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# Voting Across the Sea: The Politics of French Nationals in Morocco

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Voting Across the Sea: The Politics of French Nationals in Morocco

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**Abstract**

The goal of this paper is to explore the way French nationals in Morocco continue to participate in French politics even though they no longer live in French territory. The research examines three organizations that are based in Morocco and participated in French elections in May 2014. They are the Union de Français de l'Étranger, Français du Monde and UMP Maroc. The paper examines how these organizations interact with French nationals in Morocco and how these organizations interact with the French government. The paper determines that Union de Français de l'Étranger Casablanca and Français du Monde Maroc are different from political parties based in France. Although each organization has an opinion on French politics, their priority is in advocating for the rights of the French in Morocco as well as in ensuring that the French in Morocco are able to receive their rights to education, health, security, and social security. UMP Maroc, on the other hand, is a branch of the UMP in France and therefore prioritizes a political agenda more than the other two organizations. This paper also briefly examines the election results in Morocco in May 2014 and reflects on the relationship between the representatives of French nationals in Morocco and Moroccan politicians.

*Keywords:* Political Science, International Law & Relations, Demography

Article 4 of the French Constitution

*Political parties and groups shall contribute to the exercise of suffrage. They shall be formed and carry on their activities freely. They shall respect the principles of national sovereignty and democracy.*

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**Table of Contents**

Introduction.....	6
Background.....	7
Methodology.....	10
Union de Français de l’Etranger.....	13
Français du Monde .....	16
UMP Maroc.....	17
Elections of Conseillers Consulaires in Morocco.....	20
Representatives of the French and the Moroccan Government.....	24
Conclusion.....	26
References.....	28

**Introduction**

I am a registered voter for the state of Colorado, a state that has close elections with unpredictable results. In the United States I am very politically active. I have volunteered for political campaigns, I have registered people to vote, and I have interned for my Congresswoman. Yet during my time as a student in Morocco, I did not vote. I did not take the time to navigate the complicated website created by Colorado's Secretary of State so that I could vote from across the Atlantic Ocean. On Election Day I felt very disconnected from the United States. Though I felt guilty to be neglecting my civic duty, I was so involved in my daily routine in Morocco that I devalued the elections that were happening in my home country.

Following this experience, I was surprised to learn that the French nationals who live abroad are able to vote more easily than Americans abroad who live abroad. There are nearly 55,000 French who live in Morocco (Mathlouti 2012). Out of this population of French nationals, 31,851 are registered to vote as residents of Morocco (Resultats des elections consulaires, 2014). Although these French nationals live outside of French territory, they have their own representatives in the French government. During elections, French consulates organize polling locations so these French nationals can continue to participate very personally in the politics of France.

There are a number of organizations that help the French who live in Morocco and advocate for their interests with the French government. Many of these organizations also present lists of candidates in local elections. In my research, I focused on the Union de Français de l'Étranger (UFE), Français du Monde and the UMP Maroc. The purpose of my research was to learn about the way these organizations work with the French

community in Morocco, how they interact with the French government, and their relationships with each other. Before I conducted my research, I imagined a number of possible outcomes. These organizations could have weak agendas but mostly act to remind French citizens of their civic responsibilities. Alternatively, these organizations could be mostly focused on spreading an agenda that is aligned with the political parties in France. Another possibility is that these organizations could have an agenda that is completely separate from the agendas of political parties in France.

In my research, I also explored the results of the recent French elections in Morocco and the way the officials elected by the French in Morocco interacted with the Moroccan government. France has a very unique relationship with Morocco because of France's status as the country's former colonizer. The way the French continue to occupy this space is important to acknowledge in understanding the relationship between the two countries. In an increasingly globalized world, it is also relevant to explore how migration to Morocco complicates the ability of French nationals to have the same rights as their compatriots who live on French soil.

## **Background**

In 1958, after the Algerian crisis, the French ratified a new constitution that formed the fifth republic. It established a government that was divided into three branches, the president, the judiciary, and the legislature. For the purpose of this paper, it is important to look at the executive and legislative branches which are elected either directly or indirectly by French nationals. One must understand both the way these

politicians are elected and the right of suffrage in France in order to understand the presence of the UFE, Français du Monde and UMP Maroc in Morocco.

The executive branch of France includes the president, the prime minister and the Cabinet. The president is the most powerful member of the executive branch. The president possesses the authority to appoint a prime minister and a cabinet, both of which are then responsible to the legislature. He has the power to make treaties and declare war. He also has the ability to dissolve the National Assembly. In 1962, the constitution was amended so that the French president was elected directly by the French people. He (or she) serves a five-year term.

France has a bicameral legislature. The National Assembly is composed of 577 seats. Each member is elected by winning the absolute majority of votes in a single member constituency. Those elected serve five years before the next election. The Senate is composed of 348 seats. Senators are elected by an electoral college and serve nine years before the next election.

The right to suffrage has been important in France since the country first became a republic. Following the French revolution in 1789, the National Assembly approved the Declaration of Rights of Man that proclaims, "Law is the expression of the general will. Every citizen has a right to participate personally, or through his representative, in its foundation" (Avalon Project, 2014). To secure this right, Article 3 of the 1958 constitution states, "Suffrage may be direct or indirect as provided for by the Constitution. It shall always be universal, equal and secret" (Constitution of 4 October 1958, 2014). Once citizens reach the age of eighteen, they are automatically registered to vote. Voters can register in either their official domicile, a commune where they have

paid taxes for at least five years or a place of residence where they have lived for at least six months. If they are a civil servant or a military official, they can also choose to register to vote in the area where they have been posted (Voting—General Elections in France, 2012). Like residents of France, French nationals abroad can vote through absentee ballot, they can vote online, or they can vote in person. French consulates organize polling places during elections. In Rabat, the French are able to vote at Lycée Descartes, the local French high school. Voting abroad as a French national is very similar to voting on French territory.

French nationals that live abroad have both local and national representatives. Nationally, the legislature of France represents the interests of the French abroad. There are eleven deputies in the National Assembly that are directly elected by the French abroad. The deputy for Morocco also represents Algeria, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Libya, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Tunisia. Furthermore, there are twelve senators that represent the French abroad. The *conseillers consulaires*, the *delegates consulaires*, and the eleven deputies in the National Assembly elect the senators indirectly. *Conseillers consulaires* are elected directly by districts of French around the world. *Delegués consulaires* are also elected directly but represent districts abroad with a high population of French nationals. Both the *conseillers consulaires* and the *delegués consulaires* also elect members of the ninety members of the Assemblée des Français de l'Étranger (AFE). The AFE advises the executive and legislative branches of the French government on laws and policies that will benefit French citizens who live around the world (Qui Sommes Nous, 2014).

In addition to being electors, *conseillers consulaires* operate as local representatives and advise consuls and ambassadors on issues related to education, security, social action and employment. They help their communities furthermore by spreading information from the diplomatic and consular authorities of their district to the French community that lives there. In Morocco, there are twenty-one *conseillers consulaires*.

### **Methodology**

I began my research by visiting the French consulate in Rabat. After speaking with an employee there about French elections in Morocco, I decided to explore more about the variety of French organizations that participate in elections around the country. In the time I was given, I was unable to find much literature on the politics of French nationals in Morocco and therefore relied heavily on my own research. Due to time and financial restraints, I focused my research on three French organizations. Each organization presented a list of candidates for the *conseillers consulaires* elections in May 2014. They are the Union de Français de l'Étranger (UFE), Français du Monde and UMP Maroc.

My research on Français du Monde relied on both Internet research as well as a semi-structured interview with Marion Berthoud, one of their elected *conseillers consulaires* in the Rabat region. The interview was conducted in French and was used to determine the purpose of her organization as well as the role she played specifically in Morocco. I personally translated all quotes from the interview in this paper. Français du Monde is an international organization and so for my research I read and analyzed both

the website of the international organization as well as the website of the local branch Français du Monde Maroc. Again, I personally translated the websites in my analysis in this paper.

I originally intended for my research with these organizations to include at least one interview as well as analysis from the organization's website. However, this goal quickly proved itself to be unattainable. I emailed and called the UFE on numerous occasions and at multiple times of day, but received no response. I then visited the organization's headquarters in Casablanca. The woman who received me was very busy and guarded. She was unwilling to find a person for me to speak with to learn more about her organization. Before telling me to leave the building, however, she did quickly hand me a booklet on the UFE in Casablanca. Surprisingly, the booklet became very helpful in my analysis as it included enough information for me to at least begin analyzing the role of the UFE In Morocco.

I was additionally unable to interview any members of UMP Maroc. Like the UFE, I contacted the email listed on their website to no avail. I received a brief response after sending a Facebook message that sent me a different email address to contact. My email to this address also went unanswered. UMP Maroc does not have any listed address on their website and it was therefore impossible for me to visit their office in person, as I had done with the UFE. Consequently all analysis of the organization was done through online sources. I read their website, followed them on Facebook and watched speeches by the leader of their organization, Fredric Elbar. I also found a recent interview with Fredric Elbar in the online journal *lepetitjournal.com* and included quotes from that interview in my analysis of the organization.

I originally intended to speak with more French citizens in Rabat and attempted to do so by emailing a young French woman whom I met in Rabat. She very quickly replied informing me she now lived in Casablanca. When I offered to travel to Casablanca to meet with her, she never responded. After reaching this dead end, I contacted the local French high school to see if I could speak with their faculty about their political involvement from Morocco. Unfortunately I again did not receive a response to my inquiry. I contacted Rabat Accueil, a non-political organization (which placed no candidates on the ballot of the last elections) and they put me in contact with Jean<sup>1</sup>, a member of their organization. I had a semi-structured interview with him and he helped me greatly in understanding the politics of French citizens in Morocco.

Finally, I analyzed two interviews in my attempt to determine the relationship between French elected officials and the Moroccan government. The first interview was with Marion Berthoud, my only interview with a French elected official. The second interview I found in *thepetitjournal.com* with Pouria Amirshahi, North and West Africa's delegate to the National Assembly. This second interview reinforced the conclusions I made about the relationship between the French politicians who represent the French nationals in Morocco and Moroccan politicians.

Given more than three weeks, I would have been able to devote more time to securing interviews. My position as a young American student placed me at a disadvantage as the members of these organizations had little incentive to speak with me. Any future research would be greatly enriched by a larger number of direct conversations with the organizations and politicians that exist in the major cities of Morocco.

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<sup>1</sup>To protect his anonymity, Jean's name has been changed in this paper.

Nevertheless, this paper is at least a beginning step in discovering the important French organizations in Morocco and the ways they affect the French who live in Morocco.

### **Union de Français de l'Étranger**

Union de Français de l'Étranger (UFE) is the oldest French expatriate organization in the world. Founded when France was still a colonial power in 1927, it is now has branches in one hundred countries, including Morocco. Although I would have preferred to speak with a member of the organization, the booklet I was given when I visited their office in Casablanca was a good resource to learn more about the relationship between the UFE and the community of French in Morocco as well as the relationship between the UFE and the French government. The booklet begins with an introduction to the organization and the members and then presents the broad agenda of the group. According to their literature, the UFE protects the pensions and other social services of the French abroad. It “defends” French culture and French language. Additionally, the UFE partners with French businesses and other French organizations (a broad label that is not more clearly defined in the booklet) that work closely with government institutions.

The UFE in Casablanca enables the French in Morocco to live nearly the same way they would live on French soil. The booklet explains different options for health care for French nationals in Morocco. The UFE has also created instructions on how French nationals can enroll their children in a French school so that their children can receive a French education even in Morocco. Fourteen schools are listed, seven of which were created directly by an agency in France devoted to the education of French abroad,

l'Agence pour l'Enseignement Français à l'Étranger. The booklet also contains information on how to receive pension payments including when to expect the money as well as the different methods of payment. For better or for worse the French population can continue to have similar lives with the same access to school, health care, social services and security in Morocco that they would have in France. The UFE offers guidance on what I would imagine a French citizen, whether young or old, would need to know assuming they wanted to retain their French lifestyle abroad.

The booklet illustrates that the UFE is not a political party. The organization is focused first and foremost on helping expatriates settle in Morocco rather than advocate a certain political agenda. From speaking with my interviewees, I am aware that the UFE is a conservative organization. However, I would not have realized that fact through just examining the information they disseminate. Rather than serving as political literature, the booklet contains an overwhelming amount of information about living in Morocco, almost like a travel guide. It contains lists of cemeteries, hospitals, schools and French associations. The only mention of French political parties is when, in the introduction, the UFE boasts briefly that thanks to its work, there are nine senators in the French senate which are members of the conservative Union pour un Mouvement Populaire (UMP) party. Their literature does not mention that the organization supports conservative laws and reforms nor is it critical of the current socialist government in France. The UFE does not present itself as a conservative political party.

Even in regards to the election of *conseillers consulaires*, the UFE does not stress any sort of fiercely political agenda. On my visit to the UFE office I also took a pamphlet on the election of *conseillers consulaires*. The pamphlet does not mention the UMP or

the Socialist party nor does it mention any decisive issues such as immigration, gay marriage or even tax law. It simply explains to the reader that the UFE has been established for nearly a hundred years and is well recognized in Morocco. It also reminds the reader that the *conseillers consulaires* for Casablanca ought to be “connu et reconnu” [known and recognized]. The UFE advertises itself as the old and well-established French of Morocco. The organization is separate from the political parties in France and is focused on a very different set of issues than either the Social Democrats or the UMP in Morocco.

The UFE attracts a specific section of the French nationals in Morocco. In addition to the information regarding education and healthcare, the UFE booklet includes a number of ads for expensive real estate, cars, clothing and banks. The last page reveals an advertisement with a slogan that reads “ Assistance expatriés, faites comme chez vous” [Expatriate assistance, act as if you’re at home]. Judging from these advertisements, many of the UFE members are expatriates of moderate to high income.

In their missions, the UFE and Français du Monde are similar organizations. When I visited the UFE office in Casablanca, I explained to the woman working there that I was a student conducting research on the different French organizations in Morocco. When I told her that I had met with someone from Français du Monde already, she told me that there was no point in meeting with someone from the UFE. Briskly she told me that the UFE was the same type of organization as Français du Monde. According to her, the two organizations play identical roles. Indeed, the two organizations shared the same building, situated beside the French consulate in Casablanca. Both work to make

the French at home in Morocco. There is little difference in the purpose of each organization.

While they share a similar mission, the UFE and Français du Monde presented themselves very differently to me. The member of UFE whom I spoke to was stern with limited patience for an outsider's curiosity. Contrastingly, the members of Français du Monde I spoke with were accessible and willing to take the time to speak to me. Each organization left me with a different impression of the French community in Morocco and their willingness to engage with a person outside of their tightknit French community.

### **Français du Monde**

The First Secretary of the Socialist Party founded Français du Monde in 1980. As previously mentioned it is a very similar organization to the UFE, offering insight into how to live comfortably and securely in Morocco. It advises members of the French community on French schooling and French social security. When I met Marion Berthoud, the elected *conseiller consulaire* from Rabat and a member of Français du Monde, she explained that she was very passionate about making sure that each French national in Morocco received his social security payment.

Inclusivity and equality are values strongly emphasized by Français du Monde. The mission statement of the organization, translated from French, states

Français du Monde is designed to meet the expectations of the French abroad, regardless of their status and origin, in particular by supporting the most vulnerable, by encouraging the exercise of citizenship (including European

citizenship) and by being activists for the diversity of cultures (Notre Association, 2014).

Indeed during my interview, Marion Berthoud answered a call that concerned a local French man that was having difficulty with his French papers. After she finished the call she explained that one of the most important aspects of her job concerns helping the French nationals in Rabat navigate the complex bureaucracy of the French state. She was very determined that every French citizen be guaranteed their rights, no matter their situation or their background. So long as a person is French, her organization will insure he has the ability to exercise all of his civil and political rights.

Knowing how polarizing party affiliation is in the United States, I was very interested to ask her how Français du Monde worked with the other, more conservative organizations based in Morocco. Like the UFE, Français du Monde is not affiliated with a specific political party and instead has its own agenda separate from the platform of the UMP or the Socialist Party. However, the organization does state on their website that the organization belongs to the “Grand family of republican leftists” and defends the essential values of “democracy, the Universal Rights of Man, secularism, the end of discrimination, altruism, and all this is implied by our national motto, “liberty, equality, fraternity” (Notre Association, 2014). When I inquired whether there were noticeable distinctions between Français du Monde and the conservative organizations in Morocco, I was surprised to learn that each organization in Morocco has a similar agenda. They all worked together to advocate for free and inclusive schooling and access to social services. They also all encouraged the political participation of the French in Morocco. It

is only when they act as electors of senators and members of the AFE that the ideological differences of the *conseillers consulaires* from each organization becomes very clear.

### **UMP Maroc**

While the UFE and Français du Monde both offered candidates in the election of the *conseillers consulaires*, they are not, as mentioned earlier, political parties in Morocco. UMP Maroc, however, is a political party with an affiliation to the UMP party in France. According to the party's website, UMP Maroc is the most important branch of the UMP located outside of France with almost 800 activists (Delegation de L'UMP Maroc, n.d.).

While the other organizations publish advice on how to live in Morocco, UMP Maroc offers a political agenda. The political party has published thirteen letters on their website which reflect on the current political climate in France. Each letter is critical of socialist government that is currently in power in France. For example, in "Letter N° 2" the author is critical of a French policy that would allow homosexual couples to adopt children. The author writes that by allowing same-sex couples to adopt children, the French government would limit the right of heterosexual couples to adopt children. His logic follows that there is a high discrepancy between the number of adoptable children and the number of couples waiting to adopt. Allowing homosexual couples to adopt would result in the Moroccan state not allowing French couples to adopt Moroccan children. Therefore, the number of couples without children in France would increase. In "Letter N° 2", the author also condemns the economic policy of French president Francois Hollande, noting the high taxes and high unemployment rate in France (Lettre

d'Information N° 2, n.d.). UMP Maroc is a political party that keeps the French abroad aware of (and enraged by) the current political situation in France.

Beyond informing the French nationals in Morocco of the actions of the French government, UMP Maroc advocates for the French abroad by seeking to create new French laws or having old laws reformed. They have a very specific list of actions that, according to them, need to be made by the French government. One issue that is particularly important to UMP Maroc is French schooling. In France, citizens send their children to French schools for free. This is not the case for the French in the rest of the world. In 2013, Frederic Elbar, the head of UMP Maroc, gave a speech in Casablanca in which he spoke passionately about education. He sends his children to a French school in Casablanca and has to pay 3,000 Euros per child per year. His message quickly became a partisan issue. He reminded his audience that Nicholas Sarkozy, the former president of France and member of the UMP, wanted to make French education free for all French citizens. However, when the Socialists came to power, one of the first actions they took was to reinstate tuition fees. Elbar protested that these tuition fees make his children second-class citizens and violate France's commitment to the equal rights of all men (Elbar, n.d.) Changing policy and laws in France is the priority of UMP Maroc.

UMP Maroc recognizes that its political affiliation makes it different from Français du Monde or the UFE and the organization promotes this difference to gain support. A journalist at *lepetitjournal.com*, an online newspaper for French the abroad, interviewed Elbar before the elections of *conseillers consulaires*. In the interview, Elbar remarks that political parties, and specifically the UMP, have the power and the followers both in France and worldwide to promote change. Individuals, according to Elbar, are

incapable of making any reforms for the French abroad. Political parties, on the other hand, have power within the government (Pincemail 2014). The UMP holds 194 seats in the national assembly and 143 seats in the senate (Election Resources, 2012). UMP Maroc claims that it can better advocate for the rights of French in Morocco because they are linked to 337 party members in the French government. Each member supports each other and the platform of the political party. Therefore, according to the UMP Maroc, the organization is more reliable and more powerful than the other French organizations in Morocco.

While UMP Maroc presents itself to be focused on promoting a conservative agenda, the reality is that the organization is also focused on defeating the other French organizations in Morocco. In my research, I found that the ideology of the organization is complicated by a struggle for power and influence. The organization's competitive nature can be seen in the relationship between UMP Maroc and the UFE. Both organizations are conservative and as mentioned previously, the members of the UFE who are grand electors vote for UMP senators. However, in Casablanca, both the UFE and UMP Maroc provided separate lists of candidates despite the fact that both organizations support the conservative party in France. This was not the case worldwide. In Vancouver, Canada there was only one list for the UMP/UFE (Resultas des Elections des Conseillers Consulaires, n.d.). According to my interview with Jean, the reason why the two organizations did not collaborate was due to conflicting personalities. The president of the UFE Casablanca and the head of UMP Maroc, according to Jean, do not get along. The leaders are competitive with each other. Though they may share a common ideology,

an unwillingness to collaborate keeps the UFE and UMP Maroc from uniting to represent the interests of the conservative French nationals in Morocco.

### **Elections of Conseillers Consulaires in Morocco**

In May 2014, the French community abroad had their first elections of *conseillers consulaires*. As mentioned earlier, there is relatively little power in being a *conseiller consulaire*. The people in this position work with their local communities and advise the consulate on issues of education, social security, security and employment. They act as electors but in the election of senators, each *conseiller consulaire* is but one out of 550 electors. Still, it is relevant to examine the election of these *conseillers consulaires* not only to see which French organizations are most active in Morocco but to also understand more about the political views of the French in Morocco.

Because of the large French population in Morocco, the country has a total of 21 *conseillers consulaires*. In the election of these officials, the country is divided into six districts, each of which has a consulate. These districts are Casablanca, Rabat, Fes, Marrakech, Agadir and Tangier. There are three *conseillers consulaires* for each consulate in Fes, Marrakech, Agadir and Tangier. There are four *conseillers consulaires* elected for the French consulate in Rabat. Finally, there are five *conseillers consulaires* elected for the French consulate in Casablanca (Résultats des élections consulaires, 2014).

Despite the efforts of the UFE, Français du Monde, and UMP Maroc to encourage the French in Morocco to participate in elections, the turnout at the elections of the *conseillers consulaires* was very low. In Rabat during the election of *conseillers*

*consulaires*, only 1741 nationals voted out of 6635, meaning 74% of registered voters did not vote. Similar numbers were calculated across the country. Only 19% of registered voters voted in Casablanca. In Marrakech, 24% of registered voters voted. In Agadir and Fes, 30% of registered voters voted. Finally, only 23% of registered voters voted in Tangier (Résultats des élections consulaires, 2014).

There are a number of reasons why the turnout was so low. At first I believed that there was a correlation between the importance of the position and the turnout. If *conseillers consulaires* are less powerful, people might not believe it is worth the time to vote. When I spoke with Jean, however, he told me he did not believe this was the case because the elections of *conseillers consulaires* occurred during the most recent European elections. Instead he believed low turnout occurred simply because voting for European elections in Morocco cannot be encouraged the same way it can be in France. There were no reminders of the elections in public space. Instead, French citizens received reminder emails and letters, both of which could have been easily ignored or forgotten. Campaigns for different organizations were also difficult to organize. Jean explained that in Morocco there is no funding for political campaigns and, as he remarked, the French here “are not at home.” One cannot hang election posters or walk around canvassing when only a minority of the population of a city is capable of voting in the election. No matter the reason for the low turnout, by analyzing the votes counted, one will not see a full view of the political interests of all the French nationals in Morocco. Still, the election results are an interesting starting point to learn more about the role Morocco plays in French politics.

In the recent election of *conseillers consulaires*, the election results do not clearly illustrate whether the French in Morocco are conservative or liberal. Français du Monde won two seats in Tangier, one seat in Fes, three seats in Rabat, one seat in Casablanca, and one seat in Marrakech in Agadir. They therefore won nine seats out of 21. The UFE won three seats in Casablanca, one seat in Marrakech and one seat in Agadir. UMP Maroc won one seat in Tangier, one seat in Fes, one seat in Casablanca, one seat in Marrakech and one seat in Agadir (Résultats Elections consulaires 2014 – Maroc, 2014). Even though, as emphasized earlier, the UMP and the UFE are different organizations that offered different lists of candidates, they both represent the interests of conservative voters in Morocco. Therefore the conservative voters in Morocco won nine seats, the same number that was won by the liberals represented by Français du Monde. While the liberals and the conservatives in the country are represented equally as a whole, the French nationals in the different districts in Morocco voted either very much for the conservatives or very much for the leftists. The different factions of French in Morocco affected the way each district in Morocco voted.

Some districts in Morocco are more liberal than others. The topic of different factions of French nationals was a subject that emerged in my conversation with Jean. In districts such as Rabat, there is a large amount of people with dual citizenship. According to him, these voters will often vote for Français du Monde and the Socialist Party. There is indeed a whole section of Français du Monde Maroc's website that is devoted to binationals. This section includes a paper that decries the conservative parliamentarians in France who threatened the right of French citizens to have multiple nationalities. This paper was written in 2010 by the senators Richard Yung, Monique Cerisier-ben

Guiga and Claudine Lepage, each of who is a Socialist elected in part by the officials of Français du Monde. For the French nationals who wish to also have Moroccan nationality, Français du Monde is a more appealing organization. Rabat is also home to French nationals who work as diplomats who, according to Jean, likewise have a tendency to vote liberally. UMP Maroc did not even decide to have candidates run for the position of *conseillers consulaires* in Rabat. The majority of French Nationals in Morocco's capital city voted for the left.

The districts south of Rabat are home to more conservative French voters. In Casablanca, there are many French business owners who vote for either the UMP or the UFE. Four out of the five *conseillers consulaires* elected there came from those two organizations (Résultats des élections consulaires, 2014) Besides attracting business owners, Morocco is the number one destination outside of Europe for French retirees to live (Treguler, 2012). Most of those retirees live in either the district of Marrakech or Agadir and, according to Jean, also vote more conservatively. In both districts, two out of the three *conseillers consulaires* elected came from the UMP or the UFE. As the migration of business people and retirees continues from France, it will be interesting to see if the election results from Morocco change and the more conservative voices begin to outweigh the voice of the binational community and other liberal minded French nationals.

### **Representatives of the French and the Moroccan Government**

Although I was curious to learn how the French abroad are represented in their country across the Mediterranean, I was also curious about how the French elected

officials interact, if at all, within the Moroccan government. In my interview with Marion Berthoud, I asked whether she as a *conseiller consulaire* ever interacted with the Moroccan government. Her answer was a firm “no.” Members of Français du Monde are allowed to participate in Moroccan politics on their own time, which is especially important for binationals, but it was against regulations for her to use her position to interact with the Moroccan government. Considering all of the other similarities between the organizations I researched, I would assume the same could be said about the elected officials from the UMP and the UFE.

While there is no formal relationship that exists between the *conseillers consulaires* and the Moroccan government, Marion Berthoud did emphasize that the relationship between the two countries was extremely important to her. Though she could have no formal relationship with any Moroccan politicians, when she acted as a representative for the French in Morocco one of her main concerns was maintaining an amiable relationship between France and Morocco.

Other representatives of the French in Morocco share this desire for amity between Morocco and France. Pouria Amirshahi, the delegate of the 9th circonscription who represents Morocco as well as the rest of North and West Africa, similarly believes that maintaining a strong relationship between the French government and the Moroccan government should be a priority. In an interview with *lepetitjournal.com*, Amirshahi stated that within his district, Morocco is the most important country because of the number of French nationals who live there. He remarked “from a geopolitical point of view, it (Morocco) is of extraordinary importance for France, due to its geographical proximity, shared history, and the millions of family relations”(Pouria Amirshahi, 2014).

He emphasized in this interview that the future relationship of France and Morocco should be one where friendship can exceed the history of trauma and conflict between the two countries. In the rest of the interview he went beyond politics and discussed how the French can maintain a prosperous relationship with Morocco through civil society. He advocated for French investment in organizations such as L'Institut Français, the French language and cultural center. He did not boast of any relationship he had with Moroccan politicians but rather emphasized that the French presence in Morocco should encourage a favorable relationship between the two countries.

It was very interesting to find that there is no direct relationship between elected officials in the Moroccan government and the elected officials of the French nationals in Morocco. Instead the French elected officials work within the French government to make sure that government policies in France create a strong and healthy relationship between the two countries. At the very least, they work to verify that French policies do not negatively affect how the French are perceived in Morocco.

## **Conclusion**

Over the course of my research I was able to determine that the UFE and Français du Monde share a similar agenda. Though their *conseillers consulaires* select senators from opposite political parties, both organizations share a commitment to helping French nationals live in Morocco with the same rights to education, health care, retirement pensions and security as they would have in France. UMP Maroc has a different focus due to its explicit link with the UMP party in France. In its literature, the organization prioritizes the importance of UMP control of the French government.

While Français du Monde and the UFE share a similar goal, from my experience with each organization, they had a distinctive attitude in how they interacted with the French nationals in Morocco. From the literature they gave me it seemed that the UFE focuses a great deal on helping expatriates from France move to Morocco. During the elections of *conseillers consulaires*, they received most of their votes from the districts with the highest concentration of French expatriates including Casablanca, Agadir and Marrakech. Français du Monde, comparatively, emphasizes the importance that binationals, as well as expatriates, receive their rights as French nationals. They received the most support from Rabat, a city with a high percentage of binationals and diplomats.

Future research should be done on these three organizations. Interviews with members of UMP Maroc as well as interviews with members of the UFE would clarify the goals of these organizations and shed more light on how they work with the French government to meet these goals. It would also be beneficial to speak with members of the UFE and the UMP about their relationship and their reasons for not presenting one list of candidates for the election of *conseillers consulaires*. More research could also be conducted on the elections of *conseillers consulaires*, specifically on why so few French nationals voted.

The results of my research illustrated that the French elected officials that represent Morocco do not have close relationships with the politicians in Morocco. However, they are committed to maintaining a prosperous relationship between the two countries. As migration between the two countries continues, the relationship between them will remain important to research and understand.

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