

2019 KASIM-2021 KASIM DOKTORA YETERLİK SORULARI

2019 Kasım Doktora Yeterlik Soruları

STUDIES IN MASS COMMUNICATION, IDEOLOGY AND CULTURE

1. What is the significance of fascism for Critical Theory?
2. Write an essay on the role of the media in the formation of "hegemony" with reference to a specific case (for instance, a particular television program or news coverage about a specific issue).
3. "It can be argued that there are some similarities between the structure of Turkish media organizations and media organizations in advanced capitalist countries in terms of ownership structure, level of concentration, vertical and horizontal integration. However, similarities cease to exist in terms of relations between politics and media."

Discuss the statement above.

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

- 1) Please elaborate on the discussions with regards to the exercise of "bureaucratic power" at the micro level in terms of the role of individual bureaucrat; and, at the macro level in terms of the role defined for bureaucracy. Please do not forget to theoretically inform your discussion.
- 2) Please discuss and critically evaluate the transformation of the ministerial system in Turkey in the 2010s, in terms of its "policy making" and "implementation" capacities in the light of the New Public Management and Governance approaches.
- 3) Considering the constitutional principles (Article 126 – Central administration and Article 127 – Local administrations) with regards to "establishment of the administration" in Turkey, please discuss the mechanisms developed to ensure "unity of administration." In your answer, please also take into consideration the changes introduced by the Presidential Executive System.

COMPARATIVE POLITICS & GOVERNMENT

1) Are the main threats faced by new democracies in the contemporary world a) dramatic, sudden reversions to authoritarianism or b) more incremental, gradual weakening and erosion of democratic regimes? Why? What does the Comparative Politics literature have to say about this?

2) To quote Adam Przeworski, “is the science of Comparative Politics possible”? Why or why not? Please select two major methodological approaches to the inquiry of Comparative Politics and discuss their strengths and weaknesses (potential biases and methodological pitfalls).

3) Write a critical and analytical essay that analyses the switch of Turkey to a “presidential executive system,” the model accepted in the referendum of 16 April 2017. In answering the question, make sure that you describe the main characteristics of both the presidential and parliamentary systems by giving actual examples from some of the representative countries, such as the United States and the United Kingdom.

TURKISH POLITICS

1. Write an essay that evaluates the arguments in the paragraph below:
“Although the Committee of Union and Progress officially ceased to exist in 1918, it was the main organizing force behind the War of Independence, and practically ruled Turkey well into the World War II. Since then, the Unionist mentality has continued to influence Turkish politics; parties on the left or right of the political spectrum have inherited its main ideological elements and reproduced its approach to society or adopted its methods.”
2. Please discuss the relevance or pertinence of the concept of nationalism to the study of Turkish politics, focusing on a specific ideological-political context in a specific period.
3. Since the 1970s, the center-periphery paradigm has provided a useful analytical framework to explain and understand the nature of the socio-political cleavages, political alignments in the party system and also the voting behaviour. In your opinion, to what extent does this framework seem relevant to analyze any/all of these aspects of Turkish party politics by taking into consideration the socio-political transformations in Turkey over the past 30 years?

PUBLIC POLICY

- 1) In what ways, do you think, the legal bases of a policy sector could affect the relationship between “policy outputs” and “policy outcomes” in that particular sector?
- 2) Please compare and contrast the dynamics of “policy instrument selection” in closed and open (multi-actor and multi-scalar) policy networks.
- 3) What sort of challenges, do you think, stand before the adoption of “planning as a logic and form of policy-making/implementation” as a response to the deadlocks generated by the recent neoliberal policy environment?

POLITICAL SOCIOLOGY

- 1) How/to what extent can the rise of the post-industrial society be linked to the discourse and politics of populism? Discuss.
- 2) What is the relevance of the concepts of "multitude," "precariat" and "precarization" for a political sociology of the contemporary societies? Discuss.
- 3) Discuss and explain the newest social movements (2009 onwards) on the basis of theories of "Hegemony" and "Post-hegemony" with reference to concepts of "articulation of demands", "representation" and "chain of equivalence".

CLASSICAL POLITICAL THOUGHT

- 1- What is the Platonic critique of democratic speech and deliberation? How did Aristotle respond to this critique?
- 2- In Aristotle, blissfulness as the highest goal in human life can only be achieved in community with others.
Explain and discuss.
- 3- What is the meaning of “conquering Fortuna” in Machiavelli’s political thought? What kind of attitude is suggested concerning political action and the conditions the actors encounter in political life? How does Machiavelli’s overall teaching differ from medieval outlook to human action and mundane affairs (fatalism, for instance) and to what extent does his teaching prepare modern conceptions of freedom and political activity. Explain and discuss by reference to his texts.

MODERN POLITICAL THOUGHT

- 1- Who is the "sovereign" in Rousseau? Which characteristics does he have and how does Rousseau legitimate his power/rule?
- 2- "The Enlightenment which discovered the liberties, also invented the disciplines." (M. Foucault) By taking Foucault's statement as your initial point discuss at least three modern thinkers in relation to their views on freedom and the means/instruments of limiting freedom.
- 3- Write a critical essay elaborating the contributions of modern social contract theories to political thought and practices in terms of the conceptions of freedom, the category of individual, language of natural and political rights and rational legitimacy of political authority. Then, comment on the probable impasses and ideological obstructions created by contract theories. Answer by reference to the works of Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau.

CONTEMPORARY POLITICAL THOUGHT

- 1- The conditions encountered by the "STATELESS PEOPLE" in terms of their legal-political situation and their rights or rightlessness have become a central concern for contemporary political thinkers in last decades. Discuss the reasons for such growing concern for "right to have rights" and corresponding novelties and difficulties in conceiving rights, law and politics by reference to two thinkers who focus on these issues.
- 2- Do you think it is possible to talk about a Marxist political theory in the 21st century? If we could, in which sense(s) it is a continuity of the Marxist tradition and in which respect(s) it is a diversion from it? If we could not, why is not possible? Discuss with reference to three contemporary thinkers.
- 3- Could there be a realm or sphere of anti-political for the twentieth century political thinkers. Discuss and elaborate on the meaning and plausibility of the anti-political with reference to at least three thinkers who reflected on the category of the political.

POLITICAL ECONOMY

1. 'Market societies' have emerged as a result of change or evolution rather than political intervention. Do you agree?
2. Please write an essay evaluating the relevance of concepts such as "embedded liberalism" and "authoritarian neoliberalism" as tools of periodisation for the capitalist economies.
3. Please write an essay critically evaluating the changing conceptions and functions of welfare regimes by taking into account notions such as full employment, competitiveness, social and economic (in)security, etc.

2020 Mayıs Doktora Yeterlik Soruları

COMPARATIVE POLITICS & GOVERNMENT

1. What are political institutions according to the Comparative Politics literature? To what extent do they help us understand political and socioeconomic outcomes? Elaborate on this issue focusing on either or both of the following bodies of literature: a) democratization and democratic backsliding, b) economic development.
2. In the field of Comparative Government, it is generally accepted that there are three main forms of the executive: presidential systems, parliamentary systems and semi-presidential systems. In your opinion, in which category does Turkey's "presidential government system" fit best? In your answer make sure that you focus on the characteristics of both the new system of Turkey and these three main categories.
3. Increasing number of contemporary scholars have been referring to an authoritarian drift in political rule across different regions. Which one(s) of the below mentioned concepts, developed by different theoretical perspectives, do you think better reflect this development in state-society relations? Explain why with reference to a country of your own choice, by referring to explanatory merits of each concept and substantiating your arguments in relation to the theories underpinning these concepts.

Authoritarian Statism

Populism

Competitive Authoritarianism

Fascism

Neopatrimonialism

Democratic Backslide

TURKISH POLITICS

1. Please discuss the evolution and relevance of the center-periphery cleavage in Turkish politics. How would you assess the role and salience of this cleavage in contemporary debates in Turkish politics?
2. The political autonomy of the Turkish military and the particular pattern of civilian-military relations in Turkey have significantly influenced the prospects of democratization in Turkey ever since the 1960 military coup. Please write an essay on the determinants of the civilian-military relations by identifying the specific modes (types) of Turkish military's political role and those historical turning points in shaping civilian-military relations which have impacted on the balance of power in Turkish politics.
3. Discuss the problem of 'west' and 'westernisation' in Turkish Politics

CONTEMPORARY POLITICAL THOUGHT

1. Legitimacy is a concept that is saddled between the normative and the empirical. Discuss with respect to the following: Max Weber, Carl Schmitt and Jürgen Habermas.
2. Does Hannah Arendt's "vita activa" conceptualization (still) provide an adequate framework for the analysis of the processes of democratic social and political transformation? Explain and discuss.
3. What is the rule of law? Is the rule of law a normative and/or democratic principle? How can we evaluate the relationship between human rights and the rule of law? Answer with reference to two figures among: Hayek, Rawls and Dworkin

POLITICAL SOCIOLOGY

1. Contemporary social movements unleashed novel dynamics and practices of politics both challenging prevalent power relations and constituting forms of counter-power. If we take political sociology as the study of the social sources of power and politics, these movements are significant for the field. Can you discuss them in this context? Please refer to certain cases in your discussion.
2. How can we make sense of the notion of 'state of exception' within the context of 'age of anxiety'?
3. If political sociology is primarily concerned with the experience of "western" liberal democracies then what does the term "post" indicate for the field of political sociology? Discuss with reference to concepts like post-industrial, post-modern and/or post-capitalist. Evaluate the significance of such periodization with respect to the scope and extent of political sociology.

2020 Kasım Doktora Yeterlik Soruları

STUDIES IN MASS COMMUNICATION, IDEOLOGY AND CULTURE

1. Compare and contrast the main approaches in the field of media studies with reference to contemporary media environment and outputs in Turkey.
2. Discuss the validity of 'immaterial labour,' an important concept in political economy, as a solution to the problem of commodification in cultural industries.
3. How would you criticize the critical theory?

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND URBAN POLITICS

1. If Karl Marx, Max Weber and Michel Foucault were to sit around a table and engage in a discussion on the (changing) relationship between (urban) social movements and urban politics today, what would be the conclusions they would agree and/or disagree upon? (And what would come as surprise to them, and no surprise at all?)
2. Please discuss the changing role and place of "collective consumption" in urban politics, especially in an era characterized by the failure of neoliberal policies, which became quite visible during the Covid-19 pandemic. As you elaborate your answer, please, a) critically engage with the relevant literature (collective consumption-urban politics) from a historical perspective; b) contextualise your discussion with reference to Turkey's ongoing pandemic experience (and/or to the experiences of other countries).
3. To what extent, do you think, the debate on "Global Cities" can allow us to explain the rise of the major metropolitan centres of the Global South (with populations reaching up to 20 million in certain examples) and the urban politics generating/generated by those centres. Please elaborate your answer focusing on the case of İstanbul/Turkey.

TURKISH POLITICS

1. Please discuss the relevance or pertinence of the concept of fascism to the study of Turkish politics, focusing on a specific ideological-political context in a specific period.
2. The world has experienced the rise of populism and many populist leaders in recent years, both on the right- and left-wing of the ideological spectrum. Do we observe populist leaders in Turkish political history? Based on the relevant literature and your own knowledge, please compare and contrast a left-wing and a right-wing populist leader (and their respective political parties) in Turkish political history, with regard to (but not necessarily limited to) their leadership styles, political rhetoric, and attitudes toward institutionalization and democratization.
3. What is the role of “economic voting” in Turkish elections and Turkish politics in general? Based on the existing literature, do Turkish voters’ assessments of their own economic affluence and of the national economy affect their voting behavior; how so? Please provide at least two specific examples/episodes (informed by the literature and Turkish political history), which discuss the salience of economic voting in Turkish politics?

COMPARATIVE POLITICS & GOVERNMENT

1. In the last decade since 2008 global financial crisis, a series of theoretical responses about the political outcomes of this period of crisis have stirred the comparative politics literature. In the light of these discussions, it is clear that there is an increasing need to develop a conceptual tool kit so as to establish analogies and differences across different countries and regions. Please write an essay critically assessing the use of different conceptualizations -ie. populism, fascism, authoritarianism among others- in this discussion.
2. What causes democratization? What are the political, economic, and social factors behind democratization? In light of the ongoing debates in the Comparative Politics literature, is “modernization theory” still relevant in understanding democratization today?
3. Turkey's "presidential government system" accepted by the 16 April 2017 referendum is being criticized by almost all political parties in the country and there are discussions of “bringing the parliamentary system back”. In your opinion, are those criticisms and discussions well-grounded? Why/Why not? In answering the question please make sure that you also discuss the major characteristics of both presidential and parliamentary systems.

PUBLIC POLICY

1. To what extent can the “stages approaches” to the public policy process explain the challenges faced by the policy-makers and –implementers operating in a neoliberal governance environment. As you elaborate your answer, please employ the following key-words: “systems approach”, “decision-making”, “policy evaluation”.

2. Please compare and contrast “regulation” and “direct service provision” as two major types of policy instruments, especially in terms of their pros and cons in addressing the policy issues pertaining to social justice. As you elaborate your answer, please employ the following key-words: “policy feasibility”, “distributive policies”, “interest groups”, “fiscal restraints”.

3. In what ways, do you think, has the recent Covid-19 pandemic shown the limits to the incremental approach in policy-making? As you elaborate your answer, please employ the following key-words: “status quo”, “policy capacity”, “rationality” and “policy coordination”.

CONTEMPORARY POLITICAL THOUGHT

1. "Where would you locate John Rawls contractual approach within the political spectrum? In this context: to which extent does he touch upon egalitarian principles if there are any?"

2. Citizenship (political agency, political subject) is a key concept in Western political thought, as the question “who” the citizen is and how he/she should be conceptualized is widely debated. Discuss with respect to three contemporary political thinkers.

3. What are the contributions of the language of rights to our experiences concerning politics and law in contemporary world? What are the disputable and defensible aspects of formal, abstract and universal rights? Answer by reference to two well-known thinkers and their works.

POLITICAL ECONOMY

1. Discuss whether the recent rise of authoritarianism in the world pose a challenge to or reproduce neoliberalism.
2. COVID-19 pandemic hit is said to trigger the deepest economic contraction/crisis in the history of capitalism. How would evaluate the impact of the pandemic from a political economy perspective considering the public health, public finance, and employment policies. What might be the political implications of the pandemic.
3. What is financialization? What is main debate around the concept? To what extent this term can explain the profound changes that the economies of the world have undergone in the past 30 years?

POLITICAL SOCIOLOGY

1. Why do the concepts of precariat, precarization and multitude matter in contemporary political sociology? Please refer to theoretical and analytical studies where these concepts are deployed as explanatory categories in your discussion.
2. The covid-19 pandemic dramatically changed the distinction between public sphere and private sphere. Discuss the possibilities of reformulating this distinction, may be towards "post-public sphere" and consequences of this for the democratic political life in your essay.
3. "Think about Jurgen Habermas's and Daniel Bell's conceptions of modernity. If you were to write an essay on capitalism and its crisis by taking into consideration these two theoretical frameworks, what would your analysis be?"

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

1. Considering the two-year performance of the Presidential Executive System in Turkey, do you think there are any features of the bureaucratic system that should be revised / restructured? Why, why not? In your evaluation, please support your arguments with examples and theoretical explanations provided by public administration discipline.
2. How does the notion of “public interest” transform under different public administration paradigms? Please discuss with concrete examples.
3. “Public administration has an important role in the formulation of public policy and is thus a part of the political process.” Please discuss this statement by referring to various concepts and theories of public administration.

2021 Mayıs Doktora Yeterlik Soruları

COMPARATIVE POLITICS & GOVERNMENT

1. Turkey's "presidential government system" accepted by the 16 April 2017 referendum is being criticized by almost all political parties in the country and there are discussions of "bringing the parliamentary system back". Do you agree with these criticisms? Why/Why not? In answering the question please make sure that you also discuss the major characteristics of both presidential and parliamentary systems.

2. What are some of the basic challenges that the scholars are facing in the field of comparative politics and government? In answering the question, make sure you also refer to the main turning point in the history of the discipline.

3. Is populism detrimental or beneficial to democratic institutions? What are the opposing camps regarding this debate and what are their relevant arguments (please offer at least one scholar who argues in favor and against the idea that populism deteriorates democracy)? In your discussion, please provide also at least two cases throughout the world to further advance your theoretical discussion.

TURKISH POLITICS

1. The weakness of the civil society in Turkey has so far been studied and problematized from various angles, most notably with respect to the strong state tradition in Turkey. Please write an essay to discuss the significance of the factors which have been responsible for this weakness. Which other perspective(s) could be put forward to analyze this issue, and to account for the role the Turkish civil society has played in democratization during the post-1980 era ?
2. The Republican People's Party (CHP) ruled Turkey as a single-party government from 1923 to 1950. The Democrat Party (DP) spearheaded Turkey's transition to multi-party politics in 1950. However, the DP also ruled the country as a single-party government from 1950 to 1960. Please compare and contrast the CHP and the DP rule as a single-party government. What were the commonalities; what were the differences? Please make sure that you benefit from at least three scholars to support your arguments.
3. Discuss the ideological and support base changes in the Islamist movement in Turkey since 1950?

POLITICAL SOCIOLOGY

1. "Political sociology as a field is marked by its own Western traditional understanding of power" Critically discuss this statement by referring to at least two critical theoretical perspectives.
2. Write an essay in which you discuss the impact of the covid 19 pandemic on the relationship between the state and individual/subject regarding at least two theorists comparatively.
3. Explain and discuss the significance of the terms "modern, liminal and post-modern" in a review of the theoretical terrain in the field of political sociology.

POLITICAL ECONOMY

1. Discuss whether the recent rise of authoritarianism in the world pose a challenge to or reproduce neoliberalism.
2. COVID-19 pandemic hit is said to trigger the deepest economic contraction/crisis in the history of capitalism. How would evaluate the impact of the pandemic from a political economy perspective considering the public health, public finance, and employment policies. What might be the political implications of the pandemic.
3. What is financialization? What is main debate around the concept? To what extent this term can explain the profound changes that the economies of the world have undergone in the past 30 years?

CONTEMPORARY POLITICAL THOUGHT

1. Claude Lefort had argued that democratic society is constituted as the one in which Power, Law and Knowledge are exposed to radical indetermination. What does it mean? Explain. What are the reflections concerning this statement in the political theories of Arendt, Mouffe and Ranciere? Discuss in a comparative perspective.
2. The conditions encountered by the "Stateless People" in terms of their legal-political situation and their rights and rightlessness have become a central concern for contemporary thinkers in last decades. Discuss the reasons for such growing concern for "right to have rights" and corresponding novelties and difficulties in conceiving rights, law and politics by reference to two thinkers who focus on such problems.
- 3 'Explain and discuss common grounds and differences between Adorno/Horkheimer and Habermas concerning the 'project of modernity'.

STUDIES IN MASS COMMUNICATION, IDEOLOGY AND CULTURE

1. Political economy and cultural studies are generally seen as two fundamental but competing approaches to analyse media and communication. Do you think it is necessary and/or possible to reconcile these two strands of critical media inquiry?
2. An optimistic vision of the globalizing world by the impact of new media technologies is generally shared by technology-deterministic approaches. How would you respond to this idea?
3. Please write an essay evaluating developments and changes in the media structure in Turkey over the last two decades. In light of this evaluation, which questions related to such fundamental concerns as media pluralism, editorial autonomy, ownership structure, regulation etc., do you think, become prominent for scholars to focus on?

2021 Kasım Doktora Yeterlik Soruları

STUDIES IN MASS COMMUNICATION, IDEOLOGY AND CULTURE

1. “What is to be explained is not the fact that the man who is hungry steals or the man who is exploited strikes, but why the majority of those who are hungry do not steal and why the majority of those who are exploited do not strike.” Discuss with reference to the conceptual frameworks relevant to the field of culture, communication, and ideology.
2. Does advertising add value to the commodity it promotes? Discuss with reference to the labor theory of value.
3. "Ideology in general has no history." Discuss.

TURKISH POLITICS

1. Please discuss the change and continuities in the rise and success of right-wing populist parties in Turkish political history. Based on the historical developments in Turkish political history as well as the existing literature on populism (please cite at least two scholars in both areas), what are the historical commonalities and differences in populist leaders and parties in Turkey; why?
2. It can be contended that the post-1980 democratization in Turkey has ushered in a new trajectory for political Islam to transform itself from a peripheral force into the centre of the political system. Please discuss how this transformation could be analyzed (and how it could be approached theoretically) to account for the relative significance of external and domestic forces impacting on the process up to the 2000s (including the AKP period). In your essay, please elaborate on those factors which you deem particularly significant as well as the connections between them.
3. “Please discuss the role and place of victimhood in the historical formation of Turkish Islamism as an ideological discourse.”

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

1. Approximately 85 years have passed since Gulick (and Urwick) had formulated the POSDCORB principles. Write an essay in which you explain and discuss the relevancy and analytical value of these principles in today's modern public bureaucracies.

2..Explain and discuss the concept of bureaucratic discretion in relation to the tension between bureaucracy and democracy.

3.To what extent does the governance approach provide a conceptual contribution to deal with the current political and administrative crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic or climate change in the world and/or in Turkey? Please discuss the limitations and contributions of the concept with examples.

PUBLIC POLICY

1. What sort of challenges could the increasing diversity in the types of implementers bring for the policy-making process? As you elaborate your answer, please employ the following key-words: “policy mobilization (and agenda setting)”, “institutional bases of policy-making”, “rational decision-making”, “(policy) instrument selection”.

2. What sort of lessons can we draw from the (central and local) government responses to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic in Turkey about the limits to the efficiency and effectiveness claims of the neoliberal reform agenda/discourse. As you elaborate your answer, please concentrate on the recent “rise of the strong political executive”, and benefit from the following keywords: “status quo”, “policy capacity”, and “policy coordination”.

3. What sort of policy considerations, do you think, would necessitate an active use of “regulation” as a policy instrument in a multi-actor and multi-scalar governance environment? As you elaborate your answer, please employ the following key-words: “Policy capacity”, “open vs closed networks”, “interest groups”, “procedural instruments”.

POLITICAL SOCIOLOGY

1. Develop a political sociological analysis of one of the following;
 - a) Gezi movement
 - b) Anti-austerity movements (Occupy Wall Street, Indignados, Iceland "revolution"...)
2. Please discuss the current crisis of liberal democracies with regard to at least two theories.
3. "Political sociology is increasingly paying attention to 'culture' as a way to understand society and politics"

How could we contextualise and elaborate on this claim? Refer to at least two debates and/or theoretical perspectives that would take this premise significant and salient.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND URBAN POLITICS

- 1- Please critically evaluate the following statement: "It is possible to argue that the boundaries between "national politics" and "local politics" have increasingly blurred under neoliberalism in general, and "neoliberal urbanization" in particular. This observation equally applies to the countries of the Global South and the Global North."
- 2- Please discuss the political tensions inherent to the formulation and implementation of "large scale infrastructure projects (mega projects targeting urban areas)" with reference to major theories of local government and political representation.
- 3- What sort of political dynamics could "urbanization of poverty" trigger under an accumulation regime led by the service and construction sectors?

CONTEMPORARY POLITICAL THOUGHT

1. In Rawlsian defense of political liberalism the argument is that in contemporary pluralistic societies we should agree on the priority of rights over the conceptions of good (or good life). What is the reason for such claim? Discuss by reference to law, justice and democracy.
2. Citizenship is a key concept in Western political thought, yet the question "who" the citizens is and why has been widely neglected. Discuss with respect to Carl Schmitt, Hanna Arendt and Jacques Ranciere.
3. "Liberalism is a victim of its own success." Discuss, with reference to at least two contemporary political thinkers.

