

# Female victory or maintained masculinity?

*The effect of the Arab spring on gender equality*

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## Summary

The Arab spring is a term that describes the series of uprisings that spread across the Middle East and North Africa between 2010 and 2011. What started as an act of despair of a young street vendor that set himself on fire, resulted in a regional revolution that brought down regimes in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, and Yemen. In the former three countries, long-time dictators were replaced with democratically chosen governments. Since in all MENA regions women were discriminated by law, these revolutions sparked the hope that democratization would enhance their place in society. However, to what extent has this been the case?

This thesis assesses the effect of the Arab spring on gender equality through a co-variational case study between Tunisia and Algeria. It is expected that the Arab spring had a positive effect on gender equality. This assumed effect is assessed on a subset of gender equality indicators: women's rights, women's political representation, and women's economic participation.

Based on qualitative data on law reform, data on female parliamentary representation and data on females' relative labour force participation rates, three conclusions can be drawn. One, the Arab spring led to an increase in women's rights since Tunisia passed significant law reforms that eliminate gender discrimination in important aspects of family law and inheritance law, whereas such reform is absent in Algeria. Two, the Arab spring did not lead to an increase in women's political representation since the female parliamentary representation rate increased slightly in Tunisia and, contrary to the expectation, increased significantly in Algeria due to a quota. Three, the Arab spring did not lead to an increase in women's economic participation because women's relative labour force participation rate remained stable in both countries.

The effect of the Arab spring on gender equality appears to be mixed. However, many scholars stress the importance of time as they expect that the effect will grow stronger in the long-term. Therefore, further research, both quantitative and qualitative, is needed to fully grasp the long-term effect of the Arab spring on gender equality.

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## 1. Introduction

In 2011, autocratic regimes in the Middle East and North Africa found themselves in the middle of a crisis. The accumulation of years of unemployment, social insecurity, and repressive regimes triggered millions of people to demand political reforms (Sarihan, 2012). The protests started in Tunisia on 17 December 2010 after a young street vendor set himself on fire after his goods were confiscated by the police. This desperate act, followed by his death, brought thousands of people together to demand political change: the Jasmine Revolution had started. The mass protests of the Jasmine revolution quickly spread to other countries in the region: Bahrein, Egypt, Lebanon, Libya, Syria, and Yemen. However, the regimes whose resignations were demanded did not stepped down without a fight (Moghadam, 2014).

The Arab spring developed with relatively speaking little violence in Egypt. The protests in Egypt lasted from 25 January 2011 until 11 February 2011 and were aimed at President Mubarak who reigned over Egypt for over thirty years. Eighteen days after the first protests, Mubarak resigned from office (Al Jazeera, 2018). How different was this in other countries like Bahrein, Yemen, Libya, and Syria where protesters faced heavy military repression. For instance, Libya's dictator Moammar al-Gaddafi refused to resign and used lethal force including bombing his cities and executing opponents to retain in position (Human Rights Watch, 2012:597).

In Yemen and Syria, the Arab spring did not bring prosperity and peace, it brought the exact opposite: civil war. The Arab spring in Yemen brought a regime change after authoritarian President Saleh handed over his power and fled to Saudi Arabia. However, the continued struggle for stability resulted in a civil war that is still unfolding this day (BBC, 2020). President Bashar al-Assad of Syria first tried to appease the people by announcing new reforms. When it became evident that the protests were not that quickly smothered, Assad used and is still using lethal force against his people (Slackman, 2011).

The Arab spring and the democratic reforms that followed in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Yemen, sparked the hope that women would benefit from the shift in power since revolutions are seen as an important source of social change (Moghadam, 2013:22). Women and men from all socio-economic classes took part in the upheavals. Women actively engaged as politicians, activists, and journalists as well (Charrad & Zarrugh, 2014). Also in other countries, men and women demonstrated side by side and fought not only for women's rights, but for human rights in general. Indeed, many women joined the protests not to advance *their* rights per se, but the rights of everyone because: "neither men nor women were free under Ben Ali" (Khalil, 2014:189).

This female activism sparked the hope that women would also play a role in the aftermath of the revolution and that with a democratic regime, gender equality would improve. This thesis focuses on the effect of the Arab spring on gender equality because discrimination against any subset of society is internationally regarded as unacceptable.

This is not to say that women's rights were completely absent under autocratic regimes. In fact, women enjoyed a considerable number of rights and their situation also improved over the years. According to Kelly (2010:4), women enjoyed the most freedom in Tunisia, followed by Morocco, Algeria, Lebanon, Egypt, Jordan, Palestine, Kuwait, Bahrain, Syria, Libya, the United Arab Emirates, Iraq, Qatar, Oman, Iran, Yemen, and Saudi Arabia. Yet, the MENA region remains the region where the gender gap is the largest and the most persistent (Kelly, 2010:2).

Besides, it is important to emphasize that many autocratic regimes used women's rights as a tool for the regime to stay in power: a strategy called 'state feminism' (Johansson-Nogués, 2013:397). Women's rights were not advanced out of a genuine concern for gender equality but as an instrument for obedience: granting women certain rights in exchange for their submission to the regime's rules and decisions (Johansson-Nogués, 2013:397). Indeed, the fact that many autocratic regimes in the MENA region granted their people political rights was merely a tool to show other countries that the dictator ruled with the support of the people (Inglehart & Wenzel, 2005:286).

Since the Arab spring started a process of democratization in Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, and Yemen, it is interesting to study its effect on gender equality. Did the Arab spring bring about social change? Did democratization brought more rights for women resulting in higher levels of gender equality? The central research question of this thesis is therefore:

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*What is the effect of the Arab spring on gender equality?*

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In order to answer the main research question, several sub-questions need to be addressed first.

1. What is the effect of the Arab spring on gender equality according to the literature?
2. What is the effect of democratization on gender equality in general?
3. What was the status of gender equality in the selected countries before 2011 and how has gender equality developed since 2011?



## 1.1 Approach

The goal of this thesis is to determine the effect of the Arab spring on gender equality and assess whether this effect was positive, neutral, or negative. I conduct a co-variational case study between two countries to measure the impact of the independent variable (Arab spring) on the dependent variable (gender equality) by comparing two cases. This comparison is twofold. One, a comparison between a country affected by the Arab spring and a country unaffected by the Arab spring to assess whether and to what extent gender equality would have improved anyway as part of a larger development in the region. Second, a comparison over time to assess the development of gender equality in the two countries and to what extent the Arab spring spurred or hindered this development. The time period ranges from 2000 to 2019. The year 2000 is chosen because this year enables the researcher to look at the status of gender equality roughly a decade before the event. The year 2011 is a turning point in which the Arab spring occurred and several governments were replaced. From 2011 onwards, any potential changes in the status of gender equality can be empirically analysed. Thus, the year 2019 was chosen to allow for the broadest time frame possible in which data was also available. Moreover, this time frame is chosen for practical reasons, considering the limited time available to conduct the research (March – June 2020).

The method employed consists of a document and content analysis. An overview of the legal and social status of women should be made for each period (2000 – 2010 and 2011 – 2020). Then, I will be able to analyse whether there is progress in the first place, whether this development is positive, negative or neutral. A positive effect can be concluded when a positive development is noticed in Tunisia, whereas such a positive development is absent in Algeria. The effect is classified negative when a negative development occurs in Tunisia and not in Algeria. When both countries experience a similar trend, the effect of the Arab spring seems to be more neutral.

### *Definition and sources*

Gender equality is by definition: the belief that men and women should have equal rights and opportunities (UN Women, 2014). If women are discriminated by law, as is the case in all MENA countries, any advance in women's rights is an improvement in gender equality. The Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women, CEDAW for short, is the central and most comprehensive document that targets women's rights specifically (Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2020). Its ratification and implementation in the selected counties will be the starting point of this study. This study will focus on the political and economic parts of the CEDAW convention, because political and economic rights are the first steps in further advancements of

women's rights and therefore, gender equality (Wang et al, 2017). Additionally, the part of CEDAW that focus on family relations is also included since the position of a woman in the family defines her ability to shape her own lives (OECD, 2017:79). Although women's rights have other important dimensions, it is acknowledged that cultural rights, for instance, are hard to measure (Moghadam & Senftova, 2003).

The status of women is derived from legislation that shed light on the legal position of women. Additionally, (inter)national reports on the status of gender equality provide further insight into the rights and opportunities of women. Reports by third actors allow for a critical assessment of the position of women and to what extent the law is correctly implemented and enforced. The data that will be used will consist of, among others, national legislation, news outlets and (inter)national reports like Human Rights Watch and UN documents. Although quantitative data will be used throughout this thesis to further support the qualitative data, the research will be qualitative which aims is to explain and understand a complex situation in more depth (Bryman, 2012:379).

## 1.2 Scientific relevance

Whether a study is scientifically relevant, depends on the contribution the study makes to the existing body of literature in the corresponding field or discipline (Lehnert, Miller & Wonka, 2007:22). In the literature, the Arab spring is seen as a critical juncture: a relatively short period during which there is a substantially heightened probability that an agent's choices will affect the outcome of interest (Capoccia & Keleman, 2007:348). For this reason, it is interesting to public administration scholars and policy officers to look into the impact of the Arab spring on gender equality.

The Arab spring enjoyed considerable attention. However, the existing body of literature is incomplete for three reasons. One, most studies were conducted around 2013/2014 which means that long-term effects have not yet been studied. Two, according to Beer (2009) there is a lack of empirical studies that address the relationship between democracy and gender equality. This thesis tries to fill this gap by assessing the effect of the Arab spring as the process of democratization on gender equality. Three, to the best of my knowledge, there are little to no comparative studies conducted between countries with and without an Arab spring.

### 1.3 Social relevance

Social relevance refers to the extent to which a study 1) affects people and 2) results in a better understanding of a social phenomenon (Lehnert, Miller & Wonka, 2007:22). The social phenomenon in this study is the Arab spring and its effect on gender equality. This study aims at providing a better understanding of this recent social phenomenon and is thus socially relevant. Additionally, it becomes quite clear who is affected by the Arab spring: its people. But the relevance of this study stretches far further than only the *Arab* society and *Arab* people. The international community regards gender equality as a desirable goal. Several United Nations conventions and CEDAW in particular and objective five of the sustainable development goals are only a few examples in which the importance of gender equality is reflected. Additionally, women's economic participation is internationally regarded as an 'untapped' resource of economic opportunity (OECD, 2017:15).

However, that gender equality and women's rights are not given is illustrated by the Netherlands. A country that is internationally celebrated as a great activist of gender equality, dropped eleven places on the global gender gap index of the World Economic Forum and is now ranked at place 38 (World Economic Forum, 2019). Illustrating that gender equality is an objective that one should continuously fight for.

### 1.4 Outline

This thesis proceeds as follows. The literature review is presented in chapter two. Here, the terms 'Arab spring' and 'gender equality' are first clarified before turning to an overview of existing literature on the effect of the Arab spring on gender equality. Then, the process of democratization is explained and why the Arab spring can be seen as the start of a democratization process. In chapter three, I present the theoretical framework and derive several expectations from my literature review. Chapter four outlines the methodology. This includes a further elaboration of the applied research design, associated methods, case selection, operationalization, data collection and reflection on the reliability and validity of this research. Chapters five and six each consist of an analysis of one selected country. Here, I will look into the status of women's rights, their political representation and economic participation prior and after the Arab spring in the selected cases. The chapter describes how the democratization process evolved in the country affected by the Arab spring, before turning to the question if and how gender equality has advanced in the selected countries in the given timeframe. Then, chapter seven compares and discusses the findings of the previous chapters. Finally, chapter eight draws a conclusion. This thesis is concluded by the list of references and several appendices.

## 2. Literature review

This chapter answers two sub-questions: 1) what is the effect of the Arab spring on gender equality? And 2) what is the effect of democratization on gender equality in general? First, general definitions are set. Then, the effect of the Arab spring on gender equality is presented. Thereafter, I explain why the Arab spring is an example of democratization and what this democratization process entails. Lastly, I present the literature on the effect of democratization on gender equality and highlight some alternative influencing factors.

### 2.1 Definitions

Both the Arab spring and gender equality are complex and multidimensional concepts. Therefore, they first need to be defined before their relationship can be assessed.

#### *The Arab spring*

Many scholars link the Arab spring with the process of democratization, since countries that met the people's demand for reform started to democratize (Sarihan, 2012; Moghadam, 2014). Indeed, countries that underwent a successful Arab spring, like Tunisia, Egypt and Libya, made hopeful transitions towards democracy because these countries replaced their autocratic regimes with democratically elected ones paving the way for further democratization (McCarthy, 2019). The link between the Arab spring and democratization theory is further explained in section 2.3.

#### *Gender equality*

Gender equality is the achievement of equal rights and opportunities for men and women. However, in all MENA countries, women are to some extent discriminated by law and consequently, in practice. Thus, advancements in the rights of women lead to enhanced gender equality.

There are several ways in which gender equality can be measured. For instance, Beer (2009) argues that gender equality has to be assessed in three domains: capabilities, opportunities and empowerment. Capabilities are basic needs that enable women to participate in life and its indicators include health, nutrition and education. Opportunities refer to equal access to, for instance, land, credit and labour. Lastly, empowerment is related to representation in legislative bodies (Beer, 2009:217).

Other methods are presented by Moghadam and Senftova (2003). They focus on the presence of basic capabilities, legal rights and participation in key social, economic and political domains. They state that enhanced participation and rights are the basis of gender equality. Moghadam and Senftova (2003) present a framework consisting of 44 indicators in seven domains ranging from socio-demographic indicators like life expectancy to economic and political rights and participation such as unemployment and political representation.

Dijkstra (2002) assesses gender equality along the lines of several dimensions: gender identity; autonomy over the body; autonomy within the household; political power; social resources; material resources; employment and income; time (Dijkstra, 2002:318). Ultimately, the following variables are used: access to education; life expectancy; relative male/female labour force participation; female share in technical, professional, administrative and management positions; and female share in parliament. It is important to note that, in some countries, national parliaments do not exert much power. In that case, great female representation is merely symbolic. However, despite this flaw, parliamentary representation remains an important indicator of women's relative power (Dijkstra, 2001:323).

Hence, it is evident that gender equality can be measured by a lot of different indicators which is problematic for a qualitative study since for reasons of feasibility. Other problems in measuring gender equality refer to broad definitions and a lack of data. For instance, cultural rights such as 'the right to take part in cultural life' are broadly defined and therefore hard to operationalize. Additionally, data on violence against women is often inconsistent (Moghadam & Senftova, 2003:395-396). This poses some severe limitations to measure important aspects of gender equality. It is therefore needed to focus on indicators that are present in most, if not all, existing methodologies that are feasible for qualitative studies and that cover key domains of gender equality.

Besides the fact that different studies focus on different indicators, they all highlight the same key domains: political representation, economic participation and a set of basic rights.

## 2.1 The effect of the Arab spring on gender equality

This section provides an overview of studies that look into the effect of the Arab spring on women, women's rights and gender equality.

Moghadam (2014) offers a general stock-taking of what the Arab spring has meant for female parliamentary representation. In Egypt, the immediate effect of the Arab spring was negative since the rate of female parliamentarians dropped from 12% under Mubarak's regime to 2% after their first democratic elections in 2011. The parliamentary quota of 12% was dropped after the revolution and is therefore the cause of this negative effect. Moreover, any possible advancement in women's rights in Egypt was obstructed after their first democratic President Morsi became an autocratic leader. Only months after the elections, Morsi tried to expand his powers by pushing through a new constitution that not only gave the president more power, but also impeded women's rights because of its deeply religious and conservative tone. This and other developments moved the military to forcefully remove Morsi from power through a coup d'état in 2013.

Johansson-Nougés (2013) shows that Tunisia, Egypt and Libya introduced laws that forced political parties to include women on their list but, in all three cases, women made up the bottom of the list. In the first democratic elections in Libya of 2012, women gained 16,5% of the seats in parliament, but only two of the forty ministers were women. Tunisia experienced a similar trend with 17% female representatives in parliament, but only three female ministers out of forty-one. Johansson-Nougés (2013) concludes that the Arab spring has produced a mixed picture for women. Women may have experienced formal advancements in political rights, but at the same time, it has not led to better female political representation or access to policy-making. Moreover, she notes that the fight for women's rights is only just beginning as democratic revolutions leave a power vacuum which can result in either an improvement for women or a major setback as conventional thoughts are on the rise once more.

Hafez (2014) illustrates how the attitudes towards women have negatively changed in Egypt. She describes how women were excluded from the formulation of the new Egyptian constitution and how violence against women prevailed after the revolution. Hafez (2014) also points to the fact that in Egypt, there seems to be a growing tension between conventional Islamists and liberal secularists about the direction in which Egypt should go.

Norbakk (2016) states that although Tunisia experiences the same 'identity crisis' as Egypt on the role Islam should play in their democracy, the impact of the Arab spring is more positive. Yet, she also points to continued challenges for women's rights in Tunisia. For instance, the implementation of the constitution is elusive and not all existing laws and policies that discriminate against women are addressed yet. In 2016, discrimination continues to prevail in the area of inheritance. Additionally, women are still underemployed and underpaid and women automatically lose custody over their children after they remarry.

Moghadam (2018) explains how the Arab spring has led to such divergent outcomes. Where Tunisia is on a successful route to consolidate its democracy, women's rights in Egypt experienced a conservative backlash as the country reverted to a military autocracy in 2013. Also in Libya, women's rights have known both victories and losses. In 2012, women were granted the right of a guaranteed 10% of seats in parliament, but a year later polygamy was reinstated. Moreover, 57% of women expressed in a 2011 survey that they felt restricted in their movement now that former President Gaddafi left a power vacuum. Moghadam (2018) attributes these diverging outcomes to the fact that women's movements had different levels of influence on post-revolution governance. In Tunisia, for instance, women's movements were already present under the autocratic rule of Ben Ali and were involved in the post-revolution constitution-making, whereas in Libya, women's movements were non-existent and had consequently no influence over the new democratic reforms. In conclusion, the diverging status of women and women's movement before the Arab spring helps explain why the countries affected by the Arab spring faced such different outcomes.

Ottoway and Ottoway (2020) offer a recent study and reaffirm the mixed picture other authors have sketched. Egypt now has the most authoritarian and repressive regime it has known since Nasser's coup d'état in the 1950s. Libya can hardly be called a functioning state nowadays, since its ever-deteriorating civil war. Leaving Tunisia as the only outsider that has created a multiparty democracy. As recent mass protests broke out in Algeria, Lebanon, Sudan and Iraq in 2019, it is left to be seen what the effect of a possible 'second' Arab spring will be.

Hence, the Arab spring had a mixed effect on gender equality depending on the country under analysis. However, an update on its effects on gender equality is lacking. Additionally, Beer (2009) states that there is a lack of empirical research on the relationship between democracy and gender equality. Therefore, this thesis will contribute to the knowledge on the effect of the Arab spring on gender equality by assessing the long-term effect of democratization on gender equality.

## 2.2 Arab spring and democratization

The Arab spring is linked to democratization, because several countries passed the stages of the democratization process as described by the influential work of Huntington (1991).

According to Huntington (1991) democracy is a political system in which its decision-makers are selected through fair, honest and periodic elections in which candidates freely compete for votes which are cast by the adult population of the country (Huntington, 1991:7). Consequently, political leaders who are not chosen through free and fair elections, but (for instance) through military coups (military regimes) or patronage (personal dictatorship) are not considered to be democratic. Hence, the democratization process refers to the replacement of a government that was not chosen through free and fair elections by one that is (Huntington, 1991:9).

The democratization process consists of five phases. In the first phase, the emergence of reformers, a group of (potential) leaders demand political reforms and a change in the sitting regime from autocratic to democratic. Their demands inspire and empower other people to speak up and to join the movement in their demand for reforms.

During the second phase, the reformers gain power in one of three possible ways. One, the authoritarian leader dies and the successor is more willing to engage in democratic reform. Two, the authoritarian leader steps down and allows for a peaceful regime change which is also more open to democratic reform. The third way in which the reformers can acquire power is through the use of force in which the despotic leader is ultimately coerced to resign. This can be done for instance through a military coup or continuous violent protests.

The third phase is called 'the failure of liberalization' and refers to failed efforts of the sitting leaders to try to meet the demands for reform. These efforts can either be successful or unsuccessful. When the attempt is unsuccessful, the leader will be replaced by someone who is more democratic.

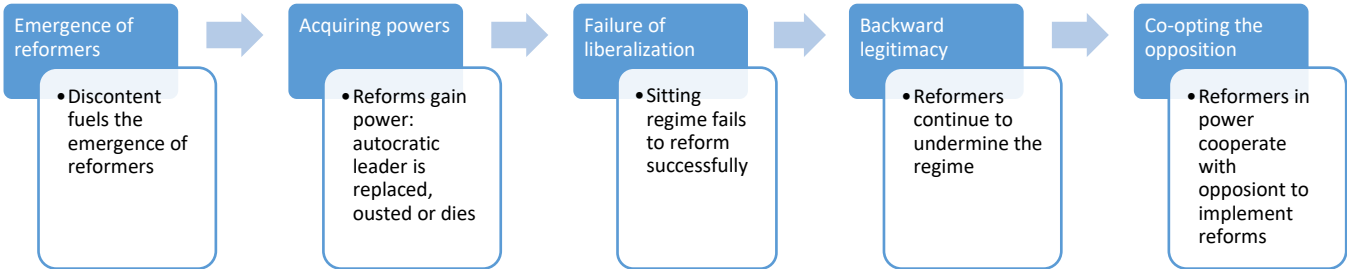
Stage four, backward legitimacy, is used as a strategy by reformers to weaken the legitimacy of the sitting regime by, for instance, constantly undermining their authority by continuous protests.

The last stage, stage five, is called 'co-opting the opposition'. In this phase, the new democratic leaders have come to power and replaced the old regime. The new leaders quickly start to cooperate with the opposition of the old regime to kick-start further democratic reforms.



According to Huntington’s third-wave democratization theory, if a country successfully passes these five stages and replaces the autocratic regime with a newly elected one, the democratization process is completed.

Figure 1: the democratization process as described by Huntington.



Source: Huntington (1991)

It was long believed that the Arab countries were the exception to the rule. The term ‘Arab exceptionalism’ referred to the situation in which most, if not all, Arab countries were still undemocratic (Huntington, 1991; Whitehead, 2015). Additionally, it was assumed that Islam impeded democratic reform. However, these are false assumptions since real-life examples exist of majority Muslim countries that embrace democracy like Albania, Indonesia and Senegal (Stepan & Linze, 2013:17). Additionally, Anderson (2004) finds that there is not a single religious tradition which values and norms are fully ‘compatible’ with democratic values. Moreover, Lindberg (2004) finds that Islam does not prevent women to politically be represented.

Sarihan (2012) assesses whether Syria and Egypt meet the standards of the democratization process. In Egypt, the emergence of reformers began on 25 January with the start of national protests. The second phase in Egypt is reflected in the resignation of President Mubarak and the transfer of authority to the military council (Sarihan, 2012:73). The failure of liberalization refers to the failed attempts of the Mubarak regime to implement reforms before the uprisings. His failure to liberalize the country paved the way for the revolution (Sarihan, 2012:74). Backward legitimacy and co-opting the opposition were also present in the Egyptian case according to Sarihan (2012:79). The continuous demonstrations weakened Mubarak’s regime because its authority was undermined. Also, the reformers sought cooperation with the military and convinced them to overthrow the autocratic regime.

Syria, on the other hand, did not succeed to pass all the stages of the democratization process. Although reformers did emerge in the anti-government protests which started in March 2011, they were unable to force President al-Assad out of office.

Thus, Sarihan (2012) shows that Egypt fits the theory on democratization. Syria, however, does not since not all the phases were completed. Not only has Sarihan (2012) illustrated that the Arab spring started a process of democratization in some countries, but he also exemplified that the democratization process may not be as linear as Huntington’s theory holds.

Table 1: the link between the Arab spring and the democratization theory.

Democratization phases	Arab spring	
	Egypt	Syria
Emergence of reformers	✓	✓
Acquiring power	✓	×
The failure of liberalization	✓	✓
Backward legitimacy	✓	×
Co-opting opposition	✓	×

Source: Sarihan (2012)

### 2.3 The effect of democratization on gender equality

In this section, I present the findings of several studies on the effect of democratization on gender equality. I first start with the general theoretical connection between democracy and gender equality. Then, I highlight the presumed relation between democracy and key domains of gender equality: basic rights, political representation and economic participation. Lastly, alternative influencing factors are presented.

#### 2.3.1 The general relation between democracy and gender equality

In theory, the relation between democratization and gender equality is positive. If a country democratizes, it leads to more gender equality. This positive relation exists for several reasons. First, equal rights and opportunities regardless of gender is a central component of democracy (Inglehart, Norris & Wenzel, 2002:272). Thus, discrimination against one group based on gender contradicts the values of democracy. Consequently, democratization leads to an increase in equal rights and opportunities for men and women which advances gender equality. Second, in a democracy,

disadvantaged groups are more likely to be able to organize and manifest themselves since civil rights are protected which enables groups to promote their interest (Beer, 2009:218). Third, democratization provides men and women with new ways to participate politically. Democratization often coincides with new institutions and policies which provide people with the opportunity to actively participate in the (re)formulation of these laws and policies (Viterna & Fallon, 2008:668). Through democratization, women get the chance to amend laws and policies that used to discriminate against them. Additionally, democratic elections provide people not only with the chance to promote their interests but also allow people to hold their leaders accountable (Beer, 2009:217).

However, it is important to emphasize that there is a lack of empirical research that addresses the relation between democracy and gender equality (Beer, 2009:213). Therefore, I now turn to the relationship between democratization and women's rights; women's political representation and women's economic participation specifically.

### *2.3.2 The effect of democratization on women's rights*

Rights and duties of men and women are enshrined in law. Therefore, one must look at the effect of democratization on law. It is universally recognized that constitutions can advance gender equality in political, economic and social life in several ways (International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance [IDEA], 2016:11). First, constitutions that include provisions on gender equality compel the state to actively protect these rights. Second, they serve as a strong indication of the state's commitment to gender equality and send a powerful message on the country's values to its people, including those who oppose gender equality. Third, constitutional provisions are harder to amend which makes them more effective. Fourth, constitutional provisions shape national legislation. Since gender equality is a central component of democracy, these values will also be reflected in the constitution and, in turn, in the national laws of a democratizing country.

In general, constitutions are more often than not revised after wars or revolutions because drafting a new constitution is seen as an act of political liberalization after a period of crisis (Ulrich, 2006:467). A new constitution thus presents the country with an opportunity to enshrine its redefined values in law. Moreover, existing provisions that discriminate against people based on their gender will be revised since they oppose the notion of equality.

Thus, as a democratizing country adopts a new constitution, this new constitution has a potentially positive effect on women's rights. Constitutional reform provides a country with the unique opportunity to redefine its values and since gender equality is a cornerstone of a democratic society,

these values will be reflected in its constitutions and, in turn, in national legislation thereby advancing gender equality (IDEA, 2016:7).

### *2.3.3 The effect of democratization on women's parliamentary representation*

The theoretical relation between democratization and women's representation is positive. Democracy holds that all human beings are equal regardless of their biological differences. As women make up half of the population, democracy is flawed when women are not represented accordingly (Moghadam, 2008). Indeed, as free and fair elections are critical to democracy, women's representation resulting from those elections is of extreme importance (Lindberg, 2004:31). One should therefore expect that democratization leads to an increase in women's political representation.

Inglehart, Norris and Wenzel (2002), show that democracies tend to have more female members of parliament than other, undemocratic, countries. Indeed, countries with more political and civil liberties have higher levels of female representatives in their parliament than countries with lower levels of freedom. Despite some exceptions, the overall relationship between democracy and female representation is strong, with a correlation of 0.65 (Inglehart, Norris & Wenzel, 2002).

However, Waylen (1994) presents empirical evidence that shows that in neither of her three case studies, democratization has resulted in increased female political representation. Several years after the start of the democratic transition, only 5.3% of the parliamentarians in Brazil were female. In Chile, the rate of female parliamentarians in 1991 was stuck at 5%. The shares in Eastern Europe even declined after democratization since many quota systems were dropped leading to a decline in female representation. In the 1990s, women representation rates ranged from 3.6% in Romania to 13.5% in Poland, making it the country with the highest rate of female elected representatives in the region.

Lindberg (2004) contradicts this notion by showing that, in the short run, democratization does lead to increased female representation. Yet, it is an incremental process. Lindberg assesses the number of seats in parliament held by women after several elections in post-autocratic countries in Africa. In Ghana, for instance, female representation increased from 8% after the first elections in 1992 to 8.5% in 1996 to 9% in the year 2000. On average, women's representation in terms of seats in parliament increased from 5% to 9% in three consecutive elections (Lindberg, 2004:45) Although there is not a significant positive relationship between the number of consecutive elections and women's share of parliamentary seats, Lindberg concludes that women's political representation slightly increases with consecutive elections.

Beer (2009) reaffirms the importance of time, calling it a 'long-term policy investment'. She highlights that it takes time before the effect of democratic rule is noticeable and argues that overtime, democracy is likely to create favourable conditions for gender equality. Indeed, she concludes that long-term democracy is strongly related to the improved status of women and gender equality in general. Hence, democratization does have a positive effect on women's political representation albeit small in the short run and maybe even unnoticeable. Over time, democracy seems to promote female representation in parliament. This positive relation is very important since empirical evidence suggests that female legislators are more likely to advance the interests of women (Lindberg, 2004:30).

#### *2.3.4 The effect of democratization on women's economic participation*

It is theorized that democracy benefits marginalized groups like women since they have new opportunities to be represented politically. In turn, their increased political power could lead to a decrease in discrimination in the labour market since there is a political group that advocates for this (Bayanpourtehrani & Sylwester, 2012). Indeed, since women make up an important part of eligible voters, political parties are prone to listen to their interests. Beer (2009) finds that democracies have higher rates of female labour force participation. Yet, Bayanpourtehrani and Sylwester (2012) find no relation between democracies and higher female labour force participation rates.

Hence, in theory, there is a positive relationship between democratization and gender equality. Yet, for the large number of studies claiming that democracy leads to more gender equality, there is an equally great amount of work that states precisely the opposite (Beer, 2009:213). Therefore, I test the theory on a new case to assess the direction of the link between democratization and gender equality in this case. Additionally, I will try to explain why we can or cannot see an effect. Consequently, this thesis contributes to the knowledge of the effect of democratization on gender equality.

## 2.4 Alternative factors influencing gender equality

Besides democratization, economic development, political stability and women's movements have an important influence on gender equality (Eastin and Prakash, 2013; Lehmijoki and Palokangas, 2006; Beer, 2009; Moghadam, 2018). In this section, I will highlight these three main alternative variables and illustrate their effect on gender equality.

### 2.4.1 *Economic development*

It is believed that economic development improves women's status because 1) economic growth creates new employment opportunities, 2) encourages social integration and 3) provides women with the opportunity to accumulate human capital (Eastin & Prakash, 2013:157).

Goldin (1994) finds that the relationship between economic growth and female labour force participation is U-shaped: decreasing at first and increasing in the long-term. This U-shaped relationship is attributed to the fact that as the economy grows, the demand for non-agricultural goods increases. Since many women work in the agricultural sector, they are the first to leave the labour market. In time, the demand for employees with great physical strength decreases whereas the demand for cognitive skilled employees increases. Hence, the opportunities for women to work increase again (World Bank, 2011).

However, a more recent study by Eastin & Prakash (2013) finds that the relation is S-shaped. At first, gender equality increases as a consequence of economic growth as technological progress increases female employment opportunities. Consequently, the opportunity costs for staying at home exceed the costs of joining the labour force. In the second stage, progress stagnates before it increases again in the third stage. Thus, the findings of Eastin & Prakash (2013) indicate that the short-term effect is positive.

### 2.4.2 *Political stability*

Political stability is defined as the absence of internal conflict in a country such as civil wars, riots and coups (Lehmijoki and Palokangas, 2006:431). Lehmijoki and Palokangas show how governments that face political instability tend to discriminate against women. There are two ways for a government to lose its control (Lehmijoki and Palokangas, 2006:435). First, by losing the elections and second, by internal conflict. To prevent losing power brought by internal conflict, the government has an incentive to have a great military force on its side. Since young and strong men are highly desired for military service, the government encourages their supply by promoting a high fertility rate. Consequently, the government forces women out of the labour market by discriminating against them and force them

into becoming stay-at-home mothers (Lehmijoki and Palokangas, 2006:441). Indeed, their empirical evidence suggests that there is a positive relationship between political instability, population growth and female discrimination.

Beer (2009) states that both men and women benefit from political stability. In politically stable countries, governments can implement policies without being obstructed by continuous regime change or instability in general that hinder the formulation and implementation of new legislation that seeks to advance gender equality.

Thus, political stability affects gender equality in two ways. One, It provides for a stable environment in which the government can formulate and implement policies without continuous obstruction. Two, it prevents that governments have an incentive to discriminate against women to maintain a high fertility rate that boosts the size of the military.

#### *2.4.3 The effect of women's movements on gender equality*

Moghadam (2018) states that the status of women's movements before the Arab spring is a compelling explanatory factor for the different outcomes of the Arab spring. She shows that countries that had active women's movements before the Arab spring had favourable outcomes for women after the Arab spring. For instance, Tunisia had a vibrant network of women's movements and included women in the aftermath of the Arab spring. Whereas women in Libya and Egypt, with weak and absent women's organizations, faced patriarchal backlash.

Indeed, Htun and Weldon (2012) demonstrated that autonomous women's movements have a significant, enduring and positive impact on progressive women-friendly policies. Women's movements are the prime drivers of change since they articulate new ideas and norms; soften the political environment; put new issues on the agenda and demand institutional change (Htun & Weldon, 2012:552).

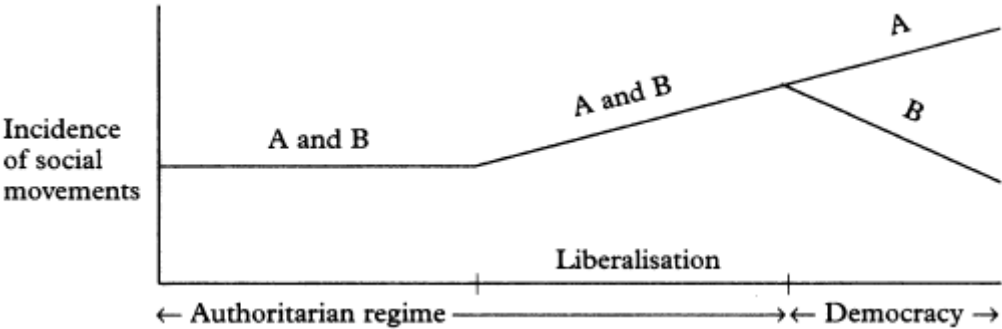
Since the Arab spring brought democratization in several countries, I now turn to the effect of regime change on social movements. Pickvance (1999) looks into the effect of regime change on social movements. As Moghadam (2018:4) states that women's movements are a subset of social movements, the effect of regime change on social movements, applies to women's movements in particular as well.

Pickvance (1999:361-362) formulates two hypotheses about the effect of regime change on social movements. The first one, hypothesis A, states that authoritarian regimes put restrictions on social

movements. Democracy lifts these restrictions as it allows for additional and expanded opportunities for society to politically participate. Hence, according to hypothesis A, democratization has a positive effect on social movements.

Hypothesis B states the exact opposite: democratization harms the influence of social movements for several reasons. One, with the rise of political parties, social movements lose their unique position in being the sole way in which people can participate politically. In turn, social movements lose members because 1) the motivation of joining, opposing the regime, ceases to exist and 2) a political career could be more beneficial than being a mere member of a movement. Two, leaders of social movements are often attracted to government jobs. Consequently, leaders leave and are hard to replace since they are scarce. Three, political parties see social movements as rivals and consequently try to hinder them. Hence, the number of political parties increases while the number of social movements decreases which, in turn, has a negative effect on the influence and strength of women’s movements.

Figure 2: the hypothesised relation between democratization and social movements.



Source: Pickvance (1999)

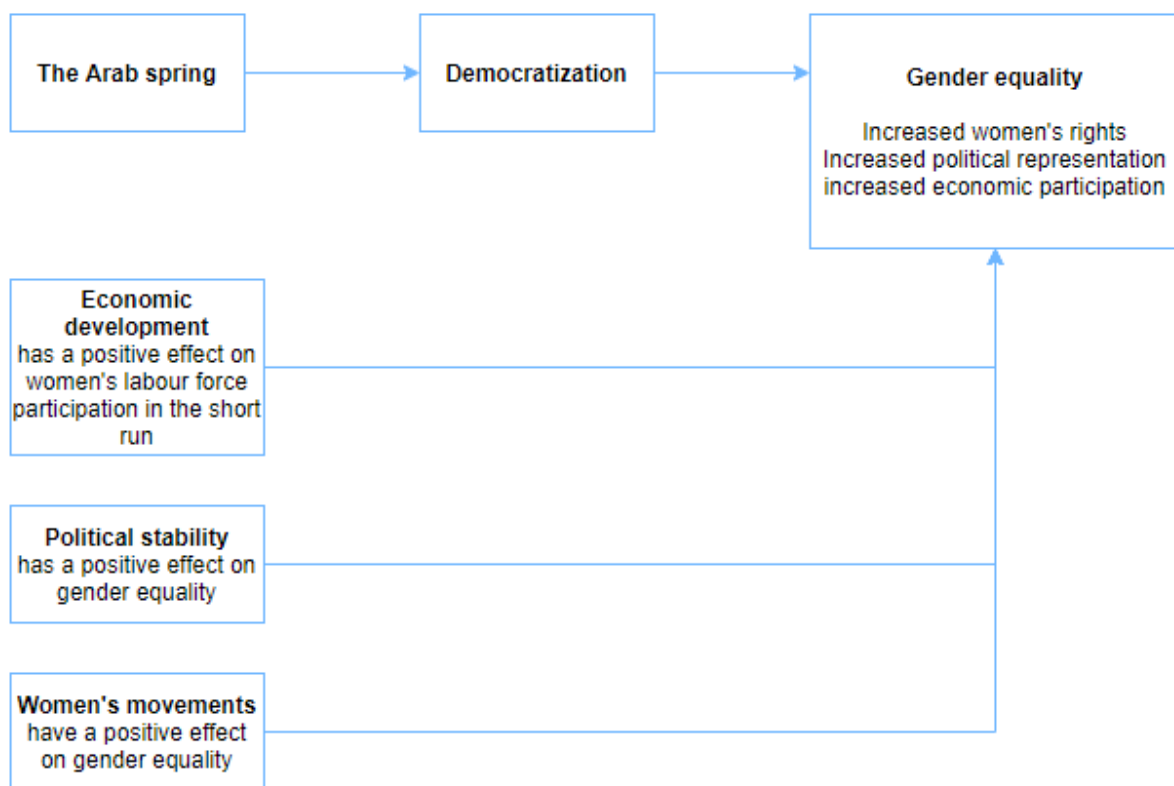
To assess which of the two hypotheses can be confirmed, Pickvance looks into the effect of regime change on social movements in four democratizing countries. He affirms hypothesis B and states that democratization negatively affects social movements as this was the case in three out of four cases.



### 3. Theoretical framework

In this chapter, the expected relationship between the variables is presented in figure 3. The Arab spring launched the democratization process which affects gender equality. Gender equality is assessed through women's rights; women's political representation and women's economic participation. However, there are alternative explanatory variables that need to be taken into account since each of them influences gender equality as well. These are: economic growth, political stability and women's movements. In turn, I expect that the Arab spring, as the process of democratization, has a positive effect on gender equality.

Figure 3: the expected relation between the variables.



#### 3.1 Expectations

In theory, democratization has a positive effect on gender equality. Yet, empirical evidence is lacking or presents mixed evidence. Nevertheless, I expect that democratization has a positive effect on gender equality based on their positive *theoretical* relationship. Therefore, the Arab spring has a positive effect on women's rights; women's political representation and women's economic participation and thus, gender equality in general.

1. *The Arab spring leads to an increase in women's rights.*
2. *The Arab spring leads to an increase in women's political representation.*
3. *The Arab spring leads to an increase in women's economic participation.*

## 4. Methodology

This chapter elaborates on the method I employ to answer the main research question. First, the type of research is presented. Then, eligible cases are discussed and selected. Thereafter, I operationalize the concepts and reflect on the reliability and validity of this research.

### 4.1 Type of research

I conduct a qualitative, comparative, co-variational case study with a deductive approach through a document and content analysis. This study is qualitative, because this thesis focuses on two cases. Even though this thesis mostly relies on qualitative data, quantitative data is used as both an illustration and as support of the qualitative findings.

The goal of this research is to determine the effect of the Arab spring on gender equality. This thesis has a factor-centric focus and aims to explain the causal effect (positive, negative or neutral) of the independent variable, Arab spring, on the dependent variable, gender equality (Gschwend & Schimmelfinnig, 2007:8). I use a comparative, co-variational case study to assess this effect. This comparison is twofold: it is a comparison between two countries and a comparison over time. More specifically, I compare gender equality in the years prior (2000 – 2010) and after (2011 – 2029) the Arab spring. Because I compare a country that experienced an Arab spring with a country that did not, it is possible to assess whether and to what extent the Arab spring influenced gender equality.

Furthermore, this thesis has a deductive approach since it investigates whether established theories still hold on new empirical events: the Arab spring. Based on theories of several academic writers (Norris & Wenzel, 2002; Viterna & Fallon, 2008; Beer, 2009; Moghadam: 2018), I derive the hypothesis that democratization and democracy, in general, have a positive effect on gender equality.

### 4.2 Case selection

To select the right cases for this study, I first specify which criteria the countries have to meet before turning to the selection of the final cases.

#### 4.2.1 Eligible countries

The Arab spring occurred in the MENA region which consists of the following countries: Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Yemen. The Palestinian Authority is not included in the MENA region since this country is not universally recognized (El-Masri, 2012:933).

An in-depth study of 16 countries is too extensive. Therefore, at least two countries are selected. It is important to notice that not all of the sixteen MENA countries experienced an Arab spring. In fact, Algeria, Morocco, Jordan, the Gulf States and Saudi Arabia are considered to be the countries where an Arab spring did not occur (Whitehead, 2015).

#### *4.2.2 Criteria for case selection*

Blatter and Haverland present two important criteria for the selection of cases in co-variational case studies (Blatter & Haverland, 2012:42). One, cases should vary as much as possible in the independent variable. Two, on other explanatory variables, the cases should be similar as possible to control for other factors that could cause or influence the effect. In this study, there are three other explanatory variables. One, the economic development of the selected countries. Two, the political stability of the country. Three, the relative strength of women's movements.

In conclusion, the following selection criteria are used; one case must consist of a country that was affected by the Arab spring; one case must consist of a country which was not affected by the Arab spring and all cases have to be similar when it comes to alternative explanatory variables: comparable economic growth, political stability and women's movements.

#### *4.2.3 Case selection: countries affected by the Arab spring*

Table 2 provides an overview of all the eligible cases and their characteristics which serves as the basis of the final case selection.

Tunisia, Egypt, Libya or Yemen replaced their autocratic regime and began a transition period towards democracy. Tunisia is the only case eligible for the final case selection. It experienced an Arab spring and remained a stable country since its democratization process did not face a detrimental relapse (Norbakk, 2016). Egypt did experience an Arab spring but its democratic transition collapsed after Egypt reverted to a military autocracy in 2013 (Moghadam, 2018). Both Yemen and Libya descended into civil war as a consequence of continued instability (Abdessadok, 2017; BBC, 2020). Thus, from all the countries that experienced an Arab spring, only Tunisia completed its democratization process.

#### 4.2.4 *Case selection: countries unaffected by the Arab spring*

The country which did not face an Arab spring is selected from the following countries: Algeria, Morocco, Jordan, the Gulf States (Bahrain, Iraq, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates) and Saudi Arabia (Whitehead, 2015:18). Algeria is the only country eligible for the final case selection because Algeria meets all the criteria listed in the previous section. Additionally, It is not feasible to include all the Gulf states. The literature is inconclusive whether or not an Arab spring occurred in Morocco. And Jordan and Saudi Arabia differ from Tunisia on some religious characteristics like the school of Islamic jurisprudence the countries adhere to. Although this last factor is not included in this thesis, I choose to exclude these countries for this reason.

Algeria varies as much as possible on the independent variables (no Arab spring) in relation to the Tunisian case (Arab spring). In addition, and equally important, Algeria is similar to Tunisia concerning the alternative explanatory variables. When the alternative explanatory variables are similar, the researcher can assess the effect of the Arab spring as the influence of the other variables is controlled for. Algeria and Tunisia have comparable annual economic growth rates, see appendix A and B. Both countries remained politically stable after 2011, see appendix B, and both countries have influential women's movements as will be illustrated in the analyses (Ben Salem, 2010; Marzouki, 2010; Moghadam, 2018).

Although Morocco shares similarities with Algeria, the literature is inconclusive whether Morocco has experienced an Arab spring. Whereas Moghadam (2018) argues that Morocco did, Whitehead (2015) argues the exact opposite. The Moroccan government quickly implemented reforms that were already in the making for some time, soothing the demands for reform (Pham, 2015). Additionally, the top-down reforms that were passed left the power of the king, and thus the political system, untouched (Ottoway & Ottoway,2020). In doing so, Morocco does not fit the definition of democratization of Huntington (1991) because it did not replace its regime by a democratically elected one which is an important factor to be comparable to Tunisia. Therefore, it is not the most suitable case for this covariational case study, because there is another case (Algeria) which is more appropriate.

Table 2: the overview of all the eligible cases, their characteristics and variables.

		<b>Egypt</b>	<b>Yemen</b>	<b>Libya</b>	<b>Tunisia</b>	<b>Algeria</b>	<b>Morocco</b>	<b>Jordan</b>	<b>Gulf States</b>	<b>Saudi Arabia</b>
<b>independent variable</b>	Arab spring (democratization)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
	Economic development*	3.6%	-4.5%	5.9%	2.3%	2.8%	3.3%	2.4%	-	2.7%
<b>Alternative explanatory variables</b>	Political stability	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Coup		Civil war	Civil war						
	Women's movement before 2011	Weak	Absent	Absent	Active	Active	Active	-	-	-

\* Average GDP growth 2011-2018, see table 1 of appendix A for an overview of the annual growth rates of all eligible countries.

Sources: Moghadam (2018), Whitehead (2015), World Bank (2020).

### 4.3 Operationalization of variables

Since many of the concepts are not directly measurable, this section operationalizes the variables and presents the sources from which I derive data.

#### 4.3.1 *Independent variable*

##### *Arab spring and democratization*

I analyse whether and to what extent the Arab spring has led to a democratization process as described by Huntington (1991). The Economist Intelligence Unit's Democracy index serves as an additional support of the claims that the Arab spring brought democratization in Tunisia and was absent in Algeria. The data ranges from the first edition of the Democracy index published in 2006 to the most recent publication released in 2019. Since 2010, the Democracy index is published annually. Between 2006 and 2010, a new version was published every other year. For this reason, the years 2007 and 2009 are absent in the analyses.

Freedom House assesses freedom and democracy as well, using a slightly different approach. Despite their methodological differences, they present similar findings on the democratization process. See annex C for an overview of the different approaches but similar findings.

Yet, as I can only choose one index for the analysis, I present the findings of the democracy index as its scores are based on 60 indicators as opposed to the 25 of Freedom House, see appendix C. Additionally, the methodology of the Democracy index remained unchanged throughout the years which makes its scores better comparable than Freedom's House scores, which methodology changed twice.

#### 4.3.2 *Dependent variable*

##### *Gender equality*

Since women are discriminated to some extent by law in all MENA countries, an improvement in women's rights advances in gender equality. Therefore, I consider advances in women's rights together with increased female political representation and female economic participation, as advances in gender equality.

### *Women's rights*

In order for this thesis to remain feasible, not all women's rights can be assessed. Therefore, I only focus on women's rights concerning family matters and inheritance. It is important to look at these indicators because laws on women's position within the family define women's ability to shape their own lives (OECD, 2017:79). In addition, inheritance rights define to a large extent women's access to land, credit and housing (OECD, 2019).

The indicators of *women's rights concerning family matters* are derived from Dijkstra's dimension *autonomy within the household* and include: the right to marry; the right to divorce; the right to custody upon divorce; having decision-making power within the marriage and having access to assets within the household as defined by law (Dijkstra, 2002:318). Women's rights to marry, divorce and gain custody are derived from international reports and national family codes<sup>1</sup>. Their decision-making power is also derived from the Family Code by looking at their rights and duties as wives. Their access to assets is also derived from the Family Code by assessing their right to property within their marriage.

The indicator of *the right to inheritance* is the (non)existence of legal provisions that guarantee equal inheritance rights to men and women. Women's access to other material resources such as land, credit and housing is often acquired through inheritance (OECD, 2019). It is important to assess this indicator since access to material resources are acquired through inheritance. Consequently, equal inheritance rights improve their control over economic resources, which decreases women's financial dependency on their husbands (Beer, 2009:221). National Family law serves as a source of inheritance rights.

I use the official French versions of Tunisian and Algerian legislation to avoid mistakes in translation. Charrad and Zarrugh (2014) illustrate how subtle inconsistencies persist between Arabic and French versions of the same law. Yet, as the researcher can only read French and not Arabic, this risk has to be taken into account. In addition to national legislation, I look into ratifications of international conventions.

### *Political representation*

A lot of authors use female parliamentary representation as an indicator of gender equality (Beer, 2009; Dijkstra, 2002; Moghadam, 2014). The literature stresses the importance of female political representation since women tend to advance the interests of women, which makes it a good indicator

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<sup>1</sup> Legislation that arranges family matters like marriage, divorce, custody and inheritance (Khedler, 2017:30).

of gender equality. I only look at female representation in national parliaments for the reason of feasibility.

The female share of parliamentary representation is measured by using data provided by Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). The IPU collects data on the total number and share of female representatives in national parliaments. This data enables the researcher to collect and compare data on female parliamentary representation over the years and between countries. Since Tunisia has a unicameral system and Algeria a bicameral, I only use data on female representatives in the lower house of parliament to be able to compare the findings.

#### *Economic participation*

Economic participation is operationalized as the relative female and male rate of the labour force. The International Labour Organization provides data on the labour force participation rate of men and women for the age of 25 – 54. I chose this aggregated band because the OECD considers the age category of 25 – 54 to be the prime working age. The labour force participation rate is a measure of a country's working-age population who either have a job or seek one. The data is aggregated by sex.

$$\text{Labour force participation rate} = \frac{(\text{Employed} + \text{Unemployed})}{\text{Working age population}} * 100$$

Source: International Labour Organization (n.d.)

Data is based on ILO's modelled estimates, because data based on national figures only ranged up to 2015. The estimated models provide data up to 2019, which enables the researcher to investigate the effect to a greater extent. After the data is derived from the ILO database, I divide the female rate by the male rate to calculate the relative rate.

#### *4.3.3 Alternative explanatory variables*

##### *Women's movements*

An official list of all women's movements does not, to my knowledge, exist, which makes it impossible to assess the number of women's movements. Therefore, I look at the change in their relative strength after 2011 which is measured through the (non)existence on legal restrictions on these movements derived from laws and news reports and academic sources on their strength.



In short, I assess gender equality by looking at improvements in women's rights in the household and in inheritance; political representation and economic participation. Table 3 provides an overview of all the variables, indicators and sources.

Table 3: the overview of variables, indicators and sources to assess gender equality.

<b>Independent variable</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Source</b>
Arab spring	Process of democratization according to Huntington	News outlets
	Score on the democracy index	Economist Intelligence Unit
<b>Dependent variables</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Source</b>
Women's rights	Right to marry	Legislation/International reports
	Right to divorce	Legislation/International reports
	Right to custody	Legislation/International reports
	Decision-making power within the household	Legislation/International reports
	Access to assets	Legislation/International reports
	Right to inheritance	Legislation/International reports
Political representation	Female representation in parliament	Inter-Parliamentary Union
Economic participation	Relative male/female labour force participation rate	Intern. Labour Organization
<b>Alternative explanatory variables</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Source</b>
Economic development	GDP growth in %	World Bank
Political stability	Absence of political chaos/civil wars	News outlets
	Political stability and absence of violence	World Governance Indicators
Women's movements	Relative strength	Legislation
		Academic literature

## 4.4 Reliability and validity

In this last section, I make some remarks on the quality of this research in terms of the reliability and the validity of the study and how these criteria are ensured and accounted for.

### 4.4.1 Reliability

Internal reliability applies to studies that are conducted with more than one researcher. This criterion tests to what extent the members of the research team are consistent and agree about what they find. Since this study is conducted by only one person, the internal reliability is accounted for.

External reliability refers to what extent the findings of this study can be replicated. Put differently: would another study draw the same conclusion? In general, is it hard for qualitative studies to meet these criteria, because social settings cannot be 'frozen' (Bryman, 2012:390). However, I employ a common strategy to enhance the external reliability of a study by providing a clear approach to any reader who wishes to replicate this study. If it is clear how the study is conducted and which sources are used, it is possible to reproduce the findings of the original study.

### 4.4.2 Validity

Internal validity is the extent in which the study established a sound cause and effect relationship between the independent and dependent variable. Several strategies enhance the internal validity of a research. First, the cause should precede the effect. Otherwise, the effect could be caused by other factors. The Arab spring was the start of a democratization process and thus precedes the effect it had on gender equality. By comparing gender equality before and after the start of this democratization process, I can assess whether and to what extent the Arab spring affected gender equality. Second, one has to account for alternative explanations that could cause the effect and this can be done through a deliberate case selection. By selecting cases that differ in the independent variable and are similar in alternative explanations, I account for the influence of alternative explanatory variables. In this research, a deliberative case selection resulted in the final selection of Algeria and Tunisia. Additionally, the change in the alternative explanatory variables is assessed to account for alternative explanations for the effect.

In addition, causality is established by focusing on events that are direct results of the Arab spring. For instance, Tunisia's withdrawal of its reservations to the CEDAW convention and its new constitution are direct effects of the Arab spring. In turn, other laws had to be reformed as well that are in nature more women-friendly.

Concept validity is a part of internal validity and assesses the extent to which the variables chosen to operationalize a concept are well-founded. In other words, do the tools measure what they are supposed to measure and, in turn, does the conclusion corresponds with reality? To ensure the validity of the concepts, I use existing operationalisations of the concepts established in previous literature. By not creating my own variables, but instead relying on existing tools, I increase the validity of the concepts. However, because I also focus on women's rights, it is important to note that an improvement in rights does not necessarily bring about a positive change in social behaviour. Yet, for reasons of feasibility I cannot assess the practical implications of these rights as well. Therefore, this notion is taken into account as a limitation of this study.

External validity means whether the findings of the selected cases can be generalized across other cases and social settings (Bryman, 2012:390). Generalization often poses a limitation to qualitative research designs, because the results of these studies are often context-specific which makes it hard to apply the findings to other settings. Since this study focuses on two cases only, it can be hard to generalize the findings to other countries who experienced an Arab spring because their contexts differ. Therefore, generalization is not the goal of this thesis per se. The goal is to gain insights into these two specific cases. However, the findings of this study can be generalized on the effect of democratization on gender equality in general.

## 5. Analysis of Tunisia

In this chapter, I present how Tunisia's democratization process developed. Then, I turn to the question if and to what extent gender equality in Tunisia has advanced.

### 5.1 Democratization in Tunisia

Democratization is by definition: the replacement of a regime that was not elected through fair and free election by one that is. In Tunisia, autocratic leader Ben Ali came to power through a coup d'état in 1987 (Boubakri, 2015:65). Consequently, his regime was not chosen through free and fair elections. Although periodic presidential elections were held, the results were already fixed from the start (Smit, 2010).

The Arab spring changed that when, in October 2011, a truly democratic government was elected in Tunisia's first free and fair elections. The events of the Arab spring in Tunisia thus fit the definition of democratization. I now turn to the process that led to this democratization applying Huntington's theory (1991).

#### 5.1.1 *Emergence of reformers*

The autocratic regime of Tunisia was regarded as resilient. Consequently, many were surprised when in December 2010, national protests broke out against prevailing corruption and the lack of social justice (Smit, 2010). When Ben Ali failed to appease the people, protests spread across the country and people started to demand for his resignation and political reform: a revolution had started.

#### 5.1.2 *Acquiring power*

According to Huntington, there are three ways in which reformers can acquire power. One, the autocratic leader dies. Two, the autocratic leader voluntarily steps down or three, the autocratic leader is ousted by force. How the reformers in Tunisia gained power, best aligns with the third way. Ben Ali was forced to leave the country as a result of continuous unrest. Indeed, news outlets reported that "the masses decided for him" which is an indicator that Ben Ali did not voluntarily leave the country (Ludeker, 2011). Therefore, the reformers acquired power by ousting the autocratic leader by force.

### *5.1.3 The failure of liberalization*

Before fleeing the country, President Ben Ali tried to soothe the protestors by promising political reforms, including firing ministers and investing 8 million dinars to address the high levels of youth unemployment. On 13 January 2011, Ben Ali promised further governmental reform and that he would no longer run for the presidency in the elections of 2014 (NOS, 2011). Despite his promises of liberalization, the people of Tunisia continued to call for his resignation. On 14 January 2011, Ben Ali fled Tunisia with his family, ending his 23-year autocratic reign over the country.

### *5.1.4 Backward legitimacy*

Despite Ben Ali's promises of political reform, national protests not only continued but also intensified. While mainly unemployed and students first took the streets in December 2010, by January 2011 the protests were led by a variety of people and classes that all demanded the resignation of Ben Ali.

Indeed, the legitimacy of Ben Ali's regime suffered a final blow on January 12<sup>th</sup>, after his main general refused Ben Ali's command to shoot at the protesting crowds. Instead, General Ammar and his troops left Tunis and urged Ben Ali to resign. Ben Ali fired Ammar that same day. Yet, Ammar's act of resistance is seen as the devastating blow that led to the fall of Ben Ali's regime (Vervaeke, 2011:13).

Moreover, the interim government that eventually took over from Ben Ali also faced continued resistance (Volkskrant, 2011:15). The Tunisian people demanded that every member of the government that had ties with the old regime would be fired. However, the new interim government was still made up of some ministers who previously served under Ben Ali. As a consequence of the continuous protests, several ministers had to resign and be replaced in order to appease the people. This indicates that the reformers would continue to undermine any regime as long as genuine political reforms were not made.

### *5.1.5 Co-opting opposition*

The new interim government that took over from Ben Ali immediately started to cooperate with the opposition. Several former members of the opposition became ministers. For instance, Najib Chebbi, member of a prominent opposition party, was appointed minister of Development and well-known political activist Slim Amamo became Secretary of State for Youth and Sports (Volkskrant, 2011:15). This shows that the transitional government genuinely tried to break away from the past. In fact, the interim government quickly lifted media restrictions; removed the ban on certain human rights groups; and promised political and economic reforms (VOA News, 2011: Dahlerup, Danielsson, Johansson, 2012).

By instantly cooperating with the opposition of the previous regime and by already implementing political reform, Tunisia successfully passed all the five stages of the democratization process as described by Huntington (1991). The process of democratization was completed.

Most importantly, Tunisia also managed to consolidate its democratization process by organizing two consecutive and democratic presidential elections since the revolution in 2011. In both 2014 and 2019, Tunisia successfully elected new Presidents: Essebsi and Saied in 2014 and 2019 respectively (BBC, 2014; Al Jazeera, 2019).

5.2 Democratization in Tunisia and the Democracy index

The scores of Tunisia on the Democracy index of the Economist Intelligence Unit, see table 4, confirm the notion that Tunisia democratized as a consequence of the Arab spring.

Table 4: the overview of democratization in Tunisia 2006 – 2019.

Full democracy	8 – 10
Flawed democracy	6 – 8
Hybrid regimes	4 – 6
Authoritarian regime	0 – 4

		2006	2008	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
<b>Tunisia</b>	<i>Score</i>	3.06	2.96	2.79	5.53	5.67	5.76	6.31	6.72	6.40	6.32	6.41	6.72

Source: The Economist Intelligence Unit (2006; 2008; 2010; 2011; 2012; 2013; 2014; 2015; 2016; 2017; 2018; 2019).

Whereas Tunisia was regarded as an authoritarian regime under President Ben Ali in 2010, in 2011 the country moved up to the next category ‘hybrid regime’ as a result of the events of the Arab spring. Four years later, from 2014 onwards, Tunisia improved its scores to such an extent that it is classified as a ‘flawed democracy’. This improvement was the direct result of the successful parliamentary and presidential elections of 2014 (The Economist Intelligence Unit, 2014:27). Moreover, in 2014 Tunisia adopted a new constitution in which democratic values are enshrined in, for instance, the preamble (Tunisia is a democratic republic) and article 125 (the independence of constitutional bodies).

Between 2014 and 2019, Tunisia's score on the Democracy index remained largely stable, indicating that Tunisia consolidated its democracy. Although Tunisia is not yet regarded as a 'full democracy', the country made significant improvements by moving away from an authoritarian regime and towards a flawed democracy in four years.

### 5.3 Development of gender equality

As numerous examples illustrate, Tunisia's democratic governments have addressed gender inequality since the Arab spring. For instance, in September 2011 Tunisia announced that it would lift its reservations to the CEDAW convention marking the country's first step towards full gender equality (Whitaker, 2011). The United Nations was officially notified of this withdrawal in 2014 (United Nations, 2014). Tunisia ratified the CEDAW convention in 1985, but made reservations to article 2 (application of the convention), article 9 (nationality), article 15 (freedom of movement) and article 16 (marriage and family relations). For an overview of Tunisia's reservations, see table 1 of appendix E. Such reservations impede the implementation of the principle of gender equality and non-discrimination (OECD, 2014:17).

Tunisia lifted specific reservations in 2014, but retained a general declaration stating that the country will not take any organizational or legislative action if provisions of the convention contradict chapter one of the Tunisian constitution. This declaration seems harmless at first, but article one of that chapter names Islam as the religion of the state. In other words, no reform will take place if a provision of the convention contradicts Islam. Although, the annulment of reservations to specific articles is a significant indicator of the advancement of gender equality, it is important to emphasize that a general reservation still applies today that could potentially impede organizational and legislative action.

The adoption of Tunisia's new constitution in 2014 is another example of the country's commitment to gender equality. Article 21 states that all Tunisian citizens have equal rights and duties and that they are equal before the law. More specifically, article 46 of the new constitution states that the state will protect and promote the rights of women. These provisions prove the state's commitment to protect and ensure women's rights which is a good indicator of enhanced gender equality. Consequently, the new Tunisian constitution is internationally celebrated for being the most progressive constitution in the Arab region (Constitution de La République Tunisienne , 2014 ; The Guardian, 2014).

Another specific example that increased women's rights with regard to family matters is the annulment of Circular number 216 of November 5<sup>th</sup> 1973 that prohibited a mixed marriage between a Tunisian woman and a foreign non-Muslim man. This decree was reversed in 2017, thereby legalising mixed marriages for women and enhancing gender equality in the right to marry (BBC, 2017).

Furthermore, stipulations with regard to inheritance were amended in 2019, granting women and men equal inheritance rights (Foroudi, 2018).

#### 5.4 Development of women's rights

The Personal Status Code of 1956 is the prime source of legislation that regulates family matters (Khedher, 2017:30). The Personal Status Code was last amended in 1993. Therefore, even though the time frame of this thesis is 2000 – 2019, I have to include the Personal Status Code of 1993, because this set of legislation still applies today.

##### 5.4.1. Marriage

*Code du statut personnelle* states that *both* spouses should consent to the marriage (article 3). The minimum age for marrying without a guardian for both men and women was set at 18 years in 2008 upon ratifying the Convention of the Rights of the Child in 1992 (Kelly, 2010:8). Men and women only need the consent of their guardians if they want to marry as minors (article 6). A mature woman does not need the consent of her guardian (article 11). Both spouses can add stipulations to their marriage contract (article 9). In addition, polygamy is banned under article 18 which is a unique factor since polygamy is legal in other countries in the region. Yet, a 1973 circular prohibits a union between a Muslim woman and a non-Muslim man, whereas Muslim men are able to marry non-Muslim women (Moghadam, 2018:5).

Tunisia placed several reservations on important articles of the CEDAW convention that ensure gender equality. In terms of marriage, the reservation to article 16, paragraph 1, section C is the most important. Article 16, paragraph 1, section C states that both spouses have the same rights and responsibilities during marriage and its dissolution. However, Tunisia considered itself not bound by this article, indicating that they oppose the idea of equality between spouses in their rights and responsibilities in both marriage and divorce.



In September 2014 Tunisia lifted all its specific reservations to the CEDAW convention, except its general reservation<sup>2</sup> (Human Rights Watch, 2014b). Nevertheless, it is an important development in advancing gender equality. Additionally, Tunisia legalised mixed marriages between a Muslim woman and a non-Muslim man in 2017. The withdrawal of the CEDAW reservations and the legalization of mixed marriages for women were the only, but noteworthy, developments in relation to the right to marry that took place after the Arab spring.

#### 5.4.2 Divorce

Since 1981, there are three ways in which a divorce can be obtained: by *mutual* consent, by the request of either the husband *or* the wife; or at the request of one of the spouses as a consequence of suffering at the hands of the partner (article 31). In any case, divorce can only be acquired through a court ruling and after reconciliation has proved to be unsuccessful. It is unique that only a court ruling can provide for a divorce since repudiation (divorce without the knowledge and thus consent of the wife) is well entrenched in other MENA countries.

Thus, men and women have the same rights to divorce. Still, Tunisia placed a reservation on article 16, paragraph 1, section C and thus opposed the provision that men and women have equal rights and duties in the dissolution of marriage. Despite the existence of this reservation, men and women had equal rights to divorce. Ultimately, this reservation was dropped in 2014 which is a positive development, even though this will not have far-reaching legislative consequences given the fact that men and women already had equal rights to divorce.

#### 5.4.3 Custody

Upon divorce, a judge can grant custody to either parent as well as a third party (article 67). However, it is important to note that the right to make life decisions (guardianship) is automatically granted to the father even though the mother has physical custody over the child (article 155). From 1993 onwards, mothers have a say in decisions related to their children and could be granted full guardianship if the father abandons the child, is unfit to fulfil his duties or if he does not act in the interest of the child. Additionally, when the father dies, children are no longer placed by the father's closest relative, but by their mother (Kelly, 2010:10). However, article 58 states that female custody holders lose their right if they remarry, except when the court or their ex-husband consents to her second marriage.

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<sup>2</sup> Tunisia will not take any organizational or legislative action if provisions of the convention contradict chapter one of the Tunisian constitution (United Nations, 2014).

Before 2011, Tunisia had a reservation to article 16, paragraph 1, section F of the CEDAW convention which states that spouses have equal rights and responsibilities when it comes to guardianship. Tunisia considered itself not bound by this provision because according to the Personal Status Code, fathers are automatically granted guardianship of the children. Although Tunisia lifted this reservation, a general reservation still holds. Because the general declaration refers to Islamic law, it is highly unlikely that women will be granted equal guardian rights in the future. This, in combination with the article that women lose custody after they remarry, indicate that inequality in terms of custody rights still prevails.

#### *5.4.4 Decision-making power within the marriage*

Since the 1993 amendment, a woman does no longer has to obey her husband, but a man remains the head of the family. Instead of obedience, both spouses have reciprocal duties since 1993. Article 23 states that husband and wife have to treat each other kindly, avoid causing each other harm and must co-operate in the management of family affairs. This indicates that women have some power to make or influence decisions, at least on paper. Thus, it seems that women do have decision-making power within their marriage. Yet, the OECD (2017) notes that a change in rights and duties does not necessarily bring about a change in social behaviour.

#### *5.4.5 Access to assets within the household*

In Tunisia, a man presents a dower to his wife upon marriage. This dower is the property of the wife as specified in article 12 and only the wife may claim payment of it according to article 13. This means that after her marriage, a woman has access to her dowry. Most importantly, article 24 states that a man is not the guardian of his wife's property which indicates that what is owned by the woman before her marriage, does not become her husband's property upon marriage.

Upon marriage, each spouse retains ownership of his or her property which he or she can manage freely. However, since many women do not own a lot of assets before marriage, this leaves them in practice with little material resources. Moreover, property that is acquired after marriage can be owned jointly, but is usually registered in the husband's name. Consequently, the wife has no legal right to these marital assets (OECD, 2017:86). Thus, although women retain ownership over property that they acquired before marriage, these assets are often of little value. Additionally, since marital assets are mostly registered in their husband's name, they cannot lay a claim on them, leaving them with little access to assets within the household in practice. Since provisions on access to assets have not been amended since 2011, on paper, women have access to assets within the household. Yet, in practice there is still inequality.

#### 5.4.6 Inheritance

The Tunisian Personal Status Code regulates the provision on inheritance which is quite complex. Upon the death of a relative, there are two types of heirs: the reserved heirs who receive a prescribed share and universal heirs (article 89). It is important to note that males and females do not receive equal shares of the inheritance. Indeed, women only inherit half of what their male counterparts receive (article 103). For instance, if a deceased has two daughters and one son, the son inherits twice the amount of his sisters. Defenders of this discriminating provision point to the different duties of men and women. As men have to maintain their family, they have a greater need for assets than women do (OECD, 2017:91).

Additionally, Tunisia had a specific reservation to CEDAW regarding property acquired through inheritance. Tunisia's placed a reservation on article 16, paragraph 1, section H denying spouses equal right to property that is acquired through inheritance (United Nations, 2006:29).

Hence, before 2011 men and women did not have equal inheritance rights. With the annulment of Tunisia's reservations to the CEDAW convention in 2014, this changed. By lifting this reservation, Tunisia cleared the way for equality in inheritance law. Five years later, in 2019, the Tunisian parliament approved a bill that granted equal inheritance rights to men and women (Foroudi, 2018). Thus, the Arab spring eventually led to equality in inheritance due to the lifting of the CEDAW reservations and the new law on inheritance.

#### 5.5 Development of women's political representation

Tunisia became an independent country in 1956. A year later, women gained the right to vote. Women have the right to stand for elected office since 1959 (Kelly, 2010:2). Table 5 provides an overview of the number and share of female parliamentarians for the period 2004 – 2019. Since this thesis focuses on a time period ranging from 2000 to 2019, the years 2004 and 2019 are respectively the first and last eligible elections for this analysis.

In October 2011, Tunisia held its first democratic elections. However, the regime change did not bring an instant increase in the share of female parliamentarians. This is striking, since article 16 of the new *Decree Law N 35 on Election of the National Constituent Assembly* of 2011 stated that candidate lists must consist of 50% men and 50% women and that male and female candidates had to alternate throughout the list (Dahlerup, Danielsson and Johannson, 2012:5). The fact that women's political representation did not increase to the extent that was hoped for, is attributed to the fact that many

political parties only gained one seat and only five out of 81 political parties had a female party leader which is only 7% (Dahlerup, Danielsson and Johannson, 2012:5).

The long-awaited increase in the female share of parliamentarians came in 2014. The provision of parity between men and women on electoral lists, introduced in 2011, was maintained in article 24 of a new electoral law: *Loi organique n° 2014-16 du 26 mai 2014, relative aux élections et référendums*. It cannot be claimed with certainty that this increase is the result of the provision of Loi 2014-16. Yet, it can be seen as a sign of improvement since parity on party lists is new. Indeed, the new Tunisian constitution states in article 34 that the state will guarantee female representation in all elected bodies. This is a very promising sign which illustrates that Tunisia commits itself to guarantee female political representation.

Table 5: the number and share of female representatives in Tunisia’s parliament 2004 – 2019.

	<i>Tunisia</i>				
	<b>2004</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2019</b>
Number of female members of Parliament	43/189	59/214	58/217	68/217	54/217
Share of female members of parliament	23%	28%	27%	31%	25%

Source: Inter-Parliamentary Union (2020a).

In conclusion, there was already a slight increase in the share of female representatives in parliament before 2011 and this upward trend continues after 2011. The average rate of female parliamentarians is slightly higher after 2011 (28%) than before 2011 (26%). Thus, it seems that the Arab spring did result in higher shares of female representation in parliament as the theory suggests. Whether this increase is a direct result of the Arab spring or a consequence of a more wider trend is uncertain. However, the Arab spring led to more women-friendly legislation like *Loi 2014-16* which compels gender equality on election lists and the new Tunisian constitution that guarantees female political representation.

## 5.6 Development of women's economic participation

Table 6 is derived from the ILO database on male and female labour force participation rates. Thereafter, I divided the female rate by the male rate to establish the relative rate. In appendix F, the whole table for the period 2000 – 2019 is included. In this section, I only focus on the period 2008 – 2019.

The male labour force participation is almost three times higher than the female participation rate during the whole time frame. Before the Arab spring, the relative female participation rate in Tunisia increased steadily from 30% in 2000 to 36% in 2010 (see appendix E). After the Arab spring the relative rate increased to 37%. However, in 2016 the relative rate decreased slightly and remained stable at 36%.

It could be that the economic performance of Tunisia in general can partly explain this neutral effect of democratization. Tunisia's annual GDP growth rate ranged from 3.9% in 2012 to 2.4% in 2018 which is a stable growth rate (World Bank, 2020). Since Tunisia's economy did not experience great economic growth nor economic decline, the demand for labour did not change extensively. This could in part explain why the female rate remained stable after the Arab spring.

Table 6: the labour force participation rate for people 25 – 54 in %.

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Female	33	33	33	33	33	34	34	34	33	33	33	33
Male	92	93	93	93	92	92	93	93	93	93	93	93
Relative	36	36	36	36	36	37	37	37	36	36	36	36
Total	62	63	62	63	62	63	62	62	62	62	62	62

Source: International Labour Organization (2020a). ILO modelled estimates [database].

Thus, contrary to my expectation, the Arab spring did not spur the relative female labour force participation rate. Nevertheless, the Arab spring did not discourage women to be economically active. Because the decrease is limited, it seems that democratization has a limited effect on the female labour participation rate.

## 5.7 Alternative explanations

To account for the influence of alternative explanations, I now turn the development of the relative strength of women's organizations in Tunisia. The development of the two other explanatory variables is presented in appendix B because these variables remain rather constant.

### 5.7.1 Women's movements

Women's movements were already present under the autocratic regime of Ben Ali, albeit being controlled by the state and under restrictions. These restrictions were lifted the moment the transitional government took office (VOA News, 2011; Dahlerup, Danielsson, Johansson, 2012). According to the literature, one would expect that the influence of women's movements would decrease after regime change as people have new ways to be politically engaged. However, empirical evidence provides a mixed picture.

On the one hand, fieldwork conducted by Norbakk (2016) shows how the political landscape has been "blown open" after the Arab spring, indicating that women's movements lost their unique position of being one of the few ways in which people can politically participate. Indeed, she observed a diverse and dynamic variety of political actors that all address women's rights. Additionally, many political parties now have a subgroup dedicated to women or gender equality in general. Moreover, Norbakk notes that some of the women's movements that existed before the Arab spring lost members to other organizations and became more fractionalised since the Arab spring created more political room for civil society organisations.

Thus, Norbakk (2016) illustrates that women's movements in Tunisia lost their unique as the number of political actors addressing women's rights increased. As a consequence, women's movements lost members. Moreover, Norbakk shows that existing movements increasingly became fractionalised. Norbakk findings are in line with the theoretical arguments provided by Pickvance (1999) on how movements lose power after regime change

El-Masri (2015) adds an important observation by stating that, because women's movements had close ties with the regime of Ben Ali, in the aftermath of the Arab spring they were seen as a symbol of the old regime. As the protesters tried to limit the influence of the former regime, women's movements were consequently targeted as factors which influence should be limited.

On the other hand, there are also indicators of the continued influence of women's movements. The greatest example is the joint effort of various women's movements in challenging article 28 of the draft constitution in 2012 (Charrad & Zarrugh, 2014). The controversy of article 28 lied in the fact that throughout the draft constitution, women were termed *equal* to men. However, in article 28 which specifically addressed women's rights, women were named as *complementary* to men (Charrad & Zarrugh, 2014:235). This notion sparked national protests which led to the omitting of article 28 in the final and approved draft of the new Tunisian constitution.

Thus, it seems that women's movements in Tunisia are still active and did not completely disappear from the political landscape. However, as they 1) lost their unique position, 2) the number of political actors addressing women's rights increased 3) they lost members 4) became fractionalised and 5) some movements were targeted for their ties with the former regime, their strength has decreased but not disappeared.

## 5.8 Conclusion

To summarize, after the Arab spring Tunisia implemented women-friendly reforms, women's political representation slightly increased and the relative female labour force participation rate remained rather stable.

With regard to women's rights, four positive developments took place. One, Tunisia officially lifted its reservations to the CEDAW convention in 2014. Two, in that same year, a more women-friendly constitution was adopted with a special emphasis on the promotion of women's rights (article 46). Three, in 2017 Tunisia legalized a mixed marriage for women. Four, in 2019 Tunisia's inheritance law was amended establishing equal inheritance rights.

Women's political representation saw a slight increase after 2011. Although the average rate of female political representation is two percent point higher after the Arab spring than before 2011, the post-Arab spring levels are comparable to pre-Arab spring levels.

In terms of economic participation, the relative female labour force participation rate remained stable when comparing pre and post relative rates. The relative rate increased slightly until 2013. Afterwards, it decreased and remained stable from 2016 onwards.

## 6. Analysis of Algeria

This chapter assesses whether Algeria democratized and whether this had an effect on gender equality.

### 6.1 Democratization in Algeria

Algeria was not immune to the series of protests that spread across the region. Yet, an Arab spring did not occur in Algeria. The autocratic regime was never replaced with a democratic one, because the reformers that emerged never acquired power (see appendix D).

Data of the Economist Intelligence Unit, see table 8, supports this statement as it shows how Algeria remained an autocratic regime after the Arab spring of 2011. The only exception is the year 2019, in which Algeria moved up to the category of hybrid regimes. This is a direct consequence of President Bouteflika resignation after people demanded his departure when Bouteflika announced that he would run for a fifth term as president. After all, regime change did take place in Algeria but this was not a direct effect of the 2011 uprisings.

Table 7: the overview of Algeria's scores on the Democracy index 2006 – 2019.

Hybrid regime	4 – 6
Authoritarian regime	0 – 4

		2006	2008	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
<b>Algeria</b>	Score	3.17	3.32	3.44	3.44	3.83	3.83	3.83	3.95	3.56	3.56	3.50	4.01

Source: The Economist Intelligence Unit (2006; 2008; 2010; 2011; 2012; 2013; 2014; 2015; 2016; 2017; 2018; 2019).



## 6.2 Development of gender equality

Algeria ratified the CEDAW convention in 1996 and placed reservations on the same articles as Tunisia did: article 2 (general application), article 9 (nationality of children), article 15 (freedom of movement), article 16 (marriage and family relations) and article 29 (dispute settlement). An overview can be found in table 2 of appendix E. Algeria declared in its reservation to article 2, that it is prepared to apply the provisions of the convention, as long as these provisions do not contradict Algeria's Family Code. Since Algeria's Family Code is based on Islamic law, this is an indirect way of stating that provisions should not contradict Islamic law.

Algeria's reservations to the CEDAW convention still apply today. In addition, Algeria's Family Code was last amended in 2005 and thus, no legal reform has taken place since the Arab spring.

This is not to say that no development has taken place with regard to gender equality. In fact, three promising developments are important to mention. First, Algeria enacted an electoral quota for women stating that in each elected body, 30% of the members should be female (Bessadi, 2017).

Second, Algeria amended its constitution in 2016 (Akef, 2016). However, only one new article is introduced that relates to gender equality. Article 36 states that the state shall promote equality in the labour market (Secrétariat Général du Gouvernement, 2016). The question remains thus to what extent the new constitution will improve gender equality.

The third positive development is the resignation of President Bouteflika in April 2019. After he announced he would run for his fifth term as president, protests broke out and Bouteflika resigned from office (BBC, 2019). The fact that he left office, provides Algeria with the opportunity to democratize. Which, in turn, can eventually lead to advances in gender equality.

### 6.3 Development of women's rights

*Code de la famille Algérie* regulates marriage, divorce, custody and inheritance. It is effective since 1984 and was most recently amended in 2005. For this reason, women's rights in the Family Code of 2005 must be assessed, since these provisions still apply today.

#### 6.3.1 Marriage

The legal age of capacity for marriage is nineteen for both spouses (article 7) and consent of both of them is required (article 9). Proxy marriages, who used to facilitate forced unions, are forbidden and according to article 19, both spouses can add stipulations to their marriage contract. Since 2005 women do not need to obey their husbands, but husbands and wives do have different duties and rights within their marriage.

Indeed, many provisions directly discriminate against women in the dimension of marriage. For instance, women need a marriage guardian, a so-called *Wali*, to be present at her wedding while men do not (article 11). Although this *Wali* merely has a symbolic role and cannot force the woman to marry or oppose her marriage, this is a discriminating practice since this provision does not fully acknowledge women's autonomy (Marzouki, 2010:9). In addition, polygamy is allowed according to article 8 of the Algerian Family Code, permitting men to be wed to up to four wives simultaneously. Polyandry is not explicitly prohibited since it is never mentioned, however one can presume that polyandry is out of the question. Although the consent of the first wife is needed in order for a man to marry another woman, in practice many men divorce their first wife to marry the second (Marzouki, 2010:10). In general recommendation Nr. 21 on Equality in Marriage of 1994, the CEDAW committee classifies polygamy as a form of gender discrimination because it violates the equality between spouses (OECD, 2014:219).

Whereas men are free to marry whoever they want, women can only marry Muslim men, making mixed marriages for women unlawful (article 31). Moreover, a new version of article 7 that was added in 2005, requires both spouses to present health certificates. However, this is often interpreted by officials as proof of virginity for women (Marzouki, 2010:12).

Moreover, Algeria made a reservation to all the provisions part of article 16 paragraph 1 of the CEDAW convention stating that the provisions of the convention should not contradict Algeria's Family Code. Consequently, provisions of the charter that contradict the stipulations of the *Code de la famille Algérie* have no legal affect in Algeria. This reservation still applies today and thus impede women's rights with regard to family matters.

Thus, in Algeria. Women do not have the same rights to marry as men. Because the *Code de la famille Algérie* has not been amended since 2005 and Algeria's reservations to CEDAW still apply, inequality concerning the right to marry persists to exist.

### 6.3.2 Divorce

In the area of divorce, men and women have unequal rights as well. In Algeria, there are three ways in which a divorce can be obtained (article 48). One, the husband requests a divorce. Two, both spouses agree to divorce each other and three upon the request of the wife. However, if the wife wants to file for divorce, she is required to list one out of ten preapproved reasons whereas a husband can file for divorce without explaining his motives. The preapproved reasons are specified in article 53. If a wife fails to provide one or more reasons or refuses to do so, she is still able to divorce her husband if she compensates him financially. This process is called *Khul* (article 54).

According to Marzouki (2010) the sum of the *Khul* is determined by the husband and wife. If they fail to agree, a judge will set the amount the woman has to pay her husband. In this case, the judge will make sure that the amount does not exceed the value of the dower the husband paid to his wife upon marriage. Since the dower is a relatively small amount, the *Khul* is likely to be too. This indicates that the amount the wife has to pay her husband will not be too high for her to pay. However, it is plausible that this sum does prevent some women to divorce their husbands. Since husbands do not need to pay their wives a sum of money to divorce them or provide them with an explanation for his wish to divorce her, women have unequal rights to divorce.

### 6.3.3 Custody

Article 64 holds that custody over the children is automatically transmitted to the mother. However, if the holder of custody remarries, they lose their right to custody (article 66). This holds for any custody holder, but since mothers are the first ones to be granted custody, they lose that right after they remarry. However, as this provision does not discriminate specifically against women, I conclude that men and women, on paper, have equal custody rights.

#### *6.3.4 Decision-making power within the household*

Before 2005, husbands and wives had very different rights and duties within their marriage. For instance, husbands were required to provide financial maintenance and women had the duty to breastfeed their children to the age of two years (Marzouki, 2010:10). These provisions were abrogated in 2008 and replaced with article 36 in which *mutual* rights and duties are stated. For example, spouses need to cohabit in harmony; protect the family's interests and consult each other in the management of family affairs. Especially the last mutual duty indicates that women do have a say in family matters. Yet, Marzouki (2010) states that the authority of Algerian women in their household remains poorly defined.

#### *6.3.5 Access to assets within the household*

Just as Tunisian women, wives in Algeria are the sole owner of their dowry which gives them access to some assets within the household (article 14). However, it is important to note that dowries in Algeria do not consist of large sums of money. Additionally, marital property is often registered in the husband's name, leaving women with little access to these goods.

#### *6.3.6 Inheritance*

The Algerian Family Code also regulates matters of inheritance. In Algeria, women do not receive an equal share of the inheritance compared to men. In fact, article 155 states that a male heir receives twice the amount a female inherit would obtain.

Discrimination based on gender, as is the case in inheritance law, has far-reaching consequences since many material resources such as land, credit and housing are obtained through inheritance. Because of the unequal footing of men and women in inheritance, it is very difficult for women to gain access to these resources, limiting their opportunities.

#### 6.4 Development of women's political representation

The rights to vote and run for elected office were granted to women in 1962, after Algeria gained independence from France (Marzouki, 2010:19). The data provided by IPU corresponds to the lower house of parliament because Algeria has a bicameral system.

Women's political representation was very low before the Arab spring of 2011, see table 9. However, when the constitution was amended in 2008, article 31 holds that the state will work to promote the political rights of women by increasing their representation in elected assemblies. In turn, the Algerian government enacted a quota law that required a quota of 30% of female representatives in parliament in 2012 (Loi n°12-03).

As the Algerian government already intended to increase women's political representation in 2008, this development can be regarded as a development in itself. Yet, the Arab spring could have spurred the quota's implementation. Despite the quota, the rate of female members of parliament did not reach the threshold of 30% in 2017. This is attributed to the fact that Algerian parties face difficulties in finding enough female candidates (VOA News, 2017). This indicates that Algeria faces wider problems. For instance, women may be unaware of the quota or women might face social stigma when they want to participate in politics. Additionally, the fact that the threshold is not reached begs the question what effect the quota will have on women's political representation in practice.

Table 8: the number and share of female representatives in Algeria's parliament 2002 – 2017.

	Algeria			
	2002	2007	2012	2017
Number of the female and total number of parliamentarians	24/389	30/389	146/462	119/462
Share of female parliamentarians	6%	8%	32%	26%

Source: Inter-Parliamentary Union (2020b).

In conclusion, even though Algeria never democratized, it did experience a significant increase in the total number and share of female representatives in the lower house of parliament from an average of 7% before the Arab spring, to an average of 29% after 2011.

## 6.5 Development of women's economic participation

Since the table on women's economic participation is so extensive, in this section only the years 2008 to 2019 are included. A complete overview can be found in table 2 of appendix F.

Since 2000 there is a continuous increase in the relative female labour force participation rate, increasing from 15% in 2000 to 23% in 2011 (see table 2 of appendix F). The relative female participation rate was at its peak in 2013 with a value of 26%. After 2013, one notices a slight but continuous decrease in the female labour force participation rate. This is striking since the male labour force participation rate remained stable after 2013, indicating especially women stopped to be economically active.

Table 9: the labour force participation rates for people aged 25 – 54 in %.

	<i>Algeria</i>											
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Female	19	20	20	21	22	24	22	21	21	21	20	21
Male	91	91	92	91	91	92	89	89	89	89	89	89
Relative	21	22	22	23	24	26	25	24	24	24	23	24
Total	56	56	56	57	57	58	55	55	55	55	55	55

Source: International Labour Organization (2020b). ILO modelled estimates [database].

Since Algeria has not democratized, I did not expect its relative labour force participation rate to increase to the extent it did between 2011 and 2013. Yet, the female labour force participation rate decreased in 2015 and 2018. Despite the constitutional provision of 2016 stating that the state shall promote gender equality in the labour market (article 36), this has not yet translated to equal labour force participation.

## 6.6 Alternative explanations

To assess the potential influence of the alternative explanatory variables, I now turn to the development of the relative strength of women's movements. The development of the two other alternative explanatory variables is illustrated in appendix B because they remained rather stable.

### 6.6.1 Women's movements

Women's movements already existed under the autocratic rule of Bouteflika, albeit under restrictions since the organization's activities were monitored by the regime. Because the Arab spring did not bring a regime change, these restrictions still apply to women's movements in Algeria today. In fact, in 2012 the Algerian government passed a new law on associations that further restricts civil society groups (UN News, 2012).

Human Rights Watch claimed that the new law is even more restrictive than the one it replaced (Human Rights Watch, 2014a). Article 7 holds that organizations need a registration receipt from the government before they can operate legally (Loi 12-06). However, Human Rights Watch (2018) reports that some women's movements, among other civil society organizations, are denied their registration receipt without a proper explanation of the authorities. Thus, it seems that women's movements still face repression and that their relative strength decreased after the implementation of new restrictions in 2012.

## 6.7 Conclusion

To summarize, after the Arab spring Algeria has not amended any provision related to family matters or inheritance. Women's political representation, though, increased significantly. Women's economic participation increased until 2013 and then decreased in 2014, 2015 and 2018 but remaining rather stable from 2015 onwards.

In 2005 Algeria's Family Code was last amended. Put differently, discriminating provisions regulating family matters still apply today. Thus, Algeria made no development in this regard.

Women's political representation, on the other hand, has improved notably after a quota was implemented in 2012. Yet, it seems that Algeria faces additional challenges since the threshold was not reached in 2017.

Lastly, women's economic participation increased slightly after 2011. However, the relative rate slightly decreased in 2014, 2015 and 2018 but remained virtually stable at a rate of 24% since 2015.

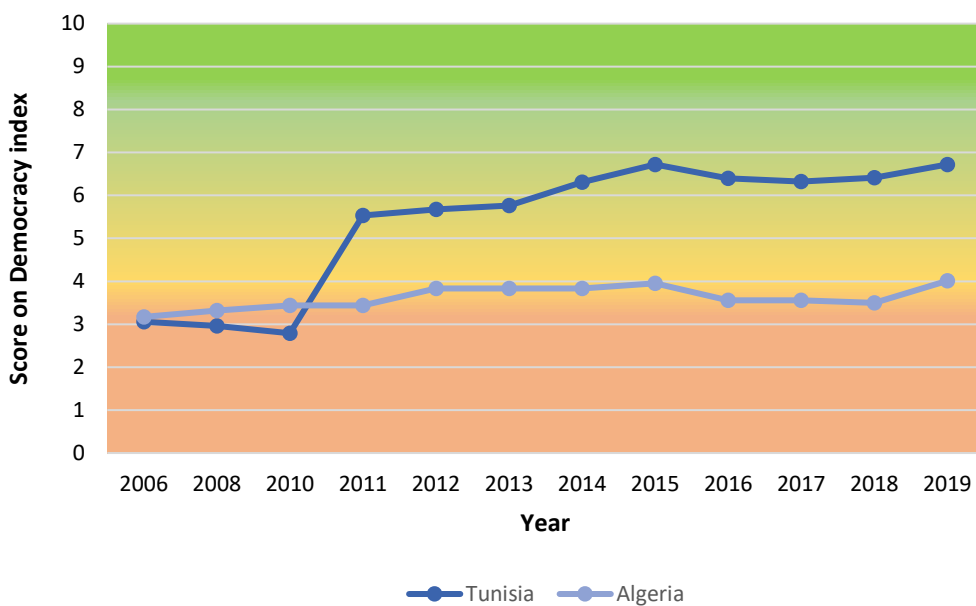
## 7. Comparison

In this comparative chapter, I present the findings of the previous chapters to allow for a general overview of the development of democratization and gender equality in Tunisia and Algeria.

### 7.1 Democratization

From the analyses, it becomes clear that Tunisia democratized after the Arab spring, whereas Algeria did not, see figure 4. Thus, the Arab spring led to democratization.

Figure 4: the democratization process in Tunisia compared to the process in Algeria.



### 7.2 Development of gender equality

This chapter compares the findings of Algeria and Tunisia concerning gender equality.

#### 7.2.1 Women's rights

Women's rights in relation to family matters improved in Tunisia whereas, no progress in this regard was made in Algeria. As a direct consequence of the Arab spring, Tunisia lifted its reservations to the CEDAW convention and legalised mixed marriages for women in 2017, whereas Algeria did not.

With regard to inheritance, Tunisia amended its inheritance laws in 2019 establishing equal inheritance rights regardless of gender. The fact that Tunisia amended its inheritance law is a direct consequence of the Arab spring. Only months after the ousting of Ben Ali, Tunisia announced that it would lift its reservations to the CEDAW convention including a reservation to equal inheritance (article 16,



paragraph 1, section H). Tunisia officially withdrew its reservations in 2014, clearing the way for equal inheritance. In Algeria, however, women still inherit half of what their male relatives receive (see table 12). For a complete overview of the status of gender equality in the selected countries before and after 2011, see annex G. Thus, the effect of the Arab spring on women’s rights in Tunisia is positive.

Table 10: the development of women’s rights.

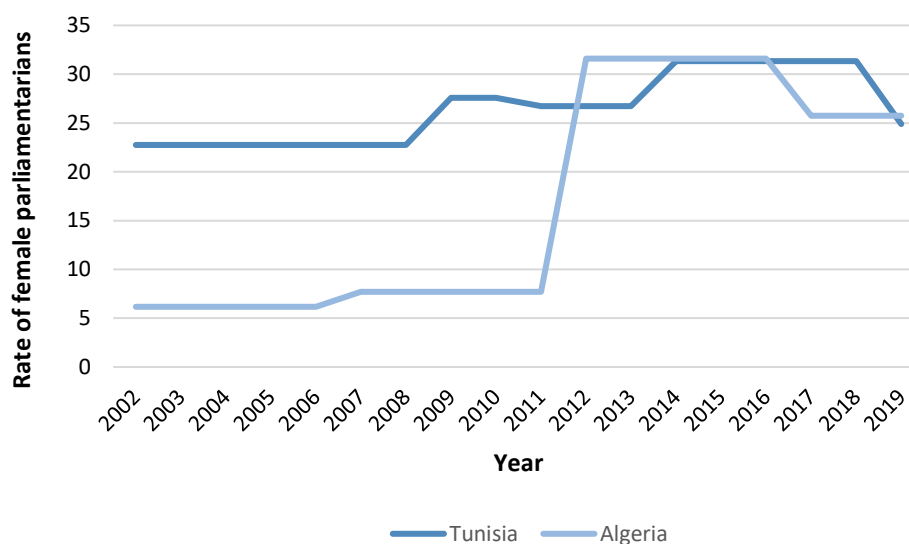
	<b>Algeria</b>	<b>Tunisia</b>
<i>Right to marry</i>	<p>×</p> <p>Reservation to art. 16 CEDAW still applies</p>	<p>✓</p> <p>Reservations to article 16, paragraph 1, section C and G CEDAW lifted (2014)</p> <p>Legalization of mixed marriages for women (2017)</p>
<i>Right to divorce</i>	<p>×</p> <p>Reservation to art. 16 CEDAW still applies</p>	<p>✓</p> <p>Reservation to article 16, paragraph 1, section C CEDAW lifted (2014)</p>
<i>Right to custody</i>	<p>×</p> <p>Reservation to art. 16 CEDAW still applies</p>	<p>✓</p> <p>Reservation to article 16, paragraph 1, section F CEDAW lifted (2014)</p>
<i>Decision-making power within household</i>	<p>×</p> <p>Reservation to art. 16 CEDAW still applies</p>	<p>✓</p> <p>Reservation to article 16, paragraph 1, section D CEDAW lifted (2014)</p>
<i>Access to assets within household</i>	<p>×</p> <p>Reservation to art. 16 CEDAW still applies</p>	<p>✓</p> <p>Reservation to article 16, paragraph 1, section H CEDAW lifted (2014)</p>
<i>Inheritance</i>	<p>×</p> <p>Unequal inheritance law still applies</p>	<p>✓</p> <p>Reservations to article 16, paragraph 1, section H CEDAW lifted (2014)</p> <p>Equal inheritance law (2019)</p>

### 7.2.3 Women's political representation

It is less evident what the effect of the Arab spring is on women's political participation. Women's parliamentary representation did increase after the Arab spring in Tunisia, however, the female representation rates do not differ significantly from pre-Arab spring levels. Additionally, Algeria who did not experience an Arab spring saw a higher increase in their female representation due to an electoral quota that was already announced in 2008 and implemented in 2012.

It cannot be claimed with 100% certainty that Algeria's quota was a development in itself, independent from the events of the Arab spring in neighbouring countries that could have triggered its implementation. Therefore, the Arab spring had a limited effect on women's political representation.

Figure 5: the development of women's parliamentary representation Tunisia and Algeria.



### 7.2.4 Women's economic participation

In table 14, I made the findings on both countries comparable with specific regard to the relative labour force participation rate.

According to the theory, one would expect that women's economic participation measured through their relative labour force participation rate would increase. Instead, in both countries the relative labour force participation rate increased between 2011 and 2013. Thereafter, the rate of both countries remained virtually the same and rather stable since 2016. Because we can observe a similar trend in both countries whereas the country experienced an Arab spring or not, it seems that the Arab spring did not affect women's economic participation to the extent that was expected.

Table 11: the relative labour force participation rate in Algeria and Tunisia 2011 – 2019 in %.

<i>Algeria</i>									
	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>
Relative rate	23	24	26	25	24	24	24	23	24
-		increase	increase	decrease	decrease	stable	stable	decrease	increase
<i>Tunisia</i>									
	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>
Relative rate	36	36	37	37	37	36	36	36	36
-		increase	increase	stable	stable	decrease	stable	stable	stable

### 7.3 Development of alternative explanatory variables

Before I can conclude, I first need to compare the change in the influence of women’s movements in the selected countries, since their economic growth and political stability are comparable (see annex B).

#### 7.3.1 Women’s movements

In both countries, women’s movements were active before 2011 and in both, their relative influence declined, albeit to different extents. In Algeria, women’s movements face difficulties in exerting their influence due to new legislation that gives the authorities more control over social movements. In Tunisia, women’s movements lost their unique position since the political field was ‘blown open’ after the revolution as new actors have emerged, all with a (partly) focus on women’s rights. Although women’s movements in Tunisia were weakened to some extent by the emergence of more political parties that also focused on women’s rights, their strength did not disappear as their influence on the draft constitution shows. The weakened, but continuous strength of Tunisian women’s movements could have influenced more women-friendly policies. However, the advancement in women’s rights that are observed are more direct consequences of the Arab spring and driven by the government itself, then demanded by women’s movements. Yet, women’s movements did exert some influence.

## 8. Conclusion

In this concluding chapter, I answer the sub-questions and turn to the empirical findings. Finally, I briefly highlight the implication of my results, the limitations of this study and make recommendations for further research.

### 8.1 Sub-questions

To answer the main research question: “What is the effect of the Arab spring on gender equality?”, the three sub-questions are first answered.

#### *8.1.1 What is the effect of the Arab spring on gender equality according to the literature?*

The literature review presented a mixed effect of the Arab spring on gender equality, depending on the country under analysis. Tunisia consolidated its democratization process and experienced positive developments. Egypt, on the other hand, saw with its democratization a rise of conventionalism. Any possible effect in Libya was nullified when the country descended into civil war.

#### *8.1.2 What is the effect of democratization on gender equality in general?*

Democracy is positively related to gender equality since gender equality is a core value of democracy. It follows that discriminating provisions in law based on gender will be revised. Furthermore, a democracy in which women are not represented is flawed. Therefore, their participation will be encouraged and in turn, increase. As a democracy offers men and women equal rights and opportunities, it is believed that democratization fosters women’s economic participation.

#### *8.1.3 What was the status of gender equality in the selected countries before 2011 and how has gender equality developed since 2011?*

Tunisia and Algeria were quite progressive countries in terms of women’s rights. However, there were some differences between them. Prior to the Arab spring, Tunisian women only had equal rights in terms of divorce. However, in Algeria women did not have equal rights in family matters or inheritance at all. In both countries women participation both politically and economically, albeit with significant different levels.

Gender equality developed positively in both countries, but again to different extents. Algeria made no advances in women’s rights, saw a significant increase in female political representation and a slight decrease in female’s relative labour force participation. In Tunisia, women’s rights were advanced to a great extent, however female political representation increased slightly and women’s economic participation somewhat declined.

## 8.2 Findings

The findings on the effect of the Arab spring on women's rights; women's political representation; women's economic participation in the selected countries are summarized below.

### 8.2.1 *The effect of the Arab spring on women's rights*

The Arab spring significantly advanced women's rights in Tunisia. However, positive developments were absent in Algeria where a democratization process never took off. It therefore seems that, based on this research, the Arab spring had a positive effect on women's rights in Tunisia.

### 8.2.2 *The effect of the Arab spring on women's political representation*

After the Arab spring, the share of female parliamentarians in Tunisia increased. However, so did the levels in Algeria. Indeed, the rate of female members of parliament increased significantly in Algeria. Since Algeria was able to obtain higher levels of female representation without having democratized, it seems that democratization is not the sole cause of increased female political representation. Still, it is possible that the events of the Arab spring in neighbouring countries, spurred the implementation of the quota in Algeria in 2012. Yet, as this cannot be proven, the effect of the Arab spring on women's political representation seems to be neutral.

### 8.2.3 *The effect of the Arab spring on women's economic participation*

In both countries a similar trend can be observed with relation to the relative female labour force participation rate. The rate increased in the first two years after the Arab spring, but decreased later on but remained rather stable from 2016 onwards. Because both countries have a similar trend regardless whether the country democratized or not, it seems that the Arab spring had a limited effect on women's economic participation in the selected countries.

Therefore, I conclude the following: the Arab spring had a positive effect on women's rights, whereas its effect on women's political representation and economic participation seems to remained neutral in the selected countries.

Table 12: the expectations, their result and the effect in the selected countries.

Expectations	Result		Effect
	Tunisia	Algeria	
The Arab spring leads to an increase in women's rights	Increase	-	Positive
The Arab spring leads to an increase in women's political representation	Increase	Increase	Neutral
The Arab spring leads to an increase in women's economic participation	Increase/decrease	Increase/decrease	Neutral

### 8.3 The effect of the Arab spring on gender equality

As pointed out in the methodology, it is difficult to generalize the findings of a qualitative study, because the conclusion is based on two cases. Consequently, the above stated conclusion may not hold when applied to other countries. Therefore, a more nuanced conclusion is prudent.

The Arab spring seems neither to have had a strong positive nor a negative effect on gender equality. Additionally, similar trends are observed in both countries despite their different levels of democratization. For instance, women's political representation increased in both countries, albeit to different extents. The relative female labour force participation rates followed a similar trend in both countries as well. These similarities beg the question to what extent the Arab spring was the sole cause of these developments or to what extent these developments were part of a wider trend in the region? Moreover, pre-existing literature had already established that the effect differs from country to country. For instance, both Egypt and Libya passed the five stages of the democratization process as well. However, their new democracies were short-lived due to a military coup and the emergence of civil war. Consequently, it is impossible to assess the long-term effect of the Arab spring on gender equality in these countries. In turn, it is difficult for this research to draw hard conclusions on the effect of the Arab spring on gender equality.

In conclusion, the effect of the Arab spring on gender equality is mixed because the effect is dependent on the country and indicators under analysis. Therefore, the answer to the main research question: "What is the effect of the Arab spring on gender equality?" states as follows: the effect of the Arab spring on gender equality is mixed.

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*The effect of the Arab spring on gender equality is mixed.*

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## 8.4 Implications

Now that the conclusion is presented, this study's implication for existing literature and society is briefly emphasized.

As Beer (2009) stated, there is little *empirical* research on the relationship between democracy and gender equality. Nevertheless, my findings seem to correspond with the theoretical expectation that democracies amend discriminating laws against women. Since gender equality is a central component of democracy, these value will, in turn, be reflected in the constitution and national laws. My finding on the effect of the Arab spring on women's rights in Tunisia supports this theoretical expectation.

Empirical findings on political representation presented in the literature are mixed, whereas Waylen (1994) finds no increase in female political representation, Lindberg (2004) finds that democratization leads to an incremental increase in female representation. The Arab spring did result in higher rates of female parliamentarians in Tunisia. However, this increase was limited. Women's political representation in Algeria increased as well, despite the lack of democratization. Therefore, my findings also support this mixed picture. Women's political representation in Tunisia increased slightly, as suggested by Lindberg. However, as Algeria's level increased as well despite the absence of democratization, it is possible that democratization per se does not automatically leads to an increase in political representation.

My conclusion that democratization has a neutral effect on female's relative labour force participation rate is in line with the findings of Bayanpourtehrani and Sylwester (2012) who find no relation between democracies and higher female labour force participation rates.

The social implication of this study is that since the Arab spring had a mixed effect on gender equality, it will have different practical implications for different people. Based on the findings of Tunisia, progression is there. Yet, the country has a long way to go to truly establish gender equality.

## 8.5 Limitation

First of all, it is important to note that my findings are based on a few indicators of gender equality. I focused on a subset of women's rights; women's political representation and women's economic participation for reasons of feasibility. In addition, in the time period available for this thesis, I only managed to look at two cases, instead of all the countries in the MENA region. Consequently, the effect of the Arab spring might be stronger if all indicators of gender equality and every country were taken into account.

Secondly, in a qualitative research design, establishing causality can be quite difficult. Although this thesis accounts for the internal validity by using a deliberate case selection and accounting for alternative explanatory variables, it is still possible that the development has been influenced by other factors. Furthermore, conclusions are based on two cases which makes generalizing the conclusion tricky.

Thirdly, law on paper is different from law in practice. Women may have equal rights and opportunities enshrined in law, but this does not automatically generate gender equality in practice. Persisting social norms, lacking implementation or enforcement may cause the situation in practice to be different from the situation on paper.

## 8.6 Further research

Based on the aforementioned limitations of this study, I propose three concrete suggestions for further research on this topic. Many authors emphasize the importance of time, suggesting that the effect of democratization grows over time. Therefore, longitudinal studies, both quantitative and qualitative are needed to address the limitations of this research.

One, a long-term quantitative research is desired. A quantitative research is able to assess more indicators of gender equality than a qualitative research like this study. Additionally, a quantitative research is better able to establish and assess a causal relationship between the Arab spring and gender equality. A quantitative research is thus needed to address limitation one and two.

Two, a long-term qualitative research is needed to grasp the effect of the Arab spring on law in practice. As mentioned before, law in the books differs from law in practice. It is therefore needed to conduct a qualitative research, preferably based on in-depth interviews, to assess if and to what extent gender equality on paper translated into gender equality as experienced by people in their daily lives.



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## Appendix A: annual GDP growth rates

Table 1: annual GDP growth rates of all eligible cases in %.

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
<b>Arab spring</b>																			
Egypt	6.4	3.5	2.4	3.2	4.1	4.5	6.8	7.1	7.2	4.6	5.1	1.8	2.2	2.2	2.9	4.4	4.3	4.2	5.3
Yemen	6.2	3.8	3.9	3.7	4.0	5.6	3.2	3.3	3.6	3.9	7.7	-12.7	2.4	4.8	-0.2	-16.7	-13.6	-5.9	-2.7
Libya	3.7	-1.8	-1.0	13.0	4.5	11.9	6.5	6.4	2.7	-0.8	5.0	-62.1	123.1	-13.6	-24.0	-8.9	-2.8	26.7	8.0
Tunisia	4.7	3.8	1.3	4.7	6.2	3.5	5.2	6.7	4.2	3.0	3.5	-1.9	3.9	2.8	2.9	1.2	1.2	1.8	2.4
<b>Arab spring</b>																			
Algeria	3.8	3.0	5.6	7.2	4.3	5.9	1.6	3.4	2.4	1.6	3.6	2.9	3.4	2.8	3.8	3.7	3.2	1.7	1.4
Morocco	1.9	7.3	3.1	6.0	4.8	3.3	7.6	3.5	5.9	4.2	3.8	5.2	3.0	4.5	2.7	4.5	1.1	4.2	3.0
Jordan	4.2	5.3	5.8	4.2	8.6	8.1	8.1	8.2	7.2	5.5	2.3	2.6	2.6	2.8	3.1	2.4	2.0	2.1	1.9
Saudi Arabia	5.6	-1.2	-2.8	11.2	7.9	5.6	2.8	1.8	6.3	-2.1	5.0	10.0	5.4	2.7	3.7	4.1	1.7	-0.7	2.4

Source: World Bank (2020).

Table 2: comparison of annual GDP growth rates of Tunisia and Algeria in %.

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
<b>Tunisia</b>	4.7	3.8	1.3	4.7	6.2	3.5	5.2	6.7	4.2	3.0	3.5	-1.9	3.9	2.8	2.9	1.2	1.2	1.8	2.4
<b>Algeria</b>	3.8	3.0	5.6	7.2	4.3	5.9	1.6	3.4	2.4	1.6	3.6	2.9	3.4	2.8	3.8	3.7	3.2	1.7	1.4

Appendix B: similarities alternative explanatory variables Algeria – Tunisia.

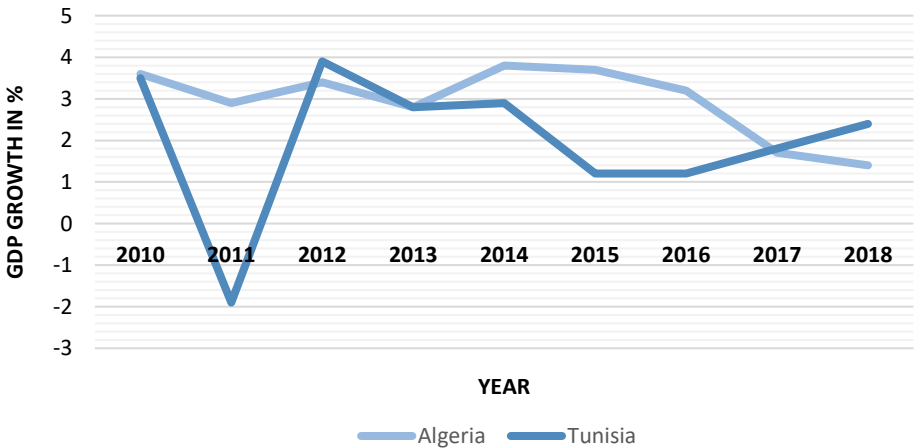
Alternative explanatory variables should be as similar as possible for the selected cases. In this appendix, I show how Algeria and Tunisia share similarities with regard to their economic development and political stability. The development of the strength of women’s movements is assessed in the analyses.

**Economic development**

Figure 1 presents the economic development in GDP growth in percentage of Algeria and Tunisia between 2010 and 2018. Despite Tunisia’s economic decline in 2011, as a direct effect of the political developments, both countries experienced economic growth. Additionally, their GDP growth rates are comparable because their minimal GDP growth rates (Tunisia: 1.2 and Algeria: 1.4) and the maximum GDP growth rates (Tunisia: 3.9 and Algeria: 3.8) are similar. Moreover, as already shown in table .. of the case selection, the average growth rate of both countries is similar, 2.3 and 2.8 respectively.

Thus, Algeria and Tunisia have comparable GDP growth rates and thus similar economic development. Therefore, the alternative explanatory variable ‘economic development’ is as similar as possible.

Figure 1: economic development Algeria – Tunisia.



Source: World Bank Indicators (2020).

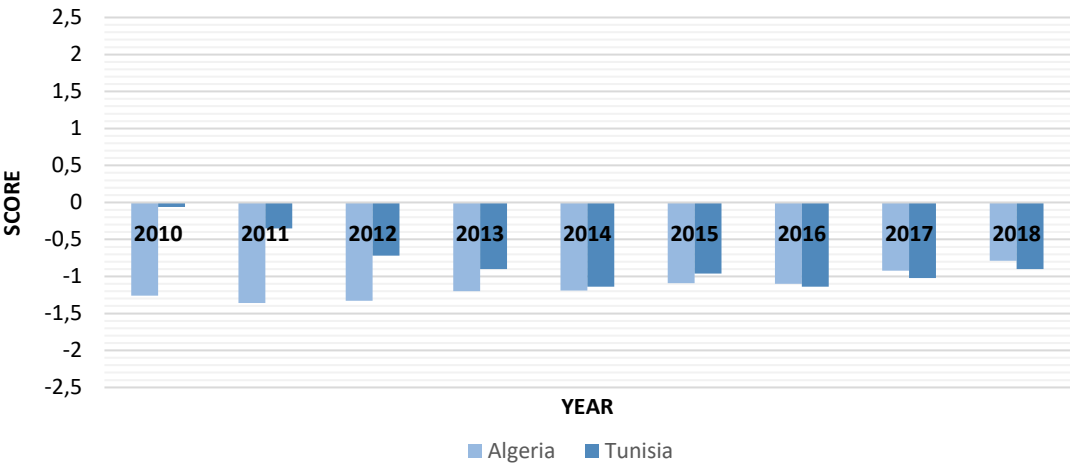
**Political stability**

The Worldwide governance indicators (2019) assessed perceived political stability. The dimension ‘political stability and absence of violence’ measures perceptions of the probability of political instability and its scores range between -2.5 (political instability) and 2.5 (political stability).

As figure 2 illustrates, Algeria and Tunisia have comparable scores on the political stability and absence of violence dimension. While neither of the two countries is completely politically stable nor unstable, two trends are observed. One, the perceived political stability in Tunisia deteriorated until 2016 and then, the situation improved again. This trend can be attributed to two developments. In 2013, political tensions reached its climax after two political figures were assassinated. Thereafter, Tunisia formed the National Dialogue Quartet in 2013 which successfully served as a mediator and was rewarded with the Nobel Peace Prize in 2015 (Borger, 2015). From 2014 onwards, Tunisia remained rather stable as the two ruling parties put their differences aside and decided to cooperate (Yahmed & Yerkes, 2019). In time, this can be reflected in better scores on the perceived political stability dimension.

Two, Algeria’s perceived political stability improved slightly after 2011 and eventually to such extent that the scores of both countries are rather similar from 2014 onwards. President Bouteflika suffered from a minor stroke in 2013 and was last seen in public in April 2014 (New York Times, 2013; Jawad, 2019). Despite his public absence, Bouteflika won the 2014 presidential elections and his government was stable enough to prevent the turmoil caused by the Arab spring and the years that followed. Thus, in terms of perceived political stability, Algeria and Tunisia are comparable cases.

Figure 2: political stability in Algeria – Tunisia.



Source: Worldwide governance indicators (2019)

Appendix C: comparison democracy index and Freedom House

First, the methodology differences between of Freedom House and Economist Intelligence Unit are described and how their methodology changed over the years.

**Methodological differences**

The Economist Intelligence Unit and Freedom House both assess the level of democracy in a country, albeit with a slightly different approach.

The Economist Intelligence Unit assessed democracy based on sixty indicators along four categories: electoral process and pluralism; civil liberties; the functioning of the government; political participation and political culture. The scores of all indicators result in a weighted average that ranges from 0 to 10. Based on this average, the regimes are classified along four types: autocracy (0 – 4), hybrid regimes (4 – 6), flawed democracy (6 – 8) and full democracy (8 – 10) and eventually internationally ranked.

Freedom House bases its scores on national surveys along two categories: political rights (PL) and civil liberties (CL). Countries are assigned two ratings for each category ranging from 1 (greatest freedom) to 7 (lowest freedom). The average of a country’s score determines whether this country is classified as free (1.0 – 2.5), partly free (3.0 – 5.0) or not free (5.5 – 7.0).

In 2017, the scale of political rights and civil liberties changed. From now on, scores on political rights range from 0 to 60 and civil liberties from 0 to 40. Both scores form an average that determines a country’s level of freedom., see figure 1.

Figure 1: overview of scores that determine a country's freedom

Status	Civil Liberties score	Political Rights score						
		0-5*	6-11	12-17	18-23	24-29	30-35	36-40
	53-60	PF	PF	PF	F	F	F	F
	44-52	PF	PF	PF	PF	F	F	F
	35-43	PF	PF	PF	PF	PF	F	F
	26-34	NF	PF	PF	PF	PF	PF	F
	17-25	NF	NF	PF	PF	PF	PF	PF
	8-16	NF	NF	NF	PF	PF	PF	PF
	0-7	NF	NF	NF	NF	PF	PF	PF

Source: Freedom House (2020g).

## Democratization in Tunisia

As presented below, the democratization process in Tunisia is the same regardless of the source from which data is derived.

### *The Economist Intelligence Unit: democracy index*

		2006	2008	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
<b>Tunisia</b>	Score	3.06	2.96	2.79	5.53	5.67	5.76	6.31	6.72	6.40	6.32	6.41	6.72

Source: The Economist Intelligence Unit (2006; 2008; 2010; 2011; 2012; 2013; 2014; 2015; 2016; 2017; 2018; 2019).

### *Freedom House*

		2006	2008	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017*	2018	2019
<b>Tunisia</b>	PL	6	7	7	3	3	3	3	1	1	36	30	31
	CL	5	5	5	4	4	4	3	3	3	42	40	38
											78	70	69

Source: Freedom House (2012; 2013; 2014; 2015; 2016; 2017; 2018; 2019; 2020a; 2020b; 2020c).

## Democratization in Algeria

Again, regardless of the source, the findings on the level of democracy/freedom are similar. However, despite the resignation of long-time dictator Bouteflika, Freedom House still classifies Algeria as not free, whereas the Economist Intelligence Unit moves Algeria up to the next category. Yet, this is the only difference.

### *The Economist Intelligence Unit: democracy index*

		2006	2008	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
<b>Algeria</b>	Score	3.17	3.32	3.44	3.44	3.83	3.83	3.83	3.95	3.56	3.56	3.50	4.01

Source: The Economist Intelligence Unit (2006; 2008; 2010; 2011; 2012; 2013; 2014; 2015; 2016; 2017; 2018; 2019).

### *Freedom House*

		2006	2008	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
<b>Algeria</b>	PL	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	11	10	10
	CL	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	24	25	24
	Average										35	35	34

Source: Freedom House (2012; 2013; 2014; 2015; 2016; 2017; 2018; 2019; 2020d; 2020e; 2020f)

## Appendix D: democratization in Algeria

This section applies Huntington's theory on the democratization process to the Algerian case. As will be illustrated, reformers did emerge in Algeria, however as they never acquired power, the democratization process failed.

### *Stage 1: Emergence of reformers*

In early January 2011, people took the streets to protests against high food prices and high unemployment rates. A few days later, protests had spread to other cities that nearly make up half of Algeria's prefectures. However, only four days later, peace and order were restored. In February 2012, a few new attempts were made to revive the protests, but these attempts were unsuccessful as the number of protesters decreased daily. By the end of February 2011, it was evident that the Arab spring would not flourish in Algeria to the same extent as it did in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Yemen.

### *Stage 2: Acquiring power*

Because Algeria's autocratic leader Abdelaziz Bouteflika did not resign, died or handed over his power, the reformers never acquired power in Algeria which is a necessary condition for democratization according to Huntington's theory on democratization.

Many scholars have focused on the question why Algeria did not experience an Arab spring to the same extent as neighbouring countries like Tunisia and Libya (Del Panta, 2017; Wolf, 2019). One of the most common explanation points to the country's recent civil war of the 1990s (Vreeken, 2011; Del Panta, 2017; Wolf, 2009). The fresh memory of the bloody civil war could be the reason why Algerians did not want an outright revolution. In addition, in Algeria, a coalition that opposed the regime was never formed, because their distrust against each other was greater than their joined hatred against the regime. This prevented a mass mobilization of people to demand regime change. Part of this latter explanation is based on the fact that Algeria did not have a middle class. In general, workers have the ability to put pressure on the regime by interrupting the process of capital accumulation. However, Algeria has the least diversified economy and its economy relies heavily on the oil and gas business, which means that only workers from these two sectors could be mobilized (Del Panta, 2017:1091). Furthermore, the fact that Algeria's security forces did not create martyrs by shooting at the protesting crowds and the fact that autocratic regimes could learn from the escalation of protests in other countries (and thus, preventing to make the same mistakes) are also mentioned as additional reasons for Algeria's exceptionalism.

Thus, the democratization process in Algeria was short-lived. Of all the five stages that the country needed to pass to pave the way for democratization, only the first one (emergence of reformers) was successfully passed. Indeed, the protests that marked the beginning of the Arab spring reached Algeria. However, the autocratic regime was never replaced with a democratic one. Hence, Algeria did not experience an Arab spring and thus never democratized.

## Appendix E: Reservations selected countries to CEDAW conventions

Table 1: Tunisia's reservations to the CEDAW convention.

Article	Paragraph	Section	Reservation Tunisia	
General declaration		States agree without delay to pursue all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women	No legislative or organizational action will take place if provisions contradict chapter one of the constitution	
Article 9	2	Equal rights with respect to the nationality of children	Must not conflict Personal Status Code	
Article 15	4	Freedom of movement and freedom to choose domicile	Must not conflict Personal Status Code	
Article 16	1	C	Equal rights in marriage and divorce	Not bound by it
		D	Equal rights and duties as parents	Not bound by it
		F	Equal rights and duties as guardians	Not bound by it
		G	Equal personal rights within marriage	Must not conflict with Personal Status Code concerning the granting of family names to children
		H	Equal rights and duties regarding property	Must not conflict with Personal Status Code concerning the acquisition of property through inheritance
Article 29	1	Dispute settlement	Disputes should only be submitted by the consent of both parties	

Source: United Nations (2006).



Table 2: Algeria's reservations to the CEDAW convention.

Article	Paragraph	Section	Reservation Algeria
Article 2		States agree without delay to pursue all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women	As long as provisions are not conflicting with provisions from Algeria's Family Code (Islamic law)
Article 9	2	Equal rights with respect to the nationality of children	Provision incompatible with nationality and Family Code
Article 15	4	Freedom of movement and freedom to choose domicile	Must not conflict Family Code
Article 16	1	Right to marry Right to freely choose a spouse Equal rights in marriage and divorce Equal rights as parents Right to decide the number of children Equal rights with regard to guardianship Equal personal rights as husband and wife Equal right in property	Provisions should not contradict Family Code
Article 29		Dispute settlement	Not bound by it

Source: United Nations (2006).

Appendix F: comparison of labour participation rates Tunisia – Algeria

Table 1: female labour participation rate Tunisia 2000 – 2019 in %.

	<i>Tunisia</i>																			
	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Female	28	29	29	29	30	30	32	32	33	33	33	33	33	34	34	34	33	33	33	33
Male	94	93	93	92	92	91	91	91	92	93	93	93	92	92	93	93	93	93	93	93
Relative	30	31	31	32	33	33	35	35	36	35	35	36	36	37	37	37	36	36	36	36
Total	61	61	60	60	60	60	61	61	62	63	62	63	62	63	62	62	62	62	62	62

Source: International Labour Organization. (2020a). ILOSTAT database [database].

Table 2: female labour participation rate Algeria 2000 – 2019 in %.

	<i>Algeria</i>																			
	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Female	14	14	15	16	16	17	18	19	19	20	20	21	22	24	22	21	21	22	20	21
Male	94	94	94	93	93	93	92	92	91	91	92	91	91	92	89	89	89	89	89	89
Relative	15	15	16	17	17	18	20	21	21	22	22	23	24	26	25	24	24	25	23	24
Total	55	55	55	55	55	55	55	55	56	56	56	57	57	58	55	55	55	55	55	55

Source: International Labour Organization. (2020b). ILOSTAT database [database].

## Appendix G: development of women's rights in Tunisia and Algeria

In this appendix, I present an overview of the differences and similarities in gender equality in terms of women's rights between Tunisia and Algeria and their development.

Equality   
 Inequality 

	<i>Tunisia</i>		<i>Algeria</i>	
	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>
<b>Marriage</b>				
Age of marriage	18	18	19	19
Consent of both spouses	✓	✓	✓	✓
Guardian needed	x	x	x	✓
Mixed marriages	✓	✓	✓	x
		Granted in 2017		
Stipulations	✓	✓	✓	✓
Proxy weddings	-	-	x	x
Health certificate required	x	x	✓	✓
				In practice used as proof of virginity
<b>Divorce</b>				
Mutual consent	✓	✓	✓	✓
Request of husband	✓	-	✓	-
Request of wife	-	✓	-	✓
Khul'	-	x	-	✓
<b>Custody</b>				
Right to custody	✓	✓	x	✓
Right to guardianship	✓	x	✓	x
	Automatically		Automatically	
Loses custody upon remarriage	x	✓	✓	✓
<b>Decision-making power</b>				
Obedience to husband	-	x	-	x
Equal rights and duties in marriage	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Access to assets</b>				
Right to own dower	-	✓	-	✓
Husband is guardian of wives' property	x	-	-	-
Ownership of pre-marital property	-	✓	-	-
Ownership of marital property	✓	x	✓	x
<b>Inheritance</b>				
Equal rights	-	✓	-	x
		Granted in 2019		

