



# Moroccans in France: their organizations and activities back home

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## **Moroccan in France: their organizations and activities back home**

### **Introduction**

The Moroccan is one of the largest migration groups in France, whose presence in France dates back from the early 20th century (De Haas 2005). In contrast with other North African states, Morocco has made emigration a key tool of its development policy. Against this backdrop, Moroccan authorities have maintained a continuous and often confrontational dialogue with Moroccan organizations abroad (Iskander 2010). Since the sixties, they played a key role in representing the overseas diaspora. But far from being a mere transmission belt of state policies, the Moroccan organizational field has generated a large array of political, cultural and social connections. While public authorities have, for long, regarded Moroccan organizations as agents of development, they became genuine political actors in both the place of settlement and in the society of origin.

This paper analyses the composition and evolution of Moroccan organizations in France. The Moroccan organizational field traversed half a century of history, affected by policy shifts, changing migration patterns and the slow work of integration processes. It will be shown that development practices are, more than ever, at the core of voluntary work. But this “developmentalist turn” paralleled a political reconfiguration of the voluntary sector. Drawing on a systematic analysis of Moroccan organizations in France, our intent is to elicit the

relations that may exist between seemingly apolitical philanthropic endeavors and political trends.

This paper is based on a quantitative and qualitative study. In France, the creation and functioning of associations is regulated by the so-called “law 1901”. The right to create an association has been opened to non-nationals in 1981. The administrative creation procedure entails that status and list of trustees are to be registered to the administration and are subsequently published in the *Journal Officiel*. This document is accessible online for all the associations created since 1996<sup>1</sup>. The inventory of Moroccan organizations in France has been marshaled by combing the online *Journal Officiel*. For each association, information on the type of activities, contact details and a short description of the objectives are given. The data have been updated through Internet search. The database compiled includes 1605 organizations and provides data about the type organization the year of creation, the place and nature of activities. In addition an online/telephone survey of 28 organizations provides additional information about the activities of the organizations, their partnerships in France and abroad and the socio-economic profiles of members. Finally, the collection of quantitative information has been complemented by face-to-face interviews with leaders of the main organizations.

The paper presents the Moroccan organizations in France, their evolution since the independence of Morocco, their activities and cross border commitments. In the second section of this paper, the light is shed on the development practices of migrant organizations. The surge of development practices occurred in the context of the Democratization of the Moroccan regime. It was conducive to a growing claim for a political voice of the Diaspora in the Moroccan political system. This process is analyzed in the third part of this chapter.

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1 <http://www.journal-officiel.gouv.fr/association>

## **1. Types and activities of Moroccan organizations in France**

### *1.1. The political and socio-cultural associations of Moroccans in France*

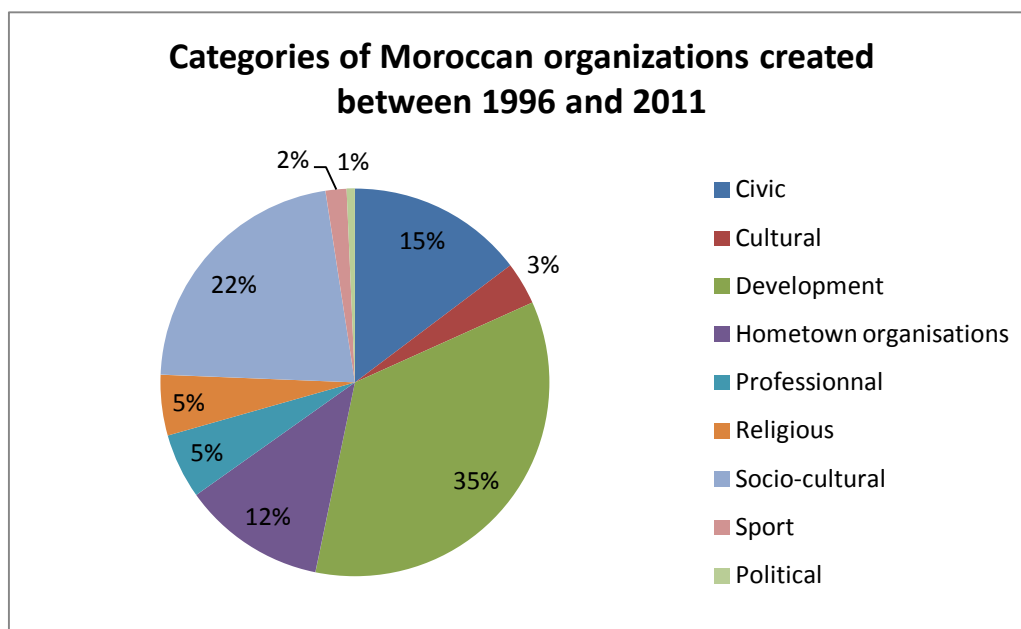
The origins of the Moroccan organizational field are to be found in the context of the independence of the country. In the sixties and seventies, the repression of the leftist opposition in Morocco led to the exile of a large number of political activists, mostly in France, but also in Spain, Belgium, Germany or the Netherlands. In 1962, various political strands coalesced into the *Association des Marocains en France*. The primary purpose of this organization was to support the left-wing political parties in Morocco. But the heavy repression during what is now called “the years of lead” forsake any effective support (Rollinde 2002). At the same time, the problems faced by labor immigrants in the arrival setting provided a new field of involvement to leftist activists. In 1982, a factional conflict led to a split and the subsequent creation of the *Association des Travailleurs Marocains de France* (ATMF). Throughout the eighties, the ATMF was at the forefront of industrial actions involving North African workers (Daoud 2002). Its involvement at the local level led the association to widen its target groups and membership basis to the other North African groups. In 2001, it acknowledged this shift by replacing the term “Marocain” (Moroccan) by “Maghrebin” (North African) in its name (“Association des Travailleurs Maghrébins de France”).

In order to combat the growing influence of leftist activists among immigrants in France and Europe, the Moroccan authorities put in place a network of associations under the aegis of the consulate. The first so-called « Amicales des Travailleurs et Commerçants Marocains » were created in 1973 in the Parisian area. The competition between pro and contra of the Moroccan regime degenerated into a spiral of violence. Activists identified by consular authorities were arrested on their return to Morocco.

The AMF, ATMF, the Amicales and their respective network of branches in France have been the main service providers to the community. The database includes 49 Amicales, 16 Associations des Travailleurs Marocains de France, and 3 Associations des Marocains en France. These associations have animated the socio-cultural life through the organizations of festivals, Independence Day Celebrations, parties and religious gatherings. They also provided support with regard to the issues immigrant could face in their daily life, either on their place of work, with their relations with administration, landlords, etc. The Amicales acted as mediators between immigrants and the consulates, facilitated administrative procedures such as passport renewal...

In those times, community life was heavily influenced by the origin country (Catani & Palidda 1987: 29). This climate of surveillance restricted the development of an autonomous organizational field. Very few other associations were created during the eighties. Hometown groups, produced by the chain migration of the 1960s, existed under the form of informal networks, sometimes mobilized around collective endeavors such as the digging of a well, or the building of mosque since the sixties (Lacroix 2005). A social movement emerged around the claims of the children of immigrants born in France for a new social contract, the so-called “mouvement beur”. But this remained disconnected from the activism of their parents, with little or no interest for the origin country. The memory of political rivalries still marks, until today, the Moroccan organizational field. It partly explains the limited number of officially declared political organizations which have been created in the nineties. Only 13 of the listed organizations are labeled as “political”. Among the latter, a third support (or oppose) the Moroccan policy in Western Sahara, a third deal with the democratization process in Morocco, and the rest are branches of political parties (Istiqlal, Parti Socialiste Unifié). The overtly declared “political organizations” are therefore those who focus on homeland issues. Another factor explaining the low number of such organizations is the French republican

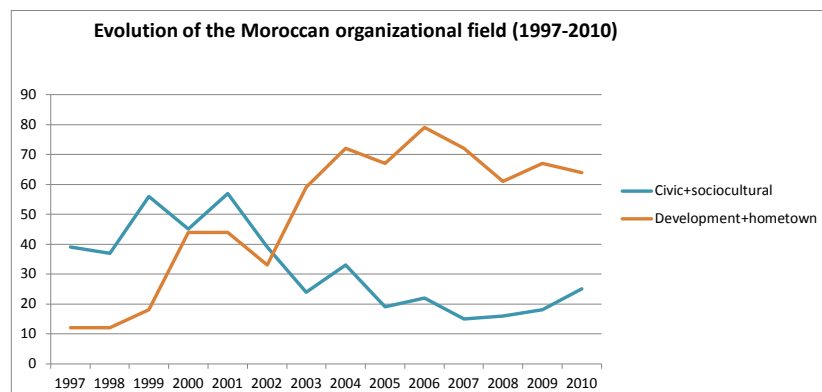
model that condemns the expression of community interests in the public sphere. Associations taking in charge the political interests of the diaspora present themselves as “civic” or even “socio-cultural” organizations.



Since the mid-nineties, 236 civic and 352 socio-cultural associations were created, second only to development organizations in number of creation. Their primary target is the local population. Socio-cultural organizations provide a space for the community life. They consolidate solidarity networks and foster local integration. For example, “Karavan” (Toulouse), seeks to promote cultural and artistic activities of youngsters with the aim to favor their professional integration. Other socio-cultural associations organize inter-cultural events to encourage interactions between Moroccan and non Moroccan populations. Civic organizations are meant to defend the rights of the Moroccan population. Their activities range from the organization of socio-cultural exhibitions to the provision of welfare services to their members and they sometimes border to political engagement. The Association de la Tribue Sahraouie is an organization which aims to defend the interests of the Sahraouian

community in France. But the charity also organizes cultural exhibition on the Sahraouian culture and conferences on the so-called “Moroccan Sahara”. Other civic associations do not represent the vested interests of a specific group, but seek to promote the political, cultural or professional integration of the Moroccan population at large. They accompany and provide guidance to people with regard to their administrative procedures, organization after-school classes and Arabic language courses, provide support in case of economic hardship, orient people who wish to invest in France or Morocco... In fact, civic organizations do not form a homogeneous category, but fill a void between socio-cultural (and a-political) associations devoted to local groups of people and political organizations that deal with homeland issues.

### *1.2. Development and hometown organizations*



The recent evolution of the Moroccan organizational field in France is marked by the sheer increase of development and hometown organizations (HTOs). One association registered since 1996 out of three is a development organization; one out of two if one takes hometown organizations into account. Both types are committed to homeland development. Hometown groups registered associations in order to carry out infrastructure and other development

projects for the benefit of their place of origin. HTOs are to be found in a wide array of immigrant groups in the world (Moya 2005). They have been extensively studied in the context of the Mexican immigration to the USA (Smith 2006; Zabin & Radaban 1998), or the Malian immigration to France (Daum 1998; Gonin 1997; Quiminal 1991). They were initially created to ease the coming and settlement of village fellows in the host setting. HTOs lost their “raison d’être” with the drying out of chain migration and the integration of their members. But, in the nineties and two-thousands, they found in development actions a new form of involvement (Lacroix 2010). One can distinguish three broad categories of projects: infrastructure projects first (building of roads, water systems, health centers, electrification, schools...); social and cultural project then (alphabetization courses, nurseries, cultural festivals...); and, finally, economic projects (creation of economic cooperatives, tapestry, agriculture projects...). The latter category, demanding high level technical skills and infringing upon private interests of individuals, are very rare among HTOs. As will be shown in the second part of this chapter, this “developmentalist turn” has been supported by a growing number of migration and development schemes implemented by French and Moroccan authorities. The majority of hometown groups come from Berber areas where traditional community structures and a sense of cultural distinctiveness remain more vivid than in other parts of Morocco. The database includes 191 organizations, a figure slightly inferior to the previous personal estimate of 250 organizations based on the number of projects carried out by federative organizations (Lacroix 2009). This discrepancy is consistent with the fact that a large proportion of hometown groups have not registered their association.

“Attacharouk” illustrates the work of hometown organizations in the domain of development. The HTO has been formally registered in 1998. Their role was initially to coordinate the participation of expatriate villagers in the funding of a water system for houses. The project



itself was an initiative of the UNESCO. In the years that followed, they electrified the village in the framework of a cofounding program of the Moroccan Office National d'Electricité. In 2003, they built up a public library with the financial support of the French Foreign Ministry (Programme Coopération Maroc) and the technical support of another migrant organization, Immigration Développement Démocratie.

In contrast with hometown organizations, the other migrant NGOs do not necessarily work in the place of origin of their members. The scope of their engagement is either regional or national. The projects cover a wide range of domains: humanitarian interventions, health and childhood/education are, by far, the main sectors targeted by the associations, then come infrastructure projects, economic cooperation, preservation of the Moroccan culture and architecture, etc. >Migrant NGOs can also be distinguished in accordance with their method of work. Some carry out development projects out of any organizational framework; some seek to foster social cooperation through a twining between French and Moroccan cities (Anjou-Atlas in Angers, Val-agglo-initiatives in Valenciennes, les amis de Taza in Athis-Mons); some support (or are overseas branches of) Moroccan associations, hospitals or orphanages (Toit au Maroc in Tours, Association pour le développement de la Fondation Norsys in Lille); some create platforms of exchanges between actors in France and Morocco (Solidarité Culture et Développement Nord-Sud in Clichy).

The majority of them work in the main emigration areas of the country: the Anti and High Atlas (Ouarzazate, Essaouira, Tiznit, Agadir...), which are the traditional areas of departure to France, and then Fes and the Middle-Atlas (Tadla-Azilal, Beni Mellal), the North (Rif) and the Sahara region.

Transnational development can be regarded as the dynamic which has supported the renewal of the Moroccan organizational field in the nineties. If one cumulates all the organizations that declare partaking in development activities, one finds 835 associations, representing 52% of the total number of associations created since the mid-nineties<sup>2</sup>. HTOs and migrant NGOs are at the forefront of this dynamic. But this also concerns a large number of associations that primarily target the local community, but that dedicate a part of their resources to occasional humanitarian or development initiatives. This is the case of Asshab (Tours), created in 2008 with a view to facilitate the insertion of youngsters in the local political and economic life. Asshab recently participated in a university twinning operation between the University of Tours and the one of Rabat. They also partook in the creation of a project of commercialization of aromatic herbs cultivated in Morocco. These associations seek to combine their local and transnational objectives: their activities in Morocco support the local integration of North African youngsters in Tours.

## **2. Profile of leaders and the role of integration in volunteer activities**

### *2.1. Two portraits of community leaders*

Two portraits of community leaders introduce this section on the Moroccan organizations in France. Kamel and Mohamed both epitomize two archetypical profiles of activists navigating in the different spheres of the organizational field, between the local and the transnational, between development and politics, between hometown networks and cosmopolite federations.

Kamel participates in associations' activities since his adolescence. The film-club of his hometown, managed by a leftist association, is a rally point for him and his friends. In the

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<sup>2</sup> This figure includes organizations which declare having partaken in activities in the domain of development, humanitarian aid, childhood and education, health and economic cooperation.

eighties, it was a central place of the local cultural and political life. In 1984, after his baccalaureate, he decides to enroll in a French university. He is received by the University of Rouen. There, he became an active member of the local branch of the UNEM (Union Nationale des Etudiants Marocains<sup>3</sup>). After two years, he left Rouen to go to Paris where he lived upon small jobs and a stipend sent by his father. In parallel, he received training in computer engineering and got married in 1990.

It is not until 1994 that he got back to voluntary work. He joined the hometown organization of his place of origin. They organize once a year a party to collect funding for the benefit of deprived children. Among other things, they shipped computers to a school and furnished a dialysis centre. They collaborated with the UNDP (United Nations Development Program) and the municipality of St Denis to set up a sanitation system. In 2003, the hometown organization joined a federation of migrant NGOs, Immigration, Développement, Démocratie (IDD).

In 2004, Kamel decides to put aside in participation in hometown development activities and joins a political organization, the Conseil National des Marocains de France (CNMF). The organization was created to claim for a Parliamentary representation of overseas Moroccans in Rabat. In parallel, he is still an active member of the leftist circles of St Denis. For example, he volunteered to take care of the Internet website of the World Social Forum which took place in St Denis in 2003.

Finally, in 2010; he founded his own association “Transferts et Compétences”, which aims to ease the circulation of skilled workers between France and Morocco. The association functions as a platform of contacts between French and Moroccan businesses on the one hand and Moroccan skilled workers on the other.

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<sup>3</sup> The UNEM is the main Moroccan student union. It had, until the nineties, chapters in all the main French universities.

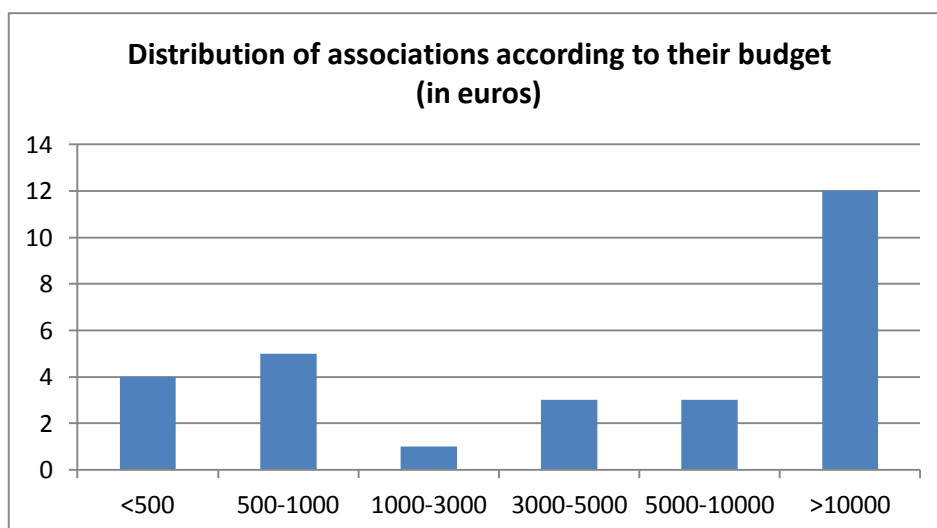
Mohamed was born in 1945 in Tamanart, province of Tata. He left his hometown at the age of 14 to work in Fqih Ben Salah, in the grocery of a relative. In 1965, he migrated to Gennevilliers, a notorious “Moroccan” suburb in the West of Paris. Like his relatives living in Paris, he became a worker in the car industry. He discovered political and unionist engagement during the demonstrations of May 68. He enrolled in the CGT (Confédération Générale du Travail) and joined the AMF (Association des Marocains en France). During these years of radical activism, he received a nickname of partisan, Larbi Toss. As a union delegate, he bore witness of industrial actions of the seventies and eighties: Chausson in 1975, Citroën in 1984, the Collieries of North Pas de Calais... In 1982, the AMF split and Mohamed joined the newly created organization: the Association des Travailleurs Marocains de France. The same year, his wife arrived in France. They had two children together. During these years, he lived two parallel lives: his political engagement with the ATMF and the union, his “hometown” engagement with his family and relatives. Like the other village fellows, he had a new house built, and contributed with the hometown organization of Tamanart to the building of a new collective well, to the refurbishment of the mosque or of the madrassa. It is in the late 1990s that these parallel lives converged with the creation of Immigration, Développement Démocratie. IDD is a platform of different migrant organizations committed to the development of the home country. Attacharouk, the hometown organization of Tamanart, is a founding member of this platform. Most of its members are related to leftist organizations such as the ATMF and the AMF. In 1998, Mohamed was made redundant. He now dedicates his entirety of his time to his various voluntary activities.

One can read between the lines of these two portraits the structuring of the Moroccan organizational field with, on the one hand; the associations who take in charge the problems and social life of the immigrant population in their place of settlement, and those that support

long distance initiatives with the origin country; mostly in the field of development. Civic and socio-cultural associations constitute the former group, development and hometown organizations the latter. Both groups are tightly connected. Community leaders navigate within this universe by being member of different associations and/or alternating different involvement during their life course. It is therefore important, after having presented these two overarching categories, to pay attention to the profile of leaders.

## 2.2. A stratified organizational field

The survey of associations reveals the strong polarization of the organizational field with, on the one hand, organizations with a low annual budget (less than 1000 euro per year), mostly relying on the voluntary work of their members, and, on the other hand, organizations with a very high annual budget (over 10 000 Euros).



The bottom end of the Moroccan volunteer sector is a heterogeneous ensemble from small local groups of people to national organizations. Most hometown organizations are to be found in this category. They rely on internal resources to carry out local projects. But “low budget” does not necessarily mean “small and local”. For example, the Association d’Ici et d’Ailleurs (founded in 2008 and based in Thiais) counts 600 members and beneficiaries living

in different parts of France. Its aim is to assist Moroccans who have invested in a housing project in Morocco. Even if they monitor large financial flows, the association itself only maintains a website and organizes few information meetings per year for its members.

At the opposite end of the organizational spectrum, stand organizations that enjoy substantial financial resources. This relatively high number of successful associations is linked to the existence of franco-moroccan community elite. In all surveyed Moroccan associations, the majority of board members have university degree. The first socio-professional category represented is the one of engineers and professionals, followed by employees and, third, by entrepreneurs and traders. Low-skilled and manual jobs arrive at the last place of represented job categories. Another hint for the level of integration of community leaders is the level of French and length of stay. Furthermore, all the board members are said to have a “perfect” or “very good” command of French and the majority of them is in France for more than ten years. The exception to this latter rule is that of the members of student organizations such as the Association Marocaine des Etudiants de Lille.

The other finding of this survey is the embedding of the Moroccan volunteer sector into the French society. This is shown by the composition of the board of trustees. We could gather information on the governing body of associations for 70 of them, either through online and telephone questionnaires, or through Internet search. A large proportion (53/70) of surveyed organizations present a mixed board with people of Moroccan and French (or other) origins. This is particularly true for migrant NGOs. For example, the Association “Qui m’aime me suive” (founded in 2005 in Octeville) is headed by two women, one born in Morocco, the other married to a Moroccan man and a Frenchman. Members and supporters are of Moroccan and French origins and they live in the same area. The founding members decided to create the association on their return from family holidays in Essaouira. A shared interest<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> very often spurred by touristic trips, as far French are concerned

in Morocco and interpersonal relations in France account for the presence of people of French origin in Moroccan associations. Mixed membership widens the basis of the supporters and provides complementary skills and resources. French people are usually in charge with relations with the local authorities and other partners in France and Europe while immigrants take on the relations with their Moroccan partners. This is the case for “Qui m’aime me suive”, which works with El Ofok, an association of Moroccan teachers in Essaouira.

The other evidence hinting for the embedding of the Moroccan volunteer sector into the French society is the variety of funding sources of associations. Of course, internal resources such as member fees, money received from the organization of parties and celebrations, and the selling of products and services are the primary resource of associations, but over one third of surveyed organizations receive subsidies from public local and national authorities, private businesses or civil society organizations.

Integration is therefore a key factor accounting for the structuring of the Moroccan organizational field. The mushrooming of Moroccan organizations in France during the nineties and thousands is linked to the emergence of a middle and upper middle class of North African origin: the so-called “*bourgeoisie*” (Leveau & Wihtol de Wenden 2001). This new community elite relies on a high level human and social capital. They enhance their capacities by navigating through different social and cultural universes and pursue activities in the national and transnational public sphere. This educated elite contrasts with historical leaders of the Moroccan organizational field. The latter are former unionists, members of *Amicales* and political activists that have been active in the voluntary sector for twenty to thirty years. One cannot talk of competition between these two categories of leaders (examples of collaborations are numerous). But this new elite participates in the transformation of the France-based Moroccan voluntary sector, a sector more open to both the host and origin

societies, more cosmopolite more motivated by philanthropic concerns than by political stakes.

### **3. From development activities to political voice: explaining the transnationalization of the Moroccan organizational field**

The recent transformation of Moroccan organizations in France is linked to the evolution of the overseas Moroccan population and its integration into the host society. But this dynamic does not suffice to explain its developmentalist and transnational turn. This trend was supported by a set of new policies that were enforced in the nineties and two-thousands: the so-called codevelopment policies in France and Europe, and the World Bank-inspired development strategies in Morocco.

#### *3.1. Moroccan associations and the French and Moroccan “codevelopment” policies*

Emigration and remittances have been two key elements of the Moroccan toolkit for development. After its independence, in the early sixties, the government signed a series of workforce agreement with the main destination states: France, Belgium, Germany, and the Netherlands. The aim was to alleviate the pressure of unemployment in the most deprived areas. The government therefore favored the recruitment of labor migrants in Northern Morocco, a region affected by social upheavals since the independence. In the seventies, the state created the Banque Populaire and established branches in the main places of settlement with a view to channel remittances into state-controlled pipelines. In 2010, the country received US\$ 6.4 billion, representing 6.6% of the GDP<sup>5</sup>. This strategy was backed upon a

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<sup>5</sup> World Bank remittances factbook 2011



discourse condemning integration into the host country: Moroccans abroad were primarily seen as guest workers whose link to the state (and subjection to the king) was regarded as unalienable. As seen above, the networks of Amicales was the framework through which the Moroccan authorities sought to exert social and political control over the diaspora. As a consequence, the authorities remained blind to gradual transformation of the emigrant population. The financial crisis and the ensuing drop in the sending of remittances (-20% in 1988) revealed the dependence of the Moroccan economy to migrant remittances and the misunderstanding of past policies. In the span of three years, the government created a Ministry of Moroccans abroad meant to design a new diasporic policy; the foundation Mohamed V to give a new thrust of the relationships between the authorities and the emigrants; and the Bank Al Amal to support economic investments of expatriates. These policies had little impacts on the short run. One of first adopted measures was a change in the official terminology to designate the Moroccan population abroad. The expression “Travailleurs Marocains de l’Etranger” (TME, Moroccan workers abroad) was replaced by “Résidents marocains de l’Etranger” (RME, Moroccans residing abroad). In parallel, the state adopted World Bank driven adjustment policies that deeply transformed the governance of the Moroccan state. One of the key objectives of this new approach was to alleviate the state control over the civil society. The procedures for the creation of non-profit organizations were eased. It spurred an unseen dynamic, particularly in rural areas where associations filled a void left by both the disappearance of traditional collective organizations, and the withdrawal of state from local affairs. In 1996, the government undertook a new co-funding scheme meant to support the village associations willing to electrify their village. The Programme d’Electrification Rurale Généralisée (PERG) provided a framework of cooperation between the state, the Office National d’Electricité and the village organizations. The state takes in charge 55% of the expenses, the rest being shared by the municipality and the villagers.

Migrations et Développement, the largest migrant NGO in France, partook in the preliminary consultations preceding the implementation of the scheme (Iskander, 2010). The idea was to encourage the collaboration and financial contribution of migrants and HTOs. The PERG proved to be successful in Southern Morocco, where hometown organizations are particularly active. Between 1996 and 2002, 7050 villages were electrified. Four of the five provinces that benefited most from the program are located in Southern Morocco, the historical emigration area (Taroudannt, Tiznit, Ouarzazate and Zagora) (Lacroix, 2005: 162). Two similar schemes were implemented in the mid nineties: one for the building of roads (Programme National Concerté des Routes Rurales, PNCRR) and the other for connecting rural houses to tap water system (Programme d'Acces Généralisé à l'Eau potable, PAGER). The three Moroccan schemes are the only examples of programs relying on migrant philanthropy. They favored the participation of hometown organizations in translocal projects.

The codevelopment policies implemented in France turned out to have a wider outreach. These policies are the result of a governmental reflection on return policies<sup>6</sup>. A series of consultations and a couple of experimental schemes<sup>7</sup> were undertaken before the mid-nineties by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Labor. It is only in 1997 that this policy was formalized and named « codevelopment ». Its central aim is to support the development impact of migration in departure areas, and this, with a view to lower the « migration pressure » (Nair 1997). It includes the support of any form of cooperation with origin areas and in partnership with migrants. The codevelopment policy is therefore not a unique governmental program, but rather a generic term qualifying a myriad of state and local schemes. Under this category falls the technical and financial aid provided to returnees,

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<sup>6</sup>The first return allowance scheme was create in 1977. It used to offer to any migrant willing to return to its origin country an allowance of 10 000 francs. The program was stopped in 1981 and replaced, in 1984, by a return project allowance, which, on the top of a financial aid, provides a technical assistance and training to applicants willing to create a business on their return. Both schemes never reach the expectations of the public authorities as the number of applicants remained low and the rate of failure high.

<sup>7</sup> Among them, the Programme Développement Local Migration started in 1993. It does not target emigrants but returnees who have already resettled for at least a year and who want to use their skills acquired in France to set up an income generating project.

« brain gain » programs, twining of cities and universities, development programs of NGOs and hometown associations, etc. Likewise, the different programs differ in their aims. Some national schemes (especially those implemented by the short-lived Ministry of National Identity, Immigration and International Solidarity, now disbanded and absorbed by the Home Office) are overtly linked to migration control objectives. This is the case of return allowances assorted with technical supports, and of development aid used as a reward by the French government to encourage sending states to sign readmission agreements and deportation programs. A second category of codevelopment schemes are those that rely on migrants to enhance a development dynamic in the origin country. An example is the Programme Concerté Maroc, a program funded by the Foreign Office and managed by the CCFD (Comité Contre la Faim dans le Monde et pour le Développement), one of the largest French NGOs. The scheme supports development projects that include at least one organization of the French and Moroccan civil societies. Two of the large migrant organizations (Migrations et Développement and Immigration, Démocratie, Développement) were part of the program. Finally, a third category of codevelopment policies (mostly enforced by local authorities) gathers the programs meant to support local integration dynamic. In that regard, a common form of public institutions/migrant organizations partnership is the twining of cities. Twenty associations recorded in the database declare working toward the establishment of or in the framework of city twining agreements. An example is provided by the cooperation between the Conseil Général of Seine St Denis and the region of Figuié. The hometown federation of Figuié emigrants actively partook in the exchanges between the two authorities. Among other things, they were associated through a sanitation project. The purpose of the Conseil Général is to favor the contacts between the migrant population, the administration and the local civil society. This aim is explicit in the development program of the Municipality of Paris, the so-called “label codevelopment”. This type of scheme illustrates what the codevelopment policy

could become in the coming years.

One of the most enduring outcomes of the codevelopment policy is the creation of a platform of migrant NGOs, the FORIM (Forum des Organizations de Solidarité Internationales issues de la Migration). The representatives of migrant organizations were initially absent from the government level discussions about the codevelopment policy. The relations between migrant organizations and public authorities, either to voice their concern or to access to funding, were mediated by French NGOs. In the mid-nineties, according to Christophe Daum, only 20% of migrant organizations enjoyed a direct access to public funding (Daum, 1998: 33). It is to respond to this situation that the FORIM<sup>8</sup> was created in 2002. This federative institution aims to gather the organizational field of migrant associations, to encourage their professionalization and to insert them into the wider field of development NGOs in France. The FORIM was created along with a funding scheme of the Foreign Office, the PRA OSIM (Programme d'Appui aux Organizations de Solidarité Internationale issues de la Migration), meant to support the development initiatives of migrants. The platform has celebrated its tenth anniversary. It includes over 700 members, including 28 Moroccan organizations.

Another outcome of the codevelopment policies is the emergence of federative migrant NGOs which mediate the relationships between large funding bodies (national and European institutions) on the one hand and small project holders such as hometown organizations on the other. The two main organizations falling into this category have already been alluded to in this chapter: “Immigration, Développement, Démocracy” and “Migrations et Développement” (MD). Both were created by former unionist and political activists. MD was founded in 1986 and is established in Marseille. It is the oldest and largest Moroccan immigrant NGO. It supported over 200 hundred projects, mostly in Southern Morocco, the area of origin of its leader. It is does not maintain any development agenda of its own but support hometown

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<sup>8</sup> [www.forim.net](http://www.forim.net)

groups bearing a project for its place of origin (Daoud 1997; Mernissi 1998). As shown above, MD played a key role in the implementation of the PERG. IDD was created in 1998 by former members of the ATMF. It is a platform gathering 14 smaller associations with a strong leftist leaning. Its first sizeable action was to support the building of public libraries in rural areas thanks to a funding of the Foreign Office (Programme Concerté Maroc). Both associations partake in government level discussions and international platforms. For example, they are part of Eunomad, which gathers 70 migrant and non migrant NGOs from 8 European countries. They also partake in the World Social Forum which parallels the conferences of the Global Forum on Migration and Development.

The surge of interest in migration and development issues and the creation of new funding schemes in France and Morocco are concurrent with the increasing number of creation of migrant associations committed to transnational development. Hometown organizations indirectly benefit from new funding opportunities either through migrant NGOs such as IDD or Migrations et Développement or through the village associations channeling the monies of co-funding schemes. Beside HTOs, there is a wealth of local and national organizations dealing with development issues. They benefit from the array of local, regional or national funding sources. Some have successfully managed to cumulate various financial resources from membership fees, to public and private funding in France, Morocco, and even at the European level. In this context, the domain of transnational development attracted a new generation community leaders in search of public legitimacy. The transnationalization of the Moroccan organizational field stands at the crossroads between a surge of interest in migration and development issues and the integration trajectory of overseas Moroccans.

## *2.2. In search of a political voice*

The transformation of the organizational field in France paralleled an opening of the Monarchic regime in Morocco. The political context became more favorable for migrants to express their political interests at home. In this last section, we will see how these political trends set the stage for some transnational attempts to represent voiceless Moroccan migrants inside the Moroccan political system. After a short presentation of the main initiatives in that domain, this section examines their impact on political actors in Morocco and on the Moroccan organizational field in France.

In the early days of overseas activism, migrant organizations pursued the long-distance nationalism inherited from anti-colonial struggles of the pre-independence period. Beyond political rivalries, militants of the AMF, Amicales and French-based branches of the UNEM shared the same sense of belonging to the Moroccan nation. This common ground became apparent in times of nationalist movements like the Morocco-Algeria war in 1963 and the Green Walk to the Western Sahara in 1975<sup>9</sup>. In this context, Moroccans abroad were primarily seen as guest workers whose allegiance to the state (and subjection to the king) was regarded as exclusive to any other sense of belonging.

But this nationalist leaning began to erode in the late seventies and early eighties with the growing complexity of the identity models of overseas Moroccans. New migrants organizations gradually emerged, based not only on national or political belongings, but also on age, religious, social, geographical or professional grounds. In the nineties, this evolution gained momentum, spurred by new political opportunities structures and the socio-economical diversification of Moroccan immigrant population. In response to the pressing appeal made by Moroccan authorities to overseas economic and development actors, organizations pointed out a growing concern with regard to administrative obstacles and

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<sup>9</sup> The Green Walk is the name given to the demonstration of 350 000 Moroccan volunteers organised by Hassan II who entered the Western Sahara and laid claim for this territory after the departure of Spanish authorities.

political difficulties. Against this backdrop, a claim for a political voice of Moroccan abroad emerged. The absence of the right to vote and of parliamentary representation<sup>10</sup> was presented as a threat to the maintaining of a sense of belonging to the Moroccan nation. It was argued the incapacity to enjoy civic rights is contradiction with the unalienable nature of Moroccan nationality. The extra-territorial conception of nationhood goes without effective external citizenship.

The first campaign started just before the 2002 general elections at the Parliament and was relayed by Moroccan online Medias and newspapers. Overseas organizations conveyed during this campaign the legal, transport, economic and administrative difficulties faced by expatriates: the long queues under the sun in Algieras or Tangiers for the crossing of the Gibraltar Straits during summer holidays, the obstacles to financial investments are some of the cases in point. Claiming for civic rights was conceived as the reward for their role in the home country development at local, regional or national levels. Community leaders legitimate their claim by putting forward the amount of migrant remittances. For example, in his open letter to the King the 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2002, a leader of a small Southern France association writes « *To deprive us from the right to vote, it is to signify us that the citizens living in the country are more Moroccan than we are. I do not dare to say to my children that we want of their remittances, but neither of their votes, nor of their citizenship!* »<sup>11</sup> This newspaper article caused a great sensation in the public opinion. The association attempted to refer the matter to the Supreme Court. But the claim was rejected as the Court deemed it out of its jurisdiction. The emphasis put on remittances and the economic role of emigrants is part of a new strategy. Breaking with the radicalism of leftist organizations of the sixties and seventies, the aim of this campaign is not to overthrow the Moroccan government, but to lobby for want of political

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<sup>10</sup> A Parliamentary representation of Moroccans abroad existed between 1984 and 1988. This experience was stopped, officially for technical reasons (the difficulty to organize elections out of the Moroccan territory) (see Belguendouz 2004). Likewise, the Moroccans living abroad participated in the 1996 and 2011 constitutional referendum.

<sup>11</sup> Available on the Internet : <http://www.bladi.net/lettre-ouverte-a-monsieur-le-premier-ministre.html>

recognition. As Natasha Iskander put it: *“political resistance shifted from a strategy of opposition to one of engaging with the state in order to change its practices (...) from within”* (Iskander, 2010, p. 18). Bringing to the fore the role of developer is a mean to overcome ideological cleavages among migrant organizations. This discourse refers to a transnational conception of citizenship, whose exercise derives neither from residency nor from nationality but from dual belonging and dual citizenship.

The 2002 campaign started too late to have any impact on the Parliamentary elections. But the movement carried on at the European level with the 2006 elections as a target. A group of migrant organizations, mixing historical leftist associations, women organizations and a range of younger community leaders, established a new lobbying network to protest against this political exclusion. Associations such as Immigration, Développement, Démocratie spearheaded this coalition. The core strategy is to promote an approach linking democratization with local development dynamic. About thirty associations from Belgium, France, Italy, Netherlands and Spain gathered in Paris on 5 January 2006, to found the so-called Al Monadara network. Their goal was to open a national debate in Morocco about the ‘diaspora’. In their final statement, the members mention the establishment of a “transnational citizenship” along with the recognition of the role of expatriates in the economic and social development of Morocco. The King positively responded to this initiative and proposed to hold a second conference in Rabat. This was done in December 2006. Participants insisted on the necessity for the Moroccan state to associate migrant organizations with policy-making and asked the Moroccan media to promote a better image of the ‘diaspora’.

In 2002, a new endeavor was initiated by “Friends of Morocco”, a sociocultural association in Versailles. Its aim was to set up a representative body of the Moroccan population living in France, the Conseil National des Marocains en France (CNMF). This initiative echoed a



statement of the Moroccan government, which brought to the fore the absence of democratic representative body within the Diaspora. As a member of the CNMF said, *‘What we want is to spread the culture of elections inside people’s mind. We do not want to promote division. We want to say to Moroccans in France: you do exist. For that, there is no other means than elections.’* The statutes of the CNMF (art.15), adopted in 2004, put the emphasis on the pedagogic value of the voting process: “[...] *the elections for the Council must provide a specific time to reflect upon the meaning of civic engagement, of the right to vote and of the importance of such a right*”<sup>12</sup>. Over a hundred Moroccan associations took part in this project, although a large number left the network due to the ambiguous relations maintained with the Moroccan Embassy. This network included a wide array of activists from various political backgrounds and various generations. It is headed by a high level civil servant working at the FASILD<sup>13</sup>. Elections took place on 21 November 2004 in eighteen polling stations, mostly located in associations’ offices. Anyone who could prove his Moroccan nationality was entitled to vote for candidates running for the CNMF’s national committee. Only 2,500 Moroccans voted that day, electing seventy-five representatives at local level, mostly in the Parisian area, Normandy and Southern France. Despite this low turnout, a meeting was held in Paris on 18 December 2004 to appoint a national executive board.

The standpoint of the Moroccan authorities and civil society toward diasporic initiatives is fraught with ambiguity. Among civil society organizations, human rights associations that maintain large chapters in several European state, such as ASDHOM (Association de Défense des Droits de l’Homme au Maroc) and AMDH (Association Marocaine des Droits de l’Homme) are the only one supportive of this demand. Both associations mention it in their

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<sup>12</sup> « [...] *les élections au conseil doivent constituer un moment privilégié pour réfléchir, au-delà du cadre strict du conseil, sur le sens de l’engagement civique, du vote et de l’importance de ce droit.* »

<sup>13</sup> Fond d’Action Social pour l’Intégration et la Lutte contre les Discrimination. The FASILD is one of the main institutional bodies in charge of implementing the integration policy.

common report on the 2002 elections, linking it to the Democratization process. In contrast, Moroccan political parties are generally opposed to absentee voting rights, '[they] *think that they may not have any support base among overseas voters*' (Østergaard-Nielsen 2003: 214). Few exceptions have been noticed. For instance, on 28 May 2005, a USFP (Socialist Union of Popular Forces) meeting was organized in Bagnolet, a Parisian suburb, focusing on 'migration and democracy', which gathered modestly about fifty people. Another left-wing party, the PPS (Socialism and Progress Party), held a conference in Paris on 19 June 2004 about the new Moroccan family law. Then, in 2006, major PPS officials travelled across France to meet migrant organizations. Lastly, in 2004, the Istiqlal (Independence) introduced a bill, which failed to pass, at the Moroccan parliament to create a consultative council for Moroccan migrants, whose members would be partly elected by migrants. This bill was followed by an internal committee, in order to 'preserve the national identity of millions of Moroccans anxious to remain Moroccan forever, without space or time break'.

State authorities have sent mixed messages toward this process. The Ministry of Overseas Moroccans has done little to promote migrants' representation, mostly because of its dependency on the Foreign Affairs Ministry, its weak presence in settlement countries and its lack of financial and human resources. But the minister Nouzha Chekrouni made official statement in favor of the right to vote of Moroccans abroad: for example, during the first online dialogue ever by a minister with Moroccan migrants, on 10 June 2003, on Yabiladi.com, an independent website of the Moroccan diaspora, she said: « *I confirm the legitimacy of the political participation of Moroccan citizens settled abroad. You are all invited to contribute to this effort in community internal organization, in order to have an institutional discussion partner.* ».

On 6 November 2005, the King announced that migrants would recover the right to vote in national elections in the near future. But then, on 16 June 2006, the Ministry of the Interior

declared that this reform was postponed due to technical difficulties. When elections took place in September 2007, postal voting or voting in embassies was totally impossible.

Moroccan migrants had to return home to vote in a constituency where his home, his enterprise or a parent is located. The same year, the government created the Council for the Moroccan Community Abroad, composed of members nominated by the Moroccan state, among whose former leftist opponents and leaders of development organizations are to be found.

Finally, the new constitution approved by referendum in July 2011, (to which expatriates could participate from abroad), includes two articles regarding the political rights of expatriates. The Council for the Moroccan Community Abroad is mentioned in the article 163. It delimits the consultative role of this council to public policies in three domains: « the preservation of the narrow links between migrants and their Moroccan identity »; « the measures aiming to grant their rights and preserve their interests and to help them to contribute to the human and sustainable development and progress of their country of origin ». But, the most important point is mentioned in the article 17 of this new constitution: « Moroccans living abroad enjoy the rights of full citizenship, including the right to vote and to be eligible. They can be candidate to the elections ». The article also stipulates that these new rights will be exercised « from the countries of settlement ». But the dispositions enforcing this article are to be fixed by the law. In the wake of this constitutional reform, the article 69 of the new Moroccan electoral code allows Moroccans living abroad to vote by mandate at the legislative elections held in November 2011, but they cannot be candidates due to the very short deadline. Moroccan migrants have to appoint an agent who will vote at their place at home. At the time when these lines are written, the campaign still carries on. The constitutional reform does not seem to fully satisfy the migrant organizations. A call for demonstration was made in Paris on the 13th of November...

In France, the right to vote campaign redefined of the lines of cleavage between associations. It should be immediately stressed that this debate only regards a small (mostly Parisian) elite of community leaders. A majority of Moroccan organizations in France either does not feel any interest in this debate or has not even heard of it. For instance, Ahmed, a member of the AMF now engaged in development activities, turns out to be indifferent to this claim and more sensitive to the exercise of the French citizenship: *« Moroccans settled in France are maintaining their culture, but they are French and it is the French citizenship that must come first, in my view... As Moroccans, we do not have the right to vote at the Moroccan elections. So what is the use of being Moroccan? It does not interest me. I do not want to have the right to vote in Morocco. But I do want my father, who has lived in France for 40 years, to enjoy the right to vote here, not there. I must say, I want to vote where I am living, where my parents are living, where my children are living. I want to participate in political changes in the country where I am living. If need be, I will go to Morocco on holidays, as a tourist, but not as a homegrown Moroccan. »*. For those who have made the choice of assimilation, the right to vote in Morocco is an outdated issue. But this debate also excludes a range of local organizations whose members either are disconnected from mainstream debates or do not show any interest. There is still a high distrust in politics, resulting from 50 years of tense relations between Morocco and its Diaspora.

This said, the right to vote campaign has delineated new lines of cleavage that do not reproduce the long standing opposition between leftists and amicalists. In France, the debate opposes, on the one hand, the CCME, the consultative body relaying the Foreign policy of the Moroccan government, and, on the other hand, the various organizational networks that campaign in favor of the right to vote: the CNMF in France and Al Monadara at the European

level. These coalitions move beyond historical oppositions and rally former “amicalists”, leftist activists, unionists women, young community leaders of various political (and religious) leanings, with a strong representation of professionals, civil servants and business owners. The presence of new community leaders is conducive to tighter interrelations with the host society (the head of the CNMF is administrator at the FASILD). But the lack grassroots embedding in the immigrant community seems to weaken their capacity of mobilization (the CNMF faced a high number of defection before the holding of associations). In addition, this diversification of profiles is not a warrant against the influence of the Moroccan authorities: the CNMF is an active promoter of the “Moroccan Western Sahara” and of a “moderate Islam”, both themes which have been central to the Moroccan Foreign Policy.

This reshuffling of positions within the organizational field has not led to a withdrawal of the Moroccan state intervention. In 2006, the ATMF accused the CCME of being a relay of the governmental influence under the pretence of defending the interests of the immigrant community<sup>14</sup>. One can talk about a “neo-amicalism” (Dumont 2008). The Moroccan state carries on holding a sway on the overseas organizational field through individuals’ and organizational networks based on economic (banks, transport companies) and political interests.

## Conclusion

This paper accounts for the slow transformation of the Moroccan organizational field in France. In line with anti-colonial struggles prior to independence, the Moroccan voluntary sector abroad emerged with a strong nationalist ethos. The early-days activism of the sixties

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<sup>14</sup> « Ce conseil n’a pour objet que la défense des intérêts de l’immigration, il n’a pas à être le représentant des affaires étrangères (défense de l’intégrité territoriale ou autre intérêt supérieur de la nation). Sa composition doit être le reflet de son indépendance et du pluralisme” (Communiqué de l’ATMF, Haut conseil des marocains à l’étranger ou pas, ce que nous exigeons des autorités marocaines, 8 décembre 2006.)

and seventies was strongly polarized between pro-government and leftist factions. As the Moroccan community abroad grew in size and settled in the arrival setting, the voluntary sector evolved to cater for the needs of local communities. Since the mid-nineties, one observes the emergence of a third generation of associations, more committed to homeland development but also strongly embedded in the host society. This third generation of association includes migrant NGOs of all kinds working in the field of education, health or economic cooperation, and hometown organizations that have institutionalized long-standing collective practices. Two factors explaining this recent evolution have been pointed out: in the first place, the appearance of a new generation of educated community leaders, willing to reap the fruits of their upward social mobility; and, in the second place, the multiplication of public co-funding and codevelopment schemes on both sides of the Mediterranean Sea.

Beyond this reorientation from local to transnational issues, the contemporary organizational field is generative of new political positioning. New political alliances formed to claim for the right to vote and to be represented at the Moroccan Parliament. While working class organizations used directly confront with state authorities, the new coalitions endorse a consensus-based approach to improve the rights of emigrants within the Moroccan polity. In Myrdal's words, leftist organizations until the eighties were protestor organizations. In contrast, the new organizational networks appear as accommodators (Myrdal). But the new coalitions differ not only in their strategy, but also in their composition. The groups campaigning in favor of absentees' right to vote are heterogeneous ensembles, gathering community leaders from diverse political backgrounds.

The Moroccan authorities reacted in accordance. A tension between different state Ministries and institutions explains the ambiguity of the official standpoint regarding overseas voting. Despite the broad consensus on the legitimacy of this claim, the administration has constantly postponed the actual implementation of this right to vote. Seen from Rabat, the threat would

be to see the Diaspora translate its economic capital into political influence. The creation of the Conseil Consultatif des Marocains de l'Etranger has maintained the illusion of a proactive approach. This lure is coming to an end. The head of the CCME has resigned without publishing the recommendations he was mandated for. Indeed, these expected recommendations seems to be of little interest at a time when the right to vote of overseas Moroccans has been carved in the constitutional stone. Critics of the Conseil have multiplied. Rumors of corruption circulate on the Internet. One can wonder what will be the next move in this transnational game...

But, at a time of profound evolution of the Moroccan community, one can ask what these claims are the symptom of. Interpreting claims for the right to vote under the lens of nationalist resurgence is at odds with on-field observations of a growing openness of migrant organizations toward the host society. As shown above, a growing number of Moroccan organizations count members with a French background seating at the board of trustees. In addition, the recent social movements in North Africa and the Middle East have attracted little more than a wave of sympathy among community leaders. Diaspora organizations do not seem to have played a decisive role in the outcome of the "Jasmine Revolution" that swept the other side of the Mediterranean Sea (REF). These two elements (broadening of the membership basis in the host country and limited political engagement in the origin country) plead in favor of a transnationalist rather than a nationalist explanation of recent trends. In other words, the transnationalization of the Moroccan organizational field (and its political reconfiguration) is the result of the search of a social recognition on *both* sides of the Mediterranean Sea. Voluntary actors assert through long distance development practices the distinctiveness of their dual embedding. Community leaders in upward social mobility are confronted to the closure of the political scene both in France and in the origin country. In

response, they use the resources of their integration to build up a transnational engagement. The growing density of cross border activities among voluntary organizations account for the deep transformation of the Moroccan community as a whole. It goes far beyond the political maneuvers of small Parisian elite.

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