



The Francophonie and Decolonization

MA Thesis International Studies

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Introduction - The Francophonie

The Francophonie is the institutional organization of the francophone world. It presents itself as a *dispositif institutionnel* that has as goals to promote the French language and cooperation between its members.¹ They are not only states, but can also be parts of states, such as Quebec or the Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles.² Today, its membership consists of 54 states and governments that are full members, 27 states that have the status of observer and seven associated states.³ Members come from all over the world, with a majority from Europe and Africa. The Francophonie consists of several bodies. An organigram of the organization has been added as an appendix, along with an overview of the summits that have been held and an overview of activities of the Francophonie.

The French language is a key-element for this organization. It is the language of communication and considered to be the element all adherents have in common, although it does not have to be an official language in a member state. Nevertheless, in many states it occupies an important place, as a remnant of colonialism.⁴ This is the first indication that colonial ties influence the OIF. We can also see that many of the members are former colonies of France; not only in Africa, such as Mali, but in Asia as well, for instance Vietnam.

The organization is active in various domains. Its objective is to support:

- The instauration and development of democracy,
- Prevention, handling and solving of conflicts,
- The constitutional state and civil rights,
- Rapprochement of people via their mutual knowledge,
- The strengthening of their solidarity by multilateral cooperation in favour of growth of their economies,
- Promotion of education.⁵

During its existence, the organization has elaborated its fields of interest and activity. When doing so, it had to take into consideration all of its members. Members that in theory are equal

¹ "Qu'est-ce que la Francophonie ?," Organisation internationale de la francophonie, <https://www.francophonie.org/-Qu-est-ce-que-la-Francophonie-.html>.

² "Liste des 88 États et gouvernements membres de plein droit, membres associés et observateurs de l'Organisation internationale de la Francophonie" (https://www.francophonie.org/IMG/pdf/som_xvii_membres_oif.pdf, Yerevan, 2018).

³ Ibid.

⁴ Gordon D. Cumming, "Commonwealth and Francophone summits: Towards a new sense of purpose?," *Journal of Contemporary European Studies* 11, no. 2 (November 2003): 201.

⁵ "Charte de la Francophonie" (Antananarivo, 22 November 2005), 2.

to each other. However, when taking a closer look, factors that might influence this equality are immediately visible. For instance, every full or associated member has to make a financial contribution to the OIF, which takes into consideration the wealth of each country.⁶ Due to their weight in the financial power of the organization, France and Canada are very influential.⁷ Moreover, a recurrent topic in the literature about the organization is its identity. Considering that the Francophonie started as a gathering of former colonies and former colonizers, one can wonder how old relations between states are still present and of influence. To what extent is the Francophonie really a decolonized organization? The main sources used to answer this question are the “*actes*” of the summits of the Francophonie. These are records of what has been said and done during those meetings. The speeches held by representatives can be found in these *actes* as well. Published by the organization itself, the sources are not fully objective. However, they do sketch an image of how the different countries view the organization. The method used to answer the main question of this thesis will be detailed more in the next chapter.

⁶ “Le budget,” Organisation internationale de la francophonie, <https://www.francophonie.org/Le-budget.html>.

⁷ Jody Neathery-Castro and Mark O. Rousseau, “Does French Matter? France and Francophonie in the Age of Globalization,” *The French Review* 78, no. 4 (March 2005): 682, Jean-Philippe Therien, “Co-Operation and Conflict in la Francophonie,” *International Journal* 48, no.3 (1993): 494.

Method

The question posed in the introduction will be answered in several stages. First, the process of decolonization will be outlined, followed by the history of the Francophonie. The organization exists since 1970 and the first summit was held in 1986. The first members were already connected with each other, with former colonial ties as the main reason hereof. To understand the relations within the organization, it is important to know how it came into being. We will focus on three countries: France, Senegal and Vietnam. The reasons for this choice will be explained in the next paragraph.

Secondly, the point of view of those states on two topics will be analysed. The topics are economic and political independence, as defined by the *Oxford English Dictionary* as important features of decolonization.⁸ The three countries have been selected for several reasons. To start, they have all been present since the start of the organization. Hence, they are equal in that sense. However, they differ in other aspects. Most importantly, it concerns here a former colonial power (France) and two of its former colonies (Senegal and Vietnam). If we want to know whether decolonization has reached its full potential in the organization, it is interesting to take into account both sides: former colonizer and colonized. Another difference between the states is that they represent different parts of the world: Europe, Africa and Asia. Of course we should take into account that these three states do not necessarily represent their whole continents. In each part of the world, a lot of differences exist between states that are part of a continent. So, we should be careful with making any conclusion linked to the geographical location.

The choice for these states has been made for one more reason, one that is related to the material that is used. Since the organizational Francophonie exists for several decades now and consists of several bodies, a lot of meetings between members have taken place. We have chosen to take into account only the general summits, usually held every two years. These summits constitute the highest authority of the organization. Hence, they provide an opportunity to all members to be present and be heard. The records of the summits are accessible and they provide the speeches held by the delegates, which allows for a comparison of their points of view. France, Senegal and Vietnam have all made numerous contributions at the summits, which allows for a profound search for information. The upside of these sources is that states have liberty to speak and can address the topics they are interested in. The choice of topic indicates where

⁸ " ,decoloni'zation, n.," OED Online, July 2018, <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/48333?redirectedFrom=decolonization&>.

countries attribute most value to. However, there are downsides on using this material too. First of all, since it concerns mostly prewritten speeches, there is little interaction between the delegations of different states. As a result, we cannot know exactly how they react to each other. Moreover, they are published by the Francophonie, which means they can be biased. Since the speeches are held within the organization, the language will be also be adapted to the occasion and states might be a little reserved to express themselves too pronouncedly, since they all need each other.

The method used to analyse the records of the summits is close reading. With the main question in mind, the texts of the speeches have been read carefully, hereby paying close attention to aspects that stand out regarding this question. The definition of decolonization given by the *Oxford English Dictionary*, “The withdrawal from its former colonies of a colonial power; the acquisition of political or economic independence by such colonies. Also trans.”, has also served as a guideline.⁹ With these tools in mind, any words, phrases and passages that could be linked to decolonization were identifiable. Next, involving the history of the states, the context in which the speech was made and the current situation in a country, the found elements have been interpreted and analysed within the context. Consequently, for each country it has been possible to identify its attitude towards the organization with regard to decolonization.

⁹ Ibid.

Decolonization

Colonization has been essential for the global distribution of the French language. France has a rich history of colonization, with colonies in America, Africa and Asia. The latter two are more recent than the first. Since the *expédition d'Alger* in 1830, France has expanded its power on the African continent, colonizing many territories in the North-West. In the second half of the nineteenth century, France also enhanced its influence in Asia with its colony of *Indochine*.¹⁰

However, the Second World War was followed by a wave of decolonization. Colonial powers had weakened and lost their influence. Peoples referred to the United Nations' Charter to claim their right to self-determination, supported in this by the USSR and the USA. A first phase of decolonization took place in Asia, succeeded by one in Africa.¹¹ The decolonization of African countries was strongly influenced by events that had taken place in Asia and by Arab and Asian nationalist leaders that supported independence.¹² The conference of Bandung of 1955 has been important too. It regrouped Asian and African states and came with a final declaration that stated that the participants supported the right of self-determination of people, were in favour of equality between nations and condemned colonial practices.¹³

France was involved in the war of Indochina from 1946 until 1954. Described as "*la sale guerre*", this war led to the end of French occupation.¹⁴ Linked to much violence here, decolonization seems to have gone more smoothly in West Africa, depending on which point of view one adopts. Nationalists see it as the result of an anti-colonial struggle, whereas the former colonizer considers it as the product of a process of preparation.¹⁵ The *loi-cadre Déferre* fits this view, although initially it was not meant as a preparatory step. This law, passed in 1956, granted more autonomy to French sub-Saharan African colonies, but left France with key powers.¹⁶ They included control over policy in defence, media and the currency.¹⁷ Moreover, African leaders benefitting from the increased autonomy were often loyal to France.¹⁸ They

¹⁰ Gérard Labrune and Philippe Toutain, *L'histoire de France* (Paris : Nathan, 2010), 83.

¹¹ "décolonisation [dossier]," Encyclopédie Larousse en ligne, accessed on 21 December 2018, <https://larousse.fr/encyclopedie/divers/d%C3%A9colonisation/184339>.

¹² "décolonisation," Encyclopédie Larousse en ligne, accessed on 21 December 2018, <https://larousse.fr/encyclopedie/divers/d%C3%A9colonisation/40278>.

¹³ "conférence de Bandung (avril 1955)," Encyclopédie Larousse en ligne, accessed on 21 December 2018, https://larousse.fr/encyclopedie/divers/conf%C3%A9rence_de_Bandung/107394.

¹⁴ Gérard Labrune and Philippe Toutain, *L'histoire de France* (Paris: Nathan, 2004), 115.

¹⁵ Tony Chafer, *The End of Empire in French West Africa: France's Successful Decolonization* (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 2002), 224.

¹⁶ "Overview Loi Cadre," Oxford Reference, accessed on 5 January 2019, <http://www.oxfordreference.com.ezproxy.leidenuniv.nl:2048/view/10.1093/oi/authority.20110803100112888>.

¹⁷ Chafer, *op. cit.*, 228.

¹⁸ Chafer, *op. cit.*, 228.

were important for both sides. For African people, their leadership meant independence through negotiation and without too much bloodshed, whilst for France, it meant “a successfully managed transition from colonialism to cooperation”.¹⁹ Indeed, the discourse of cooperation has been important in the aftermath of decolonization. According to Tony Chafer, it served to legitimize close partnerships between France and its former colonies. France wanted to maintain influence in the region, whereas new African leaders could use support for the consolidation of their new authority, in an environment that knew economic and political difficulties.²⁰ France could offer this, which led to, as Chafer describes, a form of international clientelism that gave France the possibility to maintain its status as a great power.²¹

The three selected countries, France, Senegal and Vietnam, have all different colonial histories. Senegal has a long colonial history with France. In the seventeenth century, territories in what is now Senegal came in French possession. However, territories were lost and re-owned in the centuries that followed.²² From the second half of the nineteenth century, more land was occupied by the French and protectorates were established. Some communities obtained a special status which granted their inhabitants French citizenship.²³ Nevertheless, Africans did not have exactly the same rights as the French. After the Second World War, Senegal became a republic within the *Communauté*, a federation of France and its former colonies, in 1956.²⁴ Three years later, Senegal formed the Mali Federation with French Sudan, which gained independence in 1960. However, this federation did not persist and in August 1960 Senegal became an independent state.²⁵

Vietnam was part of France’s Asian colonies. France wanted to protect the catholic missions and keep its strategic points in the region. Cochinchina was occupied from 1859 onwards and Tonkin and Annam were made French protectorates in 1883.²⁶ In 1887, French Indochina was established, which grouped together those three regions and Cambodia, with later Laos and

¹⁹ Chafer, *op. cit.*, 225.

²⁰ Chafer, *op. cit.*, 229.

²¹ Chafer, *op. cit.*, 235.

²² “Sénégal : histoire,” Encyclopédie Larousse en ligne, accessed on 3 November 2018, https://www.larousse.fr/encyclopedie/divers/S%C3%A9n%C3%A9gal_histoire/187413.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ “Communauté,” Encyclopédie Larousse en ligne, accessed on 3 November 2018, <https://www.larousse.fr/encyclopedie/divers/Communaut%C3%A9/114246>.

²⁵ “Sénégal : histoire,” Encyclopédie Larousse en ligne, accessed on 3 November 2018, https://www.larousse.fr/encyclopedie/divers/S%C3%A9n%C3%A9gal_histoire/187413.

²⁶ “Viet Nâm : histoire,” Encyclopédie Larousse en ligne, accessed on 3 November 2018, https://www.larousse.fr/encyclopedie/divers/Vi%C3%AAt_Nam%C2%A0_histoire/187039#10935427.

Guangzhouwan as well.²⁷ The Second World War led to the expulsion of the French by the Japanese, followed by the War of Indochina.²⁸ In 1954, Vietnam was split in two, awaiting the then upcoming elections for reunification. However, in 1975 oppositional troops took Saigon and in 1976 the country was reunited and named Socialist Republic of Vietnam.²⁹ In 1977, several agreements of support or cooperation were signed with western states, especially France.³⁰

²⁷ “Indochine française,” Encyclopédie Larousse en ligne, accessed on 3 November 2018, https://www.larousse.fr/encyclopedie/autre-region/Indochine_fran%C3%A7aise/124939.

²⁸ “Viet Nam: histoire,” Encyclopédie Larousse en ligne, accessed on 3 November 2018, https://www.larousse.fr/encyclopedie/divers/Vi%C3%AAt_Nam%C2%A0_histoire/187039#10935427.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

A history of the Francophonie

After African decolonization, voices were raised to create a cooperation of the francophone world. In the 1960s, Senegalese president Senghor and Tunisian president Bourguiba took the Commonwealth as example. They did not want to lose France's aid, but feared French domination in bilateral accords.³¹ With Nigerian president Diiori and the Canadian province Québec they brought about the initiative for the Francophonie.³² In 1970, the *Agence de Coopération Culturelle et Technique* (ACCT) was established in Niamey.³³ As the name indicates, the organization was especially culturally orientated. However, "it has become increasingly difficult to isolate culture in general from political and economic activity" according to Thérien, whose research is focused on international cooperation.³⁴ Consequently, the organization was equally political and economic from its start.

The idea of an international francophone organization was not received well everywhere. France was reluctant to participate, because it believed it could gain little and even feared a loss of international power.³⁵ The organization also received criticisms of being neo-colonialist. Algeria did not want to be part of this cooperation, because it considered the new organization as a form of French imperialism.³⁶ Nevertheless, the memorandum of association of the ACCT was signed by 22 member states and one participating government: Quebec.³⁷ In 1986, the first summit of the Francophonie was held. This was in Versailles at the invitation of president Mitterrand.³⁸ This summit demonstrates that France's initial reluctance had disappeared and could even be considered as a means of the state to take the lead. Indeed, in Cummings view, even though France considered these summits primarily as cultural forums, they did defend the position of the French language in the world, which would endorse their position as a great power.³⁹

³¹ Brian Weinstein, "Francophonie : A Language-based Movement in World Politics," *International Organization* 30, no. 3 (1976): 496.

³² Cumming, *op. cit.*, 204.

³³ Cumming, *op. cit.*, 204, Abdou Diouf, "L'action politique de la Francophonie," *Géoéconomie* 4, no. 55 (2010): 19, Stéphane Paquin, "La relation Québec-Paris-Ottawa et la création de l'organisation internationale de la francophonie (1960-2005)," *Guerres mondiales et conflits contemporains* 3, no. 223 (2006): 37.

³⁴ Thérien, *op. cit.*, 495.

³⁵ Thérien, *op. cit.*, 505.

³⁶ Cumming, *op. cit.*, 206, Françoise Massart-Piérard, "La Francophonie internationale," *Courier hebdomadaire du CRISP* 30, no. 1655 (1999): 7.

³⁷ "Convention portant création de l'ACCT" (Agence de Coopération culturelle et technique, 1970), 18.

³⁸ "Frise historique interactive de la Francophonie," Organisation internationale de la francophonie, <https://www.francophonie.org/Frise-historique-interactive-francophonie-42692.html>.

³⁹ Cumming, *op. cit.*, 205.

Membership expanded over the years. In the first decade of its existence, fifteen new members joined the organization. Eight of these were African states.⁴⁰ In the second decade only six new members joined the organization. The next decade shows a new increase of interest in the Francophonie, this time particularly from Eastern Europe. Eight out of twelve states were Eastern European, although they do not all have the status of member. This trend has continued after 2000. Brown indeed speaks of a “geo-political shift in balance away from Africa towards Europe”.⁴¹ Nowadays, states still associate themselves with the Francophonie, but seldom as a full member. Interest now seems to come from South-America and the Middle East, for instance from Uruguay and the United Arab Emirates. Their interest is explained by the influence the French language would have had on culture and education in these states.⁴² Economic interests are involved as well.⁴³

The adherence of African states could be explained by France’s colonial past, which applies to the presence of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia too. The participation of Eastern European countries might seem odd, considering the absent linguistic link. However, here we should take into account the events taking place in the world. As stated above, these states joined the Francophonie after 1990. The Berlin Wall had fallen and the Cold War ended. According to Archer, this allowed a revival of international organizations.⁴⁴ When East and West sought rapprochement, more cooperation was possible. This was even more facilitated with the development of new technologies such as internet, which allowed easy communication over long distances.⁴⁵

Nevertheless, not all members were happy with this shift in balance. Illustrative is the change of the linguistic criterion in 1993. Membership was henceforth defined by *ayant le français en partage* instead of *ayant en commun l’usage du français*.⁴⁶ This allowed non-francophone states to adhere to the organization, but African countries feared that it might harm the understanding

⁴⁰ “Statut et date d’adhésion des états et gouvernements,” Organisation internationale de la francophonie, <https://www.francophonie.org/Statut-et-date-d-adhesion-des.html>.

⁴¹ Peter Brown, “La Francophonie: From the Postcolonial to the Post-Cold War Eras,” *Australian Journal of French Studies* 48, no. 1 (January/April 2011): 28.

⁴² “13th Francophonie Summit Approves UAE As Observer Member,” Abudhabicityguide, published 25 October 2010, <http://www.abudhabicityguide.com/news/news-details.asp?newsid=5817&newstype=News%20Archive>.

⁴³ “L’Uruguay rejoint la francophonie,” *Le Figaro*, published 23 October 2012, <http://www.lefigaro.fr/flash-actu/2012/10/23/97001-20121023FILWWW00526-1-uruguay-rejoint-la-francophonie.php>.

⁴⁴ Clive Archer, *International Organizations* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 25.

⁴⁵ Archer, *op. cit.*, 26, Akira Iriye, *Global Community: The Role Of International Organizations In The Making Of The Contemporary World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 187.

⁴⁶ Brown, *op. cit.*, 23.

of their continent.⁴⁷ One of the consequences was that it became more difficult to understand each other, since not every member was sufficiently fluent in the French language.⁴⁸ It shows a loss of the initial common element: the use of the French language.

The linguistic change was only one of the few changes taking place in the ACCT. As stated above, international organizations gained importance in the world. This had consequences for the Francophonie as well. In 1998, the revised charter of the ACCT was adopted, thus creating the *Organisation internationale de la Francophonie* (OIF). Several reasons explain why the charter needed a revision. To start, offices originating from summits lacked juridical support, which needed to change. Moreover, the members wanted the Francophonie to keep up with the times, which demanded an adaptation of the institutional structure.⁴⁹ One of the changes was the instauration of a secretary-general. He was to represent the organization in international environments. The first secretary-general was Boutros Boutros-Ghali, former secretary-general of the United Nations (UN). His election was criticised, because a majority chose former president of Benin, Zinsou. However, France gave the position to Boutros-Ghali.⁵⁰ It is exemplary of France's influence in the organization.

Besides the internal changes the organization also changed its role in the world. It has developed its cooperation with other international and regional organizations, such as the Commonwealth and the Arab Ligue.⁵¹ It is also observer member of the UN.⁵² Due to the large number of francophone states, a francophone cooperation could have much influence in these organizations. For instance, one in three members of the UN is francophone.⁵³ However, in order to have this influence, all francophone states should see the profits of such a cooperation.

Not only membership and international presence have changed over the years, topics important to the Francophonie have undergone a change too. The positions of youth and women have gained more importance. Moreover, in the literature it has often been stated that the Francophonie has become more political. Of course, governmental cooperation on international

⁴⁷ Brown, *op. cit.*, 27.

⁴⁸ Brown, *op. cit.*, 28.

⁴⁹ Massart-Piérard, 'La Francophonie internationale', 19.

⁵⁰ Neathery-Castro and Rousseau, *op. cit.*, 686.

⁵¹ Françoise Massart-Piérard, "La Francophonie, un nouvel intervenant sur la scène Internationale," *Revue internationale de politique comparée* 14, no. 1 (2007): 90.

⁵² "Frise historique interactive de la Francophonie," Organisation internationale de la francophonie, <https://www.francophonie.org/Frise-historique-interactive-francophonie-42692.html>, "Cooperation between the United Nations and the International Organization of la Francophonie," General Assembly of the United Nations, https://www.un.org/en/ga/63/plenary/I_francophonie.shtml.

⁵³ Alexandre Najjar, "La Francophonie, un mouvement culturel ou politique ?," *Géoéconomie* 55, no. 4 (2010): 133.

level is inherently political. Nevertheless, this political element has indeed become stronger by more involvement of the Francophonie in for example peace operations.⁵⁴

In short, the institutional Francophonie has evolved out of the wish for a francophone cooperation, expressed by leaders of former French colonies. This demonstrates that colonial ties have not completely disappeared, which is supported by the influence France has in the organization. From the start, membership was primarily composed by former francophone colonizers and colonies. However, more recently other (non-francophone) states have also joined the organization, which makes it less connected to colonial times. Its scope of interest has changed as well. From a cultural and technical cooperation it has become more political. Nowadays, the secretary-general represents the organization on world stage, where it cooperates with other organizations.

⁵⁴ Frédéric Ramel, "Task-Sharing and Peace Operations: The Role of the Organisation internationale de la Francophonie," *International Peacekeeping* 19, no. 3 (2012): 304.

Economic (in)dependence

As stated in the method section, one of the aspects that comes with formal independence of a state is economic independence. In this chapter will be analysed to what extent Senegal, Vietnam and France show indeed economic independence.

Senegal

The focus Senegalese delegates put on economic affairs is often interwoven with other topics in the speeches, it rarely becomes a main topic. They consider the economy as one of the many aspects within the development of a nation. During the first summits, economic affairs were quite absent in the contributions of the Senegalese delegations. Only more recently they receive more attention, but even so especially in the context of the organization, for example with the creation of the *Forum économique francophone*.⁵⁵

However, it is possible to deduce the point of view of the Senegalese delegations on economic affairs. Economic disparity is brought to the attention. For instance, at the fifth summit in 1993, president Diouf makes two important remarks. First, he states that he agrees with economic structural adjustments, even though there are painful consequences: “Loin de moi l’idée d’éviter à nos économies le nécessaire ajustement structurel. Nos pays ne s’y sont-ils pas obligés, en dépit des conséquences douloureuses qui en découlent ?”.⁵⁶ This implies that African economies (since he is speaking on behalf of Africa only) need to be changed to be more stable in the future. This does not apply to other countries, whose economies are already strong enough. Secondly, president Diouf expresses his thanks to the “pays du Nord, pour leur générosité sans laquelle il n’y aurait pas d’action francophone.”⁵⁷ In doing so, he makes explicit that the South depends on the willingness of the North to contribute to the organization, because it is financially dependent on the North.

Later, at the tenth and twelfth summit, the Senegalese delegation tries to emphasize the value of the African continent. Often Africa is not taken fully into account, at least many countries do not perceive it as such. When speaking about the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD), president Wade states that it has its genesis in a “constat et [...] un cri du coeur: l’Afrique n’est pas une variable d’ajustement !”.⁵⁸ The emotion is clear: Africa has a will of its

⁵⁵ Sall, Sommet XVI Antananarivo 2016, 3.

⁵⁶ Diouf, read by Niasse, Sommet V Grand Baie 1993, 175.

⁵⁷ Diouf, read by Niasse, Sommet V Grand Baie 1993, 176.

⁵⁸ Wade, Sommet X Ouagadougou 2004, 292.

own and is not something others can use as they like. However, apparently African countries perceive they are not considered that way. President Wade also attempts to change this, for instance at the twelfth summit. Although he starts by reiterating that developing nations are very vulnerable for decisions made elsewhere in the world due to globalization,⁵⁹ he also tries to present the continent in a positive way. This demands that “on cesse de la considérer comme un problème mais plutôt comme une partie de la solution.”⁶⁰

So, there is a change in how the Senegalese delegation addresses the topic in the Francophonie. Earlier on, the role of the richer North was emphasized. More recently, the organization is used to present the African continent as an indispensable actor for the future. The focus here is less on the organization itself and more on the position of the continent in the world. However, the summits of the Francophonie are used to spread this message, because here concerning countries can be reached, countries that apparently still do not take Africa as seriously as they should.

Vietnam

Vietnam is a country for whom economy and development constitute major topics. The Vietnamese delegations stress regularly the difficulties that developing states encounter, a group to which Vietnam belongs too. There is also a plea for a fairer world order. This happens at several summits with exactly the same expression, namely “plus juste et équitable”. The summits during which they occur are those held in 1989, 1991, 1993 and 2004. They apply to trade^{61,62}, a wished-for new international economic order⁶³ and a wished-for new system of international relations⁶⁴. It demonstrates that according to the Vietnamese delegates, Vietnam has an inferior position in the international system.

The Vietnamese delegations do not consider their country fully economic independent. This becomes evident by the topics they address. They often speak about economic disparities between states, stress the difference between the North and the South and try to obtain debt reduction for developing countries. But we can also perceive Vietnam is not fully independent yet by the way its delegates address other members, especially where it concerns states from the global North. In 1991, the Vietnamese representative explicitly thanks France for its support

⁵⁹ Wade, Sommet XII Québec 2008, 252.

⁶⁰ Wade, Sommet XII Québec 2008, 254.

⁶¹ Nguyen Huu Tho, Sommet III Dakar 1989, 422.

⁶² My Hua Truong, Sommet X Ouagadougou 2004, 307 and 308.

⁶³ Nguyen Huu Tho, Sommet IV Chaillot 1991, 177 and 256.

⁶⁴ Nguyen Thi Binh, Sommet V Grand Baie 1993, 184.

in normalizing Vietnam's relations with financial and monetary international organizations.⁶⁵ But six years later, the Francophonie still shows inequality and relations of dependence:

“Mais la Francophonie n'est pas en elle-même un espace économique homogène. La plupart de ses membres appartiennent encore au monde en développement. Les relations au sein de la communauté s'apparentent encore plus souvent à l'aide et à l'assistance qu'au partenariat et à la coopération.”⁶⁶

We see that the members are very aware of the inequality amongst them. Developing countries, often former colonies, have not obtained complete independence yet. However, these former colonies also still call upon their former colonizer in international environments. Vietnam does so too. The shared language can serve as a reason. For instance, Nguyen Thi Binh states:

“Nous invitons les pays membres du Nord à se distinguer des autres par leur approche francophone des relations de partenariat Nord-Sud dans ces négociations et par une préférence francophone dans les relations intra-communautaires.”⁶⁷

It is difficult to break this link. Vietnam is an example of a state that could need and wants the support from countries with more influence on the global stage. Hence, considered the tight relationship it has with France, it is rational that the assistance of this state is invoked here. So, we see that Vietnam still perceives a strong dependence on other, richer countries. However, due to the shared history, their former colonizer is still called on for support, which makes it more difficult to gain complete independence.

France

Economic affairs are also present in the speeches made by the French delegations, but in a different manner. The focus of the French is put on more 'soft' topics, such as language and education. Nevertheless, economic topics are addressed too. The image of France resulting from its contributions with regard to this topic is a particular one. Most striking is that the country is depicted as a great benefactor. This happens in several ways.

Firstly, the French support for debt cancellation for developing states is a theme repeatedly brought up, especially during the first summits.⁶⁸⁶⁹⁷⁰ It is even one of France's own initiatives.

⁶⁵ Nguyen Huu Tho, Sommet IV Chaillot 1991, 256.

⁶⁶ Nguyen Manh Cam, Sommet VII Hanoi 1997, 299.

⁶⁷ Nguyen Thi Binh, Sommet VIII Moncton 1999, 250.

⁶⁸ Mitterrand, Sommet III Dakar 1989, 380.

⁶⁹ Mitterrand, Sommet III Dakar 1989, 396.

⁷⁰ Mitterrand, Sommet IV Chaillot 1991, 146.

By doing this, the country shows its willingness to help other states. However, it also stresses its role as indispensable intermediate in international context, defending the interests of developing states. The support offered by France won't be turned down easily. States that have economic difficulties might need their former colonizer to help them gain complete independence.

Secondly, the French delegations often mention the financial contribution France makes to the organization. By stating explicitly how much France contributes, the other countries are confronted once more by the fact the organization is largely dependent on only a few states. Although every country makes a contribution to its own means, it stresses the differences in financial situations amongst the members. This practice is not only present during the first summits, but even in 2004, president Chirac mentions the contribution France makes to microcredit initiatives. He reveals the destination for the money: "La France a décidé, pour sa part, de créer une facilité de vingt millions d'euros qui bénéficiera en premier lieu aux pays francophones de la zone de solidarité prioritaire."⁷¹ This is an example of francophone solidarity outside the Francophonie, but could also be considered as a means of France to maintain its position of benefactor.

However, the country also calls for more support from other organizations, for instance at the sixth and the eighth summit. Not only the Francophonie should be responsible for the economic support to developing states. For instance, when addressing education and the importance hereof, president Chirac wants more support from the international community, which he deems indispensable: "Une mobilisation de tous les bailleurs de fonds internationaux sur des objectifs quantitatifs est nécessaire".⁷² And according to him, the organization should look for more financial resources: "Elle doit rechercher des ressources complémentaires auprès de bailleurs de fonds tels que la Banque mondiale, l'Union européenne, les collectivités locales, mais aussi les entreprises et le secteur associatif."⁷³ So, although France makes a considerable financial contribution to the organization, where its representatives are not reticent about, more financial support is very much welcomed.

In short, Senegalese delegations want more economic development and are very aware of the disparities between the members of the Francophonie. African countries do not feel treated equally by richer states. Where the Senegalese delegations often express themselves quite

⁷¹ Chirac, Sommet X Ouagadougou 2004, 181.

⁷² Chirac, Sommet VI Cotonou 1995, 299.

⁷³ Chirac, Sommet VIII Moncton 1999, 151.

moderately on the topic, those of Vietnam are more pronounced. They stress the economic disparities they perceive within the Francophonie and their wish for more equality. Nevertheless, like the Senegalese, the Vietnamese also are very aware of the connection they have with the French and wish for a preference in developmental support. Supporting this view, French delegations stress the initiatives undertaken by French policy makers. They put emphasis on the financial contribution France makes to the organization. However, they also want more support from outside of the organization. So, every delegation uses the summits to bring forward their own country in a particular way. Where France for example stresses its financial contribution, hence creating the image of a benefactor, Senegal and Vietnam ask for more support for developing states. Here we clearly see differences between states and indications of relations of dependence.

Political (in)dependence

Another aspect of decolonization is obtaining political independence. This may be harder to define than economic independence. Evidently, the former colonizer has no direct control over foreign policies anymore. Nevertheless, indirect influence is still possible. By addressing topics in a very explicit manner, the importance hereof is stressed and countries urged to act in a desirable way. They include for instance democracy and human rights. Language is another domain through which influence can be exerted.

Senegal

In the speeches made by the Senegalese delegations, we can find some of the abovementioned features. First of all, the French language is an important topic for the Senegalese, especially in the field of education. This is connected to development, which makes that the language plays a role there as well. However, the fact that the French language opens possibilities to education does not necessarily enhance much political influence from the former colonizer. In fact, when speaking about the French language, president Diouf stresses the multitude of cultures that are part of the francophone world: “Bien mieux, la communauté francophone, qui se tisse patiemment autour de l’unité dans la diversité, tire aussi sa vigueur de la reconnaissance effective du pluralisme linguistique et culturel de la plupart des pays membres.”⁷⁴ States decide for themselves whether or not they use the French language. President Diouf declares that his state will continue to do so: “La présence de tous, ici, me permet de dire très librement : nous sommes francophones, nous restons francophones.”⁷⁵

Some values are considered inherent to the French language, such as peace, justice, solidarity and democracy.⁷⁶ Nevertheless, languages do not have inherent values. They are attributed, demonstrating human influence. However, this does not directly imply foreign political influence. Senegalese delegates express a positive point of view on the French language, which they consider part of their own culture, not as a foreign language. As Christian Valantin, personal representative of the head of state, states: “car elle est acceptée dès lors qu’elle n’est plus exclusive.”⁷⁷ In fact, the focus is put on the cultural diversity the French language contains: “[...] nous devons nous attacher à la langue française, qui tire sa force de la diversité de nos cultures. Cela explique notre volonté commune de renforcer sa présence sur la scène

⁷⁴ Diouf, Sommet III Dakar 1989, 370.

⁷⁵ Diouf, Sommet III Dakar 1989, 371.

⁷⁶ Diouf, Sommet V Grand Baie 1993, 174.

⁷⁷ Valantin, Sommet VII Hanoi 1997, 289.

internationale, non pour le prestige mais pour rappeler au monde l'humanisme qu'elle incarne et la pluralité qui nous fédère.”⁷⁸ So, the French language is not considered as a sign of political dependence to France.

Other topics that could be linked to politics are democracy and human rights. Here, influence from foreign states is more evident. We can see this in a speech made by president Diouf about democratization in Africa. He states:

“Il y a progrès. On ne peut le nier. Certes, tout n'est pas parfait. Mais peut-on parler de perfection en démocratie ? Elle est une création continue, jamais achevée. Toujours à parfaire. Combien de temps ont-ils mis, les pays à démocratie avancée, comme on dit, pour en arriver au point où ils en sont ? Que de dérives observe-t-on encore partout dans le monde. Sans solliciter l'indulgence, soyons réaliste et juste. Il y a progrès.”⁷⁹

The reference he makes to the time other countries took to democratize serves as an indication that he perceives pressure to democratize quickly. Nevertheless, he stands up for his country and continent, by repeating that at least progress is made.

In general, the Senegalese delegations do not seem to experience too much foreign influence in their politics. Very illustrative hereof is president Sall's contribution at the fourteenth summit. When democracy in Senegal was in danger, the state received support from other countries and organizations. The president has appreciated this:

“Cette expérience, construite en parfaite intelligence avec nos partenaires, nous ne l'avons guère perçue comme une ingérence extérieure. Bien au contraire, nous l'avons voulue et vécue comme une manifestation de solidarité conforme aux aspirations de notre peuple d'améliorer ses performances démocratiques et de les hisser à un niveau supérieur, que nous souhaitons être un point de non retour.”⁸⁰

It depicts Senegal as a state open for constructive foreign support.

Vietnam

Vietnam has a point of view on foreign involvement that is almost opposite. One thing stands out from the Vietnamese contributions at the summits: the strong emphasis on national sovereignty. At the first summit, this is presented in international context as one of the

⁷⁸ Wade, Sommet XI Bucharest 2006, 283.

⁷⁹ Diouf, Sommet VIII Moncton 1999, 217.

⁸⁰ Sall, Sommet XIV Kinshasa 2012, 147.

foundations for long-lasting peace⁸¹ and as one of the major concerns of the international community⁸². At the third summit, the topic is presented as one of the main priorities of Vietnam itself, next to peace and development.⁸³ The same ideas are present at the fourth summit, where respect for independence and national sovereignty is connected to world peace and international security.⁸⁴ So, at the first summits of the Francophonie, the Vietnamese delegations often stress the importance of national sovereignty. This could be considered as a way to indicate they do not want foreign influence in their state.

One of the domains where countries try to exert influence on the other members is that of human rights. However, the Vietnamese make clear they do not want involvement of other states. Vietnamese vice-president Nguyen Thi Binh states at the fifth summit: “Cependant, sans en dépendre entièrement, les droits de l’homme ne peuvent être dissociés du niveau de développement économique, et de conditions historiques et culturelles de chaque pays.”⁸⁵ She seems to imply that human rights are not equal in all circumstances. Also, by mentioning the historical and cultural conditions, the implication is made that human rights differ between countries and cultures. This idea is not present in the contributions of the Senegalese and the French delegations. The responsibility for the promotion and protection of human rights is attributed to the state, who is “l’unique entité ayant la compétence de trouver des solutions appropriées pour la protection des droits de l’homme.”⁸⁶ By making the state fully responsible, it becomes more difficult to protect people from violations of those human rights by the state itself. However, the idea of this powerful state does coincide with the form of government of Vietnam, where the communist party governs the state. Here we see that Vietnam will not accept foreign political influence and strongly defends its independence. Moreover, a demand is made that human rights should not be linked to developmental aid, nor used as a means of political pressure.⁸⁷

Vietnam’s emphasis on national sovereignty is very evident in the *Déclaration de Bamako* as well. This declaration on democracy, rights and liberties in the francophone space was signed by all members, but Vietnam has demanded two exceptions. Those are the remark that democracy and a multiparty system are two different notions, the first designing a goal and the

⁸¹ Cù Huy Cận, Sommet I Versailles 1986, 283.

⁸² Cù Huy Cận, Sommet I Versailles 1986, 284.

⁸³ Nguyen Huu Tho, Sommet III Dakar 1989, 406.

⁸⁴ Nguyen Huu Tho, Sommet IV Chaillot 1991, 176.

⁸⁵ Nguyen Thi Binh, Sommet V Grand Baie 1993, 184.

⁸⁶ Nguyen Thi Binh, Sommet V Grand Baie 1993, 185.

⁸⁷ Nguyen Thi Binh, Sommet V Grand Baie 1993, 185.

second only a means to achieve it, and the reserve against the use of sanctions, since the sovereignty of a state should not be compromised.⁸⁸ These examples make very clear that independence and sovereignty are key values for Vietnam that should not in any way be threatened. Those exceptions are referred to at the ninth summit, where president Tran Duc Luong explicitly demands that they are included in the reporting.⁸⁹ Vietnam is granted the exceptional position it asks for, making it very difficult for other states to exert direct influence on Vietnamese politics. So, for Vietnam we do not directly see political influence from its former colonizer. The delegates make very clear they will not tolerate such involvement.

France

France has a very different position with regard to political independence, since it was the former colonizer, having control over politics in its colonies. Nowadays, with their independence, France does not have direct influence anymore. However, this does not imply no attempt is made to influence foreign politics.

Firstly, the focus on democracy is one of the means through which France tries to have some influence. Over the years, French delegations have not hesitated to stress the importance of democracy, for example for development. For instance, at the fifth summit the French delegation explicitly states that it attaches much value to democratization in the global South and strongly supports a cooperation to achieve this goal.⁹⁰ Moreover, in 1999 president Chirac requests the establishment of an *Observatoire de la démocratie*: “Je pense aussi que le moment est venu de mettre effectivement en place l’Observatoire de la démocratie, sous l’autorité du Secrétaire général. Nous aurions ainsi un instrument efficace pour progresser.”⁹¹ Although France would not have direct control over the democratization of states, the *Observatoire* would allow more involvement of different states in the process of democratization.

Secondly, France tries to have influence through the values of the Francophonie. Democracy, human rights and the constitutional state are at the core of the organization. They are explicitly mentioned at the tenth summit as values that should be firmly integrated everywhere.⁹² Hence, by adhering to the organization, members should respect these values. By bringing them up at several occasions, the French delegations indicate they are important to them and urge the other

⁸⁸ Tran Duc Luong, Sommet IX Beirut 2002, 353-354.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Toubon, Sommet V Grand Baie 1993, 391.

⁹¹ Chirac, Sommet VIII Moncton 1999, 149.

⁹² Chirac, Sommet X Ouagadougou 2004, 180.

member states to implement them in their own policies. The abovementioned values are also considered as emblematic for the French language. For example, president Hollande states at the sixteenth summit that “Défendre le français, la culture, c’est aussi affirmer des valeurs et la première d’entre elles, c’est la démocratie.”⁹³ So, as might have been expected from the Francophonie, language, core values and the organization itself are intrinsically connected.

Thirdly, language is also a means of France to have influence on other member states. Of course the French language is at the heart of the organization; it is what all members have in common. Nevertheless, French delegates put considerable emphasis on the language and its consolidation. At the third summit, president Mitterrand presents the language as one that has a very important position, referring to the Tower of Babel. Although cultural diversity and multilingualism are good, national languages contribute to unity within a state according to him: “Partout une langue nationale est une nécessité et pas seulement politique et administrative. Chaque peuple a besoin d’une langue partagée.”⁹⁴ Even though he does not refer to it directly, in this context it is very plausible he means French to be the language accessible to all people of a multilingual state. He thus places his own language, a remnant of colonialism, over local languages that might fulfil this position as well. However, president Hollande tries to present the French language as a shared one, and not as one belonging to France. He remarks: “Le français n’appartient pas à la France, il vous appartient, il est à vous. Nous ne vous le donnons pas, nous le partageons. Car le plus beau cadeau que vous pouvez nous faire, à nous français, c’est de parler le français.”⁹⁵ States decide for themselves which language they use. Consequently, we cannot say that the language is a means of France to directly influence foreign politics. However, the emphasis put on the importance of the language and the promotion of its consolidation in the world could be considered as an attempt of France to maintain its status at international level. So, although no direct influence of France on other states’ politics is visible, it is clear that French politicians try to steer other countries in the direction they consider best.

In short, the Senegalese delegates express a very strong attachment to the French language. They are more critical towards expectations states have on developing countries, perceiving a lot of pressure. But in general, the delegates express a positive view on what they consider strong cooperation between the members of the Francophonie. Vietnamese delegates on the

⁹³ Hollande, Sommet XVI Antananarivo 2016, 2.

⁹⁴ Mitterrand, Sommet III Dakar 1989, 440.

⁹⁵ Hollande, Sommet XIV Kinshasa 2012, 137.

other hand are again more pronounced. They strongly defend their national sovereignty and make it clear no intervention is wanted. This is stressed by putting emphasis on the different cultures and histories present in the Francophonie, pointing out that members are not homogenous and consequently guidelines cannot be applied to the same effect everywhere. France, as a former colonizer, has a different position here. It can no longer develop policies in foreign states, but still wishes to have influence. French delegates consequently draw attention to what they consider important subjects, such as democracy and respect for human rights. Moreover, the emphasis put on the French language is a means of the French to maintain their influence. Although the organization is based on a language, the important status of this language in the world may help France to keep its power in the international scene.

Conclusion

The question posed in the introduction was: To what extent is the Francophonie really a decolonized organization? Senegal, Vietnam and France have been selected for a deeper analysis. We have seen that those states have a long history with colonialism, with France as a former colonizer and Vietnam and Senegal as former colonies. After a long period of colonization, Senegal and Vietnam gained their independence in the second half of the twentieth century. Soon after decolonization the Francophonie was established, an organization in which countries sharing the French language cooperate in several domains. At its start, the organization was predominantly constituted by former colonizers and colonies. Since old ties easily continue to exist, former relations of dependence are likely to remain present in the organization. As stated earlier, the sources used for this thesis are records from the organization itself. Hence, it is not exhaustive. Nevertheless, it is possible to come to a conclusion. When considering the topics of economic and political independence, mentioned as features that should come with decolonization, we see that relations of dependence have not fully disappeared between the members of the organization.

This is most clear where it concerns economic affairs. Senegalese delegations point out the differences between the members. By thanking the North explicitly for its financial contribution, they reveal how much the organization is dependent on some countries and how much their contributions are needed by the other members. Besides, the Senegalese delegates also reveal they perceive an unequal treatment of their continent by other members when it comes to finding solutions for global problems. The same topics are brought forward by the Vietnamese delegations. French delegates, on the other hand, stress the considerable financial contributions of France to the organization. Moreover, they present the state as a benefactor through its initiatives to improve the economic situations of developing countries. However, although reiterating at several occasions how much the country contributes, the delegates also ask for more support from other organizations. It shows they comprehend the delicate situation of the developing members. Nevertheless, it is clear some developing former colonies still rely on their former colonizer for economic support.

The political dependence is less present. The message in the Senegalese contributions is one of satisfaction with the organization and the support it offers. The Francophonie is considered as a possibility for cooperation between its members, with the language as a common factor, what is exactly what the organization was meant for at the start. Vietnamese delegations however

have a different opinion and are more explicit in expressing themselves on political topics. For them, national sovereignty is never to be affected. By stressing their independence and their right to self-determination, they make clear they will not tolerate any foreign involvement in their politics. As a former colonizer, France has a different position. It never has a direct influence on other states' politics. However, by emphasizing topics such as democracy and respect for human rights, the delegates still try to steer the other member states towards themes they value. Another factor that allows for more influence of France is the French language, which is at the foundation of the organization. By maintaining the status hereof in the world, France, as one of the richer countries, will also maintain its international power.

Concluding, the Francophonie shows signs that decolonization has not yet completely disappeared from the organization. Especially economically, former colonies still rely on their former colonizer for support. Here, both sides do not allow former relations to change too much. However, the situation with regard to political independence is different. Senegal does not perceive any political dependence and Vietnam will not allow meddling in its politics. France has some means it uses to have influence, but this is only in an indirect way. So, improvement of relations of dependence in the economic situation is possible. However, where it concerns the political situation, states seem to be equal to each other.

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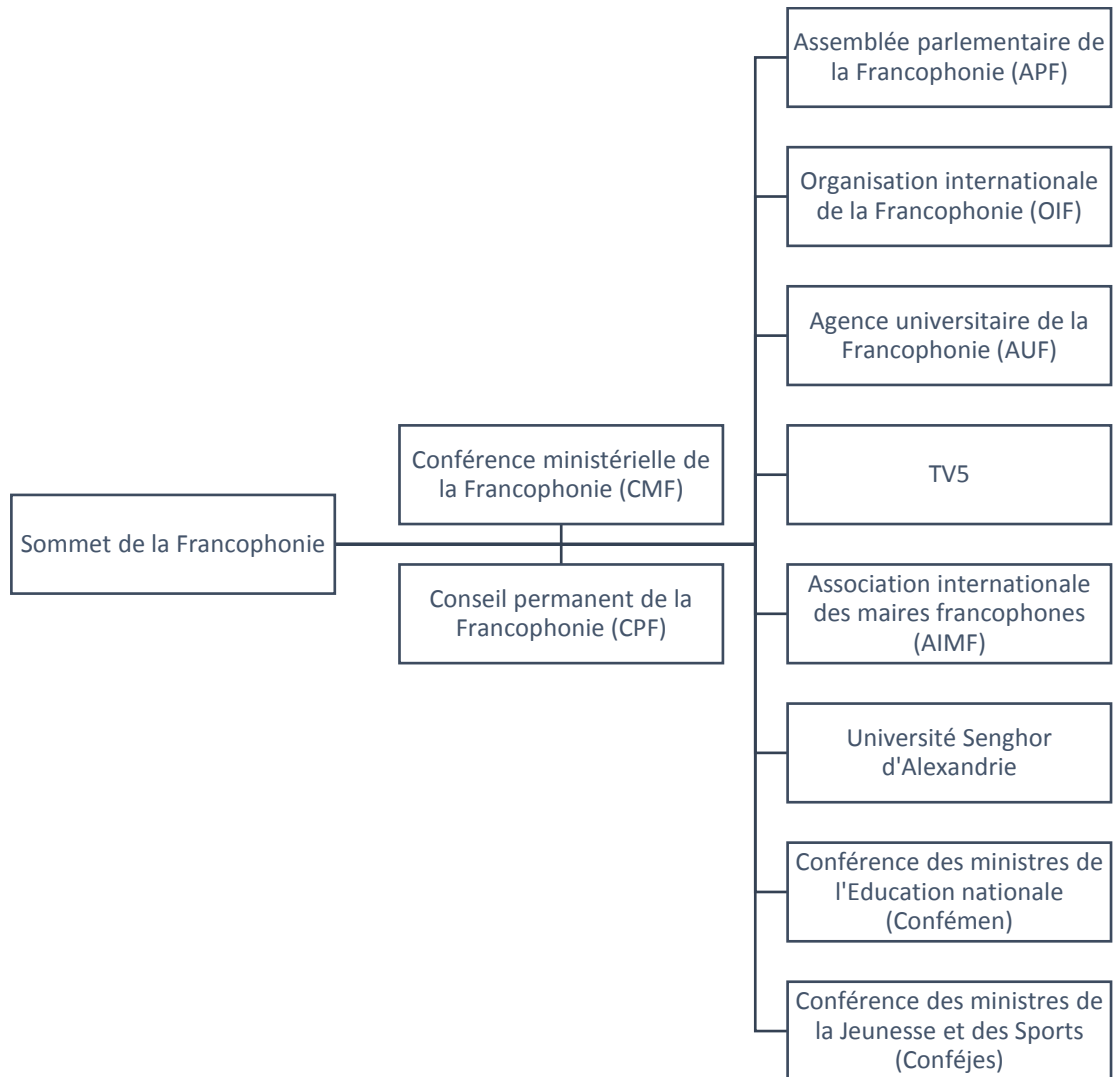
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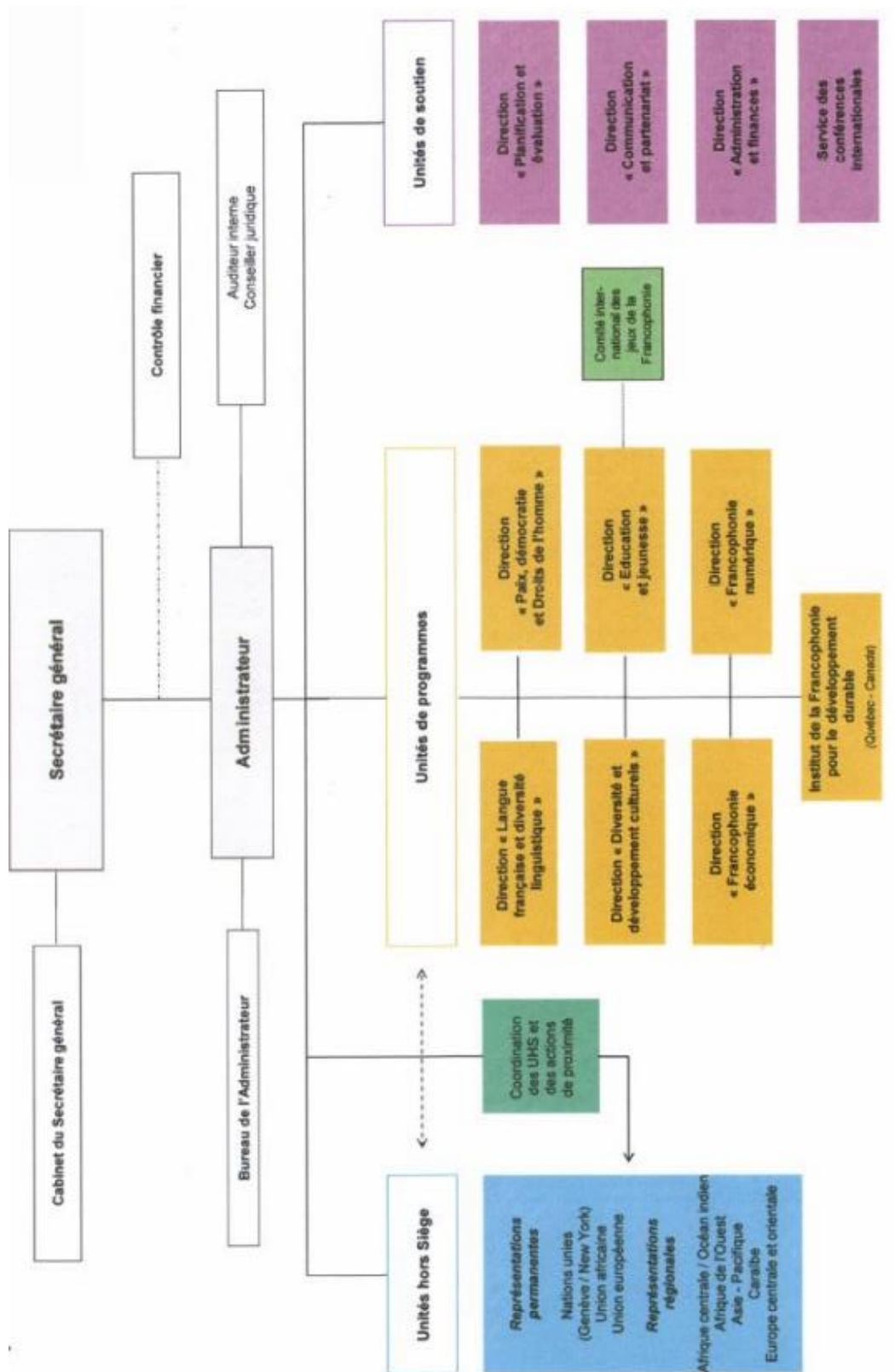
Appendix 1: Organigram

Francophonie:



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⁹⁶ "L'Organisation internationale de la Francophonie (OIF)," Organisation internationale de la Francophonie, accessed on 9 November 2018, <https://www.francophonie.org/L-Organisation-internationale-de-la-Francophonie-42707.html>.



⁹⁷ “Structure organisationnelle” (<http://mediatheque.francophonie.org/IMG/pdf/Organigramme.pdf>).

Appendix 2: The summits

Number	Date	Place	Theme(s)
I	17-19 February 1986	Versailles, France	
II	2-4 September 1987	Québec, Canada-Québec	
III	24-26 May 1989	Dakar, Senegal	
IV	19-21 November 1991	Chaillot (Paris), France	
V	16-18 October 1993	Grand Baie, Mauritius	
VI	2-4 December 1995	Cotonou, Benin	
VII	14-16 November 1997	Hanoi, Vietnam	
VIII	3-5 September 1999	Moncton, Canada New-Brunswick	Jeunesse
IX	18-20 October 2002	Beirut, Lebanon	Dialogue des cultures
X	26-27 November 2004	Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso	La Francophonie, espace solidaire pour un développement durable
XI	28-29 September 2006	Bucharest, Romania	Education
XII	17-19 October 2008	Québec, Canada	
XIII	23-24 October 2010	Montreux, Switzerland	Défis et visions d'avenir pour la Francophonie
XIV	13-14 October 2012	Kinshasa, RDC	Francophonie, enjeux environnementaux et économiques face à la gouvernance mondiale
XV	29-30 November 2014	Dakar, Senegal	Femmes et Jeunes en Francophonie : vecteurs de paix, acteurs de développement
XVI	26-27 November 2016	Antananarivo, Madagascar	Croissance partagée et développement responsable : les conditions de la stabilité du monde et de l'espace francophone
XVII	11-12 October 2018	Yerevan, Armenia	Vivre ensemble dans la solidarité, le partage des valeurs humanistes et le respect de la diversité : source de paix et de prospérité pour l'espace francophone

Appendix 3: Activities (non-exhaustive)

Language

The French language constitutes one of the primary domains of action of the Francophonie. The promotion, education and use hereof are very important. Promotion takes place amongst others through studies, analyses and research of the language and linguistic diversity, with the help of francophone ambassadors and hosting events dedicated to the French language.⁹⁸ The use of French in international context is stimulated by offering French language education to people working in international environments and sending an ambassador of the Francophonie to the Olympic Movement.⁹⁹ However, criticism has been expressed on the importance the organization attributes to the French language. According to Kleineidam, the French language constitutes in most of the so-called francophone states a minority.¹⁰⁰ Adekeye even states that “*La Francophonie* [...] is a somewhat hollow concept in Africa” and “85 per cent of so-called francophone Africans do not, in fact, speak French”.¹⁰¹ Even though these articles are not very recent, they indicate that the French language may be less important than the Francophonie stresses.

Cultural diversity and development

Promotion and protection hereof take place through various events, such as international meetings. Studies on this topic are published and the topic is pointed out to policy makers.¹⁰² Moreover, a financial contribution is made to written and filmed productions. People working in this domain and big francophone cultural events can also count on the support of the organization.¹⁰³

Peace, democracy and human rights

Nowadays a primary domain of action for the organization with a wide range of activities. Education about human rights and standing by institutions supporting them are amongst

⁹⁸ "Connaissance et promotion du français," Organisation internationale de la francophonie, accessed on 11 January 2019, <https://www.francophonie.org/Connaissance-et-promotion-du.html>.

⁹⁹ "Le français dans les relations internationales," Organisation internationale de la francophonie, accessed on 11 January 2019, <https://www.francophonie.org/Le-francais-dans-les-relations.html>.

¹⁰⁰ Harmut Kleineidam, "Politique de diffusion linguistique et francophonie: l'action linguistique menée par la France," *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 95, no. 1 (1992): 14.

¹⁰¹ Adekeye Adebajo, "FOLIE DE GRANDEUR," *World Today* 53, no. 6 (1997): 148.

¹⁰² "Politiques culturelles et développement," Organisation internationale de la francophonie, accessed on 11 January 2019, <https://www.francophonie.org/Politiques-culturelles-et.html>.

¹⁰³ "Accès à la vie culturelle francophone," Organisation internationale de la francophonie, accessed on 11 January 2019, <https://www.francophonie.org/Acces-a-la-vie-culturelle.html>.

them.¹⁰⁴ Moreover, the Francophonie aims at making legal texts more accessible and helps to conform them to international standards.¹⁰⁵ Besides, the free press is supported by equipping press agencies and setting up francophone media networks for instance.¹⁰⁶ When it comes to prevention and conflict management, the Francophonie tries to be a mediator, which considers sharing information as a very important task.¹⁰⁷ In elections, technical assistance is offered and observation and information missions are deployed.¹⁰⁸ Activities in the domain of peace, democracy and human rights also include the organization of different types of events to sensitize people, with the help of various francophone networks.

Nevertheless, the position of the Francophonie in this domain may not be so strong, according to the literature about the subject. The organization has only limited resources at its disposal.¹⁰⁹ Moreover, it is considered as a cultural organization and a means of France to enhance its own interest.¹¹⁰ The Francophonie has been described as an “institutional ‘third party’” with a “secondary role in the diplomatic sphere”,¹¹¹ with countries preferring to adhere to other organizations first.¹¹² So, although representing a large community of states, it seems that the organization is not the first international priority for its members.

Education

In the field of education, the Francophonie has several actors, such as the *Institut de la Francophonie pour l'Éducation et la Formation* and the *Écoles et Langues nationales*. The latter support in several ways bilingual education.¹¹³ The *Initiative francophone pour la formation à distance des maîtres* searches to improve the skills of teachers, by offering them

¹⁰⁴ “Démocratie et droits de l’homme,” Organisation internationale de la francophonie, accessed on 12 January 2019, <https://www.francophonie.org/Democratie-et-droits-de-l-Homme-46406.html>.

¹⁰⁵ “Droit et justice,” Organisation internationale de la francophonie, accessed on 13 January 2019, <https://www.francophonie.org/Droit-et-justice.html>.

¹⁰⁶ “Médias et liberté de la presse,” Organisation internationale de la francophonie, accessed on 13 January 2019, <https://www.francophonie.org/Medias-et-liberte-de-la-presse.html>.

¹⁰⁷ “Prévention et gestion des crises et des conflits,” Organisation internationale de la francophonie, accessed on 13 January 2019, <https://www.francophonie.org/Prevention-et-gestion-des-crises.html>.

¹⁰⁸ “Transitions et processus électoraux,” Organisation internationale de la francophonie, accessed on 13 January 2019, <https://www.francophonie.org/Transitions-et-processus.html>.

¹⁰⁹ David Morin, Lori-Anne Thérout-Bénoni, Marie-Joëlle Zahar, “When Peacekeeping Intersects with La Francophonie: Scope, Significance and Implications,” *International Peacekeeping* 19, no. 3 (2012): 296.

¹¹⁰ Rodrigo Tavares & Luís Brás Bernardino, “Speaking the language of security: the Commonwealth, the Francophonie and the CPLP in conflict management in Africa,” *Conflict, Security & Development* 11, no. 5 (2011): 621-622.

¹¹¹ Ramel, *op. cit.*, 301.

¹¹² Roger Dehaybe, “L’AIF: L’Action des Etats et Gouvernements dans la Francophonie. Entretien avec Dominic Wolton,” *Hermès, La Revue* 3, no. 40 (2004): 267.

¹¹³ “École et langues nationales (ÉLAN),” Organisation internationale de la francophonie, accessed on 13 January 2019, <https://www.francophonie.org/Ecole-et-langues-nationales-Elan-46455.html>.

education, classroom materials and online resources.¹¹⁴ Access to education is promoted and studies on this topic are important resources.¹¹⁵

Economy

Inclusiveness for everyone is one of the goals of the organization and the Francophonie specifically supports youth and women. Education is an important means and so is the improvement of the circumstances to start a business. The sharing and distribution of information is important here,¹¹⁶ and the knowledge within the Francophonie and its network are used to create more economic cooperation between its members.¹¹⁷

Sustainable development

In order to reinforce the influence of the members of the Francophonie in this domain, events are created to inform them and hence support participation in international negotiations.¹¹⁸ Moreover, education and francophone participation in (inter)national events about sustainable development should help countries plan their actions in this domain.¹¹⁹

Digital innovation

From the start an important topic to the Francophonie, the organization participates in international meetings on internet governance and educates states in cybersecurity.¹²⁰ Support is offered to francophone innovations.¹²¹

Youth

¹¹⁴ "Initiative francophone pour la formation à distance des maîtres (IFADEM)," Organisation internationale de la francophonie, accessed on 13 January 2019, <https://www.francophonie.org/Initiative-francophone-pour-la-46456.html>.

¹¹⁵ "Innovation et réformes éducatives," Organisation internationale de la francophonie, accessed on 13 January 2019, <https://www.francophonie.org/Innovation-et-reformes-educatives-46458.html>.

¹¹⁶ "Entrepreneuriat des jeunes et des femmes," Organisation internationale de la francophonie, accessed on 13 January 2019, <https://www.francophonie.org/Entrepreneuriat-des-jeunes-et-des-femmes.html>.

¹¹⁷ "Vers un espace économique francophone," Organisation internationale de la francophonie, accessed on 13 January 2019, <https://www.francophonie.org/Vers-un-espace-economique.html>.

¹¹⁸ "Négociations et décisions internationales sur l'économie, l'environnement et le développement durable," Organisation internationale de la francophonie, accessed on 13 January 2019, <https://www.francophonie.org/Negociations-et-decisions-46491.html>.

¹¹⁹ "Objectifs de développement durable," Organisation internationale de la francophonie, accessed on 13 January 2019, <https://www.francophonie.org/Objectifs-de-developpement-durable-46490.html>.

¹²⁰ "Le numérique, moteur de la diversité," Organisation internationale de la francophonie, accessed on 13 January 2019, <https://www.francophonie.org/Le-numerique-moteur-de-la.html>.

¹²¹ "Innovation numérique," Organisation internationale de la francophonie, accessed on 13 January 2019, <https://www.francophonie.org/Innovation-numerique.html>.

The involvement of youth in the organization is supported with several programmes. These include an ongoing project for volunteers and events dedicated to youth.¹²² Besides, the *Jeux de la Francophonie* are organized every four years to celebrate the artistic and sportive talents of the francophone youth.¹²³

Equality between men and women

The Francophonie supports organizations dedicated to more gender equality, for example through supporting their participation and plea in international meetings. Cooperation within the organization is important as well, to develop and reinforce women rights.¹²⁴

Partnership with civil society

The Francophonie offers the means to civil society of the francophone space to make their preoccupations known at bodies of the Francophonie and at international events. Access to information and the francophone network is a key element hereof.¹²⁵

¹²² "Mobilité et renforcement des capacités des jeunes," Organisation internationale de la francophonie, accessed on 13 January 2019, <https://www.francophonie.org/Mobilite-et-renforcement-des-46460.html>.

¹²³ "Jeux de la Francophonie," Organisation internationale de la francophonie, accessed on 13 January 2019, <https://www.francophonie.org/Jeux-de-la-Francophonie-46461.html>.

¹²⁴ "Pour l'égalité femmes-hommes," Organisation internationale de la francophonie, accessed on 13 January 2019, <https://www.francophonie.org/Pour-l-Egalite-femmes-hommes-46450.html>.

¹²⁵ "Partenariat avec la société civile," Organisation internationale de la francophonie, accessed on 13 January 2019, <https://www.francophonie.org/societe-civile-46448.html>.