

DELIBERATING IN DIFFICULT TIMES:
LESSONS FROM PUBLIC FORUMS IN TURKEY

A PhD. Dissertation

by

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Ankara

September 2018

To my mother and father,

Ülkü and Remzi Gündüz



DELIBERATING IN DIFFICULT TIMES: LESSONS FROM PUBLIC FORUMS
IN TURKEY

The Graduate School of Economics and Social Sciences
of
İhsan Doğramacı Bilkent University

by

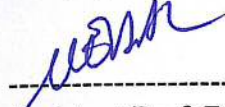
ÇİSEM GÜNDÜZ ARABACI

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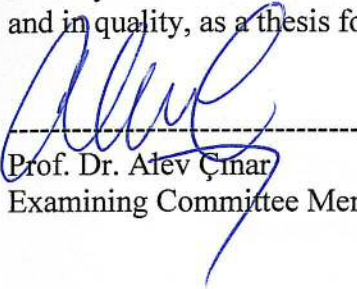
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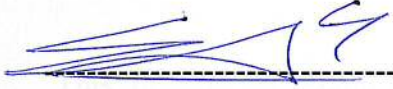
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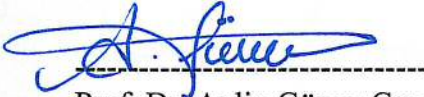
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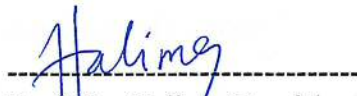
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ABSTRACT

DELIBERATING IN DIFFICULT TIMES: LESSONS FROM PUBLIC FORUMS IN TURKEY

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This dissertation examines how under semi-authoritarian political contexts and fragmented social structure public deliberation function, by in-depth analysis of three Public Park Forums in İzmir which were created during 2013 Gezi Protests. This study demonstrates that even though the effects of these public forums in decision-making process are limited; they can still foster deliberative culture in society. This culture paves the way for strong interaction between civil society organizations and a more civic public. This dissertation also finds that, there is a reciprocal relationship between contextual dynamics in which these public forums operate and forums internal deliberative features; thus both sides take position and re-position according to other side. This study argues that, deliberative prospects of such public forums under non-deliberative settings are relatively modest, nevertheless, they can be research areas for further studies in terms of analyzing their role in enhancing social capital, deliberative culture and civiness.

Keywords: Deliberative Democracy, Public Forums, Social Movement

ÖZET

ZOR ZAMANLARDA MÜZAKERE: TÜRKİYE’DEKİ HALK FORUMLARINDA DERSLER

Gündüz Arabacı, Çisem

Doktora, Siyaset Bilimi ve Kamu Yönetimi Bölümü

Tez Danışmanı: Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Meral Uğur Çınar

Eylül 2018

Bu tez, yarı-otoriter siyasi bağlam ve bölünmüş bir toplumsal yapı altında halk müzakeresi kavramının nasıl işlediğini, 2013 yılında Gezi Protestoları zamanında kurulan İzmir’deki üç halk forumun derinlemesine analiziyle incelemektedir. Bu çalışma göstermektedir ki; sözü geçen forumların karar alma süreçleri üzerindeki etkileri kısıtlı olmakla birlikte, hala toplumdaki müzakere kültürünün gelişmesini teşvik edebilmektedirler. Bu kültür, sivil toplum örgütlerinin kendi aralarındaki etkileşimi güçlendirmenin ve daha sivil bir toplum oluşmasının önünü açmaktadır. Ayrıca bu çalışma, forumların içinde faaliyet gösterdikleri bağlamsal dinamiklerle forumların içsel müzakereci özellikleri arasında karşılıklı bir ilişki olduğunu ve her iki tarafında diğer tarafın aldığı pozisyona göre pozisyonunu belirlediğini ortaya koymaktadır. Bu çalışma, bu tarz halk forumlarının müzakereye elverişli olmayan ortamlarda müzakere açısından görece mütevazî şansları olsa da, ileride yapılacak araştırmalara halk forumlarının toplumsal sermayeye, müzakere kültürüne ve sivilleşmeye yaptıkları katkılar açısından araştırma konusu teşkil edebilirler.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Müzakereci Demokrasi, Halk Forumları, Toplumsal Hareket

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The Gezi Park movement started as a reaction to government's urban planning about Taksim Square in İstanbul in May 2013. According to this plan, a replica of Topçu Barraks from the Ottoman Empire would be reconstructed by cutting down trees in Gezi Park. A few people who wanted to protect trees in the Park started to protest by standing keeping watch nevertheless they faced with severe police intervention. This intervention against silent protesters paved the way for increase in participation rate to protest around the whole country. Environmental concerns were voiced along with discontent about growing authoritarianism and interference in the lifestyles.

People were protesting during Gezi Park Movement against government's interventionist stance towards individual right and freedoms. Moudouros (2014) argues that, reaction of people against government is related to government's perception about state-society relations through which political power seems itself the only authority to give services and determine what is right and fair. Thus, there exists a one-dimensional relationship, which ignores demands of people (Moudouros, 2014).

Gezi Park has been analyzed from different angles. Nevertheless especially creating new public spaces and discussion opportunities between opposite segments of society make Gezi Park movement important. During Gezi Park Movement people experienced how they can create an effective big entity when they act together how this wave could spread along the whole country. Sözalan argues that due to the solidarity raised during Gezi Park movement between groups who were in conflict before, people learned that they should listen each other rather than only hear and they should react against injustice together (Sözalan, 2013). This experience influenced the mentality of citizenship of participants of movement. Nilüfer Göle (2013) defines Gezi Park movement as a new threshold for democracy by mentioning that Gezi Park movement paved the way for new forms of citizenship where old cleavages between authoritarian secularism and Islam are surpassed. Gezi Park movement was the scene for new civic actors and they found their own to action.

This dissertation will examine Gezi Park Movement Public Forums, which can be considered as one of the important outcomes of the movement as being initiatives of new public and political discussion areas.

During Gezi Movement, especially in big cities such as Ankara, İzmir, Bursa, Eskişehir, Antalya, Mersin, Adana, people were gathering in parks in order to cooperate and participate to forum meetings which were open to public and everyone could share his/her opinion within some forum rules (Inceoglu, 2013). In İzmir there were Buca Barış Mahallesi Kız Kulesi Public Forum, Konak Forum, Bornova Public Forum, Gündoğdu İskele Public Forum, Evka-1 Yedigöller Public Forum, Alsancak İskele Public Forum, Güzelyalı Park Public Forum, Karşıyaka Park Forum and Foça

Forum during Gezi Park Movement in the 2013 summer (<http://everywheretaksim.net/tr/>). This study focuses on three of them Güzelyalı Park Forum, Foça Forum and Karşıyaka Public Forum, because these three forum are still active since June 2013 and they evolved through relatively different ways in terms of functioning and activities. These forums mean in Turkish context new public spaces providing discussion and foster civic participation intention. They are unique cases because in Turkey there has not been such public forums, which experience deliberative discussions and decision-making processes. There is only one exception: LA21 (Local Agenda 21). This was a United Nations Development Program, which aimed to improve dialogue between civic initiatives and local governments in decision-making processes. There were 23 partners including Turkey but deliberative experiences within the scope of this program occurred in fixed boundaries in accordance to purposes of program and its time limits. Doğanay mentions that, these LA21 practices in Turkey was not inclusionary and this was damaging for deliberation nature (Doğanay, 2004).

Public Park Forums are original cases for citizens of Turkey in terms of creating discussion platforms together with people coming from diverse ethnic, class, social backgrounds and having different sexual orientations although Turkey's semi-democratic structure is not convenient for formation and survive of such entities. Ercan and Mendoça refer to this diversified group that included “a variety of left-wing organizations, environmentalist, LGBT groups, feminist groups and ‘anti-capitalist Muslim’, as well as many trade unions and professional organizations” (Ercan & Mendonça, 2015, p. 272).

On the other hand, Gezi protest arose as a reaction to increasingly authoritarian democratic atmosphere in Turkey, which is considered by people as in trouble especially in the last period of AKP government that governs the country since 2002. In recent times, regime in Turkey is being perceived as hegemonic (Çınar, 2016, p. 1218) and competitive authoritarian (Esen & Gümüşçü, 2016, p. 1582) Freedom of houses considers Turkey under the category of partly free in 2017 (Freedom of House, 2017) and not free in 2018 (Freedom of House, 2018). Democracy indexes define Turkey as a hybrid regime. Post-cold war era has witnessed hybrid political regimes, which can be defined as mixed regimes that include some democratic attributions together with authoritarian governance. Many different conceptualizations exist for mixed regimes such as “semidemocracy,” “virtual democracy,” “electoral democracy,” “pseudodemocracy,” “illiberal democracy,” “semi-authoritarianism,” “soft authoritarianism,” “electoral authoritarianism” (Way & Lewitsky, 2002). “Semi-authoritarian regimes are neither full-scale authoritarianism or fully democratic yet display characteristics of each. They are semi-dictatorships in that although generally free elections are held and democratic institutions are in operation, elections do not transfer substantive political power, and institutions operate weakly so as to provide regime incumbents with a more elaborate and believable democratic disguise” (Sondol, 2007).

When consider Turkey’s specific conditions this dissertation will refer regime in Turkey as semi-democratic. Thus public park forums become more worth to analyze from a deliberative perspective, which provide to examine how under these compelling settings public forums maintain their deliberative practices because not only central authority so to say AKP government display authoritarian tendencies but

local authorities also behave in the same line. The situation is not different in İzmir which is a city mostly being governed by CHP municipalities.

These forums can be evaluated within new democratic imaginaries and protests in non-European neighborhoods as democratic inspirations. Moreover, they necessitated to re-think about notion of public sphere while “democratic theories focus on responsiveness and accountability in decision-making process and theories of public sphere focus on facilitating or hindering this process” (Ferree, Gamson, Gerhards, & Rucht, 2002, p. 289).

A deliberative democratic perspective will be applied to Gezi Park Public Forums for the reason that this new approach can bring a new attitude to social movements in Turkish case by considering Gezi Movement as part of more global trend of horizontal, participatory social movements (Azzelini & Sitrin, 2014). Moreover, this dissertation will use a deliberative democratic perspective because in Turkish democratization literature, Gezi Movement requires a new perspective, which prioritize discussion, civic participation, and collective action that cannot be explained by representative democracy or other democratic traditions such as direct and radical democracy.

Scholars argue that “the general aspiration for deliberative democracy ‘deliberative democracy’ is for the mass public to influence policy making through public discussion” (Fishkin, He, Luskin, & Siu, 2010). They argue that, common assumption is that deliberative democracy is Deliberative Polls have been conducted locally and nationally in a variety of countries and policy contexts, ranging from the United States and Britain, to Canada, Australia, Denmark, Italy, Bulgaria, Hungary, Northern Ireland and transnationally in a Europe-wide project for the entire

European Union. China, however, poses a distinctly different political and policy context (Fishkin, He, Luskin, & Siu, 2010).

“Deliberative democracy is an attractive broadly encompassing theory of how communicative interaction benefits democracies” (Mutz, 2006, p. 5). Moreover, examining how deliberative civic initiatives survive in semi-democratic structure such as Turkey can provide literature contribution in terms of new aspects of civic initiatives, which are being shaped according to contextual dynamics.

This dissertation research questions are: How can public forums come to existence and survive under semi-democratic conditions? In which aspects contextual dynamics shape their functioning and cooperation with other civil society organizations and what are the prospects of deliberation under such conditions if any?

This dissertation conceptualizes deliberative democracy as open, inclusive, transparent discussion, which prioritizes reciprocity, reasonable arguments, respectful against different arguments and equality. Nevertheless, this study argues that all these virtues are idealized and as will be displayed in the following parts can be damaged and transformed in in real life practices. However, it is argued that, deliberative culture can still flourish under difficult settings and when people experience deliberation and collective actions taken after these deliberative processes, they have intention to go further steps.

Analyzing Gezi movement (and public forums) from a deliberative democratic perspective firstly requires examining contextual dynamics, which fostered the movement and lead up to formation of public park forums. Contextual dynamics

refers to democratic tradition from a broad perspective because society's political conjuncture and social capital reserves are being shaped under the effect of this tradition (Paxton, 2002). This tradition also directly related to position and power of civil society in society.

This dissertation will try to contribute to the deliberative democracy literature by examining that whether under such type of regimes; public forums can provide accumulation of deliberative capacity. Gezi movement is an interesting case for deliberative democracy research because it provides to analyze how under semi-authoritarian political conjunctures deliberation occur. Moreover, Gezi Movement's progression is related to this suppressive regime and its non-proportional use of power by police and public forums can be defined as a way of escape and reaction. So to say, contextual dynamics settled the ground for Gezi Movement and further process was shaped within such context. For this reason, analyzing public forums under such a semi-democratic and relatively restrictive regime will contribute to deliberative democracy literature. On the other hand, the interaction between social movement literature and deliberative democracy will be discussed by focusing on how public forums as being outcomes of a social movement can contribute to foster engagement within civil society organizations and deliberation culture between them.

This dissertation will apply a deliberative systemic approach, which handles deliberation as a whole system. This deliberative system consists of deliberative and non-deliberative parts. This dissertation refers to non-deliberative parts as contextual features of Turkish case, such as state role in Turkish democratization experience and place of civil society within this state centralized tradition. Public Park Forums can be defined as most deliberative structures during Gezi Movement still they have

had also non-deliberative features. Deliberative features refer to discussion culture, which prioritize respect to different arguments; equality; inclusiveness, and horizontal relationship on the other hand non-deliberative features refer to hierarchical relations, repressive attitudes of majority ideas and non-equal formation.

This study will look at the public forums in İzmir that came into existence with Gezi 5 years past the Gezi movement. In the literature, there are studies, which have already examined Park Forums but this research distinct from previous studies by providing a *longue durée* look rather than focus on their presence during Gezi Park protests. It is argued that, although public forums were born and feed from Gezi Park movement, this dissertation will focus on Public Forums, which are still active in İzmir. Besides their emergence from a social movement, they are worth to examine as new public spaces all by itself. This dissertation focuses on three public forums in İzmir, which have been operating in İzmir since Gezi: The Foça Forum, the Güzelyalı Forum, and the Karşıyaka Forum. These three forums were chosen for the reason that unlike other forums such as the Kadıköy Yoğurtçu Park Public Forum and the Abbasağa Park Forum (both in Istanbul), these forums survived up until now. In terms of tracing forums' internal dynamics such as formation and transformation process and their relationship during this 5 years process with their environment, İzmir forums provide invaluable data. Public Forums in İzmir were chosen for several reasons. Firstly in İzmir voters have mostly secular visions and they generally support CHP and strongly opposition to AKP. Besides this political stance, İzmir is among the most immigrant-receiving cities which provide local people to encounter with people coming from different backgrounds.

The Park Forums in İzmir worth to examine for several reasons. One is because although they are deliberative mini-publics, which aim to have a voice in especially on local decision-making processes, they are not created conditionally with this purpose by local governments as other types of deliberative mini-publics in the literature (Escobar & Elstub, 2017). Public Forums' way of functioning and rising point is largely different. This study demonstrates that they are completely civil initiatives and they try to be autonomous in their practices by staying away from local government. It will also demonstrate that they have at some points cooperation with local authorities, nevertheless they consider they should maintain a balance in order to be able to behave autonomously. The literature mentions that, there are problems about the representability of mini-publics (Gronlund, Bachtiger, & Setälä, 2014). Public Forums in İzmir diverge with their look at representability issue as well. They do not have an emphasis on their power of representability; rather they mention they can play a leading role during rising times due to their experiences. Moreover, time issue is another important distinctive feature for Public Forums in İzmir. As real world deliberative experiences, continuation for 5 years is not a period that can be underestimated. The other feature is concerning their deliberation form, which will be conceptualized as informal. This type of deliberation separates the deliberation procedures of public forums from other mini-public.

This dissertation shows that, non-deliberative parts of a deliberative system can also contribute to deliberative culture in a society thus even under semi-democratic regimes deliberative platforms can find a place for themselves to function and effect other civil society organizations. This study contributes to deliberative literature, which did not sufficiently examine the interaction between non-deliberative parts and deliberative parts of a deliberative system by focusing on how this mutual

relationship shape their stances according to other side's position. This contribution is that, there is not a one-sided relationship, which only complicates practices of deliberative units, but non-deliberative institutions or organizations are also being forced to adopt in some ways to these deliberative experiences. Another contribution of this dissertation is concerning features of deliberative mini-publics. Public forums can also be defined as mini-public nevertheless, they have different attributions for instance they were born randomly as a civil initiative without any intervention or purpose and they adopt an informal form of deliberation within forum. Moreover they do not have a specific purpose as mini-publics have, rather they behave according to their forum agenda which is being defined by forum members together. To study public forums in İzmir demonstrated that, consensus issue does not work as deliberative democracy literature mentions about its place on deliberation process. Public forums use consensus as a tool for put their decisions in action not as an ultimate goal. However, it does not mean that, they do not look for consensus because they prioritize conflict and discussion. Mouffe (1999) argues for instance that, conflict is important for deliberation and for this reason consensus should be perceived as inevitable elements of deliberation. This situation is different in public forums and this shows us that, neither conflict nor consensus are inevitable for deliberation. Moreover, while compelling settings prevent people from reaching public policy making process, they have still intention to stay in play after experiencing deliberation and cooperation and realize that they can make their voice heard by this way by authorities. The last contribution is about relationship between social movement researches and deliberative public forums. Finding of this study show that, deliberative forums can foster social movements on the contrary to literature, which claims they are incompatible (Mansbridge, et al., 2012).

The dissertation is composed of eight chapters. First chapter is titled “Intersection between Gezi Park Movement and Deliberative Democracy: Park Forums” will provide a literature review concerning deliberative democracy and Gezi Park Movement and Public Park Forums. This chapter aims to justify the reasons of selection deliberative democracy rather than other democratic theories without overestimating its capacity. Under this chapter, there will be three sub-sections; first section will be a literature review concerning deliberative democracy. Second section will be discuss consensus issue in deliberative democratic literature and the third section will be focus on deliberative systemic approach in relation to Social Movement researches in order to display the compatibility between deliberative systemic approach and social movement researches. Second chapter section will mention the emergence of public park forums from Gezi Park Movement and the third chapter will try to provide background information about the process, which ended up with Gezi Park movement and reasons behind formation of public park forums as discussion platforms. In addition, in order to demonstrate conceptual framework before Gezi Park Movement, democratization process and place of civil society in Turkey will be mentioned in this chapter as well. This background information is needed, for the reason that, in order to handle Gezi Park Forums within a broad system, Turkey’s democratic tradition, which shape social and political conjuncture, should be put under the scope. This dissertation main argument mentions that, even contextual constraints exist and deliberative attributions can be damaged under non-ideal conditions, when people experience to discussion culture and behave collectively, they will want to stay in play. Because, they will learn that, authorities can hear their voice by this way. Moreover, there is not a one-sided relationship, it means that while public forums’ formation and functioning

procedures are reflecting and being influenced by existing social and political conjuncture, their environment also re-positions according to forums' actions. Moreover, social learning is one of the most important prospects of deliberation. As Bora Kanra (2012) mentions, besides general tendency to handle deliberation only as a decision making procedure, social learning is also important phase of deliberation process. He argues that this phase is crucial especially in divided societies for the reason that, people can focus on understand each other rather than focus merely on agreement. People can learn to take into consideration others' perspectives without pressure to take decisions. Even contextual dynamics and unique internal features of public forums do not easily pave the way for preference transformation and changes in opinions and ideologies, public forums can still contribute to social learning process in their local circle.

Fourth chapter, which titled Formation and Functioning of Forums. This chapter aims to display how these forums were born, with which purposes how they define themselves and their motivations. The fifth chapter will focus forums' composition and put the inclusiveness and diversity issues within forums on table. These chapters try to examine how aspects of deliberative democracy occur in public forums.

Chapter six which is titled "Forums' decision making procedures and action oriented consensus" will focus on decision-making procedures of forums in order to demonstrate do they find some middle ways in terms of reaching consensus and do they abstain from some issues in order to prevent in-forum conflict. Chapter seven "Forums' Relationship with Local Authorities" is the last research chapter and this chapter will try to examine forums' relationship with local authorities and other civil organizations. The last research chapter which is titles "Forums' trigger further civic

and Political action will mention prospects of deliberation in public forums in terms of fostering civic engagement and strengthen civil society in itself.

In the following sub-section “methodology and case selection” I will put on table how the research questions will be operationalized, which research methods were selected and conducted and how I made case selection for this dissertation.

1.1. Methodology and Case Selection

Gezi Park Public Forums have been created during Gezi Park Movement first in public parks in İstanbul. Abbasağa Park, Gezi Park, Yoğurtçu Park, Kuğulu Park, Güven Park, Anıtpark, İsmail Hakkı Tonguç , Hacı Bektaş Veli, were gathering places of protesters to talk and discuss about both ongoing process in Gezi Movement and other societal concerns as well. These park forums were gathering nearly every night during peak times of movement in June and August 2013. They were using social media to announce times of meetings and in order to transmit their messages and coordinate with other park forums in different cities. This dissertation picked three public park forum in İzmir because İzmir Forums are still active when the other forums in other cities do not regularly meet as İzmir Forums do. People are still using public parks and organizing forum meetings in Gezi Park Movement anniversaries in other cities but İzmir forums meet regularly nearly every week.

These forums were reached via their facebook accounts and sent messages that explain aim and scope of this research. I mentioned my desire to participate to their events and they invited researcher to their most recent forum meeting. Two focus

group studies were realized with Karşıyaka and Foça Public Forum and one was with Güzelyalı, during different times in a year. I participated in their events and with participants of that meeting – the ones who accepted to participate to focus groups study- realized these studies. When forums organize an important event, they announce in their facebook group account ahead. Thereby researcher could follow their events. Some important periods were determined such as referendum or Gezi Movement anniversary or the time periods in which these forums organize events or protests. During and/or after their events or forum discussion sessions researcher asked forum members whether they want to take part in interviews within the scope of this research. Some of the permanent forum members and non-permanent participants did not accept to talk with me, and some of them accepted with the condition of see the results of this research. Moreover, some interviewees asked about whether I will make interviews with other forums' members or not. For instance, Güzelyalı Park Forum members asked me when I will go to other forums did they accept me to their events or did they accept to make interviews. I conducted my interviews in three different times. The forums members, which I made interview, can also participated to focus groups studies and this gave me opportunity to make comparison between their responses during face-to-face interviews and focus groups studies. Because members can give different responses when they entered interaction with other forum members.

This dissertation, in accordance with its research questions, which were mentioned in the first part of introduction, applies multiple research methods in order to get feasible explanations to these questions. I operationalized in-depth interview, participant observation and focus group studies during data collection period. This section will explain how these different methods were used inter-related to each

other and why researcher has chosen these methods rather than the other ones while mentioning the constraints of all three methods as well.

Data Collection

In-depth interview

Interviewing can take different forms structured interviews with set questions, semi-structured or unstructured interviews. All these forms have different and also overlapping aspects (Morris, 2015, p. 9). Kathleen M. Blee and Verta Taylor defines an interview as a guided conversation and they refer to importance of interviews for social movement researches by mentioning “Interviews have always been central to social movement research as a means of generating data about the motives of people who participate in protest and the activities of social movement networks and organizations” (Blee & Taylor, 2002). They define structured and semi-structured interviews and explain difference between them and they argue that structured interviews are generally being used in survey research and opinion polling on the other hand semi-structured interviews provide useful tools to investigate, interpret and discovery of complex social events (Blee & Taylor, 2002, p. 92).

Della Porta explicitly puts in the table that: “In social movement studies, the relative scarcity of systematic collections of documents or reliable databases gives in-depth interviews even more importance” (Della Porta, 2014, p. 228). As Alan Morris (2015) mentions, in-depth interviews are also semi-structured in which interviewer has topics that he/she wants to cover related to research questions but at the same

time interviewee has flexibility to a certain extent and interviewer has opportunity to intervene and ask from interviewee to make clear his/her answers. The in-depth interviews are convenient for collecting data concerning processes and also personal interest, beliefs, opinions and interpretations of social movement activists. For this reason, in social movement researches in-depth interviews are useful instruments to examine the way in which participants give sense to their actions and micro-dynamics of commitment. “The qualitative interview is thus particularly useful when we wish to analyze the meaning individuals attribute to the external world and to their own participation in it, the construction of identity, and the development of emotions” (Della Porta, 2014, p. 230). In the light of these reasons, in this research, participants' beliefs, interests and perceptions concerning functioning forums and meanings they attribute to their participation to Gezi Park Public Forums are convenient to analyze by in-depth interviews.

Main weakness of in-depth interviews -besides its strengths- is not to be able to reveal the interaction between participants and for this reason; focus group research will be used as a complementary method. While preparing questions, at the first step researcher should define themes, which reflect focus points of research and at the further step, which provide to construct interview questions (Della Porta, 2004). In accordance with my research, questions, which aim to evaluate the deliberative features -if there is- of Gezi Movement Public Park Forums as real world cases and their functioning manner under semi-authoritarian settings, specific themes, were defined and interview questions were constructed upon these themes, which are also the characteristics of deliberative democracy:

a) Preference (trans) formation; b) Orientation to the public good; c) Rational argument; d) Consensus: approved by all participants; e) Equality; f) Inclusiveness; g) Transparency (Donatella, 2005, p. 74)

These aspects were mentioned in detail in the introduction part. This section will demonstrate how these aspects will be operationalized within the scope of this dissertation. Questions, which were prepared for in-depth interviews were used during focus group during studies as guideline. In addition, these questions (Appendix A) were formulated in accordance with these seven aspects. The aspect of “orientation to the public good” can be measured by examining forums’ discussion issues and content of their events and protests. Whether they launch rationality in their arguments can be examined by their way of justifying their opinions during forum discussions and also their responses to the question about the role of rationality on their decisions is important data in terms of operationalize this aspect. Equality and inclusiveness are observable by forums’ formation and participants’ profile. Diversity of participants’ profile is an observable criterion for forums inclusiveness and changes about in-group diversity in time is another measurement in terms of sustainability of inclusiveness of forums. Equality issue between members -especially equality in terms of right to speak- is observable besides their statements by their attitudes during forum discussion sessions. Consensus is also observable during forums’ discussions and their statements concerning consensus issue. Transparency can be measured by their announcements of their forums’ meeting reports and before that; they mention the dates and place of meetings from their facebook group accounts. Nevertheless, their Facebook group accounts are requiring membership, they are not open groups.

Selecting people to interview is a crucial part of in-depth interviews. Participating events of Public Forums in İzmir facilitated to decide the way in which researcher should define research sample. One of each Public Forum in İzmir has a core list whose number changes 10 to 15 people for each meeting. At the first step, I decided to make interviews with them in order to gain data from more dedicated participants of forums. At the second step, I made interviews the ones who participate forums not regularly as the core list and who wants to respond my questions thus at this step interviewers are randomly selected. Making interviews with both of these groups can give me opportunity to make comparison between two. I made 56 interviews in total with three forums. Some of the participants of interviews and focus group studies asked researcher to not to use their names and for this reason in terms of coherence researcher did not mention name of any participant. Interviewees were realized with 35 men and 21 women and age range of %80 of interviewees is between 40-65. All interviews were conducted in their meeting places that specific cafés. The names and address of their meeting places are being mentioned in forums' Facebook groups.¹

Giving enough space to respondents is crucial to make them feel comfortable and willing for continue to interview. Nevertheless, in order to prevent diversion from focus of questions, interviewer should maintain the control of conversation. During my research, with asking permission of respondents, the interviews were recorded.

¹ Marpuç Caf  in Karşıyaka, Lal Caf  in G zelyalı, Sahil  ay Bah esi

Focus Groups Research

Andrew Parker and Jonathan Tritter (2006) mentions that “in recent years focus group studies have become an established and accepted part of the range of methodological tools available to academic researchers” (p. 23). They mention that, focus group research have become more popular among social scientists for the reason that, they perceive focus group studies more cost effective than traditional methods, and easy to adapt to a range of research approaches and designs (Parker & Tritter, 2006). Moreover “Focus groups are less threatening to many research participants, and this environment is helpful for participants to discuss perceptions, ideas, opinions, and thoughts” (Dickinson, Leech, Onwuegbuzie, & Zoran, 2009, p. 1).

“Focus groups are discussions within a small group, moderated by a researcher, and oriented to obtain information on a specific topic” (Blee & Taylor, 2002, p. 107). “A moderator facilitates discussion by presenting the main focus of the research, and then stimulating the debate, trying to involve all participants and discuss central topics” (Della Porta, 2014, p. 289). Differently from in-depth interviews, in focus groups, participants discuss between each other in accordance with themes, which are defined by researcher, and thus responses are in fact formulated collectively. “The data that focus group discussions produce are distinct in a number of ways from data collected by other qualitative methods . . . the aim of the focus group is to initiate discussion between group members, and it is this interaction that make the data distinct” (Bloor, Frankland, Michelle, & Robson, 2001, p. 58). “In contrast to individual interviews, they allow the researchers to observe the group interactions that underlie the construction of collective identity, collective action frames, and the

emotional dynamics involved in the creation of oppositional values” (Blee & Taylor, 2002, p. 109). Focus group research facilitates to analyze how public forum in İzmir internally define their practices and how they perceive external dynamics, how macro system and contextual framework influence their existence and survival. Moreover, focus group studies provide to examine whether they really have in-group equality and whether they could construct respectful attitudes towards each other’s opinions. In my focus group studies, the questions were same with questions, which were asked in in-depth interviews. However, order of the questions could change according to interactive conversation during the study. The opening question of focus group research is 'How do you define Park Forums?' because this question can pave the way for discussions about collective norms and meanings attributed to Forum itself by group members.

Focus group researches take maximum 90 minutes in order to avoid of decrease of attention against research and maintain fruitfulness of discussions and prevent to diversions of focus of research themes. As Francesca Polletta (2002) notes, “group interviews with two to six people increase the accuracy of information, allowing participants to build upon each other’s memories. It is, however, recommended to keep the number at the absolute minimum consistent with covering the range of the study population” (p. 237). In my focus group researches, participant number changed between 8 to 11 and at the beginning of discussion I asked for permission to record the conversations and explained the scope and aim of doing this focus group study. Moreover I mentioned that they can read the analysis if they want at the end of the research and they do not have to mention their names and even they mention I will not mention them. Focus groups were also conducted in their forum meeting places. Focus groups studies were realized with participants of that day forum

meeting. Nearly all forum members of that day forum discussion accepted to participate focus group study only one of them in Foça Forum did not want to participate and he only listened. Focus group studies were conducted with each forum for two times and in Karşıyaka Forum 10 and 11 people participated; in Foça Forum 11 and 8 people participated and in Güzelyalı Forum 9 and 11 people participated. Focus groups studies were realized after forum discussion sessions. For instance, one of the focus groups studies which was conducted in Güzelyalı Public Forum after an event for children (Children Theater). Some members of Güzelyalı Public Forum participate generally to Forums' events and they participate occasionally to Forum discussion sessions. I asked these non-permanent participants to join focus group study in order to get chance to make comparison between permanent and non-permanent members but they did not accept to participate.

Participant Observation

Haug& Simon (2008) define participant observation by referring to Richard Fenno's metaphor 'soaking and poking' as the immediate inclusion of the researcher in the field which gives opportunity to researcher to observe implicit aspects of the object (p. 6).

I participated to forums' events and discussions in order to understand the contradictions, the stakes and the social expectations that forum participants being studied experience. By using three methods in this research – besides the challenges especially concerning the analyzing section- I will try to fill the gaps of each method with the help of the other. While in-depth interviews are crucial to understand the personal perspectives of participants, the focus group provide information about the

interaction between the participants and participant observation help to fill the gaps with the help of self-experience.

Analyzing Forums' written materials.

I focused on Forums' facebook group accounts and their report, which they posted in their facebook group account. Each Forums' Facebook account were analyzed from the beginning. They share some documents in Facebook such as their manifestos, some forum meetings reports. These documents are open to group members and these written materials provide to observe a long period while field researches –in-depth interviews, focus groups studies and participant observation- can only contain a 1 and half year period.

Data Analysis

After collecting data by these research methods, this dissertation will apply an interpretative approach to analyze these data. Ercan, Hendriks and Boswell (2017) argue that, a researcher who aims to develop a systemic deliberative approach to empirical studies can apply to interpretive approach which provides to handle with difficulties coming from analyzing together distinctive components of the system. Moreover, this approach gives opportunity to research to examine core features of deliberative system such as sites, agents and discursive elements (Ercan, Hendriks, & Boswell, 2017).

This dissertation also tries to capture the overlapping sites of deliberative system and the practices, beliefs and perceptions of individuals within public forums by making in-depth interviews, participant observations and focus group studies. They argue “It is interpretive scholars who are best-placed to access and examine the practices of these groups and their interplay with formal decision-making circles” (Ercan, Hendriks, & Boswell, 2017, p. 200). In-depth interviews, focus group studies, participant observation and reading written material in their social media accounts help researcher to examine the seven aspects of deliberative democracy how they occur or do they occur in public forums, in which manner do they operate under semi-democratic conditions. At some points these seven aspects can be deduced from interviews and focus group studies however, sometimes these aspects can arise implicitly and need interpretation. This interpretative analysis will be handle by defining some key terms such as in-group diversity, equal right to speak, perception of consensus, decision-making procedures, interaction with other groups and discussion manners.

CHAPTER 2

INTERSECTION BETWEEN GEZI PARK MOVEMENT AND DELIBERATIVE DEMOCRACY

This chapter will provide a literature review on deliberative democracy, its systemic approach, Gezi Park Movement and Public Forums under three sections. First section will discuss the distinctive features and deficits of deliberative democracy in order to display the convenience of deliberative democratic theory in examining public forums in İzmir. There are different definitions of deliberative democracy in the literature and in this chapter researcher will put on table how deliberative democracy will be conceptualized within the scope dissertation. This is necessary to show why deliberative democracy and not the other theories were chosen to analyze public park forums in İzmir. Core elements of deliberative democracy will be mentioned in order to examine how in real world cases these elements occur. On the other hand, challenges of deliberative theory especially when it is being applied under semi-democratic conditions can be analyzed by framing theoretical boundaries of deliberative democracy. The second section will demonstrate the emergence of Gezi Movement and Park forums and convenience of systemic approach in analyzing public forums. In the third chapter, in accordance with systemic approach, contextual

dynamics in which forums operate and get interaction with will be presented. All these background information will prepare the base for research chapters about public forums in İzmir.

2.1. Deliberative Democracy: With its Distinctive Features and Deficits

Deliberative democracy can be defined in procedural and epistemic terms as well.

“In procedural terms as decision-making through reasoned, other-regarding, uncoerced, equal and inclusive debate” (Chappell, 2008, p.67). And on the other hand, in epistemic terms, besides its normative virtues, deliberative democracy can reach right answers. Chamber argues that, deliberative democracy thinkers refer to epistemic function of deliberation nevertheless, they do not neglect procedural aspects when reaching right answers (Chambers, Can procedural democracy be radical? , 2002). When deliberative democracy theories apply to empirical cases, it becomes more obvious that there is not a clear-cut distinction between procedural and epistemic values of deliberative practices but they are both necessary to define deliberative democratic theory. This dissertation does not conceptualize deliberative democracy merely in procedural or epistemic terms because it handles procedural and epistemic features seem together, the point is, in what manner they appear under semi-democratic conditions. It is argued that, procedural and epistemic features of deliberative democracy are being damaged or transformed under semi-democratic conditions but they are still important in terms of analyzing systematically public forums.

The deliberation has been seen one of the most important proponents of democratic ideals with the perception that people should participate in the collective decision-making processes via some other mechanisms rather than voting in order to talk about democratic legitimacy (Dryzek & Braithwaith, 2000, p. 244). Thus, it can be argued that deliberative transformation within democratic theory is being shaped around discussions concerning legitimacy of decisions, which are taken during and after democratic processes. John Parkinson refers to legitimacy when defining deliberative democracy and argues, “The classic accounts of deliberative democracy are also accounts of legitimacy” (Parkinson, 2003, p. 180). And Dryzek (2001) argues that theory came to Joshua Cohen's classic formulation about legitimacy which mentions: “outcomes are legitimate to the extent they receive reflective assent through participation in authentic deliberation by all those subject to the decision in question” (p. 651).

Deliberative democracy makes emphasis on participation of individuals to decision-making processes via deliberative discussion, which can foster legitimacy of decision in the eyes of public, but scale problem in real world cases - which prevent mass participation- is an obstacle against power of improving legitimacy. As being small scale real world experiences, public forums in İzmir can maintain in-group legitimacy because they all can participate discussions and have a voice in decisions. Nevertheless, even in these forums, deliberative discussion cannot be reached easily in terms of equal participation. They have relatively similar point of views however low level of discussion culture in society reflects on forums discussions as well.

Godin and Niemeyer argue this deliberative turn refers to transformation of democratic ideals by moving away from strict “aggregative” or “vote-centric”

models towards deliberative and discursive ones, which make emphasis especially on reason, publicity, reciprocity, transparency, argumentativeness and responsiveness (Goodin & Niemeyer, 2008). Besides different definitions about deliberative democracy, there are certain common criteria, which are being mentioned in the literature to frame core elements of deliberation. Trénel (2004) traces the empirical literature and picks five core features of deliberative democracy: “equality, rationality, respect, constructiveness, and interactivity” (pp. 3-4). Della Porta (2005) as mentioned in the introduction section, refers to seven aspect of deliberative democracy while defining its core elements: preference (trans)formation, orientation to the public good, rational argument, consensus, equality, inclusiveness, and transparency (p. 75). Deliberative democratic theory mentions that, when people have mutual respect in deliberative discussions, they can learn different perspectives and can change their point of views in the course of time and it is one of the main features of deliberative democracy (Zelevnik, 2016, p. 42). During this discussion, each participants should have equal say in discussion and new comers should be welcomed without entrance barriers. During Gezi Movement, these seven aspects can be observed relatively. For instance protests and public park forums were open everyone and everyone has equal right of speak. There was not a hierarchical relationship and even delegation. People were discussing about public issues rather than political or personal interests. They aim to reach consensus in order to put their decisions in action, but they do not have an obsession in terms of reaching consensus. They mention rationality when they explain how they take decisions, but in their terms, rationality is synonymous with feasibility of decisions. In public forums in İzmir inclusiveness is being mentioned by forum members, Forum members claim that forum’s door is open to everyone who correspond minimum

criteria of forum, however it is argued that, existing broad system shapes forums' profiles as well and society's fragmented structure reflects on forums' participant profiles. In this research, these seven aspects are being used for the reason that deliberative democracy is open discussion oriented and these aspects are being accepted as crucial elements of discussion processes.

This dissertation conceptualizes deliberative democracy as open, inclusive, transparent discussion, which prioritizes reciprocity, reasonable arguments, respectful against different arguments and equality. Nevertheless all these virtues are idealized and as will be displayed in the following parts, these can be damaged and transformed in practice.

For instance, Button and Mattson (1999) mention, "Deliberation is a complicated process marked by conflict, differing orientations, and political inequalities" and they conclude "deliberation can play an important role even in a representative democracy, though caution against regarding it as a cure-all for the ills of contemporary politics" (p. 609). This argument is important in terms of considering potential place and role of conflict and difficulties in catching an ideal deliberation, which should function within the boundaries of representative democracy.

Nevertheless, there is still opportunity for deliberation to find itself a convenient area to flourish as Public Forums in İzmir. At least they try to manage although in-group conflicts, which prevent to some extent deliberation. However, as will be explained in detail in following sections, they can work against and with representative democratic institutions at the same time because even experiencing deliberation and being a part of it create ambition for people to stay in play.

Simone Chambers (2003) defines deliberative democracy “as normative theory that suggests ways in which we can enhance democracy and criticize institutions that do not live up to the normative standards” (p. 309). He argues, “Deliberative democratic ideals claim to be the most appropriate version of democracy in dealing with the pluralism than aggregating or realist models of democracy” (Chambers, 2003, p. 308). It should be mentioned that, deliberative democracy is not being perceived as an alternative of representative democracy it is rather an expansion of representative democracy. Chambers (2003) defines the deliberative democracy “as a debate and discussion aimed at producing reasonable, well-informed opinions in which participants are willing to revise preferences in light of discussion, new information made by fellow participants” (p. 309). This argument is optimistic and ignoring how hard to reach a discussion, which can change preferences of discussants nevertheless, even confronting with different arguments is an important step towards deliberation culture. In addition, may be the most important point is that, when people realize that they can make their voice heard by deliberative collective decisions, they have more inclination to be part of deliberative processes. One of the participants of Güzelyalı Public Park Forum mentioned during focus group study that, they should stay together -even they do not share whole Forum decisions- if they want to be a part of solution.

New deliberative platforms such as civic forums (deliberative poll, citizens juries etc.) which are the newcomers of political arena, are also seeking for legitimacy in order to consolidate their place in face of established conventional democratic institutions. Thus, they try to follow the path of a democratic deliberation. For this reason, public forums in İzmir are also have concern about legitimacy from deliberative and political aspects. They should gain legitimacy in the eyes of public

in order to have a place within a large democratic system. These forums try to improve their legitimacy “by carefully incorporating enclave deliberation of the least powerful citizens, equalizing their participation and influence with more privileged citizens” (Karpowitz & Rapheal, 2014). Authors mention that, although they are not as established as conventional democratic institutions, there are still ways for civic forums to transfer their arguments to the political system (Karpowitz & Rapheal, 2014, p. 337). Moreover “These advances should help forums to embed themselves more firmly within political routines; to build ongoing and trusted relationships with officials, the news media, advocates, and the public; and thereby to help establish a more deliberative democracy” (Karpowitz & Rapheal, 2014, p. 337). Gezi Public Forums are also care about legitimacy for their decisions in order to get respect and confidence from local public and authorities. One of the respondent from Foça Forum mentioned during focus group study “If we want to be heard by local authorities we should gain respect from public and this requires taking decisions in a legitimate way”. This means that, not only local authorities need legitimacy in the eyes of citizens, these public forums need also legitimacy in the eyes of people and local authorities. For this purpose, they try to consolidate deliberative discussion culture by maintaining equality, inclusiveness and transparency within group. This point will be given in detail in the section internal dynamics of Public Forums in İzmir.

Displaying the differences between other democratic theories and deliberative democracy is one of the ways of defining core elements and distinctive features of this theory. David Miller points out differences between liberal democracy and deliberative democracy by arguing some particularities of liberal democracy make it more fragile against democratic ideals such as arbitrariness of decision rules,

vulnerability to strategic voting than the deliberative democracy (Miller, 1992, p. 54). The problem in the liberal democracy is to find the most convenient institutional structure, which can meet requirements of efficiency and equality (Miller, 1992, p. 55). At this point, aim is not to explain in detail liberal democracy's challenges but it is aimed to display basic distinctions between deliberative democracy and liberal democracy even deliberative democracy is flourished within liberal democracy. Miller argues that liberal democracy and deliberative democracy are strictly separated from each other in terms of 'human nature in politics'. According to him, the liberal democracy is mainly stressing the different preferences of individuals and deliberative democracy in the contrary emphasizes on the capacity of people to consider common good fairly. He points out that, in deliberative democracy, premise is "democratic institutions are in charge to solve conflicts between different political preferences thus favoring deliberative democracy does not require abolishing all liberal democratic institutions but existing institutions will be used on the way of processing deliberative discussions" (Miller, 1992). Liberal theorists faced with the problem of diversity of opinions and commitment of citizenry, which refer to issue of pluralism, and deliberative ideals come to scene at this point (Bohman & Richardson, 2009, p. 253). Public Park Forums in İzmir refer the notion of common good and common dream as well and they all agree that they need democratic institutions and get interaction and collaborate with them in order to be part of decision-making processes. The issue becomes more complicated when it comes to define common good. Because common good is a broad concept and actually these public forums' activities do not aim to reach common good in reality. Generally, they aim to solve local problems and even they work for countrywide problems these problems are not serve to common good. However, as collective civic initiatives, Gezi Park Public

Forums can be evaluated with deliberative democratic theory, which refers to the issue of reach consensus, take decisions by discussion and get in action collectively.

Besides utilization interchangeably, deliberative democracy and direct democracy concepts are distinct from each other moreover deliberative democracy has a critical stance towards direct democracy practices. Deliberative democrats argue that, in referendum for instance the principle is to aggregate the preferences of individual rather than deliberative processes and these practices do not support public deliberation in wider public sphere and even in parliamentary democracy. And the scale problem makes them distinct from each other as well (Schiller, 2007).

Deliberative democracy has common points with participatory democracy (Vitale, 2006) and in somewhere, they are being used interchangeably but there is one important distinctive feature between them, which is communication. This point, which is being, emphasized, political decision-making should be talk-centric rather than voter-centric (Bohman, 1998). These Public Forums in İzmir are sign of tendency of people towards talk-centric decision-making procedures and their discontent about vote-centric perception.

In the literature, there is a distinction between informal and formal deliberation accounts. This distinction can be taken different conceptualizations. Johhan Kim and Eun Joo Kim (2008) defines two categories of deliberation one is instrumental deliberation which is a procedural tool and other is dialogic deliberation which can be defined as informal everyday political talk. This informal political talk provide people to develop a mutual understanding, construct their identities, improve public reason, create considered public opinion, rules and sources for deliberative democracy (p. 51). Deliberative practices in Gezi Park Forums in İzmir can be

evaluated under informal deliberation. Informal deliberation's rules are less strict than formal deliberation thus its barriers are elastic against entrance and exit, participants can easily enter to discussions and leave. This type of deliberation does not bound with defined places or times and it can dure longer periods of time. “Instead, it is fragmented among multiple groups and participants, multiple settings such as informal discussion, formal legislative debate or the media, and over various points in time” (Chappell, 2008, p.22). This type of deliberation is being criticized because of complexity of making distinction between deliberative dialogues and non-deliberative ones. Moreover, Gutmann and Thompson (1999) do not defend the idea that private conversation should be counted within deliberative democratic theory because these conversations do not need to meet requirements of reciprocity, transparency and accountability. Thus, informal deliberation is much harder to evaluate against the normative values of reason, inclusion and equality. That is to say, general attitude in the literature perceives informal public forums outside from the scope of deliberative democracy but this dissertation tries to display in which ways it is possible to take into consideration these public forums' informal deliberation practices by a deliberative democratic perspective, and in which aspects deliberative democracy falls short in explaining.

Deliberative democracy is distinct from other democratic theories with its approach to preference issue. Deliberative democracy argues that, deliberation can be defined as a preference formation process and/or during deliberation, preferences can also be transformed. Masakazu Matsumoto (2010) describes deliberative democracy as a preference transformation process (p. 91). Claudia Landwehr (2005) argues, “Central contrast consists in the differing notions of preference the theories apply - rational choice theory regarding them as stable and exogenous to the decision

process, deliberative democracy as transformable and endogenous” (p. 41).

However, as this study will try to demonstrate in the light of empirical data, preference formations and/or transformation cannot come to exist easily. The analysis of the interviews and focus group discussions reveal that such public forums cannot manage preference transformation because they do not face with different perspectives, which pave the way for change their point of views. This study contributes to literature by showing that preference formation is not a crucial element of deliberative democracy because people, who are like-minded can also deliberate – may be without hard discussions- but on the other hand, deliberation is a social learning process and this is also crucial in terms of prospects of deliberation.

Fishkin perceives deliberation and participation as two core democratic attributions, which are completely incompatible. He mentions “Achieving political equality and participation leads to a thin, plebiscitary democracy in which deliberation is undermined. Achieving political equality and deliberation leaves out mass participation. Achieving deliberation and participation can be achieved for those unequally motivated and interested, but violates political equality” (Fishkin J. S., 2009, p. 191).

When participation and quality of deliberation come across and if we should choose one of them in the expense of the other one, quality of deliberation overbalance on mass participation for the reason that mass participation can be perceived as an optional value of deliberative democracy. Especially local issues concerning city’s budget or education, are not issues related to macro-deliberative processes, they can be solved within small deliberative groups rather than broader public sphere (Lafont C. , 2015, p. 41). The situation is similar to park forums in İzmir. There is not a mass

participation in each Forum meeting. They mention that they reach 200-300 participants in some demonstrations especially concerning national wide concerns but apart from these rarely occurred times, they are 10-15 people who try to find way of solutions to their local problems. There is not a mass participation but there is political equality and quality of deliberation at least participants of forums claim in this way in interviews and focus group studies. This challenging point causes critics about scope and potential capacity of deliberative democracy but this dissertation argues that, when idealized normative theories come to apply to real world cases, it is inevitable to become deformed. However, the important point is not to lose essence of deliberative democracy even in small units: discussion culture, respect to others' opinions, equal right of speak, non-hierarchical relationship, transparency and diversity.

The most important proponent of this deliberative discussion process (if not in practice) is dialogue between the government and citizens (McCoy & Scully, 2002, p. 127). This dialogue ends with transformation of needs of citizens into rights by political classes. Undoubtedly, such efforts do not find correspond always by political classes moreover this transformation is not an easy process. In liberal democracies, voting is the tool of this dialogue nevertheless; social movements' activities should be evaluated within the framework of "responsiveness".

Deliberative democracy is trying to respond need of "responsiveness" by criticizing delegated democracy. "Focuses on opportunities for conflict and therefore direct political participation, and socially shared spaces of public deliberation" (de Nardis, 2014, p. 81). As being a form of social shared space, public forums also try to get opportunity of political participation with this purpose, they try to find some other ways than voting to make their voice heard by authorities.

As mentioned above, liberal democracy is criticized because of its insufficiencies to cope with the challenges sources from principle of limited state and institution of representation, and David Beetham (1992) examines these two problematic conditions of liberalism. Beetham (1992) mentions that “Liberalism has provided not only the necessary foundation for, but also a significant constraint upon, democracy in the modern world” (p. 44). He argues that evaluation and display the potential of these problematic conditions are important in terms of the place of civil society in liberal democracies and the re-thinking about the definition of public sphere.

(Beetham, 1992) This critical perspective concerning liberal democracy and emphasis on new political representation, engagement and discussion arenas necessitate research orientations towards deliberative democracy. Therefore, need for a transformation within democracy itself, sources from challenges of liberal democracy. The crisis of representation has been paved the way for increasing influence and effectiveness of civil society to mobilize through social movements and radical public protests, which display a growing demand for politics and for more spaces of democratic action (de Nardis, 2014, p. 73).

New type of social movements – Gezi movement can also be defined within this group as will be explained in following section- are sign of this demand and deliberative democracy is more convenient to analyze this quest for new spaces to democratic participation than other types of democracy. Traditional mechanisms of representation are swinging and in this process separation between civil society and political classes are being more significant and this new conjuncture requires more in depth examinations about social movements and protests.

In this section, different definitions and conceptualizations of deliberative democracy were mentioned in order to define core elements of theory. This conceptualizing is in need of comparison between other democratic theories and mentioning the deficits of deliberative democratic theory in order to display why this dissertation applies deliberative democratic theory for analyzing Gezi Park Public Forums in İzmir rather than other democratic theories such as participatory and direct democracy; liberal-representative democracy. Analyzing public park forums in İzmir from a deliberative democracy perspective does not mean that all aspects of public forums can be examined from this perspective. This study also aims to explain which features of public forums in İzmir are making them challenging for deliberative democracy literature and this features can contribute to literature in terms of structure and functioning of these mini-publics.

2.1.1. How Deliberative Democracy Literature views consensus: Is it feasible in practice?

In the literature there are contradictory arguments concerning ability of deliberative processes to reach consensus. In this section will be given a background information in order to examine the situation in Public Forums in İzmir. These questions will be discussed in research chapter concerning decision-making procedures of public forums: whether these public forums aim to reach consensus in all their forum discussion, how their perception of consensus effects issues they chose for their discussion sessions and whether in real world cases consensus-obsessed attitude can correspond with theory.

Cohen (2009) argues that all participants are equal within deliberation and ideal deliberation aims to arrive at a rationally motivated consensus (p. 24). The important point is “to find reasons that are persuasive to all who are committed to acting on the results of a free and reasoned assessment of alternatives by equals” (Cohen, 2003, p. 348). Public Forums in İzmir have some different perceptions in terms of reaching consensus. The literature sees consensus as a conflictual area moreover some thinkers argue that, it is not feasible for all deliberative processes to reach consensus.

Habermas mentions that the essence of communication contains in itself the possibility of reaching consensus. “Consensus is possible because understanding is the telos inherent in human speech” (Habermas J. , 1984, p. 287). Habermas refers to a counterfactual ideal speech situation in which people raise and accept the following validity claims: the truth of the propositional content, comprehensibility of utterance the truthfulness or authenticity of the speaking subject and appropriateness given the existing context (Habermas J. , 2007). Margaret Kohn (2000) argues “this ideal speech situation is a regulative ideal which formalizes the conditions of actual interaction which leads to consensus formation” (p. 429). And she argues that even linguistic competence can become an exclusionary factor between participants of deliberation and Habermas’s assumptions about transparency of language and neutrality of communication and recent theories about communicative ethics do not have capacity to improve the legitimacy of discursive and even reasonableness is being constructed under the existing power relations (p. 408).

It can be argued that, especially first and second-generation deliberative theories focused largely on consensus issue as one of the main goals of deliberation.

Nevertheless, as mentioned in previous sections, deliberative democratic theory has

been evolving and in this process, consensus has become to being seen as empirically hard conclusion to achieve and normatively undesirable ideal. On the other hand, disagreement in deliberation has become to being perceived as not just an empirically inevitable outcome but also normatively desirable goal of deliberation (Landemore & Page, 2015, p. 259). For the reason that, deliberative democrats are now hesitant towards consensus and try to find some middle ways. Authors argue that “for achieving better arguments normative appeal of consensus varies depending on the deliberative task whether it entails problem solving and predictions. It means that, in pure problem solving contexts consensus retains a strong normative and forms the ideal deliberative outcome of deliberation”. (Landemore & Page, 2015, p. 259)

Iris Young compares interest-based model of politics with deliberative democratic theory and mentions that, in interest based models participants prioritize their own private concerns when deliberative democratic theory assumes democracy as a process that creates a public citizens coming together to talk about collective problems goals, ideals and actions (Young, 1996, p. 120). However, Young criticized Habermas and other theorists who are in similar line to see deliberation only as an argumentative discussion, which yields to “force of better argument”. She proposes another model of democracy, which she calls “communicative democracy” (Young, 1996). This kind of democracy is also discussion based but it includes other forms of communication as well (McAfee, 2000). She argues that, when other forms of communication such as story telling are excluded from deliberative discussions then, who has the ability of argumentation make convince others that his/her argument is better and should be accepted as common good then this causes also inequalities. In this book, it is also argued that, reaching consensus means deciding what is in the

common good. Nevertheless, the problem is what is common can exclude what is particular and this might come through denigrating the particular perspectives of less privilege participants. Young wants to preserve the plurality of concerns, orientation and goals that arise in public forum by giving place different types of discussions and thus different type of groups.

Mansbridge (2006) mentions, public sphere in which Public Forums also operate, has had a structural transformation and conflicting interests have come to the scene.

Moreover, she argues that, for maintaining a functioning deliberation, it should be accepted that conflict and differences have place in this process (Mansbridge, 2006).

Pitkin and Shumer (1982) put this argument one step further and argue that, conflict is not an element which can be taken or left, it is inevitable part of deliberation.

"Conflict--handled in democratic ways, with openness and persuasion--is what makes democracy work, what makes for the mutual revision of opinions and interest" (p. 47). Nevertheless, if reaching a kind of consensus is the ultimate goal then, these special interests should be transformed, re-shaped in order to find some common points (Sanders, 1997, p. 360). In addition, the other important argument here is that, emphasis on individual selves in the community. It means that, even in deliberative groups, which trigger collectivity, each member's individuality should be counted as important.

Mendonça and Ercan (2015) argue that in the literature, conflict and deliberation have been evaluated as mutually exclusive. Pretended conflict between private interest and common good cause presuppositions that every type of conflict should be eliminated from public discussion in order to build deliberation. Nevertheless, there are some contradictory ideas about the relationship between deliberation and

conflict. For instance, Mouffe and Young, -who are referred in this article as critical side of deliberative democracy- argue that deliberative democrats totally undermine conflict between adversary group in the name of reaching consensus. And this tendency undermines potential fruitful discussions between adversary opinions. “Despite their various differences, these scholars have argued that ‘the force of a better argument’ and consensus are not the best strategies to address the issues of domination and marginalization in contemporary societies” (Mendonça & Ercan, 2015, p. 269). Nevertheless, Public Forums in İzmir do not perceive conflict as important element of deliberative forums. As will be mentioned in previous section, they prize diversity in theory but in practice, they look for an environment without conflict but it is not feasible in a society composed by divergent camps and this tendency prevent them from experience plurality.

Sarah Maddison argues that, although deep cleavages in many societies still exist, alternative deliberative platforms provide to promote deliberative features of nations. She argues that divided societies are in lack of equipment of deliberation because of praxis of combat and conflict. Making deliberative and collective decisions requires intention and culture of political deliberation. She mentions, “for many groups in divided societies, an agonistic engagement that allows conflict about their deep, identity based differences to continue to define the relationship is both more realistic and more productive than efforts to deliberate” (Madison, 2014, p. 190). The reasoning requirement of deliberation -which is mentioned in previous parts as an important element of reasonable deliberation- is in itself problematic in divided societies. This argument shows how paradoxical the relationship between conflict and deliberation and deliberative culture. In societies, which are in lack of deliberation culture and have social dissolutions, conflicts can damage even potential

deliberations. On the other hand, when such societies can learn deliberative discussion culture conflict can feed deliberation.

Mouffe argues that, the democratic politics which tries to ignore power and antagonism has tendency to maintain rational consensus while underestimating the central role in politics of conflictual dimension and its crucial role in the formation of collective identities. This is why it is unable to provide an adequate model of democratic politics. She proposes an alternative model to deliberative democracy, which he calls agonistic pluralism. She mentions that, “politics aims at creating of unity in a context of conflict and diversity; it is always concerned with the creation of an “us” by the determination of a “them”” (Mouffe, 1999, p. 15). Mouffe indicates that, the important point is to create us\them discrimination in a way that is compatible with pluralist democracy. She puts explicitly the difference between his conception “agonistic pluralism” and “deliberative democracy” that agonistic pluralism does not aim at eliminating passions from public sphere for the purpose of reaching rational consensus, rather it aims to convert these passions towards democratic designs.

Dryzek argues that, Mouffe’s stance towards deliberative democracy is lacking in terms of finding solutions to social problems via collective decisions. Mouffe perceived the term consensus strengthen existing power relations but she underestimates that without consensus there will be no decision. He mentions that, Mouffe conceptualizes deliberative interaction as dispassionate and reasoned and this conceptualization does not provide to cope with differences nevertheless, Drzyek proposes a model of discursive democracy, which can handle with deep clashes (Drzyek, 2005, p. 221).

A second departure of Drzyek –as he mentions- from Mouffe involves the way deliberative interaction is conceptualized. Mouffe may be right that deliberation in the image of a philosophy seminar—dispassionate and reasoned—cannot handle deep difference. (Drzyek, 2005) However, it is possible to formulate an account of discursive democracy that is more contestatory than this image, so more robust in the face of deep difference. Third, Mouffe’s interpretation of the main task of democracy has no obvious place for collective decision-making and resolution of social problems. She scorns consensus as a cover for power, but at least consensus implies that decisions can be made.

Public forums’ participants in İzmir try to reach consensus usually by suppressing their identities and by focusing on issues, which are easier to reach common points than rigid consensus in order to put in practice their decisions effectively. As mentioned above, forum members stay away from in-group conflict while literature gives important place to conflict during deliberation. The practical consequences of forums’ perception on consensus issue will be given in research chapters however, this literature background will help to analyze how in world experience contextual dynamic shape the meaning and manner of consensus.

2.2. Harmony between Deliberative Democracy and Social Movement Researches

This section will try to evaluate the relation between social movement researches and systemic deliberative approach. Putting this relation on table is being needed for the reason that, besides critics concerning ability of deliberative democracy in analyzing

social movements and incompatibility of social movements with deliberative democracy, public forums in İzmir with their emphasis on discussion and their interaction with broader system – civil society organizations, other initiatives and local government- can be analyzed from a deliberative democracy perspective. This section will provide information about deliberative democratic theory's particularities in relation with social movements.

Haug and Teune (2008) mention that, social movements can be defined as most convenient forums, which provide a useful tool to express political claims. For this reason, social movements are ideal real world cases to examine deliberation capacity. Moreover, “social movements are certainly the most important forums for an immediate expression of political claims” (Haug & Simon, 2008, p. 2). They transmit their messages to a larger populace and they are cases, which can be perceived as critical case for the empirical study of deliberation. Authors mention that social movements as critical cases give the opportunity to analyze under which circumstances we can maintain deliberative discussion as a tool of discursive conflict resolution because activist in social movements – same as in our public forums- long discussion sessions take place before reaching a decision (Haug & Teune, 2008). “Social movements have a long tradition of discursive decision-making and identity building” (Polletta, 2002). Thus on the contrary to the claims in the literature –as John Medearis (2005) refers “Social movements and their contentious speech and tactics sound recurrent, dissonant themes in the literature on deliberative democracy” (p. 53). Thus social movements are not far away from discursive tradition.

Moreover “sometimes, with very small democratic openings, social movements have been able to bring about far greater ones” (Markoff, 2015, p. 129). Because actually,

many social movements contain inherently potential to seize limited opportunities and make them less limited and they have capacity to survive even under hybrid regimes. Markoff (2015) argues that “As social movement and governing elites redefined the meanings of democracy and at certain historical moments, developed new ways of thinking about democracy and new institutions the embody those ideas” (p. 136). Gezi Movement also required a new way of thinking about democracy, in which people do not satisfy with representative institutions and they voice their demands by themselves on public squares or via their social media accounts and they started to discuss about their concerns with people coming from different segments of society.

It is important to analyze the relationship between social movements, deliberative democracy and new socially shared spaces for this dissertation, because public forums were born from Gezi Park Movement. In the literature, there are contradictory arguments about the potential of social movements in terms of improving deliberative democracy. Some of them mention that, social movements trigger activism and activist attitude does not conform to deliberative democratic attributions such as discussion by listening other opinions... Della Porta, who is one of the prominent thinkers of deliberative democracy literature, suggests that, “reflections on social movements might help specifying some conceptualization of deliberative politics” (Donatella, 2005).

Young refers to the critics of deliberative democrats against activists and protesters. He mentions that, deliberative democrats criticize activists for being unreasonable. According to whom criticize activists and protesters, activists and protesters cannot manage to maintain a reasonable political engagement because they cannot have a

reasonable discussion with people they disagree with (Young, 2001, p. 675).

However, Gezi movement and its discussion areas public park forums were -at least- an attempt to disproof this argument because Gezi Movement was relatively heterogeneous formation in which some groups that did not come together before walked arm in arm. Although it did not dure so long, protesters could behave in accordance with deliberative attributions. Thus, it is argued that, may be ideal conditions cannot occur easily in real life especially during social uprisings however it does not mean that social movements and participants of these movements' practices are incompatible with deliberative democracy.

The World Social Forum (<https://fsm2016.org/en/sinformer/a-propos-du-forum-social-mondial/>) and other recent social mobilizations have some important common particularities in terms of their perception of democracy, which focuses mostly on participation and deliberation than democratic perception of institutional arrangements. This perception lead thousands of people who are not satisfy with ongoing systems in their countries to street since 2012 and they showed that streets and squares are reserved to people to use as public sphere. This new democratic approach prioritizes rights of speak of ordinary citizens and mentions that a more deliberative attitude in democracy can provide to see everyone has the right to be heard, this right does not reserved to elective officials and experts. Deliberation culture emphasis on open discussion platforms, which give opportunity to confront with different perspectives and preference change; foster solidarity among opposing groups and if they have a problem solving intention and create collective identities. Moreover, this new culture is not specific for a region; it has been observable in recent social movements around the world.

Fraser mentions that what is common virtually for all these protests is an emphasis on the failure of governments, be they formally democratic or authoritarian to respond and attend to basic needs of their citizens. Participants in the WSF realize an Arendt understood that public spaces can be multiple and they do not necessarily have to encompass the institutions of government (Becker, et al., 2016, p. 166). Public spaces of better say counter publics can be created and exist outside the formal political sphere (Fraser, 1990). As mentioned in previous section, The Gezi Park Public Forums in İzmir display an informal deliberation experience that aims to situate distant from political institutions nevertheless these new counter publics create their own political spheres as much as distant from existing political sphere and mostly opposite to it.

While examining, how and where social movements and deliberative democracy convene than it is important to mention civil society's role in which social movements can born and survive. Civil society is being attributed different roles in the deliberative democratic literature (Hendriks, 2006). These are two salient perspectives within theory on the one hand micro deliberative theorists who emphasis on importance of cooperative attitudes of civil society with state by mentioning procedural conditions for structured fora; and on the other hand macro deliberative theorists argue that civil society should stay away from state in order to support informal deliberation in the public sphere. When both of these approaches apply to real world cases, it becomes clear that this is an exclusionary attitude and only an inclusive deliberative practice -which takes place in different discursive sphere open to different civil society actors- can lead up to a functioning public deliberation (Hendriks, 2006).

Gezi Park movement opened new discussion areas such as Public Forums in which public deliberation occurred and these new platforms can be evaluated as opportunity for democratizing state-society/individual and civil society relations. These new platforms, which were born from Gezi Park Movement, will be examined from a deliberative perspective because of these scarcities of other democratic perspectives, which were mentioned in previous section In the following section, the process, which lead to emergence of public park forums, will be examined in the following section.



CHAPTER 3

FROM SQUARES TO PARKS: GEZI MOVEMENT AND PUBLIC FORUMS

Gezi Park movement is crucial for Turkey's social movement and deliberative democracy literature because it can be defined as a Turkish example of new uprising wave in the world, which comes from 2012. Gezi Movement resembles with other examples around the world via its discourses symbols and practices but it has also distinctive features and this study does not aim to contribute to social movement literature, rather it will try to contribute deliberative democracy literature by examining public forums in İzmir which were born from Gezi Movement and operate under Turkish non-deliberative context as will be explained in the following section.

In the literature Gezi Park is defined as resistance, protests, uprising, revolt and even an attempt. This dissertation defines Gezi Park as a social movement in the light of descriptions in social movement literature. Diana refers to different theorists' definitions about social movement and in her article she mentions four aspects of social movements dynamics which are a) networks of informal interaction; b) shared beliefs and solidarity; c) collective action on conflictual issues; d) action which

displays largely outside the institutional sphere and routine procedures of social life (Diani, 1992, p. 7). Gezi Park movement was an example of collective action of different segments of society concerning their concerns about government sanctions; they stayed largely outside the institutional sphere and they constructed informal networks and they had shared beliefs and solidarity. And Gezi Park protests did not conduct in an organizational structure. In the light of this definition, this dissertation defined Gezi Park as a social movement.

Soli Özel argues from a social class perspective that, analyzing Gezi Park Movement, as a reaction of suppressed middle classes paves the way for tracing societal reasons behind the scene and how these people triggered newly emerging participatory and democratic political spaces within movement (Özel, 2014). According to him, these protests display the need for a new conceptualization of citizenship and he defines the movement as "an attempt to enlarge the liberal-democratic space in Turkish politics" (Özel, 2014, p. 7). Nevertheless, it was challenging to transform these new political spaces into deliberative areas within existing contextual framework, as will be explained in following sections.

Antimo L. Farro and Deniz Günce Demirhisar (2014, p. 179) analyze the Gezi Movement from the perspective of collective movement and its social, cultural and political meanings. They argue that the participants' individual life in terms of economic, social and cultural dimensions is substantially similar. Moreover, their lack of economic resources causes their political dissatisfactions and push them criticize AKP's neo-liberal approaches to economic development. They claim that the young generation especially attacks the government, which they see as the responsible of their bad life conditions and their lack of will power upon conducting

their lives. They argue that the Gezi Protesters do not concern with the clash between the Kemalist republican tradition and the Islamization process envisioned by the AKP. Their incentive to mobilize cannot be refrained to this ongoing conflict. They ask questions about their personal rights on living their individual lives. On the other hand, Bülent Diken argues that, “the revolt was a reaction to Islamic governance” (Diken, 2015). He claims that the AKP was founded as a reaction to the republican idea and these revolts were against the AKP’s tendency towards the Ottoman theocracy as a ‘moderate Islamic party’ (Diken, 2015). Ahmet Öncü approaches to the Gezi Movement from a perspective which tries to examine the relationship between Turkey’s capitalist modernity and Gezi Movement while referring to the duality –he claims that there exists- between the laic/Islamic segmentation in the society (Öncü, 2013). All these arguments try to explain the reasons behind the protests which sourced from existing socio-economic and political structure and also try to display whether composition of participant represents social dissolutions in society or not. In addition, these reasons behind the uprising of Gezi Park movement are mostly similar with reasons, which oriented people to Park Forums.

Gezi Protests projected a distinctive image in which the two supposedly antithetical categories -radical and deliberative politics- were linked together (Damar, 2016). “The protestors' political efforts to construct a rigid political boundary against the AKP created new political spaces in Turkey's urban context for the emergence of politics of recognition between contending secular and Islamic communities” (Damar, 2016, p. 5). And also author argues that, Gezi Park movement is a radical political movement and due to this radical attribution it has productive potentiality which provides to create new political alternatives. Gezi Park protests can be defined as 'trans-environmentalist protest' within which the protestors linked ‘their

environmental concerns with wider societal issues such as democracy and human rights, thus transcending an otherwise strict environmental agenda' as Aimilia Voulvouli mentions (Voulvouli, 2011). Public Forums in İzmir are still maintaining their concerns about environment and it can be argued according to the data collected from field researches that, environmental concerns are greatest motivation source of forum participants.

Gezi Park Movement was analyzed in terms of how inclusive it was. People from different ideological and ideational backgrounds gathered in streets and squares. People from different ideological and ideational backgrounds walked together during Gezi including "a variety of left-wing organizations, environmentalist, LGBT groups, feminist groups and 'anti-capitalist Muslim', as well as many trade unions and professional organizations" (Ercan & Mendonça, 2015, p. 272). Public Park Forums are being also analyzed in terms of inclusiveness, this study will demonstrate that Public Forums' profile were reflected the Gezi Park Movement's participants' profile but in time these diversity left it's place to relatively homogenous profile.

Farro and Demirhisar (2014) mention "Most of the protesters present in the Park are college and high school graduates. The proportion of women participating in the collective movement is slightly higher than that of men. The average age is 28 years. It is mainly constituted of active people and students. Among the protesters, one could find liberal professions, civil servants, and other employees in the tertiary sector, while the share of unemployed is very low" (p. 178).

Abbas and Yiğit (2014) mention people who participated in movement can be categorized in three social groups, which are environmentalists, non-partisan, and anarchists. He argues that the second category is the most consistent one and it

included people with ‘no specific political affiliation or explicitly political objectives’ (p. 10). As will be discussed in the following sections, Park Forums in İzmir are also composed of people – not all of them but majority- do not have a political affiliation and they did not participate any social protest before Gezi Park Movement.

Gezi Park movement was discussed in the literature in comparison with the other social movements in Turkey. Yıldırım defines the Gezi Movement as a unique movement because of it did not have any institutional support and it paved a new way of social movement structure from a protest to occupy movement. He mentions that the Gezi movement cannot be framed as a merely demands of a group of protester but the movement should be considered as a critic towards the ongoing democratic process in Turkey. He also mentions that uprising of ordinary people is a new trend around the world. Yıldırım tries to display that the Gezi Park movement is in similar lines with other uprisings in the other regions of the world, which have tendencies to create a new political and cultural space (Yıldırım, 2014, p. 177).

Gezi movement important from certain aspects nevertheless utilization a discourse that “embraces all religious ethnic backgrounds paved the way for discourses, which prioritize peace and freedom” (Özkaynak, Aydın, Ertör-Akyazı, & Ertör, 2015, p. 4). This atmosphere constructed a mentality, which provide people to behave without their political affiliations, and could work in favor of other political groups and they could feel more close to different opinions, at least they could develop a tolerant attitude (Özkaynak, Aydın, Ertör-Akyazı, & Ertör, 2015).

Ilay Romain Örs argues that, Gezi Movement paved the way for “re-conceptualizing the democracy in Turkey through the changing ways in which people engage with public spaces in the urban sphere” (Örs, 2014, s. 491). According to Örs, reading the

spatial component of Gezi movement is crucial to understand these new forms of using public spaces and Gezi Park Forums can be analyzed under these new forms (Örs, 2014). In fact, existing conjuncture was not allow willingly to these new forms nevertheless, these new social arrangements, such as park forums, found their way.

Park Forum born after police and protesters emptied the Gezi Park organized around these forums in İstanbul and in other cities as well. These forums are being defined as: “Representing the first participatory democracy experience in Turkish history, these park forums served as egalitarian, self-regulatory gathering spaces where numerous issues were addressed, including but not limited to freedom of the press, electoral systems, urban transformation projects, environmental justice, LGBT rights, state violence, violence against women, workers’ movements, and alternative economic systems” (Özkaynak, Aydın, Ertör-Akyazı, & Ertör, 2015, p. 7).

As conclusion of this chapter, Gezi Park movement lived its peak times for 3 months in 2013 summer and after movement lost blood. Nevertheless, “the Gezi spirit” -as supporter and participants like to call it- has been living even after 4 and half year and public forums are the most significant organizations which still survive and sustain this spirit. Besides the world historical significance of the Gezi case, studying forums in Turkey will provide further insights in our understanding of the working of deliberative democracy based on multiple other grounds. In order to analyze Public Forums in İzmir from a relatively complete deliberative democratic perspective, this dissertation, will apply a systemic deliberative approach, which will be explained in detail in the following section.

3.1. Fresh Blood for Deliberative Systemic Researches: Public Park Forums

This section will prepare the ground for the responses for these questions: how forums enhance deliberative culture by getting interaction with their environment and foster prospects in terms of civiness and more engaged civil society despite non-deliberative parts of the system. Moreover, this section will provide justification about applying systemic deliberative approach to examination of public park forums in İzmir.

Deliberative Democracy has passed two stages and now entered in a third generation. Habermas and John Rawls can be classified under the first generation with their normative assertions. The second generation tried to reconcile normative aspects of deliberative democracy, which were mentioned by first generation with empirical cases in order to test how theoretical assumptions work within complexity of social realities. Third generation deliberative democracy has been occupied with institutionalization in order to achieve this reconciliation in practice (Elstub, 2010). Part of the third generation -which is also constructing this thesis's theoretical frame- is the systemic approach of deliberative democracy, which provides to consider deliberation as a whole system from a broad perspective.

Scholars made valuable researches, which have served a purpose to reconcile theoretic discussion concerning deliberative democracy with empirical studies and this effort has been generally approved. Nevertheless, they have been also criticized for not to engage with a broad picture which can only display the relationship between small deliberative groups and existing system. The third generation “adopted mainly a micro approach to deliberation that isolated mini-publics and

other institutions from the broader discursive environment and macro context within which they operate” (Elstub, Ercan, & Mendonça, 2016, p. 5). Taking deliberative practices in relation with their environmental relations provides to “understand how each venue is influenced by interactions across the various parts of the deliberative system as a whole” (Mansbridge, et al., 2012, p. 26).

It should be mentioned that, undoubtedly researcher who works on deliberative democracy have face with challenges about integrated philosophical concepts into positive political science because implementing deliberative ideals to real world situations is not an easy task. Institutional contexts, which are more suitable for deliberative democracy, were examined, nevertheless, actor-centric and cultural variables that might affect deliberative quality were underestimated (Bächtiger & Hangartner, 2010, p. 609). And these ignored variables are also necessary to construct a broad systemic approach.

Actually, systemic approach does not cause to lose ideal focus of deliberative theory, it rather tries to examine deliberation as a living mechanism which in relation with other social and political mechanism in society. Undoubtedly, in theory deliberative democracy seems more flawless but it does not mean broader deliberative systems must leave whole normative accounts of theory. Besides these critics and potential constraints of systemic approach, it can still pave the way for improving deliberative democracy (Felicetti, 2017).

As Owen and Smith argue deliberative systemic approach should provide clarifications concerning to what extent deliberative systems give place to non-deliberative politics. They mention, “In embracing the function of non-deliberative communicative acts, deliberative systems theorists often fail to recognize and

account for the deliberative wrongs that such acts involve and the harm that they frequently cause.” (Owen & Smith, 2015, s. 224)

At this point, first requirement to respond these critics concerning relatively exclusionary approach of deliberative democratic theorists, is defining what we understand from deliberative system. Deliberation is being defined by systemic deliberative approach as a “communicative activity that occurs in multiple, diverse yet partly overlapping spaces, and emphasizes the need for interconnection between these spaces.” (Elstub, Ercan, & Mendonça, 2016).

“Thinking in terms of a system offers several advantages” (Mansbridge, et al., 2012, p. 2). Given system can include polity at large but systemic approach provide us to handle deliberative democracy in a large scale societal terms which include set of institutions and organizations as well. It is argued that, deliberative capacity of a deliberative system is not merely about each separate components of it rather this capacity should be considered as a whole (Mansbridge, et al., 2012). It means that, the sites where public deliberation occur have enlarged their areas (Ercan & Drzyek, 2015, p. 242). First and second generation of deliberative democracy scholars concentrated on formal or informal institutions while searching for deliberative capacity if it occurs nevertheless, recent studies acknowledge that deliberation occurs in multiple and partly overlapping sites (Ercan & Drzyek, 2015).

The place of mini-publics within deliberative systems is important and debatable. Curato and Böker offer “the notion of ‘co-development’ as one possibility to ensure mini-publics’ fruitful role in the deliberative system” (Curato & Böker, 2016, p. 175). Lafont mentions that, actually there is a tension between micro, macro deliberative approaches and rather than focusing on these designed forums, macro

deliberative processes prioritize participation of citizen in decision-making process concerning general political issues and less concern with face-to face deliberation and effort of local people to solve their local problems (Lafont C. , 2015).

Critics concerning new deliberative platform such as mini-publics mention that, the importance of these mini-publics is overestimated in the literature and the relationship between deliberation and mass participation has become more blurry than before. Carol Pateman argues in her article that, with the rise of enthusiasm towards deliberation within democratic theory, theorists inclined to ‘new deliberative bodies’ and this inclination prevent them from focusing on mass participation (Pateman, 2012).

A systemic interpretation of deliberative democracy can make constructive contribution to this debate between micro and macro approaches to deliberation. Böker Curato (2016) argue that “Deliberative democracy is envisaged as an overarching system made up of different component parts that overall plays host to a range of contesting discourses within and across both ‘micro’- and ‘macro’- sites in an inclusive, deliberative and consequential manner” (p. 176). Thus, besides the fact that, sometimes, issue of mass participation can overshadow the place of deliberative forums and critics concerning the overestimated role of mini-publics within deliberative theory can get support, even so small deliberative practices are still important in terms of analyzing deliberative attribution in real world cases. While focusing on public forums in İzmir, taking into consideration their relationship with local government, civil initiatives and other organizations such as chambers, give opportunity to observe their potential to create deliberative culture. So to say, leaving

in isolation these public forums and underestimate non-deliberative parts of system can overshadow their potential deliberative prospects.

Despite critics concerning mini-publics' - mentioned above- and their place in deliberative democratic literature, as Fung argues that mini-publics have potential capacity in terms of making democratic contribution by "public accountability, social justice, effective governance, and popular mobilization". (Fung, 2003, p. 340). Bora Kanra mentions that, studies on deliberative democracy mostly discusses deliberation as decision-making procedure but deliberation should also discussed as a social learning, which is so crucial in order to reach a prevalent decision-making. (Kanra, 2012) According to him, social learning is the first stage of engaging with deliberative environment (Kanra, 2012, p. 2). Hartz-Karp argues that mini-publics provide to create common identities (Hartz-Karp, Anderson, Gasti, & Felicetti, 2010).

These arguments can be gathered under a single roof. First, it is clear that, in order to get a fully-fledge understanding of deliberative democracy, new researches should be more overarching than the former ones. On the one hand, the issue is not overestimating the role of mini-publics in deliberative literature; but as being good empirical practices it is not coherent and feasible to ignore their importance for deliberative democracy. On the other hand, only focusing on testing how theoretical assumptions of deliberative democracy work on empirical cases is not sufficient to maintain an inclusionary deliberative perspective, which handles deliberation within a system. Thus, if we perceive deliberation as a dynamic process then, it is inevitable to see it with its different ingredients, which are also interaction between each other. Tracing the relationship between institutions and organizations within a deliberative

system via analyzing real world cases, help us to find out how deliberative democracy operates and how it can be improved. Dryzek (2016)notes that the deliberative systems approach features a lot of theorizing yet “relatively little close study of actual deliberative systems in the terms that theorists specify.” (p. 214)

Besides taking Public Forums in İzmir – a kind of mini-public formation- as research subjects, this dissertation -while considering critics in the literature in terms of overestimating the role of mini-publics in deliberative democratic system- will try to analyze internal deliberative features of these public forums within a relatively non-deliberative system without exaggerating their importance but still accepting their potential to contribute deliberative culture. The internal and external features of Public Forums – which are the mini-public examples within the scope of this dissertation- will be explained in further chapters but first contextual dynamics, which can be defined, as non-deliberative part of the system, will be discussed in the following section.

CHAPTER 4

CONTEXTUAL CONSTRAINTS: TURKEY'S EXAM WITH DELIBERATION

In this section, contextual frame will be demonstrated in order to examine in which circumstances public forums arisen and try to survive and how each side is being effected from the other sides attitudes and re-position accordingly. This contextual dynamics should be demonstrated for conducting a systemic approach, which perceive public forums with external dynamics with which forums get interaction inevitably.

4.1. State Role in Democratization Process in Turkey

Turkey's democratization process starts with the assumption that "modernization and democracy are inseparable" nevertheless as pointed out in the literature modernization theory has some problems in determining the thresholds of modernization required for democracy and beyond which authoritarianism ceases to be viable (Hinnebusch, 2006). The modernization theory cannot successfully explain the Middle East countries' democratization processes but Hinnebusch (2006) argues

that, “Turkey the one successful democratic transition in the Middle East, suggests what conditions might facilitate it” (p. 388). He argues that “relatively high nationalist legitimacy with which state-founder Atatürk had endowed the state and Turkey’s congruence between identity and territory provided the country with the national identity and coherence that made democratization less risky”. (Hinnebusch, 2006, p. 388) Nevertheless, in the literature there are assumptions about the early democracies in terms of their transition and consolidation experiences: back to the authoritarian past or forward to the future of consolidated liberal democracy (Merkel & Croissant, 2007). On the other hand, there is another way in between the liberal democracy and authoritarian regimes: grey zone.

The conceptualization of democratization is very crucial and also controversial in the literature. Larry Diamond is making three distinct categories for non-authoritarian regimes; pseudo-democracies, electoral democracies and liberal democracies. The election for public office is the common feature of these three categories but they differ from each other according to their degree of allowing competition and participation (Elklit, 2007, p. 29). Turkey is a hybrid democracy according to him. (Diamond, 2002). It means that, Turkey’s stance is in between the two phases in the grey zone.

The distinction between the liberal democracies and electoral ones is mainly lies on the existence of political rights and civil liberties, which are seen as the guarantees of meaningful electoral contestation and participation (Elklit, 2007, p. 29). “Pseudo-democracies have legal opposition parties and perhaps many other constitutional features of electoral democracy but fail to meet one of its crucial requirements: a sufficiently fair arena of contestation to allow the ruling party to be turned out of

power” (Elklit, 2007, p. 29). This argument can be applied to Turkish case. Ruling party can use all state apparatus during election periods when opposition parties have challenges about reaching large masses because especially mass media organs are in control of government for the reason of media ownerships. Mass media organs, do not give any place to deliberation because of the general crackdown of the media. (Freedom of Press) Major media are owned by big companies which have close relationship with government and who speak in the same tone with authority (Çarkoğlu & Yavuz, 2011).

The writings about the Turkish experience of democracy mostly refer to the military coups and especially the 1980 military coup and 1982 Constitution. Ziya Öniş and Steven B. Webb point out that, structural reforms of economy and the restoration of democracy go hand in hand in Turkey in 1980s and Turkey’s experience to transition to democracy was controlled from above. Hans Peter Schmitz (2004) takes the issue of democratization from a different perspective, which goes beyond the rhetoric and tries to develop a framework, which focuses on transnational activism to examine domestic regime changes. He mentions that in the international relations and comparative politics literatures, there is a tendency to evaluate processes of democratization by considering the crucial effects of international factors (Schmitz, 2004). He claims that the comparative regime transition explanations insisting on relations between economic and political change nevertheless they cannot explain “the process and the interactions among participating collective actors” (Schmitz, 2004, p. 404). This refers to the existing assumptions in the literature about Turkish democratization process, which point out the effects of EU membership candidacy on Turkey’s democratic amendments. Especially the AKP government is one of the core examination areas of the researches about democracy in Turkey. Ergun

Özbudun insists on the success of AKP government in the way of Turkish consolidation of democracy by implementing Constitutional changes and amendments (Özbudun E. , 2013, p. 179). Nevertheless, after 2007, EU reforms lost momentum in Turkey and Turkey has fallen behind other developing countries in democracy indexes in terms of democratic attributions.

Bilge Yeşil mentions that:

Turkey is a parliamentary democracy, which has held multiparty elections since 1950s. However, it remains under the weight of a strong state tradition that prioritizes the protection of the state over individual rights and freedoms. Predicated on the principles of statism (the primacy of and reverence for the state) nationalism, secularism, and Westernization, the republican project centralized the power of the state, built a national economy, eliminated Islam from public life, suppressed ethnic and religious minorities, and denied a host of individual freedoms and liberties along the way (Yeşil, 2016, pp. 9-10).

Yeşil argues that “Since its rise to power since 2002, AKP has espoused contradictory policies in the fields of politics, economics, and media. It has defined itself as the promoter of democratic consolidation while at the same time it has limited its notion of democracy to that of a simple majoritarian rule” (Yeşil, 2016). For instance despite certain achievements and democratic steps concerning Kurdish issue, Kurds' political demands were ignored and state continues to follow a centralized, stasis and intolerant attitude (Yeşil, 2016, p. 141). Since 2010-2011 it had become clear that, the AKP was adopting the autocratic inclinations of the very state it had initially promised to reform.

Ziya Öniş who is a prominent Turkish social scientist, argues that “the loss of reform -EU accession period- momentum and rising authoritarianism during the most recent phase of AKP government indicate that Turkish democracy is in crisis”. Öniş mentions that, although Gezi Park movement can be defined as a social reaction against central government restrictive sanctions, which sourced from below, it could not manage to behave in an organized manner. He refers the terms 'bounded communities' while describing the existing situation in Turkey, there is a significant pressure and insatisfaction whereas Erdoğan and AKP continue to sustain power in country (Öniş, 2015). It can be argued that these bounded communities found places to breathe in public forums but undoubtedly if they behave in a political manner – they do not – and if local or central authorities consider them as a menace, it will be compelling for them to continue their activities.

Murat Somer (2016) tries to examine authoritarian turn in Turkey in his article by making distinction between two types of authoritarianism: “The first is the reproduction of Turkey’s long-existing semi-democratic regime – which the article calls old authoritarianism – in a new historical and dominant political– ideological context and under an Islamist-leaning government. The second is the emergence of a new type of authoritarianism – dubbed new authoritarianism – that is in many respects unprecedented for Turkey” (p. 481).

Analyzing this new type is not an easy task thus, it is not sufficient to look at political society and institutions. “The important point is that this new type of authoritarianism necessitates a new kind of state-society relationship where, paradoxically, political power becomes simultaneously more particularistic, personalized and mass-based” (Somer, 2016, p. 481). The important argument in this

article is that, besides having potential to become more robust type of authoritarian regime, this type has also a potential for democratization. Somer argues that, passive groups have become more active and may be in the course of time, they will be join other active groups and their cooperation provide to reach truly democratic institutions (Somer, 2016). The potential prospects about public forums, which prioritize discussion and deliberation, refer to this point. Public forums activities not only a gain for a specific small group, their existence and maintenance is an opportunity to construct strong relationships with other civil society organizations and cooperation for a social learning process which can lead to accumulation of deliberative culture.

In sum, in Turkey state tradition does not allow to construct a well-functioning and developed democracy and AKP government also follow this path and state becomes more robust against democratic attributions. And state society relations are being shaped under this state tradition and state's restrictive attitude concerning civil rights arise at this point as well. In this next section, it will be discusses how in this context deliberation can find place itself nevertheless it can be argued that, public forums try to survive and stay in deliberative system by fighting against general socio-political atmosphere, which has obvious non-deliberative tendencies.

4.2. Deliberation against Strong State Tradition

As Mansbridge et al. (2012) mention the state's role in deliberative systems and they (ibid.) argue that liberal-democratic constitutional states "create spaces of deliberation within political institutions such as legislatures and courts. They also

enable deliberation within society by protecting free speech and association. They encourage deliberation by underwriting institutions in which deliberation is itself constitutive, such as universities and scientific research establishments.”

(Mansbridge, et al., 2012, p. 10). Hybrid regimes -Turkey is also defined under this category as mentioned- do not create such opportunities.

State as an actor of deliberative system does not neither facilitate nor catalize deliberation but it has influence over deliberative entities' strategies, discursive practices and actions. As Dryzek (2009, p. 1395) argues, “state structures may have unintended and surprising consequences that can be revealed only by empirical analysis.” This dissertation evaluates the state as part of contextual dynamics in which the deliberative system operate although it is not being counted as part of the system at hand. State shapes the role of media and draws the movement area of civil society in Turkey. All relationship between these contextual dynamics are being shaped in accordance with democratic tradition in society. Moreover socio-cultural factors such as deep social cleavages between Kurdish and Turkish nationalists; Islamists and Secularists – counted as reasons behind Gezi Movement in the introduction part- compose other parts of context. Most of the three forum members mention that, they are aware of the state structure in Turkey which does not allow deliberation and even they achieve something it is not due to the state, it is despite the state.

Undoubtedly, Turkey has lived important changes at national and international level on policy-making process in last three decades nevertheless; centralism is most remarkable tendency of this process. This means that, public policies are being decided and implemented by central and local authorities, and in such a mechanism,

there is very limited place for non-state social groups. Development of civil society and increase in number of organizations could not provide a pluralist approach, which give opportunity to different segments of society in participating decision-making processes to voice their demands by another tool than elections.

An institution can be considered as deliberative within deliberative system when it has ability to provide action that is “reflective, respectful, and dialogic” (William, 2016). Similarly, Mansbridge et al. (2012) argue that deliberative systems should have some core elements while functioning “seeking truth, establishing mutual respect, and generating inclusive, egalitarian decision-making” (p. 22). And Dryzek (2009) defines deliberative system’s capacity by mentioning “the extent to which a political system possesses structures to host deliberation that is authentic, inclusive, and consequential.” In the light of these description about deliberative system and capacity, it can be argued that Turkish political structure does not provide a convenient atmosphere for flourishing deliberation within a deliberative system.

Dryzek argues (2009, p. 1395) that, parliaments and constitutional courts suit deliberation better in deliberative systems, the situation is opposite in Turkish case and executive is very powerful which has general tendency about rule by degree. As example of this situation, constitution-making process in 2017 which ended with referendum, did not display deliberative attributions which could lead dialogue between political parties. Constitutional change was about transformation of political regime from parliamentarism to presidentialism and ruling party AKP, MHP (far-right party) made even such an important change together, and the process was not inclusionary and transparent against other political parties and social components (Topping, 2016).

To sum, Gezi Park Public Forums in Turkey could not reach any state channels in order to get interaction with state in a deliberative ground. Because, in fact Turkish state chose to ignore forums and it does not take them as actors to have dialogue. As mentioned above, Turkish political regime is majoritarian and with constitutional change and early presidential elections, it has become more monolithic. Elections are being perceives as the only attribution of democracy and Gezi Park Movement was seen as a part of a bigger complot. In the light of this background information, it is not hard to imagine the relationship of public forums in İzmir with central government -when İzmir is a city permanently votes for CHP (big opposition party)- is almost absent.

4.3. Bounded Civil Society

The civil society provides a different channel besides the political parties. Due to these channels, the citizens can express their opinions and have the opportunity of represent their interest. This function of civil society is especially important for some groups, which have been excluded from the society and deliberative democracy – as mentioned in the literature section- refers directly to these disadvantageous groups, which can be more active within deliberative practices. For this reason deliberative democracy literature emphasis on equality and equal right of speak.

John Dryzek mentions that in democratization process the important focal point is civil society and argues that focusing merely on the state is overestimating the importance of the state in democratization process. He mentions that inclusion in

state and inclusion in politics are different issues. Therefore, the relation between the state and democracy is worth to examine in order to display the relationship between the democracy and civil society. Dryzek argues that one of the main pressures behind the incentive towards more democracy is 'civil society' (Dryzek J. S., 1996, p. 476). Gordon White also mentions the importance of civil society in facilitating and impeding democratization (White, 1994, p. 375).

Ernest Gellner defines also the civil society according to the power relations between the state and civil society. He defines civils society as "set of nongovernmental institutions, which is strong enough to counter-balance the state, and, whilst not preventing the state from fulfilling its role of keeper of peace and arbitrator between major interests, can, nevertheless, prevent the state from dominating and atomizing the rest of society" (Gellner, 1994, p. 5).

Cohen and Arato define civil society as the whole set of conscious, institutionalized and organized expressions of the "lifeworld". Lifeworld comprises everyday human relationships, cooperation and solidarity guided by norms, values and cultural traditions in which individual identities are formed. Interpersonal communication is the rule in this sphere. They argue that modern civil societies appeared when the differentiation emerged within the "lifeworld" (Arato & Cohen, 1994). This definition also displays how civil society is being perceived as a place providing interaction between people and prizing diversity.

According to Tocqueville, the most important threat for a society is "state despotism". The civil life is damaging under the pressure of political institutions, which claim that they represent and protect the whole society. This political power, which is centralized, firstly shapes each individual then whole society. This power

encloses the society with complex rules and individuals cannot break this circle of pressure”. At this point, Tocqueville mentions that, to prevent state despotism, the civil organizations should be created and developed out of the state. He claims that civil organizations such as religious communities, universities, civil governments, and publishing houses are the main obstacles against the state despotism. He defines the civil organizations as independent eyes of society but on the other hand, he accepts that the civil society organizations depend on the state institutions in terms of their presence and future and also correlation between them. Public Park forums are not civil society organizations in terms of their way of formation and functioning but relationship of these forums with state and their positioning will be discussed in the following sections in order to justify how crucial maintain the relationship balance between forums and central and/or local authorities.

The civil society can be considered as initiative of the democracy but at the same time, it is the main tool of consolidation of democracy. Because, political participation and the political efficiency can be also flourished by the civil society mentality. “Civil society can also be a crucial arena for the development of other democratic attributes, such as tolerance, moderation, a willingness to compromise, and a respect for opposing viewpoints” (Diamond, 2016). These values and norms – which are being mentioned as deliberative democratic theory’s core values - become more stable when the society gain by its own experience and effort. As will be discussed in further chapters, although Turkey has not have enough social capital in order to construct a fruitful civil society, Gezi movement and Park Forums which can be defined as attempt for deliberative discussion platforms, can be defined as initiatives to fill this gap.

Turkish civil society has deep fragmentations, which cause intolerance between each other. As mentioned above, ideally civil society can feed firstly in itself tolerance and respect to differences, nevertheless generally state and civil society share a common political culture and if state cannot resist opposition groups and try to impose it's truth as the single one, then civil society which born and flourish within such an intolerant condition has very limited space and opportunity to construct respect (Şimsek, 2006).

Turkey has lived in a period, which displays a remarkable societal change. Number of civil society organizations and people who have become member of a civil society organization have been increased considerably since 2000 with the help of Turkey integration process to EU and economic development. As mentioned in (Turkish civil society report) “Today there are nearly 130,000 CSOs in Turkey, and roughly 13 percent of the Turkish population is a member of an association—the most common legal status for CSOs”. Although after the July 2016 coup attempt several were closed, civil society organizations still have relative complexity and diversity. Nevertheless, Turkey’s history, social norms, and legal framework reinforce the primacy of the state, a situation that has often led to a restrictive or uncertain environment for civil society.

(<https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/security/reports/2017/07/10/435475/trends-turkish-civil-society/>)

Özçetin and Özer argue that “Despite this early progress—and despite the party’s own commitment to empower civil society and democratic participation—the AKP has increasingly fallen back on a narrower, more majoritarian, understanding of democracy, with elections as the sole source of legitimacy and a focus on

representation, not participation (Özçetin&Özer, 2015). This overall deterioration translated into a pause and an eventual backsliding in the opening of the legal environment for civil society activity.

4.3.1. State Response to Civil Initiatives

Context of urban movements has changed substantially since the 2000s and so has the state's response. And as authors mention that “the response of the Turkish state to urban movements in the last decade illustrates that economic neoliberalism does not have to coincide with the dismantling of the state” (Eraydın & Taşan-Kök, 2014, p. 111). Thus states’ new position are shaping around the interests and demands of the market and neoliberal policies. In this context, neoliberal urban policies serve to legitimize and strengthen actions of authoritarian governance strategies. From government side, it can be argued that, urban areas are being used as pilot regions for socio-political transformation and governments see these areas as economic interest centers as well. “State’s dominant role in Turkey, pave the way for different types of intervention such as social control, restrictions, penalization and exclusion of certain groups within urban areas hand in hand with economic neoliberal policies and the response of the Turkish state to urban movements depicts changing partnerships between the state, the market, and the citizens”. (Eraydın & Taşan-Kök, 2014, p. 111)

Ali Can argues that, there is not an inverse proportion between global democratization waves and social movements. In order words, he claims that, spread

of democratic institutions globally does not mean that, number of social movements and protests will decrease. Social movement activity is not an alternative to institutionalized politics, rather it is a complementary mode of political action, which increases even as democratic politics spread. On the other hand, Tocqueville claims that, in societies where state is weak and civil society is strong, social movements can help peacefully to develop democratic mechanisms but in societies where state is strong and civil society is weak then, social movements will be face with brutal state response and they can easily transform to rebellions. The researches upon social movements show that, social structures have important impact on development of social movements and moreover intervention strategies of state shape the direction of social movement (Can, 2014). The situation is not different in Turkey as well. State is strong and civil society is weak and social movements and protests face with brutal interventions. The attitude of state and local authorities influence the position of protesters.

As mentioned in previous sections, State response to Gezi Park Movement and especially police brutality, influenced the ongoing process of movement. After giving background information about state and local authorities in this section, the research chapter which will examine relationship of public forums and local governments can be interpreted. more clearly. This dissertation argues that relationship between existing semi-democratic and suppressing political conjuncture and civil initiatives in this case public forums effect each other mutually. It is important to analyze how public forums and local government apparatus develop strategies – deliberative or non-deliberative - within a broad system to maintain this relationship.

Protests against mining-companies can be used in order to display state response to environmental protests. Efemcukuru case is one of the important examples of these protests movements. This case is useful to show how rival parties discursive strategies change accordingly. Rival groups -on the one hand mining companies and local authorities on the other hand citizens and civic initiatives and social movements- use their discourses as a strategic tool of conflict and therefore in order to examine power relation between these groups it is important to analyze interaction between these groups. In the article, it is argued that “the rival discourses were constructed by radically exteriorizing and thereby antagonizing one another”. The final goal of conflicting groups -in this case pro-mining and anti-mining groups- not only make their discourse dominant at local level but also suppress the opposite discourse and create different levels of conflict in this way. As mentioned in the literature above, conflict is one of the inevitable elements of deliberation but when it becomes to be perceived as the main goal then opposition parties loose their vision of deliberation.

The Eldorado -mining company- tries to build relationship with local community and for this reason company visited Efemcukuru with accompany of local government authorities and the Mps of the region. As opposed to this attempt of company, environmentalists in the region gathered around various NGOs and İzmir municipality -especially its water and sewage management division, İZSU- and other anti-mining groups such as EGECE, EP, Hand-in-Hans movement (Özen & Özen, 2017).

As the article mentions, role of government in these interactions is very important because insistence of the government on the operation of goldmines, by ignoring

opposite voices and also court verdicts on the issue, causes increase in consent among peasant willingly or unwillingly. When government gives indirect support to company, it becomes a part of conflict by taking repressive measures against local protesters. “Given the neo-liberal commitments as well as the prevailing statist polity, the government's support for the company against the local movement was not an unexpected move”.

“Although it is argued in the social movement literature that destructive and violent protest activities that threaten public order are generally more successful in achieving their goals (Gamson, 1990; Tarrow, 1998), the adoption of non-violence as a protest strategy in the Bergama Movement played an important role in gaining the sympathy of the general public”. Nevertheless, although movement has gained a considerable public support and sympathy, authorities did not take satisfactory action to meet demands of movement (Özen&Özen, 2010). It can be argued that, besides repressive actions, government can take position near mining companies by ignoring local people's demands.

Turkish environmental civil society composed by both institutionalized and non-institutionalized actors such as environmental organizations, the Green party, environmental movements, environmental platforms and other non-governmental bodies. Article argues that, environmental civil society actors are not in cooperation between each other and mostly they are in clash and they cannot foster solidarity between them (Paker, Adaman, Kadirbeyoğlu, & Özkaynak, 2013). Nevertheless, in our cases, Gezi Park Forums in İzmir when the issue is environment can behave collectively with other environmental organizations without hesitation. This point will be explained in detail in next section.

Büke Boşnak argues in her article that, institutional state machinery is not a monolithic entity but is composed of multiple different fragmented institutions and agencies. In this context, environmental organizations have a complex engagement and different modes of interaction with state institutions, ranging from cooperation, conflict and resistance to cooption (Boşnak, 2016).

Jessica Doyle mentions the findings of her research about women civil society organizations in Turkey in terms of their interactions with state and their space of influence. She argues that, in Turkey state has take three strategic positions against civil society organizations because in Turkey state tries to shape and control civil society in three ways. “(1) the creation by the state of seemingly civic organizations to influence the realm of civil society in a way that directly supports state power; (2) collaboration with organizations and specifically how the state has used the reliance of independent women’s organizations on state cooperation for pursuing their activities to control them; and (3) through repressive actions which have limited and disempowered CSOs” (Doyle, 2017). State displays same attitude against, environmental groups and other civil society organizations as well. They apply mostly to repressive actions in order to suppress and control these civic groups, and as will be explained below local authorities in İzmir behave not in a different manner. May be they do not take obviously an oppressive attitude; even ignoring these public forums is sign of repression. In the light of these background information, in research chapter concerning public forums’ relation with local government, forums strategies against local authorities will be examined in order to display how this repressive attitude finds response from forums.

In the first part of the dissertation, a contextual frame was drawn in accompany with literature review concerning deliberative democracy and Gezi Movement. These contextual features are necessary in terms of examining public forums in İzmir from a systemic approach. The second part will be based on empirical findings collected from in-depth interviews, focus group studies and participant observations and these chapters try to find responses to dissertation's questions: How under semi-democratic conditions public forums can arise and survive. In which aspects contextual dynamics shape their functioning and cooperation with other civil society organizations and what are the prospects of deliberation under such conditions if any?

CHAPTER 5

FORMATION AND FUNCTIONING OF FORUMS

Internal dynamics of Public Forums refer to information about their formation process and their way of functioning in order to analyze which deliberative attributions (seven aspects) can explain their functioning procedures. As mentioned in introduction part Foça Forum, Güzelyalı Forum and Karşıyaka Forum are the main foci of this dissertation. These public forums are born during Gezi movement but they went relatively further points since Gezi Movement.

Public Park forums in İzmir can be analyzed from a deliberative democracy perspective because they are based on open and equal participation and inclusive discussions. As mentioned in previous sections, other democratic theories do not refer to discussion issue as deliberative democracy do and moreover, deliberative democratic theory mentions mini-publics such as deliberative polls, citizens' juries as real world deliberative democracy experiences. Deliberative democracy can provide with its systemic approach to analyze public park forums with their environment thus this give a broad picture about their role and importance within this system. Undoubtedly, as mentioned in the literature section, real world cases can not be totally overlap with assumptions of normative theorists concerning ideal

deliberation but these public forums can meet certain criteria of deliberation. As will be given in detail in following parts of this section, three forums in İzmir have common particularities such as prioritizing discussion and refer the terms respect and tolerance while defining core requirements of their discussion meetings.

Decision making process is directly related to outcomes of deliberation between forum members and decision are mostly taken by consensus but sometimes on conflicting issues they apply to majority vote. In all three forums, they choose a moderator via voting who conduct discussions. Forums do not have limiting and exclusionary rules of membership. However, as will be given in further chapters in detail, respect to basic human rights and adopting an anti-racist discourse are being mostly referred by three public forums' members. They also regard publicity and transparency -which are counted within the core aspects of deliberative democracy- and for this reason their meeting are open to public. Moreover, in order to justify their transparency they publish their meeting report which displays the discussion issues and decisions after forum meetings in their facebook group and in terms of other important aspect of deliberative democracy, they prioritize collective interests of their forums and in a more broader term their local neighborhood against their individual interests.

Public Park Forums in İzmir have some distinctive features, which cannot be explained within deliberative democratic literature. For instance they have political affiliations nevertheless they do not express during forum discussions and Forums' do not have a forum leader. Moreover, in the literature these civic forums – which are mentioned in previous sections as well- do not resemble to these public park forums. Civic forums -deliberative polls, citizens' juries- are being criticized because

of their lack of representative power. These civic forums are being constructed with purpose nevertheless public park forums born from a social movement as a collective civic reaction mechanism randomly. As the research presented here demonstrates, they did not refer to their representative power, they do not have such an ambition, they only refer to make their voice heard by authorities and have a say during decision-making process. Agenda-setting is also important for public park forum in İzmir. Because in mini-public reserved to a purpose discussion issues are also being designated by forum organizer but in public park forums discussion issues are being determined directly by forum participants.

The other important point, public forums' do not have a direct effect to local decision-making process, they do not behave with a decision-obsessed attitude but they know that they can push them to consider their expectation for legitimacy. This point is important in terms of displaying that according to forum members legitimacy is weak part of local governments and even they cannot directly be part of decision-making process they can make heard their voice.

The Foça, Güzelyalı and Karşıyaka Forums were all created during the Gezi movement and have been active since. These three public forums have differences and similarities as well. Their membership profiles in terms of age range is considerably similar. Most of the participants in each forum are above 40, and a majority of them is retired. As mentioned in the introduction, there is relatively a balance between number of men and women forum members. And there is not a dominance of one sex over the other. Women have equal right to speak with men and they are both active during their forum activities. Güzelyalı Public Forum have young supporters especially during their events concerning children. A music band,

Şubadap Çocuk, gives support voluntarily to forums organizations such as children theater which are open to public.

In all three neighborhoods, the main opposition party in Turkey, The Republican People's Party (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi-CHP), rules the municipal government. The party defines itself as secular, social democratic. This information is important because, as all three forum mention that they are opposition centers towards existing conjuncture and especially government. Nevertheless, it is argued that, they are not only oppose to government but also they are oppose to local government that they do not satisfy with its sanctions. In the following sections, their relationship with local government will be analyzed in order to display how their strategies are being shaped according to their relations with their external environment.

Each forum following their own schedule and they organize weekly meetings on specific days: The Foça Forum meets on Thursday and the Karşıyaka and Güzelyalı Forums meet on Tuesdays. They try to meet regularly. One of the Foça Forum members mentioned during in-depth interview that, during summer times, when participation decreases because of the holiday season, they met even they were only three people. (14.07.2016) All forum members in each forum work on voluntary basis and when they need money for their events and protests, they give from their own pockets. Members, who cannot give support financially to forum, take on other forum affairs. In Güzelyalı Public Forum, there is a forum member who is a worker in a supermarket cannot support forum financially but he undertakes cleaning of meeting places and arranging workshop materials of events such as writing and hanging posters. He stated during in-depth interview “even though he could not help

the forum financially, he wanted to volunteer for the needs of the forum”.

(19.12.2015)

Forums’ participant profiles differ from each other. Foça is a small countryside close to İzmir and for this reason, generally, retired people live in there and because of this, Foça Forum members are all retired people. Güzelyalı Public Forum have more members who work as civil servants than Karşıyaka Public Forum and on the other hand, both have members who have trade union background. Karşıyaka Public Forum (KPF) do not abstain from displaying their left-wing political stance while Foça Forum (FF) members do not mention their political affiliations and they describe their forum as open to every different political views. Güzelyalı Public Forum’s members do not define themselves with their political identities as well and they do not reveal their political affiliations. Instead, they prefer adjectives such as “humanitarian” and “human-oriented” for their actions, and they define public forums as “human-oriented collectivities.” As one member puts it, “we have human-oriented concerns and we do not have any political priorities.”

Karşıyaka Public Forum (KPF) defines Public as 'public opposition centers'. KPF members define public forums as a 'collectivity of confidential friends'. This statement refers to emotional motivations behind their participation. Moreover, they define Forums as an 'organized form of life'. According to Forum participants, Gezi indicated the will of society to organize. They explain the reason for their effort to continue their existence since Gezi Movement as desire to meet certain societal exigencies such as this will of organizing. They try to pursue this goal and fill the gap in terms of being an organized community. They use the term ‘organized’ in a

different manner than Güzelyalı Public Forum (GPF), this term does not have a negative connotation for KPF as for GPF.

KPF explains that, in order to enlarge their community they go to bazaar and other places where they can gather people around them by referring cost of living and purchasing power. Because they think that, these are the most important problems for people before all political concerns. One the participant mentioned during in-depth interview that, when people have financial difficulties, they do not interest with other social problems but you can explain political decisions cause this economic problems and if they behave collectively they can make heard their voices. This participant mentioned that, local people know about them and they support them during their street protests or other activities thus they do not feel themselves limited wihtin this forum.

KPF members mention during focus group discussion that, Gezi Movement process, especially during early stages, was marked with extreme social and political cleavages; Public Forums sprung up in the middle this climate. In addition, it is likely that if these chaotic events did not occur, this society would not create an influential movement of this scale nor the different organizations that have emerged. Thus forum participants all agree that, “Gezi Park Forums are acquisition of this extreme process”. This point is important in terms of their emphasis on divided society. Karşıyaka Public Forum members are defining existing social structure as divided. However, opposition to government managed to bond several divided camps in society and from this climate, Gezi Park movement and park forums occurred.

One of the participants of the Karşıyaka Public Forum responded to the question concerning motivations behind their participation to these forums since Gezi Park

Movement – when I did this interview two and half years were passed since Gezi- by mentioning, “Forums will be in the future alternative solution centers in the eyes of people”. Karşıyaka Halk Forumu define Forums, in their Forum Manifesto, as ‘resistance centers’.(ref) They mention at this point, they had disputes while they were preparing their manifesto nevertheless they argue, “Each different argument enriches manifesto”.(one of the women forum members mentioned this point during focus group study 14.07.2016, Karşıyaka) This argument completely overlaps with the assumption in the literature, which will be mentioned in following sections in detail that, different arguments and conflicts between them provide a convenient atmosphere for deliberation to flourish. In addition, this conflict does not have to be an obstacle for reaching a common point. The other important point is that, they know that even they do not have big concrete outcomes until now, these collectivity and developing forum culture will provide very crucial ground for future social initiatives and other civil society organizations as well.

KPF members argue that, they should take a step further instead of conserving existing situation. This sentence displays that, they believe in themselves for creating a better conjuncture. One of the participant mentioned during in-depth interview that, “we pursue our road which is correct for us without oppressing people to come after us on the same road. We only try to determine our own path and if people would like to pursue we encourage them by heart”.(ref) This expression is similar with GFP, they also mention bringing society one step further by attributing themselves a leading role.

At this point, KPF make emphasis on that they are respectful against all other perspectives and they do not have a Forum culture, which adopt coercion. These

values are completely match with assumptions in the literature concerning deliberative democratic platforms' particularities. Nevertheless, the real world situation in terms of respect to other perspectives is a bit different which will be explained in diversity section. Field researches results show that, they do not adopt an oppressive attitude within group but it is because there is a homogeneity in terms of opinions in forum. When they confront with other opinions, they try to display a respectful and tolerant attitude against them however these new comers cannot become permanent because of forums' invisible eliminating mechanism.

KPF uses social media regularly and effectively. They discuss time to time that Forum principles are valid for Forum's facebook account as well and it is not allowed to share racist, sexist discourses in this page as in Forum discussions. One of the meeting which researcher participated, Forum moderator warned some participants to be attentive to their language while they share something in Forum's facebook page. They consider their social media accounts as a tool to reach more people, for this reason they try to active especially in facebook and they make their announcements from this page as other forums do. On the other hand, they can get interaction with other civil society organizations and initiatives due to social media, thus this channel also provides to strengthen their connection with them.

Foça Public Forum meets more regularly than other Forums. They mention, "We gathered sometimes with 3 people but we did not cancel our meeting". They prioritize continuity of Forum and they perceive this as a success. In Foça Public Forum, the discussion session starts with explanations about actions that they have put in practice since last meeting. In each discussion session, they define action plans and in the next meeting, they make an overall situation assessment about their last

decisions. For each event, they make a division of labor and this division of labor is completely on voluntary basis. Nevertheless, some tasks such like writing brochures and preparing banner are being taken over by certain members. They mention that they complement each other. Foça Public Forum uses their facebook account as a way of expressing their concerns. For this reason they have a short manifesto in their facebook group and they explain why they are here and what their principles are.

“We are here in order to voice problems of our city in which we are living. We aim to produce solutions to these problems and put them in practice as far as we can. Our principles are our priorities. We are here to think, discuss and create solutions.

Forum prioritizes public and it tries to be a bonding agent in society. The core principles of Forum are anti-fascism and anti-racism and other principles should be compatible with these principles”.(referans) This statement is important in terms of demonstrate how they perceive their existence and what are their main purposes. As mentioned in the literature section, deliberative democracy focuses on discussion and this manifesto shows how public forums consider discussion as a way of solution and being a part of decisions at least in their local environment.

In the eyes of Foca Public Forum, all communities of Turkey are equal and free. They make emphasis on fraternity and necessity for an organized life, which serve for equality, universal rights and liberties. They argue, “If we can construct a common dream we can fight against capitalism which destroys these universal principles”. This terms can be explained through deliberative democratic theory’s attribution which insists on equality especially concerning public participation and the emphasis on common dream is important to show how forum members perceive finding common concerns in the way of fighting against what they oppose.

Moreover, FPF defines Forums as channels through which they can display their opposite positions. They mention that, they want to be heard their voice and they anticipate from local government to come and listen their opinions and wishes. So to say, they do not merely want to gather and discuss on their agenda, their ultimate goal is to make their voice heard by local authorities in order to be take part in decision which effect their local life. The seven aspect of deliberative democracy via which this study examine public forums in terms of systemic approach, do not refer to this action-oriented attitude of deliberative democracy. This point will be given in decision-making section in detail but it is argued that, public forums in İzmir have an action-oriented attitude and they regard discussions as the mere way of this process.

During focus groups study one of the FPF member mentions, “We had big discussion when we were trying to prepare a booklet in which we tried to respond to question “what kind of city do we want to live in?” Our core principles are shaped by these responses. Moreover, we construct our activities in accordance with these principles and features of our ideal city”. They mention that, they had big discussions because they have different perspectives on future of their city. Some of the participants would like to live in a silent city but others argue that Foça can be vibrant and touristic place rather than a silent one. But as mentioned in KPF, after discussions between different opinions, they reached a consensus because they mention that, “If Forum's interest requires to take a decision in order to implement it, then they try to find a middle way to reach consensus”.

One of the forum participants mentioned during focus group study that, “Forums were established during Gezi Movement based on environmental conscience nevertheless then public forums have transformed to a social phenomenon”. He

claimed, “That is the truth and it is unquestionable”. Other participant added that “These forums were established because we lived a movement like Gezi otherwise it would not have been occurred”. However, there are different arguments concerning this point. One of the other forum members mentioned in reponse to other participants arguments that: “May be these forums born from Gezi Movement but they transformed and evolved a lot in the course of time. We cannot say now that Gezi and these forums have only environmental concerns. Nevertheless, it is still valuable in terms of displaying how a social movement, which is sourced from environmental conscience, could become a movement like Gezi Park Movement which is undoubtedly more overarching than an environmental movement”. Gezi Park movement is undoubtedly a reference point for public forums in İzmir. Nevertheless, the perception about Gezi Movement is not in the same line in all three forums and even same forum members have different perceptions about Gezi Movement. It can be argued that they want to declare that they can walk on their own foot.

One of the participant of Foça Forum mentioned during focus group study that, “We are here in Forum since June 2013 in order to fight against anti-democratic implementation in country with brother in arms. Environmental concerns are also important for us but they are not only motivations behind our participation to Forums”. This statement show us that, Foça Forum consider democratic implementations in the whole country not only in their local periphery. Fighting against existing democratic settlement is one of the important motivations behind participating forums. Thus, non-deliberative features of context can foster ambition of deliberative participation; it means that, non-deliberative dynamics within deliberative system can serve for improving deliberative culture as well.

Güzelyalı Public Forum define Forums as open public spaces, free-living quarters, living space, and soul of social life. It can be evaluated from all these definitions that, they do not refer any political term while defining 'public park forums'. This facilitates to find common points. Moreover, in social movements, rational communication is not reachable in discussions instead emotions play important role. (Della Porta, 2005) This is also applicable to our case. They usually refer emotional factors that push them being together and their emotional moods affect discussions. One of the respondent mentions that:

“If I do not participate then I will stay at home alone and I will not feel that I can do something beneficial. Coming here and discussing with people and being a part of agency (they use usually the term 'eylemcilik') make me feel like I am living and I am not alone.”

Emotional dynamics, as an important factor, make approximate participants of Forum and they start to feel as family members. It can be evaluated under the motivations of participants to join Forum's meetings regularly. They mention that they miss each other when they do not see each other. GPF frequently refers to word that there are -in Forum- sensitive people no matter of their political belongings. This point makes people closer and equal in terms of their concerns and this term is also a sign of emotional factors which play important role as a bonding agent. Deliberative democratic literature does not refer to this point. Public forums in İzmir, for the reason that they have been together for more than 4 years, display different motivations in terms of participating to forum meetings and activities. Besides the time issue, existing contextual framework, make people who have common future concerns about themselves more close to each other. It is argued that, along with

deepening discussion culture these public forums are still reflecting fragmented social structure in the country.

GPF defines Forum “as a process in which public come together and discuss” thus Forum is defined as a “form of discussion” and a place of discussion of public between themselves. This reference is important in terms of displaying the relevance of deliberative democratic theory’s core emphasis and forums’ focal points.

Discussion is the main distinctive element of deliberative democratic theory from other democratic theories and forums refer themselves as discussion platforms. The other important reference is concerning public, which means that these forums are inclusive and open to all citizens who want to be a part of this formation. One respondent from GPF emphasized during in-depth interview upon the term “Public” when he defined forums and he argued that this emphasis makes Forums distinct from other social and political organizations and platforms. As mentioned in the introduction section, these public forums in İzmir are important because they are not civil society organizations, which are prevalent in Turkish case, they are different formations and for this reason, deliberative democratic theory which prioritize citizens participation via discussion during decision-making process is convenient to analyze these public forums formations and functioning.

The most remarkable adjectives, which were utilized by participants for defining Public Park Forums in GPF, are 'humanitarian' and 'human-oriented'. After defining Forums as 'human-oriented collectivities', they emphasize that they are not a political restructuring. These words were not choose and used successive randomly. They mean by referring these terms that 'we are not political organization because we are a humanitarian collectivity and we have human-oriented concerns because we do

not have political priorities'. They use 'political' and 'humanitarian' as contradictory terms. These statements were collected during focus group studies and in-depth interviews. They try to demonstrate that they are different from organizations which prioritize political concerns and have political affiliations because they believe that public good can be reached by abstaining from political belongings. This point is related to public sphere political sphere distinction and displays that public forum members try to find a place themselves within public sphere with a new form of participation and cooperation.

Participants of GPF respond to the question “with which purposes you started to join Forums” that, “Gezi Movement was initial driving force and it revealed that many people have common concerns about political power and its actions”. They started to gather in public parks every night in Gezi Park Movement summer, in order to talk and discuss what they can do for a new order in society. One respondent mentions:

“Frustration in society is the most important driving force, which orients people to go to streets, to join protests and to participate public park forums in order to discuss about what they can do and how they can be part of transformation in society”.(ref)

Other GPF member explains the first days' reflections of Gezi Park Movement in İzmir during in-depth interview.(ref) He argues that, “Politically oriented people were not in streets during first days of Gezi Park Movement. In fact, may be there were politically oriented people in protests nevertheless initial motivation was different and for this reason people did not feel need to express their political stances. They had more important concerns than their political affiliations such as common perception of menace. They had common anger; common future worries and thus their political affiliations were not initial motivation behind participation to

protests. No one knows each other there was not collective attitude as claimed; people were participating on individualistic basis”. This statement demonstrates that, individuality and personal concerns were having precedence over collective behavior and this mentality paved the way for movement without leader each and every person existed during Gezi Park movement with his/her own individuality rather than belongings.

GPF members differentiate themselves from Gezi Park in certain aspects. They mention that, they try to create a cultural and political climate which was absent in Gezi Park movement. This argument is important to mention for displaying that, although they all agree that Gezi Park Movement was initial point and it paved the way for Public Park Forums, they argue that they construct a more convenient atmosphere and a more established formation, which provide to flourish a cultural and political climate. At this point, they are in contradiction with their definitions of Public Park Forums because now they mention that they create a political atmosphere which was absent in Gezi Park Movement. It can be argued that, in time when forum culture establishes, political stances become more obvious in comparison to beginning times but still they do not define themselves as a political entity.

GPF members are organizing events for children because they argue that if they want to change something in society they should start from children. Apart from this statement, it can be argued that, in their perception they have a leading and dominant role in society. They argue that society need a transformation and that transformation should be in line with republican acquisitions. While they make emphasis on transformation in society, they usually refer to these acquisitions and they argue that

society has lost its way because of moving away from Republican acquisitions. They explicitly mention that they try to “create a generation in accordance to republican acquisitions” with the purpose of eliminate dissolutions in society. Their initial aim of participating to this Forum is “being active by dealing with problems in society and being a part of solution”. They struggle for transform society and ‘carry it a step further’. They define their activities as fight for democracy, liberty and peace. As mentioned in the literature section, problem solving intention orient forums to stay in play in a cooperaiton with others who think in the same line with them. Moreoever it is argued that this intention to stay in deliberation arises from aim to contribute social learning process which according to them will create a social capital accumulation and civic participation repertoire.

As a conclusion remark, it can be argued that, the main motivations and departing points are relatively similar for three forums. They define public forums by staying away from political connotations and they still try to survive not for today but also for future when – as they believe- people need their experience. All three forums refer to attributions, which are also mentioned by deliberative democracy theorists may be not with the same terms but they refer. For instance they refer to building deliberative capacity by social learning and moreover they mention public good which is over political and personal interests and they refer to transformative power of such deliberative groups. The other important point is that they define themselves as open discussion platforms in which they try to be a part of problem solving. In the next section, other aspects of inclusiveness and diversity as a result of inclusiveness will be examined within forums.

CHAPTER 6

COMPOSITION OF FORUMS: WHETHER THEY CAN REACH PLURALITY?

As mentioned in the introduction section, deliberative democracy mentions, decisions, which are being taken after an open and citizen participant discussion, are more legitimate than representative-oriented processes. In these deliberative processes, people can have their own word in decisions, which affect them. Nevertheless, in deliberative democratic literature decision-making issue is a bit confusing especially when the debate goes around consensus issue and common good as mentioned in the first part. Actually, not all deliberative practices aim to reach concrete decisions, and the process is enough valuable in terms of creating a deliberative culture. Some arguments -will be discussed below- mention that, some middle ways exit in terms of reaching consensus and common decisions. The public park forums in İzmir are not obsessed with taking decisions at the end of each forum session; actually they call the outcomes of forums as action plans. They know that, they cannot easily influence the decisions of local government and they try to make their voice heard by their events, activities and protests.

The mini-publics get critics in the literature in terms of creating monolittique entities, which does not allow plurality and complexity. On the other hand, advocates of

deliberative democracy argue that deliberative democracy can foster tolerance between different opinions. Chambers refers to the critics of diversity theory against deliberative democracy. The first involves the notion of reasonableness and reasoning and the second the conditions of equality. Chamber argues that, because of critics about incompetence of deliberative democracy in coping with identity, diversity and recognition issues raised by diversity theorists, defenders of deliberative democracy have intended to reformulate the theory in order to make it more substantial (well-founded) against critics concerning pluralism. As Gould notes (1996, p. 172), “the telos of discourse, what characterizes its aim and method, is agreement. Difference is something to be gotten past. And the reciprocal recognition is for the sake of common agreement rather than also for the sake of enhancing and articulating diversity.” Chambers argues that, confrontation with other peoples, cultures and identities derived deliberative democrats to re-think about being definitely consensus-oriented and to find new aspects that can cope with pluralism and diversity. Thus, Chambers mentions that, “the intersection with diversity theory has moved deliberative democratic theory in significant new directions”(Chambers, 2003).

These new directions can be found in public park forums in İzmir. As mention in the introduction part of this section, middle ways in terms of reaching consensus is being perceived more feasible in deliberative democratic literature and public park forums display such an attitude during their discussion sessions. Nevertheless, finding new ways about reaching consensus cannot handle with maintaining in-group diversity. It means that, even moving away from consensus-oriented approach, cannot provide plurality in public park forums in İzmir. They mention that, such forums aim to find

common points in order to maintain a fruitful discussion for this reason they should hide their political affiliations.

Karşıyaka Halk Forum mention that there are principles concerning participation to Forum. They put on their Facebook group's opening page what are these principles and they prepared a manifesto, which indicates these principles. They mention explicitly that, racist discourses are definitely excluded from all Forum activities and discussions. They claim that all other discourses are welcomed by Forum. This point refers to the notion of inclusiveness. They also make emphasis on universal principles as though human rights and principle of rule of law. On their facebook account there is such a statament:

“Forum’s values are scientific and open to everyone and we take the road by gaining respect from others”

One respondent from KHF mentioned during in-depth interview that “Nationalist and neo-nationalists tried to manipulate Forums from beginning. Nevertheless, they were minority in terms of quality and quantity thus; they could not succeed to dominate Forum discussions. Liberals, anti-capitalist Muslims and nationalists have left the group after a while”.(ref) This point is important in terms of displaying how Forums could not maintain the diversity, which existed in early stages. Opinions in majority dominate discussions and different arguments cannot survive within group too long. This situation can be explained by contextual features which play both a supressive role over public forums functioning and main features of Turkish social and political conjunctures shape internal dynamics of forums.

During a focus group study one participant explained that at the beginning of Gezi Park movement so to say in 2013 summer, they were meeting every night in Nergiz Park. And they were calling themselves Bostanlı Public Assembly. This assembly was composed of young activists who have affiliation with Turkish Communist Party nevertheless in time they lost their dominance within group and they left assembly meetings to a large extent. They argue that, young people do not participate to Forum meetings because they like action and in these forums the way of solve problems is discussion generally, and it does not contain dynamism which satisfy young people.

People and groups who have left-view are still more active and they have leader position in Karşıyaka Public Forum. However, one of the forum participants mentioned during focus group study that “it should not be perceived as a pressure, they only share their organizational experiences with Forum and this facilitates to put in action Forum’s decisions. The same emphasis was made by Güzelyalı Public Park Forum. They explain the position of people from left-wing view in Forum as such;

“At the beginning, all social segments were in movement however; in the course of time, movement has evolved into a more left-oriented mentality because people who orient discussions and lead actions are left-oriented. They have generally a politically active background and they have discipline and conscience concerning behaving in an organized manner. For this reason, who were outside of left-wing view started to feel as excluded”. Moreover, during interviews they mention, “orientation is coming from nature of politics”. In the literature, there are some critics concerning dominance of some groups in mini-publics. Public park forums can also be criticized in terms of monolithic dominant discourses, but it should be mentioned that, especially such forums which continue for long periods, make people to think in

similar lines. It can be defined a kind of preference change but actually, participants who are core members of these forums have similar point of views may be with some minor differences.

This dominance of left-wing view determines dominants discourse in the Forum as well. One respondent said during focus group study that, “She felt happy to walk with a nationalist arm in arm because this shows that they started to think and question existing situation”. It can be argued that, as a general tendency, forum participants marginalize people who are right wing. For instance, during one interview respondent said that: “There were even right wing people in Public Park Forum discussions” “Although they are right wing they participated”.

One of the respondent argued during interview that, at the beginning people were not politically oriented and also existing structural and functional formulation did not allow people to express their personnel identities such as political identity or religious affiliations. This practice has become a principle for Public Park Forums and defines their perspective against identity issues. According to this principle, Forum members –even they affiliate a political party- should leave their political party affiliation behind the door when they participate to Forum discussions. It means that, their priority should be Forum concerns not their political party’s interests. For instance, inside forum there are members who feel more close to certain political parties like CHP. Nevertheless, they severely criticize Aziz Kocaoğlu – who is mayor of İzmir from CHP- because of its municipal work in İzmir. Forum participants should prioritize concerns about their city and country over their political stances.

In their report which is entitled “about provocation” they explicitly mention that they are not only against government and political power they are also against opposition parties which are according to them also be nourished from existing clashes in society. They mention, “differences which we think that cause of discrepancies are in fact bonding us”. They mention, “The Fascist mentality, which settle down deeply in ourselves, is also enemy of us and we should fight against it as well”. It is argued that, besides monolithic structure of Karşıyaka Public Forum, they voice their ambition about diversity within group and also in society. Nevertheless, even when they express this desire they use an exclusionist discourse.

During focus group study they refer to attempt of Labor Party and TKP in order to display how political and personal interests could cause disorder in Forum. In this attempt –as written in their meeting report(ref)- these people tried to sabotage meeting and tried to dominate discussions according to their ideologies. Forums are open to everyone and every opinion as long as they do not try to manipulate people’s perceptions by force. Here is the emphasis on force of better argument instead of any coercion or manipulation of opinions by power. This emphasis is being made in the literature by Habermas as well and this point is important in terms of presenting deliberative democracy’s focus on communication. They (more than one participant mentioned his/her opinions about this issue) mentioned during one of the focus group studies that, their initial point to come forums is to get opportunity to talk and discuss with other people.(ref) As mentioned in the introduction part, deliberative democracy has some common features with other democratic theories but its distinct from them with its prominent emphasis on communication and discussion abilities of people and make their voice heard by this way.

During in-depth interview one forum member tried to display how tolerant they are against new comers and different opinions. he mentioned that even their manner of arrival and attitudes –TKP and Labor Party- during discussions were not compatible with Forum’s principles – because they came with their party flags and banners- Forum respected their right to speak and add their theme suggestion to Forum meeting agenda. This point is related to be an open discussion platform which gives everyone equal opportunity to express his/her opinions. Nevertheless, while TKP and Labor Party members were talking about public rebellion in Egypt they composed military intervention with public rebellion and argued that every public rebellion will need at the end help of an army. This argument cannot be acceptable for forum members because all forum members mentioned during focus group study that – there was an obvious consent in this issue- KHF is explicitly opposed to every type of coup and they cannot be tolerant against this coup plotter approach. Thus, they have strict barriers in terms of discussion issues in forum meetings especially when the issue comes to any type of violence.

At this point, it should be referred to respect and openness issues in deliberative democratic literature. They usually mention forums are open to everyone who want to join providing forum principles such as respect to other’s opinions, stay away from manipulative attitudes, not to bring their political identities to the fore. On the other hand, they have in fact an obvious political stance and they do not hide this. For instance they argue that, everyone can join to Forum and participate to discussions in condition that they have a problem with power so with government. This expression displays that there is an exclusive tendency towards who support the existing political power. They frame their opposition at different points as an opposition and reaction to intervention to their life-style. This means that, even they take decisions

and actions collectively, they prioritize their individuality. The deliberative democracy literature does not refer to this point explicitly.

One of the respondent mentioned during in-depth interview that “Some people left the Forum when decisions are not in the same line with their opinion” thus, it can be argued that Forums cannot provide an atmosphere which price diversity. People generally do not come to discussion in order to come across with different opinions and get in interaction; contrary they come to Forum meetings with the purpose of encountering with like-minded people whom fostering their opinions.

Some of the KHF members recognized this problem about diversity wihtin group at the very early stages of forum formation. There were critics coming from forum inside forum concerning Forum’s principles, which were mentioned in Forum’s meeting report. These critics refer to the homogenous community of Forum and its power of representation. They argue that Forum has an implicit tendency to create a uniform public. (14 ağustos 2013) Report is important in terms of explaining the transformation within forum. At the early formation period of forum, when participation rate was more higher than now, homogenous participation profile was ditracting forum members because they were believe in that discussion sessions can be fruitful only when different voices can be heard. In the course of time, some of the participant who do not satisfy with forum structure and composition left the group and some of them get used to it as a forum culture.

The power of representation is not being mentioned during interviews and focus group studies, because as mentioned in previous sections, the formation, functioning and objectives of public park forums in İzmir are not so similar with mini-publics,

which were mentioned in the literature. Undoubtedly they have common points, but deliberative democracy theory cannot explain whole picture about public park forums.

For all forums, principle of voluntarism is the main principle of participation to forums' events and meetings. It means that there is no coercion over non-participants to join Forum meeting and events. All participants are voluntarily come and work for Forum's good. One of the Foça Forum members mentioned in the interview that, "personalities are playing important role in this process". This argument refers to the point about individuality. They emphasize on their individualities before their identity of forum membership.

In terms of inclusiveness of Forum, there are different arguments in Foça Forum. One participant argues, "It does not reflect reality that, Forums are open to every social segment. However, every person who defends "free living spaces" can join Forum even their political view is different. The important point to define what is different in their eyes, but it can be argued that, they want also a forum structure – as Güzelyalı Forum Members mentioned- where they can meet with people who think in the same line with them.

Besides intrinsic exclusionary approach, Foça Forum members have similar point of views in terms of inclusiveness. One respondent mentions, "Forum does not have barriers against new comers but in order to behave in a harmony, it is crucial to have 'same dream'". Nearly all Foça Forum members make emphasis on 'common mentality' requirement during interviews and focus group studies, which in their perception is important for a Public Forum, which will work for public good instead of private interests. They focus on their individuality rather than being a part of an

entity but on the other hand, they still prioritize public interest rather than their own private interests.

While they explain how hard to survive and work within a forum formation in Turkey, they refer to religion because they consider religion as a sign of undemocratic prosecutions. Their emphasis on religion can be evaluated as an indicator of their perception, which considers religious affiliations of individuals as a barrier against democratization. One of the participants mention that Anti-Capitalists Muslims were welcomed to their events and meetings but, there is a condition that they should leave their Islamic perspective and identity behind the door because religious identity can prevent people from improving their discussion culture.

Foça Forum members argue, “As Turkish society, we have some strange forms of affiliations. Compatriotism, football teams, political parties are some common grounds, which facilitate to establish close relations. Nevertheless, these common grounds can not provide to develop a discussion culture. We do not know to listen each other even when we are saying the same thing. We need tolerance more than anything else”. Again, turn back to the reference point of this dissertation; even deliberation culture cannot be constructed easily especially in semi-democratic cases like Turkey, and people who did not experience social capital, have some struggle to meet and discuss with different opinions. Nevertheless, when they realize that, being a part of a deliberation process –which requires an optimum level tolerance against other opinions- open door to be heard by decision-makers thus they can get opportunity to have a voice on decision about their life. Even this experience foster the deliberative culture. This point is important from another angle as well. This dissertation takes a systemic approach as explained in previous sections and

arguments of Foça Forum Members display how important to examine deliberative practices within their environment.

One of the Foça Forum member directly refer to this point and said that “Turkey’s democratic tradition, there is not a discussion culture which provides opportunity different people come together and discuss on something. There are not convenient organizational structures, which give chances citizens to be existing in a democratic public sphere with their own opinions”. And other member claimed during interview that, “Even in Gezi movement, if things had intensified, political and social polarizations would have risen”.

When they explain during focus group study about participants’ profile of Foça Forum, one of the participant mentioned that as Karşıyaka Public Forum, low level of young participation is a big problem. She explained that, young people do not interest with Forum activities, it is a problem on several counts. For instance they could not manage to handle with all work load of Forum because of their age.

However she added that “we display very good performance when compare to our age average, even so, if there were young people we could have been more dynamic than now”. Two members of Forum mentioned, “For instance we came to Foça as two retired people but then we found Forum and we could not stay at home without doing anything” Their concern about young participation is actually about low level of participation to forum. They voice their ambition about increase in number of participants because they mention that, when participation to their events will increase then their impact on local government will increase accordingly. On the other hand, they could construct and maintain a deliberative ability in their forum

due to the small number of participants. This point is related to mass-participation and deliberation paradox, which is mentioned in the literature by Fishkin.

One participant of FHF mentioned during in-depth interview mentioned that they do not leave their political identities behind the doors. However, their arguments concerning identity issue is different from other Forums. They do not force participants to leave their political identities behind the doors because they believe they can find some common political grounds if they pursue public good. Thus, they do not consider political identities as discriminator as GHF do consider. However, during focus group studies intrinsic situations were revealed. For instance, one of the participant said that he is also member of United June Movement. Other members of Foça Forum were surprised because they did not know this before. When asked to him why he hid his affiliation with this movement he responded that he did not want to damage the synergy in the forum. This response reveals that, even they are more tolerant to different political affiliations than Karşıyaka Public Forum – according to results of interviews and focus groups studies- there is an invisible mechanism, which push them to hide their political identities.

Foça Forum members mention that they are discontented in terms of diversity within Forum. One of the participant mentioned during focus group study that” Diversity in terms of opinions provide lively discussions and these discussions pave the way for reach creative opinions”. One other participant added “We know importance of being with diverse opinions for improvement democratically but a person from MHP (Nationalist Movement Party) does not want to be with me. Or a person who supports AKP does not join us by saying that we are against government and AKP”. They argue that Foça Forum is open to diverse opinions but other people (such as

AKP supporters) are intolerant against them. In Karşıyaka Public Forum (KHF) this situation is partly different. One participant of KHF says, “After all that long time it is impossible to be arm in arm with a Nationalist again, because the camps have more become evident than ever before”. This argument is important how deliberation process can damage rather than enhance the relationship between different groups. Because in time people who have similar opinions create a common language and common perceptions and this make them remove from people who use different jargon.

One of the Güzelyalı Public Forum participant mentioned during focus group study that, while Gezi Park movement, they were more active nevertheless, even during that pick times of movement there was not enough diversity. He added that “Because even at those times of social process of escalation, it is hard to find people who keen to shoulder responsibility concerning societal struggles”. This respondent also argued that, although there are some arguments about existence of extreme groups in Gezi Park Movement, that was not the case at least in İzmir-based protests. There were people who feel discontent about political power actions and as mentioned above the common point is anger against government, nevertheless even its pick times, there was not extreme groups as people supposed. Moreover, they are still absent, extreme groups do not attend forum protests.

Güzelyalı Public Forum argue that Forums are impartial and inclusive thus everyone can join the discussion without any limitation nevertheless, everyone who wants to join discussions and be a member of Forum should beforehand accept general rules and principles of Forum. The one of most important Forum principles, which is directly about inclusiveness and transparency of Forum formation is that,

“Everyone who wants to participate to Forum activities should accept that no political sign neither party logo nor political slogan can be used in Forum facebook page and/or during Forum activities and discussions.”

They mention that their door is open to everyone but each person who wants to participate to Forum discussions should leave their political and/or religious identity out of the door. Empirical findings demonstrate that, this situation is similar in all three public forums in İzmir. In fact, they all have political stances – as they mention during interviews- but they are not holding their political preferences as an obvious sign in front of Forums common interests. It can be argued that these three public forums have different arguments in terms of their capacity of inclusiveness. They all recognize importance of inclusiveness which comes along with equality and diversity nevertheless on the other hand they have different reasons while justifying why they cannot maintain in-group diversity and a real inclusiveness.

While one of the members of Güzelyalı Public Park explains their rules of participation to forum meetings during in-depth interview, she mentioned that “They call İhsan Eliaçık to participate Forum discussions but they mention that he and people around him should leave their religious identities.” One other respondent argued “Forums are open to everyone. It can be observed with a concrete example; a person who does not want to be built a new stadium in his/her neighborhood with environmental concerns and a person who thinks that it is a state politics can gather and fight for same objectives with different concern and they do not try to manipulate other’s perspective”. It can be argued that they regard the issue of inclusiveness in theory however in practice they prioritize group harmony in order to put in action their decisions.

One another important point in terms of the issue of inclusiveness is distinct arguments between core members and other participants who come to forum meetings occasionally. One of Forum participant, who is helping Forum during its social events and not a permanent participant of Forum discussion sessions, mentioned during in-depth interview that, permanent participants have become a group and they orient all activities and discussions. Sometimes new people join to Forum and start to participate to discussion nevertheless, they feel being excluded and after one or two meeting they left Forum. It can be argued that, although Forum meetings are open to everyone – at least all participants agree this is the case- and even they prioritize publicity, Forum has invisible barriers against new comers. Forum has its own functioning principles and they construct a specific Forum culture, which sets norms and rules implicitly. Moreover, that Forum culture prevents Forum from having diversity in terms of participants' profiles.

There are people who did not take any active role in a political or a social movement and/or protest before and there are people who have politically active background in terms of working as syndicate member. Some argue that there is not any dominant group in Forum and no one manipulates discussions nevertheless, they also accept that some participants have more experience in terms of collective behavior due to their past political and social memberships, thus they can take the lead during protests. Participants do not interpret this situation as a manipulation. Moreover they accept that, first days were in need of orientation and indispensably political groups took the control and organize protests. Political groups have experience to arrange people and make them engage in street protest for this reason they do not define this orientation as a pressure or domination of certain groups or ideologies, they define this as a normal process for the beginning of a social movement.

One participant illustrated one of the remarkable –according to him- event during first days of Gezi Movement. He referred to this anecdote in order to display how people’s reaction could be destroying without sensibility:

“These days were the first days of movement and we –people- were meeting near the Göztepe Bridge every night after work. A car was passing in front of us and driver was a veiled woman. A woman one of us, who was middle-aged, abused the woman in the car by hitting her car’s glass. We tried to keep her from doing this and explained that her attitude is impolite.” He argues that this anecdote shows tension within society and uncontrolled reactions of people which are sometimes sourcing from despair and their inexperience of being streets as a protester.

One of the respondents in GPF argued that we are not a democratic society, differences cannot survive, and majority is suppressing minorities. They criticize this situation nevertheless, they are also not a group, which contains diverse groups and opinions thus it can be argued that Forums are reflecting existing political conjuncture in societies. One of the objections towards incoherency of deliberative ideal comes to the scene at this point and claims that, once institutional structure was constructed, the people cannot behave independently from this structure. But they can learn how to find ways within cracks of the system.

GPF members put explicitly their attitude towards exhibited political affiliations on the table and they emphasize that political identities, flags and political slogans are banned from Forum meetings. They argue that, exhibiting political identities and affiliations can cause conflict and dissolution in-group and they do not perceive this as a chance for diversity. One of the respondent argues that, “if everyone come and display his/her political identity then this will cause to put differences on center

rather than similarities and commonalities”. It can be argued that, actually, they prize diversity in-group and they give importance to different opinions in terms of maintaining democratic and lively deliberation process but they also afraid of facing with reflections of deep clashes existing in society in their Forum if they highlight differences rather than similarities.

For instance one respondent hide his political affiliation -this was revealed during in-depth interview- because of his past experiences – fractions in social democrat sides of politics- he knows that even close political views were fragmented instead of merge and they could not become a political power. These unfortunate experiences prevent him to express his political identities with the purpose of avoiding dissolutions within group. Because they know that in order to become a big community and they mention that “if they need commonalities and if the ways of this passing through to hide their identities, they can do this voluntarily”.

One respondent who does not have any affiliations with either political parties of political groups explain this situation from his point of view that, “he will feel being excluded if people start to mention their political affiliations”. According to them if we want to define this formation as Public Forum then we should stay away from identical issues, which make us degraded. It can be argued that, this fear is similar in all three public forums in İzmir.

During focus groups study forum members mention that, common values are playing important bonding agent role between people. In spite of this, if there are obvious differences between participants, they argue, “with time these differences cause conflict and divisions in Forum, nevertheless extreme opinions (in their terms) are being automatically eliminated by Forum’s existing structured internal dynamics”.

They mention that, “these internal dynamics in fact play a transformative role and this transformative mechanism serves to transform differences to resemblance and they start to be akin to each other”.

One of the respondent argue that, they are not interested in people’s identities no matter what it is. He says that the important point is “take a position near oppressed people”. This point is important to mention because, this issue approximates people even they have different political stances. They mention that, sub-identities should not be revealed and everyone should gather under one inclusive umbrella rather than discriminator identities. Deliberative democracy literature cannot refer to emotional factors which hold together participants of such public forums. Public Forum members – same in all three forums- generally mention emotional dynamics which motivate them to continue to stay in forums. They refer usually to Neighborhood as an important fellowship ground and as an umbrella identity. They feel like family members and their common living spaces their cities and they consider their district as a meeting place.

Güzelyalı Public Forum participants’ stance changes concerning identity issue changes depending on their personal profile. For instance, two people were working in a syndicate before they retired and they expressed their opinions concerning being together with different segments of society and different perspectives, in a more tolerant way than other participants. They do not mention wish of being with people who are like-minded with them in Forum discussions in order to provide an order within Forum meetings. They have different pre-requisites in their mind in terms of accepting new people to Forum meetings. They have a more socialist discourse and one of them mentions that “He is not taking side of political organizations; he is

taking side of public”. Again, this argument directly related to claim that Public Forums display an attitude towards reaching common interest or group interest rather than focusing on private interests and aim to be beneficial in solving problems, which concern whole society or at least their local agenda.

Güzelyalı Forum's members explain their arguments concerning political identity issue with a concrete example which was mentioned by other forums as well. This show how this case influence Forums' memories. As other two forums, they told that some people participated to discussion with their Labor Party label and they attended to Forum discussions with their own masses. They tried to manipulate discussions and to attract supporter to their political camp. But general tendency in Forum displayed an attitude against politicized groups and after a while they gave up and abandoned to participate to Forum discussions because their aim was not get interaction with different perceptions and feel the diversity instead they had political ambitions. In order to reach this goal they tried to use Forum's power to reach people. Respondents argue that “Labor Party supporters put their political wills on center not human thus; they could not reach their goals. In other words, they did aim to reach some party interests and for this reason, they failed”.

In terms of transparency and publicity, they mention that they make their events open to public and they also announce from their facebook group and they hang their event announcement on the walls and trees around Güzelyalı Park and Göztepe region. This situation is similar with other forums. They also announce their meeting times and places via their facebook groups or hand-brochures or banners if they can prepare.

When they were asked about equality within group, one participant of forum who does not come to forum meetings regularly mentioned that, even they claim there is equal right to speech in practice this does not work. This claim is important because it shows that, they cannot actualize their principles in practice because they do not have always ideal situations.

During focus groups study, one of the participant mentioned that, “it was not a homogenize organization at the beginning but after political discourses start to dominate Forums, disengagements became indispensable. At the beginning Gezi Movement was a total social inflation nevertheless in time even people who do not belong to any group find somewhere to feel close their perception”. One participant displayed explicitly clash within group “Someone run like hell when they hear Atatürk”. This displays that Atatürk has become a real separator in society. People who support HDP left the group and contrary some Forum members have left Forum because a dominant HDP discourse exists in Forum. For instance, someone who is from nationalist wing of CHP joins to Forum but he/she leaves Forum by claiming that Forum is behaving as an extension of HDP.

This chapter aimed to show how diversity issue works within Forums and do they maintain in-group plurality as they claim. Diversity is directly related to forum experience in terms of inclusiveness and participation rules and barriers if there exist. Especially participant observations and interviews with non-permanent members display the fact that, despite Forums' arguments and intentions about reach in-group diversity, plurality of opinions and equality, there are in all these three forums homogenous participant profiles. Moreover, for the reason that, these forums have been continuing since June 2013, they construct a deep-seated forum culture and

even this culture behaves such a barrier against new-comers and especially against different opinions. In the next section, decision-making procedures will be examined in these three forums. Decision-making procedures are important in terms of legitimacy of decisions as mentioned in the introduction part. Next section will open the way to display how they construct relationship with decision-makers -in this context local government- and other civil society organizations in order to find ways to voice their decision and demands.



CHAPTER 7

FORUMS' DECISION-MAKING PROCEDURES AND ACTION-ORIENTED CONSENSUS

One of the Karşıyaka Public Forum members mentioned during in-depth interview that, people are more interested in environmental issues because taking decisions and putting them in action are more easy than other issues. That is to say that, decisions are being taken depending on their feasibility. Local issues especially concerning their green areas are most attractive issues for KHF members. For instance, one of the KHF members mentioned during focus group study that “people who are living in Karşıyaka do not interest by heart with other issues but with their park”. During an in-depth interview one respondent argued that when they discuss about solutions to local problems some disputes can occur in terms of way of approaching and solving problems, but at least when the issue can be defined as common concern by forum members then at the end of they day they can find a middle way.

During one focus group study, one KHF member explained that, in early stages of Gezi Park Movement, they were focusing on street protests and discussing about their future action plans concerning demonstrations. In time, their discussion issues were diversified in accordance with national and local agendas. As organizational

formation, there is no administration body, which orients discussions and defines subjects of discussions. They define subjects of discussions together and they take decisions with consensus or majority voting if not all participants agree with decision. This point is important to make distinct public forums in İzmir form other examples in the literature because generally – as mentioned in the introduction section- discussion issues are being determined by organizers of these constructed deliberative mini-publics. But in public forums in İzmir, participants are defining together their discussion agenda.

During an interview, one of the KHF member mentioned that, “In Forums there is not representative mechanism but direct democracy. People are not represented in Forums they directly voice their opinions and use their votes”. This point is mentioned by other forums as well, it is important in terms of displaying their perception of direct democracy and representation issue. They think that, representative democracy have some challenges and gaps and they try to fill this gap via this forums in which they experience direct democracy at least in their small decision-making mechanisms. KHF mentions their decision-making principles:

Principles of Decision-Making

1. Everyone should support the decision even if one person does not convince they discuss until everyone accept decision or find another way.
2. Suitable to soul of June
3. Serve to fight in the place of democracy, freedom and labor

Forum members explained during focus groups study that, at the beginning, they were trying to construct a systematic voting procedure. Nevertheless, according to my participant observations, because of decreasing number of participants, these procedures have become unnecessary. For instance, they argued that searching unanimity or in their terms “absent of negative vote” decelerates Forum functioning and execution process. Thus they decided to look for 3/2 vote rule. At this point it should be mentioned that each Public Forum has different type of decision-making process, KHF claims that they have a systematic mechanism of decision-making nevertheless in practice -according to results of participant observations during their forum discussion meetings- discussion sessions pass in an atmosphere of bargaining and they do not apply this 3/2 rule to all their decisions.

In terms of participant profile, one of the KHF member mentioned in focus group study that “During Gezi movement, opposition groups came together and people who were not in the opposite camp did not participate. Nevertheless, opposite camp included different segments thus they were not a homogenous group.” It means that, even people who position in the opposition camp, do not have similar way of perception. For this reason, in some cases, they took action when they could reach a decision with unanimity but in other cases, the situation is different. Forum members mentioned that “It was obvious that they were all opposite to government and political power but, they had still different point of views and different style of taking action”. One of the respondents argued that Forums are referring to whole but this whole includes only opposite groups even so it is a good practice that different opposition groups can gather and take in action together. Because even for opposite side of society it is hard to come together and behave in a harmony. One of the interviewer from KHF mentioned that: “When forum face with problems in reaching

consensus then some people can feel themselves like minority within group”. And according to this participant, this feeling can cause to feel also excluded and Forum should prevent to create such a feeling.

In the literature, it was mentioned that, rational arguments are better arguments and have the power against irrational arguments and they replace coercion. Besides the fact that, defining what is rational and what is not is not an easy task, public forums in İzmir also refer to this point while they responded to the question; how do they reach decision? Why some arguments are more acceptable than the other for majority of Forum? In their report, which was written during the first months of Gezi Movement KHF mentions explicitly the term “common sense” it can be evaluated as a response to wish to be rational. It is important to mention, they argued during focus group study that they behave conscientiously. Participant observation study demonstrated that, during Forum discussions, they do not refer to any religious or moral thinking system while they were discussion about their agenda and justifying their opinions. They were mentioning the substance of their decisions by universal norms and rules such as human rights, freedom of speech, freedom of expression, minority rights and etc.

When it comes to equal right to speak, different arguments arise in KHF. They mention in manifesto that, people who have right to speak feel more responsible to Forum because it fosters their affiliation with Forum. “We do not need any guidance of any wise man in our Forum”. Nevertheless, they had a dispute between each other during the focus group study concerning the right to speech, they got angry with one participant for the reason that he talks too much, and he does not allow other ones to join the discussion. During this dispute, one of the participant

mentioned that, “Because of A.G. brother's (he bespeaks as brother because he is oldest member of Forum) this type of attitudes, young friends who were participating forum discussions at the beginning, left the group”. After this statement they had a short dispute other members also expressed their discontent about this issue, person who was criticized did not accept the critics but then they could turn back to without researcher intervention to focus group study. The important point is that, argument about decrease in young participation, displays obviously how equal right to speak influence people's motivation to participate to forums. So to say, for a deliberative platform equal right of participation and also equal right of speak are the most important requirements.

Due to study of participant observation, their ways of discussion can be analyzed besides their responses during focus group study and in-depth interviews. In KHF, they choose a moderator for each Forum based on unanimity. One person volunteer for being moderator and if others approve then discussion start. They define the agenda together by asking everyone their suggestions. (Sometimes they define their agenda before meeting if there is an important nation-wide or local issue to discuss) They generally speak by asking permission from moderator but sometimes in relation to issues they are talking about they talk without asking permission. When they get interaction between each other moderator intervene and ensure rhythm of discussion. This moderator takes notes during discussions and post report on Facebook group page. Their admin of Facebook group is identified for three months.

According to agenda, participants take the floor and share information they have with others. For instance, Kültürpark is an important issue for Forum because this issue is directly related to İzmir City and this issue is not a political but an

environmental issue. K lt rpark and its importance will be explained in detail in the following sections. The other issue, which is being discussed nearly in all Forum meetings, is Nergis Park (a green area in the center of Karşıyaka district and local government try to destroy it to build houses) They have been working on this issue since 2014 and they went to local authorities in order to voice their demands.

Nevertheless, they could not reach any gain from their efforts. They had conflict about strategy they will pursue in this issue during Forum meeting. Some of them support to protest in the assembly of municipality but others argue that it is not the way of reaching solution only it can help to be heard by large communities. This point shows that, each member of forum does not have a common position against local government, at least they have different perspectives about getting interaction with local government.

The subjects of discussions in KHF do not exclude political agenda and they consider diversity in terms of discussion subjects as richness. Actually, these assemblies do not turn into severe conflict platforms because people who participate are already from the same point of view as mention in previous section. They are generally like-minded people in terms of political stance.

Foça Forum members mentioned during focus groups study and in-depth interviews that, everyone has equal right to speak in Foça Forum. During decision-making process, they had discussions mostly because of contradictory opinions about ways of solutions. They generally take decisions concerning environmental problems. Nevertheless, they have disagreements in terms of ways which they will pursue.

For instance, some participants argue that after submitting their petition to local authorities concerning an issue which they look for a solution, they should assume a

passive attitude and wait for response. Others are in favor of being active and suggest to street demonstrations. Because they argue that, media follow their events by this way they can create a social pressure over local authorities. For instance, one of the issues in their agenda was occupation of a beach in Foça. One person uses a public beach for his private interest by constructing a café. They have been tackling with this issue since 2014. But they could not get a concrete success. Some participants suggested meeting with mayor and district governor and gaining their support; some of them objected to this suggestion. These contradictory arguments do not cause conflict. While they discuss, they take the floor by asking permission from moderator and they try to find a middle way by referring goals of Forum.

One of the member mentioned during focus group study, “Even conscience about environmental issues has transformed from beginning.” This point is important to show public forums' function as social learning platforms. Moreover, members who are concerned about environment – industry in Aliğa and air pollution it causes is an important issue for Foça Forum members- can have different solutions to same problems. Some of them think that renewable energy can be a solution but others can believe, renewable energy systems are also damaging for environment. But they mention during focus group discussion that: “it is important that, we all think in favor of our city and environment, for this reason it is not important to have different ways and perception”. Foça Forum's discussion subjects are usually concerning public affairs. They have also political issues in their agenda however; they are few in number in compare to issues concerning public affairs. May be because of this reason they do not have a more tolerant attitude against political identities.

In Foça Forum, there is an executive (they call it “yürütücü” in Turkish) who is selected for every three months. It is important in terms of procedural decision-making dynamics in Forum. They ask for voluntaries but if there is not any voluntary then the one who is in turn becomes executive. This executive person facilitates Forum affairs by making arrangements and prepares the agenda for each meeting. He or she prepares action plans for Forum and offers to approval of Forum members. Moreover, he or she distributes tasks to Forum participants for each next event and in the next meeting he/she opens the discussions by evaluating former meeting’s outcomes.

Except from executive person, for each meeting they choose a moderator and this moderator orient discussions and as a Forum culture, they ask permission (not always but more than usually) to moderator to get the floor. Moderator takes notes and after the meeting, they post their discussion themes and decisions on the facebook group. This point was mentioned by forum participants during focus groups studies as an example of transparency of their forum activities and publicity of their decisions.

They make emphasis on several occasions on common good by referring inverse proportion between private interest and common good. One participant mentioned during focus group study that: “We define a common good in accordance with our Forum principles (common goal) and for reaching this common good, we can ignore our private interest because we all have the same perceptions, same anger, and same concerns about future of country”. One other participant mentioned, “We try to construct common perception with the help of common rational”. Rationality emphasis is important in terms of explaining deliberative democratic premises, and

searching for substantive side of their decisions. The important point is, they also accept that, different point of views cannot live in even such public formations because of existing political culture. They mention, “We cannot leave our cultural baggage behind, and these Forums cannot be evaluated without existing political and social climate, however we try breaking our shell of”. This statement demonstrates obviously how low level of social capital which was mentioned in the literature section, come into existence in public forums' functioning mechanisms.

Concerning their discussion issues, one forum member mentioned that, “Fight for environment means more than fighting for environment. Some of our friends are criticizing us for being too much engaged with environmental problems but for us fighting for a better environment means fighting against capitalist system as well”. It should be mentioned here that, when they mention fighting against existing system they refer to fight against AKP government sanctions, which runs the state since 2002. They ascribe handicaps of the existing system to AKP and its government's affairs. One participant said during focus group study “Government does not ashamed of rape our rights in the cause of their ambitions of making money”. She added, “So fighting for environment means fighting for our life and rights because government try to destroy our life spaces”. This reaction is against to political power and this feeling of opposition make participants of forums close to each other.

In terms of procedures of taking decisions, they look for unanimity. Nevertheless, in some cases they cannot reach consensus with unanimity. In these situations, they pursue the majority decision and members who vote against, do not intervene or manipulate decision. They obey the majority rule but they do not participate in events. This situation also displays that, forum members do not prefer to get in

conflict and behave in a tolerant manner. For instance, not all participants participated in demonstration, which is named “there is a thief”. One respondent explained, “Some Forum members did vote against doing this demonstration because they found it too political. But after approval of rest of group toward realizing demonstration, they adjusted with Forum’s decision and participated in”.

Concerning the place of conflict during discussions one participant argued, “In Foça Forum there are not contradictory opinions and we usually work here in harmony. Nevertheless, in other forums there are certain opinions which I cannot stand side by side”. He referred to this point without asking and he added, “We do not have big disputes during Forum meetings because we discuss generally about local problems and when you live in such a small city then it becomes easy to find common ground”.

They define decision-making system in Forums as direct democracy. One of the members mentioned during focus group study “Not everyone should share same opinions”. Thus, it can be defined under the rubric of moderate forms of consensus but sharing same motivation for actions is enough for going to action. They all know that, in order to be powerful they need to behave collectively. It is the rationale behind their cooperation. Nevertheless, forum members agree on an issue that, if they were talking about national problems then they could have big discussions.

They explained the situation in this manner, “We do not put in table conflicting issues in fact. We discuss about issues, which have more potential to reach a consensus. Some issues are less controversial such as “need for fresh and clear air” and fight against air pollution. We decided not to hold any political party banner or shout slogans of political parties during environmental protests”. (14.07.2016) They

explained their stance towards political signs with an anecdote “There was a June movement but it was broken because during election period, political preferences become more dominant and disengagements become indispensable. For instance, one of our friends had a different approach to Kurdish issue. Because of this different approach, he left the group”. This means that Forum has an eliminator mechanism and this mechanism works in similar manner with other Forums.

During focus group study three of them mentioned the term “using rational mind” and they argued that capacity of operationalize and actualize are important features of decisions. They define rationality within the concept of feasibility of decisions as other forums do. It is argued that, public forums in İzmir perceive rationality in a different sense than deliberative democratic literature. They explain it in practical manner rather than substance of decisions.

Güzelyalı Public Forum They define Forums in the focus group studies and interviews as a direct democracy practice. Because, they argue that, there is not a representative organ and everyone who has intention to participate to Forum meetings can come without any restriction and explain his/her opinions. They emphasize that, everyone has equal right to vote and no one has privilege or no one's vote is more important than anyone else's is.

GHF members usually mentioned during focus group studies that Forum is not an organization. Because in forums they put at the center public and public good rather than organs or other representative bodies as so in institutional or organizational formations. Other respondent said during in-depth interview that, Forums' settlement is different from an organization or institutional body with its feature of not having a representative body and this makes Forums important. They claim that, “Forums

should not have executive bodies and decisions should be taken from below. If there is an executive body then a hierarchical relation would emerge and this can damage existing horizontal relationship manner which provide legitimacy of decisions”.

GHF insistently mentions that, they are not a political collectivity they are human oriented. Their focus point human and they work for creating a more humanitarian life conditions at least in their local environment. They explain that as a working principle firstly they apart from problem than they try to find solutions and they discuss about ways with which they can reach solutions. They mention that, they can take action collectively without any discontent when the issue is human oriented and not about private interests. They are not explicitly mention about private interest and public interest clash with these terms nevertheless their emphasis on facility of behave collectively when the issue is not about private concerns, displays in practice that consensus is more easily reachable when discussion issue is concerning public interest.

One respondent argued during in-depth interview that, “consensus is a tool here not an ultimate goal. The ultimate goal here is share a common life”. This statement shows how participant of Güzelyalı Public Forum’s members consider consensus issue. They defend an idea of consensus, which is more moderate and less strict as mentioned in the literature. So to say, they do not have a consensus-obsessed attitude, the important thing is to stay as a forum and behave collectively. It is argued that, to stay in play they sustain from conflict and try to find middle ways.

One respondent argued that decisions, which can be put in practice in short term, are being taken more easily than decisions, which can be realized in long term. If a consensus will occur at the end of discussions then they can get in action. As

mentioned above, their rationality perception is related to practical reasons rather than substantive concerns or rationality. In their terms, more rational is the one, which is more concrete and corresponding to concrete necessities. In addition, they look for unanimity while they take decisions about activities they take.

Issues, which are being discussed during meetings in Güzelyalı Public Forum, are the issues, which are already agreed on. May be because of this reason Forum meetings is not witness to conflicts between arguments. Subjects concerning education are issues that everybody agreed on it. Education is a common concern for forum members because they have children and they care about their children thus they handle issue emotionally. At this point, it can be argued that, besides rationality issue and practical concerns, emotional factor have impact on their decisions. Emotional dynamics in such forums are not being mentioned in the literature nevertheless, as mention in the section of Forum's formation; they sometimes handle discussion issues and decision-making process emotionally. In addition, Forum members without any restriction or pressure are covering all expenses voluntarily this is also sign of emotional commitment of members to forum.

The one other important emphasis of forums is the role of each member's individuality. During an interview, one of the participant mentioned, "when groups are gathered within Forums in terms of their political or other identical affinities, then decision making process will be shaped around groups' preferences rather than individuals". The most important feature of Forums is that each individual is very important in the eyes of Forum. In addition, they refer at this point to Gezi Movement and they argue that otherwise these formations will behave discordant to the soul of Gezi movement. "During Gezi movement I walked under lots of different

flags and banners but I did not walk under these flags like I am member of these organizations”. They behave within forum structure and they experienced of being a member of such a collectivity but they exist with their uniqueness and personal identities. This point arises in other forums as well and it is argued that, deliberative democracy literature does not mention how in such deliberative initiatives personalities play role and how should they taken into consideration, but it is argued that, these public forums can maintain deliberative attributions – as much as they can- without leaving their individual existences.

In terms of right of equal speak, GHF members all agree that, everyone can speak and share his/her opinions during forum meetings and discussion agenda is defined also by consensus. They refer to respect (mutual respect in the literature) issue, which in their mind is the first rule of collective decision-making process. They mention that they cannot reach decision if they do not respect to others’ right of speak and tolerate different arguments.

Subjects of their discussions are shaping depending on agenda of society and also about their neighborhood problems. They mention that, they are not limited themselves in terms of defining agenda it means that; defining themselves as a human oriented collectivity does not prevent them from discussion political issues. Because during focus group discussion they argue that they have political views, nevertheless they do not have political labels. Actually, they have but because they all have very close political tendencies they do not need to express and this close political stance cause to exclude different and extreme stances from forum.

They explain that, agenda is defined by unanimity and they discuss every issue without restriction in condition that is in favor of public interest. This point is

important in terms of conflict between private interest and public interest. They claim that they pursue public interest nevertheless their definition of public interest and its scope is a bit blurry. As an argument, it can be mentioned that, they consider public interest in local terms not a nation-wide term and they define this terms from their own perspectives. Especially issues concerning education and environment are serving public interest according to them. The main motivation behind their actions is public sensibility and they try to find solution to their local problems. They take decisions after Forum discussions and generally and they take with unanimity.

Nevertheless, sometimes there occurs conflict between participants and they explain that, until everyone will be convinced they continue to discuss. In some cases they could not take decision with unanimity, then who are not convinced respect the result but they do not take a part during action process.

They define their decision-making mechanism as horizontal rather than vertical. They argue that there is not a hierarchical relationship between participants; they all have equal right to speak and equal weight of vote. No one is playing leadership role in the group and so no one has power of manipulating discussions. They construct a mechanism in order to maintain an order during discussions and especially in order to facilitate put in practice their action plans decisions. Facilitator is being chosen for each action plan according to conformity between tasks, which will be taken, and person's ability of realizing of these tasks.

As conclusion for this section, it is argued that ideal speech situation which was mentioned by Habermas and referred in the literature section, does not occur easily in real world cases such as public forums in İzmir. Because as will be mentioned above, some participants of forums have rhetorical abilities or political backgrounds

or only they have more ambition to get the floor and other participants can feel discomfort about this situation and this can make them away from forum itself. For instance young participants disengagements from KHF occurred for this reason and non-permanent members' discontent about this situation in GHF make them away from discussion meetings.

Consensus issue is one of the most important features of deliberative process. As mentioned in the literature section second and third generation of deliberative democracy theorists argue that conflict is indispensable for deliberation and strict consensus-focus discussions are not feasible in real world experiences. The situation is similar in public forums in İzmir. They do not have a consensus-obsessed attitude rather they focus on feasibility of taking decisions. Moreover they do not leave place to disagreement in deliberation, because they believe that, disagreement can cause conflict and conflict can prevent them from behave collectively.

But on the other hand, as mentioned in the literature section, when the issue is problem solving then they look for consensus before going action. Many of participants in all three public forums mentioned during interviews and focus groups studies that, they aim to solve problem especially in their local environment. For this reason, they try to find common points in order to reach consensus before implementing their decisions. However, this aim to reach consensus make their discussion subjects limited and choosing the themes, which are easier to get consensus, is also another way of moderate consensus. For instance, when the issue is education or the future concerns about young generation then they find middle ways and common points more easily than political issues. This situation, which

narrow scope of uncontroversial issues, is related to existing semi-democratic and fragmented structure of society.

Why these public forums try to find some common issue to discuss in order to reach consensus can be explained for the reason that, research in small-groups has shown: deliberation is “hard work” (Holt 1993, 1999) and that equality amongst discussants is hard to achieve even within groups, which explicitly reject hierarchies (e.g. Gastil 1993a). As a deliberative small group example, it can be argued that deliberation is not easy to achieve in Public Forums. As mentioned in previous section, even they claim that they ensure equality within group; they had conflicts about this issue as well. Non-permanent participants and also some of permanent participants do not agree that forums have enough in-group equality.

As Iris Young argues -mentioned in literature section- deliberative discussion should include different forms of discussions such as story telling or daily conversations by this way domination of some groups who have ability of argumentation practices can be eliminated. Actually, in public forums in İzmir, discussions are not take place mere a constructed deliberation. As mentioned emotional factors, play an important role to motivate people to participate because they construct an emotional bond with forum members and thus discussions in forum can occur like daily conversation as well. And may be the situation is vice versa: for the reason that they can have intimate conversations, they can attach emotionally to forums. This does not make deliberation deformed rather, it makes discussion more flexible in terms of participants.

CHAPTER 8

FORUMS' RELATIONSHIP WITH LOCAL AUTHORITIES

“Potential of a social movement to influence public policy decision-making process is related to external dynamics such as the political environment where the social movement has emerged or the characteristics of the state, which the social movement struggled to influence” (Özen&Özen, 2010). This argument can provide explanation to the question why public forums in İzmir can not reach to policy making process. When state or local government perceive such civic groups and forums as a threat then other side takes position according to this attitude. And at the end of the day, they cannot work together in policy-making process.

Forums' relationship with local government is not follow a single line –it has transformed in time- and each forum does not display same stance against local government, which they interact with. For instance, GPF had close relationship and cooperation with Karabağlar Municipality at the beginning. They were using Güzelyalı Kültür Merkezi (Güzelyalı Cultural Center) for their forum events such as children theater or painting workshops. However, when forum started to arrange protests against Municipality's urban plans then local government changed its stance against GPF because municipality started to perceive forum as a menace. In an in-

depth interview, a forum participant summarized this situation as “authority by nature is closed to opposition, when you voice your contradictory arguments, authority tries to bloc you.”(19.12.2015)

Karşıyaka Public Forum has a critical stance towards local government and their relationship is consistent from this angle. The striking point is that, in KPF there are CHP supporters and party members but this does not prevent them from criticizing municipality which is a CHP held municipality.

One member of KPF mentioned during focus group study that “As a member of Kültürpark Platform ; as a citizen who is living in Karşıyaka and as a member of CHP, I can say that, CHP does bad things in terms of city planning and we try to defend our city together.”(02.01.2016) Another members added to this point and stated that “Güzelyalı and Foça forums have close ties with the municipalities but they should keep some distance with the municipal government in order to maintain a critical attitude toward the municipal government”.(02.01.2016)

The Foça Forum has close relationship with local government. One of the forum member mentioned during focus group study “We prepared a forum program and brought it to mayor. He deplored about not to get this program before elections and mentioned he would have implemented this program rather than their own municipality program”.(14.07.2016) Foça Forum members think that good relations with local authority are essential in order to able to realize their forum goals otherwise their decisions will onşy stay on paper. As one participant put it during in-depth interview: “If we want to change something in our city and protect our living spaces, we should find ways to be respected by local authorities. They should accept us as a social pressure element” (14.07.2016) Some forum members – with a

common decision of forum- have joined city council and some municipality assemblies in order to get more interaction with local authorities. Because they think that this interaction is crucial in order to put their decisions in practice and see concrete results rather than only meet and discuss. This statements and anecdote about mayor refer to literature, which mentions the relationship between authorities and such deliberative units, is being shaped according to the positions of each side. This dissertation argues that, although lack of deliberative culture of local governments and also reluctance and the fact that public forums cannot participate to public policy making process, local authorities must hear their voice at least in order to be legitimate in the eyes of local people.

However, Foça Forum members have also debates about the manner of this relationship with municipality. There is a Donatkent issue which has been in their discussion agenda for too long but they could not reach any concrete solution. One of the forum members explained the situation during focus group study: “Donatkent is a beach in Foça and a person occupied it for his own private interest more than three years by building a café on the beach. We tried to attract attention of local authorities and people to this issue but local government preferred to ignore” (03.03.2017) Researcher participated to a forum discussion session as a participant observer and during this meeting one of the subjects in the agenda was Donatkent. Forum moderator after reading the agenda, came to Donatkent issue and explained what they did until now about this problem. Two forum members prepared a new petition to submit to municipality and moderator read this new petition and ask forum members whether they want to add anything or they have any different suggestions.

The contention issue is concerning further steps. Because some forum members argue that they should submit this new petition and wait for response from municipality, others argue that they will not get any concrete achievement with a petition because they tried this way before and it did not work. One other forum member added “while waiting we should go and stay on the beach some days of the week. We should not be passive if we want to gain concrete benefits at the end of day. We should create pressure over authority as public authority.”(03.03.2017) The participant who thinks that they should wait silently until municipality’s response said that “if we want to get concrete benefits, we should refrain from being a menace in the eyes of local authority”.(03.03.2017) This point is important because they know that when they are being perceived as menace then authorities will take position and expedients accordingly.

Forum members had dispute about the way they will pursue concerning this issue. Nevertheless, these disputes do not prevent them from working together or create big conflicts within group. Some members agree that, if they chose to way of doing street protests than they can attract attention of media and they can get support more people which pave the way for social pressure on local government. At the end of the day, their discussion culture provide to find a middle way by insisting on feasible arguments forum’s objectives. At this point, it can be argued that, not similar with central government’s stance towards public forum still local governments in İzmir do not display a deliberation friendly attitude and connect to deliberative system.

For the Karşıyaka Public Forum, Nergis Park (a public park on which the municipality was planning to build a car park and other buildings) is also a central

theme of discussion during almost all meetings. The Karşıyaka Forum has been working on this issue since 2014 and forum members mentioned during focus group study that, they went to local authorities in order to voice their demands for several times. Nevertheless, they could not reach any gain from their efforts. Same as Donatkent issue in Foça Forum, Nergis park is also distutable issue in terms of ways to pursue for Karşıyaka Public Forum. During forum discussion session they could not reach consensus about whether they should protest during municipal assembly or other way which is less provocative.

Güzelyalı Public Forum is the most important example about how authorities change their stance according to civic initiatives activities. As mentioned, their relationship has been changed in the course of time because Güzelyalı Public Forum displayed some critical attitudes towards municipality sanctions. As mentioned in the literature, authorities and public forums have different type of relationship, whether they cooperate, get in conflict or authority try to supress these formations by ignoring them or punish them. In Güzelyalı Forum example, local government chose to punish forum by taking away Güzelyalı Cultural Center from them. This situation did not discourage forum members, they only dissapointed for children because they were using Center generally events for children free of charge.

CHAPTER 9

FORUMS TRIGGER FURTHER CIVIC AND POLITICAL ACTION

“Deliberation does not deliver us from the constraints of politics, but it improves the authenticity of citizens’ voices in democracy” (Karpowitz & Rapheal, 2014, p. 86).

As mentioned in the previous section, for the reason of weak relationship between local government and public forums, and the attitude of local authorities as a reflection of strong and repressive state culture, capacity of public forums to influence policy-making processes is limited. Nevertheless, as Dryzek (Dryzek in Rosenberg) argues, deliberation can take different tasks rather than being a part of policy-making process. Thus, besides social and political constraints in terms of democracy culture and civil society position in Turkey, public forums have still opportunities to foster the social and political culture of environment in which they operate and they can contribute to the civiness and social capital of their community. It is relatively hard task to manage but they can even promote pluralism within Turkish society -which has deep cleavages- by giving chance to people to encounter with different ideas.

The data collected for this study demonstrate that besides contextual and internal constraints, these public forums took a concrete step towards to enrich social capital and strengthen the liaison between civic associations significantly. This step is very crucial because as mentioned in the bounded civil society section, Turkish civil society is known for being very weak and function within the impact area of state dependently (Keyman & Gümüşçü, 2014). Moreover, low level of interpersonal among Turkish citizens prevents them from participating in civic associations and people prefer to socialize with their families or people from the same hometown (Kalaycıoğlu, 2012). Finally, there is a fragmented social structure in Turkey, which is being formed by especially polarization between secularism and Islamism and between Kurdish and Turkish nationalism (Özbudun E. , 2013). In such an atmosphere in which neither the local government as part of existing non-deliberative political culture and, nor the social structure which has low social capital provide convenient ground for the flourishing of the civic life, public forums serve important purposes.

During an in-depth interview, one participant of the Karşıyaka Forum mentioned that, she is 65 years old until this age she did neither participate any activity of any kind of civil society organization nor affiliate any political party. Being a part of this forum very much means for her because she feels for the first time in her life that she is active politically. She added that, she is taking care of her grandchildren and during the times left from her grandchild, she is trying to make her best. (18.03.2017)

This example demonstrates the power of forums in terms of improving civic sense, which provide close relationship to neighborhood, foster solidarity, and conscience about making collective behavior and decisions. Moreover, as member of GPF

mentioned during an in-depth interview these forums are “educative and create a sense of awareness.” (01.07.2017)

Forums are using social media accounts, as mentioned in Forums’ formation chapter, not only for communicating within forum but also with other civil society organizations. They announce their events via their facebook accounts, share photos of their meetings and events and they put their forum meeting reports. One of the Güzelyalı Forum member mentioned that, sharing their events and forum meeting reports display their transparency and publicity moreover it can be perceived as a sign of inclusiveness. Karşıyaka Forum member said that, for the reason that mass media is blind and speechless social media is very crucial tool of communication within group and even older participants started to use social media. A Foça Forum participant referred to power of social media and said that, they become aware during their protests or events that they have followings in social media and even they do not come to forum meetings, they support them during these protests and events. So to say, they use social media as a way of reaching potential new participants.

Forum members in İzmir do not only participate to their forums meeting and events. As a result of growing network between civil society organizations and forums, İzmir Forums’ members are permanent participants of street protests even they are not organizers. So to say, whatever they are in leading cadre or not they give support to protests if they all agree that this protest should be supported because its congruity with general principles and goals of the Forum. This can be evaluated as an example how participation to these public forums courage people to become more engaged politically.

The environmental concerns can bring together all forums because they are common concerns for all forums. Aliğa is a big industrial district of İzmir, and especially air pollution reached critical dimension. All three forum members pay attention to steam power plants in Aliğa. For instance, besides Foça Forum members -who are more interested with environmental issues in Aliğa because they are more close to Aliğa-, Karşıyaka Forum members also joined Doğal ve Kültürel Yaşam Girişimi (Initiative for Natural and Cultural Life) and together with City Planners İzmir Branch, Eğitimsen (a left-wing teacher's trade union) Foça Branch they prepared a visit to Horozgediği and Kozbeyli villages in order to define an action plan to cope with this issue.

The Foça Forum has close ties with the Foça Çevre ve Kültür (Environment and Culture) Platform (Foçep), which was founded in 2009. They work and protest together especially when the issue is concerning environment. To their last protest, Ege (Aegean) Çevre ve Kültür (Environment and Culture) Platform participated as well which was called "Zeytinime Dokunma (Do not touch my Olive)". Foça Forum, together with Aegean Environment and Culture Platform went to the Turkish Parliament and made a press release on 13 June 2017 to demand that the government stops projects of opening olive gardens to construction. The Foca Forum also participated in an initiative against fossil fuels (Fosil Yakıt Karşıtı İnisiyatifi) along with 37 other organizations. They jointly organized an event called "Kömüre Karşı Pedala Bas" (Pedal Against Coal) and a panel called "Kömürden kurtul geleceği kurtar" (Get rid of coal, rescue your future).

Foça Gündem which is a news portal gives local news about Foça District has close ties with Foça Forum and this portal reports Foça Forum's activities in its facebook

and twitter accounts. One other important organization initiated by Foça Forum is “Engelsiz Kamp”. Foça Municipality, Foça City Council Disable Assembly organize a camp led by Foça Forum, first one was realized in July 2017, and the second one on 18-19 2018 with 150 disable people in Kozak upland. Foça Forum can led such organizations via their relationship with municipality and city council.

One of the members of Güzelyalı Public Forum stated during in-depth interview about their relations with other public forums in İzmir “We as İzmir Public Forums can work together without any hesitation especially when it comes to the environment. Our living spaces are our priority and we want to have our voice heard in the decision-making process regarding this issue.” (19.12.2015) Each public forum in İzmir is also participant of Kültürpark platform which works for protecting Kültürpark in Alsancak İzmir. The same forum member added by saying “With this purpose we joined the Kültürpark Platform and some of forum members actually led the founding of it. The Kültürpark Platform is a very important achievement for İzmir’s civil society.”(19.12.2015) In the During a focus group study in Güzelyalı Public Forum, a member of forum refers to this point “Forums are not organizations, forums are processes where people gather and discuss. After forum discussions, common action can occur. They founded the Kültürpark Platform with this idea and that they discuss the future of the Kültürpark Platform in their forums”. (13.03.2017)

In the formation process of The Kültürpark Platform public forums in İzmir had a part. The Kültürpark Platform is composed by differen political and civil organizations such as TMMOB (Union of Chambers of Turkish Engineers And Architects), Halkevleri (People’s Houses), Mimarlar Odası (Chamber of Architects), İzmir Tabib Odası (İzmir Chamber of Doktors), Şehir Plancılar Odası (Chamber of

Urban Planners), The United June Movement and public forums in İzmir. One of the Güzelyalı Public Forum member mentioned during in-depth interview “Kültürpark Platform was founded as a result of the meetings and deliberations among members of different forums in order to provide a space for organized action, we can say that Kültürpark is a concrete gain of forums” (01.06.2017). Kültürpark Platform has also a facebook group and platform puts its main goal as “to invite the İzmir Metropolitan Municipality to withdraw the Kültürpark Revision Project ... and to accept with common sense that it is possible to find a way that makes it possible to pass the natural, historical, cultural and social structure of Kültürpark to new generations with more sustainable practices.”

Public forums’ participants not only join to environmental organizations and initiatives but also they take part in different civic and political formations. The United June Movement (Birlesik Haziran Hareketi –BHH) is an important actor that was “fermented” in the forums of Gezi (Dağlar, 2015). As Dağlar mentions, public forums around Turkey gathered at different times but their meeting with academics, political party members and civil society organization on 30 August 2014 was a starting point for a new formation. “The United June Movement” was founded after several meetings in the following two months. The United Haziran Movement has small assemblies in cities. For instance, in İzmir, there are Karşıyaka Haziran Assembly, this organization structure provide movement a horizontal organizational formation. United Haziran Movement also focus on environmental issues along with human rights and democracy problems. For instance during election periods BHH and forum members in İzmir joined an organization which is called İzmir’in Sandıkları (The Ballot Boxes of İzmir). They worked for this organization voluntarily during referendum process as observer at ballot boxes after training given

by this organization. One of the GPF members mentioned, “The forum also served as a bridge between the Bar Association of Izmir and Izmir’in Sandıkları. The Bar Association allocated an office for Izmir’in Sandıkları and published 10.000 brochures detailing the proposed constitutional amendments as well as the guidebook for becoming observers during the referendum”.

Some forums members in Karşıyaka Public Forum for instance, are discontent about acting together with BHH and realizing joint events and protests. Because they think, that BHH is too political and this situation does not correspond with their forum principles. For that matter, some members of the forum left the forum for this reason. One KPF participant stated during in depth interview “The forum moves in a direction I cannot adopt day by day. Some friends try to steer the works of the forum because they are members of the BHH.”(18.03.2017)

Foça Forum is in cooperation with Foça Barış Kadınları (Peace Women) because they have common points in terms of working for human rights – women’s rights-, justice, gender equality and problem of violence. In Turkey especially in recent years, number of violence events against women and children have augmented and also become more visible with the help of social media. And Foça Forum supports this organization in its street protests or other works in order to improve conscience concerning these problems.

Foça Forum members are aware of importance to reach more people and for this reason they regard internet sources and social media as alternative to mass media one of the Foça Forum member explained that “ I started to issue an internet newspaper which is titles Siren. It is an internet newspaper that is independent of state and institutions and political parties and focuses on Foça”. (05.04.2017) Other member

mentioned about Foça Siren that “this internet newspaper voices our city’s problem in a more perpetual way”. Karşıyaka Public Forum also referred to such a similar internet news portal which is titled Kızılıcık Eylem Haberleri (Kızılıcık Action News) and this internet newspaper is being founded by a KPF member as well.

In terms of social learning side of deliberative processes, there are some examples from interviews and focus groups. One of the respondent mentioned, “I was afraid of going and intervening to AKP’s demonstration during “ground table event in Ramadan. But then I realized how important to behave in opposite way because my friends, who went and intervened to this group, managed to make them aware of our existence” These Forums educate people and they have chance to experience how they can act collectively and how they can make voice in public sphere where they meet other organizations and social groups.

One other respondent argue that Forum affected all his/her life perception largely. She says “For instance, my knowledge about Turkish socialism deepened and I became more aware about Turkish politics”.

People who came from Yeni Foça Forum had disappointments about level of environmental conscience in Foça Forum. New comers from Yeni Foça Forum, fostered discussions in order to improve environmental conscience in Foça Forum and they argue, “Forum’s stance is very different than it was at the beginning. They have now a more international point of view in terms of environmental issues”.

One Karşıyaka Forum member, for example, said “I learned that political activities need effort and patience. I learned to be tolerant toward people from other societal segments such as liberals and nationalists.” Another participant similarly stated “he

learned to be more tolerant toward other opinions and that he learned to listen”. Yet another one claimed that “her perspective against the East (read Kurdish) problem had changed”.

In the course of time, local authorities started to listen forums and other civil initiatives more than before. For instance, Bornova Municipality prepared an activity, which is entitled “Meeting of Bornova civil society organizations” in 21 December 2017. Municipality invited civil society organizations by an invitation, which was signed by mayor himself. Nearly 60 civil society organization participated and each made 5 minutes presentations concerning their demands.

On 11-12 November 2017, in Bergama, there a an important meeting which was initiated by 11 ecology organization and several organizations from different cities gathered in order to discuss ways of putting together their power and struggle. This meeting aimed to create a common platform for ecology organizations, which may provide a common fight sprit. More than 200 people and 42 different organizations participated to this meeting and the first part of the meeting on 11 November until lunchtime was open to public, the following sessions were realized on organizational base.

In the first day, a forum discussion session was realized and organizations explained their own local problems and put on existing situation on the table under the main topic “Problems of Ecology Struggle” there were two sections one is “Ecological Struggle and Political Problems” and “Ecological Struggle and Juridical Problems”. These sessions were held as forum meeting and participants mention that, oppression regime which is consolidated by OHAL implementations, restrict movement area of these ecology organizations as with other civil society organizations and initiatives.

The policies followed by government on the issues energy, water, forest, agriculture, breeding, cause nonrecoverable damages to nature and life spaces. Their opportunities to fight against this pillage are also being restricted by these government policies. They mentioned that, they are the most organized and active social opposition movements thus they have the potential of displaying the damaging policies of political authority.

In terms of juridical problems, they mention that, in the past, they could get court verdicts in favor of ecology organizations, nowadays it has become too hard. In order to handle with these constrains especially with court and expert witness fees, they should prepare campaigns to collect financial support which has become necessary. Second day, they discussed about new methods in ecological protests. They decided to create a cooperation network and for this purpose they should prepare a document concerning regulations of this new formation which mention the name of new network and main norms. They should gather in a second meeting in January or February and a working group will prepare a discussion document for the next meeting.

Haziran actualized a general assembly on education. In this Assembly -which was held in Ankara on 9-10 September 2017 in setting of ODTÜ alumni association - report which was prepared by Haziran education commission was declared and then a forum discussion was realized. This commission is also preparing a weekly bulletin entitled “Eğitimde neler oluyor?” (Current Issues in Education?).

CONCLUSION

This dissertation aimed to examine how under semi-democratic structures in terms of political culture which restricts growing of social capital and civil society, deliberative forums can arise and survive? How this contextual dynamics and deliberative public forums influence each other's strategies and positions and whether these forums can reach concrete achievements under such compelling settings?

In order to respond to these questions in-depth interviews, focus groups studies and participant observations were realized with public forums in İzmir and collected data were analyzed from systemic deliberative approach. In accordance with requirements of this approach contextual dynamics in which these forums operate were put on table and this provided to examine internal functioning dynamics of forums by seeing the whole picture. As mentioned in the introduction, distinctive feature of this study is focusing on Gezi Movement Park Forums because both Gezi Movement itself and Park Forums sourced from this movement around the country are new experiences for Turkish democratization and social movement practices. And again as mentioned in the introduction section, this dissertation tried to contribute deliberative democracy literature because these public forums display deliberative practices even not in ideal format as literature define, they are still worth to examine as deliberative discussion platform in Turkish case.

According to key findings from in-depth analysis of public forums in İzmir, their internal dynamics such their way of functioning, forum composition in terms of participant profiles and decision-making procedures are coherent with deliberative democracy's attributions even they are not perfectly match. Forum participants have important references to deliberative democracy's features during in-depth interviews and also focus groups studies especially while they define forums as open discussion platfroms. Even statements of forum members do not reflect sometimes real practices within forums such as inclusiveness issue, they are aware of how important to behave collectively to make their voice heard by local authorities.

As local public forums they managed to survive from Gezi Movement in 2013 until now. Their events and activities mostly concerning about their local problems such as environment and education and they generally try to stay away from political issues. Because they know that when local government perceives them as menace then existing non-deliberative situation which was defined as semi-democratic in introduction part as well, will become more compelling for them. Nevertheless, one of the most important achievements of these public forums is contributing deliberative culture of society. Despite their limited power to participate policy-making process, because of the attitude of local governments exclusionist and non-deliberative attitudes, forums have got an important step towards improving deliberative culture by constructing relations with other civil society organizations, fostering civic participation among local people and accumulating a deliberation repertoire. Engagement with different civil society organizations such as United June Movement, City Planners, Initiative against Fossil Fuels, Culture Park Platform, Environment and Culture Platform etc. displays how public forums experiences concerning being part of civic life pave the way for enlarging the interaction circle

within civil society. Nevertheless, it should be mentioned that, social learning process is also under impression of existing social and political fragmented structure and for this reason, gains are modest but still important.

Deliberative democracy literature mostly refer to developed democracies. This dissertation contributes to deliberative democracy literature by analyzing public forums in İzmir which were born from a social movement and survive for years in a semi-democratic regime. In the literature, as mentioned in background information section, mini-publics have been research subjects for deliberative democracy researchers to implement philosophical theories to empirical cases. However, public forums are not completely overlapping with mini-public, which are being mentioned in the literature. Public forums have distinctive features. They do not have any institutional connection and they were not constructed with a purpose by a state or local government organization. They arisen as a civil initiative and in their activities and events they behave completely autonomous, they define their own functioning procedures and they work voluntarily. All these features make them distinct from mini-publics mentioned in the literature; such as deliberative polls, citizen's juries that are created by some organization for a specific period and with a purpose. They have formal deliberative procedures when public forums have informal deliberation practice. It can be argued that, within a broad system, form of deliberation and particularities of deliberative platforms shape depending on features of the whole system. This study argues that, this relationship is not one-sided, both contextual dynamics and deliberative platforms like public forum in this case, affect each other. Both side define their strategies according to other side's positions and this interaction does not occur in a stable manner, it is lively and changeable. It is argued that, real world deliberative practices can deform some deliberative attributions of

deliberative theory in order to can keep pace with their community but on the other hand non-deliberative parts of the system should also adopt to deliberative side as possible. It is important to examine how deliberative culture can effect non-deliberative sides of deliberative system.

This study demonstrates that, even these public forums operate under semi-democratic settings, which can be defined as non-deliberative, public forum can still foster deliberative culture, strengthen the liaison between different civil society organizations and encourage civic engagement. May be these results relatively modest but further researches can analyze the changes in time whether experience in terms of deliberation can overcome structural barriers. One other striking result of empirical researches is, in deliberative democracy literature argues that, deliberation requires inclusiveness and respect to other opinions for a fruitful discussion nevertheless in public forums in İzmir cannot provide such an inclusiveness atmosphere, which provide plurality of decisions. Moreover, when forum construct its own forum culture which foster like-mindedness, then reaching plurality within forum becomes more infeasible.

This dissertation can open the door for a comparative analysis in order to examine whether under such similar contextual dynamics deliberative experiences develop similar patterns or not. Moreover there is a scarcity in the literature in terms of looking towards outside of developed democracies, and may be further researches can focus on how deliberative attributions can transform and appear in different forms. One other important direction of this dissertation for further research can be about applying cumulative experience within public forums in İzmir to other countries and cases.

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APPENDIX A

- 1.Yaşınızı, Cinsiyetinizi ve Eğitim durumunuzu belirtebilir misiniz?
- 2.Hangi Park Forumuna, ne kadar süreyle ve ne amaç güderek katıldınız?
- 3.Katıldığınız Park Forumlarında katılımcıların eşit konuşma hakkına sahip olduğunu düşünüyor musunuz?
- 4.Forumlarda tartışmaları yönlendiren ve/veya baskın gelen gruplar var mı? Evet ise ne tür baskı ve yönlendirmeler olduğunu açıklayabilir misiniz?
5. Forumların bütün toplum kesimlerine açık bir platform olduğunu düşünüyor musunuz? Örnek verebilir misiniz?
6. Forumlardaki tartışmalarda kararlar alınıyor ise karar alma mekanizması nasıl işliyor açıklayabilir misiniz?
7. Üzerinde uzlaşşı sağlanan konuları diğerlerinden ayıran özellikler nelerdir? Daha akılcı oldukları için mi yoksa başka sebeplerden mi herkesin onayı alıyorlar?
8. Forumlarda gerçekleşen tartışmalardan sonra bakış açınızın değiştiği ya da tamamen farklı düşünmeye başladığınız konular oldu mu? Örnek verebilir misiniz?

9. Forumlarda daha önce bir arada olmayı düşünemeyeceğiniz toplum kesimleriyle bir araya geldiniz mi? Örnek verebilir misiniz?

10. Park Forumlarını nasıl tanımlarsınız?

11. Gezi Parkı Forumlardaki deneyimleriniz başka forumlara da katılmanız konusunda teşvik edici oldu mu?

12.Ekleme istediğiniz düşünceleriniz var mı?

