Black Tunisians and Racism in the Discourse of National media, urban élites and rural local actors: the case of ‘Abid Ghbonton
After 2011, an anew sentiment of freedom and a loosened censorship on internet, newspapers, and television:

- **Number of associations doubled**
- **Qualitative leap: new focus on human rights**
- **Geographical reshuffling: penetrating the interior**
The “progressive and environmentally unsustainable hyper-concentration of anthropogenic pressures and activities on increasingly vulnerable areas” has as causes

- The burgeoning business of international tourism (resorts, villas..)
- The de-localization of European manufacturing activities (textiles)
- The extreme exploitation of phosphate mines and industries

and as consequences:

- Hyper-urbanization
- Environmental catastrophes (e.g. the Gulf of Gabès)

The «coastalization» of Tunisia
Julia Clancy-Smith (2014)
Who are «Black Tunisians»?
Slavery: the Trans-Saharan slave trade
• First country to abolish slavery in the Arab and Middle-Eastern world: in 1846 thanks to the far-seeing policy of Ahmed Bey (1837-1855)

• Transformation of slavery into *wala*

• Denial of the legacy of slavery and of racism under the nation-building post-independence process (Habib Bourguiba)

• With no apparent minority, the South has functioned as a «domestic other»

**Abolition**
• Less than 25% of Blacks attend secondary schools
• Lowest ladders of society
• Strict endogamy
• No political representation before 2011, scarcely after 2011
• Morally lacking authority, less «pious» than Whites: Blacks’ jobs are socially despicable: blacksmiths, prostitutes, musicians, singers

Black Tunisians today
Associations for Blacks’ rights

- Urban-based
- Highly educated Blacks
- French-speaking
- Women
- Young and digitally-educated
- Fight for the introduction of a «hate crime»
• Southern, conservative village
• Blacks and Whites share the same patronymic and belong to the same qabyla (tribu) but Blacks are called «Slaves of the Whites»
• Blacks and Whites divided by a oued (small river) and practice a strict endogamy
• They survive as clam collectors, musicians, blacksmiths, emigrants (Djerba and Libya)
• Linguistic differences: French vs Tunisian Arabic
• Locally pursued strategies of emancipation (migration, music) vs calls for «hate crime»
• Geographical cleavages: North (coast, cities) vs South (centre, South, borders)
• Theoretical/Religious frameworks: Western-oriented discourse on «Apartheid» vs Islamic institution of wala

Why do ‘Abid Ghbonton not understand urban activists?