

Political Science
Concepts, Institutions, Ideologies
Kudret Bülbül

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He is married with three children.

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Preface

WHY IS THERE A NEED TO WRITE A NEW POLITICAL science book when there are enough political science books in Turkish and other foreign languages in the literature already? Undoubtedly, the answer to this question may be different for everyone.

When I returned to academia after seven years having left a bureaucratic career in 2017, I thought that, in parallel with the ongoing developments in Turkey, more political science books would have been written and would have given more contribution towards furthering Turkey's civilization. However, it was enough for me to take a brief look at the political science books in Turkey to see that this expectation was not fulfilled. On the contrary, Western political science books, translated into Turkish or in Western languages, became much more widespread than they were when I had left academia.

Undoubtedly, these studies from Western literature were beneficial, as they contained valuable information from the political science literature. However, these books were mostly centered

upon their own societies. These books rarely included information about the history and civilization of non-Western societies (naturally Turkey's), and their contribution to the literature of political science. When these books are taught in their original language or translated into Turkish as is seen in our universities, we have taught our students a sense of partiality and a sense of rootlessness that their civilization is nonexistent in history and that it has never contributed towards the political science literature. I can say that this is one of the main motives that pushed me to write a new book of political science. In this context, while transferring the universal political science literature, I tried to include the contribution of our civilization to this literature as much as possible. In this study, I tried to address the issues that are not seen in the West but ones we often face. I have stressed and criticized the Eurocentrism of Western political science literature from time to time.

Undoubtedly, these are not ventures that can be completed with one or more types of studies. Such searches can only find a response in the literature over time if they are continuous.

I tried to use a language that is as understandable as much as possible while writing this book of political science. I do not know how successful I was because writing in an easy-to-understand manner requires a lot of meticulous professionalism.

In preparing this book, I aimed to make the reader aware of the contemporary, intellectual and future topics that will continue to be discussed, while still giving a place for the classical topics of political science. I took care to prepare the course curriculum for universities by designing the contents for a two-semester course.

In this study, I followed a concrete-to-abstract order, without breaking the integrity of the book, to gain a better understanding of political science issues. I began the first chapters on concrete

subjects that are more easily understood as the backbone and skeleton of political science. I tried to leave the second part of the book to more abstract and deeper subjects that were a little more difficult to understand. These sections were dealt with in a slightly more detailed and analytical manner, as their scope and content are relatively more recent and on more controversial issues.

Discussion questions were put at the beginning of each chapter in the book to prepare the readers for the relevant topic and to make them think about it. At the end of the chapter, a summary, and the names/concepts related to that chapter were added. Thus, it was aimed that both the readers and the teachers who would utilize this book as a textbook should have a better understanding of the relevant sections.

The target audience of the book is undoubtedly not just for students from different departments. Apart from students, its target is primarily for politicians, bureaucrats, scientists, researchers, private and civil society workers, those interested in politics, those trying to understand politics, and anyone else who seeks for a better understanding of various political mechanisms.

Undoubtedly, such a comprehensive book will have imperfections and inaccuracies. The Mecelle rule is always a guide in this regard: “if the whole of something cannot be achieved, the whole is not abandoned.” I hope that these possible imperfections will decrease over newer editions with the generous contribution of its readers.

Finally, I would like to state that it is very pleasing that the first edition of this study in Turkish was sold out in a short period of 3-4 months. We can interpret from this demand that the issues discussed and the perspective that this book addresses are greatly needed. Thus, the study for the 2nd edition has been revised. An

essay on the definition of politics that was not encouraged in the first edition is then presented within the second edition.

The first edition of this study triggered two additional studies. The first is the publication of the book Political Science in English (now in your hands). Translation work that is underway to be finished in 2020. The second is to write a “Political Science Dictionary” from the perspective of the Political Science book. The Dictionary work is finished, and may be published in the coming months.

I would like to thank research assistants Emrah Ayhan, İlyas Balcı, Mustafa Kemal Sağlam, and Dr. Başak Akar, Nazmul Islam, Numan Bülbül, Adres Yayınları, and everyone who contributed to this study. My special thanks is for Büşra Sönmez, working at Ankara Hacı Bayram Veli University, for reading this work from the very beginning, and making necessary corrections, while making the text easier to understand.

Kudret Bülbül

Çukurambar, August 2020

PART I
POLITICS AS A SCIENCE

1) POLITICAL SCIENCE: DEFINITION, QUALIFICATIONS, EMERGENCE, AND DEVELOPMENT

Discussion Questions

1. What is politics? How can it be defined?
2. Why do individuals and communities need politics? Why do they make politics?
3. The German statesman Bismark defines politics as “the art of the possible.” In this case, are the revolutionary activities and/or the things not done artistically outside the scope of politics?
4. Where does the challenge of defining politics arise? Why do the definitions made by political scientists contain certain deficiencies?
5. What methods can be followed to understand politics?
6. Sal Kalvador President Alsano Salvaro explains that he has been running his country in the “best way” for years and that his people are extremely “happy” and “peaceful” under his rule. He states that the “external powers” who want to divide their country are some “defeatists” who want to bring “mischief” inside their nation to disrupt the “unity and solidarity” of the country. Therefore, according to him, there is no need for politics in his country. Evaluate the views of Salvaro by specifying the basic conditions that make politics possible.
7. Political Science students from Turkey, France, Somalia, Pakistan, and Mexico are taking a History of Political Thought course which begins with Plato and ends with Weber. Except for the French student, the others feel alienated and rootless due to the content of the course. Please, explain and evaluate the reason for this alienation by touching upon whether Political Science is a Western centered science or not?

IDENTIFICATION EFFORTS

Politics can be seen in all societies where a social life had existed since the ancient times. However, when it comes to “what is politics?” it cannot be said that the citizens in the streets, or even the scientists, or the professionals in this field, could reach a common definition.

We may come across the concept of politics in daily life, sometimes singularly, and sometimes with its many extensions such as: politics, entering into politics, the political arena, political parties, the political system, political participation, political sphere, political culture, political power, political psychology, sociology, philosophy, etc. are the first to come to mind.

For the people on the street, families often make the following warning to their children who had won entrance to a university: “My dear son/daughter, never involve yourself in politics. From home to school, just follow your coursework, and nothing else.” In this warning, there is an assumption that politics is a bad thing that they should not be involved in. If the children reply to their parents who had warned them in such way as: “My dear Mom/Dad I want to be the Prime Minister or President in the future, and then I want to solve our country’s problems that you constantly complained of,” families will probably be happy with this response. However, is it possible to become the prime minister or president “without getting involved in politics?”

Remarkably, one of our examples then speaks of Adnan Menderes, one of Turkey’s former prime ministers, saying that he was a very good person but “his only fault was to get involved in politics” (Ozankaya, 1971: 140).

One of the most colorful figures of Turkish politics, the National Party Chairman Osman Bölükbaşı, was once asked: “What

Politics is?” The answer he gave is quite instructive: “The roads are mud, the oxen are deaf, the baby is small, but you shout and shout” (yollar çamur, öküzler sağır, bebek sagır, bağır Allah bağır). With this gnomic sentence, Bölükbaşı maybe wanted to emphasize that politics is the activities carried out aloud going through the mill of an environment that involves challenges in the roads to read in politics, stolidity of the political/bureaucratic mechanisms, people’s unawareness of the developments.

Undoubtedly, the above approaches given by these leaders may have a certain consistency and explanatory value. As mentioned in the statement that “Statesmen think of future generations; and politicians think of future elections,” the above approach may not see politics as something positive because they perceive politics as being related to election affairs rather than state affairs. As can be seen in the following lines, scientists draw attention to different dimensions of politics in their own unique definitions.

In the western tradition of thought, the Ancient Greek Thinker Aristotle (384-322 BC), is seen as the founder of political science. Aristotle sees politics as a “superior science,” the most comprehensive of human activities. He defines man as a “political animal”(zoon politon). This definition includes the assumption that the main feature that naturally distinguishes man from animals is his/her political activities.

Although Aristotle strikingly reveals the value attributed to politics, his approach does not include a general definition of politics.

American political thinker Harold Laswell defines politics as “a series of activities that determine who gets what and when.” This definition given by Laswell is meaningful in that it points out that politics is a distribution mechanism, but can we see every distribution activity as a political activity? For example, is this

considered to be a political activity when a lecturer, determines which student will get what grade according to his/her accumulated success during the semester? If the lecturer has made his/her evaluation according to students' success, and far away from political influences as one would expect, this activity cannot be defined as a political activity.

Canadian political scientist David Easton defines politics as “the distribution of material and spiritual values based on authority.” Easton’s definition makes sense for its inclusion of spiritual values. However, this definition does not give enough explanation in case of the absence of authority. Simply said it does not define politics in a situation where there is no authority.

For the prominent French social scientist Maurice Duverger, politics is “a struggle for conflict and power, as well as a struggle to create an order that can benefit all members of society.” Duverger (1964) sees politics as a “struggle to create order” by pointing to the very basic two dimensions of politics, the dimension of conflict and power, and raising an ethical meaning between them. In this case, the question of whether the struggle for the demolition of order is out of politics’ interest, then comes to mind.

Inspired by the German Statesman Otto Von Bismarck (1815-1898), politics is defined as “the art of the possible.” I frequently use this definition in terms of emphasizing consensus, not wanting the impossible, and searching among the possible alternatives. It is an elegant approach towards seeing politics as seeking possibilities and solutions among certain opportunities in an artistic way. However, I wish this sentiment had reflected reality. In this case, there would be no need for revolutions, wars, deadly rivalries, ambitions, and the victimization and tears of millions of people. The definition is also incomplete because it hides this harsh aspect of politics.