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**Arab Women's Rights Torn between a Burdensome Past and a Promising
Future:**

**A Comparative Study between the Achievements of Women after the Arab
Spring and of Algerian Women after the Independence**

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Table of Contents

Introduction	4
1. Historical and Political facts: the awakening of the Arab Spring	9
1.1 Introducing the Arab spring: How did it start and where did it spread?	10
1.2 What caused the Arab spring and why it didn't happen everywhere?	12
1.3 The role of external forces as well as the role of the west in the Arab spring	14
2. Achievements of women during the Arab spring: American vision, Arab dream	17
2.1 The feminist movement and an overview on Women's Liberation after the Arab Spring.	19
2.2 Progress of women's status in the light of socio-cultural and political changes.....	21
2.3 The struggles that stood against Arab women	22
3. Accomplishments of Algerian Women during the period from 1830-1962	23
3.1 History of Algeria in the colonial period, between 1830-1962	23
3.2 France's policies to settle in Algeria: Economic, Political and social dominance.....	25
3.3 The role of women in getting the independence of Algeria	26
3.4 Women's covert operations: Most prominent faces.....	29
4. The status of women in Islam and the Middle East: between crisis and reform	32
4.1 The situation of Women after the Arab Spring	32
4.2 The situation of women in Algeria after the independence.....	36
4.3 Comparative approach: between what women have achieved after the Arab Spring and after the independence movement of Algeria.....	39
Riassunto	41
Bibliography	46

Introduction

After a long period of stagnation, Arab countries have known unexpected outbreaks and uprisings in more than one Arab country. Revolutions started in Tunisia and then spread to other countries. People were asking for change and wanted to overthrow the old oppressive regimes, modify their systems, reform their rules and create a brighter future in their economies, politics as well as social lives. In the late 2010 and the beginning of 2011, a wave of revolutions erupted and protests across the Arab world began with Mohamed Bouazizi and the Tunisian revolution. There were various reasons behind these revolutions: people were sick and tired of the corrupted systems they were living under, the bad conditions, poverty and the oppressive political regimes. These protests spread very quickly in most Arab countries, these protests included clashes between security forces and demonstrators and sometimes resulted in deaths of citizens and security personnel. The events proved that these regimes are very weak and fragile. These revolutions have been characterized by the emergence of an Arab acclaim that has become popular in all the Arab countries: "النظام اسقاط يريد الشعب" which means, "*The people want to overthrow the regime*".

The concept of revolution has always been linked to violence and bloodshed, by both: the rebellions and the system who is ruling. The Arab Spring, however, had a unique characteristic. The World History witnessed a new form of Arab revolutions, far from military *coup d'état* and miles away from revolutionaries' violence. Arab people choose to rebellion in a more sophisticated way, because they have realized that the peaceful revolution would be more effective than absurd violence. All groups and segments of society have been involved in the revolutions since its first day. It is true that youth had a distinguished presence, maybe more than other segments. They were active on social media, in squares and everywhere. Tribal religion and regional conflicts disappeared and were replaced by a spirit of unity, integrity and harmony.

People adopted different names to describe the events that took place in the Arab World. There are people who called them revolutions, others who called them protest movements, and others who claimed that they were manifestations asking for democracy and a better environment to live in. Those names do not apply to all the countries where the revolutions took place despite the fact that all of them shared the same objectives and had the same shutter button. The Arab spring raised because people started recognizing their personal freedoms, and realizing the growing corruption and the lack of justice in their countries.

Chalmers A. Johnson in his book *“Revolutionary Change”* has defined Revolution as:

“Revolutions are social changes. Sometimes they succeed; often they fail. Revolutionary change is a special kind of social change, one that involves the intrusion of violence into civil social relations. And revolution, both as a form of behaviour and as a concept, concerns the most basic level of man’s communal existence—its constitution, in the Aristotelian sense of the principles of political authority and distributive justice prevailing in a particular society”

The revolution is an uproot of an already established regime, undermining the existing governance structures and erasing all what characterized the old era. And if we follow this definition we can only apply it to what happened in Egypt, because relating it to what happened in Libya, in Tunisia or Yemen won't be accurate. Considering for instance what happened in Libya, the manifestations can only be defined as a civil war, or what happened in Tunisia that must only be interpreted as a pre-democracy movement towards the liberation. On another hand, there is the situation in Syria that can be defined as a rebellion and civil disobedience. In order to avoid all these divisions and name callings in the characterization of the developments in the Arab World, people prefer to use the word: **Arab Spring**. It sounds like a poetic expression that mirrors evidently the Arab situation. It is perhaps because this expression does not hide a meaning of a revolution, or rebellion nor a movement asking for democracy that made it be popular. It is simply a neutral expression that reflects the change desired from the Arab population. This expression “Arab Spring” even if it is neutral, it describes the developments which happened in the Arab region, and it carries the word “Spring” which refers to renewal and the rebirth of a new system. This really applies to the Arab revolutions that contributed to the movement of the youth more than others. The spring symbolizes the optimism and hope and this applies to Arabs’ dreams and expectations. The word was used so that Arab peoples aspire to open a new page in their political history away from the dictatorial regimes that failed to achieve development and away from the old failed economic systems. This expression conveys to the ambitions of young people and their hope for a better future.

However, when the meaning of this expression is associated with the movement of peoples and their desires for a better future it should not obscure all the historical experiences in which spring aborted and failed to reach its objectives or at least did not come to what was expected of it. The word "spring" was first used in 1968 to refer to the reform movement that Czechoslovakia witnessed. This reform movement tried to get rid of the grip of the Soviet Union and emancipation from the former communist regime. Later on, Moscow came with a

response to send tanks to the capital Bragg and aborted the spring before the blooming of its flowers, and this was the famous end of Prague's spring.

According to Keating, many arab intellectuals were not comfortable with this term of Spring. Of course the reason was clear, it was reasonably because of the failed Pragma spring (Keating, 2011) and perhaps that is why to avoid this destiny, Western countries did not want to describe the democratic movements of Eastern Europe swept after Gorbachev's reforms in the eighties: spring. The media along with scholars and academics in the West choose different names for each revolution. That's where they called the movement in Czechoslovakia, "*The velvet revolution*" because of its peaceful aspect and because of the contribution of intellectuals and opinion makers in its launch, headed by "*Vaclav Havel*" who became the first democratic president of the country. On the other hand in Ukraine for instance the popular movement was called: "*The Orange Revolution*" in view of the orange flags fluttering in the streets. The word spring has been used in recent years to describe the massive demonstrations witnessed in Lebanon to demand the withdrawal of Syrian forces from the country. The existing regimes aborted the Spring in Lebanon and Czechoslovakia in 1968, if this is the case for these two countries, what would be the future of the Arab Spring? Would it be similar to the previous failed experiences? or better? Most people were raising these kind of questions.

Indeed, the success of the popular movement in Egypt and Tunisia makes them recede from the failure and makes the spring come true somehow but unfortunately not complete.

Finally, there is another kind of Spring that can be identified in the special case of the Moroccan King Mohammed VI, who distinguished himself from the previous leaders of the Moroccan state when he established "*The Equity and Reconciliation Commission*" in Arabic: "الإصاف هيئة" والمصالحة", which has as mission to open old legal files where human rights were violated especially during the period when his father King Hassan the second was ruling. In addition, he also introduced new constitutional amendments that took away some of his powers and by doing this he move the country from an absolute monarchy to a constitutional monarchy. With these spontaneous changes, Mohammed VI has given a new meaning to the Arab spring. An Arab Spring far from any kind of violence and radical change of regimes.

In my thesis, I will be discussing the role of women in the Arab Spring, I will be comparing it with accomplishments of Algerian Women during the period from 1830-1962. I will start my thesis by giving an overview of what happened in the Arab Spring. The first chapter will be dealing with the historical background and some political facts, I will be introducing the Arab Spring. How did it start? Where did it spread? What caused the arab spring and Why it didn't happen everywhere? I will end my first chapter by speaking about the role of the west in the

Arab Spring. The second chapter will be about the achievements of women during the Arab Spring, an American vision broke by an Arab dream. I will start this chapter by speaking about the role of Arab women in the Arab Spring, their role in helping in rebuilding the economies and the political institutions. Then I will go and touch another topic which is the feminist movement and an overview on Women's Liberation, I will also talk about the progress of women's status in the light of socio-cultural and political changes and the struggles that stood against them. The third chapter will hold a study of what happened in the period from 1830-1962 in Algeria, I will be focusing on the accomplishments of Algerian Women during this period of time. The role of women in getting the independence of Algeria and the Women's covert operations. The fourth chapter is the most relevant chapter, it will be about the status of women in Islam and the Middle East: what happened between the crisis and the reform. The first matter I will be pointing out is a comparative approach so I will be basically comparing between what women achieved after the independence movement of Algeria and after the Arab Spring. I will be speaking about the situation of women in Algeria nowadays and the situation of Women after the Arab Spring. I will raise a lot of questions, such as: Are there some changes? Did the situation get better? And I will end up with a conclusion, summarizing all what was discussed previously in my thesis.

Women's rights constitute a complex and immense subject of study. The inequalities and discrimination against this segment of society is what makes the topic interesting for a lot of scholars. My thesis will be about the Arab Spring in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA Region) and how the women helped during this period. Not only this, but more, it will be a comparison with the period after the decolonization of Algeria.

An essential step must be taken before tackling this topic, which is describing the historical background of these countries where the Arab Spring took place in order to know the status of women before the Arab Spring. Moreover, it is also vital to comprehend the commitment of countries and the reforms they have adopted after the Arab Spring concerning women's rights, especially through the new constitutions endorsed in Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia. It is also crucial to speak about the role of international conventions in shaping the new status of women such as the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) but also the point of view of the Islamic reformation in its relation in all the procedures of elaboration, interpretation of the law and legitimation.

The Arab Spring revolution does not hold much of the scientific meaning of what it is the term "Revolution" politically and socially, its aim is not just to overthrow the political system, which has been rooted in the Arab region and had a sour taste because of corruption and tyranny,

and which continues to suffer from an indirect system of colonialism but also to change the status of women.

Hundreds of thousands of pictures and news reports from Tunisia, Egypt, Yemen, Syria and Libya reflected the role of women in the Arab Spring. Media displayed the role of women and how they all stood up side by side with men in this revolution, not only in the streets but also in the fields as well as in calling earlier for a revolution to change the deteriorated situation in the Arab world. In Tunisia, for instance there was approximately no difference between men and women, women activists along with men organized the major demonstrations that toppled *Ben Ali*. According to *Mounira M. Charrad* and *Amina*, women had an essential role in shaking the Tunisian politics during the Arab Spring. Regardless of their economic status, or where they lived, they worked as journalists, photographers, politicians, scholars, activists... Tunisia is considered as the limelight compared to other Arab countries in terms of women's rights since the country focused a lot on the family law an example reflecting this is the Code of Personal Status which was promulgated in 1956 (Charrad, 2007). According to Kerry and Breslin, Tunisia was ranked in 2009 by the Freedom House number one in terms of women's rights, and this incorporated different aspects such as: "autonomy, security and freedom of person" as well as "political and civic voice" (Kerry and Breslin, 2010).

In Egypt, the image of women in the streets was so pleasant. Women from different backgrounds, religions and social classes demonstrated, mourned, cleaned the streets, prepared the food, they didn't give up even if they were dragged, arrested, raped and killed.

In Yemen, "*Tawakul Kerman*" marked the Yemeni history. She was the youngest woman and the first Arab Woman to win the Nobel Prize for her leadership role in Yemen's revolution against the miserable regime. In Libya on another hand, "*Iman al-Obeidi*" stormed the Press Center, to reveal to the media all over the world with an unrivaled extent of courage what the women in Libya were going through from sanctions and arbitrariness. The Gaddafi Brigades used "rape" as a lethal weapon against those pretesting and asking for freedom and dignity and it is exactly the same weapon used in Syria too, where people wanted to be saved from all the forms of slavery. In Syria, "*Tal El-Mallouhi*" was a young blogger who worked against Syrian forces and after her there was "*Suhair Al-Atassi*" this woman was the first one who dared to carry a candle to support the people in Tunisia and Egypt, she was slapped on her face, and this slap went down in history as the slap that made Syrians go out for the first time after forty years calling for their rights and using a Syrian expression: "بينذل ما السوري الشعب" which means "Syrian people don't get humiliated". Many western scholars were wondering, Where is the woman in the Arab revolutions? And it is really disappointing that a lot of them did not

recognize what arab women have done in the Arab Spring. This is probably due to the Arab women situation and the stereotypes put on them.

1. Historical and Political facts: the awakening of the Arab Spring

According to Dabashi the use of the expression “*Arab Spring*” is not used out of nowhere, it is an expression that holds meanings of hope and it is used over other expressions such as: “*Arab Awakening*” or “*Arab Revolutions*”. He believes that the Arab Spring came against all the systems based on oppression in the Arab world (Dabashi, 2012).

People stood up for their rights and for the rights of the less privileged. They stood up hand in hand regardless of their background, their religion or their fates. They had one goal: **put an end to the old regimes**. Demonstrations took place in Middle East countries as well as North African countries and they lasted almost three years. The Arab revolutions showed that the ability of most Arab peoples to coexist with authoritarian regimes has come to an end. It is possible to say that no revolution can succeed and reach its goals or some of its objectifs without having a clear vision of it, a deliberate plan and without having organized for it and it is also plausible to say that a revolution that does not include those elements is chaotic, confused and tends to fail. The Arab Spring revolutions began in Tunisia and suffused to the other Arab countries which witnessed protests and different kind of manifestations without any kind of plannings. If it was the case, some of them, the ones who started earlier would have been successful, at least in part and in a very short period of time.

However, it was not the case these revolutions have been based on spontaneity. They started spontaneously, they were unplanned and started all of a sudden. The absence of a plan or a prior program to the Arab revolutions does not imply that the situation continued as such. Later on, they started putting strategies and anticipating plans on how to make this “*Arab Spring*” succeed.

Oppression, deprivation all combined with humiliation became the fuel that ignited the fire in Tunisia and helped in the quick spread to the other countries on the borders. Although the anger was the most crucial generator of the revolutions in the Arab countries, in its advancements the core was not based on agitation or upheaval. Violence and chaos were emerged in the surface, and the media showed it clearly. We saw it in the way women were raped, or in many situation where people were stolen. The revolutions in most countries were peaceful, they were well organized. Young revolutionaries meet in the squares, they were capable to turn the public anger into a strong and active political force that was capable to change the destiny of most of the Arab countries and forced some dictatorships to step down from their powers and abandon

their positions. A very clear message was sent implicitly to many other Arab regimes and governments, a message holding a clear desire: **either you start doing the reforms or your destiny will be as the others**'. The Arab Spring did not have inspirational leaders like the Islamic revolution in Iran in 1879 for example. Philosophers and theorists were absent too, as well as political parties that normally are the ones who mobilize the masses, sharpen their minds and channel their energies in the direction of practicing various forms of revolutionary actions. However, what it is certain is that there was a common collective vision of the revolutionaries, those visions were built in the streets, across many social networking sites and social media, through the open discussions and dialogues. Those methods worked as an alternatives to a guiding leader, they replaced the role of philosophers as well as political parties. Those who are aware of what happened during the Arab Spring know that leadership, coordination, organization and planning are all elements not missing in the contemporary revolutions, though they did not exist since the beginning.

The emergence of this new kind of operations and elements, which have become prominent features in the Arab revolutions is generally based on the development of communication methods and techniques. Moreover, the high level of political and legal awareness among the youth, who represent the widest and most influential segment of the Arab world is also a crucial element.

The revolution in Iran three decades ago was called the “الكاسيت ثورة” or “*The Cassette Revolution*” because it relied on cassettes as a basic means of guidance, mobilization and political education, while the Arab Spring revolutions relied heavily on social networking sites, satellite channels that had as objective to cover everything and transmit events moment by moment.

1.1 Introducing the Arab spring: How did it start and where did it spread?

"That morning, he did not want to hear anything, he was so angry" *Fayda Hamdi*, a police officer in Sidi Bouzid, recalls. On December 17, 2010, a young Tunisian, vendor of fruits and vegetables was confiscated by police officers. This is not the first time: it is just one among many others. *Mohamed Bouazizi*, 26 years old, immolated himself with fire in front of the *Sidi Bouzid* prefecture. *Mohamed Bouazizi* was described with all the positive adjectives, a young man, peaceful, hard working, serious... "A good son, a very proud boy even though he was very poor" said his mother. His name was *Tarek*, but his family used the name *Mohamed*. He grew up in *Sidi Bouzid*, an agricultural town of 40 000 inhabitants, surrounded by six brothers and

sisters. His father died when he was three years old and his mother remarried with her brother-in-law, as it is often the case in rural Maghreb regions.

But it is *Mohamed* who became "The man of the family" as it is used in Arab countries, or the breadwinner of all his family. At the age of 14, he alternated between classes and masonry jobs. With all the responsibilities he had, he realized later on that is impossible for him to reach his objective which is to settle down in the second biggest city in Tunisia: *Sfax*. He knew that his family relies on his own income and that studying was not an option. He left high school in his last year and enrolled in an association of unemployed youth. At the age of 19 and like many other young Tunisians, he became a street vendor of fruits and vegetables. *Mohamed* was considered as a clandestine worker, he didn't have the means to pay bribes to obtain the required authorization to sell his goods. His mom said: "*If one would love to describe the situation in the Arab world, he would say: Here, the poor do not have the right to live*". So, the police regularly confiscated *Mohamed's* fruits, vegetables and the balance he used. Rather than ask him to move, they fined him. *Mohamed Bouazizi* was so patient until the 17th of December 2010. "*The day before, I had already told him to leave and he had been executed*" testified *Fayda Hamdi*, but that morning he did not want to hear anything, he was so angry that he shouted at her and twisted her finger, he also wanted to tear the epaulets off her uniform. Some said that the policewoman even slapped him, others denied.

Humiliated once more, *Mohamed Bouazizi* went to the governorate headquarters to ask for explanations. Unfortunately, at the prefecture, no one deigns to receive him. They refused to explain to him and so something in *Mohamed Bouazizi* broke, that is where he immolated himself in front of the administration. He died of his wounds two weeks later, in 2011 and exactly on January the 4th, in a hospital near Tunis.

One would automatically ask: What triggered this gesture? As logical as it seems: "His total refusal of the dictatorship". Two months after his suicide, the mother of the young man, *Mannoubia Bouazizi*, confessed to the media that "*his act was a gesture of refusal. It was hit, insulted by a woman, the municipal agent and in front of everyone, that's what hurt him.*" She also said that her son committed suicide because he refused to see his dignity flouted.

A man slapped by a woman in the street represents a real humiliation in Tunisia, not only in Tunisia but in almost all the Arab countries especially in rural villages such as *Sidi Bouzid*.

A lot of people affirmed that it was a rumor, this slap; a rumor that allowed the opponents of the regim to rally more Tunisians to their side. Because the police symbolizes the dictatorship of President *Ben Ali*, which had power in Tunisia for twenty-three years. And the suicide of

Mohamed bouazizi, implies a total refusal of the dictatorship as her mother affirmed. The slap symbolized a system that ignores and represses people.

The immolation of *Mohamed Bouazizi* is not the first in Tunisia, but was the one that caused the explosion of others in the same situation of *Mohamed Bouazizi*. Starting with young people who are qualified, graduates and unfortunately can not find work. They were fed up and they started the contestations, that spread across the country until reaching the capital on December the 27th. Thousands of people attended the funeral of *Mohamed Bouazizi* on January the 5th. In the Arab world, dozens of young people started following what *Mohamed Bouazizi* did, he was a brave man, an example for them, and they started immolating themselves after him. On the 14th, less than a month after the young salesman's suicide, President *Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali* fled the country. The Tunisian regime collapsed. It is the beginning of the Arab Spring which started to spread and triggered in Egypt, Libya, Syria and spread to other countries. But the icon of the Tunisian revolution did not stay long. Six months after the immolation of *Mohamed Bouazizi*, his portrait, which adorned the statue on the main square of Sidi Bouzid, was took off.

1.2 What caused the Arab spring and why it didn't happen everywhere?

A lot of questions were raised after what happened in Tunisia, the most common one was: Why exactly after what happened in Tunisia a lot of revolutions started in many other countries? and why those specific countries?

Looking at what the Arab world faced so far, brings us to question the civil wars in both Syria and Yemen, the authoritarian system in Egypt, the collapse of central government in Libya, the rise of Islamic state, and the fact that people were fleeing their countries and these problems. Doesn't it mean that the peaceful Arab Spring is the main reason for all of that?

According to *Adam Roberts* the solution does not reside in the disposing of the dictatorial and corrupt ruler. The solution is to change the system, build equitable establishments and institutions, and reestablish trust within states (Roberts, 2016). From all the Arab countries, Tunisia was the one that reached most of political, social and economic changes or at least part of them. Tunisians stood together when *Ben Ali* escaped, they stood together because this was not enough to make the regime fall, they started working on the system more in order to remove all the people that used to work for *Ben Ali*. Parties helped each other, that is why in two years they managed to reach what they wanted. "*Ennahda party*" played a huge role in the Tunisian revolution, "*Ennahda*" is an islamist party in Tunisia, its known by its democratic beliefs. In one year the Arab world succeeded in getting rid of four autocrats successively, starting with *Ben Ali* in Tunisia, than *Hosni Mubarak* in Egypt, *Muammar Gaddafi* in Libya and then *Ali*

Abdullah Saleh in Yemen. According to *Adam Roberts*, no country other than Tunisia saw a better change (Roberts, 2016). After the resignation of *Hosni Mubarak*, another authoritarian regime replaced it. In Libya and Yemen where the society is divided and detached wars triggered. On another hand, Bahrain and Syria where there was opposition but no revolution got two very unexpected results. In Bahrain, Saudi military took the lead by reinforcing the government and in Syria a debacle resulted. What happened in Egypt and other countries, helped in rising of the ISIS since 2014, they basically took advantage of what was happening. *Adam Roberts* claimed that the ISIS focused more on the territory not like Al-Qaida.

Adam Roberts in his article on “*The Guardian*” mentioned three lessons about “*The capacity of civil resistance to liberate people from autocracy*”.

The first is that civil resistance is powerful, it sometimes holds excessive power, it has power to ruin the system but this civil resistance may not affect the autocrat. The example *Adam Roberts* gave is that of *Bashar Al-Assad* in Syria.

The second lesson is the fact of accepting the civil resistance, because the latter is perceived as problematic as it is represented dogmatically in a higher position than mundane business of government. The civil resistance should bring up a new strategic plan better than the previous one, it should persuade people that there will be a change to the better and in case of the contrary, the civil resistance would be a problem added to the many issues already existing and not a solution. In the Arab Spring, many of the movement were somehow useless and didn't come with new solutions and quick fixes to the old regimes.

The third lesson according to *Adam Roberts* is that this civil resistance we are talking about can come asking for changes without wanting the fall of the regime, and the clear example here was the one of two countries: Morocco and Jordan. Both countries came with new reforms, and avoided all what happened in the neighboring countries. Another very important point brought up by Roberts is that what happened in the Arab Spring raised differently from one country to another and had different consequences depending on the history, economy, geography and political beliefs of each country (Roberts, 2016).

Fayz Sara, is a journalist and a writer that spent three years in prison since the beginning of 2008. He used to defend the freedom of speech, and he helped in presenting a clear vision of reform. According to *Fayz Sara*, the Arab world lived in worst conditions than these of the Arab Spring. Arab people lived in oppression, dictatorship, abuse and domination. More than twenty countries which surface is more than Europe's surface, having good military power and good weapons, sources and many more blessings. Nevertheless, people lived under bad conditions, and the reason behind this resides on the bad regimes which ruled them. Arabs

reached a point where there was nothing to do, no power over what was happening, couldn't stop it nor lower the impact of the oppressive regimes they lived under.

In his book, Fayz is arguing the relationship between arabs and politics. He is emphasizing on the idea that parties are weak and he is completely right, as a Moroccan I can't deny the weakness of most Moroccan parties. He believes that parties' deterioration all along with the absence of expressions of public opinion, the marginalisation of representative institutions and its weak role as one of the main institutions in the arab systems are all witnesses of how oppressive most regimes were.

Fayz claims that the Arab world doesn't really care about politics, and about what is happening in the Arab world in general. This can be clearly viewed from the statistics made by an Egyptian association which job is democratic affairs. They found out that 88% from Egyptian people don't belong to political parties, 67% don't really have political interests which means that two thirds of the population don't give much importance to politics and don't want to change the present nor to affect the future (Fayz, 2008).

This designed only Egypt, who knows maybe the situation in the other Arab countries is worst? One should think about the reasons behind this unhealthy relationship between politics and Arabs. This is due to many political factors. The Arab governments design the kind of relationships they have with their populations, they determine the frame of its movements and their effectiveness all along with its participation in the civil society and in the administration of its affairs. The arab ruler is the one who chooses the people surrounding him, as well as all the other important agents in the parliament or deputies or even chancellors. Then comes the role of media that starts to comply with all the system, then the political parties than the religious ones who start to pray with this ruler. And so this directly leads people to accept and follow the system with all its bad sides, because of the biased information the media reflects. Few people have critical minds, understand what is going on and don't accept the political system as it is and want a change, but what to do about it? They belong to weak parties, that have no power over the government and don't have financial means to compete with the state, this unfortunately makes them weak and lower their effectiveness.

1.3 The role of external forces as well as the role of the west in the Arab spring

According to Doctor *Jamal Abd Aljawad* all the issues related to change and revolutions are internal affairs. The distribution of political powers within each society is the result of the historical background and developments of that country, that has an effect on the economy, social, political and ideological forces as well as the construction of a political culture that

contributes to the formation of all the political system and political structures more precisely. Nevertheless, one should not forget the role of external forces, that play as well a huge role in determining the paths of political changes and their possibility to happen. According to Doctor *Jamal Abd Aljawad*, the role of the west in influencing the events of the Arab spring can be addressed on three main levels:

The first level is the level of changes in the structure of the international system. These changes are not linked to the country itself in any domain. The second level is the level of specific policies adopted by the international powers. While the third level relates to the regional dimensions. Including considerations affecting the choices of different parties, as well as specific policies adopted by the regional powers regarding the developments of the Arab Spring. The regional powers that were not touched by the winds of the Arab Spring directly adopted policies that influenced the developments of the Arab Spring. Although these powers are part of the Arab Spring, which is a regional, these countries themselves have a distinct position because they have been able to act and influence developments in other countries directly affected by the Arab Spring which made the position and policies of regional powers external to the phenomenon of the Arab Spring, that is largely considered as a domestic phenomenon in specific Arab countries. The dual nature of the regional powers, both internal and external, to the developments of the Arab Spring at the same time may have enabled these regional actors to play a role that was most effective in guiding the revolutionary upheavals in the region during the last four years of the Arab Spring.

On another hand, changes in the international system also had its impact on the Arab Spring, in previous times, foreign powers played a major role in resolving issues of power and political change in many countries. This was the case in colonial times, and later on in the period of bipolarism and the Cold War. In colonial times, whole nations were created as a result of the division of spheres between the colonial powers. In the Arab region we have seen this in more than one case, the most famous one is the case of *Fajja*, the group of countries that comprise the present Arab Orient, which was created in the Sykes-Picot Agreement, which led to the division of the Ottoman Empire in the Eastern Mediterranean region. Now two countries suffer from a chronic crisis of governance and there is a risk of internal explosion and division, this can be traced back to the colonialism in these countries that were born lacking the meaning of the national political community and the national state.

The colonial era ended and the international system entered into the Cold War era, in which the countries of the world were divided on ideological bases, some were with the East and others with the West. Germany, Vietnam and Korea became more than one state. While the two sides

were united in the case of Vietnam and Germany, in Korea there was still a division. The most important impact of the Cold War, however, has been the transformation of systems of governance or adjusting them in the interest of the dominant international behavior. Examples of this are very numerous in Iran, the former Czechoslovakia, Chile, Afghanistan, Panama and Grenada. The combination of conspiracy and direct military interventions were the tools used to make these interventions successful. This was logical and understandable because most countries were newly formed so they were fragile and still had a feeble structure. The cold war had two impacts on the emerging states: on the one hand, foreign powers continued to intervene in the affairs of other countries to model politics and governance in order to serve their own interests. On the other hand, the Bipolar system contributed to the strengthening of the emerging countries by providing them with protection and support from the international allies of the major powers. In an international system in which every nation, regardless of its small territory and modern formation has acquired a strategic value, the strengthening of the structures of the emerging countries and their protection against the dangers that might be threatened by modernity and lack of resources was one of the methods of launching the Cold War.

The situation changed in the next stage, which is after the end of the Cold War. The world entered in a new era which deals with globalization that is why a number of evolutions happened and affected the way the international system affects countries, including Arab states (*Abd Aljawad, 2014*). Globalization has a disruptive effect on nations, groups and identities, globalization has exerted this impact on all societies.

A change in policies of major powers occurred, Arab societies have been affected by the impact of the economic and communication globalization, and the Arab spring revolutions were one of the consequences of this exposure. However, this is not the only impact of the external factors on the Arab Spring revolutions. Besides this, there were the policies of the major international powers that also influenced the Arab Spring. The end of the Cold War and the entry into the international system of globalization led to a decline in military-strategic threats and a change in policy priorities by many countries. Western countries succeeded with their liberal ideologies and this helped in disseminating values and systems emanating from liberal ideologies, because they are the ones that made their countries succeed. The most important manifestation of this transformation was encouraging the “Democracy promotion”.

Western powers who won in the Cold War, began to incorporate human rights and democracy goals into their foreign policy immediately after the end of the Cold War. During the first decade following the end of the Cold War, only limited efforts were made to spread democracy in the Arab world. While these efforts were reinforced and intensified in other areas such as the

Balkans, Latin America and Africa. This decade saw an important shift in this domain, a transformation that was not inevitable, but was largely chosen by those in the West, especially in the United States.

The attacks of the 11th September by Al-Qaeda which targeted some points in the United States were a turning point. American policymakers concluded from this event that authoritarian regimes in the Arab Middle East create environments favorable to extremism and terrorism and harmful to security and interests of the West, and that a democratic political reform in the Arab countries is the best way to prevent the breeding of terrorism.

Promoting democracy in the countries of the region was not only an ideological choice, but it was a choice that was linked to what was portrayed as security and strategic interests of the United States and the West. While this policy took a violent and aggressive form in the invasion of Iraq, it took the form of political pressure in the case of other Arab countries, especially Egypt, which was a direct target for the implementation of this new American policy. However, the history can not be changed, it was not possible to erase the effects of the policies pursued in the previous years. The failures of the governments and the ability of the opposition to incite and mobilize led to the outbreak of the Arab Spring revolutions.

According to *Shadi Hamid* the Middle East was not influenced a lot by the United States and Europe. The United States tried to remain disengaged but this made other countries take its place and move on. The development that happened in the Arab world after the Arab Spring relies in a large part on the efforts of foreign powers (*Hamid, 2015*).

2. Achievements of women during the Arab Spring: American vision, Arab dream

According to an investigation made by BBC Arabia, it was clear after what happened in the Tunisian revolution that the old image of the Arab woman changed. It is true because we all saw how highly educated women, doctors, lawyers, University professors, journalists and even unemployed women affected the evolution of the Arab Spring. In Cairo, women played an active role, not only in the protests but in many organizations that transformed Tahrir Square to a place where women were involved in arranging food and blankets delivery, providing medical assistance...

In Yemen, a young woman, *Tawakkol Karman*, was the one who led the first demonstrations on campus against the regime of *Ali Abdullah Saleh*. Karman became popular as one of the leaders of the revolution that is still existing. In Bahrain, women were among the first who entered the Pearl Roundabout in the capital Manama, some with their children to ask for change.

Zainab Khawaja played an important role as well in the Bahraini movement, she went on hunger strike to protest against her husband's beating.

In Libya, women were active. Mothers, sisters and widows of men killed in a massacre that took place in 1996 in a prison demonstrated outside a courthouse in Benghazi after the arrestation of their lawyers. However, these women have payed a lot after this uprising.

Moreover, in Tunisia, the police stamped down on the revolution, women were beaten by security personnel, and in rural areas many women were raped by police. These rape cases didn't happen only in the Tunisian rural areas, there have been several reports of rape also in Egypt, additionally to the South African reporter from the CBS who has been sexually assaulted. In Libya, and exactly in Tripoli, *Iman al-Obeidi* was brave enough to share in front of millions of people, in front of cameras that she had been raped by 15 members of the Gaddafi forces. But not all women were among the demonstrations that were asking for change. In Yemen, for instance there were those who demonstrated in the streets supporting the President *Ali Abdullah Saleh*. In western Libya, before being subjected to violent repressions by the regime's forces, women were largely absent from the protests in the city. It was common to see some women “يزغردن” (ululating) to Colonel Muammar Gaddafi.

The long investigation conducted by the “*Guardian*” brings us to a conclusion which is that the Arab Spring has not been promoting notions for gender equality as a lot of Arab women believe. Many feel that men who have advocated for women's presence in the streets were just pretending they are encouraging women's freedom, because most of them did not welcome the presence of women later on in parliaments, ministries, and administrations. The investigation states that one of the Egyptian woman demonstrators told *Catherine Ashton*, the European Union's High Commissioner for Foreign Policy, during one of her visits to Tahrir Square: “*Men wanted us to be here when we were demanding the departure of Mubarak, but now that he is gone, they want us to go back home.*” As for women in Tunisia, the real battle had begun right after the revolution.

Muhamad Olimat in his book “*The role of Arab women in the Arab Spring*”, where he is displaying the role and contribution of Arab women in the Arab Spring is trying to clarify the big picture. He believes that the Arab countries shared the same objective which was to change their conditions and regimes ruling their countries. Different geographical positions, different weather conditions and different political systems, however, the same goal. The Arab Spring came to advance the situation of Arab countries and improve life conditions, that is why the role of women can't be denied. They have been active in the development of their countries

since ages. Their efforts don't stop at home, taking care of their children, but it goes beyond it, their role was also very important in military operations (Olimat, 2013).

Women have fought in many wars in Ancient ages, even with the prophet Mohammed. Natalie Marie-Louise Nolte stated in her article one of the most influential women warriors in Islam: *Khawlah bin Al-Azwar*. One of her descriptions is:

"(she) was at first taken to be a man because of her height, she revealed herself as a woman when the battle was won [...] (still) Mohammed himself paid tribute to the prowess of the most famous female warrior of the period" (Miles and Cross, 2008, p. 4).

This woman used to fought in wars with swords without any fear or doubts. There are other figures that used to fought not only *Khawlah bint Al-Azwar*, in the Sunnah (narration of Prophet's habits) we can find a description of how the Prophet hand in hand with his wife *Aisha* and other women used to fought in wars:

"young wife Aisha, threw of her veil to take command at the Battle of the Camel, and [...] grand daughter Zaynab bin Ali fought in the Battle of Karbala [...] Umm Al Dhouda bin Mas-ud, fought so magnificently at the Battle of Khayber that the Prophet allotted her a share of the spoil's equal to a man's" (Miles and Cross, 2008, p. 11).

The ortodox Islamic scholars didn't look at women as the prophet did, they believed that women's presence in wars was an immoral act and that it should be stopped. They believed that women's job was taking care of their households and children. At that point, war became dominated by males under the pretext that men had stronger bodies than women and this allowed them to face the difficulties they would encounter during the war. All what Muslim women achieved during the period of the Prophet Muhammed was forgotten. Fortunately, Islam has changed, now Muslim women are more liberated. Their role is not constrained at home but it goes beyond that to work outside their households (Nolte, 2015).

2.1 The feminist movement and an overview on Women's Liberation after the Arab Spring

During the Arab Spring, peaceful demonstrations took place, people went out in the streets, ready to sacrifice their lives, shouting and asking for their rights. They rejected the idea of living under oppression and regimes of dictatorship. As for most of Arab women, their participation according to *Rosemary Davis*, the Regional Arabic Spokesperson at the British Embassy in Dubai, impressed the women in the West. She reported that their participation in these

revolutions made most Western women proud and reassured them, that is because these revolutions did not come to men's favour. Women played a similar role as men, whether in demonstrations which took place in the streets, or even in practicing political activities on the internet by writing articles, twits, blogs and keeping the world in touch with what it is happening in the fields (Davis, 2012).

Rosemary Davis said that as part of their commitment to support the democratic process in the region, especially after the Arab Spring, the Arab Partnership Participation Fund was launched by the United Kingdom government in order to build the structures of more open and free societies that are supported by vibrant economies and the implementation of long-term political and economic reforms (Davis, 2012).

Looking at all of what women did during the Arab Spring, one should rethink about the expression "Arab Spring", maybe it would be more accurate to call it the Spring of women. Arab women helped in changing the old regimes, helped in rebuilding the economies and political institutions as well as in stopping or at least diminishing all kind of injustices and oppressions. The least they could have gained is their dignity, equality and justice, because they have worked for it and they deserve it, unfortunately after the end of the Arab Spring, we noticed the disappearance of women.

On another hand, and speaking about the Arab feminism, it would not have developed if it had not been flinched by women. The first organized movements appeared in the 1920s, parallel to European and American feminism, and not under its impulse. Their figurehead is the Egyptian *Huda Sharawi*. This aristocrat created in 1923 "The Egyptian Feminist Union", in the spirit of the Arab cultural renaissance movement. Her vocation is universalist: *Huda Sharawi* participated in several international feminist congresses. In Rome, she invited President *Benito Mussolini* to grant the right to vote to Italians.

In Egypt, Tunisia and Morocco, feminist movements were present in the movement against colonization. "*They will play a decisive political role in the fight for national independence,*" said *Leila El Bachiri*. Their first Pan-Arab Congress, held in Cairo in 1944, associated feminism with Arab nationalism.

Although, these historical movements will be stopped after the independence thanks to the authoritarian regimes of *Abdel Nasser* and *Habib Bourguiba* who put an end to all democratic inclinations, women did not give up. They started joining associative movements to claim their rights and their liberties and a lot of "urban intellectuals" started showing up, like *Latifa Jbabdi* in Morocco.

Today, women continue to fight in an international level asking for a total equality in the new established constitutions. In Tunisia, *Leïla El Bachiri* hand in hand with other feminists, including the jurist *Sanae Ben Achour*, but also thanks to other democratic forces, the total equality between men and women was registered in 2014 in the Constitution. A historical legend in the Muslim world.

2.2 Progress of women's status in the light of socio-cultural and political changes

According to the 2015 report of the World Economic Forum's on gender gap, the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region was ranked in the last ranking in terms of indicators of women's political participation and empowerment. Women occupy only 13% of seats in parliaments, in most countries women's choices to participate in political life or to run offices are still constrained by structural barriers such as discriminatory laws and prejudicial institutions. In Saudi Arabia, women can vote only in local elections, a right they have received lately in 2011 which also holds strict conditions.

The system of quotas came to promote women's political empowerment and it came with successful results at least in increasing the representation of women in parliaments. In countries like Tunisia, Morocco and Lebanon, quotas were the main driver of women's representation in parliaments. In Egypt, on the other hand, the number of women in the parliaments remained low, it stagnated at 2%, except for periods when the system of quotas was adopted (in 1979, 1984 and 2010). While these examples prove the usefulness of the quota system, it can be emphasized that the absence of an effective environment where there is a political participation of women will continue to reduce the number of women in politics, and thus their credibility and political weight. There are few exceptions to women who succeeded in breaking the political barriers, such as *Hala Shukrallah*, head of the Constitution Party in Egypt, *Luizah Hanoun*, head of the Labor Party in Algeria, and *Nabila Mounib*, General Secretary of the United Socialist Party in Morocco.

In the Gulf countries, where women's representation is still marginal, political life has seen some positive developments recently. In the United Arab Emirates, *Amal al-Qubaisi* became the first female leader of a national assembly in the United Arab Emirates and the Arab world, and seven other women ministers were appointed in the latest cabinet reshuffle. In Saudi Arabia, women participated for the first time in municipal elections on December 2015 and many of them won seats in municipal councils. However, when one looks at the reality from a bigger scale, one can see that in the Arab world, men still dominate the political arena (*Alaoui*, 2016). Women's participation in political life is still limited in the Arab region, and this is due to social and cultural norms that barricade their ability to become leaders and engines of

transformation, this was evident throughout the history of the Arab world. It is difficult to reach development without the women's participation, women presence in the political life is essential in building strong and sustainable economic and political systems. It is crucial to include the perspective of women in the political decision-making process.

Building an effective participation of woman in the Arab region requires more institutionalized forms and efforts to make her in a position of a decision-maker. It also requires a greater effort to change people's mentality towards the role of women in political life, and to instill a culture of equality in schools, media and social institutions. Arab women, such as *Hala*, *Luiza* and *Nabila*, have overcome political discrimination and other obstacles with strong support, but for Arab women as a whole, equality must become a reality, not just a dream.

2. 3 The struggles that stood against Arab women

In Yemen, *Tawakul Karman* was detained for 48 hours for committing the offense of driving alone at night, which was a "humiliation" for the soldiers who arrested her. However, in some cases women have been able to protest with some impunity or even benefit from their status.

"From the beginning, the riot police have been extremely brutal, but the women have held on and continued to wave their flags in front of them," said *Maryam Al-Khawaja*, a human rights activist in Bahrain.

Furthermore, even in Syria women have stood against violence. On the 16th of March, a non-violent demonstration against the Ministry of the Interior organized by the families of the prisoners of Damascus led to a lot of arrests and physical assaults, sparing neither women nor children. *"I was beaten several times, but I managed to get out of it"* said the daughter of a prominent political prisoner who insisted on not revealing her identity. In Damascus, another anonim woman said: *"From the beginning there was shooting, and the men were afraid that their mothers and sisters would be hurt. Some women also feared for their own lives."* She added that most protest movements have started from mosques, a place still dominated by males. *"Many younger women are coming out in the streets, especially during university protest movements, but I think some of them are not aware of the crucial role of their participation"*, she reported. Women were beaten, raped and maltreated during the manifestations in the streets in all the countries: Tunisia, Yemen, Egypt... Social media reported many cases were women were brutally treated. It is disappointing to see how Arab societies are responding to all the efforts made by such brave women.

The Arab cultural discourse is still weak towards the suffering of women, despite the change that occurred in the Arab countries and despite the life evolutions that cropped up. Arab women

are still suffering from the unfairness of all general manifestations still occurring in places where traditions are still holding people back. Those traditions that lead most of the times to desecration of her rights, of her oppression, humiliation and the abuse of her humanity and dignity. These inherited traditions and harsh customs of Arab societies most of them contradict what was mentioned in all the religions, in addition to its contradiction with the value system that governs the cultural heritage. It is sad and sorrow how the negative impact arising from the legacy of contemporary Arab societies is consolidating the idea of patriarchal societies where there is male domination. According to *Abdsalim*, this is without any doubt the essential cause of women oppression and it is the cause that restricts their freedoms and makes them obey all what male dictate without discussing (*Abdsalim*, 2012).

According to the Journalist and researcher *Latif Abdsalim* among all the dozens, but hundreds of questions that seek solutions and detailed answers in this very important topic of Arab women struggles, one should not forget about the importance of researching an effective method to awaken Arab women's minds and push them to think and question their rights and freedoms. One should analyze how women's minds were shaped to what men wanted, a woman that lives secluded in her house, feeling powerless, helpless and living under her husbands mercy. The regimes were fearing the liberation of women in accordance with the changement movements taking place, they were fearing the freedom and emancipation of the Arab woman. Arab countries lived many years under oppression, however one should not deny that the Arab civilization after this historic phase "The Arab Spring", which is considered as a sharp turning point in all the domains be it political, social, economic or cultural has achieved a lot and is still striving to achieve more in terms of women rights.

3. Accomplishments of Algerian Women during the period from 1830-1962

3.1 History of Algeria in the colonial period, between 1830-1962

Colonialism in Arab countries was one of the main projects of European states, western countries had as an objective which is to impose political influence on the colonized countries. This made them look strong and powerful compared to other countries. Algeria was among the countries that Western states aspired to colonize, it has remained under the French occupation for more than a century. During this period the French army practiced the worst forms of oppression with Algerian people. France put into action many policies that drove Algeria away from its identity and culture. This was apparent in many aspects, they prevented Arabic language from schools, they prohibited the learning of Quran, along with sowing discord and rivalry among people.

The reasons behind Algeria's occupation by France resides behind their ambitions to obtain a rich country in terms of natural resources. Although France had identified a reason for the occupation of the state of Algeria, which was the attack of the Annaba people in Algeria of a ship belonging to France, one should not deny that this is just a curtain in which France hides its need to have control over Algeria.

If we go back in time to see what happened before the colonisation, the Ottoman forces ended in Algeria, the French forces started spreading a mess, vandalism and looting in various Algerian cities. Algerian people stood up against these actions, and many revolutions took place in response to this like the Algerian revolution that took place in 1954, lasted eight years and ended with the Declaration of the Algerian Independence in 1962.

Djamila Daniele, is a *Moujahida* "fighter" that believes when a war breaks out, everyone hears about it. That is exactly what happened in Algeria, when the war started, it gradually invaded the Algerian territory, women were faced with a situation where they had to act and make a change, and that is exactly what happened: they acted and made a change. Their only hope was to diminish the profound injustice in Algeria.

Another unknown *Moujahida* said that one day a man came and asked her: "*can I bring you something you can smuggle through certain dangerous road blocks?*" She was okay with it and she began. She said that they all revolted because they didn't see any good in what they were living, neither for them nor for the next generations. Algerian women showed their bravery and *Zohra Drif Bitat*, ancient combatant, who is now the vice president of the Senate said: "*they were looking for useful people, they didn't need to come find us it was us, who looked for them.*"

After watching a very known movie called "*La bombe*", realised by *Rabah Laradji*, I saw how brave Algerian women were, I couldn't get rid of that one scene that grabbed my attention: the woman was speaking to a general and asking him to let her accomplish the operation she wanted to do. She said: "*Our brothers are dying every day and every second*" he said: "*this mission is too difficult you are not used to this kind of operations, you must first prepare yourself.*" She replied: "*This is not a matter of being used to do something, it is a matter of faith*". Algerian women were full of faith, they were loyal to their country and had conviction that they could get Algeria's independence. With a lot of optimism, allegiance and determination they succeeded to get their independence hand in hand with all faithful Algerians. In his book: "*A Dying Colonialism*", *Frantz Fanon* speaks about the feminine presence during the liberation period, he speaks about how the typical woman-for-marriage has disappeared and gave her place to a woman-for-action, he said:

“The unveiled Algerian woman, who assumed an increasingly important place in revolutionary action, developed her personality, discovered the exalting realm of responsibility. The freedom of the Algerian people from then on became identified with woman's liberation, with her entry into history. This woman who, in the avenues of Algier or of Constantine, would carry the grenades or the submachine-gun chargers, this woman who tomorrow would be outraged, violated, tortured, could not put herself back into her former state of mind and relive her behaviour of the past; this woman who was writing the heroic pages of Algerian history was, in so doing, bursting the bounds of the narrow in which she had lived without responsibility, and was at the same time participating in the destruction of colonialism and in the birth of a new woman.” (Fanon, 1959, 107)

3. 2 France's policies to settle in Algeria: Economic, Political and social dominance

French colonizer followed a set of policies to expand their leverage, the first strategy followed was: the integration policy. Its aim was to dissolve Algeria in the French entity and to make it succeed France worked on joining Algeria to France after the decree signed on the 22nd June 1834, granting residents access to their rights, supporting the colonists in building their settlements, as well as confiscating and redistributing agricultural lands to French people. The second policy was: land confiscation, various methods have been adopted such as: the establishment of agricultural companies, the launch of the railway to connect the plain Mitidja to Algiers' port and this was in 1857. The third policy is the settlement Policy: France encouraged this policy after directing Algerian agriculture to serve the French economy. On the other hand the Algerian people were subject to harsh laws such as the law of the inhabitants, stripping them from all what they possess: properties, personality, identity and culture. The fourth policy is the policy of Christianization and conversion of Muslims to Christianity, one of the most prominent manifestations of this policy was clear in changing mosques to churches, as well as encouraging Christian missions and the destruction of Islamic institutions. The fifth policy was the French policy, among its manifestations was fighting the Arabic language by freezing its use, the distortion of national history and the attempt to instill French history. French colonizer tries to detach Algeria from its Arabic and Islamic belonging by granting French nationality to the Algerians. According to the French Constitution, Algeria was splitted into three provinces: Constantine, Algeria and Oran. The system took a military form from 1830 to 1870, than a civil character after 1870.

When talking about the colonial policy from the administrative point of view, French colonizer harnessed huge military and financial resources for the invasion and the occupation of Algeria, they tried to repress the resistance and they committed massacres and genocides against the Algerians. On another hand, administratively, the French colonizer issued a set of decrees and laws, the most important ones were:

- The law of 1848: annexation of Algeria to France
- The law of 1845: division of Algeria to 3 prefectural areas
- The law of 1865: Algerians are considered French nationals
- The Law of 1870: granting Jews people the French nationality
- The law of 1871: punitive measures against the Algerians for any trivial reason
- The law of 1912: recruitment of Algerians

Economically, the French colonizer issued a series of decrees to confiscate Algerians' properties in order to encourage and facilitate the settlement policy and weaken the Algerian resistance against the colonization forces. They worked on the expropriation of tribes, they started encouraging European companies to invest in the agricultural sector and they directed both sectors, agriculture and industry to serve the French economy. In the financial sector, which is mainly related to the tax system and banks, they used it against Algerians in order to exhaust them and facilitate transactions for the French people. New banks were inaugurated in the beginnings of 1851, several taxes were imposed on the Algerians.

French administrative, financial and economic laws and procedures have deteriorated the social situation of Algerians. Moreover, a set of decisions were issued in order to abolish the power of Islamic legislation in Algeria and restitute it with the French judiciary system, including decisions and Laws of the 1834, 1854, 1866, 1889.

In order to eliminate the identity of the Algerian people and as I mentioned before, the French coloniser changed the educational system in almost all schools and applied the French system by standing up against the Arabic language and Islamic teachings and restricting the role of the "الأئمة".

3. 3 The role of women in getting the independence of Algeria

During the Algerian occupation, women have been an essential element in taking the independence and bringing back the liberation to Algeria. The woman, was strong, she stood beside the man, she had more responsibilities towards the Revolution than then men had. She was a powerful support for her husband, her brother, her son and all the members of the family. Women used to hide arms and smuggle them. Showing extraordinary courage, the Algerian

woman proved herself, her potency and her powerfulness to change her country's conditions to the best. The Algerian woman played a crucial role through her effective participation in the war of liberation both in rural and urban areas, she fulfilled her patriotic duty alongside with the man.

Women in rural areas, managed to become an operational element in breaking the blockade in which the colonial army wanted to lock up the *Mujahideen* (fighters). Their contribution was very important through the tasks they performed for the Revolution. If the rural woman could bore the burden of the Revolution in the mountains, villages and hamlets, in the city woman also fulfilled her patriotic duty and served as a great help to the *Mujahideen* inside the cities where most of the repression powers were concentrated and where constant surveillance was kept. She used to take the place of many *Fidaiin* in dangerous and risky missions.

The activities of the Algerian woman during the Revolution took various forms including: the activists in the civil organization of the National Liberation Front who were the ones holding political as well as administrative responsibilities. They were strong *fidaiyate* and collected funds. Moreover, there were militants working with the Military exactly with the National Liberation Army but they represented only a small percentage, their missions were nursing, assistance and cooking. In the countryside as well as in the cities, woman was a fighter, a militant, a *Fidaia* or a *Moussebila*.

According to *Malika El Korso*, *Moussebila* were the great anonymous of the War of National Liberation. They were the ones responsible of preparing food for the *mujahideen*. They are those who prepared couscous, who washed and sewed the *guerrillas'* outfits, collected money, they worked in offices as well. In short the *Moussebila* had a great role, even if looking from the outside it may seem that their responsibilities were less arduous than other women, but still it helped during the Revolution (El Korso, 1998).

The maquis had a crucial need for nurses. From the paramedical school or high schools, trained by professional Doctors in Oran, they joined the maquis after a brief course introducing them to first aid in order to work in health teams. They lend a helping hand to the maquis and helped for the civil population, especially women and children.

There existed also the “*Berrata* women”, that is to say, those who had the role of hiding the weapons under their veil. They had the most poignant and spectacular role. Everyone agrees that the bomb network would never have worked so well, without women. The most prominent names were: *Zhor Zerraari*, *Djamila Bouhired*, *Djamila Boubacha* and many others... The National Liberation Front succeed in a lot of its missions because of these women.

Algerian women had diverse missions and this has led the French adversary to pay more attention to them, France admitted the role of women in the Revolution and in Algerian society. Unfortunately, these women were exposed to various forms of repression and torture. The colonial administration had reserved special prisons for the Algerian woman to minimize their force and break their social edifice. However, they failed to do so and the result was that many women succeeded and fell on the field of honor, like *Hassiba Ben Bouali*, *Malika Gaid* and *Meriem Bouattoura*. The heavy responsibilities and the important missions women had during the liberation made them leave their secondary roles for more essential roles which the *Mujahideen* needed the most, despite all the difficulties she faced in as a woman.

Prisons, whether in Algeria or outside, were not the preserve of men alone, but they also included women. Despite this, the prisons reserved for Algerian women were terribly dangerous. It should be noted that the number of Algerian women detained reached 16% in 1956, a proportion that continued to increase. There were a lot of effects of the suffering endured by the Algerian woman, the sufferings of the woman following the repression and the detention left a set of deep sequels and it is hardly possible to measure the dramatic situation which they dragged. The woman has indeed suffered a lot and this has given birth to a terrible fear, these effects still persist to this day. Some of them were imprisoned, tortured and detained, and such painful memories will remain in the memory of the survivors, negatively impacting their daily lives after independence (Guendouz, 2011).

It is important to go back in history and see the role of the woman, and to bear in mind her values and place in the Algerian society under colonialism. Despite all the attempts of the colonizer to diminish the place she occupied in the society, the Algerian woman was strong enough to override the obstacles put in front of her. To belittle her, the colonizer considered the woman as an oppressed creature because of her veil and because of the traditions and customs. However, how the colonizer saw the woman contradicted what she was capable of doing, and her aspirations. Her tenacity and resistance during the war of liberation helped the Algerian society. The colonizers' attempts to depersonalize the Algerian women were in vain, they could not reach their objectives because the Algerian woman has always withdrawn from the European look. Most of Algerians kept their veil on because they believed that it was the symbol of modesty and displayed their identity, other preferred putting it off for the sake of their country.

The participation of women in the struggle for national liberation and as I have already highlighted before, has been clear in the missions she used to perform. She had to hide arms

and weapons used during the revolution. This was a turning point in the history of Algerian women, people changed their mind about them and about the muslim woman in general.

So the revolution will develop in this brave women a need for freedom and liberty. Years have passed by and the woman has been relegated to the background, but it was about time to evoke what these brave women did, who have illustrated the revolution by their courage and self-sacrifice.

3. 4 Women's covert operations: Most prominent faces

Malika Gaid was one of the outstanding Algerian female fighters, she was born in 1934 in *Belcourt* Alger. Originally from *Timenguache*, a village of *Beni Yaâla*, in the wilaya of *Setif*, she died holding the weapons on her hands in a hospital situated in a cave in the *Iwakouren* region near *M'chedallah*. *Malika Gaid* was a nurse working with the NLA but she was also a combatant. *Malika Gaid*, just like all the women who have sacrificed themselves in the name of freedom, is now an essential figure that remains part of the Algerian memory. Another woman who has shown bravery is *Naciba Malki* called *Chafika*. The latter was responsible for the military and political sector, *Chafika* was active in Algiers in 1956.

Another woman is *Yamina Oudai* called *Zulikha*, this great lady was from *Hadjout*. Mrs. *Yamina Echaib*, lost her husband *Larbi Oudai*, but she was brave enough to stand in front of the colonizer. She spoke French fluently and had no complex facing Europeans, she was able to realize her dream when the war of national liberation was unleashed on November the first of 1954. Mother of three children who all were young, she choose to distinguish herself from others by having a fierce determination against the occupier. She used to lead women and men for the national cause, and by using all the subterfuges to circumvent the ambushes rendered by the colonial forces. When the colonial authorities became aware of her role among the population and its surroundings, she decided to flee and join the Maquis. Captured on October 15, 1957, she was tortured for 10 days. She never denounced those women and men who were working under her leadership, in order to preserve the politico-military organization. "*In front of us, her handcuffed hands*" said one witness, "*she spat in the face of a military captain and said: look what an Algerian French soldier can do.*" *We have not seen her since that day*" he said. On Tuesday, October the 25th of 1957, at 3 pm, *Yamina Oudai*, known as *Zulikha* was executed.

Another one is *Raymonde peschard* or *taoues*, she was born in *Saida-Eugène* in Algiers, on September the 15th of 1927, she was an activist and a member of the Algerian Communist Party. During the war of liberation, she joined the National Liberation Army in *Kabylie wilaya*

III. On November the 26th of 1957 she fell, arms in hand, at the age of 30, *Raymonde Peschard* with several of her companions of the NLA in a place called *Draa Errih*, in the *Jebel Tafartas*, what is called today *wilaya Bordj Bou Arreridj*, the *wilaya III*.

The last conspicuous woman I will be mentioning is *E'chahida Meriem Bouattour*, she was born in 1938, she studied at *Sétif* high school, she joined the ranks of the revolution in the *wilaya* in 1956 and participated in many dangerous operations, through which she demonstrated her bravery and courage. The last operation she performed was the one she performed alongside with her friend the *Martyr El Hamlaoui*. These operations were carried out against military institutions and installations as well as police stations, they also consisted of the eradication of traitors and *harkis*. According to *Djamila Ould Khettab*, *Harkis*, were Algerians helping the French colonizer. They supported the colonizer and defended the French Algeria. They used to help the French army during the period from 1954 to 1962, they stood with France against the National Liberation Front (Ould Khettab, 2015). When someone denounced *E'chahida Meriem Bouattour and martyr El Hamlaoui*, they escaped and took refuge in a house but unfortunately the house was found by the French army in a short period of time and then dynamited. *Meriem Bouattour and Martyr El Hamlaoui*, both died on the 8th June of 1960 (Aek, 2012). Researchers and historians considered the success of this new form of combat among Algerian combatants as an example to women all over the world. They never had a slight hesitation when it comes to standing against any form of injustice, they did their best for an independent Algeria. It must be kept in mind that the Algerian woman had a double responsibility, she was engaged in war and was a fighter but she had also her duty at home as a wife, sister and mother.

Algerian women sacrificed a lot in the name of patriotism, unfortunately their efforts were not recognized as it should be. *Lala Fatima N'Soumer*, the first one to be sentenced to death, *Djamila Bouazza*, *Meriem Bouattouta*, *Hassiba Benbouali*, *Fatima Hadje Ahmed* and many other women who made the Algerian history and the history of the world.

The woman in Algeria was and is still reflecting an image of resistance, she is the pillar of her family. She worked on maintaining the cultural belonging to the nation and succeeded in transmitting these values and behaviors to her children and grandchildren by narrating to them the epic legends, folk tales and telling them about the heroic championships. Children grew up listening to stories of heroes, Mujahideen and Mujahidat those who asked for freedom and defended their dignity and identity.

The Algerian woman entered the field by herself, she contributed and invested all her energy in the service of the revolution at various levels and social classes. She endured the difficulties

everywhere as a fighter, a captive or even imprisoned says the Algerian writer and poet *Moufdi Zakaria* in his poem entitled: “الجزائر إلياذة” (Moufdi, 1964).

”خاشعة له الرؤوس فتعنو اللواء نشيد صوت وجلجل
راكعة الدنا فتصغي العذارى، نشيد تنلو الجزائر وبنّت

The woman defied the pressures of colonialism and refused to proceed with its plans, including the vote on the French constitutional referendum on September the 28th, 1958 presented by general *Charles de Gaulle* to the French and Algerians alike. Women went out shouting: “جروني”. Women were saying to the French colonizer that he can penalize, prison or even beat them; they won't give up and they won't vote for general *Charles de Gaulle*

Women asked for their rights to defend their country and proved that they are capable of doing all the operations assigned to them, their motto was:

آ الطالع للجبل اعلمني خويا علاه تدسها مئي
هات لي كابوس باش نجاهد ونمشي معكم يا الزعما
يا الواعش ديزوني فرمليّة و باه نداوي المجاهدين.

4.The status of women in Islam and the Middle East: between crisis and reform

In their book entitled: “*Women in Muslim Societies, Diversity within Unity*”, *Herbert L.Bodman* and *Nayereh Tohidi* tackle Islam from the cultural point of view, they look at Islam as a changing entity. They emphasize on the gender ideology of Islam in the countries of the MENA region:

“A trend in the scholarship on the Middle East and North Africa has uncovered the gender ideology of the major original texts of Islam. This is an important side of the issue, because the texts, however open to diverse interpretations, have provided a common element throughout the Islamic world. It is only one side of the issue, however. We must remember that Islam has intermingled with many other factors such as local custom, politics, economics and historical conjuncture to shape the status of women in different ways in different times and places.” (Bodman, Tohidi, 1998, 63)

The emphasize on the idea that each country has its own interpretation of meanings and symbols of Islam, depending on its history, culture customs and many other factors...

4. The status of women in Islam and the Middle East: between crisis and reform

4. 1 The situation of Women after the Arab Spring

The Arab Spring revolutions resulted in the rise of Islamic and conservative movements, many women were fearing a decline in their fundamental rights. This motivated Arab women to establish a support fund for the protection of women's rights in the Mediterranean region.

Noria is a member of a music band, she dances and sings because it is her passion, she said "*For me, dancing is an expression of freedom, and if women are prevented from dancing in a country than this country does not enjoy freedom.*" In the absence of women's freedom within a society, one cannot speak about democracy. Dancing for *Noria* is not just an art but a symbol of freedom and a measure of the respect for women's rights within a community, in all their forms.

Emma Goldman, a feminist activist shares the same view as *Nori*, she said: "*What is the purpose of a revolution, if I do not have the freedom to dance?*" *Emma Goldman* describes through this example the situation, which is experienced by many women in North Africa, the Middle East and other Arab countries. Even after the Arab Spring revolutions, many women are still oppressed and marginalized, they are still suffering from brutality, different forms of inequality between them and men, sexual harassment and violence. In order to put an end to violations of women's rights, human rights' activist *Emma Goldman* founded the "*Mediterranean Women's Fund*", an initiative sponsored by many artists who organize festive evenings to raise funds and donations to promote women's freedom and their rights in the Mediterranean region. According to the official website of the "*Mediterranean Women's Fund*":

"The Mediterranean Women's Fund is run by women coming from Algeria, Spain, Morocco and France. Their experience in various women's movements gives them a practical knowledge of the possibilities and the difficulties met by women's associations around the Mediterranean region."

The team is constituted of women, they are: *Marta Giral* who is the Chairperson and a member of the Board of Trustees, *Chantal Hémar*d who is the Secretary and a member of the Board of Trustees, *Christine Buttin* who is the Treasurer and a member of the Board of Trustees, *Alya Cherif Chammari* and *Axelle Maldidier* who are members of the Board of Trustees, *Caroline Sakina Brac de la Perrière* who is the Executive Director, *Fawzia Baba-Aïssa*, the one in charge of Communication and Development and *Samia Allalou* who is in charge of Documentation.

Arab women feel that their freedom is under threat, their presence was dominant during the Arab Spring revolutions, they were always at the forefront of the protestors and they were the first advocates of a just and democratic society. *Caroline Sakine Braque du Lapier*, one of the founders of the "*Mediterranean Women's Fund*", Algerian human rights' activist who lived during the civil war of the 1990s in Algeria and who also stressed the important role women played during the revolutions said: "*Now fundamentalist and conservative movements are trying to make women's rights be the center of discussion*". For this reason, *Caroline Sakine Braque du Lapier* believes that determination and will alone are insufficient to put an end to these flows that threaten women's rights and freedoms. "*These conservative forces have a lot of money, this has led us to establish this fund. We are sponsored by the German FILIA Women's Foundation, the Global Fund for Women and the United Nations*" said *Caroline Sakine Braque du Lapier*.

The Fund has so far supported about 47 women's project in the Mediterranean area with a total financial envelope of € 100,000. In Spain, for example, there is a project to support women who are victims of domestic violence, in France a special assistance is granted for women who are forced to marry. In Tunisia, a video was produced encouraging women to participate in the elections and another video which emphasises on the danger of sexual harassment as a disgrace to men was produced in Egypt. After the Arab Spring revolutions, an electronic map to reduce sexual harassment was designed. A lot of activists in Egypt were able to establish "التحرش خريطة" or Harassment Map to combat sexual harassment, thanks to the support of the fund. The idea behind this "التحرش خريطة" were four young Egyptian women who, like many Egyptians, were victims of sexual harassment in public places, in transport buses and other places...

Samia Alawi, an Egyptian journalist and an active member of the "*Mediterranean Women's Fund*", she conducted a research where she confirmed that this project is so helpful and will put an end or at least abate these abuses happening every day. She said: "*Women are being touched, they are being harassed, men are looking at them in a ridiculous way and insulting them*". This was the main reason why *Samia Alawi* believed in the network "Harass Map" as a way to put an end to these abuses. To give a more detailed explanation of what an "Harass Map" is, one should emphasize on this definition: "*It is an online map that allows women to report the location and type of harassment by sending a short message*". "*This is how we can identify the most dangerous places*" reported *Samia Alawi*. In some neighborhoods in Cairo, there were recorded about 100 cases of harassment in one day.

But the most dangerous problem is that sexual harassment in Egypt is still considered as a taboo which prompts many women not to declare such attacks or sue the culprits. This is why the

network, through the continuously updated map of the “harassmentmap.org” website, has also urged higher authorities to act in order to stop these attacks.

Samia Alawi said: "The numbers on the map have spurred women to go to the police and give them the real numbers of women harassment and correct the wrong statistics the police hold, which are usually small numbers". Unfortunately, the police often do not care about it and take no action, this leads many volunteers to go personally in order to talk to the accused person and to make him aware that harassing a woman is shameful, unacceptable and ask him to change his behavior. In addition to all what was mentioned before, the "*Mediterranean Women's Fund*" also assists victims if they decide to initiate a lawsuit by providing them with free legal support and a supervision by a counselor. This model has also been imitated by a civil and juridical institution in Turkey, as well as outside the Mediterranean region, in Afghanistan, Indonesia and India.

In a study conducted by the “العربية المرأة منظمة” or the “*Arab Women's Organization*”, conducted by Ambassador *Haifa Abu Ghazaleh*, Special Representative to Civil Society for the League of Arab States Secretary General. The report is entitled "*Arab Women and Democracy*", it was discovered that the situation of Arab women in most of the countries that witnessed the revolutions showed that women are the "critical equation" in modern democracies, due to several factors, including the recognition of the importance of their political presence in parties, governments and public institutions as well as the unwillingness of the parties to take serious positions on the different problems facing women. This study shows the situation of women in the Arab countries before and after the Arab spring revolutions and whether the revolutions are springing on women and bringing new changes and benefits to them or increasing their sufferings.

The notion of democracy coincides with women's rights, no country can claim its democracy without respecting women's rights. Working for women's rights is an integral part of the struggle for democracy, because democracy requires equality for all citizens. Thus, promoting women's rights means promoting democracy. Democracy alone will not be enough to change the situation of women in the Arab world, the change needs a lot of efforts, it needs in the first place a change in people's mentality. What happened during the Arab Spring revolutions in 2011 in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Yemen and Syria granted some changes in these regions. There is no doubt that Arab woman had a strong role in movements lead against the oppressive regimes, whether through participation in demonstrations or through the establishment of blogs and Facebook pages, and through various media sites, by promoting concepts of freedom, human rights and defending the right of expression. Arab women were convinced that their

participation in the process of democratic transformation was the only manner that can represent the benefits of woman. Indeed, Arab countries have made some changes in their policies to improve the situation of women in the Arab world. Most of these measures have been exceptional, especially quotas. This has a qualitative impact on the entry of a larger percentage of women into political life. More women now have the right to participate in public decision-making. Of course, there is still a disparity between countries when it comes to quotas and there are those who did not take these extraordinary measures yet or are not willing to take them at all. *"As experts, we want to discuss the feasibility of the measures taken and some disadvantages that these measures may bring in the Arab world"* said Dr. *Fadia Kiwan*, member of the Executive board of the NCLW (The National Commission For Lebanese Women).

According to the report I have mentioned before, *"Arab Women and Democracy"*: justice in Arab countries is still far. This report was the first periodic report that addressed the situation of women, equality and justice for women in the Arab world, it was issued by the organization. Despite the progress made in many fields, gender equality is still hard to reach. The report mentioned that women's participation in political and social movements aiming the achievement of democracy and social justice is not something new. However, her participation in the contemporary Arab revolutions in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Yemen were pivotal and exceeded all expectations. Although the report included a case study of some Arab Spring countries, it is not enough to build the future of women in the post-revolution era based on it. Albeit the major role that women played in the Arab revolutions from the political coordination to the organization of demonstrations, this active participation did not continue during the first phase of the transition to democracy. Women were generally excluded from taking higher positions in institutions and governments, they were also precluded from posts where there is any kind of decision-making. The report noted that progress in terms of women's rights is still slow because the representation of women in public leadership positions is progressing very slowly.

Dr. *Haiifa Abu-Ghazaleh* says that there are three main shortcomings facing all Arab countries: freedom, women's empowerment and the lack of knowledge. The Arab Spring was not an uprising for the rights of women, it happened to defend the rights of everyone, to defend human dignity, and to create a better political atmosphere in which men and women are included. The percentage of women's participation in legislative councils in the Arab world is the lowest when compared to other countries in the world. Arab women considered the timing of the Arab Spring the most appropriate timing to assess the status of women in the Arab region in light of the emergence of modern democracies. Development, equality and peace cannot be achieved

without the effective participation of women at all levels of decision-making. Doubts about women's participation in the political and social life have begun affecting women in the post-revolution era. The question that must be raised here is: are the rights gained under the previous regimes still present? or did they flee especially with the apparition of all those extremists parties.

Arab women worked hard during the Arab Spring, they deserve to get their rights back: equality, dignity and democracy. The role played by Arab women during the various revolutions in many Arab countries, including Egypt, Tunisia, Libya and Yemen, emphasized that women's movements are an integral part of the Arab popular movement (Mazen, 2011).

4. 2 The situation of women in Algeria after the independence

The Mujahida *Fatima Ouzegan* said that Algerian women have been able to manifest themselves in many domains and have achieved significant gains, she believes that after fifty years from Algeria's independence woman is occupying a prominent place in society and is contributing effectively to the paths the country is taking towards sustained development. In an interview with the Algerian Press Service, mujahida *Ouzgan*, who was sentenced to death during the liberation revolution, explained that these gains were reached by women themselves over the past fifty years. They worked to get them, they managed to break many taboos despite the difficulties and obstacles they faced. *Ouzagan* did not hide that the construction process had experienced many difficulties in the early stages due to the devastation left by the colonialist who occupied Algeria under the pretext of "spreading civilization". She added that the illiteracy rate which was widespread after the independence, the deterioration of the social and economic conditions of Algerians had nothing to do with the civilization of which colonialism was speaking about. Mujahida *Ouzgan* said: "*What I value most is the interest in education the state has developed after the independence*". Algeria started opening schools, universities and institutions to people regardless of their sex, without discrimination which enabled young people to show themselves in different areas such as architecture, social sciences, medicine, literature, law... She explained that despite the struggles Algeria faced during the period of resistance, it was able to recover from them thanks to the efforts of all Algerians. *Ouzgan* considered that each generation is obliged to contribute to the development of its country, she said: "*The participation in building and developing the country is no less important than defending the country while being armed.*"

After calling young people to preserve Algeria and follow the footsteps of the Mujahideen, *Ouzgan* stressed on the fact that more attention must be given to people who sacrificed everything to get the independence, especially women. Their role must be highlighted because after Algeria's liberation, people are not shedding light on the participation of Algerian women in the liberation revolution, people are not speaking about the important role the woman played alongside with the man. She also spoke about the role of rural women who fought during the liberation revolution, describing them as "*The active element in the revolution because of their tasks*". *Ouzgan* added that despite the physical and psychological torture methods used in various prisons and detention centers by the French colonizer against women, this did not discourage the Mujahidat. They didn't stop their fight even though they were imprisoned and even sentenced to death (*Ouzgan, 2012*).

According to *Nikki Keddie*, the revolution in Algeria was well welcomed by people, and so happened even with conservatism. These parties raised in Algeria as an answer against what the coloniser was trying to do: erase the Algerian culture, religion and customs. The FLN was combatting the image of the woman, the coloniser was trying to impose on the society its religion, customs and identity. Algeria, as almost all the other Arab countries still had a patriarchal aspect, the Islamic law was the one directing the country so the country had a more restrictive view on the feminist movement. Unfortunately, after the independence the struggle of women increased with the increase of the FLN's need to eradicate all forms of secularism and modernization (*Nikki, 2006*).

According to *Neil Macmaster*, women presence in the field continued to increase, the colonizer was against these results and became more involved in finding a solution to this issue, as the independence movement was getting stronger thanks to women (*Macmaster, 2007, 91-92*). The french colonizer didn't recognize Algerians, Algerian people were never treated in the same way and following the "*Statut Personnel*" (personal status law) used by the colonial regime, France has showed its power over Algerians. However they couldn't change the familial code because France looks at the family legislation and the area of marriage as a sacred field that must be respected (*Macmaster, 2007, 97*). Nevertheless, the French colonizer put another approach that introduces some new reformist laws and liberal measures. These laws pointed on women's rights and dignity in all life domains (*Macmaster, 2007, 96*). France's goal was to calm down the uprisings and protect the "L'Algerie Francaise", the question that must be raised here is: How can this be reached? The answer is: by implementing campaigns that sensitize women of the importance of unveiling. Because according to them putting off the veil is a form of liberation, by promoting the importance of education and by providing people with health

care and other services (Macmaster, 2007, 96). Algerian women were a very important component in the revolutions against the French colonizer, so the idea was to provide these women with all their needs so that they will feel comfortable with the French system, accept it and stop the rebellion. This put fear in all Algerian men, because they saw the westernization of women as a threat for them, for their rights and families. They secluded women in houses and begin reminding them of the importance of their religion, customs and traditions.

The colonizer aimed to unveil the woman, but the FLN was against this idea and pushed the Algerian woman to preserve her identity and culture, to be a good woman which according to them means a good wife at home and a brave *Moujahida* outside. The veil helped her during her operations because she could smuggle weapons easily without being caught. However, *Frantz Fanon* believed that this was not the only reason behind the unveiling of the Algerian woman, her faith and her respect towards traditions and belonging made her respect her veil and the way she was dressed (Ahmed, 1992, 164). The FLN created a campaign that they choose to entitle as follow: “*Women could only achieve equality by fighting for a country freed from colonial domination.*” (Macmaster, 2007, 92-93). The FLN used this as a pretext against French people and the principles they were promoting, most women believed this.

On another hand, in his book “*Women in islamic societies*”, *Bo Utas* said:

“The conflict between tradition and modernism is very apparent in Algeria, a traditional Sunni-Muslim society. After 130 years of French colonial rule, and eight years of violent war for independence, it is now in the process of developing into a modern, socialist state. On the one hand we find a wish for rationality and for rapid technological development, and on the other a wish to rediscover an Arab-Muslim identity and way of life. The struggle between old and new is perhaps more violent in Algeria than in most other countries throughout the third world, as a consequence of the long and very ambitious programme of industrial development, adopted by the newly-independent state. Anxiety and identity crises often followed, especially within the category of people who were the first one to benefit. This change was accompanied by a wish to preserve everything touching family life unchanged, as a sort of shelter against intruding modernism.” (Utas, 1983, 192)

Unfortunately, Algerian women were disappointed after the independence when they had no important position in the government and had no right to take part in decision-making. They were present during the struggle to liberation but once Algeria got its independence the woman

had to go back to her place: secluded in her husband's home. Most women fought in urban areas where asked to perform in specific domains such as: cooking, nursing, doing secretarial work... Their job was mainly performing female tasks. However, woman in rural areas were the ones who had tough missions, as hiding weapons, watching the enemy and acting as messengers between soldiers so that they don't get caught. After the independence the efforts made by these women was not recognized, they didn't benefit from the help Algeria gave to all *Mujahidin*, nor got a recognition and acknowledgement for their efforts and endeavors.

The Algerian government did not recognize the work done by a lot of women and did not support women's wish to be as equal as men, but afterwards, Algeria started working on the legal reform. The ancient Algerian family code which was initiated in 1984, in 2005 the government started making some changes in it. These changes gave more rights to divorced women and their children, restricted the polygamy for man and allowed the woman to be more free from her husband obedience. The Algerian woman is still struggling from a patriarchal society, however the change these legal reforms brought, liberated her somehow from the hard restrictions of the ancient family code of 1984 (Gray, 2009).

4.3 Comparative approach: between what women have achieved after the Arab Spring and after the independence movement of Algeria

While looking at the situation of Algerian woman after the independence and the situation of woman after the Arab Spring, one can see a progress but not as expected. After the Arab Spring, a reform came to bring a change to the familiar code in Morocco for example but it didn't fulfil all their needs in terms of politics as well as economic and social life. The woman in both cases was present during the uprisings, they fought for the liberation of their countries but even for their liberation. Unfortunately, after the uprisings men made the Arab and Algerian woman disappear. According to *Haifa Abu Ghazaleh*, Assistant Secretary General and head of Media and Communication of the League of Arab States in Jordan: Many sides are against the woman, the religious discourse held by cheikh, who are interpreting the Quran in their one way and are making Haram and Halal fatwas is the main one. The second side that is pushing the woman back is marriage (Abu Ghazaleh). After the liberation of Algeria, the FLN became stronger thank to the woman who stood in front of the coloniser and helped in the liberation of her country, the FLN started the sensibilisation of the importance of holding on the culture, religion and traditions and so men started secluding their wives, daughters, sisters at home and the veil was imposed on them. On the other hand, after the Arab Spring, Arab countries witnessed the appearance of new mouvements that were against

the feminist movements and against the presence of woman in the political life and her active participation in the decision-making process.

Conclusions

A huge event like the Arab Spring as well as the French colonization of Algeria affected people who lived during this period. It is true that many objectives were not reached but what is important is that Western powers were not able to steer things in the direction they wanted. When the history of the world opens its doors to biased realities, social and political stereotypes start shaping the events. This is a good point because it allows to local and regional powers to the freedom of self-determination, as they are not willing to bear the cost of difficult choices imposed by the bitter reality. The role of regional powers represented an essential component in the fabrication of politics, culture and economy in the countries where the Arab Spring took place.

The role of women in changing the old oppressive regimes and allowing their countries to enjoy better conditions was prominent. However, their efforts did not reap much concern from their countries which took advantage of them during the period of struggle but did not grant them a colossal change in terms of their rights.

Algerian women were present during the struggle for liberty, they helped their country obtaining its independence but after this, women were secluded in their homes again.

On the other hand, Arab women who were characterized by their courage had an important role in the Arab Spring, they have not reach what they desired but at least the outcome was not as bad as the one of Algerian women. A huge change happened between the past era when Algeria was occupied by the French colonizer and when the Arab Spring happened, and if we look at it from a different angle we can say that even now Arab women are not having the same struggles as long time ago. Arab countries are healing from the patriarchy that was dominating in the past. The recovery period is taking time, efforts and a lot of adjustments not only in the lawmaking process but also in the mentality of people and the behaviour of the upcoming generations.

The developments of the Arab countries during the last years have shown that women have been able to stand for their rights and diminish the oppression of men. However, it is still too early to celebrate this outcome, especially since a lot of restrictions is erecting on the way of Arab women's liberties.

Riassunto

Sono diversi i paesi arabi in cui sono scoppiate rivolte e insurrezioni impreviste. La rivoluzione è iniziata in Tunisia, Egitto e poi anche in Libia. Il popolo richiedeva un cambiamento e il rovesciamento dei vecchi regimi oppressivi oltre ad una modifica sostanziale dei loro sistemi, delle riforme per le norme e la creazione di una nuova realtà sia nel contesto politico che sociale. La presenza delle donne arabe ha avuto una rilevanza notevole nelle piazze, nell'organizzazione e nella cooperazione.

D'altra parte, durante la liberazione le donne algerine hanno svolto un ruolo pubblico in politica e nella dimensione economica e sociale. I loro risultati hanno superato le aspettative, il loro lavoro durante l'indipendenza è andato di pari passo con quello degli uomini. Hanno cucinato, curato, aiutato a trasmettere e nascondere messaggi segreti e le armi di contrabbando, ma i loro sforzi non furono riconosciuti e dopo la liberazione molti dei loro diritti svanirono con la partenza del colonizzatore francese.

La mia tesi si concentrerà sui risultati che le donne sono riuscite a raggiungere *in primis* in tutti i paesi arabi e poi dopo la liberazione dell'Algeria. Inizierò con un'introduzione sui fatti storici e politici a partire dall'insorgere della primavera araba. Quando ha avuto inizio? Cosa l'ha causata? Perché non è successo ovunque? Qual è stato il ruolo dell'Occidente?

Il secondo capitolo riguarderà le conquiste delle donne durante la primavera araba, esplorando a fondo tematiche importanti quali la ricostruzione dell'economia e delle istituzioni politiche accanto al movimento femminista, concludendo con una panoramica sulla liberazione delle donne e sulle lotte che hanno dovuto affrontare. Nel terzo capitolo mi concentrerò sulle donne algerine nel periodo dal 1830 al 1962, sulla loro battaglia per ottenere l'indipendenza dell'Algeria e sulla loro partecipazione alle operazioni segrete. Nel mio ultimo capitolo discuterò dello status delle donne nell'Islam e nel Medio Oriente, a metà tra crisi e riforma. Farò un confronto tra i risultati che le donne hanno ottenuto dopo l'indipendenza dell'Algeria e dopo la primavera araba, illustrando la loro condizione attuale.

Dopo un lungo periodo di inattività, i Paesi arabi sono stati caratterizzati da insurrezioni e rivolte. Le prime rivoluzioni sono iniziate in Tunisia per poi diffondersi in altri Paesi. La popolazione era intenzionata a rovesciare i vecchi regimi oppressivi, modificare i loro sistemi, riformare le leggi in vigore e creare condizioni migliori per la politica, l'economia e la dimensione sociale. Tra la fine del 2010 e l'inizio del 2011, una nuova ondata di rivoluzioni ha colpito il Paese, e le proteste in tutto il mondo arabo sono iniziate con Mohamed Bouazizi e la rivoluzione tunisina. Dietro a queste rivoluzioni si possono annoverare diverse cause: un sistema pesantemente corrotto, condizioni di vita non ottimali, povertà dilagante e un regime

politico marcatamente oppressivo. Queste proteste si sono diffuse capillarmente nella maggior parte dei Paesi arabi e sono scaturite in scontri tra forze di sicurezza e dimostranti che hanno causato diverse vittime da entrambe le parti. Gli eventi hanno dimostrato che questi regimi sono molto deboli e fragili. Queste rivoluzioni sono state accompagnate da un'acclamazione araba che è diventata popolare in tutti i paesi arabi: "النظام اسقاط يريد الشعب" (*Ashaab yourido iskata nidam*) che significa "Il popolo vuole rovesciare il regime".

Il concetto di rivoluzione è sempre stato collegato alla violenza e allo spargimento di sangue, tanto da parte delle forze ribelli quanto del governo carica. La primavera araba, tuttavia, aveva una caratteristica peculiare: il panorama internazionale ha assistito a una forma completamente nuova di rivoluzioni arabe, lontane dal *golpe* militare e dalla violenza dei rivoluzionari. I popoli arabi hanno scelto di ribellarsi in un modo più sofisticato, avendo compreso che una rivoluzione pacifica sarebbe stata più efficace di una violenta. Ogni fascia sociale è stata coinvolta nelle rivoluzioni sin dal primo giorno, ma sono state le generazioni più giovani a rendersi maggiormente partecipi con la loro attività sui social media e nelle piazze. La religione tribale e i conflitti regionali sono scomparsi, facendo posto a uno spiccato spirito di unità, integrità e armonia.

Le persone hanno adottato nomi diversi per descrivere gli eventi che hanno avuto luogo nel mondo arabo. Ci sono persone che li hanno chiamati rivoluzioni, altri movimenti di protesta e altri che hanno affermato fossero manifestazioni in nome della democrazia e di condizioni di vita migliori. Questi nomi non si applicano a tutti i paesi in cui le rivoluzioni hanno avuto luogo, nonostante tutti condividessero gli stessi obiettivi e le stesse cause.

La primavera araba ha acquisito popolarità perché la popolazione ha iniziato a riconoscere le proprie libertà personali e ha compreso la crescente corruzione e l'ingiustizia nei propri Paesi.

Chalmers A. Johnson nel suo libro "*Revolutionary Change*" ha dato questa definizione:

"Le rivoluzioni sono cambiamenti sociali. A volte hanno successo; spesso falliscono. Il cambiamento rivoluzionario è un tipo speciale di cambiamento sociale, che implica l'intrusione della violenza nelle relazioni sociali civili. E la rivoluzione, sia come forma di comportamento che come concetto, riguarda il livello più basilare dell'esistenza comunitaria dell'uomo: la sua costituzione, nel senso aristotelico dei principi dell'autorità politica e della giustizia distributiva prevalente in una particolare società."

La rivoluzione è uno sradicamento di un regime già stabilito, che mina le strutture di *governance* esistenti e rimuove qualunque segno distintivo del periodo precedente. Se prendiamo questa definizione come principale riferimento, possiamo applicarla solo a ciò che è successo in Egitto, poiché non avrebbe la stessa efficacia se associata alle situazioni in Libia,

Tunisia o Yemen. Considerando ad esempio quello che è successo in Libia, le manifestazioni possono essere definite solo come una guerra civile, mentre gli eventi in Tunisia devono essere interpretati solo come un movimento pro-democratico verso la liberazione. D'altra parte, la situazione in Siria può essere definita come una ribellione e una disobbedienza civile. Per evitare tutte queste divisioni e denominazioni nella caratterizzazione degli sviluppi nel mondo arabo, la gente preferisce usare il termine *primavera araba*. A prima vista sembrerebbe un'espressione poetica che rispecchia la situazione araba, se non altro perché questa espressione non nasconde il significato di una rivoluzione, di una ribellione o di un movimento che chiede la democrazia che lo ha reso popolare. È semplicemente un'espressione neutra che riflette il cambiamento tanto desiderato dalla popolazione araba. Anche se neutrale, questa espressione descrive gli sviluppi avvenuti nella regione araba e porta la parola *primavera*, chiaramente riferita al rinnovamento e alla rinascita di un nuovo sistema. Questo è vero per le rivoluzioni arabe che hanno contribuito ai movimenti delle generazioni più giovani. La primavera simboleggia l'ottimismo e la speranza, e questo si applica ai sogni e alle aspettative degli arabi. La parola fu usata in modo che i popoli arabi aspirassero ad aprire una nuova pagina nella loro storia politica, lontana dai regimi dittatoriali che non riuscirono a raggiungere un vero progresso sociale e dai vecchi sistemi economici falliti. Questa espressione trasmette le ambizioni dei giovani e la loro speranza per un futuro migliore.

Tuttavia, quando il significato di questa espressione è associato al movimento dei popoli e ai loro desideri per un futuro migliore, non dovrebbe oscurare tutte le esperienze storiche in cui la primavera ha fallito e non ha raggiunto i suoi obiettivi. La parola *primavera* fu usata per la prima volta nel 1968 per riferirsi al movimento di riforma di cui la Cecoslovacchia fu testimone. Questo movimento riformista ha cercato di liberarsi della morsa dell'Unione Sovietica facendosi forte dell'emancipazione dall'ex regime comunista. In seguito, Mosca rispose inviando carri armati nella capitale Praga, metaforicamente interrompendo la primavera prima della sua fioritura.

Secondo Keating, questo termine non aveva ricevuto l'approvazione degli intellettuali arabi. Ovviamente la ragione era chiara, era ragionevolmente a causa della fallita primavera di Praga (Keating, 2011) e probabilmente questo è il motivo per cui i paesi occidentali non volevano usare questa parola per descrivere i movimenti democratici dell'Europa orientale spazzati dopo le riforme di Gorbaciov nel anni Ottanta. Ad esempio, il movimento in Cecoslovacchia fu chiamato "La rivoluzione di velluto" per il suo aspetto pacifico e per il contributo degli intellettuali e degli opinionisti nel suo avvio, guidato da Vaclav Havel che divenne il primo presidente democratico del paese. D'altra parte, in Ucraina, ad esempio, il movimento popolare

venne chiamato "La rivoluzione arancione" per via del colore delle bandiere impiegate durante le dimostrazioni. La parola primavera è stata usata negli ultimi anni per descrivere le massicce manifestazioni in Libano per chiedere il ritiro delle forze siriane dal paese. Considerando che i regimi hanno interrotto la primavera in Libano e in Cecoslovacchia nel 1968, quale potrebbe essere il futuro della primavera araba? Assisteremo a un nuovo fallimento o a una svolta decisiva?

In effetti, il successo dei movimenti popolari in Egitto e in Tunisia ha fatto sì che la primavera si fosse in qualche modo avverata, ma sfortunatamente non del tutto.

Infine, c'è un altro tipo di primavera che può essere identificata nel caso speciale del re marocchino Mohammed VI, che si è distinto dai precedenti leader dello stato marocchino quando ha stabilito "The Equity and Reconciliation Commission" (in arabo: "الإنتصاف هيئة والمصالحة"), che ha come missione l'apertura di vecchi file legali in cui i diritti umani sono stati violati, specialmente durante il periodo del padre Re Hassan II. Inoltre, ha anche introdotto nuovi emendamenti costituzionali che hanno tolto alcuni dei suoi poteri e facendo ciò ha trasformato il paese da una monarchia assoluta a una monarchia costituzionale. Con questi cambiamenti spontanei, Mohammed VI ha dato un nuovo significato alla primavera araba, lontana da ogni tipo di violenza e dal cambiamento radicale dei regimi.

In quasi tutti i paesi le donne hanno avuto un ruolo preminente. Costruire una partecipazione effettiva della donna nella regione araba richiede forme più istituzionalizzate e sforzi per portarla in una posizione di decisore. Richiede anche uno sforzo maggiore per cambiare la mentalità delle persone verso il ruolo delle donne nella vita politica e per instillare una cultura di uguaglianza nelle scuole, nei media e nelle istituzioni sociali. Le donne arabe, come Hala, Luiza e Nabila, hanno superato la discriminazione politica e altri ostacoli con un forte sostegno, ma per le donne arabe nel loro complesso, l'uguaglianza deve diventare una realtà, non solo un sogno.

Le donne algerine hanno avuto diverse missioni e questo ha portato l'avversario francese a prestare maggiore attenzione a loro. La Francia ha ammesso il ruolo delle donne nella rivoluzione e nella società algerina. Sfortunatamente, queste donne sono state esposte a varie forme di repressione e tortura. L'amministrazione coloniale aveva riservato prigioni speciali per le donne algerine per ridurre al minimo la loro forza. Tuttavia, non ci riuscirono e il risultato fu che molte donne ricevettero onore dalla comunità, come Hassiba Ben Bouali, Malika Gaid e Meriem Bouattoura. Le pesanti responsabilità e le importanti missioni che le donne hanno avuto durante la liberazione le hanno indotte a lasciare i loro ruoli secondari per assistere i Mujahideen, nonostante tutte le difficoltà che una donna si trovava ad affrontare. Si noti che il

numero di donne algerine detenute ha raggiunto il 16% nel 1956, una percentuale che ha continuato ad aumentare. Le sofferenze della donna dopo la repressione e la detenzione hanno lasciato una serie di traumi profondi che difficilmente è possibile misurare. Alcune di loro sono state imprigionate, torturate e detenute, e ricordi così dolorosi rimarranno nella memoria delle sopravvissute, influenzando negativamente la loro vita quotidiana dopo l'indipendenza (Guendouz, 2011).

È importante tornare indietro nella storia e vedere il ruolo della donna e non dimenticare i suoi valori e il suo posto nella società algerina sotto il colonialismo. Nonostante tutti i tentativi del colonizzatore di sminuire il posto che occupava nella società, la donna algerina era abbastanza forte da scavalcare gli ostacoli posti di fronte a lei. Per sminuirla, il colonizzatore considerava la donna come una creatura oppressa a causa del suo velo e delle tradizioni e dei costumi. Tuttavia, il modo in cui il colonizzatore ha visto la donna contraddiceva ciò che era in grado di fare e le sue aspirazioni. La sua tenacia e resistenza durante la guerra di liberazione ha aiutato la società algerina. I tentativi dei colonizzatori di spersonalizzare le donne algerine furono vani. La partecipazione delle donne alla lotta per la liberazione nazionale è stato un punto di svolta nella storia delle donne algerine, perchè le persone hanno cambiato idea su di loro e sulla donna musulmana in generale.

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