

EVOLUTION OF NONGOVERNMENTAL SECTOR PARTICIPATION IN THE FRANCOPHONE MOVEMENT: STAGES OF THE PROCESS

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Abstract: This paper analyzes historical line of civil society development in the field of Francophonie and determines stages of this process. We explore aspects regarding relations of nongovernmental sector with official francophone institutions. Activity of nongovernmental organizations much preceded foundation of official intergovernmental Francophonie what helped them to gain trust and respect in the society and made official institutions consider their position.

Keywords: public sector, Francophonie, civil society, International Organization of the Francophonie

1. Introduction

France has deep traditions of cultural-linguistic internal and external policy, which go with its roots up to 16th century. Since that times there were many activists (poets, politicians, artists), who were fighting persistently for French language purity, its prestige and authority. Expansion of French language in Europe and colonies led to spreading of French culture, raise of respect to it and even cultural acceptance. The term “francophonie” was invented much later by Onesime Reclus in 1880. The author used this term referring to the French speaking world community in general and some countries especially. Unfortunately the term didn’t get wide recognition and usage then.

However, at that time French language was really wide spread. From XVII to XX century French was the main language of diplomacy in Europe and was popular as communication language for elite in many countries. Such success was achieved not only thanks to purposeful governmental policy but also because of active support from the side of public sector.

As many researchers affirm strong basis provided by nongovernmental sector can’t be overestimated. This thesis is also supported by leaders of Francophonie. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, the first Secretary General of International Francophone Organization, is sure that without operation of local organizations there would not be the International Francophone Organization nor its Summits [1]. The acting Secretary General Abdu Diof also underlines the founding role of civil society in formation of international francophone community. Francophonie’s success, he affirms, is obliged to active public members, who for a long time were its guides and lobbyists though owed very few recourses for activities [2].

Unfortunately, the role of public sector still has not been investigated sufficiently. There are very few works which mostly in descriptive manner touch the history of civil society participation in Francophonie’s formation. Jacques Barrat and Claudia Moisei [3] made very good effort in systematization of different institutions dealing with Francophonie. Special attention they gave to nongovernmental sector, specifically

to the biggest organizations, their aims, structure and history. Michel Tetu [4] includes history of public sector development into the general history of the francophone’s movement, showing in a such way their indivisibility.

This paper is an attempt to analyze historical line of civil society development in the field of Francophonie and determine stages of this process, regarding its relations with official Francophonie.

2. Staging of the francophone’s public sector development

Analysis made during the research helped to identify staging of francophone public sector development. Using induction and deduction methods, method of historical event research and comparative method, we came to the conclusion that there were four important stages in the life of nongovernmental Francophonie, which cover following periods: 1883-1961, 1962-1969, 1970-1988, and 1989 – till now.

Identification of these stages was made basing on important events in the life of francophone community which influenced its further development.

First stage

The first stage begins in 1883 when the first nongovernmental organization, which had French language and culture as the main object, started its work at service of the Francophonie. It was Alliance Française, which was established on the initiative of Paul Cambon and Pierre Foncin. Support and expansion of French authority with the help of its culture and language propaganda became the aim of Alliance. Alliance Française in our days is a strong organization with wide net of representative offices in 136 countries. However its main aim remained the same, just formulation changed a little – promotion of French language and culture in the world.

Among pioneers in public sector, one more organization should be mentioned - French Secular Mission. It was founded in 1902 by Pierre Deschamps. The main peculiarity of this organization is in complex approach to French culture and language expansion through education

sphere. The organization works out concrete education programs for establishments of different directions and levels.

In the beginning of XX century the word “francophonie” was not in use: it was not mentioned in official documents and mass media nor in titles of public organizations. Actually the term “francophonie” was forgotten with death of its author and will be brought back to life only after the Second World War thanks to the enthusiasm of civil society.

At this stage there was one more peculiarity of nongovernmental Francophonie – appearance of francophone NGOs out of France. Among such organizations can be named following: Council of French life in America (1937), International association of French-speaking Writers in Quebec (1926), Royal academy of French language and literature in Belgium (1920). These organizations played important role in consolidation of French language and culture in their counties.

Second Stage

In 50s people already calmed down after the shock of the Second World War and finally were enjoying peaceful being. Of course it reflected on different spheres of life. New impulse was given for francophone movement as well as to activation of public sector. It happened in 1962 after publication of the article of Senegal President Leopold Sedar Senghor in magazine “Esprit”. This event invoked francophone movement and brought back into use the term “francophonie”. From that year on activation of francophone society can be noticed all over the world. Stelio Farandjis [5] names three main reasons of this phenomenon happened in 50s-60s of XX century:

- development of information technologies, which allowed francophones from different countries on five continents stay in touch and even unite in international organizations;
- acknowledgment of French language as official in many new countries appeared in the result of decolonization;
- acknowledgment of Quebec's francophone right on preservation of cultural identity, what caused waive of solidarity in many countries.

Another French researcher Jaque Barrat [6] pays his attention on other factors, which prompt development of Francophonie. He is convinced that in the basis of francophone's conception lays idea of French language and culture richness and prestige, which for a long time considered to be a gift for many countries. Moreover, French culture contains values which are so important in modern society, like tolerance, democracy, human rights etc. That is why exactly nongovernmental sector activated its work much earlier than official authorities did. Public sector persistently worked on promotion of French language and culture in the world.

To this range of factors, which caused the splash of civil society activity, we would also add the loyal attitude to French culture from the side of new intelligence and political leaders in former colonies, who were brought up in France and thought in French education establishments. Of course, they could not imagine themselves without France and after

decolonization were looking for any way to continue close relations with former mother country.

The second stage was very rich on different events. Step by step Francophone movement involved more and more enthusiasts from different fields: participants of Quebec's “quiet revolution” (J. Lesag), journalists (M. Tetu, J. Leger), professors and scientists (Z. Abdu, M. El-Fazi), diplomats (C. Deneux, B. Doren), writers (R. Kornevin). All they and many others became lobbyists of Francophonie and pioneers in this movement.

Also we can notice digression from Francophonie's narrow direction. On the wave of enthusiasm, many unions, associations and organizations appeared one after another. French language and culture remained the founding basis but field of interest was already much wider. So, if in the beginning nongovernmental organizations were mainly dealing with questions of French culture and language, now Francophonie included many spheres of life. There appeared organizations with different directions of work like democracy development, social help for poor people and children, professional unions, etc.

Also francophone movement gained the foothold when international nongovernmental organizations appeared, some of them nowadays play initial role in Francophonie. In 1953 appeared International Council of French speaking Radio and Television for mutual support and cooperation in producing broadcasts and telecasts in 33 countries. International association of French Culture Abroad appeared in 1960. There appeared also many associations and professional unions: linguists, scientists, economists, lawyers, doctors etc. For example International federation of French Language Teachers created in 1969 today counts around 70 000 members in 118 countries and issues several periodicals.

Third Stage

New level of cooperation was opened to public sector in 1970, when enduring process of francophone's movement formation and confirmation led to foundation of the Agency of Cultural and Technical Cooperation - the international francophone institution on governmental level. Later in 2005 the Agency will be reformed into International Organization of the Francophonie (IOF).

Institutional Francophonie from the moment of its establishment purposefully developed relations with NGOs on different levels. We would underline several reasons for it. Firstly, appearance of NGOs much preceded foundation of official intergovernmental francophone institutions. Therefore, NGOs already had their firm position and, what is more important, they were willingly supported by civil society. Secondly, UNO, which was an example for many organizations, had close cooperation with public sector, what was fixed in the Charter (article 71). The Agency took UNO's model and adapted it to own realities. Nevertheless, the Charter of the Agency speaking about its functions and duties didn't mention anything about relations with public sector but it was said the NGOs have a right to become a member of Agency's Consulting Council.

Variety of NGOs involved in Francophonie caused necessity in their classification what could facilitate in

analytical researches but also could help in contact-making between themselves. French researcher Rene-Maurice Dereumaux [7] proposes classification of francophone NGOs by the type of membership: those which unite legal members (parliaments, universities, mass media etc.) and physical members (teachers, doctors, females, etc.). M.I. Tavernie [8] making an analytical research for National Assembly divided NGOs on main and secondary. There is one more variant of classification according to the type of relations with International Organization of the Francophonie: category A – organizations, which have the closest cooperation with IOF, category B – cooperation on level of mutual consultations, category C – only exchange of information about activities of both sides.

The most spread and used classification is that which is accepted by IOF. This approach to classification was proposed by Conference of International Nongovernmental Francophone Organizations, which was established by the decision of Permanent Council of Francophonie in 1992. Classification is being made basing on main missions of organizations:

- group A – French language, cultural and linguistic diversity
- group B – Peace, democracy, law
- group C – education, science
- group D – economic cooperation, sustainable development, solidarity
- group E – other.

Not only classification of NGOs was essential at this stage. Glut of public sector with uncoordinated small organizations led to dispersion of efforts and resources, what made solving of serious problems impossible. There fore small organizations felt necessity in unions which could help them in work. As a result in 1974 Francophone Association of friendship and contacts was founded with in Paris. Today this association counts 132 members. It is an international union of NGOs on sectoral and geographical principle, covering all fields of cooperation.

Frames of Francophonie were becoming wider. Therefore Agency of cultural and technical cooperation initiated establishment of Francophone business fund in 1987 for development of international economic cooperation. The main aims were: support of trade between francophone countries, industrial partnership development, and exchange of new technologies. In 1991 the Fund adopted its new Charter according to which it was determined as the international nongovernmental organization.

Fourth Stage

This stage is characterized with final confirmation of public sector in international Francophonie. 1989 – the year when IOF invited two powerful NGOs to become its official operators. Both organizations agreed to join and became responsible each for own direction: University of Senegal, International Association of Universities.

Conference of International Nongovernmental Francophone Organizations from its foundation became the official representative of public sector in International Organization of the Francophonie. The Conference united

the biggest and the most influential nongovernmental organizations (today there are 69 members), which received advisory status in IOF.

NGO's accreditation for IOF and obtaining the advisory status can be given only on following conditions observed by NGO:

- use French language as the working one
- aims of organization must correspond to priorities determined by the Summit of IOF
- respect and observation of francophone principles
- organization of activities minimum in two countries-members of IOF and availability of local partners in other countries.
- strong and clear institutional structure for cooperation with IOF and its operators

After reformation of IOF in 1997 new Charter approved place of the Conference of International Nongovernmental Francophone Organizations in international community and simultaneously confirmed its relations with International Organization of the Francophonie. According to the Charter, Secretary General of IOF is obliged to call the Conference twice per year and Article 18 fixes obligations from the side of the Conference:

- inform its members about the programs and plans of work approved by the Summit of IOF
- determine organizations which have possibility and desire for contribution into the francophone movement and effectively work within francophone programs
- hold consulting work and analyze feedbacks and propositions concerning IOF's work and its programs
- promote cooperation between NGOs

In 2004 Secretary General of IOF felt necessity in strengthening ties between civil society and official institutions of Francophonie. Therefore, Directive on regulation of relations public and nongovernmental organizations with francophone institutions and International Organization of the Francophonie was adopted at the Conference of francophone ministers which was held in Cotonou, November 24, 2004. This Directive replaced the old one adopted in 1992.

So, the Conference of International Nongovernmental Organizations again got approval as an official institution, which represents public sector. Section 3 of the Directive fixes obligations of sides:

NGOs are obliged:

- inform Secretary General of IOF about their activities and make reports one time per two years;
- inform own members about activities, programs, arrangements of IOF and its operators;
- contribute into achievement of common strategic plans adopted by the Summit;
- participate in consulting meetings of francophone institutions and take part in work of the Conference.

IOF from its side is obliged

- invite NGOs on different own actions and actions of operators;
- allow usage of francophone symbols on condition of advanced agreement.

3. Conclusions

Expressing the aspiration for cooperation, exchange of ideas, and mutual help basing on common language belonging, NGOs for many years were lobbyists of Francophonie. Their activity preceded foundation of official intergovernmental institutions.

Quantity growth of NGOs was accompanied with quality changes - strengthening of NGO's role, widening spheres of their activities. With time, associations, unions etc. covered with its activities all spheres of life.

Harmonic coexistence of governmental and nongovernmental organizations is a peculiarity of modern Francophonie. Some NGOs even integrated into IOF structure and became its operators.

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