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Stéphanie Pouessel

NEW LINGUISTIC SOUNDINGS IN TUNISIA: DIASPORA RETURNEES AND THE POLITICAL PARAMETERS OF LANGUAGE USE¹

Abstract

How can one really get involved in any given society without mastery of its language? This seemingly innocuous question, which refers to modes of political participation, sheds light on the cornerstone of political participation for “Tunisians abroad.” Beyond that, it also highlights their alternative relation to the local Tunisian colloquial/vernacular. While this relationship may at times enhance their status as outsiders, it also enables them to shift the goal posts of national borders. Building on this hypothesis, the paper analyzes the uses of language by two groups from the diaspora which have risen to power: the diaspora of exiles and the ‘brain drain’ diaspora. Regarding the former, exclusive socialization for decades in their country of exile has meant they have adopted new languages and use different variants of the Arabic language, which they learn through encounters with militants and other people, from North Africa to the Middle East. This paper argues that this unprecedented situation renders the old binary opposition between secular Francophones and Islamist Arabic speakers more complex. The brain drain diaspora represents another facet of the power nexus in Tunisia: many of its elements have since “returned” to take over the current technocratic government and have also developed a different relationship with language, which has impacted upon both the codes of politics and identity codes in Tunisian society.



INTRODUCTION

Are the languages spoken by Tunisians in diaspora – for example, French, English, and Italian – Tunisian languages in their own right? This question is all the more pertinent today because a large number of the key actors of the Tunisian state currently have close ties with different foreign countries. For example, the first President of the Republic during the Democratic transition, Moncef Marzouki, was a practicing medical doctor for twenty years,

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working between Strasburg and Paris; the leader of the Islamist party Ennahda, Rached Ghannouchi, was granted asylum in London between 1990 and 2011; the Vice President of the National Constituent Assembly, Meherzia Labidi, lived for twenty-five years in Paris; and among those elected to Parliament on 23 October 2011, there were eighteen former political exiles, twenty-nine former residents abroad and seven binationals.² All had children or grandchildren born and residing abroad. Migration can thus be said to lie at the core of the Tunisian political transition. Although the number of Tunisian living abroad is well known—10 percent of the Tunisian population lives abroad: 83.5 percent in the European Union and 58.5 percent in France, Tunisian Office Abroad, 2006—no numbers are available for the Tunisian diaspora who have “returned.” One reason for this may be the constant movement of these actors and their non-definitive residence.

The main actors of what scholars refer to as “return migration” have accessed a set of social experiences abroad which they are mobilizing in reshaping Tunisian politics.³ Among these “social remittances”—which Peggy Levitt defines as ideas, behavior patterns, and identities traveling from the country of residence to the country of origin⁴—languages form a pivotal dimension while remaining, to a large extent, under-researched. Such markers of national belonging and origin-related crystallizations rub up against one another, are exchanged, and mutually adjust along the lines of the flow patterns affecting the Mediterranean space and beyond.

The migration of linguistic practices is not a new phenomenon, but rather it is inherent to Maghrebi migratory history. Since the 1960s, North Africans have powered a large-scale circulation of languages to and from Europe; on one hand, Arabic and Amazigh migrated towards Europe; on the other hand, the languages of Europe shifted towards the Maghreb. It was the two variants of Arabic, the dialectical or oral and the classical or written forms which were spread by Maghrebi speakers via the Arabic-speaking schools they have set up in Europe, together with the different varieties of Amazigh. If these languages of the Maghreb had already come to settle in Europe and the languages of Europe were already in circulation throughout the Maghreb, their visibility was limited, especially in Tunisia. Until the Tunisian Revolution and the fall of the dictatorship, the absence of a free political

expression meant that practically no visibility of any language *other* than Arabic had been allowed on the Tunisian political stage.

The opening of civil society in 2011 stoked the fires of politically active Tunisians abroad, reinvigorating a long-muffled patriotism, and unfurling a process of “returnee diaspora.”⁵ This process encouraged a return of social and political practices back towards Tunisia among them, linguistic practices. Within the bounds of this paper, my aim is to analyze how these languages impact the new political field in Tunisia: how are these changes blurring the lines of frontiers and shaking up identities among political groups?

By way of introduction I will sketch the Tunisian ‘nation’ and its ‘frontiers’ by presenting the shifting policies of the Tunisian expatriate community to a more definite embrace of *Tunisiens Residents à l'étranger* (Tunisians living abroad)—from now on TREs—as part of the Tunisian national project. After this, I shall first address language acquisition abroad, often learnt in exile, which is then used in, for example, the current expression of Tunisian Islamism: what new languages is that particular political platform using? To what degree do the linguistic competences of these actors have an impact, not only on nationwide communication but also on communication at an international level? Islamic politics is a particularly relevant case to evaluate language shifts since a significant number of militants were exiled abroad and became dominant in the new Tunisian political field after Islamist electoral victory following the 2011 revolution.

Second, I shall study the linguistic turn as applied to political engagement in order to analyze the issue of “reintegration” and the adaptation of diaspora to the society of origin, which may be likened to “this strange and sometimes alienating kind of culture-shock.”⁶ These occasionally arduous encounters, which often involve an element of linguistic conflict, are “loci” which raise the question of what a nation may consist in today: for example, can one be a Tunisian and not speak Arabic? Finally, I will assess the relationship between social class and language by focusing on the case of the French language, the second most widely spoken language in Tunisia after Arabic, long associated with the idea of ‘High Culture.’ I will attempt to ascertain just how far the return of a “second generation” diaspora socialized in France may have contributed to modify the “social frontiers” of this language, and to “de-gentrify”

the image of *la Francophonie*, the supposed French speaking world, in Tunisia.

This survey is based on a series of interviews I conducted with formerly diaspora-dwelling Tunisian political actors. This includes Members of Parliament, Ministers, and Non-Governmental Organization workers. Additionally, this work draws from my own personal experience in Tunisia between 2009 and 2014, which enabled me to obtain close participant “observation” of the linguistic usages of second generation Tunisians, including long discussions on their relationship with languages.⁷ In addition to such thick description I augmented these interviews with media analyses, which I derived by tracking Tunisian Francophone, Arab-speaking and English-speaking media from 2011; this media consisted of newspapers, TV, radio and Internet blog articles.

NATION, LANGUAGE, AND DIASPORA

Arab nationalism claims a common heritage across the Arab world, assuming that all Arabs are united by a common history, culture, and language. After 1945, it influenced differently the spread of national “imagined communities.”⁸ In Tunisia, unlike more rigid nationalist ideologies held elsewhere in the Arab world, Habib Bourguiba, who ruled the country from 1957 to 1987, adopted more of a Tunisian nationalist than an Arab nationalist ideology of the nation. Thus, the identity of the Tunisian people developed based on other references to form a synthesis between ambient Arab identity and the specificity of Tunisia’s millennial history. This plural, pre-Islamic historical signifier of Tunisian roots – i.e. Punic, Carthaginian, Roman, etc. – was branded as a sign of “*Tunisianness*.”

At the 1956 independence, the understanding of ‘nation’ was ideologically built on the predominance of Arabic language as the oppositional language to that of the colonizer. Nevertheless, language policies in light of the ideological formation of the nation were very differently applied in Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia.⁹ Moreover, until now, different political trends vis-a-vis language have coexisted in Tunisia, ranging from pro-Arabic nationalism to a French bilingual position to positions in favor of a diversity of languages including *Amazigh*, or Berber languages. In formerly French North Africa, states have recently made important

linguistic-political shifts. After forty years of demands from Amazigh civil society in Algeria and Morocco, these minority languages were officially recognized in 2002 and 2011, respectively. This initiated a more or less successful implementation of linguistic reforms at school. These potential re-definitions of state national projects to recognize greater diversity should also be considered in relation to the containment or integration of political opposition.¹⁰ Northern African Arabic, the ‘mother tongue’ across the Maghreb, is also undergoing a process of ‘officialization.’ Hitherto considered a dialect, artists, writers and journalists advocate its officialization for use this variety of Arabic in schools. In sum, linguistic issues are important in the current redefinition of societies in Maghreb. This article will assess the potential redefinitions of these categories of national belonging following the return of Tunisian diaspora to Tunisia during and subsequent to the Tunisian revolution in 2011.

At the moment of national independence in 1954, the state considered Tunisians abroad as a solution to problems of the labor market; these individuals were officially designated as “Tunisian workers abroad” (TTE). In 1967, the Tunisian government created an agency called *Office de l’Emploi et de la Formation Professionnelle*, or Office for Employment and Professional Training. This agency organized the direct recruitment of unskilled Tunisian workers for industry and building sectors in European countries. The Tunisian government expected that workers would migrate temporarily and then return to Tunisia. In fact, first generation migrants underwent a process of *double absence* by which they were disconnected from both their home country and host countries.¹¹

Dual citizenship, excluding neighboring countries, was accepted in 1975, “probably a way to recognize that Tunisians in Europe would not return;” the Tunisian State then focused on the protection of the European Tunisians rights abroad.¹² The *Office des Tunisiens à l’Étranger*—Office of Tunisians Abroad, or OTE—was created in 1988 in order to implement these policies through various cultural and social assistance programs. In this frame, fourteen social attaches in Tunisian embassies and consulates organized cultural events, summer camps for Tunisian children living abroad, and language courses to foster Tunisian migrants’ ties to the country. In order to promote national development, the Ministry of Social Affairs, Solidarity, and Tunisians Abroad implemented policies aimed at increasing the economic benefits through

remittances, business networks, knowledge transfer and investments.¹³

The right to vote in the presidential elections was granted to members of the Tunisian diaspora in 1988. However, because of the authoritarian regime, residents abroad did not have access to political participation until 2011. After the fall of the former regime, emigrant—through elites and leaders of associations active in the countries of immigration in the EU—claimed the right to participate in rebuilding the country. In 2011, Yadh Ben Achour, the president of the High Authority for achieving the Objectives of the Revolution Political Reform and Democratic Transition, argued for an extension of the rights of Tunisians abroad in parliamentary elections. In response to this “emigrant lobbying,” a new instance was created in May 2011 to supervise elections.¹⁴ This organization, *Instance Supérieure Indépendante pour les Elections* (ISIE) headed by Kamel Jendoubi, announced the creation of eight parliamentary seats (out of 217) dedicated to six districts abroad. 4,546 polling centers were requisitioned, including places outside the consular system such as schools, offices of associations, centers, and municipalities.

Indeed, the Tunisian revolution introduced the participation of Tunisians abroad in elections for the National Assembly and representation within the National Assembly. In the post-revolution election of October 2011, the Tunisian diaspora was able to elect its representatives in the National Constituent Assembly (NCA) in order to enhance political participation for Tunisians abroad. Eighteen seats of the assembly were reserved to representatives from the diaspora: eight for France; three each for Italy, the United States, and other Arab countries; and one for Germany. The new Tunisian Constitution, passed in January 2014, acknowledges the role of Tunisians living abroad. Two articles of the Constitution clearly address this group: Article 55, which guarantees the right to vote and the right to be represented at the Assembly; and Article 74, which grants binational citizens the right to run for the position of President of the Republic under the condition that they pledge to give up the second nationality if elected. The establishment of a democratic electoral process from abroad challenges the boundaries of nation and citizenship, thus appearing as one of the possible expressions of “transnational citizenship.”¹⁵

THE NEW LANGUAGES OF ISLAMISM

Many Maghrebi political parties were originally linked to France, particularly since the first stirrings of the National Liberation movements—which were, to a large degree, set up from the Metropolis, Paris, but also Marseille, Lyon, or Grenoble. However, the militant activities of political Islam remained on the fringe of this geographical and cultural space, interacting more intensely with the ‘Arab and Muslim world’; for example, Egypt, Iran, Syria, etc.¹⁶ This movement, born in the twentieth century, was, according to leader of the Tunisian party Rached Ghannouchi, set up along the lines of Arab secular Nasserist and Ba’athist nationalism.¹⁷ On the basis of these ideological trends, Ghannouchi created *le Mouvement de Tendance Islamique*, the Movement of the Islamic Trend (MTI), at the beginning of the 1970s. The MTI’s Islamist militants drew on the resources of the Arabic language as a counter-referent in order to oppose the opposition leader Habib Bourguiba, who strongly advocated Arab-French bilingualism. Political Islam, which considers Arabic to be pivotal to its cause, also emerged as predominantly Arabic in expression and in orientation. The subsequent repression which its militants were subjected to under first under Bourguiba and then beneath the Ben Ali regimes led to successive waves of political exile, notably towards Europe and Canada, but also to the Arab world and throughout the world.

The evolution of political Islam towards Europe and the socialization of generations born outside of Tunisia has resulted in Tunisian Islamism becoming increasingly expressed in languages other than Arabic, particularly in Europe. The rise to power of the political Islam party Ennahda in 2011, after a history of migration, exile, and/or foreign residence, portends a classic recourse to Arabic in coherence with the ideology of the party. It simultaneously leads to a ‘visibility’ of European languages in less formal spaces such as militant Facebook pages and partisan media. In addition to the use of different varieties of Arabic due to the international and cosmopolitan contexts of the countries of exile, this led to a normalized communication with the international media. This new expression of Tunisian political Islam is contributing some significant evolutions: a shift in the lines of political wording (through binational speakers, one of whose mother tongues is ‘foreign’) and new parameters of international

political communication through foreign languages inherent to the movement.

LINGUISTIC MODULATIONS OF THE POLITICAL

The new generation of political militants from the Ennahda party, brought up under the conditions of migration and exile inherited from their parents, have acquired fluency in the language of their country of asylum. For instance, in the framework of the National Constituent Assembly, Imen Ben Mohamed and Osama Essaghir, the two young militants elected to the Italy constituency seats (ANC and ARP), use both Italian and Arabic to express themselves on their professional Facebook pages. Savida Ounissi, Ennahda MP for the 'France I' constituency (ARP), exclusively expresses herself in French. The patterns of exile which lead to migration outside the perimeter of Francophone countries have also created a surge in the use of English, especially from exiled militants who resided in the United Kingdom. Consequently, the latter have contributed to challenge the historical hegemony of French in Tunisia.

The militants whose exile took them outside of the Francophone perimeter to Germany, the UK, Sudan, and Saudi Arabia have tended to lose the French language; many of the youngest never learned French. Some of the leaders of the Ennahda party speak English fluently, but no French; notably former Foreign Minister Rafik Abdesslam and Lotfi Zitoun, former adviser to the Jebali government, both of whom lived for twenty years in exile in London. These new linguistic profiles on the Tunisian political stage upset the canons of political expression in Tunisia that have elided Francophonie with modernity since Bourguiba's bilingual policy which, following the country's independence, envisaged the country's development in tandem with the French language.¹⁸ The historically Francophone media are afraid of losing the prestige attached to the language as a result of English-speaking political Islam activists and politicians:

The new Foreign Minister, Rafik Abdessalam Bouchlaka, is said to have apologized for not being in a position to give an interview on the RTCI station because of his lack of fluency in French. Has Foreign Affairs now become confused with the Gulf countries on the level of government decision-making? Is the refusal of the Minister an excuse or an

indirect message to favour expression in Arabic over French in Tunisia? . . . We dare hope that Francophonie is not now under threat in Tunisia.¹⁹

The introduction of foreign languages other than French through diaspora returnees has not been able, up until now, to counterbalance the pivotal position which French has held in Tunisian society since decolonization. French remains central to elite political spheres, and language barrier can be a real obstacle to the reintegration of the children of exiles born outside the Francophone perimeter. Indeed, a high number of children born to exiled Tunisian Islamists ‘returned’ to Tunisia encounter difficulties in adapting which are not linked to their potential weaknesses in Arabic, but to a lack of fluency in French.

The Francophone linguistic and cultural complicity between returnee Islamist children formerly exiled in France and their new everyday environment in Tunisia, which eases them painlessly into the French educational institutions of Tunisia, is nonexistent for returnees from non-francophone countries. For instance, the children of those exiled in the UK, having opted to settle in Tunis, often feel “set aside” and encounter more difficulty in integrating than the returnee Tunisians from France. This alienation stems both from the linguistic point of view and from that of the organization of the Tunisian political and administrative system, which is largely inspired by the French model. As one individual explains, “We feel as though we have come from another world, it’s more difficult for us [than for the Tunisians from France], we feel different, from a different culture, we feel doubly distant from Tunisian culture, which is French.”²⁰ German in nationality, the children of a militant exiled in Germany came up against the absence of any international educational institution in which French was not the main language as soon as they arrived in Tunisia. Their weakness in French, which was an obstacle to studying in international classes, has been a “stumbling block for their integration” in Tunisia.²¹ Once in their teens, the children had no choice but to return to Germany in order to prepare for a new, and better re-departure towards Tunisia, by studying. . . French!

ARABIC READJUSTED

Beside the problem of fluency in French, a returnee’s Arabic itself

can acquire different, local tonalities depending on the place of exile chosen by the militant and on the version political Islam in question. Apparently anecdotal, yet symptomatic of a distancing from the home country, any modification of their Arabic 'accent' in the militants of the diaspora is indeed perceptible and testifies to their condition as 'diasporic.' Their practice of Arabic falls under the influence of the variants present in the countries of asylum: the Tunisians exiled in countries with a strong "oriental" presence—for example, Egypt or Palestine—will more frequently assimilate these variants: "When I talked to my family, they noticed I had changed, because I was speaking in a way which was closer to the *Shargia* (Levantine) Arabic," testified a Tunisian MP elected to the German constituency (ANC).²² In countries with an important Maghrebi presence, the youngest, who have interacted more closely up against the heirs to Maghrebi immigration, have assimilated not pure national Maghrebi variants, but rather "the Arabic of France." This is in fact a blend of all the different Maghrebi Arabic variants, including a number of French lexical items, as well as likely lexical items from other non-Arabic languages such as Romani and English.

The generational variant also has had an impact, entailing a different relationship to Tunisian Arabic: a militant exiled when adult will conserve his or her fluency in Tunisian Arabic, while conversely, he may forget its regional variant. The same configuration can be found in the case of the MP for the Kebili constituency (ANC), Bechir Chammam, exiled for twenty years in Sudan, who was elected to a seat in Parliament three months after his return from exile. Speaking Sudanese Arabic and furthermore, dark-skinned, he confides the embarrassment of some of his colleagues who had first mistaken him for a Sudanese person.²³

Cut off from the social evolution of Tunisian society for decades, the exiled or imprisoned militants of political Islam have also been out of touch with the lexical evolution of everyday language. Though improvement in local Arabic is easily obtained, it is quite another thing to fix an official language of expression for the party, and to keep it up. The Ennahda party's leader, Rached Ghannouchi, was long made fun of for his very classical usage of Arabic in his speeches. The private television channel *Nessma* TV's satirical broadcast *Les Guignols*, or "The Muppets," which specialized in parodying politicians, set up Ghannouchi by pinpointing a verbal tic of his, which consists in lengthening final

vowels, by adding a drawn out “a” to each of his words.²⁴ Today the degree of formality in Ghannouchi’s public Arabic has been toned down; furthermore, he regularly refers to popular proverbs in Tunisian Arabic during his appearances in public, thus following the general linguistic trend of society, which is towards an uninhibited use of Tunisian Arabic in the civic and political arenas.

THE NEW POTENTIAL OF INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATION

The new Maghrebi generation born in Europe represents the nexus between the two shores of the Mediterranean. This generation understands the different codes of each society and connects the nations *from below*. This plural national belonging is particularly visible in the way these individuals master languages. The children of political exiles, born or socialized abroad, by their fluency in a “foreign language,” bring a new means of international communication to the political party. Communicating on the Tunisian political transition via a foreign ‘mother tongue,’ their language of socialization, enables the current political transition to be better understood by international observers without the filter of outside translation.

Working in the party’s communication department in 2012, Seifeddine T., who was exiled in France from the age of twelve to the age of twenty-six, is simultaneously French- and Arabic-speaking (the language he was schooled in until the age of twelve). He considers that he contributes “linguistic knowhow”²⁵ to Ennahda, for instance, by translating press releases into French, and “draft language” because “the people in Ennahda translate their ideas into French badly, when it isn’t the journalists themselves who do their own translating.” The Francophone fringe of Ennahda has proposed substituting the term “political Islam” for that of “Islamism” on the grounds that it “goes down better.” Seifeddine considers himself to be a sort of bridge builder in the explanation of the Arab revolutions to the West: “We ‘frenchify’ their language, we facilitate the encounter of the two worlds, those of France and of Ennahda.”²⁶

Another living interface, this time for the English-speaking world, is Yusra Ghannouchi, who grew up in London as her father was forced to exile. After the revolution, Yusra Ghannouchi has become an official spokesperson for Ennahda, appearing regularly

on the British Media such as the *BBC* and *Sky News*, thus proposing a new embodiment of Tunisian Islamism in the English language. If this Islamist voice is able to steer clear of the chosen minute changes of meaning implicit in any act of translation with its unavoidable loss of nuance, it also contributes to seriously reduce the inevitable 'foreignness' element it entails. By embodying Islamism in the clipped tones of British English, she breaks with the ancient codes of expression of Islamism in Arabic and thus succeeds in rendering more "familiar" this ideology to the English-speaking world.

By contributing in this way to a debunking of certain preconceived ideas about political Islam, it may be assumed that the diaspora's public expression of these new languages deconstructs the prejudices that enable the automatic association of Arabic with terrorism. Indeed, beyond the resolution of the problem of accuracy in translation, Tunisian Islamist players who express themselves in the European languages of English, French, German or Italian embody a closeness, a complicity, or even a form of sympathy, breaking in this way with the inherent otherness which sticks to any distant language, and particularly to Arabic, which still bears the stigma of terrorism.²⁷ Such linguistic modulations seem to be the forerunners of a normalization of Islamism on the international level; in other words, its assimilation with a political party is now legitimate because it has become "audible" for the western world.

The utilization of French is thus a real watershed in Tunisian communication with France: the communication on the media with the Francophone diplomatic corps is not only carried out by the militants of the political party that was dominant after decolonization—the Arab-French bilingual Neo-Destour led by Bourguiba—but is being gently 'gatecrashed' by actors with a diaspora profile, that of exile, study, or work abroad, who are disinhibited about using these languages.²⁸ One good example in the world of French publishing is Moncef Marzouki, a former student, who first resided in France before going into exile there. Marzouki has already published several books in French, among which a long interview in book form with the sociologist Vincent Geisser, which got significant media coverage.²⁹ In 2012, one year after having come to office as President, Marzouki also published a book with a Paris publisher which, seeing how far it goes in popularizing Tunisian politics and in 'explaining' the current political challenges which Tunisia has to face, clearly targets a

French readership.³⁰ This kind of publication, though it may appear to have been a purely partisan initiative, has contributed to normalized relations with France, corresponding to certain expectations, among which that of demystifying Tunisia's transition, reassuring decision makers, investors, and tourists, and highlighting the democratic path on which Tunisia has now set its sights, including the integration of political Islam.

THE LINGUISTIC DIVIDE

The introduction of these new language codes onto the Tunisian political scene highlights the complexity of a next-generation Tunisian diaspora's political engagement. Arabic, either transmitted parentally, studied, or merely fantasized, is what *links back* to the home country. At the same time, the ways it is spoken and written, especially its overlaps with other variants of Arabic and the other languages of socialization, signify the *frontier* of the diaspora and of the parameters which condition the current access to politics in Tunisia. The new diaspora generations, born in the countries of residence of their parents, maintain a specific relationship with Arabic, whether concerning what this language represents for them—in its idealized or fantasized component, a rejection to it—or their linguistic competence with Arabic.³¹

The new diaspora generations often maintain an ambivalent relationship with Arabic. The children of exiled Islamists often enjoy a linguistic competence in Arabic superior to that of those children who are heirs to "economic" migration. Stringent rules set up by exiled Islamist families often enforce the practice of Arabic in the domestic and family-centered sphere, contributing to the conservation of the Arabic language among exiles.³² The children have become familiar with classical and written Arabic within their parents' militant networks, notably through the Islamic institutes which they set up in Europe.³³ Glamorized by the family and in keeping with their political commitments, it is often part and parcel of the children's curriculum as the 'second language' studied at the *Lycée* for the *Bacalauréat*, or in the framework of schooling by Arab private schools. This is learning process which may be facilitated by the mentoring of parents already literate in Arabic such as professors, primary school teachers, and others. Nonetheless, for some, the learning process does not take place "painlessly," and the children often turn to the advantage of other languages; for

example, one child, the offspring of an ex-Minister exiled in France, turned to Latin.³⁴

What is more, fluency in Arabic may vary according to the age of the child at the time of the forced departure from Tunisia. The differences in fluency between those who arrive young and those who were born in exile may come to represent a stumbling block for the post-2011 return of the youngest and for any political commitment in favor of Tunisia.³⁵ For the new generation of Tunisians of the “return diaspora,” French may indeed be the only language in which they are fluent upon their “return” to Tunisia. Furthermore, fluency in Arabic may be an obstacle to political commitment in Tunisia. Which variant of Arabic may be considered to be the most relevant for political commitment? Classical, or “literary,” Arabic, the sign of knowledge and written culture, or Tunisian Arabic, the oral language of everyday life and of the ‘straight talking’ which every politician aspires to?

The European-born generations’ entry into politics originally raised the fraught issue of the use of the languages of the emigres on the Parliament floor (National Constituent Assembly). This debate was opened by the honorable member Karima Souid, an ANC MP for the “France Sud” (*South of France*), binational and – significantly – not a fluent speaker of Arabic. The daughter of Tunisian immigrants living in the Lyon suburbs, in her status as a France Sud MP elected to an Ettakatol (ANC) seat, Karima Souid ‘necessarily’ became the representative of the Assembly for the French media of France 3, France 2, BFM, etc. This rare example of an MP having been almost exclusively socialized in French, because she was born in France, became a useful tool for the ANC to improve Francophone viewer ratings, as she was able to “tweet” and post on Facebook continually and in real time on the progress of the ANC’s deliberations, uploading a stream of documents translated into French.

“You don’t speak the language, so how do you expect to find solutions?” questioned a Tunisian citizen to Souid.³⁶ In line with this criticism concerning binationals who have gone into politics, a central question is indeed how one can communicate and get involved in a society whose mother tongue one has no fluency in, or that one no longer knows? Karima Souid acknowledges that during her electoral campaign, she had never thought that the linguistic issue might turn out to be a problem.³⁷ Confronted with a

massive consensus around Article 1 of the new Constitution, which stated, "Our language is Arabic," Souid fought a long battle to put in Article 77 of the rules and regulations of the Assembly, which grants the right to have proceedings translated into the languages used by the foreign constituencies, into practice. By virulently taking the floor amid the ranks of the ANC, she describes the great linguistic divide which characterizes Tunisian binationals.³⁸ The resistance nursed by some MPS comes into play: the *Congres pour la Republique* (CPR), or Congress for the Republic, MP for the constituency of Kebili, South Tunisia, opposed Souid's French utterances by publicly and in Arabic disqualifying them in the midst of a plenum of the ANC, stating in Arabic: "The Arab People is Arabic-speaking and of Muslim denomination, I refuse *la Francophonie*."³⁹

Through her efforts to adapt orally and in writing in order to participate in the Assembly's deliberations, Souid raises the issue of the relationship with Arabic prevailing in second and third generations, who "know how to speak neither dialectal Arabic, nor classical, literary Arabic, and do not know how to write at all."³⁹ ⁴⁰She remains the instigator of the debate around the constraints which may be encountered by binationals in Tunisian political life and, beyond that, of the potential dissonances which characterize their relationship with Tunisian society. This complex relationship with different identities reached its climax during a spat between Souid and the France I MP for Ennahda and ANC Vice President, Meherzia Laabidi, who had herself lived in France for twenty years. The latter was tackled by Karima Souid who, in the midst of a plenum Parliamentary debate, stood up and pointed her finger at the Vice President, accusing her of having breached the Article of the internal rules and regulations stipulating the right to translation for the returnee Tunisian MPs. Laabidi retorted by exclaiming in French, "Stop playing the victim and respect this Assembly! There; now you can understand me!" To which Souid replied in Arabic, "I am Tunisian, speak to me in Arabic!"⁴¹ The MP who had been vocally claiming for the right for translation into French thus came to contradict herself in rejecting outright her colleague's remark made in that very language. Souid's choice to assert her own Tunisian identity in Arabic, by demanding the use of the Arabic language, demonstrates the extent to which language and identity are inextricably linked.

The languages of the diaspora confront the Tunisian nation with the possible expression of the political and of citizenship through other languages than that of the Arabic Constitution. Non-Arabic language acquisition for members of the diaspora blurs the lines of what circumscribes the Tunisian nation as defined by the use of the Arabic language. By distinguishing nationality from language, it introduces a debate around the frontiers of the national and its Constitution, in a decentering movement, tracing the premonitory signs of an extra-linguistic form of national belonging.

THE DIASPORA OF PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCES

Side by side with the returns of exiles and economic migrants, upper class Tunisians who have been abroad for their studies or for job opportunities are now also settling back into post-2011 Tunisian political life. They have been French-speakers since childhood, via French institutions already attended in Tunisia, and have possibly added other European languages learnt in the course of studies abroad. They have enjoyed a free-ranging mobility since adulthood – in other words, a form of mobility closer to that of the “*bledards*” (stay-at-homes) than to the “*banlieusards*” (suburb-dwellers), the heirs to immigration born in Europe.⁴² This “professionally skilled” diaspora cultivates a vastly different relationship to other languages, which they nonetheless bring into play in political communication within the higher echelons.

During the constitution of a “Technocratic” government in January 2014, certain ‘Tunisians from abroad’ were called upon for their “skill set” by the new Prime Minister Mehdi Jomaa. The latter are thus TRE who have been called on to extricate themselves from high-flying international careers as CEOs and other high-ranking positions, and come and join the government. Above and beyond skills transfer, there was to be a transit of extraterritorial languages, bringing a different relationship to the use of Arabic, both local and classical, to the public stage. Amel Karboul, the very high-profile Minister of Tourism, has been lampooned on the social networks because of the mistakes she makes in Arabic. She expresses herself very frequently in an alternating mixture of French and dialectal Arabic, duplicating the *Tunisois* parlance of the Urban elite. This Minister is also perfectly fluent in German, thanks to her familial and professional connections in Germany; this has enabled her, unsurprisingly, to develop a top-level partnership with the German Tourism industry. On the other hand, the Prime Minister, Mehdi

Jomaa—himself a full-time resident of France until his appointment, having pursued his whole career in a subsidiary of the “Total” petroleum group—chose to converse with Barack Obama in French during a diplomatic meeting in Washington, DC on 4 April 2014.

The return of this “skilled diaspora”—a reverse of “brain drain”—caused a disruption in the political communication of the *ancien regime*, which was underpinned by older players, less prone to international mobility and so more Arabic-speaking. This usage of Arabic and foreign languages is closely akin to that of the heirs of the economic or exile diasporas. However, apart from the fact that they grew up exclusively in Tunisia—hence their fluency in Arabic—their presence in political life and their belonging to the Tunisian nation will probably always cause them to be perceived as more legitimate than the other children of the Tunisian diaspora.

‘DE-GENTRIFY’ THE FRENCH LANGUAGE: BILINGUAL HISTORICAL ELITE AGAINST FRANCOPHONE DIASPORA

In Tunisia, French is not exclusively the language of the bilingual and highly skilled and internationally mobile elite evoked above, nor that of the heirs of the former single party, the Neo-Destour of Bour guiba.⁴³ The back-and-forth shuttle-runs of Tunisians residing abroad have been transplanting the French language for decades and the political return of a Francophone diaspora is reinforcing the process. Linguistic changes can create unexpected complicities such as the current State secretary of Tunisians Abroad, a former Islamist exiled to France, who gave her support to a second generation left-wing woman MP and came under fire because for her lack of fluency in French, ultimately comparing her condition to that of her own children in France.⁴⁴ Another example is the daughter of a Francophone Islamist, highly active in Tunisian Civil Society, who feels immediately accepted and legitimized among leftist militants if and when she uses French.⁴⁵

The work-related return of a middle class diaspora is encroaching on the linguistic territory of the elite and so contributing to “de-gentrifying” the aura and the usage of the French language, which has historically been the language of *distinction* for the Tunisian elite.⁴⁶ As Bourdieu has proved, the relationship between social class and the French language, once the language of the elite, has become devalued within Tunisian society

given the arrival of a Francophone diaspora with less of an elite background.⁴⁷ The use of French is thus also becoming the preserve of different social categories and is no longer the exclusive property of an internationally mobile Tunisian bourgeoisie. If French was hitherto reserved to a socio-economically superior class while Arabic was the mark of a middle echelon, the presence of the diaspora at the epicenter of the Tunisian political earthquake has contributed to a process of disruption between language and socio-economic class.

This plurality of social profiles engendered by migration is indeed diluting the elitist hue which formerly characterized the use of this language. Elitist social distinction is now conveyed by claiming that Tunisian Arabic is a fashionable, impacting on both politics and the media, advertising and the arts, and enabling individuals to singularize themselves both from French and from official Arabic while opening up a new horizon for this language. This positions the claim for Tunisian Arabic as a return to *Tunisianité*, or Tunisian identity, henceforth hungry for social equality since the 2011 revolution. In contrast to classical, literary Arabic, Tunisian Arabic is perceived as a language linked to another cultural areas and political positions such as Arab nationalist and Islamist. To use the dialectal Arabic of the capital, Tunis, confers an urban gloss, makes one *hip*, *in fashion*.⁴⁸ An example of this lies in the very recent translation of the new Tunisian Constitution into Tunisian Arabic (Arabic script). This 2014 initiative of the Tunisian Association of Constitutional Law (ATDC), which favored the translation of the Constitution into dialectal Arabic was particularly showcased and celebrated by the national and international press. This translation has been justified as “using everyday language,” “the language of the majority,” to help the People to “be familiarized with their rights” so as to become “responsible.”⁴⁹ The substance of this introduction consists in the expression of a desire to re-appropriate a stolen relationship with the political, a re-appropriation of politics by and for the people, through a downsizing to the vulgar the language of “the People.”

The presentation of this translation proclaims its aim as being “to reach the regions.”⁵⁰ The “subaltern” rhetoric on the underprivileged regions, which calls for them to be reinvested by the means of “their language”, i.e. spoken Tunisian Arabic, is above all an attempt to reconnect with the original spirit of the of the 2011

Revolution, around the principles of equality and fraternity. However, Tunisian Arabic is a language which possesses several varieties, according to the regions of the country, and more particularly, marks a clear difference between the Arabic of the capital and the coast with the Arabic of the south and the interior regions. The language used for the translation of the Constitution is closer to *Tunisois* Arabic than it is to the Arabic of the south of the country, as far as lexical variants and accent are concerned. What is more, the “regions of the Interior” are more knowledgeable in literary Arabic than the more bilingual Capital. Finally, this translation of the Constitutional text takes on the issue of the very representation of the political and of language in the Arab world. The superior status of the political (whether questionable or not) imposes the use of classical, literary Arabic, a language perceived as being superior, noble (*lingua franca*) and fulfilling functions other than those of the everyday and domestic world (vernacular). Thus, for a large number of speakers, more particularly from regions other than the capital, this linguistic-political initiative has had no palpable meaning.⁵¹

Nonetheless, the jurists who instigated this translation were hyped by the television and radio media in their role as “explainers” of the Constitution during the phase of the voting on the different articles and after the signing of the Constitution itself. That is because, beyond being a mere translation, this text purports to be a document of legal expertise “explaining the Constitution” and providing definitions of every important term, such as secularism: “*houkouma madaniya*,” etc. This association of bilingual jurists, along the same lines as the bilingual elite, regularly organizes conferences and meetings in a mixture of French and Arabic or in French.⁵² Above and beyond a mere translation, this text is actually more akin to a legal “exegesis” which, under the guise of the neutral tone of legal expertise and technocracy, smuggles in a political vision of society. It is clearly situated within the Anti-Islamist political opposition, by its deconsecrating of the relationship between the political and literary Arabic. As an alternative to literary Arabic, the prerogative of the group politically opposed, this group of jurists distinguishes itself by its use of the Tunisian Arabic rather than the use of French. The dialectal thus becomes the refuge of a historical group on the decline, issued from the former single party, Neo-Destour, which either lacks proficiency in literary Arabic or

voluntarily wishes to set itself apart from it; thus, the use of dialectal Arabic is a linguistic-cum-political alternative.

CONCLUSION

Carrying out a revolution in politics also boils down to reformulating the *modes of expression* of the political. If Ben Ali addressed “his” People in a hollow form of standard Arabic, with a monotonous tone, emblematic of doublespeak, Moncef Marzouki, the President of the Democratic transition, upsets the apple cart by communicating in dialectal Arabic and even adopting the accent of the marginalized regions of the South, regions emblematic of the Revolution.⁵³

This displacement of the lines of the formulation of the political is also facilitated by the novelty of a strong presence of the diaspora at the core of Tunisian political life. The exile diaspora portends the rise of a multilingual Islamism, thus nuancing the dichotomous categories of Francophone/secular versus Arabophone/Islamist. What is more, these languages make it possible to undertake political communication on the international level, offering a tribune to political Islamism without the intrusive interference of translation. Above all, this enables the establishment of a proximity and a complicity with other nation-states by the intermediary of new, entirely binational and bilingual players.

The encounter of new generations from the diaspora in France with the Tunisian context has confronted these populations with another, genuinely Tunisian *Francophonie*, that of the traditionally French-speaking Neo-Destourian elite. The latter finds itself out of step, wrong-footed with regard to its counterparts from the diaspora. The cultural environment of the children of the diaspora, their social class, their belonging to a negatively discriminated group and to a “troublemaking minority”, and the nature of the votes in 2011—both for Ennahda and CPR—are blatantly in contrast with the Francophone Tunisian bourgeoisie. This disruption contributes to reshuffle the socioeconomic hierarchy of languages.

Finally, diaspora language may well represent one of those invisible frontiers which condition political engagement. A “foreign” language and a high degree of fluency in Arabic languages may either lead to exclusion from the political arena or, on the contrary, be perceived as a form of dominance over the local

population. Whatever their tonality may be, languages practices condition the relationship with the Other and simultaneously call into question national belonging. The muted, muffled transformation of Tunisia's linguistic landscape portends a redefinition of the delineations which define the national. The "nation" can no longer be entirely, coincidentally embodied by one language, if it ever once was. These two elements can no longer entirely coincide because other languages, those of the diaspora, are on their way to becoming Tunisian as well through new usages and claims. The latter have all too rarely envisaged the languages of the Maghreb diaspora as languages of *national expression* in their own right; however, *volens nolens*, today they are at the core of the reshaping of the political in the Maghreb. Such ongoing transformations represent a clarion call to renew our studies on language in the Maghreb. This inflection of our overview of the Maghreb should enable the presence of these displaced populations in the building of these societies to be taken into account, in their complex posture of embodying a double presence—both here and there—which, by transcending the *double absence* of the first emigrants, has yet to be placed on record.⁵⁴

NOTES

¹ This article was supported by the European Research Council program "When Authoritarianism Fails in the Arab World" (WAFAW).

² ANC 2011–2014. These figures are an assessment made by myself thanks to the data collected by the NGO El Bawsala (marsad.tn). This NGO has carried out a gargantuan job of transparency on the ANC by uploading on line elements like the biography of the MPs, the contents of their voting and even their pay slips.

³ Cf. for the second generations, Dennis Conway and Robert B. Potter, eds., *Return Migration of Next Generations: 21st Century Transnational Mobility* (Farnham, UK and Burlington, USA: Ashgate, 2009).

⁴ Peggy Levitt, "Social Remittances: Migration Driven Local-Level Forms of Cultural Diffusion," *The International Migration Review* 32 (1998): 926–48.

⁵ Vincent Geisser, "Le Rôle des Franco-Tunisians dans la Chute de la Dictature et dans la Transition Politique " [The Role of Franco-Tunisians in the Downfall of the Dictatorship and the Political Transition], *Migrations Société* 24, no.143 (2012): 155–78.

⁶ Francesco Cerase, "Expectation and Reality. A Case Study of Return Migration from the United States to Southern Italy," *International Migration Review*, 8, no. 2 (1974): 36–50.

⁷ As this research covers both the period of the mandate of the first Constituent Assembly elected in 2011 and National Assembly elected in October 2014, the article will use the acronym "ANC" to refer to the first and the acronym "ARP" (assemblée des représentants du peuple—Assembly of the People's Representatives) to indicate the second.

⁸ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1982).

⁹ Gilbert Grandguillaume, *Arabisation et Politique Linguistique au Maghreb* (Paris: Maisonneuve et Larose, 1983).

¹⁰ Stephanie Pouessel, "Des Dialectes du Bled à la Langue du Roi: Elements d'une 'Ascension' Linguistique et Miroir de l'Arabe Dialectal," in *Changements Linguistiques au Maroc*, eds. Catherine Miller, Jan Jaap de Ruiter and Montserrat Benitez-Fernandez (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2013).

¹¹ Abdelmalek Sayad, *La Double Absence: Des Illusions de l'Emigre aux Souffrances de l'Immigre* [The Double Absence: From the Illusions of the Migrant to the Sufferings of the Immigrant], (Paris: Le Seuil, 1999).

¹² Laurie A. Brand, *Citizens Abroad: Emigration and the State in the Middle East and North Africa* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 13.

¹³ Katharina Katterbach, "Tunisia's Diaspora Policies—Supporting Integration in Host Countries and Mobilizing Resources for Home Country Development," AHK Deutsch-Tunesische Industrie-und Handelskammer (2010).

¹⁴ Jean-Michel Lafleur, *Transnational Politics and the State: The External Voting Rights of Diasporas* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 6.

¹⁵ Laurie A. Brand, "Arab Uprisings and the Changing Frontiers of Transnational Citizenship: Voting from Abroad in Political Transitions," *Political Geography* 41 (2014): 54–63.

¹⁶ Cf. The intellectual and militant itinerary of Rached Ghannouchi outlined in an interview carried out by François Burgat (1992).

¹⁷ François Burgat, "Rachid Ghannouchi : Islam, Nationalisme et Islamisme (Entretien)," *Egypte/Monde Arabe* 10 (1992): 109–22.

¹⁸ Though Arabic was one of the main pillars of the National constructions of the Arab world, Tunisia figures as an isolated model, in which French remained officially enshrined by Habib Bourguiba as a token of Modernity and opening up to the World. This position, entailed by the involvement of Bourguiba's personal life story with France and his vision of politics, was also erected as counter-referent to be mobilized against his main political rival, the Arab nationalist Salah Ben Youssef.

Notwithstanding, Arabic remains the official language and main identity fixture for the majority of the population.

¹⁹ <http://www.tiwinoo.com/rafik-abdesslam-refuse-de-sexprimer-en-fran%C3%A7ais.html>.

²⁰ Interview with the daughter of a returnee exile from the UK, 15 April 2014, Tunis.

²¹ Interview with a militant of the Ennahda party formerly exiled in Germany, 2 February 2014, Tunis.

²² Ibid.

²³ Interview with the ANC MP for the Kebili constituency, 17 May 2014, Tunis.

²⁴ Troyka Boys, “جاي مل معارضة للحكومة” August 2012, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V_VY26rdh5s.

²⁵ Interview, 5 May 2013, Tunis.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ The inverse case upsets representations just as much: the Francophone or Anglophone jihadi hostage-takers, being binationals, introduce new patterns of language which upset pre-designated “cultural areas.”

²⁸ “If we have chosen French to be our *lingua Franca*, it is to be better integrated into the current of Modern Civilization and to catch up on our backwardness as soon as possible,” Habib Bourguiba, *Discours de Bizerte*, 1968.

²⁹ Vincent Geisser et Moncef Marzouki, *Dictateurs en Sursis: La Revanche des Peuples Arabes* [Dictators under Reprieve: The Revenge of the Arab Peoples], (Paris: Editions de l’Atelier, 2009).

³⁰ Moncef Marzouki, *L’Invention d’une Démocratie. Les Leçons de l’Expérience Tunisienne* [The Invention of a Democracy: The Lessons of the Tunisian Experience] (Paris: La Découverte, 2013).

³¹ As a young Franco-Tunisian writes on the UNI-T Facebook group page: “Perso je ne peux pas soutenir une discussion approfondie en arabe, meme pas en tunisien, done oui c’est la *teuhon* je le reconnais. Je ne sais en fait parler le tunisien que pour les choses de la vie courante. (. . .) L’arabe est une langue indispensable en tant que tunisien, en tant qu’arabe, en tant que musulman. Si on ne cultive pas nos forces, on n’est juste amputé” [“Personally, I cannot manage a lengthy discussion in Arabic, not even in Tunisian, so, yes, it is a shame, I admit that. In fact, I only know how to speak Tunisian for everyday things (. . .) Arabic is an indispensable language when you are a Tunisian, an Arab, a Muslim. If we don’t cultivate our strong points, we’re just amputated, cripples”], 26 October 2013.

³² There are exceptions however: some first generation Islamists claim for the use of French at home: “Mes enfants sont français, je parle le français avec eux” [My children are French, I speak French with them]. The prospect long on the cards of a return which would never happen because of the political climate goes to explain this type of choice. Interview with an Ex-Minister from Ennahdha, formerly exiled in France.

³³ Michael Bechir-Ayari, “Rester le Même Tout en Devenant un Autre: les ‘Islamistes’ Tunisiens Exiles en France” [Staying the Same While Becoming Another: Tunisian Islamists in France], *Maghreb-Machrek* 194 (2007–2008): 55–73.

³⁴ Interview with a returnee exile from France belonging to the Ennahdha party, 2 April 2013, Tunis.

³⁵ Interview with an Ennahdha woman MP from the “Italy” constituency, 18 February 2014, Tunis.

³⁶ Reported by the MP for the France Sud constituency, interview 3 February 2014, Tunis.

³⁷ Interview, May 2013, Tunis.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ “Echa’b el ‘arabi, ‘arabi fi loughthou, mouslim fi dinhou wa narfoudhou el francofoni,” intervention on 7 January 2013, plenum of the ANC, Bardo.

⁴⁰ Ironically, the speech from which the quote about not knowing how to speak dialectal Arabic is taken is actually delivered in Tunisian darija, with lots of French lexical items much as is spoken in everyday Tunisian speech. Here is an extract from her intervention between two languages: “Ahna noumathilou twansa elkoul, noumathlou zeyda twansa fil khaliy elli deuxieme ou troisieme generation maya’rfoush yahkiou biddarja, bil’arabiya el fousha, maya’rfoush yaktbou ou nqoulek zeyda elli nos parents, nos anciens – samahni malqitch le terme bil’arbi – mayaqrash, mayemshiou bilmaktab pour la plupart, ou mayafhamoush bil’arabiya el fousha.” Plenary session, 8 December 2011, ANC, Bardo, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zuo-HVj-7kA>.

⁴¹ “Ana tounsiya ahkili bil arbi !” 6 January 2014, ANC, Bardo, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-pNOiEb2XZA>.

⁴² Claire Schiff, “Beurs et Bledards : une Dichotomie ‘Indigène’ a Usages Multiples: Rapports de Genres, de Classes et de Culture dans les Forums de Discussions en Ligne Dédiés a la Communauté Maghrébine” [‘Beurs’ and ‘Bledards’: a Multiple-Purpose ‘Indigenous’ Dichotomy. Gender, Class, and Cultural Relations on Online Maghrebin Discussion Forums], CERI-Science Po, accessed 24 April 2013, <http://migrations.free.fr/Textes%20colloque/Schiff%20Claire.rtf>.

⁴³ Vincent Geisser, “Diplômés Maghrébins d’ici et d’ailleurs: Trajectoires Sociales et Itinéraires Migratoires” [Maghrebin Graduates from here and elsewhere: Social Trajectories and Migratory Paths], (Paris: CNRS, 2000).

⁴⁴ Interview, 25 May 2013, Tunis.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ It should be remembered that French is today connected with another migratory phenomenon, that of the Francophone sub-Saharan migrations towards the Maghreb. They introduce different usages of French, and on the institutional level, they sometimes contribute, for instance, to the rapid expansion of Francophone Private Schools.

⁴⁷ Pierre Bourdieu, *Langage et Pouvoir Symbolique* [Language and Symbolic Power], (Paris: Le Seuil, 2001).

⁴⁸ Though the problematic of the use of the dialect was already present in the 1960–1970s, it was limited to the circles of the Far-Left, notably around the “Perspectives” group, which published newspapers in dialectal Arabic (darija), a language purportedly closer to the ‘People’ and the ‘Workers.’ Certain militant writings were precisely addressed to migrant workers in France and to their families. Cf. Michel Camau and Vincent Geisser, eds., *Le Syndrome Autoritaire: Politique en Tunisie de Bourguiba à Ben Ali* [The Authoritarian Syndrome. Politics in Tunisia from Bourguiba to Ben Ali], (Paris: Presses de Sciences Po, 2003).

⁴⁹ Introduction to the text of the translation of the Constitution, published by the ATDC, 2014.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Personal observation.

⁵² Personal observation at the “Cafe Politique sur la Constitution, “ (“Political Cafe on the Constitution “), 21 May 2014, Cafe Voltaire, Ennasr, Tunis.

⁵³ Cf. for instance this speech by Moncef Marzouki, which calls on the citizens of Tunisia to go to census: Presidency TN, “ كلمة رئيس الجمهورية السيد محمد المنصف المرزوقي بمناسبة تعداد “ April 2014, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=98obErFICKo#t=41>.

⁵⁴ Sayad, *La Double Absence*.