

كشف منظور العلوم الاجتماعية عن حجاب أسباب ميل المرأة التونسية إلى اللغة الفرنسية وخطاب الدعا

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ملخص: يدرس هذا البحث ظاهرتي الاستعمال الأكثر للغة الفرنسية وخطاب الدعا (دَعَى على) بين النساء التونسيات منهنما بين الرجال التونسيين. لا يكاد علماء الاجتماع العرب يولون أي اهتمام لدراسة استعمال اللغة بين الجنسين، بينما ازدادت دراسات علماء الاجتماع الغربيين للموضوع في العقود الأخيرة. وربما يُعْتَبَرُ هذا البحث رائداً في دراسته للعوامل الاجتماعية والنفسية والثقافية التي تفسر أسباب الفروق في خطاب الجنسين. يستعمل صاحبُ البحث مفهوم التخلف الآخر لتحليل ميل النساء أكثر من الرجال إلى استعمال اللغة الفرنسية وممارسة خطاب الدعا. ومن ثم، فمقولة هذه إلى الدراسة ترى أن للمرأة التونسية تصوراً وتعاطفاً بارزتين نحو اللغة الفرنسية في حين تنظر النساء التونسيات برؤية دونية نحو اللغة العربية/ الوطنية الأمر الذي يجعل هويتهم العربية مرتبطة خاصة أن من بين هؤلاء النساء من تهيمن عليهن اللغة والثقافة الفرنسيتان.

المصطلحات الأساسية: اللغة الفرنسية، الدعا، التخلف الآخر، الهوية التونسية المرتبطة، النساء التونسيات، الجنس، الجنس الاجتماعي، النظام الهرمي بين الجنسين، التخلف اللغوي.

A Social Science Exploration of Tunisian Women's French Language and Adàa Discourses

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Abstract: This paper deals with Tunisian women's more widespread use of French and Adàa (word cursing) than their Tunisian male counterparts. Arab sociologists have hardly paid attention to gender and language/speech while Western social scientists have extensively tackled the topic in their studies. This article may be considered a pioneering effort in the exploration of the social psychological and cultural factors behind the differences in language/discourse use between the two Tunisian sexes. Both Adàa and French more frequent use by Tunisian women are analyzed through the concept of 'the Other Under development'. As such, the thesis of this paper underlines the positive perception Tunisian women and men have of the use of the French language. This is found to be strongly correlated today with symptoms of negative perception of Arabic and confused troubled Tunisian identity of especially many literary and educated Tunisian women and men.

Key words: French language, Tunisian women, Adàa, the Other Under development, Tunisian troubled identity, Pecking order, Sex, Gender, Linguistic Under development.

The Study's theme, Objectives, and Methodology

This piece of research attempts to shed light on the frequent use of *French and Adaa* (cursing words) by Tunisian women and the potential socio-psychological dimensions related to such behaviors. The paper hopes to find out whether *these verbal behaviors* are normal practices or symptoms of certain problems and dilemmas in the developing Tunisian society which makes its women more prone than men to these two patterns of language behavior. Could these two types of behavior be in

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favor of development/modernization or the contrary? And is it possible to offer a fair, credible, scientific reading and analysis of the phenomenon in question?

Common observations show that *Tunisian women are more inclined* than their Tunisian male counterparts to use French instead of Arabic orally and in writing; they are also more prone than men to use *Adaa*. The difference in language use between the two sexes has been widely studied by Western scholars (Trudgill, 1972; Kramarae, 1985; Smith, 1985; Nicholson, 1984; Lang, 1971; Maccoby, 1974, Mackie, 1987), whereas the subject has been rather neglected in the Arab World..

The topic is quite significant when charting discourse behavior of Tunisian women, and should merit the attention of social scientists in the region. This paper thus comes as an attempt to satisfy social science's curiosity about this phenomenon. To offer a thorough investigation of the subject, a *qualitative methodology* was used depending mainly on field observation of various women behaviors related to the two features of the phenomenon in question. On the theoretical level, the present author relied heavily on *a kit of new concepts* which he himself has developed in recent years such as the concept of the Other Underdevelopment /OU (Dhaouadi, 2002 a: 122-131) and Human Symbols/HS (Dhaouadi, 2013). These concepts and similar ones used in this study can be considered of Third World born authenticity. Many of them are apt for use across underdeveloped/developing societies which are still victims of linguistic and cultural colonization, a phenomenon *understudied* by Western or Western-oriented contemporary social sciences. The self-coined conceptual terms and theoretical visions and paradigms by Third World social scientists are seen by Farid Alatas as their way to liberate themselves from Cultural Dependency and foster and promote indigenous social sciences (Alatas, 2003). Developing self-grown concepts, methodologies as well as theories by Arab social scientists should be considered a good sign of the arrival of the Arab Spring to the intellectual life of Arab social sciences.

Arab Sociology and the Study of Language and Gender

The last few decades have witnessed a growing interest of Western social sciences in the study of language and gender (Holmes & Meyerhoff, 2005; Tannen 1990). In contrast, Arab social scientists in the Arab World *have hardly paid any attention* to this field (Women in the Arab world

1984, Gender and Development in the Middle East and North Africa 2005). On my part, I became interested in this subject since the early 1980s. I have made observations on different linguistic behaviors especially among women and men in Tunisian society and, consequently, developed certain new concepts as well as a theoretical framework to deal with and explain the phenomenon in question. As such, I see the need for an Arab Spring or awakening in the study of language and gender.

The Concepts of Gender and Sex

The American anthropologist and social psychologist Margaret Mead is considered a pioneer in *the emergence of concepts related to sex and gender*. She conducted a field research in Somoa and the New Guinea area. Her books include *Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies* (1935) and *Male and Female* (1949) where she examined the extent to which male and female roles are shaped by social factors rather than heredity. Among three primitive tribes she studied, she found the Arapesh men and women equally passive, mild-mannered, self-effacing, and nurturing toward their children. As to the Mundugamor tribe, she noticed that men and women were aggressive, sexually active, and hostile toward their children. Finally, the Tchambuli women were the practical, hard-working “breadwinners”, whereas the Tchambuli men were vain, gossipy, decorative, and artistic.

Ann Oakaly’s book (*Sex, Gender and Society*) was *the first work on gender and sex* to be published in 1972. She offers opposite definitions of sex and gender. For her, the term sex refers to the bio-physiological differences between men and women, while she defines *gender* as a human behavior resulting from *the culture of society*. In other words, gender is the outcome of a dual social classification of what is masculine and feminine as seen in society’s cultural outlook. According to the sociological perspective, society often divides unequally the roles between the two sexes.

The Absence of the Two concepts in Arab Sociology

It is not an exaggeration to say that Arab sociologists hardly use the concepts of sex and gender as just defined. For instance, the Arabic journal *Idafat* of the Arab Sociological Association published in 2009 a special file on sexuality in Arab societies. The first study was titled “maids and sex: a study of Arab perception of the sexual life of foreign

maids in the Arab world”. The second article focused on the sociology of women and sex in the work of Abdu Assamad el-Delimi, a Moroccan sociologist”. The subject of the third article was “the understanding of sexuality among Lebanese youth: stable judgments and change of attitudes. The fourth and the last paper was titled “the adolescent and sex: the life course of a village adolescent”.

It is clear from the titles of these studies that *there is an absence of the two concepts of gender and sex* as defined above: sex as a bio-physiological identity for men and women and gender as an identity acquired by both sexes from the culture of their society. The authors of the four articles focused on sexual activities among maids, Moroccan/Arab women, and Arab adolescent youth in Arab societies. It could be argued in this context that it is quite legitimate that Arab sociologists should deal in particular with the issue of gender; because the cultures of Arab societies, before and after the Arab Spring, have had a strong impact on shaping the personalities of Arab women and men and, thus, their different behaviors. As such, *gender is a very legitimate key sociological concept* for the understanding and explanation of various Arab social phenomena, which may differ among Arab women and men in the Middle East and North Africa. By not doing so, Arab sociologists miss a rich appropriate area for sociological exploration and investigation.

Foreign Language and Tunisian Women

As mentioned before, my interest in the study of Tunisian women’s interaction with the French language began earlier in the 1980s. My findings on the linguistic behavior of Tunisian women could be *extended* as well to Algerian and Moroccan women and perhaps to women in other Arab societies like Lebanon.

The principal thesis of this study claims that *the use of French language by Tunisian women* is not a mere way of communication, but it is equally *a symbolic tool* that reflects as well *the condition of Tunisian women* at the psychological, social and cultural levels in their own society as will be shown in this paper.

Tunisian Bilingualism

In order to understand the symbolic dimension of French use by Tunisian women, we need to know the nature of bilingualism in the larger Tunisian society. The latter uses two languages: Arabic as its

national language and French as the colonial language. The written and oral presence of Arabic and French in Tunisia creates *two types of bilingualism*: A- a bilingualism which *does not blame* the use of French among Tunisian men and women. This bilingualism is the most widespread in Tunisia even after its 2011 Revolution. B- a bilingualism that blames the use of French among Tunisians. This is represented only by a very tiny minority of Tunisian men and women. These two bilingualisms are also associated with *two forms of Arabization*. After independence, the first common Tunisian meaning of the term Arabization referred to linguistic policy which favors the promotion of the wide societal use of Arabic instead of French in various sectors of the Tunisian society. The second meaning of Arabization refers to what I call *psychological Arabization*. I plainly mean by this concept the concrete establishment by Tunisian men and women of *a close and strong relationship with Arabic*, their national language. My research shows that there is rather *a negative relationship* between type A of bilingualism and the first and the second type of Arabization. Bilingualism A does not strongly promote either of the two patterns of Arabization (Abdelilah-Bauer, 2008). In contrast, bilingualism B is very committed to the full promotion of the two Arabizations in Tunisia. The social psychological analysis of the Tunisian linguistic scene shows that *bilingualism A's* continuing prominence in Tunisia today is the outcome of *four main factors*: 1- the spread of French use in Tunisian society during the French colonization (1881-1956). 2- Many Tunisians went to schools in Tunisia where French language and its culture were dominant and, furthermore, some of them later attended French universities. 3-The graduates of these schools and universities have taken over the key positions (Presidents, ministers, governors...) to administer and run the affairs of the country after independence. 4- In Bourdieu's terms, those French literate and educated Tunisian men and women have, so to speak, *re-produced themselves* in governing the Tunisian society by attaching great importance and priority at times to the strong presence and frequent and wide use of French and its culture in independent Tunisia. This type of bilingualism A may be considered as *conspiring against the normal wide use of Arabic*, Tunisia's national language. Consequently, social scientists need to take into account the shades of the colonial and postcolonial variables in the study of the status of Arabic and French among Tunisian women and men today. The upgraded status of French and the still lower status of Arabic today among Tunisian men and women is one feature of what I call "*the*

Other Underdevelopment/OU” in Third World societies. The OU has hardly come to the attention of Western social scientists despite its real empirical presence in developing countries. As to Third World social scientists, they also have largely remained silent on the OU issue because of their *Academic Dependency* on Western social sciences (Alatas, 2003, 2006). Let's get familiar with this new concept in order to see its relevance to the study of Tunisian women discourse of French language.

The Wide Illiteracy on the “Other Underdevelopment”:

In dealing with the phenomenon of underdevelopment in the Third World, during the first and the second modernity's eras, Western social scientists have tended to confine themselves to the social, economic and political sides of the phenomenon of underdevelopment (Jacquemot, 1981; Bauman 2005). The accumulated quantity of Western social sciences literature on underdevelopment since the Second World War is impressive. Yet, *there is hardly* any reference to the other sides of underdevelopment / The Other Underdevelopment/OU (Pieterse, 2001). *The OU is the psycho-cultural underdevelopment*, according to my own conceptualization of this subcategory of the larger phenomenon of the Third World underdevelopment. I measure the OU in developing societies by such behavioural / psychological manifestations like the desire to imitate the West, suffering from inferiority complex as well as by using Western linguistic and cultural borrowing like the use of Western languages (English, French...) instead of native ones and the heavy dependency on Western modern science and knowledge, the wide diffusion of Western cultural values in developing countries...etc... As such, The OU is seen in my perspective as having largely resulted from Western imperial domination of Asian, African and Latin American societies in contemporary times.

In response to this academic and intellectual illiteracy and silence vis-à-vis the OU, I have set out here and elsewhere to explore this “Forgotten Underdevelopment” in a rather operational systematic framework. As expected, one can hardly seek any direct help from Western or Third World Western-oriented social sciences in going about defining, conceptualizing and theorizing this field of research. The illiteracy of both Western and non-western social sciences on the OU constitutes in itself a strange phenomenon which needs an explanation.

The Bipolar Nature of the OU:

As a phenomenon, the OU is viewed here as having *two major components* (1) The cultural and linguistic underdevelopment component and (2) The psychological underdevelopment dimension. The OU is, thus, a psycho-cultural and linguistic underdevelopment in nature. These two features of the OU are two interdependent components which interact ultimately with each other in a reciprocal pattern. Therefore, OU can be looked at and conceptualized as *a psycho-cultural and linguistic-system*.

The Cultural and Linguistic Underdevelopment:

Culture, as defined by Edward B. Tylor (1871), is seen, especially by modern anthropologists and sociologists, as a vital force of human society existence. Society's dynamics depend greatly on the state of its cultural forces. However, Tylor's concept of culture does not include language, though without the latter we can hardly conceive of culture in its human broad sense. As such, *language is the cornerstone* for the emergence of the phenomenon of the complex human culture. So, I prefer to use in this article instead of culture the term *Cultural Symbols (CS)* which I define as: *spoken/written language, thought, beliefs, knowledge/science, laws, myths, cultural values and norms*. CS is seen as the most distinctive features of the human species. So, they are so basic to the human identity. Understanding Third World underdevelopment remains incomplete and short sighted without paying adequate attention to its CS aspects of underdevelopment. Third World CS underdevelopment is but one dimension of its global (socio-economic, political dimensions, etc...) underdevelopment and it can be measured by three manifestations:

1) Linguistic Underdevelopment:

I define linguistic underdevelopment as *the widespread use of a foreign language/s* in a given society (as the case of Tunisian women's use of French will show) and *the under usage* (the less than full use) of society's own native language(s) (spoken/written or both). The side effect of linguistic underdevelopment ought *to be taken very seriously*, because it has a negative impact on the cultures of societies as well as on the very continuing presence of underdevelopment of native language/s (Wurn, 2001). Today's Third World linguistic underdevelopment can best be illustrated in the African continent.

a) Black Africa's Linguistic Underdevelopment:

As a result of Western imperialism in Africa since the 15th century, English, French, Portuguese and Spanish have become the official languages of most countries of today's Black Africa. There are nearly as many independent African states which use English as there are states that use French as their official languages. The total number of those countries amounts to 38 which constitute the majority of the African states of the Black continent (Fragas, 1984: 164-183). It is because of this linguistic fact that Africa is so often divided today into *two Africas*: 1) the English-speaking Africa and 2) the French-speaking Africa. To name just a few of these countries I can mention Uganda, Ghana, Nigeria, Liberia and Sierra Leone, which belong to the English-speaking Africa, while Senegal, Tchad, Guinea, Congo and the Democratic Republic of Congo/Zaire are representatives of the French-speaking Africa. Portugal's earlier colonization in the continent has led to the spread of Portuguese in such countries as Mozambique, Angola and Guinea-Bissau, where Portuguese is still the official language of these independent states. Compared to the wide use of English and French as pointed out in Black Africa, the use of Portuguese is considerably limited. It is adopted only in five countries as an official language. Finally, Spanish, as an official language, is found only in Equatorial Guinea. As such, the overspread use of these languages particularly in various modern sectors of these societies constitutes *a linguistic underdevelopment*. In other words, native languages are not given the opportunity to be fully used in all walks of life. Their growth and their maturity are, therefore, bound to be hampered and *underdeveloped*. The general acute linguistic underdevelopment in Black Africa should not, however, be explained only by Western imperialism but also by *in-built internal difficult linguistic situations* which characterize most of these countries. On the one side, there is hardly any common language/dialect in each of those societies which is understood and acceptable to all clans, tribes and groups. On the other hand, the language(s)/dialect(s) are often limited to orality. As such, its full use falls short of meeting the modern aspirations of the new African states like self-management of modern structures and institutions in their own societies. This delicate linguistic state in today's Black Africa should be meaningful in any rigorous attempt to understand the special nature of the complex problems of underdevelopment facing those

nations. That is to say, the challenges they face in the battle against underdevelopment are not limited only to the socio-economic dimensions. Their underdevelopment is *global* in nature. Their psycho-cultural and linguistic symbolic underdevelopment is a fundamental component of their broad underdevelopment.

b) North Africa's Linguistic Underdevelopment:

Similarly, the North African societies (Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco) can hardly be exempted as well from the phenomenon of linguistic underdevelopment among women and men. The post-independence constitution of each of these countries explicitly affirms that *Arabic is the national official language*. Yet, the use of French (spoken and written) is still a prevailing common phenomenon in these societies particularly in the various modern sectors. One manifestation of linguistic underdevelopment is the wide spread of the Franco-Arabe (spoken Arabic mixed with French) nearly among all groups of both sexes of today's Maghrebian societies. As explained earlier, national government policies of Arabization have not yet been entirely able to promote the status of Arabic to a fully used language (spoken and written) in all sectors of these nations. As such, the societies of North Africa suffer, though to a considerably lesser degree, like the majority of Black African societies from linguistic underdevelopment. However, Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco have, on the whole, *a much better chance* than the rest of the African states in ending linguistic underdevelopment because of the following reasons:

First, Arabic is spoken and understood by the vast majority of the entire population of these three countries. **Second**, Arabic is the sacred language of the Holy Book (The Qu'ran) of the Islamic faith to which Arabs and Berbers of the Maghreb adhere. **Third**, as a language, Arabic is a fully articulated and sophisticated language that can adapt itself to modern changes. It had already proved its great vitality during the Golden Age of Arab-Muslim civilization. The enormous movement of translation undertaken by this civilization, especially under El Maamun's rule in Baghdad, illustrates very well the capacity of the Arabic language to integrate Greek philosophy, Persian and Indian sciences and wisdom into the Arabic-Islamic-cultural and scientific heritage, which Europe had greatly benefited from. Based on this, the relative linguistic underdevelopment of Arabic in Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco has mainly resulted from *the French*

linguistic and cultural colonization and not from inherent linguistic handicaps which afflict Black Africa as referred to earlier.

Thus, successful Arabization becomes here the key for dealing with linguistic underdevelopment. However, social policies, enthusiasm and determination of the post-independence regimes in those countries have not unanimously been in favour Arabization. *The general weak and ambivalent attitude of political and intellectual authorities toward Arabization particularly in Tunisia and Morocco has contributed, since independence in 1956, to the delay of the linguistic underdevelopment eradication in these independent countries despite the Arabic language's great potentialities for promotion and advancement.*

Language and Gender under Scrutiny

Having outlined my three major concepts: Man is by nature a cultural symbolic being, Cultural Symbols/CS and the OU, I believe it is right to use them in my field work on *Tunisian women and French language discourse*, the major topic of this paper.

One special sub-feature of the OU is found especially among Tunisian literate and educated women who have more than primary school level of education. These women tend to be *more involved in code-switching* than their Tunisian male counterparts. Tunisian literate and educated women use more French words in their Tunisian Arabic dialect "the Franco-Arabe" (Dhaouadi, 1982 b: 124-137, 2003: 417-435, 1986: 46-66, 1996 a: 81-91). They adopt more as well *the Parisian accent* when they speak or read the French language (Dhaouadi, 1996 b. 107-125, 2002 c 41-53). Put in my CS perspective, these *Tunisian women are the bigger users of the French linguistic symbols.*

As such, Tunisian literary and educated women use of French words and sentences in their Arabic Tunisian dialects has *two characteristics*: 1 - they use more French words and sentences than their Tunisian male counterparts, and 2 - they intensely use the Parisian accent when they speak or read French. It is methodologically legitimate here to recognize that we have *two types of Franco-Arabe* in Tunisian society, one is *masculine* and the other is *feminine*. To my knowledge, this has largely passed unnoticed by those who have studied bilingualism in Tunisia. The social psychological causes of the two Franco-Arabes, as linguistic phenomena, need to be fully described, analyzed and discussed.

The Socio-Psychological Dimensions of the Feminine Franco-Arabe:

Historically, the mixing of Arabic with French (the Franco-Arabe) among the Tunisian population has its roots in the French colonization of Tunisia which lasted from 1881 to 1956. Ibn Khaldun's (1332-1406) law of imitation could explain why the encounter between the French colonizers and the colonized Tunisian people has, on the one hand, led to the emergence of the Franco-Arabe among Tunisians and, on the other, to a quasi-complete absence of what we may call the Arab-Franco-spoken language among the French occupiers. According to this Arab sociologist, "The vanquished always wants to imitate the victor in his distinctive mark(s), his dress, his occupation, and all his other conditions and customs" (Ibn Khaldun/Rosenthal, 1980:299).

While the Franco-Arabe is a general socio-psycholinguistic fact in contemporary Tunisia, it is not, however, identically used by the two sexes. Tunisian women, who have more than primary school level of education, tend to mix their Arabic dialect with more French words and expressions than their Tunisian male counterparts.

Interviews and plain participant observations make it rather clear that the literary and educated Tunisian female population has decisively *more pronounced desire and actual linguistic behavior* toward the use of French in her spoken Arabic⁽¹⁾. The question now could be formulated in Khaldunian terms: what lies behind the greater imitation of the French language (as a cultural linguistic symbol) as manifested by the literary

¹ For instance, an overwhelming majority of Tunisians when asked: who mix more their Arabic with French: men or women? Choose women as the greater users of French. This repeated popular common sense impression could hardly be easily dismissed as unfounded when particularly supported further by more meticulous social science research techniques like the ones referred to in the text. Modern social sciences literature on the relation between gender and language use is still poor despite its steady growth in recent years. Peter Trudill, for instance, advances an argument similar to the one advanced in this study. That is, specific language use echoes the social psychological situations of its user. He says. "Men in our society can be rated socially by their occupation, their earning power and perhaps by their other abilities: by what they do. For the most part, however, this is not possible for women. It may be, therefore, that they are instead to be rated on how they appear. Since they are not rated by their occupation or by their occupational success, other signals of states, including speech are correspondingly more important". In *Language in Society: Sex, Covert Prestige and Linguistic Change in the Urban British English of Norwich*, Vol.I n°2, Oct. 1972. pp.179-194.

and educated Tunisian women? In other words, what are the social and psychological factors which may make them more attracted (solicited) toward the much frequent use of French in their Arabic conversations? What is at stake here is the identification of *certain specific factor(s)* that could account for this greater inclination among these Tunisian women for the use of the Franco-Arabe in the Tunisian society.

My own research in this field has enabled me to identify *two major forces* that could explain the Tunisian feminine Franco-Arabe in question. They are of socio-psychological nature and they are integrated in what I would like to call "*The Double Self Contempt Symptom*". On the one hand, there is the inferiority complex vis-a-vis the French, (or the West in general) which is shared both by the male and female population alike in today's Tunisian society (Memmi, 1957). On the other hand, the literary and educated Tunisian women suffer from *a second inferiority complex* that of being positioned in a largely *male dominated society*. The mentalities, the traditions and the social structures of the Tunisian society still hamper somewhat the female population from having an easy and full excess to participate particularly in the larger sectors of modern life⁽²⁾. In functionalist terms, the literary and educated Tunisian women's frequent resort to the Franco-Arabe (as a cultural linguistic symbol) has basically a *psychological function*. It represents for them a symbolic compensative solution that gives them the impression of *bridging the equality gap* between them and their Tunisian male counterparts. The use of French, as a cultural symbolic weapon, plays *two roles for these Tunisian women*: (1) It lifts them up, so to speak, so they can consciously or unconsciously feel closer to the image as well as to the status of the former colonizer (the French), who personalizes for them a better self-esteem image. The imitation in speaking the French language appears to reduce the burden of the inferiority complex still felt by both Tunisian

² The double standard ethics between the two sexes is still strong in certain sectors in today's Tunisian society. The cultural value system of the latter still exercises more constraints on the female population toward things associated with modernity. Three empirical examples from the Tunisian social scene are sufficient to make the point: (a) women's mobility after the sunset is greatly restricted. They hardly can attend theatrical plays, movies, shows, intellectual events... at night, if they are not accompanied particularly by male companions. (b) Tunisian cultural norms still do not permit the Tunisian women to smoke in public. And (c) Going to cafés to drink coffee, to eat a cake... is still strongly a male activity in Tunisian cafés.

sexes in face of the perceived dominant Western other. The Tunisian women's frequent use of French seems to be *a symbolic gesture* with which they *peacefully protest* against the social order of their own society. This social order still puts some obstacles which block them from having easy access to some features of modernity like their Tunisian male counterparts. This is expressed more by Tunisian women under "Ennahda" Islamist political party leadership after the Tunisian uprising of 2011.

The desire and the pursuit of modernity in the Tunisian society put greater socio- psychological pressure, stress and worries on the female population (Hays, 1987). In social psychological terms, the phenomenon of the feminine Franco-Arabe could be seen as the result of *two types of stressful practices* of which the literary and educated Tunisian women are especially the victims: (1) the self-degradation feeling as the outcome of the relationship between the former dominant colonizer and the dominated colonized Tunisians. (2) the relative oppression exercised by the prevailing traditions, mentalities, social structures... of the Tunisian society on these women who aspire for a greater share of modernity (Hays, 1987). As such, the Tunisian literary and educated women's inferiority complex is the outcome of *both social and psychological forces*. So, their social psychological state is more likely to be exposed to more social contradictions and psychological tensions, (Hays, 1987).

There is hardly a need to point out how the theoretical concepts outlined above could help explain the profile of the described linguistic behavior of the literary and educated Tunisian women.

The Social Psychological Dimensions of Adàa

Adàa is an Arabic word. It means the oral use of Arabic words and sentences by which the person wishes to inflict damage and bad luck on the addressed individual. It is plainly *word cursing*. This phenomenon is more spread among women in Tunisian society. It is fair enough to state that Adàa, as a widely used feminine Tunisian discourse, has no relationship with women's biology. Otherwise, Adàa would have been a common feature in the past, in the present and in the future among the female population in the rest of human societies regardless of the social and cultural differences which may exist between them.

Adàa appears to be largely absent, for instance, in both the

American and the Canadian societies. Viewed against this background, *the phenomenon of Adàa becomes a full blown legitimate domain of sociological research*. As mentioned, the sociologist can easily state in this regard that Adàa, in Tunisian society, is predominantly a feminine widespread linguistic phenomenon whose roots are first of all of *social nature*. And this phenomenon is far from being a recent phenomenon in the Tunisian society. It is rather a kind of *cultural symbolic heritage* which continues *to prevail more* among the larger female population.

The Social History of Adàa in the Arab World

The social researcher is required here to shed light on the history of the social forces which have helped to bring about *the widespread phenomenon of Adàa* among the Tunisian female population. The Lebanese sociologist, Zuheir Hatab can be considered almost the only known Arab author (Hatab, 1980) who has implicitly made reference to some of the social historical causes which may help explain and account for the emergence of the phenomenon of Adàa in the Arab societies at large. Though the determination of the precise historical date of the emergence of the phenomenon in question might be of some help for the establishment of a better understanding of Adàa, I focus nonetheless in this article on the diagnosis of the social psychological dimensions of Adàa as it could be inferred from Adàa discourse itself. The appropriate reading and interpretation of the latter could certainly convey and offer an adequate image both of the state of Arab society as well as of social status of women in it.

The phenomenon of Adàa is more likely to surface and even harden in societies where the following *cultural symbolic characteristics* are common features: widespread of alphabetical and intellectual illiteracy, prevalence of superstition and illusive imagination, strong beliefs in invisible and mysterious forces like Satans, demons (Jinn), Saints, magicians, jugglers...

Like other linguistic discourses, *Adàa* unveils certain aspects of society's social reality. *It is a sort of a mirror* that reflects symbolically the state of the cultural and social condition of individuals and groups in a given period of society's history. In short, Adàa is one of the telling indicators of society's grave cultural symbolic backwardness. It should be rightfully added to the list of the sociology of underdevelopment

indicators spelled out by the literature of the sociology of underdevelopment in modern times. In my own terms, Adàa is a clear component of the Other Underdevelopment. As explained earlier, it is the underdevelopment which erodes and undermines both the psychological as well as the cultural symbolic dimensions of the individual's personality.

According to Zubeir Hatab, the Arab families and their societies had witnessed *a high degree of decline* in thought and behavior especially during the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries. Thus, Adàa could be seen as a discourse that has recorded in a linguistic cultural symbolic manner the deteriorating Arab larger society of which the Tunisian society is but a social subsystem.

Adàa and its Social Psychological Meanings for the Tunisian Women:

The above are some of the social cultural symbolic meanings that could be inferred from Adàa about the state of Arab societies in a given period of their history. But the most important question relevant to the thesis of this article is this: what are precisely the social psychological dimensions (meanings) of Adàa for the Tunisian women? As stressed here, Adàa is predominantly an oral discourse more used by the female gender in the Tunisian society. In view of Zuheir Hatab, this could be accounted for by *the overall deteriorated social status of the Arab women* during the periods of decadence in the history of Arab peoples.

“Due to her ignorance, her lack of social experience and her isolation, the Arab woman becomes the member of the family and society who is mostly predisposed to react favorably toward superstitious beliefs and thoughts (cultural symbols) and mostly inclined as well to take them as true and as basis for their behaviors/actions » (Hatab, 1980: 175).

In sociological terms, the phenomenon of *Adàa* among the Arab (Tunisian) female population becomes *the outcome of a stubborn social cultural symbolic determinism*.

On the psychological level of the Tunisian women, the discourse of Adàa makes unambiguous hints that the Tunisian women were not, at times at least, capable to deal directly and personally with many issues and events that affect, preoccupy and defy them. *Feeling helpless, weak and in a state of defeat*, they seek help and intervention of others on their

behalf. What makes their situation not helpful is that Adàa is a call upon invisible and metaphysical beings in the hope they could intervene, control and put order in their own affairs. In acting this way, they could only harden and aggravate *their psychological state of powerlessness*. The intermediate beings to which they turn to and ask for help from belong neither to the real material worlds nor to the making of their own daily life. With Adàa, they ultimately sought/seek help from an imaginary and illusory universe that could hardly offer them any substantive help conducive to a real positive change of their social psychological state.

Tunisian Women's Condition and the Parisian Accent

Further analysis of the French language discourse of Tunisian women shows that they also use more than Tunisian men the so called *Parisian accent*. There are two strong reasons which have prepared and continue to predispose the Tunisian women to be psychologically and socially more in need than Tunisian males of their persistent adoption of the Parisian accent when they speak or read French. These two reasons explain as well the already described tendency among Tunisian females to mix their Tunisian dialect with more French words and expressions (the Franco-Arabe) than their male counterparts. In other words, both the Parisian accent and the greater use of French in the Tunisian Arabic dialect -as linguistic symbols- by Tunisian females could be interpreted as *symbols of the degraded social status* and the *strained psychological state* of the contemporary Tunisian women. The social psychological situation of the latter makes them: 1) keener than the Tunisian males to reach out for the linguistic cultural symbols of imitation of the former French colonizer and (2) more pressed than the Tunisian males to reach out for the cultural symbols of modernity. Both behaviors could be seen as the syndrome of what is called « *status frustration* » in modern psychology.

The Pecking Order among the Three Social Actors

In order to resort to the sociological perspective in my analysis, let's look now at French language and Parisian accent discourse of Tunisian women from the perspective of *the social theory of imitation*. The act of imitation implies at least the presence and the interaction of two parties: the imitator and the imitated. In the situation at hand during the French colonization of Tunisia, there were *three parties involved*: the Tunisian women, the Tunisian men and the French colonizers. The interaction of

these three parties occurs through the law of the so-called *pecking order*. That is, a hierarchy prevails in the relationship among the three social actors. On the one hand, during Tunisia's colonization by France (1881-1956), the French occupiers were the dominant party and the Tunisian men and women were the dominated ones. On the other hand, Tunisian society was strongly male dominated. Inequality between the sexes was an overwhelming feature. In this triad situation, *Tunisian women were subjugated to two types of domination*. In short, they were the most powerless of the three parties.

The Continuing Pecking Order

With Tunisia's independence in 1956, things have considerably changed between the parties in question. The French physical occupation of Tunisia was terminated. Consequently, the majority of the French population left Tunisian territory soon after. But the shades of French domination did not fade away from the imagination of the independent Tunisian population. France is still strongly present among Tunisians through *its cultural symbols* especially its *language, culture and thought*. France, as a well-developed society, is still intensely felt by developing Tunisia through tourism, the written media and the lively images which Tunisians regularly receive from various French/European television stations on their television screens. After independence, the dominant/dominated relations between the French and the Tunisians have taken the form of *developed/developing relations*. That is, Tunisians continue to suffer from the inequality syndrome in their relation with the French, their former colonizer.

Persistent Inequality between the Sexes

The Tunisian social scene has, in turn, witnessed a considerable positive change in favor of the promotion of the social status of Tunisian women. The latter have massively gone to school and to the job market. Many pro-woman progressive laws have been adopted as well. The Tunisian women stand today as the avant-garde in the entire Arab world as far as women's rights are concerned. Yet, total equality between men and women has not been completely achieved in all aspects in independent modern Tunisia. This is far from being peculiar to Tunisia. Inequality between the sexes still exists even in the most advanced Western societies of this century. In other words, the Tunisian women

still lag behind their male counterparts on few fronts on the equality scale. Despite their considerable gains that have increasingly enhanced their social status in the last five decades or so, they remain more disadvantaged than the Tunisian men with regard to what I would like to call '*modernity's benefits*'.⁽³⁾ The net result of all this is the continuing presence of some hierarchical order among the former French colonizers, the Tunisian men and the Tunisian women. A thin pecking order still holds through. There has been some change favoring more equality in the relationship between independent Tunisians and the former French colonizers, on the one hand, and the relationship between the sexes since Tunisia's independence, on the other. In this hierarchal triad, the position of Tunisian women tends to remain somewhat in *the third place*. This situation may be interpreted to be behind Tunisian women's more use of French cultural symbols like the Franco-Arabe and the Parisian accent *as a compensation* for their third status standing in the triad setting.

Who Imitates Whom Most and in What?

Modern social science theory of imitation suggests that the weaker party is more inclined to imitate the stronger one. This is in line with the law of imitation of Ibn Khaldun, the Arab historian and sociologist of the Middle Ages (1332-1406). As quoted before, he states that the vanquished party tends always to imitate his conqueror. As already seen, the Tunisian women are victims of *a double domination*. Their traditional male-dominated society continues in certain cases to block them from social mobility, restrict their access to the wider range of modernity's benefits and limit their free development and actualization. In face of this situation, the literary and educated Tunisian women in particular are pushed harder to look for an *outlet that liberates them* somewhat from the burden of the double domination they face. Their inclination to imitate culturally and symbolically the French dominant party appears to be legitimate for at least three reasons: (1) the French were physically and now are culturally symbolically the top dominant party in the triad setting referred to earlier. Thus, they were and are more eligible to be imitated by the most dominated party (the Tunisian women). (2) The

³ Modernity's benefits refer basically to three things: 1) more equality between the sexes in their society's social order; 2) more freedom of mobility for females in society; 3) more freedom of expression in public for females.

Tunisian women's linguistic symbolic imitation of the French liberates them somehow psychologically and, to a certain extent socially, from some strict traditional cultural features of the significantly Tunisian male-dominated society, and (3) it is through the imitation of the French (Western) dominant party that the Tunisian women attempt to minimize the stress caused by their desire for modernity in a society which continues to exercise in certain situations *a double standard between the sexes*. In other words, being more deprived of modernity's wider benefits than their Tunisian male counterparts, the Tunisian women tend to seek peaceful cultural symbolic (linguistic) means to express their frustration. They choose some sort of *non-violent protest* against the male dominated society. Their imitation of the French (the Western) party is hardly limited to their adoption of the Parisian accent in speaking or reading French. As pointed out earlier, they are also known to be more keen than the Tunisian men on mixing their Arabic with French words or/and expressions (Franco-Arabe) in their daily speech (Dhaouadi, 1986: 46-66). Furthermore, Tunisian women appear to be more involved in *birthday celebrations* than Tunisian men. This is more visible in the organization of birthdays of their children which has become, since independence, a relatively widespread custom among a significant majority of Tunisian mothers. The adoption of the Parisian accent, the tendency of using more French words or/and expressions with Arabic and the widespread birthday celebrations among Tunisian women all converge *to signal one thing: Tunisian women are more in need to imitate French (Western) modernizing cultural symbols*. To speak French with a Parisian accent means to be as modern as the Parisians themselves, the most modern of all modern French people. Behind the Parisian accent and the French language use in general, there is more than the ear can hear. The persistent use of the Parisian accent by today's Tunisian women stands for the cultural symbols of becoming modern like Parisians. In sociological terms, feeling thwarted by the traditional structures of a male dominated society, the modernizing Tunisian women reach out for certain *cultural symbols of modernity* which hardly raise the anger of Tunisian men. The Parisian accent, the greater use of French words and expressions (Franco-Arabe) and birthday celebrations appear *to satisfy both sides*. On the one hand, the Tunisian women's self-esteem and their desire for becoming modern seem to get adequate fulfillment from *the easy practice of those cultural symbols*. On the other hand, the

Tunisian male population does not apparently mind to see that Tunisian women have access to modernity through the use of some of its symbols which are tolerated by the rules of a male dominated society.

The Tunisian women's social status before and after independence makes them, as described above, more prone to be involved in the culturally symbolic of a wider range of imitative behaviors of the French (Western) party in more than just a limited single act. It covers rather a number of linguistic cultural symbolic acts (the Parisian accent, more use of French words and expressions with Arabic (the Franco-Arabe and birthday celebrations) which ultimately make up an entire unit or *a coherent system*. All these different acts signal unequivocally the Tunisian women's pressing desire for Western modernity of which their male dominated society deprives them of. Their bargain here is to have bigger access to the cultural symbolic system of modernity which they reach out for and concentrate *their imitation upon*. This could be considered in a culturally symbolic way as a compensation for modernity's missing benefits. Their greater deprivation (compared with their Tunisian male counterparts) from modernity's gains predisposes them to be *the most eligible candidates* for a fuller swing, so to speak, of cultural linguistic imitation of modern French/Western people in general. Obviously, that leads them to suffer more than their male counterparts from *the Other Underdevelopment*.

As such, the continuing overwhelming use of the Parisian accent by the majority of today's Tunisian women, when speaking or reading French, has to be understood in light of what has been already underlined. That is, *the historical argument* explaining the contemporary Tunisian women's Parisian accent *is far from adequate*. Without the analysis of the social situation and the psychological state of the contemporary Tunisian women and their use of cultural symbols in response to those conditions, no lucid understanding and explanation of the origin as well as the maintained use of the Parisian accent by the Tunisian women today could be expected to be genuinely secured. The question of the Parisian accent is hardly a matter of plain history, as H. Skik claims (Skik, 1992). Such a view excludes the impact of society's ever ongoing dynamics on language (as the Mother of all cultural symbols) use through time and space. A given accent of a given language is always potentially subject to change by the people who use it. When it persists, as is the case with the Parisian accent among contemporary

Tunisian women, *we have to seek a structural functional perspective that offers a credible explanation*. In other terms, the continuing use of the Parisian accent by the majority of Tunisian women will continue to fulfill social psychological needs as long as the Tunisian women remain, in certain areas, the more handicapped party of the modern Tunisian society pecking order structure.

Conclusion

To my knowledge, the identification of Tunisian women's *greater desire* for the use of French and the Adàa constitutes *new findings* for both Tunisian sociology as well as Arab sociology at large. The adoption of a social psychological approach in the study of Adàa and French language more pronounced practices by the Tunisian females has helped discover *hidden dimensions* behind these two phenomena. This gives credibility to the disciplines of social sciences both at the theoretical and empirical levels. Adàa and French wider use by Tunisian women are based on *empirical observations* in the Tunisian society in particular. On the *theoretical level*, both phenomena could be explained by my concept of *the Other Underdevelopment* outlined above. In doing so, the two phenomena are captured on the spot with their revealing meaningful social psychological implications. They are no longer forgotten phenomena, let alone trivial and marginal ones.

It appears that the silence of both Tunisian sociology and Arab sociology on the two phenomena is due to two major factors:

1 - A big lack of scientific curiosity among Tunisian and Arab sociologists at large with regard to *the small phenomena* in their societies. In general, they are rather trained to orient themselves to the study of *big phenomena* like development/underdevelopment, social inequality, capitalism, socialism, social movements, Arab Nationalism and Islamic Fundamentalism etc... For instance, after independence, Tunisian sociologists have not paid attention to a number of small phenomena like *the prohibition of raising female cattle* in the north-east of Tunisia and to the conspiring bilingualism mentioned earlier. These two small phenomena are of empirical nature in Tunisian society. Their significance in the Tunisian social scene is of great importance to social scientists to discover new facts and possibly develop new concepts and theories (Dhaouadi, 2006, 2010, 2013).

2 - Most Arab sociologists are handicapped by what Farid Alatas calls *Academic Dependency* (Alatas 2003, 2006). There are several ways on how to look at the issue of Third World academic dependency on the West in the field of social sciences:

a) Research has documented that the works of some Western social scientists, as anthropologists and geographers, *served colonial interests like divide and rule*.

b) Western oriented education of Third World social scientists tend to create what the Malaysian sociologist, Seyed Hossein Alatas, calls "*the Captive Mind*" (Alatas, 1972:9-25). The latter merely extends the application of American and European social sciences to the developing societies' settings without the appropriate adaptation of imported ideas and techniques to Third World situations.

c) This Third World captive mind becomes *squarely captive* when it receives its academic social science knowledge in *Western languages* like English and French. Tunisian sociologists of the earlier period after independence are a good example of that.

The education of both Arab and Third World sociologists in American and European social sciences can be *irrelevant* to the Arab and Third World social sciences in two ways: 1) these sciences are not applicable to phenomena and realities of the Arab and the Third World societies.

2) they ignore or they are not adequately aware of certain phenomena in the Arab world like what is called *the Other Underdevelopment* and the feminine Franco-Arabe in the Maghreb, as outlined and analyzed earlier.

3) In this context of dependency, authentic Arab sociology could hardly claim it has a solid real existence, because *it lacks its own self-made credible concepts, methodologies and theories* drawn from the social realities of contemporary Arab societies.

As such, the focus on Tunisian women's speech/discourse in this article can be considered of *post-modern nature*; because Postmodernism pays great attention to the symbols of modern individuals and their advanced societies (Lyotard, 1979). Yet, it could be argued that Tunisian women's wide use of French and Adàa are *symptoms of underdevelopment and not of development*. As already outlined by Hatab, the Adàa discourse

is a manifestation of a backward social and cultural condition of the Arab women. Today, Arab public opinion hardly sees the practice of Adàa as a sign of progress and modernity of Arab women. As to the widespread use of French by Tunisian women, the general Tunisian public perception sees it as an index of modernity because of the impact of the colonized-colonizer relationship between Tunisians and the French. However, neutral analysis can show that this Tunisian public perception is *a false one*: a) Using French instead of Arabic, Tunisia's national language, is a practice which would promote *the underdevelopment of Arabic*. Since language regresses or progresses according to the degree of its full use in society, b) *the underuse of Arabic* by Tunisian women and men has resulted in *a negative psychological perception of Arabic* among the majority of them and c) this type of bilingualism is bound to have *a troubling impact on the identity of Tunisian women* and men, because languages are often found to be cards of identification.

In a nutshell, the displayed obsessive frequent use of French by Tunisian women can be interpreted as symbolic remaining features of French colonialism. Tunisia has led the *2011 Arab Spring movements of liberation* from dictator and oppressive political regimes. Yet, Tunisian women can hardly qualify to be revolutionary if they do not liberate themselves, and consequently, their children (Tunisia's future generations) from French/Western linguistic and cultural colonialism and imperialism. Remaining under the burden of the latter, *Tunisian men and women cannot plan the future of their own society*, but they will rather let Others do the future planning for them.

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