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**Titolo della tesi**

Positioning of a cultural institute in different countries:  
A case study of Alliance Française

**Relatore**

Roberto Grandi

**Correlatore**

Pina Lalli

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## Chapter 1 Introduction

- 1.1 Executive Summary
- 1.2 Definitions: cultural diplomacy, soft power and nation branding
- 1.3 Alliance Française
  - 1.3.1 History and missions
  - 1.3.2 In Hangzhou and in Bologna
- 1.4 Methodology of research

## Chapter 2 Field work in Alliance Française in Hangzhou

- 2.1 From a financial standpoint
  - 2.2.1 Revenue from French courses
  - 2.2.2 Other income
    - 2.2.2.1 French Government and Chinese partner
    - 2.2.2.2 Entreprises
- 2.2 From a organisational standpoint
  - 2.2.1 Composition of *équipe*, departments and their functions
  - 2.2.2 Role of interns and its selective function
  - 2.2.3 Internal communication
  - 2.2.4 Partnership with Gongshang University
  - 2.2.5 Directors from both Chinese and French part and their respective tasks
- 2.3 Missions: organised activities and events
  - 2.3.1 Conditions of main campus and other venues for cultural events
  - 2.3.2 French courses and their orientations
    - 2.3.2.1 Teachers
    - 2.3.2.2 Students
    - 2.3.2.3 Courses typology
    - 2.3.2.4 Teaching period
  - 2.3.3 Cultural events: scheduling, organisation
  - 2.3.4 Promotion, advertising and external communication
  - 2.3.5 Example analysis on execution: concert and cinema

## Chapter 3 Field work in Alliance Française in Bologna

- 3.1 From a financial standpoint
  - 3.1.1 Revenue from French courses and French exams
  - 3.1.2 Other income
    - 3.1.2.1 Contribution from members
    - 3.1.2.2 French Government
    - 3.1.2.3 Entreprises
  - 3.1.3 Expenditure
- 3.2 From an organisational standpoint
  - 3.2.1 General Assembly, Executive Board and membership
  - 3.2.2 The Composition of *équipe*
  - 3.2.3 Role of interns and its selective function

3.2.4 Internal communication

3.2.5 French Directress and her tasks

3.3 Missions: organised activities and events

3.3.1 Conditions of main campus and other venues for cultural events

3.3.2 French courses and their orientations

3.3.2.1 Teachers

3.3.2.2 Students

3.3.2.3 Courses typology

3.3.2.4 Teaching period

3.3.3 French exams

3.3.4 Cultural events: scheduling, organisation

3.3.5 Promotion, advertising and external communication

Chapter 4 Case Study

4.1 Equilibrium to maintain in storytelling

4.1.1 Colonial tradition and modern values

4.1.2 Authority from official background and independence

4.2 Similarities between the two branches and the reasons

4.3 Dissimilarities between the two branches and the reasons

4.4 Conclusion: how a cultural institution reaches its full potential

Bibliography

Appendix

1. Interview with Chinese director of Alliance Française of Hangzhou: Yaping Ying

2. Interview with French director of Alliance Française of Hangzhou: Jonathan Unlu

3. Interview with French directress of Alliance Française of Bologna: Martine Pagan

## 1.1 Executive Summary

After the end of Cold War, different states have put more attention than ever on cultural diplomacy in order to build a nation image on the world stage. The benefits brought about are considerable: more foreign investment, more skilled migrant workers and strong cohesion at home, especially for enhancing national pride for ethnic minority groups.

In a bid to achieve the goal, the role of cultural organisations supported by states have also become unprecedentedly prominent: since pattern of cultural diplomacy is shifting from a conventional state-leading one to a new, non-ideological one imprinted with commercial marketing logic. Inside this arena of soft power exchange/competition, organisations such as British Council, Goethe Institute of Germany, Cervantes Institute of Spain and Italian Cultural Institute are among the most celebrated ones.

Among them all, Alliance Française was one of the oldest with the most prestige. Founded at the era of colonialism with long tradition, it has expanded to 137 countries on 5 continents. So analysing the function of Alliance Française in different socio-political contexts will undoubtedly help us to understand how a state-supported cultural institution position itself in different countries.

As this is the goal of this thesis, I chose two cities to make the comparison: Hangzhou in China and Bologna in Italy. China is surely the biggest new market for France in recent 3 decades and Alliance Française naturally seeks to expand its influence in this new frontier. Among the alliances in China, Hangzhou is the newest one so for the organisation it is a whole new land to “conquer”. Meanwhile, being a neighbour of France, Italy has strong traditional and cultural ties with France and it is considered to be in the backyard of French cultural influence. Since AF of Bologna is the oldest one in Italy, it would be very interesting to compare the operation of the branches in totally different scenarios.

I shall also declare that the comparison between Hangzhou and Bologna can by no means be generalised to the comparison between China and Italy. As evident to all, both two countries have their diverse and complicated domestic situations. A certain difference between Hangzhou and Bologna doesn't represent big pictures in the two nations.

With regard to the structure of the work, in the first chapter I try to clarify some ideas important to our analysis: cultural diplomacy, public diplomacy, soft power and nation branding. Following that, in the 2nd and 3rd chapter, I tend to look into local situations of both branches in 3 perspectives: financial standpoint, organisational standpoint and standpoint of its organised activities. Trying to explain the similarities and dissimilarities in the 4th chapter, in the end I will conclude by giving the assessment on the performance of Alliance Française in Hangzhou and Bologna.

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