

Deliberative Democracy: As an Approach for Analyzing Gezi Movement Public Forums

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Abstract : Deliberation has been seen one of the most important components of democratic ideals especially since liberal democratic attributions have been under fire. Deliberative democracy advocates that people should participate in collective decision-making processes by other mechanisms rather than conventional ones in order to reach legitimate decisions. Deliberative democratic theory makes emphasis on deliberative communication between people and encourages them not to merely express their political opinions (through surveys and referendum) but to form those opinions through public debates. This paper focuses on deliberative democratic visions of Gezi Park Public Forums by taking deliberative democracy as theoretical basis and examining Gezi Park Public Forums in the light of core elements of deliberative democracy. Gezi Movement started on 28 May 2013 in İstanbul as a reaction to local government's revision plans for Taksim Gezi Park, spread throughout the country and created new zones in public sphere which are called Public Park Forums. During the summer of 2013, especially in İstanbul but also in other cities, people gathered in public parks, discussed and took collective decisions concerning actions which they will take. It is worth to mention that since 3 and half years some Public Park Forums are still continuing their meetings regularly in city of İzmir. This paper analyzes four 'Public Park Forums' in İzmir which are called Bornova Public Forum; Karşıyaka Public Forum, Foça Public Forum and Güzelyalı Public Forum. These Forums are under investigation in terms of their understanding of democracy and the values that support that understanding. Participant observation and in-depth interview methods are being used as research methods. Core element of deliberative democracy are being collected under three main category: common interest versus private interest, membership, rational argument and these values are being questioning within one of each Forum in order to draw an overall picture and also make comparison between them. Discourse analysis is being used in order to examine empirical data and paper aims to reveal how participants of public forums perceive deliberative democratic values and whether they give weight to these values.

Keywords : deliberative democracy, Gezi Park movement, public forums, social movement

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