AGAINST HABERMASIAN DE(A)LIBERATION

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ABSTRACT

This study offers a critical evaluation of Habermasian deliberative democracy, arguing that despite its valuable place in democratic ideal, Habermasian 'public deliberation' is not enough to think deliberative democracy as an alternative theory of democracy as it diminishes the content and space of the politics. Habermasian deliberation is less responsive to the needs of diversity for its (1) exclusionary, (2) elitist-oligarchic, and (3) depoliticizing aspects. Instead of a Habermasian understanding of democracy that is oriented to maintain existing order, today's pluralistic societies needs agonistic understanding of democracy for including excluded segments of societies as well as for widening the public-political space to respond the present problems.

Keywords: *Habermas, public deliberation, agonistic democracy*

(Habermasçı Müzakereciliğe Karşı)

ÖZET

Bu çalışmada, Habermasçı müzakereci demokrasinin eleştirel bir değerlendirilmesi sunulmakta ve demokratik idealdeki değerli konumuna rağmen siyasetin içeriğini ve alanını daraltması hasebiyle Habermas'ın 'kamusal müzakere' kavramının müzakereci demokrasiyi alternatif bir demokrasi teorisi olarak düşünmemiz için yeterli olmadığı iddia edilmektedir. Burada, Habermasçı müzakereciliğin, çeşitlilikler dolayısıyla ortaya çıkan ihtiyaçlara cevap veremediği, bunun da bu anlayışın (1) dışlayıcı, (2) elitist-oligarşist ve (3) apolitikleştirici özelliklerinden kaynaklandığı açıklanmaktadır. Mevcut düzenin korunmasına odaklanan Habermasçı demokrasi yerine günümüz çoğulcu toplumlarında dışlanmış kesimlerin demokratik alana dahil edilmesi ve mevcut problemlere cevap vermek üzere kamusal-siyasal alanın genişletilmesi adına agonistik demokrasiye ihtiyaç duyulmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Habermas, kamusal müzakere, agonistik demokrasi.*

Against Habermasian De(a)liberation

Popularity of liberal democracy as social/political ideal has steadily risen throughout the world since the late 1980s. Although the fall of socialist democracies has initially sparked interest in Western liberal democracy model, interestingly enough, the same cannot be said about the theory of democracy. It was another strand that has become dominant in political theory by re-defining democracy as a substantive or self-contained philosophy of politics.

This strand of political theory has been mostly covered in the emerging literature on deliberative democracy model. Despite its close affinity with liberal, participatory and radical democratic models, deliberative democracy seems more extensive in terms of philosophical and moral foundations. What make theoretical contemplations and quests for alternatives today in democratic theory reasonable are deep suspicions about whether contemporary representative democracies are the rule of/by the people indeed. Although elections or other representative mechanisms are meant to establish a bond of consent and responsibility between the government and the governed, this alone is not enough to easily describe today's democracies as genuine rule of the people. Furthermore, increasing heterogeneity and pluralism in contemporary societies are bringing about new democratic troubles to cope with. For this reason, over the last decades democratic theory seems shackled by quests for making representative democracy more inclusive in the conditions of present societies based on pluralism and diversity.

Today deliberation is thought to be essential in democratic systems for enabling the formation of rational public opinion in the public sphere. Proponents of deliberative democracy suggests that legitimacy of political decision-making depends on its adherence to a process of public discussion in which participants leave aside their self-interests and limited points of view and reflect on public interest and common good. In broader terms, arguments in favour of deliberative democracy revolve around its educative power, its community-generating power, the fairness of the process of public deliberation, the epistemic value of its outcomes, and the congruence of deliberative democratic ideal 'with whom we are'.[1]

More specifically, Jürgen Habermas' theory of the communicative action and public sphere has occupied central place in debates on deliberative democracy. Habermas' theory is significant as he has provided the most systematically developed theory of the public sphere to date. Outlining a discursive interpretation of the classical democratic idea of self-legislation, Habermas strives to show how people themselves can be

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[1] Maeve Cooke, 'Five arguments for deliberative democracy', *Political Studies*, vol. 48, 2000, p.947.

authors of legitimate laws that affect them and how this is possible in contemporary pluralist societies.

This essay critically evaluates Habermasian deliberative democracy which has received much attention in contemporary democratic theory. An analysis of basic premises of Habermasian deliberative democracy around his concepts of 'communicative action' and 'public sphere' in the first part will be followed by a discussion on the limits of deliberative democracy based on its exclusionary, elitist-oligarchic and depoliticizing features in the second chapter. The third chapter then covers an evaluation of agonistic politics as an alternative to eliminate the limits of deliberation. The main argument put forward in this essay is that despite its valuable place in democratic ideal, Habermasian 'public deliberation' is not enough to think deliberative democracy as an alternative theory of democracy as it diminishes the content and space of the politics for the sake of reaching consensus and agreement.

Basic premises of Habermasian deliberative democracy

In deliberative democracy literature, the term 'deliberation' is conceptualized as distinct from contention, simple discussion and negotiation. Walzer defines 'deliberation' as not mere thinking but 'a particular way of thinking' which is quiet, based on reflection, open to evidences, and respectful of different points of view. It is a rational process of assessing what is at stake, reflecting on alternative possibilities, arguing about appropriateness, and deciding the best option.[2] Chambers interprets deliberation in a slightly detailed manner by describing it as 'debate and discussion aimed at producing reasonable, well-informed opinions'.[3] After all, deliberation is about finding a way to address concerns, resolve disagreements, and overcome conflicts through argumentation supported by reasons.[4] Thus, deliberative democracy is a model where collective decisions that affect the society as a whole are made after such a process of discussion.

Deliberative democratic theory is claimed to be a normative theory that shows ways to enrich democracy and criticize institutions that do not meet the normative standard.[5] Emphasizing the significance of the need for discussion and debate in defining 'common good', deliberative democrats

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[2] Michael Walzer, 'Deliberation, and what else?' in Macedo, S. (ed.) *Deliberative Politics: Essays on Democracy and Disagreement*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1999, p. 58.
[3] Simone Chambers, 'Deliberative democratic theory', *Annual Review of Political Science*, vol. 6, 2003, p. 309.
[4] Lynn M. Sanders, 'Against deliberation', *Political Theory*, vol. 25, no. 3, 1997, p. 347.
[5] Chambers, 'Deliberative democratic theory', p. 308.

contend that democracy –as distinct from representative democracy- should be based on 'public deliberation' that all citizens participate in. Deliberation is recommended especially when these problems gets worse without prospects for satisfactory resolutions since deliberation takes alternative solutions into consideration, thus giving chance to all members of heterogeneous society to make their voices heard.[6]

In this context, Habermas' theory of 'communicative action', which constitutes the mainstream of deliberative democracy, makes its biggest contribution. Communicative action in Habermas' theory is individual action designed to promote common understanding in the society where all members seek to coordinate actions by reasoned argument, consensus and cooperation as opposed to strategic action that means simply pursuing one's personal goals.[7] What makes communicative action possible is human capacity for rationality which is no longer limited by the subjectivistic and individualistic premises of modern philosophy.[8] Rather, rationality in Habermas' thought is inherent within language in the form of argumentation through which actors 'thematize contested validity claims and attempt to vindicate or criticize them'.[9] Moreover, actions and beliefs are rational insofar as they can be supported publicly by good reasons. The exchange of reasons refers one to a discourse in which participants aim to reach agreement on the basis of better argument.[10] This argumentation process is structured around the absence of coercive force, the mutual search for understanding, and the compelling power of the better argument.

This is how, from a Habermasian perspective, more 'holistic' decision-making practices are formed by democratic deliberation of social affairs. People are enabled to 'reassert active control over the direction of social and economic affairs through conscious collective action'. Moreover, when 'voice' mechanisms that are active in political and economic institutions educate people's preferences through open public debate, individuals will 'reconnect' themselves with their communities. This seems like a process of intersubjective learning in the public realm where individuals widen their horizons through deliberation and informing each other new perspectives.[11]

Likewise, Guttman and Thompson point out the advantage of deliberative democracy in promoting learning over time. Citizens are

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[6] Sanders, 'Against deliberation', p. 347.

[7] Jürgen Habermas, Reason and the rationalization of society, *Theory of Communicative Action*, vol. 1, trans. by Thomas McCarthy, Beacon Press, Boston, 1984, p.86.

[8] Ibid., p.vi.

[9] Ibid., p.18.

[10] William Rehg, and James Bohman, 'Discourse and democracy: the formal and informal bases of legitimacy in Between Facts and Norms', in Von Schomberg, R. and Baynes, K. (eds.) *Discourse and democracy: essays on Habermas' Between Facts and Norms*, State University of New York Press, Albany, 2002, p.32.

[11] Mark Pennington, 'Hayekian political economy and the limits of deliberative democracy', *Political Studies*, vol. 51, 2003, pp. 724-725.

expected to learn from their mistakes and from one another through public argumentation.[12] Deliberation necessitates not only multiple but conflicting points of view since conflict is the essence of politics. In this process new information emerges as each uncovers the potentially harmful consequences of the other parties' proposals. But deliberation is not only a process of discovery; the parties also try to persuade each other through argumentation, which does not necessarily lead to an agreed proposition. The parties either agree or reject.[13] It can be inferred that deliberation in political sphere will not necessarily result in universally agreed truths or absolute rejection of values or norms.

Here Habermas' understanding of deliberation diverges from above conceptualization in terms of validating norms. For him, deliberation plays crucial role in 'practical questions' which concerns validity of norms according to their moral or political motivations. He argues that the recognition of the validity claim of a norm can be rationally motivated. By rationally motivated agreement about norms, Habermas means the consensus of all.[14] Lack of a convincing account of how norms can be validated will leave the norms at the mercy of individual interests.[15] Hence, if an agreed norm emerges through deliberation it must embody in some way a general interest.[16] Habermas' aim is to find out that the universal authority of norms is derived from collective discourses of justification. Thus, validated norms in Habermas' thought are the result of practical-rational public deliberation in a democratic society. Only such norms can claim to be binding or legitimate.[17]

Deliberative democracy's insistence on normative morality stems from its aim to institutionalize the procedures through which communicative power is generated. It is the production of communicative power, not the setting of collective goals that the deliberation seeks to achieve. Communicative power can be seen as an inherent capacity found in all speech and action in the common world of appearances. Habermas describes communicative power as an 'authorizing force expressed in

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[12] Amy Guttman, and Dennis Thompson, *Why deliberative democracy?*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 2004, p. 12.

[13] Bernard Manin, 'On legitimacy and political deliberation', *Political Theory*, vol. 15, no. 3, 1987, pp. 352-353.

[14] Ibid., p.367.

[15] Raymond Plant, 'Jürgen Habermas and the idea of legitimation crisis', *European Journal of Political Research*, vol. 10, 1982, p. 345.

[16] William Rehg, *Insight and solidarity: the discursive ethics of Jürgen Habermas*, California University Press, California, 1997, p.39.

[17] Jürgen Habermas, *Between facts and norms: contribution to a discourse theory of law and democracy*, trans. by William Rehg, MIT Press, Cambridge, 1996, p. 107.

jurisgenesis'.[18] For him, legitimate law rests upon the generation of communicative power which is based on the public sphere.

Habermas attributes a central and constitutive role to the public sphere. When communicative rationality as a form of communication emerges within interactions of citizens, public sphere, which is the space of deliberative reasoning, is constituted, whose boundaries is defined by the form of communication and not by the content. Public sphere in Habermas is a reflexive mechanism based on exchange of validity claims where only the force of better argument 'wins out'.[19] It is an 'intersubjectively shared space' reproduced through communicative rationality.[20] Public sphere in Habermas is not a specific or single public, but complex network of multiple and overlapping publics where critical discourse by individuals, groups or other kinds of associations is maintained. However, Habermas' idea of informal discourse that occurs in the public sphere needs formal decision-making deliberative mechanisms with which it constitutes democratic legitimacy.

Public sphere, through normative contributions, influences formal mechanisms which gives public sphere social power. Here communication is not regulated by procedures and people can discuss without constraints.[21] As the public sphere is autonomous, social power functions like a 'warning system'[22] in case administrative mechanisms disregard some issues and thoughts. Social power is transformed into communicative power through elections or other opinion-formation mechanisms, which then transforms communicative power into administrative power through legislation.[23] This is a legitimate transformation for Habermas since people's opinions in the public sphere are tested from the standpoint of the generalizability of interests and they are filtered through institutionalized procedures of will formation processes.[24] As Baynes argues this model suggests a 'two track' process in which there is a division of labour between 'weak publics' (informally organized public sphere, civil society) and 'strong publics' (formally organized mechanisms of political system).[25] Dahlberg interprets this conception of public sphere as the idealized form of public reasoning in

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[18] Ibid., p.148.

[19] Cristina Lafont, 'Is the Ideal of a Deliberative Democracy Coherent?', in S. Besson and J.L. Martí (eds.), Deliberative Democracy and its Discontents, Ashgate, Aldershot, 2006, pp. 3-26.

[20] Habermas, *Between facts and norms*, pp.360-362.

[21] Ibid., p.314.

[22] Ibid., p.359.

[23] Ibid., p.299.

[24] Ibid., p.371.

[25] Kenneth Baynes, 'Deliberative democracy and the limits of liberalism', in Von Schomberg, R. and Baynes, K. (eds.) *Discourse and democracy: essays on Habermas' Between Facts and Norms*, State University of New York Press, Albany, 2002, p. 18.

Habermas.[26] However, such a conceptualisation poses severe limitations on the public and political sphere in terms of inclusion and plurality.

Limits of Habermasian deliberative democracy

Limits of Habermasian deliberative democracy -deliberation itself too- are the results of the promotion of consensus as the purpose of deliberation which marginalizes voices that do not readily agree. His emphasis on consensus in the public deliberation implies a teleological necessity, excluding dissensus or disagreement, which means denial of agonistic interpretation of political action. Habermas put emphasis on consensus and seems to subordinate majority-rule as an interruption in the search for an agreement, he denies the possibility of rational disagreement in a pluralistic society.[27] However, this renders deliberative democracy less responsive to the needs of diversity for its (1) exclusionary, (2) elitist-oligarchic, and (3) depoliticizing features.

First of all, deliberative democracy poses significant exclusionary aspects that threaten its alleged inclusiveness. Its imaginary promise about the full participation of all those affected is something that can never be realized. This idea of full discursive participation seems rather an abstraction from concrete traits which are the basis of diversity. The question is who is going to define what it means to be affected, which is always a political issue. It leads to either redrawing the political boundaries for each issue or assuming that issues affects members of the community at stake equally.[28] The idea of consensus of all those affected assumes a universalistic capacity of deliberation that holds the promise of protecting differences. However, this idea of difference is problematic too because discourse theory accommodates diversity by prioritizing commonality over difference and by concealing 'non-rational' speech acts and dissensus. In such a public deliberation discursively weak or incomplete opinions or arguments are excluded. Moreover, expecting democratic deliberation to be rational and calm implicitly means disqualifying discursively vigorous arguments.[29]

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[26] Lincoln Dahlberg, 'The Habermasian public sphere: a specification of the idealized conditions of democratic communication', *Studies in Social and Political Thought*, vol. 10, 2004, p. 6.
[27] Thomas McCarthy, 'Legitimacy and diversity: dialectical reflections on analytical distinctions', *Cardozo Law Review*, vol. 17, no. 4-5, 1996, pp. 1123.
[28] Johan Karlsson Schaffer, 'The boundaries of transnational democracy: alternatives to the all-affected principle', *Review of International Studies*, vol. 38, no. 2, 2012, p. 321.
[29] Sanders, 'Against deliberation', p. 370.

In its overall conceptualization, Habermasian public sphere neglects voices of certain groups by claiming a universal norm of rational discourse. His insistence on rationality in deliberation inevitably puts aside those forms of speech that are context-specific. As Young points out assertion of communicative rationality in Habermasian deliberation poses a problem for aesthetic-affective modes of communication. Emphasis on rational argumentation privileges formal forms of speech while marginalizing the underprivileged. Norms of deliberation, i.e. articulateness, are culturally specific and often operates as forms of power that give social privilege for the articulate while devaluing the speech of marginalized since 'the force of the better (assertive) argument' wins.[30] Nevertheless, the speech culture of women and racial minorities exhibit signs of excitement and value the expression of emotion such as anger or passionate concern, the use of figurative language, variation in tone of voice and extensive gesture.

Second, related to the exclusionary aspect of Habermas' deliberative model and from a pluralistic point of view, democratic validity of a communicatively constituted public sphere is questionable since it promotes a singular form of the public sphere, which poses a danger of creating elitist-oligarchic spaces and springs from the question of feasibility. Evaluating the assertive conditions of Habermasian communicative rationality, Bell, for example, points out that deliberation might turn into a practice of elites.[31] In existing democracies we always see reinforcing forces of social, economic and political inequalities that enable the powerful to use formal democratic mechanisms for their own benefits.[32]

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Discourse ethics, as a type of argumentation that attempts to establish normative or ethical truths by examining the presuppositions of discourse, turns into deliberative democracy only with the addition of a system of rights. They are procedural guidelines for the legitimacy of decision-making process. In this process, communicative power is transferred from society to formal system of government via rights. Thus, legitimate law is bound to opinion formation of the people. So, he seeks for consensus to guarantee rights rather than agonistic claim-making. Here we may ask: How can new forms of rights be claimed in this context for those seeking recognition of their identity? This is really problematic since in our existing societies with established traditions will-formation cannot be idealized from a zero-point. Habermas' theory seems more plausible in a world where people in the state of nature decide and come together to make a social contract, which is only an assumption. This brings to mind the

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[30] Iris Marion Young, 'Communication and the other: beyond deliberative democracy' in Benhabib, S. (ed.), *Democracy and difference*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1996, pp. 123-124.
[31] Daniel A. Bell, 'Democratic deliberation: the problem of implementation', in Macedo, S. (ed.), *Deliberative politics: essays on democracy and disagreement*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1999, pp. 74-75.
[32] Iris Marion Young, *Inclusion and democracy*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000, p. 17.

question of the feasibility of preconditions of deliberative consensus. Since these conditions are difficult to be met, at the end an appeal to a suppositional general will might be inevitable. Pennington maintains that a small group of intellectuals might try to define a general will that would emerge out of an ideal deliberation.[33]

Third, in conjunction with above considerations, another severe problem of deliberation arises as what Schaap analyses as the 'depoliticizing effect of consensus as a regulative idea'.[34] As Young points out deliberative democracy assumes that politics must be either a competition among private and conflicting interests, or that political participants must leave their particular interests aside to constitute a deliberative public.[35] Understanding politics in a narrow sense as a conflict between particular interests and presupposing these interests as converted to a pre-determined general interest is problematic because an anticipated moral consensus is in fact politically constituted and always represents a provisional hegemony of the dominant tradition in the society. Reasonableness of particular claims actually means they should conform to what the general interest suggests as commonality, which silence certain claims and make them appear as unreasonable. Thus, it is wrong to see the public assertion of experiences of people located in structurally or culturally differentiated social groups as nothing but the assertion of self-regarding interest. This is very significant to draw attention that deliberative way to determine legitimate political action often results in co-optation of radical challenges to the dominant interests within society.[36] This shows that deliberative democracy is more oriented towards maintaining the existing order rather than enriching the political and public sphere. Therefore, public reason may appear as a neutralizing principle rather than a neutral one. As such, what some deliberative democrats consider as a moral requirement (excluding unreasonable claims) is rather an act of power, a political issue that have roots in political distinctions of identity and belonging.[37]

All in all, Habermasian deliberative democracy is more like de(a)liberation since it seeks consensus and agreement as a teleological necessity in a public-political sphere of normatively constituted procedures. In that respect, we may better call his model not as 'Habermasian deliberative democracy' but only as 'Habermasian deliberation' since

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[33] Mark Pennington, 'Democracy and the deliberative conceit', *Critical Review*. Vol. 22, no. 2-3, 2010, p. 173.
[34] Andrew Schaap, 'Agonism in divided societies', *Philosophy and Social Criticism*, vol. 32, no. 2, 2006, p. 261.
[35] Young, *Inclusion and democracy*, p. 7.
[36] Schaap, 'Agonism in divided societies', p. 257.
[37] Ibid., pp. 263-264; C. Mouffe, 'Deliberative democracy or agonistic pluralism', Social Research, vol. 66, no. 3, 1999, p. 755.

deliberation seems to replace democracy as an end itself in his theory. The limits of his model, however, are due to his exclusive/limited visions of democracy and the politics, which is very much connected to the fact that Habermas assumes that power can be separated from public discourse. On the contrary, power both constitutes and is constituted by public discourse. Habermas overlooks the dominant influence of 'power politics'.[38] From this perspective the political process may not mean a 'struggle' for the best argument among all those affected but as a 'struggle for power' among actors who are not primarily interested in the communicative quality of the process of will-formation but concerned about gaining interests. Thus, political decisions are compromises that come out of the 'actual, political or societal balance of power'. Even our democratic policy discussions are not independent of coercion and threat, and free of the distorting influence of unequal power and control over resources.[39]

Here, we may even argue that Habermas seems to offer what a 'mode of governance' needs to maintain itself. In this respect, from a psychoanalytic viewpoint, his discourse theory means *superego-building* that may not necessarily be rational but tries to suppress certain voices, needs and claims for lacking discursive rationality. Instead of deliberative democratic model that seeks to find consensual morality of politics, those approaches that see conflict or dissensus as central to politics seem more politically oriented and enriching the political field. Again from a psychoanalytic viewpoint, agonistic politics leave more space for 'modes of resistance' especially when the voices of ego oppose oppressive power of superego.

Need for agonistic politics

Whereas Habermas' discourse theory that ultimately aims consensus is blinsided to plurality; agonistic politics, which follows Arendtian tradition, enlarges political space and multiplies forms of rights claim. Instead of 'best argument' in deliberative consensus, Arendtian agonistic politics gives emphasis on plurality and diversity.

In Arendt's thought, politics is an end in itself and not a procedural means to an end. Arendt's idea of politics is 'a world in itself' rather than simply a way of promoting welfare.[40] Here, disagreement can find a place in the public sphere as when people act they constitute a common world

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[38] Geert Munnichs, 'Rational politics? An exploration of the fruitfulness of the discursive concept of democracy', in Von Schomberg, R. and Baynes, K. (eds.) *Discourse and democracy: essays on Habermas' Between Facts and Norms*, State University of New York Press, Albany, 2002, p. 187.

[39] Young, *Inclusion and democracy*, p. 17.

[40] Margaret Canovan, 'Politics as culture: Hannah Arendt and the public realm', *History of Political Thought*, vol. 6, no. 3, 1985, p. 636.

instead of a general will for Arendt.[41] As Arendt prioritizes action and speech that reveals everyone's distinction in the public sphere for the realisation of a fully human life, plurality and diversity are something that must be preserved here. For Arendt 'action corresponds to the human condition of plurality, which is specifically the condition… of all political life'.[42] Plurality is a political relation in Arendt, which is a space-making phenomenon as it constitutes a space of appearances. This space of appearance is not a given space; rather, it is a contingent space where the actors reveal their individual 'who' in the presence of others.[43] Thus, action is only realized in the condition of plurality. Here, multiple viewpoints can find voice in public debate without prioritizing discursive or rational superiority. Arendt's theory of judgment offers prospects for a balance between the universal and the particular and insists on the act of judging itself rather than consensus in the public sphere.

Arendt refers to Kant's theory of faculty of judgment to reflect on the ideal public sphere. She specifically focuses on Kant's *Critique of Practical Reason* and *Critique of Judgment* where she can find out political aspects of judgment. Evaluating three faculties of human beings (willing, thinking, judging) and turning to Kant's account of reflective judgment, Arendt reaches the conclusion that judgment is 'the most political of man's mental abilities' since it is the only one that necessitates the presence of others and what she calls broadened way of thinking, or thinking from the standpoint of everyone else.[44] In this way, particular acts of judgment that cannot claim public validity otherwise might be made. This is exactly what strictly political thinking is about for Arendt[45], which also makes final decisions more valid. Arendt's theory of judgment in this context well explains why she thinks politics not as a process to consensus but as an activity to express men's plurality in the world. Her emphasis on *doxa* (opinion) against truth in the public realm also reveals her vision of politics as she thinks truth can destroy doxa, 'it can destroy the specific political reality of the citizens'. And what comes out when *doxa* is destroyed is just an illusion.[46] From this point, we might go further to say that suppressing the diversity of opinions in the public sphere by prioritizing consensus or

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[41] Mustafa Dikeç, 'Beginners and equals: political subjectivity in Arendt and Ranciere', *Transections of the Institute of British Geographers*, vol. 38, no. 1, 2012, p. 82.

[42] Hannah Arendt, *The human condition*, 2nd ed., University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1998, p. 7.

[43] Dikeç, 'Beginners and equals: political subjectivity in Arendt and Ranciere', p. 81.

[44] Hannah Arendt, *Lectures on Kant's political philosophy*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1982, p. 4.

[45] Hannah Arendt, *Between past and future: eight exercises in political thought*, Penguin Books, New York, 1968, pp. 241-242.

[46] Hannah Arendt, 'Philosophy and politics', *Social Research*, vol.57, no. 1, 1990, p. 90.

ultimate agreement necessarily destroys plurality and diversity among citizens.

It is Arendt's emphasis on plurality and distinction that most critics find agonistic ethos in Arendt's political thought. With an aim to detach Arendtian politics from the Habermasian consensus, Villa thinks that the political action depicted in *Human Condition* is idealized as an agonistic subjectivity that prizes the opportunity for individualizing action.[47] Villa points out that Arendtian understanding of plurality is not just a condition but also an achievement of political action and speech which give public expression to difference. Unlike Habermas, Arendt's action is an end itself, whose value is not based on the formation of a rational general will. For Villa, Arendt fears that rationalization of communicative action might lead to the creation of docile subjects.

Following along a very similar line, Honig criticizes Seyla Benhabib's attempt to reduce Arendt's political theory to consensus or an 'associative model' of democracy.[48] Elaborating on 'agonistic feminism', Honig wants to see performative emergence of actor's identity. For she thinks plurality and difference in Arendt's thought means the revelation of one's 'who'. Honig's political action assumes a 'practice of (re-)founding, augmentation and amendment that involves us in relations not only 'with' but also always simultaneously 'against' others'.[49]

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Analysing political reconciliation from agonistic perspective, Schaap explains how agonism opens more space for politics. Leaving aside differences among agonistic democrats, he contends that they share a desire to broaden the political space in the sense that citizens feel free to challenge the terms of public life.[50] He points out that agonistic politics can open ways to win political conciliation back from 'state-sanctioned project of national building', thus enabling a radical democratic politics that seek for solidarity among citizens in a divided society.

From above interpretations it can be concluded that Arendt's agonistic approach seems more responsive to diversity vis-à-vis Habermas' deliberative democracy. Arendt considers plurality as the underlying condition of judgment and action. Without agonistic politics, pluralism is lost as it is consensus, ultimate aim of deliberation that diminishes diversity of opinions in the society. In this context, agonistic politics open ways through which distinction is disclosed and freedom is acquired. Therefore, plurality in the public realm increases the chances of distinction in action and speech, which preserves diversity in the public realm.

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[47] Dana R. Villa, 'Postmodernism and the public sphere', *The American Political Science Review*, vol.86, no.3, 1992, p. 717.
[48] Bonnie Honig, 'Toward an agonistic feminism: Hannah Arendt and the politics of identity', in Honig, B. (ed.) *Feminist interpretations of Hannah Arendt*, Pennsylvania State University Press, Pennsylvania, 1995, p. 159.
[49] Ibid., p. 160.
[50] Schaap, 'Agonism in divided societies', pp. 257-258.

Conclusion

This study tried to offer a critical evaluation of Habermasian deliberative democracy which rests on the idea that democratic procedures should enable 'subjectless' public communication to be institutionally transferred to public opinions supported by socially effective power and discursive structures should govern this whole process. The argument of the essay was that despite its valuable place in democratic ideal, Habermasian 'public deliberation' is not enough to think deliberative democracy as an alternative theory of democracy as it diminishes the content and space of the politics. Here Habermasian deliberation was critically analysed as less responsive to the needs of diversity for its exclusionary, elitist-oligarchic, and depoliticizing aspects.

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