

Lecture as part of the Teaching Assistantship Programme 2021

**The Crisis of Hegemony in the Middle East and North Africa after the Arab Spring:
The Tunisian Political System's Crisis as a Case Study**

Organizational details

Instructor: Nourhan Kassem

Date: 2nd June, 2021, from 2-4 pm

Location: Online (link will be sent in advance to the lecture)

Content

The Arab Spring articulated the deep crisis that the post-colonial Arab countries endure. It rendered the understanding of crisis as a process rather than an emergent event.

This lecture answers the question: Was the Arab Spring a moment of expression of a long crisis or just an expression of emergent one? Colonial legacies, the Cold War and disadvantageous insertion into the global economic system created dysfunctional emergent states and contradictions that continued into the Arab Spring revolutions. With this backdrop, the crisis that Tunisia witnessed after the outbreak of the uprisings was an episode of a long crisis that extended from the reign of the first Tunisian president, Habib Bourguiba, and which has exemplified itself clearly in the paralyzed political process after Jasmine Revolution in 2010/11.

By the same token and to catch the current connotation of the concept of crisis, I am going to raise the following conceptual question: what does the concept of "Crisis" mean? I believe that it is feasible to start with brief recounting of the development of the concept of crisis through skimming the different notions it got along the history of its usage.

Then I move to answer the question: Which concept suits the case study? I utilize Gramsci's concept of "organic crisis" to explain the dysfunction of the Tunisian political system. Such dysfunction started with the post-colonial state under Bourguiba and continued with Ben Ali's regime. The causes of the outbreak of 2010-2011 upheavals are in the contradictions of the Tunisian political system rather than just attributed to the rule of Ben Ali. I aim to provide an interpretive framework for understanding the Tunisian uprising as the continuation of a long period of crisis and as an interregnum where the old dies and the new is yet to be born as Gramsci elaborated.

Structured timetable

- First 10 minutes: deliberating on the concept of "crisis"; its origin and evolution.
- Following 15 minutes: Political crisis: a process to question the structure of the system.
- Following 15 minutes: Tunisia's continuous crisis of hegemony: Bourguiba and the impasse of post-colonial state.

- Following 15 minutes: Ben Ali: the quandary of 'passive revolution'.
- Following 15 minutes: The Arab Spring: The old dies but the new cannot be born.
- Following 10 minutes: Conclusion: The Contradictions Continue.
- Last 10 minutes: to wrap up what we were discussing, receiving feedback, and proposing probable upcoming topics of shared interest.

Key words: Crisis, Hegemony, Organic crisis, Bourguibism, Depoliticization, Arab-Spring.

Learning Targets

- The participants will learn more about the Arab countries especially the Tunisian political system which is experiencing these days' continuous demonstrations in the Tenth anniversary of the 2010 uprisings.
- will learn how the Tunisian people regard such upheavals and the quandaries they are living in and how the aftermath- revolutions period looked like in the Middle East especially in Tunisia.
- They will get to know my style in teaching and we can share different experiences regarding the topic and the teaching style.

Target group

Students, Doctoral Candidates and Postdocs of all Faculties

Course language

English

Registration

Please register **by Friday 21st May 2021** via e-mail at info@ggs.uni-giessen.de.