is widely well-known as exemplified by a "croissant" which presents as an ordinary bakery on the breakfast table, the Cannes Film Festival to which the film producers from all over the world are waiting to participate and promote their film to receive the Golden Palm, the highest prize awarded to the best movie of the year. The way of life "à la Française" is implemented by the classy people who eat well, live well and enjoy the existence of their life.

France regarded as a global cultural power. In this regard, it is interesting to investigate the factor leading to reputation of France in oversea as well as the positive opinion of the public towards France. One of the most important factors is that France is successful in conducting foreign and cultural policies in many countries including the Francophonie (French-speaking) countries, ancient French colonized countries as well as the countries that France maintain a good diplomatic relationship with. On this regard, it is important to observe foreign cultural policies of France in order to understand how France maintain the good diplomatic relationship with foreign natives to create a positive image of France oversea.

## 1.2 Research questions and hypothesis

### 1.2.1 Research question

How does the French government promote French culture and cultural goods to create a positive perception of France in Thailand?

### 1.2.2 Hypothesis

The French government tries to create a positive perception of France in the eye of the Thai public by using films, both French and foreign.



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### **Research Objectives**

1. To understand French foreign cultural policies towards Thailand
2. To understand how the film serve as an instrument of soft power of France in Thailand

### **1.3 Scope of the research and methodology**

1. French films selected to be screened in Thailand by Alliance Française from Jan 2020 to Feb 2021 (AF available the information just 1 year)
2. Qualitative and content analysis of the films
3. Case analysis: the film "Le fabuleux destin d'Amélie Poulain"



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## Chapter 2 Conceptual Framework

### 2.1 Soft Power and films

#### 2.1.1 The concept of soft power

In recent years, the concept of soft power has been significant in the public interest especially on the international affairs. The soft power has been widely discussed among scholars, academicians, politicians and decisionmakers in foreign affairs. The concept of soft power has been widely presented in the academic articles, journals on international affairs, foreign magazines and newspaper. More importantly, the word leading nations such as USA, France and Germany give an importance to soft power as a tool to preserve national interests and alters the word perception towards such nation.

Understanding the concept of soft power is important because it is necessary to better understand the process of power in international relations which is different from the past to the present. The most powerful nations in 21th centuries are not the one occupying the powerful army weapons, but the most powerful and efficient technology, innovation and medias. In other words, the soft power will be the important elements on national influence as it changes the perspective and the mind-set of people in one nation towards another nation.

To understand the concept of soft power, it is important to understand the nature of power. According to Waltz (1979), power is based on the particular material capabilities that a state possesses. These capabilities, as said Waltz, consists of size of population and territory, resource endowment, economic capability, military strength, political stability and competence (Waltz 1979, 131)<sup>1</sup>. With regard to Waltz definition of power, it can be assumed that the most powerful state is the state possessing the most powerful materials and geographical resources and has capabilities to influence other nations by using the materials resources. The Waltz's definition of power is in accordance with Gilpin (1981) who described the power as "the military, economic, and technological capabilities of states"<sup>2</sup>.

According to the definition of power, there are two forms of power. "Hard Power" and "Soft Power". The difference between "soft power" and "hard power" is that the hard power is exercised through the power resources such as military

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<sup>1</sup> Waltz, K. (1979). Anarchic Orders and Balances of Power. In K. Waltz, Theory of International Politics Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, Inc.

<sup>2</sup> Gilpin, R. (1983). "War and Change in World Politics (Revised ed.)." Cambridge University Press.



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forces, weapons, military threats. The hard power is merely materialistic and depends on military complex that can be used to threaten or marshal force. The soft power, on contrarily to the hard power, is delivered from several resources such as domestic and foreign policies in order to generate the positive image, respect and administration from one nation to another. The powerful nation formulates the foreign policies in order to exercise the soft power on other nation via culture, tradition as well as civilization through soft media such as entertainment industry, cinema, movie as well as documentary.

Joseph Nye (2004) describes the term "soft power" as "the ability to shape the preference of others through appeal and attraction, whereas hard power is exercised by the military and economic forces. Joseph Nye underlines that "soft power is based on the attractiveness of a nation's culture, political values, and foreign policies"<sup>3</sup> (Nye 2004: 5). Moreover, he emphasizes that soft power is exercised through several mechanisms such as "culture," "political value," and "foreign policies"<sup>4</sup> (Nye, 2004: 22). Nye highlighted furthermore that the soft power derives from a more intangible and enlightened source: a positive image in world affairs that endears nations to other nations in the world polity. This positive image derives from a number of sources: the domestic and foreign policies that nations follow, the actions they undertake, and/or national qualities that are independent of specific policies or actions (e.g., such as culture).

Importantly, Nye states that "A country may obtain the outcomes it wants in world politics because other countries – admiring its values, emulating its example, aspiring to its level of prosperity and openness – want to follow it. In this sense, it is also important to set the agenda and attract others in world politics, and not only to force them to change by threatening military force or economic sanctions. This soft power – getting others to want the outcomes that you want – co-opts people rather than coerces them"<sup>5</sup> (Nye 2004: 5).

Besides, Wilson (2008) explains "soft power" in the way that "soft power is the capacity to persuade others to do what one wants" (Wilson, 2008, p. 114). He distinguishes the soft power and hard power that "Hard power is based on military intervention, coercive diplomacy, and economic sanctions and relies on tangible power resources such as armed forces or economic means"<sup>6</sup> (Wilson, 2008, p. 114).

To conclude, soft power is different from hard power according to which soft power aims to attract and persuade the public to follow the policies by forming the positiveness, reputation, and especially propaganda through the cultural

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<sup>3</sup> Nye, J. (2004). Soft power: The means to success in world politics. New York: Public Affairs.

<sup>4</sup> ibid

<sup>5</sup> ibid

<sup>6</sup> Wilson, E. J. (2008). "Hard Power, Soft Power, Smart Power." Smart Power. The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, **616**(1), 110-124.

and economic mechanism. The objective of soft power is instead exercising forces but to influence the public to do something in the benefit and interest of the one who is exercising power.

### 2.1.2 Films as an instrument of soft power

Alina Chernukho (2018) explains in her work "Cinema as a tool of "soft power." A selection of French examples that the cinema is considered not only as one of the fastest-growing cultural industries in the world. It is also an important tool of soft power according to which it generates its result by forming a positive image of the country. As a soft power tool, the film generates, promotes, and sophisticates the culture, tradition, and civilization of one nation to the public eyes. More importantly, the film influences the perspective of the public toward the nation generally positively. Most powerful nations such as China, the United States of America, and France are world leaders in cinematography and use the film as a tool of soft power in accordance with its foreign policies to promote the nation's image to be the most powerful or cultural richest nation. Alina Chernukho underlines that cinema becomes a soft power tool because the government of those nations gives importance to public diplomacy and nation branding to enhance international cultural cooperation and secure the nation's interest through bilateral diplomacy. Alina Chernukho investigates the soft power in four French films such as 1) *Les Parapluies de Cherbourg*, 2) *Le Fabuleux Destin d'Amélie Poulain*, 3) *Vivre Sa Vie* and 4) *Paris, Je t'aime* in order to prove that the films can be a tool of soft power. The investigation can be concluded that the film is considered an integral part of the culture. Most of the films reflect the way of life, culture, and mentality of people in the nation. As a result, films are mostly served as propaganda to promote a good image of the countries and cultural harmonies. In the film *Paris Je t'aime*, the film promotes a good image of Paris by emphasizing the ethnic and cultural diversities in Paris where people from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds live together harmoniously and peacefully without being discriminated. It promotes the image of "living together in Paris" to create unity within diversity since France is a country where people migrating from different countries live together. Moreover, *Paris Je t'aime* is a soft power tool used to promote tourism in Paris because Paris is one of the most favorite tourist destinations. The film has romanticized Paris as a city of love in multiple episodes such as *French Kiss* and *Moulin Rouge*. It commodifies love, passion, and the experience of being a happy tourist in Paris. Moreover, the film has projected several tourist attractions in Paris, such as the Eiffel Tower, Notre Dame of Paris, Luxembourg garden etc.. which is not the usual vision of Paris. Lastly, the film represents the humor and appreciation for Paris. For this reason, there is no doubt that the film "Paris Je



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t'aime promotes a good image of Paris and influences the members of the audience to visit Paris<sup>7</sup>.

Moreover, it can be said that a film is a form of soft power. As argued by Oliver Keune and Valeriya Frants (2017), "The cinema is one of the most profitable cultural industries and a highly influential instrument of "soft power"<sup>8</sup>" (Oliver Keune and Valeriya Frants, 2017: 154). The movie is used to promote the good image of the country as well as convince the audience to be engaged generally and emotionally, as supported by Nye, who argued that "popular entertainment often contains subliminal images and messages about individualism, consumer choice, and other values that have important political effects"<sup>9</sup>. (Nye 2004, 168).

To conclude, a movie is a form of soft power because it relies primarily on culture as a source of influence. Many countries use a movie as a tool to shape its representation and exercising soft power over the audience, as exemplified by the USA who creates an American hero to convince the USA as a great and safe nation, or South Korea who creates Korean series to project that a Korean man is gentlemen by taking care well of the woman.

### 2.1.3 Example of Film as soft power - "Ratatouille"

As mentioned earlier, the film is considered a soft power tool to persuade the public and form a country's positive image. Ratatouille is the most outstanding example of a French film that contributed to France's positive image and its reputation in gastronomy.

The movie "Ratatouille," produced by Pixar and Walt Disney, exposes numerous French cultural presentations. The Ratatouille appeared in the cinemas in Thailand on 26 July 2007, under the name in Thai "พ่อครัวตัวจิ๋วหัวใจคับโลก." The cartoon won the Oscar award in the category of the best-animated feature of the year. Ratatouille is an animation in which the story narrates a talented rat who becomes a great chef in Paris. Most of the scenes and actions in the movie took place in a high-class restaurant in Paris. The dialogue between the characters in the movie concerns the French cooking. There are many French cultural terms such as "classification of the cooker level" and "name of French well-known dishes" More importantly, Ratatouille exposes the soft power in several means as discussed as follows:

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<sup>7</sup> Chernukho, A. ((2018)). "Cinema as a tool of "soft power". A selection of French examples, No. 2 " Crossways Journal 2.2 : Dissertation Abstracts 2018 Vol. 2.

<sup>8</sup> Keune, O. and V. Frants ((2017b)). Cinema as an Element of a State's Soft Power System.

<sup>9</sup> Nye, J. ((2004)). Soft power: The means to success in world politics. New York: Public Affairs.



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The soft power generated over the movie *Ratatouille* (2007) by representing French culture's tradition. First of all, it is to convince the audience that France is the world leader in gastronomy. France cuisine is not only the best in the world but is also vary according to the regions. The film producer uses the name of the movie "Ratatouille," a French Provençal stewed vegetable dish originating in Nice. Moreover, the movie presents several French dishes such as Quiche Lorraine, Chicken confit, French onion soup, Boeuf bourguignon, which are sophisticatedly prepared by a well-known French cooker. The movie exposes to the audience that French gastronomy is not simply an ordinary meal, but it has a long tradition and savoir-faire that are passed from generation to generation. As a result, French gastronomy's excellent image and reputation pass through the movie of *Ratatouille* and convince the audience to try and has a good vision toward French gastronomy. Secondly, the movie "Ratatouille" presents French gastronomy's good image through the cooker's classification and hierarchy, typically French. Unlike other nations, French cookers are divided according to their cooking experiences from a dishwasher, Kitchen Porter, Commis Chef, Chef de Partie, Sous Chef, Chef de Cuisines, and executive chef. The audience will perceive this classification and hierarchy through the movie. Thirdly, "Ratatouille" convinces the audience about the quality of the restaurant. The restaurant was degraded to a four-star restaurant by the food critic who writes the restaurant's review in the movie. The restaurant was a five star-restaurant and was a culinary destination of Paris, and represented Paris's best restaurant. In this regard, the audience perceives a French restaurant as a high-quality restaurant with a higher standard than any restaurant in the world. The restaurant is evaluated and criticized by the food critic. The French restaurant owner always has to maintain the standard of their restaurant.

To conclude, the movie "Ratatouille" is deemed to be a soft power of France according to which French culture such as French gastronomy, French culinary tradition, and the classification and hierarchy of cooker are presented in the movie. The movie is used to promote the reputation and a good image of French culture to the audience worldwide, including Thailand. It was in the form of propaganda to increase the French cuisine's role in a country and convince the audience to have a good perception of French culture.

## **2.2 French foreign cultural policies**

### **2.2.1 French foreign cultural policies in general**

The French foreign and cultural policies in oversea were conducted by the Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs according to which a huge network of French cultural department and institutions were established in overseas. The cultural departments and establishments such as Alliance Française or Institut Français were founded in oversea in order to be the diplomatic and culture



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representative of France and work closely with local partners for diplomatic and cultural purposes. According to the foreign and cultural policy of Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs, Republic of France, the France's cultural policy abroad has the following objectives:

1. Bringing French culture and the work of French artists to the public and wider audience around the world. In this regard, Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs appointed the Alliance Française and Institut Français to collaborate with local partners in order to organize some 50,000 cultural events a year such as cinema program, art and design programs, events for celebrating French important days e.g. French national day, Easter, French Independence Day etc... Building lasting networks among creative artists and cultural policy managers in order to respond to the demand from overseas artists and professionals.
2. Develop bilateral cultural diplomacy by organizing the event such as cultural workshop, the festivals as well as cultural events

In this regard, the Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs appointed Alliance Française and Institut Français to be French diplomacy representatives in oversea

### 2.2.2 French foreign cultural policies in Thailand

In recent years, France has considerably promoted its cultural presence in foreign countries and has begun to use the soft power actively to form the positiveness of French culture, language, gastronomy, and arts. The use of media such as films by French cultural institutions is widely acknowledged. In this regard, France has been put first on the list of the most influential countries in terms of "soft power"<sup>10</sup>. (Gray, 2017).

Looking back in the history of France, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs established the "General Directorate of Cultural Affairs" in 1945 and then renamed the "Ministry of Culture" in 1959. The Ministry of Culture has appointed cultural institutions such as Alliance Française and Institut Français to carry out cultural diplomacy. In this regard, Alliance Française is engaged as an important cultural institution in France's international relations. The mission of Alliance Française is to promote Francophone cultures and cultural diversity through

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<sup>10</sup> Gray, A. ((2017, July).) France becomes the world no 1 for soft power. In World Economic Forum (Vol. 27).



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cinema, art, fashion and design, cultural events<sup>11</sup> (Alliance Francaise de Bangkok, 2021).

Interestingly, according to Ebru Eren (2020), "Alliance française is an effective tool of soft power in the context of France and a cultural model to other states. It rests on the socio-cultural values of French Revolution ("promotion of national language and Francophone cultures"), on sociopolitical values of French revolutionary ideology ("cultural exchange with the values like freedom, equality, fraternity, interculturality, etc. abroad") and foreign policy practices of France ("international cooperation and network")<sup>12</sup> (Ebru Eren 2020, P: 129)

As a result, it can be said that there are numerous signs of the expansion of France's soft power in Thailand, such as the growing number of French tourists visiting Thailand, the increase of the French presence in Thailand through the cinema, arts, cultural event and business organized by Embassy of France in Thailand and Alliance Francaise de Bangkok, the increasing number of Thai students studying French in the high school, the inauguration of Alliance Francaise de Bangkok in Bangkok. Moreover, Thailand accepts France's soft power in the country as many associations relating to France are under the King and Princess of Thailand's patronage. Moreover, it is evident that in the case of Thailand, the achievement of France's soft power strongly relies on the foreign policy and cultural policy of the French authorities, such as the Embassy of France in Thailand and the Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs. Lastly, this notion and practice of soft France soft power are in accordance with Nye's definition of soft power because it is driven by culture, political values, and foreign policies of the political bodies. France's soft power in Thailand aims to create the presence of France in Thailand to be nationally and nationally accepted and increase France's role in the economy, politics, and society of Thailand.

Moreover, the result of soft power resulting by French foreign and cultural policies has a great impact in Thai economy and industry through the presence of Frenchness and French cultural good in Thailand

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<sup>11</sup> Bangkok, S. A. F. ((2018, November 19)). "Alliance française Bangkok.." from <https://afthailande.org/en/alliance-francaise-de-bangkok/>.

<sup>12</sup> EREN, E. h. ((2020).) Education Policies as a Tool of Soft Power: Alliance Française and Yunus Emre Institute. Current Research in Social Sciences. Published.



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## Chapter 3 French films in Thailand: Alliance Française cinema

### 3.1 Task of Alliance Francaise in general and Thailand

The Alliance Française was founded in Paris in 1883 and is now the world's leading cultural network, with more than 800 establishments in 137 countries across the five continents. Every year, over 500,000 people of all ages attend Alliance Française schools to learn French, and over 6 million people take part in the cultural activities on offer. The network is coordinated by the Alliance Française Foundation. All Alliance Française establishments pursue three essential common missions:

1. Offering French language lessons, in France and abroad, to all comers;
2. Raising awareness of French and Francophone cultures;
3. Promoting cultural diversity<sup>13</sup>.

### 3.2 Alliance Francaise cinema in Thailand

From the previous chapters, it is argued that film is the instrument of soft-power. The film is used in accordance with foreign policies of the powerful nations as the “soft power” to shape the foreign public opinion, form the positive image of the country as well as exercise the international influence to the public. Most of scholars and academicians admits the presence of soft power in the cinema such as Dagnaud (2011) who argues that cinema is a tool of soft power of nations<sup>14</sup> (Dagnaud 2011: 142) as same as Morin (2013) who explains that film is the most significant tool of soft power and cultural industry in terms of economic profitability and symbolic influence<sup>15</sup> (Gilboa 2008: 60) The film allows the nation to build active status of the world and exercise the soft power through the positive perception of its culture, civilization, tradition and languages.

According to the France diplomacy of the Ministry of the Foreign Affairs of France, one of the most important bodies involved in the French foreign

<sup>13</sup> Bangkok, S. A. F. ((2018, November 19)). "Alliance française Bangkok. ." from <https://afthailande.org/en/alliance-francaise-de-bangkok/>.

<sup>14</sup> Dagnaud, M. ((2011)). "Le cinéma, instrument du soft power des nations." *Géoéconomie*, e, 58(3), from <https://doi.org/10.3917/geoec.058.0021>.

<sup>15</sup> Gilboa, E., 2008. (, 2008.) Searching for a theory of public diplomacy. *The annals of the American academy of political and social science*, **616** (1), 55-77.



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diplomacy in oversea is Alliance Française. The Alliance Française has the mission to 1) develop the teaching and use of the French language around the world 2) contribute to increasing the intellectual and moral influence of France and the interest of all French-speaking cultures 3) encourage exchanges between cultures and 4) contribute in general to the development of cultural diversity. In this regard, it can be assumed that Alliance Française is an effective tool of soft power in the context of France and a cultural model in overseas because the Alliance Française is engaged as an important cultural institution in the context of international relations of France. Moreover, Alliance Française represents the revolutionary ideology of France for the promotion of French language and French culture in overseas.

One of the most important activities organized by Alliance Française is the cinema. In every month, the Alliance Française of Bangkok presents the cinema programs with variety of films such as comedy, science-fiction, dramas, action as well as animation. Most of them are related to French culture, civilization, history as well as the present French society.

### 3.3 Qualitative and content analysis of the French films elected to screen in

#### Thailand by Alliance Française of Bangkok.

In this part, the author will analyze the cinema programs at Alliance Française in Bangkok from January 2020 to February 2021 in order to study the type of films and investigate the content of the films whether it is related to the politic, culture, gender and democracy which deems as the soft power in order to promote the positiveness of the country as well as influence the perception of the public towards France.

#### 1. The cinema program of Alliance Française on January 2020

No	Date	Name	Directors	Genre	Content
1	8 January 2021 11 January 2021 25 January 2021	PAPICHA	Mounia Meddour	Drama	Culture Immigration

2	11 January 2021	DILILI À PARIS	Michel Ocelot	Animation, Adventure, Family	Culture
3	16 January 2021	JESSICA FOREVER	Caroline Poggi	Drama, Fantasy	Culture
4	22 January 2021	THE BALLAD OF GENESIS AND LADY JAYE	Marie Losier	Documentary, Sexuality, Music	Sexuality Culture
5	22 January 2021	ODALISQUE	Siripat Nomruk	Drama, Short Film	Culture Thai
6	25 January 2021	STEP	Wayla Amatathammachad	Documentary, Dance	Culture Thai

**Source:** Alliance Française of Bangkok

According to the cinema program in January 2020 of Alliance Française in Bangkok, the Alliance Française selected 6 films to show to the public. All of them is concerned with the culture in different dimensions such as immigration and sexuality. Interestingly, the Alliance Française decided to show the films representing the combination Thai culture and French culture such as ODALISQUE and STEP according to which both of them were produced in Thailand and directed by Thai directors. In this regard, it can be argued that Alliance Française in Bangkok does not only aim to promote only French culture and civilization through the film but the institute are interested also in Thai culture. The interest on local culture may influence and develop the diplomacy for the bilateral interest.

## 2. The cinema program of Alliance Française on February 2020

No	Date	Name	Directors	Genre	Content
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1	5 February 2021	NUMBERED SPECIAL SCREENING & TALK	Dana Doron & Uriel Sinaï	Documentary, History	Culture
2	12 February 2021 15 February 2021	DAVID HOCKNEY AT THE ROYAL ACADEMY OF ARTS	Phil Grabsky	Documentary, Art	Culture Art
3	26 February 2021	FRENCH CLASSIC	Costa Gavras	Political Thriller	Culture
4	19 February 2021	LAST YEAR IN A REFUGEE CAMP	Dapho Moradokpana and Hsa Law Taeh Htoo	Short film	Politic
5	19 February 2021	LE HAVRE	André Wilms, Blondin Miguel, Jean-Pierre Darroussin	Comedy, Drama	Culture
6	28 February 2021	THE MAN WHO MENDS WOMEN - THE WRATH OF HIPPOCRATES	Thierry Michel & Colette Braeckman	Documentary	Culture

**Source:** Alliance Française of Bangkok

According to the cinema program in February 2020 of Alliance Française in Bangkok, the Alliance Française selected 6 films to show to the public. All of them is concerned with the culture except the film named LAST YEAR IN A REFUGEE CAMP which concern the politic between Thailand and Myanmar. Interestingly, the film LE HAVRE represents purely French culture as an urban French commune and it is one of the most favorite holidays destination of French people. The film narrates the story of a shoe shiner who tries to save an immigrant child in the French port city Le Havre. The film promotes the positive image of Le Havre as one of the most favorite travel destinations by people as well as promote the tourism and tourist attractions in France.



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### 3. The cinema program of Alliance Française on March 2020

The Alliance Française in Bangkok has stopped to provide films programs due to the widespread of COVID-19.

### 4. The cinema program of Alliance Française on April 2020

The Alliance Française in Bangkok has stopped to provide films programs due to the widespread of COVID-19.

### 5. The cinema program of Alliance Française on May 2020

The Alliance Française in Bangkok has stopped to provide films programs due to the widespread of COVID-19.

### 6. The cinema program of Alliance Française on June 2020

No	Date	Name	Directors	Genre	Content
1	6 June 2020	MINGA ET LA CUILLÈRE CASSÉE	Claye Edou	Animation	Culture Immigration
2	10 June 2020	BOONCHU 1	Bhandit Rittakol	Comedy	Thai Culture
3	13 June 2020	100 KILOS D'ÉTOILES	Marie-Sophie Chambon	Comedy-drama	Culture
4	17 June 2020	QUEEN OF MONTREUIL	Solveig Anspach	Comedy-drama	Culture
5	24 June 2020	LES GARÇONS ET GUILLAUME, À TABLE!	Guillaume Gallienne	Comedy	Culture



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6	27 June 2020	GRIFFES, PLUMES, POILS ET MOUSTACHES	No identical	Animation	Culture
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**Source:** Alliance Française of Bangkok

According to the cinema program in June 2020 of Alliance Française in Bangkok, the Alliance Française selected 6 films to show to the public. All of them concern the culture but in different dimensions. First of all, 4 films such as 100 KILOS D'ÉTOILES, QUEEN OF MONTREUIL, LES GARÇONS ET GUILLAUME, À TABLE! and GRIFFES, PLUMES, POILS ET MOUSTACHES concern French culture while MINGA ET LA CUIILLÈRE CASSÉE concerns the culture of another countries that France has a strong diplomatically relationship with such as Cameroon, the ancient colonized country of France. The film MINGA ET LA CUIILLÈRE CASSÉE narrates the story of the Minga who is loosely based on "The Broken Spoon," the famous African tale. The film is a vibrant tribute to Cameroon's rich cultural diversity, while being a source of entertainment for the young and old alike.

### 7. The cinema program of Alliance Française on July 2021

No	Date	Name	Directors	Genre	Content
1	1 July 2020	LES GARÇONS ET GUILLAUME, À TABLE!	Guillaume Gallienne	Comedy	Culture
2	4 July 2020	LES MALHEURS DE SOPHIE	Christophe Honoré	Comedy	Culture
3	8 July 2020	BESIDE THE RAILWAY TRACK (PART1&2)	Watcharapong Phukhum	Short film	Culture
4	8 July 2020	J'AI PAS SOMMEIL	Claire Denis	Drama	Culture

5	11 July 2020	LE MÉPRIS	Jean-Luc Godard	Drama	Culture
6	11 July 2020	MILOU EN MAI	Louis Malle	Comedy,	Culture
7	15 July 2020 25 July 2020	PORTRAIT DE LA JEUNE FILLE EN FEU	Céline Sciamma	Drama	Culture
8	18 July 2020	GRIFFES, PLUMES, POILS ET MOUSTACHES 2	N/A	Anime short films	Culture
9	18 July 2020	NELSON MANDELA: THE MYTH AND ME	Khalo Matabane	Documentary	History
10	22 July 2020	FUN BAR KARAOKE	Pen-ek Ratanaruang	Action- comedy	Thai culture
11	25 July 2020	GUS PETIT OISEAU, GRAND VOYAGE	Christian De Vita	Anime	Culture

**Source:** Alliance Française of Bangkok

According to the cinema program in June 2020 of Alliance Française in Bangkok, the Alliance Française selected 11 films to show to the public. All of them concern with the French culture such as the film named LE MÉPRIS which narrates the history of France in the regime of Louis XIV according to which the absolute monarchy had a power in the government. The miserable of people contribute to French revolution sooner. The film named LES MALHEURS DE SOPHIE represents the French ideology according to which during the 18-19 centuries, the men had a power over the women whether in the work place, public areas as well as in the house hold. The Patriarchy in France would soon lead to the social movement for sexual equality.

## 8. The cinema program of Alliance Française on August 2020



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No	Date	Name	Directors	Genre	Content
1	4 August 2020	LES YEUX SANS VISAGE	George Franju	Horror-Classic	Culture
2	5 August 2020	CITIZEN DOG	Wisit Sasanatieng	Fantastic	Thai Culture
3	8 August 2020	TOUT EN HAUT DU MONDE	Rémi Chayé	Anime - Fantastic	Culture
4	8 August 2020	TOUT CE QU'IL ME RESTE DE LA RÉVOLUTION	Judith Davis	Comedy	Culture
5	15 August 2020	PHANTOM BOY	Jean-Loup Felicioli	Anime	Culture
6	15 August 2020	LE GRAND BAL	Laeticia Carton	Documentary	Culture
7	18 August 2020	ADULTS IN THE ROOM	Costa-Gavras	Drama	Culture
8	19 August 2020	LES DEUX AMIS	Louis Garrel	Drama	Culture
9	26 August 2020	RIPE	Punnaruj Peerachaikarn	Short Film	Culture
10	26 August 2020	ZOMBI CHILD	Bertrand Bonello	Drama	Culture
11	29 August 2020	UN DIVAN À TUNIS	Manele Labidi	Comedy	Culture
12	29 August 2020	ADULTS IN THE ROOM	Costa-Gavras	Drama	Culture

**Source:** Alliance Française of Bangkok



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According to the cinema program in August 2020 of Alliance Française in Bangkok, the Alliance Française selected 12 films to show to the public. All of them concern with the French culture, except the film named CITIZEN DOG which concern Thai culture. According to the 11 French films, it is noticed that all of them represent the French culture in different dimensions, for example the film LE GRAND BAL represents the French folk-dance festival that takes place every year in Gennetines, not far from Moulins, in central France. The dance begins at nine in the evening until at least three in the morning.

### 9. The cinema program of Alliance Française on September 2020

No	Date	Name	Directors	Genre	Content
1	2 September 2020 15 September 2020 26 September 2020	LA VÉRITÉ	Hirokazu Kore-eda	Drama	Culture
2	8 September 2020	L'ARGENT	Robert Bresson   French Classic	Literary Adaptation	Culture
3	9 September 2020	TEARS OF THE BLACK TIGER	Wisit Sasanatieng	Action - Thai Classic	Thai Culture
4	19 September 2020	SOLDADO MILHÕES	Gonçalo Galvão Teles and Jorge Paixão da Costa	History, War	World Culture
5	19 September 2020	REDENTOR	Claudio Torres	Fantasy, Drama	World Culture
6	22 September 2020	MYSTERY MIND MAPS	Raphael Treza	Documentary	Culture



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7	26 September 2020	LE PRINCE OUBLIÉ	Michel Hazanavicius	Anime	Culture
8	30 September 2020	HÉDI, UN VENT DE LIBERTÉ	Mohamed Ben Attia	Drama Romance	Culture

**Source:** Alliance Française of Bangkok

According to the cinema program in September 2020 of Alliance Française in Bangkok, the Alliance Française selected 8 films to show to the public. All of them concern with the culture in different aspects such as French culture, world culture and Thai culture. The film named LE PRINCE OUBLIÉ represent the French society according to which the lost prince means a single dad who refuses to leave the normal world over the years for taking care of his 11-year-old daughter, who's growing up way faster than he'd care to admit. In French society, most of the family are single mom or single dad who take care of their son and daughter.

#### 10. The cinema program of Alliance Française on October 2020

No	Date	Name	Directors	Genre	Content
1	3 October 2020 17 October 2020	LE PRINCE OUBLIÉ	Michel Hazanavicius	Anime	Culture
2	3 October 2020	MON-RAK TRANSISTOR	Pen-ek Ratanaruang	Musical	Culture
3	7 October 2020	LA PLANÈTE SAUVAGE	René Laloux	Animation, Sci-Fi	Culture
4	9 October 2020	APPRENTICE	Junfeng Boo	Drama	Culture



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5	17 October 2020 27 October 2020	MATISSE FROM MOMA AND TATE MODERN	Phil Grabsky	Documentary	Culture History
6	21 October 2020	AMAL	Mohamed Siam	Documentary	World Culture

**Source:** Alliance Française of Bangkok

According to the cinema program in October 2020 of Alliance Française in Bangkok, the Alliance Française selected 6 films to show to the public. All of them concern with the culture.

#### 11. The cinema program of Alliance Française on November 2020

No	Date	Name	Directors	Genre	Content
1	4 November 2020	PEE NAK 1	Phontharis Chotkijarsadarsopon	Comedy- Horror	Thai Culture
2	10 November 2020	BANDE DE FILLES	Céline Sciamma	Drama	Culture
3	11 November 2020	MON INCONNUE	Hugo Gélin	Comedy- Romance	Culture
4	25 November 2020	CAMILLE	Boris Lojkine	Drama	Culture
5	28 November 2020	SANTA & CIE SPECIAL CHRISTMAS	Alain Chabat	Comedy	Culture
6	14 November 2020	FRIDA KAHLO EXHIBITION ON SCREEN	Ali Ray	Documentary	Culture

	18 November 2020				
7	17 November 2020	MON INCONNUE	Hugo G�lin	Comedy- Romance	Culture

**Source:** Alliance Franaise of Bangkok

According to the cinema program in November 2020 of Alliance Franaise in Bangkok, the Alliance Franaise selected 7 films to show to the public. All of them concern with the culture.

## 12. The cinema program of Alliance Franaise on December 2020

No	Date	Name	Directors	Genre	Content
1	2 December 2020	LES HIRONDELLES DE KABOUL	Zabou Breitman and El�a Gobb�- M�vellec	Animation	Culture
2	9 December 2020	16 LEVERS DE SOLEIL	Pierre- Emmanuel Le Goff	Documentary	Culture
3	12 December 2020	LE PETIT PRINCE	Mark Osborne	Anime	Culture
4	15 December 2020	MON INCONNUE	Hugo G�lin	Comedy- Romance	Culture



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5	19 December 2020	MA MAMAN EST EN AMÉRIQUE, ELLE A RENCONTRÉ BUFFALO BILL	Marc Boreal and Thibault Chatel	Anime	Culture
6	19 December 2020	LA DAME AUX CAMÉLIAS (BALLET DU BOLCHOÏ)	John Neumeier	Musical	Culture

**Source:** Alliance Française of Bangkok

According to the cinema program in December 2020 of Alliance Française in Bangkok, the Alliance Française selected 6 films to show to the public. All of them concern with the culture.

### 13. The cinema program of Alliance Française on January 2021

No	Date	Name	Directors	Genre	Content
1	19 January 2021	LE POULAIN (We need your vote)	Mathieu Sapin	Comedy	Politic
2	20 January 2021	COMME DES GARÇONS	Julien Hallard, with Max Boublil, Vanessa Guide, Bruno Lochet	Comedy	Culture
3	23 January 2021	JALOUSE	David Foenkinos and Stéphane Foenkinos	Comedy, Drama	Culture
4	27 January 2021	REVENIR	Jessica Pallud	Drama	Culture



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5	30 January 2021	LES CONTES DE LA NUIT	Michel Ocelot	Animation	Culture
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**Source:** Alliance Française of Bangkok

According to the cinema program in January of Alliance Française in Bangkok, the Alliance Française selected 5 films to show in January according to which 4 of them concerns French culture such as the film named les contes de la nuit (French tales of the nights) which represents the French tales stories based on the French believes in God and unseen and mysterious narrative stories in different five regions in France : Bordeaux, Marseilles, Toulouse, Dijon as well as Hauts-de-France. The film narrates the French believes which are obviously seen in French fairy tales such as the Werewolf, the Beauty as well as the City of God. However, the French film is not far from politic according to which the film named LE POULAIN (We need your vote) represents also the French politics according to which people believes in the democracy and it is the right and obligation to go for a vote whether in the school or presidential election.

#### 14. The cinema program of Alliance Française on February 2021

No	Date	Name	Directors	Genre	Content
1	3 February 2021	PLACE PUBLIQUE	Agnès Jaoui	Comedy	Culture
2	6 February 2021	DEUX MOI (Someone, Somewhere)	Cédric Klapisch	Drama	Culture
3	13 February 2021	BRITANNICUS	Stéphane Braunschweig	Tragedy	History Culture
4	13 February 2021 17 February 2021	CÉZANNE, PORTRAITS D'UNE VIE	Phil Grabsky	Documentary	Art History



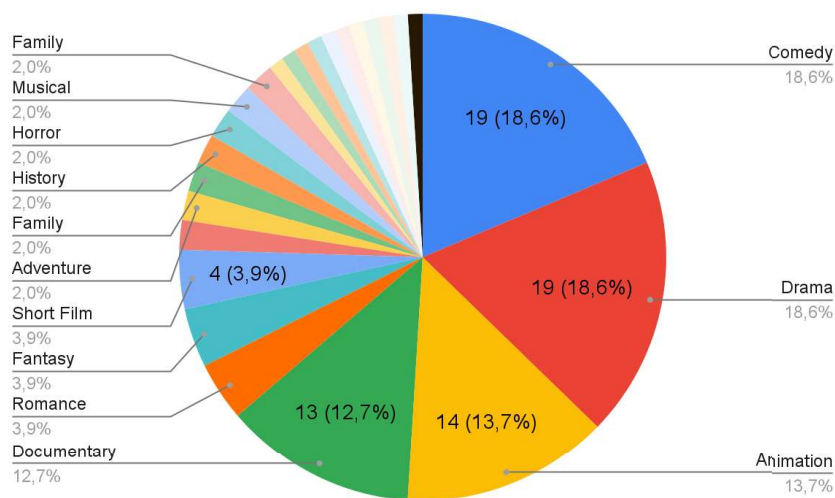
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5	20 February 2021	FAHIM	Pierre François-Martin Laval	Family comedy	Culture
6	20 February 2021	ERNEST ET CÉLESTINE EN HIVER	Julien Chheng and Jean-Christophe Roger	Adventure	Culture

**Source:** Alliance Française of Bangkok

According to the cinema program in February of Alliance Française in Bangkok, the Alliance Française selected 6 films to show in February according to which 4 of them concerns French culture

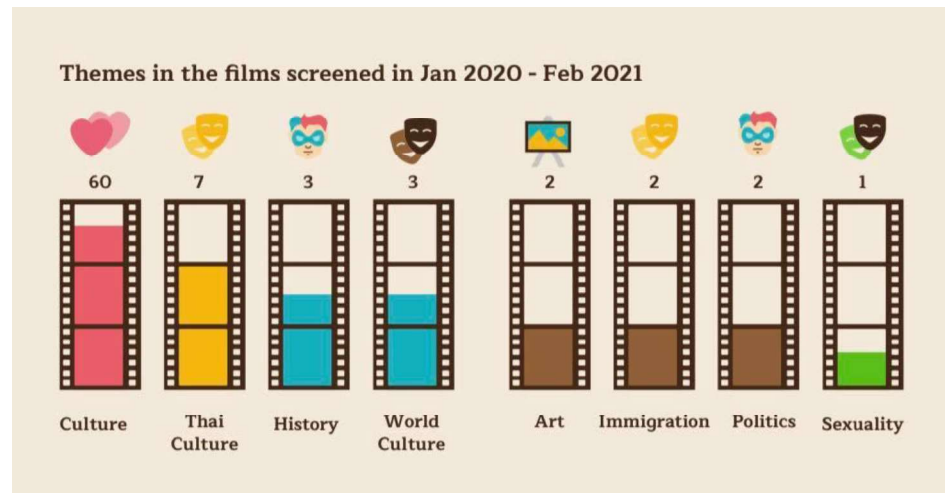


The result of the analysis of genres shows that comedy and drama seemed to be the most selected, following by animation, documentary, action, adventure, family, history, musical, and arts. From the number and genre of films featured across the year, the popularity or content with a wide target seems to be the focus for AF cinemas program.



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The result of the analysis of theme shows that the most popular ones were culturally-oriented, following by Thailand-related content with cultural practices on screen, history, world culture, art, immigration, politics and sexuality.

## Chapter 4 Case analysis: the film *Le fabuleux destin d'Amélie*

### Poulain

In this chapter, the film *Le fabuleux destin d'Amélie Poulain* (Jean-Pierre Jeunet, 2001) will be analyzed with regard to the question of soft power in the film. The analyze will investigate in order to find out whether the film *Le fabuleux destin d'Amélie Poulain* is an example of a tool of soft power since it contributes to the positive representation of Paris. Firstly, the film display Paris as picturesque and romantic city. Secondly, the film shows Parisienne tourist monuments as well as the lifestyle which implies the romantic image of the city. In addition, the main character Amélie perceives Paris as the city of happiness in order to forget her unhappiness and her past. All this aspect in the film *Le fabuleux destin d'Amélie Poulain* could be possibly related to the soft-power.

#### 4.1 Synopsis and reception



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The film *Le fabuleux destin d'Amélie Poulain* narrates the story of the young French waitress Amélie Poulain who was born in June 1974 and is raised by eccentric parents who believe that Amélie has a heart defect but actually she has not. In order to solve the problem, the parents decided to give her a home school and prevent Amélie from sociability. Therefore, Amélie Poulain lives her life lonely and depressed. However, Amélie always develops an active imagination and a joyful personality. Unexpectedly, when Amélie is 6 years old, her mother, Amandine, was killed when a suicidal Canadian tourist jumps from the roof of Notre-Dame de Paris. As a result, her father was very depressed about the death of her mother and decided to withdraw himself from social interaction. Besides, Amélie creates her own imaginary world to cope with the loss of her mother. The story narrates many aspects that Amélie has turned the unhappiness to happiness and negativity to positivity. She observes the happiness of Dominique Bredoteau as he is able to forget with his past as well as with his lost daughter and grandson. Amélie becomes inspired by his success and decides to devote herself to improve the lives of the people close to her, for example, Amélie helps her co-worker Georgette and the regular guest named Joseph to fall in love with each other and successful in love. She creates long lost love letters from her conierge's dead husband in order to bring happiness back into their lives. Moreover, she also steals her father's garden gnome and makes him travel around the world with a stewardess as her father has always dreamt of touring the world with her mother. Thus, Amélie intervenes with the other character's lives in order to protect them from unhappiness and rather motivates them to find closure with their past. The happy ending of Amélie highlights the stereotypical and romantic representation of Paris as all characters have found peace with their past and are able to pursue happiness within the picturesque Parisian setting. In this regard, the end of the film displays a harmonic Paris as narrative and setting are both showing a happy contemporary life in Paris. All characters have found closure with the past.

#### 4.2 The Image of Paris as soft-power

The film *Le fabuleux destin d'Amélie Poulain* is a tool of soft power as it forms the positive image of Paris to the public and influence the public to have positive opinion towards Paris. Firstly, in the film *Le fabuleux destin d'Amélie Poulain*, Paris is represented as a city of love and happiness. This shows by the fact that people living in Paris including Amélie Poulain can forget their painful past and unhappiness and live happily and positively. This fact deems as the soft power as it projects the image of Paris as a city of happiness. The audience perceive the positivity of this city and would like to live in this city for long. Secondly, the film *Le fabuleux destin d'Amélie Poulain* presents the tourist attractions in Paris in order to influence the audience to visit Paris once in a life time. The film's



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story focuses on the symbol of Paris as it is set in the area of Montmartre and famous Parisian landmarks as the Eiffel Tower and Sacré-Coeur. In this regard, it is contributed to show the image of Paris as a flawless as well as timeless Paris. In addition, it creates stereotypical and romantic image of Paris.

In conclusion, it can be said that the film *Le fabuleux destin d'Amélie Poulaine* is a tool of soft power because the film's visuals can enhance the stereotypical image of Paris of being romantic and picturesque and create a fictional and exaggerated version of Paris. Moreover, it emphasizes the romantic and fantastic representation of Paris as it presented as a city in which everyone can pursue happiness and romance. Moreover, it contributes to the stereotypical image of Paris as it focuses on displaying the beauty of the heritage site Paris by focusing on the capital's area of Montmartre. This stereotypical image is emphasized by the narrative's focus on the past and a mythical Paris as well as by the attachment of a romantic and fantastic notion to the displayed places.

## Chapter 5 Conclusion

In 21st centuries, the world competition is beyond employing military weapons against the enemy but the power varies from the technology to the information. The notion of soft power as explained Joseph Nye is based on the attractiveness of a nation's culture, political values, by source of foreign policies<sup>16</sup> (Nye 2004: 5). The powerful nations such as the United State of America exercise the soft power through the media, especially the films. American Hollywood films and American superheroes are perceived by the audience throughout the world and influence their ideas that American is the greatest nation in the world.

France is also one of the most powerful countries in the world that exercises the soft power in accordance it's with foreign cultural policies. According to the Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs, the cultural diplomacy is administrated through the cultural institutions such as Alliance Francaise. Such institution conducts cultural diplomacy through various cultural programs including film screening.

It can be said that film is one of the most powerful tools of soft power employed by government's cultural bodies in order to form the positive image of the country. The film *Le fabuleux destin d'Amélie Poulain* is a great example

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<sup>16</sup> Nye, J. (2004). Soft power: The means to success in world politics. New York: Public Affairs.

to show that film a very powerful tool of soft power in order to shape the opinion of a foreign public on a country. Thailand is missing from thai conclusion.

First of all, in the film *Le fabuleux destin d'Amélie Poulain*, the image of Paris is showed positively. Paris is presented as a city of love, hope as well as of happiness. The one living in Paris could forget their painful past and live their new life. Secondly, the film *Le fabuleux destin d'Amélie Poulain* shows the attractions in Paris which are not only historical monuments such as Notre Dame de Paris or the Sacre Coeur, but it includes the way of life of people in Paris. Last but not least, the film can influence the audience diplomatically through the positivity, perception as well as attraction in the film.



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