THE POLITICS OF SILENCE: DISCUSSING DELIBERATIVE AND AGONISTIC DEMOCRACY VIS-À-VIS GENDERED RESPONSES TO THE MILITARIZATION OF EVERYDAY LIFE IN TURKEY

by

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Abstract

THE POLITICS OF SILENCE: DISCUSSING DELIBERATIVE AND AGONISTIC DEMOCRACY VIS-À-VIS GENDERED RESPONSES TO THE MILITARIZATION OF EVERYDAY LIFE IN TURKEY

By Zeynep Gülru Göker

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The dissertation discusses contemporary theories of democracy in the light of the concept of silence. It questions the dichotomous thinking of speech and silence in political theory and challenges the conventional view of silence as the loss of communication. Looking at silence as consent, as refusal or protest, and as disengagement, all of which intersect at various contexts, the dissertation engages in a dialogue with deliberative and agonistic democrats on the meaning and complexity of political action and democratic practice. It analyzes the ways in which silence is framed politically, particularly in women's silent protests of state-inflicted violence in Turkey and around the world. The construction of gendered responses to the militarization of everyday life reveals subaltern women's significant contribution to building a more just society through unconventional acts of democratic engagement.

In Western political thought, democratic self-expression has predominantly been associated with the speaking subject. An uncritical association between speech, freedom and democratization risks ignoring the regulative and exclusionary functions of speech and relegates silence to the outside of communication. Two politically relevant and theoretically significant lines of inquiry are developed from this argument. First, it is shown that silence is neither an antithesis of nor an alternative to speech but a useful concept showing the multifaceted workings

of power in any political action or democratic opening. Secondly, women's presence in public spaces overturns the traditional association of the feminine with compliance and passivity. The dissertation involves the coupling of this theoretical engagement with an empirical analysis of the Saturday Vigils – silent vigils held by the parents of the disappeared-under-arrest in Turkey since 1995 – and concludes that the vigils open up a serious democratic space in contentious practice and contributes to Turkey's political liberalization. Moreover they set an example to collective action framed in silence that has wider implications for feminist democratic theory and political theory in general.

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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION: CONTEMPORARY DEMOCRATIC THEORY AND THE POLITICS OF SILENCE

Democratizing Democracy: The Deliberative and Agonistic Models

Since the 1990s "democratization" has increasingly occupied an important place in the agenda of Turkish politics. Although it was the period after 2001 that the Turkish Parliament enacted comprehensive reform packages in order to fulfill the Copenhagen criteria for European Union membership, the reform period can be traced back to the early 1990s. Upon Turkey's integration to the global markets in the 1980s, by 1990s there was wide public support for democratization, what had become a universal norm in the post Cold-War period.[1] Although the 1982 Constitution, which was prepared under non-democratic conditions in the aftermath of the 1980 military coup d'état, reflected the authoritarian values of the military-state alliance, the 1980s was also the period when the rhetoric of democracy emerged on many fronts. While consecutive governments embraced the language of democratization in trying to meet with the European Union accession criteria and initiated constitutional amendments to widen the scope of civil and political liberties and to soften the military control over civilian politics[2]; it was grassroots organizations and women's movements who did democracy on the streets via innovative and learned practices. Contentious action in Turkey, prior to 1980 could be characterized mainly in terms of the Left-Right political cleavage characteristic of the Cold War years. The rising political violence between extreme right and extreme left groups as well as ultranationalists and Islamic hardliners, and governments' inability to

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[1] Ergun Özbudun and Serap Yazıcı, *Democratization Reforms in Turkey* (Istanbul: TESEV Publications, 2004).
[2] See Özbudun and Yazıcı for more details on the comprehensive reforms packages in the 1990s and 2000s.

put an end to it, was perceived by the military as a reason to intervene in civilian politics. Hence in the aim of “restoring order” and stopping violence, the1980 military coup d’état was made only to be followed by more violence, thousands of arrests and an authoritarian legacy. The void created upon the massive repression of social movements was filled by women’s mobilization and human rights activism in the 1980s that enlivened contentious action in ad hoc, non-hierarchical, informal ways of organizing at a time when “politics had ended.” [3]

Human Rights activism in Turkey is conjecturally an adjunct to the plight of the Kurdish population in the aftermath of the 1980s. The Kurdish minority in Turkey always constituted a threat to the Turkish republican state, which was imagined and construed as a Muslim, Turkish nation-state during the foundation of the republic from the remnants of the multi-ethnic, multi-religious Ottoman Empire. Unable to eliminate differences into an overarching identity of the “Turk,” the Turkish state-military alliance used various strategies to deal with its Kurdish population including forceful assimilation, migration and at times extermination.[4] The Kemalist reforms were aimed at creating a unitary nation-state to replace the multi-ethnic, multi-religious Ottoman Empire. The new leadership accepted a single source of sovereignty embodied in the “people’s will”, which required the collaboration of the people, regardless of differences, with the will of the state that found its representation in an ethnically Turkish, Sunni Muslim identity. The will of the state, with the military as its guardian, defined internal and external enemies, and while trying to create a homogenous nation-state continuously named

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[3] Şirin Tekeli, “Yeni Dalga Kadın Hareketinde Örgütlenme” [Mobilization in the New Wave of Women’s Movement], Bianet, November 29 (2004). http://www.bianet.org
[4] Mesut Yeğen, "Turkish Nationalism and the Kurdish Question," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 30, no. 1 (2007).

internal and external enemies, such that the Kurdish population, among others at various junctures, was continuously forced outside the law. Hence since the inception of the republic, the state-military alliance solely treated the Kurdish issue as a national security problem. Prior to 1980 the newly found Kurdistan Workers Party had also become active in the southeastern provinces and political bombings and killings had started to become commonplace. After 1983 it was predominantly the organizations that sought rights for the Kurdish minority as well as leftist activism that had become the primary target of the Turkish State; many of the people who were arrested was declared to be either lost under custody or disappeared. Hence, on one hand post-1980s was a period when Turkish governments openly embraced the rhetoric of democratization and enacted reform packages, while on the other hand, all political activism took place under the auspices of an authoritarian-militaristic state. Furthermore in the 1987 State of Exception was declared in the Kurdish populated southeastern provinces to last until 2002. According to Keyman, the democracy rhetoric of the nongovernmental organizations and social movements in the post-1980 period was accompanied by insecurity on the part of individuals in terms of the expression of difference or the lack of protection on freedom of speech and basic rights; which leads him to characterize this period as a "democracy without democrats."[5]

In 2009 the current Turkish government headed by Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, the leader of the Justice and Development Party that has majority seats in the parliament, announced their plan entitled, "democratic opening," that aims to resolve the Kurdish problem via civilian efforts and to restructure the state-society relationship in

[5] Fuat Keyman, *Türkiye ve Radikal Demokrasi* [Turkey and Radical Democracy] (Istanbul: Alfa, 2000), 123.

consideration with the plurality of identities in Turkey. What does democracy mean when it is posed as an aim that is to be achieved? The brief description of the Turkish political scene presents us with two different ways to think about democracy: a formalistic approach to political change that takes democratization as a process enabled by political elites who enact reform packages, and a practice-oriented approach to democracy that is embodied in social movements and organizations. Democratic theory, in the post-Cold War period, witnessed attempts to reconcile this discrepancy and to address the problems with purely formalistic accounts of democracy. Within a formalistic understanding, a regime is democratic if competitive elections are held periodically and institutionally guaranteed.[6] Ranciere argues that while the triumph of democracy is celebrated everywhere, this rhetoric refers to the victory of democracy as a political regime, meaning, a set of institutions that materialize the idea of popular sovereignty, while democracy as a political practice is always accompanied by self-doubt.[7] Paradoxically, what accompanies the celebration of democracy as a regime is growing dissatisfaction with the existing forms of institutional mechanisms.[8] The extensive literature on democratic transition and consolidation employs this formal definition when looking at various aspects of the relationship between political, economic and social factors in the

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[6] Joseph Alois Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy*. 6th ed. (*Counterpoint*. London ; Boston: Unwin Paperbacks, 1987). Adam Przeworski, *Democracy and the Market : Political and Economic Reforms in Eastern Europe and Latin America* (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991).
[7] Jacques Rancière, *Disagreement: Politics and Philosophy* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 96.
[8] The inconsistency stems from the association of democracy merely with a regime type whereas Ranciere defines it as a mode of subjectification, namely, the moment of the appearance of people within a specific sphere as interlocutors. When the people are replaced with an emptied notion of "public opinion," democracy is legitimized without reference to the demos and we are confronted with *post-democracy*. Ibid., p. 97-100.

formation and consolidation of democratic systems.[9] Yet, as Wedeen argues, only few of these works spend much time problematizing the concept of democracy or investigating "ordinary practices of political participation, performances of democratic subjectivity that exist outside of electoral confines."[10] In contexts where the ethical and political principles of democracy such as freedom, equality and the discourse of basic rights are not yet completely institutionalized, discussions of democracy are held within comparative politics or area studies literatures, while the theories and fundamental concepts of contemporary accounts in democratic theory have a lot to offer to this discussion. As Lummis states, "If democratic theory matters in the world, it matters in the Third World, where some of the great democratic struggles have taken, and are taking, place."[11] Transitions to democracy literature treat political change on a continuum and consequently undermine its complexity and dynamism.[12] As such it misses the element of historicity in democracy and some of the ways in which people create opportunities in authoritarian contexts or unconsolidated democracies.

The dissertation engages in a dialogue with two prominent strands in contemporary democratic theory, the deliberative model and the agonistic model, to see whether post-metaphysical accounts of democracy allow any venturing beyond the

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[9] Larry Diamond, *Developing Democracy: Toward Consolidation* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999). Samuel P. Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1993). Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996). Seymour Martin Lipset, "Some Social Requisites of Democracy: Economic Development and Political Legitimacy," *American Political Science Review* 53, (1959). Guillermo O'Donnell and Philippe C. Schmitter, *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Tentative Conclusions About Uncertain Democracies* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986) are among major texts within this literature.

[10] Lisa Wedeen, *Ambiguities of Domination : Politics, Rhetoric, and Symbols in Contemporary Syria* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1999), 61.

[11] C. Douglas Lummis, *Radical Democracy* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996), 11.

[12] Jillian Schwedler, *Faith in Moderation : Islamist Parties in Jordan and Yemen* (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 6.

liberal-democratic framework of the global North. The dissertation discusses contemporary democratic theory in its deliberative and agonistic forms vis-à-vis Turkish politics at times, but particularly with respect to contentious action in Turkey in the aftermath of the 1980 military coup d'état in the framework of women's activism against human rights violations of predominantly the Kurdish minority in Turkey. I particularly look at the two models' efforts to substantiate the role and value of political participation and communication within democratic theory and how thinking outside the framework in which they theorize political communication, namely, deliberative speech and agonistic action alone, contributes to our understanding of democratic theory in particular and political theory in general. To do that the dissertation takes a non-conventional perspective on silence, to argue both that it is understudied within given paradigms of political communication where the notion of speaking subject enjoys an uncontested status, and to show that silence is conceptually significant and politically strategic given its use in certain contexts, such as in silent protests. As a case study, the dissertation analyzes the silent vigils held in response to enforced-disappearances of Kurdish political activists in Turkey.

The dissertation takes deliberative and agonistic models of democracy as the framework in which the discussion of democracy is made due to their emphasis on democratizing democracy, insofar as they express the centrality of the people and suggest rendering people's participation more genuine. In that respect, both models depart from liberal and competitive elitist accounts that understand democracy merely as the clash or the aggregation of pre-determined interests of rational subjects.[13] They emphasize the

[13] Anthony Downs, *An Economic Theory of Democracy* (New York: Harper & Row, 1965). Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy.*

construction of collective demands or arguments, where the process takes center stage as constitutive and transformative of political subjectivities rather than merely representing them. The deliberative model of democracy values democracy as a process of collective will-formation, where the process rather than the end results has primary importance as long as it constitutes an intersubjective framework where legitimacy of decisions is established via the collective rationality of the participants. (See Chapter 2) The overlap between rationality and legitimacy is attained through a set of procedures ensuring that the consensus that is reached is the product of free and reasoned deliberation enabled by the participation of all affected parties as moral and political equals.[14] According to John Dryzek, the deliberative turn in democratic theory reflects a challenge to liberal and competitive elitist models, because it does not accept preferences as given and democracy merely as their aggregation, but instead rests on the acknowledgment that perspectives and preferences are made and remade through their communication. Hence he defines the deliberative turn as a "renewed concern with the authenticity of democracy."[15]

Distinct from the deliberative model, agonistic democrats reject the possibility and the desirability of a union between legitimacy and rationality, arguing that legitimacy is the name given to a political act of closure and can never be representative of any universalistic account of rationality.[16] The common denominator of the agonistic models is the influence of poststructuralist and psychoanalytical paradigm on their thinking,

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[14] Seyla Benhabib, *Democracy and Difference : Contesting the Boundaries of the Political* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), 69.
[15] John S. Dryzek, Deliberative Democracy and Beyond : Liberals, Critics, Contestation (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 1.
[16] See William E. Connolly, *The Ethos of Pluralization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995). William E. Connolly, Samuel Allen Chambers, and Terrell Carver, *William E. Connolly : Democracy, Pluralism and Political Theory* (London ; New York: Routledge, 2008). Ernesto Laclau, *On Populist Reason*. (London ; New York: Verso, 2005). Chantal Mouffe, *The Democratic Paradox* (London New York: Verso, 2000). *On the Political*, *Thinking in Action* (London ; New York: Routledge, 2005). *The Return of the Political* (London ; New York: Verso, 2005).

which leads to the rejection of pre-established universalities whether in the form of a discourse of human rights, a historical teleology that centers on the working class, or rational discourse.[17] The poststructuralist accounts acknowledge the instability of any meaning and hence the impossibility of any closure to democracy. On the other hand, the psychoanalytic understanding of identity of the subject, within Freudian and Lacanian traditions, informs an account of identity as the site of a fundamental antagonistic struggle. This then informs the works of theorists such as William Connolly, Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe such that they imagine politics as the site of collective antagonism where contestation becomes the central aspect of the political realm that is continuously disrupted by social movements. Democracy is valued because it is the only political system that institutionalizes this contestation and enables its continuity; nevertheless, they aim to radicalize democracy by way of deepening the meaning of its ethico-political principles liberty and equality and extending their application to more people and wider spheres of engagement.[18]

Despite the irreconcilability of their respective ontologies of the political, which is ultimately a matter of antagonism for the agonistic democrat and open-ended communication of perspectives for the deliberative democrat, deliberative and agonistic theories converge on their rejection of a closure to the meaning and form of democracy. They both acknowledge and value some form of dispute and disagreement over the principles of liberty, equality and basic rights that goes hand in hand with their institutionalization. Mark Devenney and Aletta Norval are two theorists whose works

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[17] Lars Tønder and Lasse Thomassen, *Radical Democracy : Politics between Abundance and Lack*, *Reappraising the Political* (Manchester, UK ; New York, New York: Manchester University Press ; Palgrave, 2005). 1-17.
[18] Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, Hegemony and Socialist Strategy : Towards a Radical Democratic Politics (London: Verso, 1985).

have significant parallels with one of the aims of this dissertation, that is a dialogue between the deliberative and agonistic, or poststructuralist models of democracy.[19] Devenney's concern is to forge a theory of political subjectivity that reconciles the promising aspects of post-metaphysical political theory of Habermas and Laclau. In that respect, he states:

> The communicating subject of politics is a subject who adheres to certain structural constraints on action (here we may speak in terms of a developmental psychology, lifeworld and the like) but these constraints at the same time imply a certain subjective mobility institutionalized in democratic societies, a mobility allowing the reformulation and a rearticulation of what is communicated in any given context.[20]

Hence Devenney suggests, for the justification of democracy we need to adhere to a less determinate subject than the subject of traditional political theory postulated by classical liberal or republican versions of democracy. He argues that the models of radical democracy receive their strength from an understanding of language as essential to the formation of subjectivities, rather than one that simply embraces a propositional account of language.[21] The enlightenment ideal of the sovereign subject who is fully capable of authorizing decisions and taking control of utterances is challenged by contemporary philosophy. Both Habermas and poststructuralist thinkers such as Laclau and Mouffe have surpassed logocentricity of the enlightenment tradition and moved towards the study of the relation between subject and language.[22] In his famous formulation of communicative action, Habermas locates the site of rationality in the intersubjective

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[19] Mark Devenney, Ethics and Politics in Contemporary Theory: Between Critical Theory and Post-Marxism (London ; New York: Routledge, 2004). Aletta J. Norval, Aversive Democracy : Inheritance and Originality in the Democratic Tradition (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007).
[20] Devenney, *Ethics and Politics in Contemporary Theory*, 116.
[21] Ibid., 49.
[22] Ibid., 99.

processes of communication in the public sphere, which later informs a discourse theory of democracy where he ties processes of decision-making to the processes of communication in the public sphere, where popular sovereignty becomes dispersed in public communication.[23] Although Habermas does not explicitly suggest an underlying core identity of the subject, he takes his cue from developmental psychology and the processes of development of individual adults to explain the rational development of the society towards moral consensus. Within this process the assumption is that abnormalities during development can be cured through dialogue.[24] While Devenney is concerned with Habermas's presumption that abnormalities can be disregarded, my concern is that Habermas's account of speech, which later takes the specific form of deliberative speech in deliberative democracy, becomes the means through which political subjectivities are imagined to be constructed and the way they act in the public sphere. The emphasis on deliberative speech as the form and model of democratic participation acquires an uncontested status in democratic theory today without a concomitant problematization of the motivation, ability or the effectiveness of this particular form of communication. That is one reason that makes the study of silence important, such that it challenges the uncontested position deliberation has acquired in democratic theory today.

Aletta Norval, on the other hand, also engages in a dialogue with deliberative and poststructuralist accounts of democracy, but she is particularly concerned with explaining how democratic identifications form and are sustained over time. According to Norval, the lack of attention to the processes of "identification as a democrat" is the most

[23] Jürgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action* Vol I. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1984). Jürgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action*. Vol II. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1987). Jürgen Habermas, *Between Facts and Norms : Contributions to a Discourse Theory of Law and Democracy*, *Studies in Contemporary German Social Thought* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1996).
[24] Devenney, *Ethics and Politics in Contemporary Theory*, 110.

significant lacunae in democratic theory today.[25] She argues that deliberative democrats miss the importance of the moment of "identification as a democrat," either because they care about procedures and not about the subjectivity of the participants, or because they give scant attention to changes in political subjectivity.[26] I disagree with Norval and argue in contrast, that while Habermas and his followers dislocate the sovereign subject as the subject of politics, they implicitly presuppose and introduce a strong account of the subject of democracy, and give account of how she acts, speaks and even feels in participating deliberative forums. Deliberative democrats build their respective theories on the assumption of the existence of an outspoken, courageous political subject who can appear in public, make arguments, listen to others, see from various perspectives and who is also willing and ready to change her convictions without shame; moreover, one who willingly accepts deliberation as *the* model of resolving disagreements, and hence the model of democracy. This notion of subjectivity is both accepted a priori so that the model can celebrate deliberation as an antidote to democracy and also advocated as a virtue of deliberation, which is believed to constitute a learning-school for democrats. (See Chapter 3)

The principal critique of Habermas's idealized notion of the speech act comes from poststructuralist thinkers such as Judith Butler, Chantal Mouffe and Ernesto Laclau. Butler refuses Habermas's presupposition that meanings are transmitted through speech acts univocally, and emphasizes the possibility of the construction of a vast array of unprecedented meanings from the disjuncture between the utterance and the meaning.[27]

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[25] Norval, *Aversive Democracy*, 55.
[26] Ibid., 119.
[27] Judith Butler, *Excitable Speech : A Politics of the Performative* (New York ; London: Routledge, 1997), 141.

This leads to a notion of the subject that at once constitutes and is constituted in language. Laclau's argument is similar; he also rejects any complete closure to the constitution of the subject, and finds the possibility of political action in the very impossibility of the complete determination of the subject by any structure or discourse. According to Devenney, this opens up to a radical theory, because on one hand it suggests that the subject is the impossible moment of sovereign determination but on the other hand, we are all continuously determined by processes of subjectification, and collective mobilization becomes possible when we partially identify with various discourses and movements.[28] For Chantal Mouffe, the foremost goal of the radical democrat has to be the multiplication of outlets of identification with democratic movements rather than envisioning procedures that enable rational dialogue.[29] As such, agonistic democrats find deliberative democracy's focus on deliberation too narrow and purified to account for the reality of political communication. Yet in doing so, they celebrate antagonism at the expense of reducing politics and democratic struggle to disruption and resistance alone. Instead of sitting down to make arguments, Laclau and Mouffe's actors act, and democratic practice is reduced to a disruptive, heroic conception of action, where politics is reduced to fighting and resistance. The mere focus on the moment of disruption ignores ongoing politics, in other words, the not-so revolutionary and disruptive sequences of politics.[30] That is why despite the major distinctions between the two approaches, both the deliberative and the agonistic models of democracy end up idealizing a particular form or characteristic of action in explaining democratic engagements. Thereby they associate democratic practice with the political engagements

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[28] Devenney, *Ethics and Politics in Contemporary Theory,* 112.
[29] Mouffe, *The Democratic Paradox*, 69.
[30] Norval, *Aversive Democracy*, 133.

of primarily speaking and fighting individuals, which then not only undermines the power differentials within spheres of deliberation and action, but also leads to rigid categories of what counts as political engagement and disengagement, or resistance and compliance. That is why the dissertation turns to silence for a more nuanced understanding of political action and democratic engagements.

In Western political thought, democratic self-expression has predominantly been associated with the speaking subject. The notion that speaking is freedom is so ingrained in our thought that we seldom go about questioning it.[31] The centrality of voice and speech to the construction of political communities and political action has practically become "a truism in political theory."[32] The lack of any implicit or explicit reference to silence in deliberative democracy, an extensive literature that focuses on communication, is especially striking. An uncritical association between speech, freedom and democratization risks ignoring the regulative and exclusionary functions of speech and relegates silence to the outside of communication.[33] Throughout the dissertation silence is posed as a question to deliberative democracy not only to understand why speech is valorized as the form of democratic expression and the gate to freedom but also to explore the discrepancies and injustices that lie beneath the equation of democracy with deliberative speech. Silence is also confronted with the agonistic model to challenge its association of democratic action with a combative ethos that materializes as political partisanship. The agonistic critique of deliberative democracy is valuable to the extent that it challenges the constricted account of communication deliberative democracy puts

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[31] Wendy Brown, "Freedom's Silences," in *Edgework : Critical Essays on Knowledge and Politics*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2005, 314.
[32] Keenan Ferguson, "Silence: A Politics," *Contemporary Political Theory,* no. 2 (2003): 49.
[33] Don Ihde, *Listening and Voice : Phenomenologies of Sound*. 2nd ed. (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2007), 14.

to fore. Instead agonistic democrats emphasize the role of passions and passionate attachments in the make up of collective mobilization. Yet because they force an a priori antagonistic character to collective identifications, they also cannot account for the political value of silence, such as seen in voters' abstention, boycotts or silent protests, which are forms of action, or inaction, that circumvent or escape partisanship rather than reinvigorate or channel antagonism.

Contemporary interest in speech and deliberation most definitely owes to the rising interest in language and semantics in the 1970s, which is a period when visualism in philosophy was replaced by linguism.[34] According to the Charles Taylor not only did this period witness the prioritization of language within philosophy, but also the philosophical understanding itself became attached to linguistic understanding.[35] Yet the spoken word is only tip of the iceberg when it comes to language, "which is not merely the cloth of thought expressed in words, but a medium in which we are plunged in and cannot fully plumb."[36] When contemporary theories inspired by linguistic understanding are translated into actual models of democracy, this broad notion of language tends to get confined to particular forms of speech. In contrast, silence is implicitly and often single-handedly associated with the absence of communication. The dissertation asks whether looking at politics in the light of silence offers us any insight into the nature of political action. I argue that this perspective complicates taken-for-granted associations of certain modes of speech and action with rationality or resistance, and consensus or conflict,

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[34] Ibid., 6.
[35] Charles Taylor, *Human Agency and Language*. Cambridge [Cambridgeshire] ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 217 – 222.
[36] Ibid., 235.

which has become a dichotomy that represents the opposition between the deliberative and agonistic models of democracy.

Silence

Existing literature that deals with silence or refers to the concept mostly does so by looking at the "silencing" of the past by historians or as it indicates the state of "being silenced," namely becoming speechless and powerless, thus, as something that happens to women or other subordinated groups.[37] (See Chapter 4) Political theorists have also inherited the legacy of postcolonial and subaltern studies to bring to fore the absences in texts and silences in history. Thereby silence mostly indicates negativity, denoting an effect of power rather than an act of power, or the absence of communication rather than an act of communication. Feminist critiques of deliberative democracy have looked at ways in which gendered hierarchies embedded in communication constrain women's access to deliberation.[38] They have suggested alternative modes of communication such as narratives, story-telling, passionate speech to render women's participation into deliberation more meaningful.[39] Yet, while speaking freely and openly has been a central organizing principle for many social movements, even within these reformed models, the privileging of speech as an exercise of freedom has not been adequately challenged. There are scholars, albeit few, who discuss silence from a different perspective, such as Max Picard who rejects the exclusively negative connotations of silence and elaborates

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[37] For a discussion of history writing as an attempt to silence elements of the past that do not fit into the narratives of the dominant powers, see Michel-Rolph Trouilllot, *Silencing the Past : Power and the Production of History* (Boston, Mass.: Beacon Press, 1995).

[38] Lynn Sanders, "Against Deliberation," *Political Theory* 25, no. 3 (1997). Iris Marion Young, *Inclusion and Democracy*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

[39] Young, *Inclusion and Democracy,* 52-81.

on it as "a positive, a complete world in itself."[40] Yet Picard's work gives silence too much of a world of its own. Defining and attributing values to an abstracted concept of silence invites the danger of putting it on a pedestal without paying attention to power relations within communication. One can define many instances as silence; in fact it is hard to make rigid distinctions between the states of silence, quietness or muteness.[41] Within the field of linguistics, silence is treated as an integral part of discourse[42], for instance, Adam Jaworski differentiates between an essentialist approach to silence, that defines silence tightly and explores it as an abstract phenomenon, and a non-essentialist approach, with which silence is not defined but instead examined in practice through its operations in discourse. Cherly Glenn's work on silence is also a source of inspiration for the dissertation in that she also challenges the predominant position speech has enjoyed as the authorized medium of culture and power in social and political theory."[43] Yet Glenn only looks at silence as a form of rhetorical delivery and studies individual acts of silence, as examples of the refraining from testifying. As much as her analysis is useful in showing the gendered underpinnings of silence, such as in Anita Hill's long period of silence before she testified against Clarence Thomas, the dissertation departs from Glenn's analysis in that I look at silence as a collective, political experience rather than

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[40] Devenney, *Ethics and Politics in Contemporary Theory*, 17.

[41] Jaworski argues that a linguistic exploration of silence has to insist on actual communication such that the quite that passes between strangers who pass by without a comment is not an example of silence. Adam Jaworski, *The Power of Silence : Social and Pragmatic Perspectives* (Newbury Park, Calif.: Sage, 1993), 48. Otherwise, silence can be found anywhere, and mostly with religious and spiritual connotations as it pertains to a solitary state of contemplation, thought and transcendence, but also in communal experiences of spirituality such as Quaker worships, mosque prayers, or in meditative activities such as yoga retreats.

[42] For two prominent works on silence treated within the field of linguistics see Jaworski, *The Power of Silence* and Deborah Tannen and Muriel Saville-Troike, *Perspectives on Silence* (Norwood, N.J.: Ablex Pub. Corp., 1985).

[43] Cheryl Glenn, "Silence: A Rhetorical Art for Resisting Discipline(s)," *jac* 22, no. 2 (2002): 281.

an individualized rhetorical use.[44] Chapter 4 surveys an array of possibilities in which silence can be understood to relate to the construction and the breaking up of political communities. Chapter 5 analyzes silence as a political strategy that is an effective form of communication in given circumstances, but also as a conceptual tool that marks the futility of partisanship and the inability of certain forms of speech in given situations. In this chapter, I discuss the Saturday Vigils in Turkey, held in response to the enforced disappearances as an example of political action framed in silence. Silent practice is not unique to citizens of Turkey; one can find many examples in world history. Within political theory silent protests are usually treated within the literature in civil disobedience, yet while the emphasis is made on the protest, the adjective "silent" only receives passing reference. I argue that exploring the use of silence is insightful because once we listen to silence within a given context it can tells us a lot about the nature and the structure of political discourse within a given situation. Moreover, disembodied nonverbal action underlines perceptive activities such as seeing, paying attention and being seen which are undervalued but equally significant components of democratic engagements.

What does it mean to discuss silence vis-à-vis democracy, and as a democratic engagement in a country where it is hard to talk about an efficient system of protection for the basic right of freedom of expression? On the 30th of April 2008, the Turkish Parliament debated an amendment to the notorious Article 301 of the Penal Code, which

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[44] My analysis also differs from an understanding of silence as the absence of noise, such as Sim's (2007) call for the cultivation of silence in an increasingly noisy world. (2). Sim makes an insightful discussion of the politics of noise as a symbol of ideological power, discussing sound bombs and planes flying over Gaza and their psychological effects on people, as well as other ways in which silence and noise are structured in arts, philosophy and language. Stuart Sim, *Manifesto for Silence : Confronting the Politics and Culture of Noise* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007).

stifles freedom of speech by criminalizing speech that "insults Turkishness." In a country where insulting Turkishness or as the recent amended version indicates: "insulting the Turkish nation, Turkish Republican State, the Grand National Assembly, the Government and the State judicial organs" is a crime that justifies imprisonment up to two years; where criticizing militarism and the Army can be considered a crime under Article 318 of the Penal Code for "alienating the people against the military" how can we talk about silence in the same sentence with democracy? If we are to think of democracy as a practice and as a historical contest over the meaning and application of freedom and equality, then it is in fact necessary to do so in such contexts. As Benhabib argues "the justification of democracy should begin with an account of the institutions and practices already prevalent in democratic societies, and with the principles implicit in their self-understanding" that is why we have to look at particular discursive formulations and how they shape democratic practices and determine communicative practices.[45] Two interrelated phenomena shape political discourse and the limits of democratic action in Turkey: the structuring of political discourse on friend-enemy lines as part of the process of constructing and maintaining a homogeneous nation-state, which then led to the second phenomenon, namely, the increasing militarization of the state and everyday life that shaped the meaning and experience of democratic citizenship. Both phenomena meet in constructing the experiences of the Kurdish minority. The silent vigils held each Saturday in Turkey were primarily a response to the phenomenon of enforced-disappearances, but I also argue in this dissertation that they make possible a gendered response to the militarization of everyday life.

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[45] Devenney, *Ethics and Politics in Contemporary Theory,* 119.

Gendered Responses to Militarization

The focus on gendered responses to militarization as well as women's choice of silence as a political strategy is important. In Turkey, the understanding that women's rights were granted by the state received much acceptance among women's organizations that identify themselves with the modernizing projects of the early republican elites. Although there are distinct currents of feminist mobilization in Turkey today, the history of women's mobilization can roughly be categorized under two distinctive labels: "state feminism," that actually projected itself as an ally of the modernization project and gladly accepted the role assigned to women as the symbols of the modern Turkish nation; and "critical feminism," of those women who challenge the idea that the woman question can be resolved by men alone, and criticize the symbolic role women played in the modernization process at the expense of any substantial change to women's condition.[46] State feminists embraced the republican modernization project and its rhetoric that the women's rights are handed over to women by the founding fathers. It is partially true that the early republican years and the concomitant modernization project elevated the status of a small group of women by creating opportunities for political and economic participation in line with the modernist agenda, however, it was hardly the lower class, Anatolian or Kurdish women whose rights and status were advanced during this time. That is why looking at women's actions is significant to see the ways in which, in the aftermath of the 1980 coup d'état, they constructed innovative practices. The Saturday Vigils consisted of a group of feminist human rights activists, but mainly of Kurdish

[46] Nermin Abadan-Unat, "Söylemden Protesto ya da Türkiye'de Kadın Hareketinin Dönüşümü," [From Discourse to Protest or The Transformation of the Women's Movement in Turkey] in *75 Yılda Kadınlar ve Erkekler* [Women and Men in 75 Years] *1998*, ed. A. Berktay Hacimirzaoglu, Türkiye Is Bankasi., et al. (Istanbul: Türkiye Ekonomik ve Toplumsal Tarih Vakfi, 1998).

women coming from rural backgrounds whose sons or husbands disappeared under arrest. Their practices can be considered innovative within the context of Turkey, but also borrowed from international movements, such that the Saturday Vigils were inspired by the similar vigils of the Argentinean Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo.

There is a growing body of interdisciplinary literature within Turkish scholarship studying women's actions in Turkey, in fact studies show a vibrant women's movement dating back to the Ottoman era, and Berktay shows that divergent voices within women were present since the early days of the Republic and were suppressed in time when the republican elite claimed that the woman question was settled.[47] Feminist scholars have recorded the achievements of the post-1980 women's activism and its institutionalization in the 1990s.[48] In the 1980s women campaigned against domestic violence, pointed at the patriarchal limits of the civil and the penal code, and lobbied for women's sexual rights. In mid-1980s different voices emerged within the women's movement as Kurdish women and Muslim women started redefining rights and expanding the boundaries of democracy.[49] The dissertation contributes to such body of work through a focus on the ways in which informal practices and women's silence and not only speech informs feminist democratic practice. The Saturday Vigils, silent vigils held in protest of

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[47] Fatmagül Berktay, "Cumhuriyet'in 75 Yıllık Serüvenine Kadınlar Açısından Bakmak," [Looking to 75 Years of the Republic from the Perspective of Women] in *75 Yılda Kadışnlar ve Erkekler* [Women and Men in 75 Years] *1998*, ed. A. Berktay Hacimirzaoglu, Türkiye Is Bankasi., et al. (Istanbul: Türkiye Ekonomik ve Toplumsal Tarih Vakfi, 1998). Serpil Çakır, *Osmanlı Kadın Hareketi*. [The Ottoman Women's Movement] 1st ed, Kadın Araştırmaları Dizisi ;. (Cağoloğlu, Istanbul: Metis yayınları, 1994).
[48] Pınar İlkkaracan, "A Brief Overview of Women's Movements in Turkey (and the Influence of Political Discourses)," *Women for Women's Human Rights Reports No. 2*. (1997) http://www.wwhr.org/yayin_3.php?detay=12
Aksu Bora ve Asena Günal, 90'larda Türkiye'de Feminizm [Feminism in Turkey in the 90s](Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2002).
[49] Zehra Arat, "Kemalizm ve Türk Kadını," [Kemalism and the Turkish Woman] in *75 Yılda Kadışnlar ve Erkekler* [Women and Men in 75 Years] *1998*, ed. A. Berktay Hacimirzaoglu, Türkiye Is Bankasi., et al. (Istanbul: Türkiye Ekonomik ve Toplumsal Tarih Vakfi, 1998). Aksu and Günal, "90'larda Türkiye'de Feminizm [Feminism in Turkey in the 90s].

enforced-disappearances of mostly Kurdish citizens in the aftermath of the 1980s military coup, are phenomenon that are not regarded either as revolutionary or as deliberative moments of politics, however, I show that silent practices constituted long-standing democratic engagements. A discussion of this particular case shows that while silence is predominantly perceived as an indication of the loss of communication in the face of arms, it can in fact constitute a powerful response to state-inflicted violence and the militarization of everyday life. Moreover, the predominance of women as participants of the vigils and the general perception of the vigils as women's events, as the name *Saturday Mothers* indicates challenges the gendered underpinnings of democratic citizenship in Turkey.

Scholars from a wide range of disciplines have engaged in works that critically look at women's activities. Ackelsberg argues that historiographies of women's activism challenge old notions of what counts as political participation disrupting the public/private division; Kaplan and Ackelsberg study the ways in which women who are inspired by daily concerns engage in webs of political activities to bring the social into politics.[50] Such studies show how dissenting practices can take multiple forms: discursive, performative, organized and everyday dissent.[51] Yet, the dissertation takes caution against looking for dissent without paying attention to the ways in which many political practices also reproduce traditional norms and gender roles. In order to understand the dynamic relationship between women's practices and the state, it is

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[50] Martha Ackelsberg, "Communities, Resistance, and Women's Activism: Some Implications for a Democratic Polity," in *Women and the Politics of Empowerment 1988 eds.* Ann Bookman and Sandra Morgen (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1988). Temma Kaplan, *Crazy for Democracy: Women in Grassroots Movements* (New York: Routledge, 1997).

[51] Holloway Sparks, "Dissident Citizenship: Democratic Theory, Political Courage, and Activist Women," Hypatia 12, no. 4 (1997).

essential that we contextualize our analyses of political actions and pay attention to multiple relations of power and discursive formulations in which they take place. This is a lesson transnational feminism has taught to the study of women and gender around the world: looking at the intersections of the local and the global and treating places as places in history, socially constructed in power relations.[52] That is why the dissertation analyzes the Saturday Vigils vis-à-vis the nationalist and militarist structuring of political discourse and democratic citizenship in Turkey.

According to Lois McNay, abstract discursivism that is characteristic of current post-identity politics misses the importance of explaining political action from the perspective of embodied subjects.[53] The problem with theories of disruption or dislocation is that while they understand the subject as the product of that dislocation and indeterminacy, they forget about the processes of reactivation and the continuation of those moments that is essential to the sustenance of democratic relationships. In that respect, they are unable to give convincing accounts as to why the disruptive practices of radically democratic groups, or wild publics that Jürgen Habermas relegates to the outside of formal decision-making stay as democrats over time and not revert back to xenophobic forms of antagonism. We need to avoid reducing the relationship between deliberative and agonistic democracy into a simplified choice between consensus or conflict, of deliberative speech and combative, disruptive action. That is why while I analyze women's silence as a response to enforced-disappearance and militarization, I

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[52] See Inderpal Grewal and Caren Kaplan, *Scattered Hegemonies : Postmodernity and Transnational Feminist Practices* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994). Lisa McLaughlin, "Feminism and the Political Economy of Transnational Public Space," *Sociological Review* 52 (2004). Breny Mendoza, "Transnational Feminism in Question," *Feminist Theory* 3, no. 3 (2002). Chandra T. Mohanty, *Feminism without Borders Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity* (Durham ; London: Duke University Press, 2003).

[53] Lois McNay, "Feminism and Post-Identity Politics: The Problem of Agency," *Constellations* 17, no. 4 (2010): 522.

also aim to show how the practices reinforced traditional gender norms and how women's relationship to language changed over time while silence gave way to a more institutionalized and vocal form organizing in the reinitiating of the vigils in 2009. (See Chapter 6)

The rhetoric of democratizing democracy, such as one that is embraced by the current Turkish government focuses on democratic practice as a mode of elite negotiation or simply as governmental action. On the other hand, the theoretical attempts to radicalize or democratize democracy, such as those of the agonistic model insists on the centrality of a bottom-up process and centralizes people's practice with little emphasis on ongoing governmental politics. Social transformation is also not the "rallying of masses for a cause" but happens through the ways in which "daily relations are rearticulated and new horizons are opened."[54] The dissertation underlines the necessity to stop clouding these rearticulations with the nostalgia for revolutionary action. It also warns against the conflation of the celebration of democracy as a system of ongoing communication with the advocacy of deliberation insofar as it celebrates the speech act for its own sake. On the whole, the dissertation addresses deliberative and agonistic democrats' move from open-ended communication to the expressive model of democratic citizenship where communication is less broadly defined. Through the discussion of under-theorized models of communication, such as embodied nonverbal action, it invites exploring political practices within particular discursive relations and suggests that democratic theory has to venture beyond "what is voiced" to look for democrats. That is why, the dissertation invites the reader to pay attention to what is not said and done to notice how

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[54] Judith Butler, Ernesto Laclau, and Slavoj Zizek, *Contingency, Hegemony, Universality : Contemporary Dialogues on the Left* (London ; New York: Verso, 2000), 14

we might be confusing political actions with passivity and democratic interventions with disengagement.

Structure of the Argument

Chapter 2 starts with a brief analysis of Habermas's notion of communicative rationality in his earlier work as it informs a model of democracy. I argue that the theory loses its critical strength, which is the communicability of all values, when translated into a model of democratic practice, because it rests on a particular ontology of the subject and confines communication to a narrow notion of deliberative speech and to a narrow sphere of politics, thereby relegating informal practices to an inferior role in democratic will-formation. I trace this move in contemporary deliberative theory and the celebration of deliberation as a learning school for democrats, an idea that implicitly associates deliberation with truth and emancipation and takes the motivation to speak for granted. The central argument of the chapter is that while the communicative understanding of democracy is promising insofar as it stresses the communicability of interests and values and links decision-making to wider participation of the public, the deliberative models confine democratic action to a constricted account of communication, that is not adequately critical of its own expectations about a purified account of democratic dialogue and its presupposition of a particular political culture and mode of subjectivity.

Chapter 3 discusses agonistic democracy within the works of Mouffe and Connolly as self-proclaimed agonistic democrats, and with reference to Laclau and his description of collective mobilization from isolated democratic demands. All three models converge on the rejection of pre-established universalities and celebration of

democracy for keeping open the contestation for the definition of its ethico-political principles. Yet they all focus exclusively on the disruptive element of politics and theorize democratic expression only from the point of view of the voice of the excluded. I argue that Mouffe's critique of deliberative democracy's focus on consensus is convincing in her rejection of a power-free understanding of communication whereas her alternative notion of agonistic democracy is not because she has to refer to a notion of consensus herself in order to tame antagonism into agonism. Her reliance on the friend-enemy dichotomy in making up of the political and of political identifications, renders her notion of agonistic democracy ill equipped when considered in contexts where hegemonic powers constitute the political and the limits of political action based on friend-enemy distinctions. On the other hand, Connolly expects too much from political subjects in order to translate agonistic politics into a viable ethical practice. It is because both theorists understand politics on antagonistic terms that when they translate the understanding into a democratic model, they focus too much on the disruptive elements of political action that cannot explain how agonistic bonds are to be sustained over time as democratic relationships. Despite a similar emphasis on the disruptive in understanding political action, Laclau's work on democracy is insightful in terms of looking at the coming into being, or the articulation of democratic demands with respect to historicity and contingency. Thereby he is able to avoid the background assumption of a consolidated liberal-democratic regime that exist in Mouffe and Connolly's work and open up space for the discussion of democratic theory beyond the global North.

Chapter 4 surveys different conceptions of silence within political theory and embraces a non-conventional perspective on silence that refuses to perceive it as absence,

lack, and the demise of communication. I first look at the relationship between speech, silence and the formation of the political and complicate the taken-for-granted associations between silence and complicity. I argue that complicity and resistance are not easily distinguishable political states, and speech as well as silence has different modalities that enable the construction of political communities or lead to the breakdown of unjust ones given the right circumstances. Second, I explore the implications of thinking of silence as not-speaking vis-à-vis deliberative and agonistic democracy, to show how silence is at times constructed as a refusal of given paradigms and outlets of political action or language. Third, I suggest that democratic engagements can indeed take place in silence such as in the form of collective actions and that we need to pay attention to what silence allows as a political tool, this point is further elaborated in a case study in Chapter 4. Finally, I look at silence as inaction, such as in the example of political boycotts or voters' abstention once again with an example from Turkish politics, where the Kurdish minority chose boycott instead of voting as a response to decades of exclusion from formal political outlets.

Chapter 5 is a case study of the Saturday Vigils in Turkey. The analysis concretizes some of the discussions made in the previous chapters. The chapter starts with a description of the ways in which the Vigils were mobilized with an account of the Turkish political context in the background. I argue that silence was in fact valuable as a political tool in fashioning this democratic mobilization because it created an opportunity to establish a distance from barren dichotomies of political discourse, thereby allowing a longer presence in the public sphere and a wider reception from national and international audience. To deliberative democracy, the chapter raises the question, what kind of a

communicative experience do silent protests constitute, and to agonistic democrats, the question, what we can say about political action where political discourse is constituted by friend-enemy distinctions.

Chapter 6 follows up on the discussions of the Saturday Vigils to see what substantive democratic contribution comes out of paying attention to what was not said. I argue that the judgment of the vigils from a feminist democratic perspective is allowed by the space silence creates. The Saturday Vigils are not only examples of ad hoc, unmediated direct action; they also challenge antagonistic political discourses and underline the democratic potential of a political practice that is driven from loss. They make a claim to right to life for all persons instead of revitalizing antagonistic, vengeful discourses. The vigils promised and in fact to some extent allowed the construction of gendered responses to the militarization of everyday life. I discuss Saturday Vigils along with other instances of the politicization of motherhood in Turkey and around the world to see whether the act of mourning and the mobilization of passions can open up a democratic space. The chapter briefly discusses the current Justice and Development Party government's rhetoric of the "democratic opening," namely the possibility of a democratic resolution to the Kurdish problem, to see how the rhetoric of "maternal grief" that is employed in political speeches juxtaposes with the actual practices of women who are mobilized around loss. The chapter concludes that when certain impartial or dispassionate forms of expression are valorized over others they might lead to the exclusion of those who cannot express themselves as such, those who sometimes seek silence as an expression.

The belief that power can be bracketed and that people can deliberative and negotiate without violence and exclusion is the biggest problem with contemporary accounts of deliberative democracy. The rhetoric or the process of democratization in Turkey has to be analyzed with consideration of the discursive and structural violence that accompanies any existing or suggested deliberative medium. However this should also not lead to the prioritization of a heroic, combative notion of democratic action. Instead the dissertation invites rethinking political and democratic change in a manner that is more attuned to the varieties of democratic experience.

In the conclusion I return to the initial question about how this analysis speaks to democratic theory in general. I summarize the problems with privileging a particular account of political action as *the* model of practicing democracy to argue that such accounts are unprepared to deal with political change in a broader spectrum. The dissertation ends up with a call for conducting more work that bridges normative democratic theory and existing democratic struggles in the world, with a concomitant skepticism of democracy as mere rhetoric in the hands of authoritarian powers. Attending to this prominent debate within contemporary democratic theory in light of understudied practices in Turkey, invites a rethinking of the normative and the empirical, and the theory and the practice of democracy in the world, as well as a broader conceptualization of communication that venture beyond the narrowly expressive components of political action. In order to construct fuller understanding of democratization and political change we need to account for intermediary forms of communication and envision ways of relating to the other that exceeds both rational deliberation or combative action. Contextualization of democratic theory, even and especially with respect informal

political practices is not only politically urgent but also theoretically relevant in order for democratic theory to become more attuned to the varieties of democratic experience beyond the global North where significant democratic struggles are taking place today.

CHAPTER TWO
DELIBERATIVE DEMOCRACY AND THE SPEAKING SUBJECT

Today, the centrality of voice and speech to the construction of political communities and political action has practically become a truism in political theory.[55] While speaking freely and openly is a central organizing principle for many social movements, the primacy of speech in framing political action, has not been adequately challenged. In democracies, Bryan Garsten states, "quiet people rarely enter politics."[56] And we often believe this to be the case because we focus exclusively on the outspoken as political actors. This attitude has reached its peak in deliberative democracy today. An analysis of the predominant theories of deliberative democracy shows that they exclusively imply a speaking subject. With the exception of a few works that focus on a broader conceptualization of deliberation to include other forms of communication, the latest trend in deliberative democracy is to focus on designed publics in which citizens participate to argue about specific issues. The problem with most of these accounts is the presupposition of a particular mode of subjectivity without closer introspection of the regulative functions of deliberation and the questioning of deliberative speech as the model of democratic engagement. Deliberative democrats assume willingness to argue on behalf all parties, and when it is not explicitly assumed, the contrary is never considered without a derogatory attitude, simply put, those who do not want to argue while they can are considered as self-contained, and unwilling to compromise and listen to the

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[55] Notable exceptions are Danielle Allen, "Anonymous: On Silence and the Public Sphere" in *Speech and Silence in American Law 2010*, ed. Austin Sarat (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010). Wendy Brown, "Freedom's Silences," Keenan Ferguson, "Silence: a Politics," Contemporary Political Theory 2, no.1 (2003). Also see Sim (2007) for a discussion of Quaker communities and their ritualized form of silence as element that constructs the community. Stuart Sim, *Manifesto for Silence : Confronting the Politics and Culture of Noise* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007)

[56] Bryan Garsten, *Saving Persuasion : A Defense of Rhetoric and Judgment* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2006), 1.

perspectives of others because they reject finding fair terms for cooperation or pressing their claims in public accessible to fellow citizens.[57]

The implicit assumption about the willingness to deliberate and the effectiveness of speech as a method of political expression is backed by the prevalence of "stylized facts" and simplified empirical observations in normative political theory.[58] The lack of real understanding on who, how and where deliberates, translates into a notion of deliberation that can be quite demanding, yet inadequately critical about its own assumptions and abstractions.[59] When political communities and public spheres are envisioned solely through a particular form of communication, and that is stylized deliberation on given issues, then it becomes hard to dissociate the celebration of deliberation as a democratic theory that rests on the communicability of all values and perspectives from one that insists on the speech act without adequate attention to its quality and content. Even though deliberative democracy starts out as a theory that dissociates itself from purely formalistic accounts of democracy and rationalistic notions of the self, it nevertheless introduces an equally strong account of the democratic subject. Moreover, the lack of any implicit or explicit reference to silence in this extensive literature that focuses on communication is striking but also revealing of the way in which it rests on this particular subject.

The chapter starts with a discussion of the origins of deliberative democracy in Habermas's theory of communicative rationality. The contemporary notion of

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[57] Amy Gutmann and Dennis F. Thompson, *Democracy and Disagreement* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 1996), 55.
[58] John S. Dryzek, "Theory, Evidence, and the Tasks of Deliberation," in the *Deliberation, Participation and Democracy: Can the People Govern? 2007,* ed. Shawn Rosenberg (Basingstoke [England]; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 238.
[59] Ibid.

deliberative democracy as the open contestation of values and principles established via rational speech geared towards understanding is informed by this theory. This conceptualization informs a discourse theoretical model of democracy where Habermas relocates popular sovereignty in communications in the public sphere, thereby arriving at a proceduralist view of democracy that defines popular sovereignty as intersubjectively distinct from both the liberal and the republican models.[60] He therefore nullifies the alleged tension between basic rights and liberties, and popular sovereignty.[61] As a theory of democratic legitimacy, deliberative democracy brings together decision-making with processes of opinion and will formation; "popular sovereignty even if it becomes anonymous, retreats into democratic procedures and the legal implementation of their demanding communicative presuppositions only in order to make felt as a communicatively generated power."[62] Deliberative democracy aims to widen the participatory basis of democratic action, thereby moving away from purely formalistic or

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[60] According to Habermas, the liberal view defines the democratic process as the task of programming the government to serve the interests of the society, made up of self-interested individuals. The liberal citizen holds negative rights vis-à-vis the state and other citizens and enjoys protection from the state as long as he/she remains within the boundaries of law. In contrast, in the republican tradition, politics is more than a mediator, but is constitutive of the processes of a society as whole. Political authority is derived from the communicative power of citizens. For Habermas, the advantage of the republican model is the preservation of the original meaning of democracy as the institutionalization of public use of reason jointly exercised by autonomous citizens. However, he is concerned with the communitarian readings of republicanism, which move toward ethical constrictions of political discourse. Thus the discourse theoretical interpretation of democracy focuses on procedural rather than ethical constraints. With republicanism, it gives center stage to opinion and will formation but without relegating institutionalization to a secondary status. Habermas, *Between Facts and Norms*, 22 – 30.

[61] According to Habermas, private and public autonomy mutually presuppose one another and democratic process must secure them at the same time. Human rights should neither be imposed on the sovereign legislator as an external barrier, nor should be instrumentalized as a functional requisite of legislative goals. Human rights are required for the public use communicative freedom; they make the exercise of popular sovereignty possible. At the same time, there can be no law without private autonomy of the citizens as legal persons; without basic rights that secure private autonomy there can be no medium for institutionalizing the conditions under which citizens make use of their public autonomy. Thus popular sovereignty, understood as the rights of communication and participation that secure the public autonomy of citizens, and rule of law, understood as the classical basic rights that guarantee private autonomy, are co-original. Habermas, *Between Facts and Norms*, 260-261.

[62] Ibid., p. 29.

aggregative accounts. As radical as this move from democracy understood as the mere aggregation of interests to an understanding of popular sovereignty that locates legitimacy within the construction and communication of interests, deliberative democracy circumscribes the spheres and mode of communication to a constricted notion of deliberative speech.

On one hand, the distinction that is made between formal and informal publics relegates many forms and spheres of communication to a secondary status, on the other hand the exclusive focus on deliberation misses the ways in which this particular mode of communication is not always relevant or analytically useful as a category to understand certain democratic experiences. In Chapter 5, Saturday Vigils are analyzed as examples of silent protests, where silence becomes not only an effective form of communication under given conditions, but also conceptually points to the irrelevance of argumentation upon certain experiences. The current chapter also takes up deliberative democracy's developmentalist approach to democracy showing that the celebration of deliberation as a learning school for democrats masks an implicit association of speech with truth and emancipation, and furthermore takes the ability and willingness to speak for granted. The chapter concludes with a brief discussion of theories that attempt to move towards a broader conceptualization of deliberation in response to purely rationalistic accounts of deliberative democracy that dismiss passions and rhetoric from democratic speech. To what extent, however, deliberation can be stretched as a concept while still remaining faithful to the origins of the model is a source of debate for democratic theory. The following chapter takes up the agonistic critique of deliberative democracy, mainly elaborated in Chantal Mouffe's work, insofar as she criticizes not only the constricted

account of communication that deliberative democracy takes for granted but the notion of legitimacy that is tied to a rationalistic account of democracy.

The Speaking Citizen and Communicative Rationality

In Western political thought, political expression has predominantly been associated with the speaking subject. According to Aristotle, distinct from any other creature, speech gives human beings the capacity to think and reason, and thus makes man, by nature "a political animal."[63] Thereby citizens take turns participating in the deliberative functions of the state.[64] Hannah Arendt celebrated the Athenian polis where speech and only speech made sense.[65] She argued that human beings insert themselves into the world through speech, and believed that we could live without labor or work, whereas a life without speech makes a dead world.[66] In democratic theory today, democratic expression and participation are also associated with the speaking subject, with deliberative democracy being its best example. In democracies, Garsten states, "quiet people rarely enter politics."[67] This chapter suggests that we believe this to be the

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[63] Aristotle, Ernest Barker, and R. F. Stalley, *Politics* (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press,1998), 2, 11. The capacity to make arguments about the advantageous and the harmful, or the just and the unjust, makes man much more a political animal than any kind of bee or other gregarious animal thus giving human beings a distinctively political character, Aristotle, *Politics*, I. 2, 10-11. The statement comes with a qualification. Not all humans possess the same amount of deliberative capacity in the construction of their souls. The slave soul does not have any deliberative capacity at all, while women have it but they do not have complete control over it; in fact, quoting Sophocles, Aristotle argues that silence gives grace to women, Aristotle, *Politics* I. 13, 35. See Chapter 4 for a discussion of speech and silence in light of a gender perspective.

[64] Yet contemporary interpreters of Aristotle agree that his notion of deliberation does not have an equivalent counterpart in the contemporary discussions of public reason; See Garsten, *Saving Persuasion*. Paul Nieuwenberg, "Learning to Deliberate: Aristotle on Truthfulness and Public Deliberation," *Political Theory* 32 (2004). Bernard Yack, "*Rhetoric* and Public Reason: An Aristotelian Theory of *Deliberation*," *Political Theory* 34, no. 4 (2006):417. According to Yack, contemporary notion of public reason, as a form of deliberation, is too constrained both in form and substance of political argument when compared to Aristotelian public reasoning that lacks constraints and draws its premises from a broader range of "reputable opinion."

[65] Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), 27.

[66] Ibid., 176.

[67] Garsten, *Saving Persuasion*, 1.

case because we focus exclusively on the outspoken as political actors. When the motivation and the willingness to speak is taken for granted, the presence of speech and action in given forms is taken as an indicator of democracy whereas any deviance or refusal, such as silence, is associated with the lack thereof. Thereby the refusal to speak or act in the expected fashion and non-verbal political expressions are either simply overlooked or mistaken with compliance, passivity, or merely with disinterest.

Contemporary interest in speech and deliberation most definitely owes to the rising interest in language and semantics in the 1970s. According to Taylor this was a period when the philosophical understanding itself became attached to linguistic understanding.[68] Yet, the spoken word is only tip of the iceberg when it comes to language, "which is not merely the cloth of thought expressed in words, but a medium in which we are plunged in and cannot fully plumb."[69] Post-metaphysical models of democracy receive their strength from an understanding of language that is essential to the formation of subjectivities, rather than a simply propositional one.[70] However within deliberative democracy, communicative interaction is confined to a particular model of communication; an analysis of the predominant theories of deliberative democracy shows that they exclusively imply a speaking subject. Since 1990s, democracy has largely become a matter of deliberation and democratic theory has witnessed two decades of condensed discussion on deliberation with normative concerns setting the groundwork in the 1990s, and more empirical works to follow up predominantly within the last decade.[71]

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[68] Taylor, *Human Agency and Language*, 217.
[69] Ibid., p. 235.
[70] Devenney, *Ethics and Politics in Contemporary Theory*, 49.
[71] In the risk of doing injustice to a series of theorists whose work would fall under this rubric, among the most prominent names within this literature are Seyla Benhabib, James Bohman, Simone Chambers, Joshua Cohen, John Dryzek, Jon Elster, James Fishkin, Amy Gutmann, Bernand Manin, Dennis Thompson.

The deliberative model that understands democracy as the process of collective will-formation where the legitimacy of decisions is established via deliberations in the public sphere is inspired by Habermas's communicative action theory.[72]

Communicative action theory is Habermas's replacement of the rationalist tradition's locus of the all-knowing subject with a moral "view from nowhere" with the intersubjective, interpersonal linguistic realm of communication as the locus of collective rationality.[73] From Mead he takes the centrality of linguistic symbols and intersubjective reactions to social development. Instead of individual responses to separate stimuli, Mead emphasizes the role of communicative interactions to social development.[74] This translates into a model of communication where instead of responding to the other, "taking the attitude of the other" acquires a central place. This particular act requires a shift in consciousness rather than a mere gesture or a response to the other's utterance.[75] According to Habermas, consciousness change allows moral and political shifts to take place in people's perspectives during speaker-speaker and speaker-listening relationships in deliberation. In that respect, communicative action is different from the strategic model of action, which only uses the perlocutionary effect of language, namely, influencing another's view in the interest of the agent. It is also different from the normative model of action, which understands language as a medium for the transmission of cultural values. Finally, it is different from the dramaturgical model of action on the basis that the latter understands language as a mode of self-expression alone. According to Habermas,

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[72] James Bohman and William Rehg, *Deliberative Democracy : Essays on Reason and Politics* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1997), ix.
[73] Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action Vol. I*; *The Theory of Communicative Action Vol. II.*
[74] Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action Vol. II*, p. 5.
[75] Ibid., 13.

distinct from all, communicative action is the only model of action that takes all functions of language equally into consideration:

> For the communicative model of action, language is relevant only from the pragmatic viewpoint that speakers, in employing sentences with an orientation to reaching understanding, take up relations to the world, not only directly as in teleological, normatively regulated, or dramaturgical action, but in a reflective way.[76]

Communicative action consists of "those linguistically mediated interactions in which all participants pursue illocutionary aims, and *only* illocutionary aims, with their mediating acts of communication."[77] According to Austin locutionary acts that make a proposition are different from illocutionary sentences, where the speakers perform within the proposition. Finally, perlocutionary acts are those where, through the utterance, the speaker produces an effect on the hearer and brings something into the world.[78] For Habermas, actions are generally about mastering situations and communicative action highlights two aspects of mastery: implementing an action plan and arriving at a shared interpretation of the situation, in other words, reaching consensus.[79] In speaking, actors take turns playing the communicative role of the speaker, the addressee, and the bystander, the first and second person participant perspectives as well as the third person observer perspective by way of which an intersubjective complex is formed.[80] In this circular process the actor becomes two things at one, "an *initiator,* who masters situations through actions for which he is accountable, and a *product* of the transitions surrounding him, of groups whose cohesion is based on solidarity to which he belongs, and of

[76] Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action Vol. I*, 95.
[77] Ibid., 295.
[78] John L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words* 2d ed. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975), 94 – 133.
[79] Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action Vol. I*, 295.
[80] Jürgen Habermas, *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1990), 135.

processes of socialization in which he is reared."[81] The actor faces the segment of the life-world as a participant but also with the life-world behind, with which she is carried by and supported, so the life-world is not only the context for the process of reaching understanding but also its resource.[82] Thereby the socially integrative and expressive functions that were first fulfilled by ritual practices before the secularization of the life-world are replaced with communicative action in the process of rationalization.[83] According to Habermas, the authority of the achieved consensus replaces the authority of the holy as criticizable validity claims turn into everyday occurrence and replace its spellbinding character.[84]

During communicative interaction that is aimed to reach understanding actors reciprocally raise validity claims that are intersubjectively recognized. Validity claims are ascribed to the perspectives of the speakers and hearers, and language, as a medium of communication, serves the purpose of understanding.[85] Three validity claims are raised with each utterance; these are truth, rightness, and sincerity/truthfulness.[86] While the actors still coordinate their actions and pursue particular aims, thereby retaining the teleological structure fundamental to all concepts of action, they also seek legitimacy, self-presentation and agreement.[87] That is what makes communicative action different from the other three models. Instead of holding a success-oriented attitude, actors intend

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[81] Ibid.
[82] Ibid.
[83] Yet his feminist critics have vigorously argued that his argument does not account for the gender subtext because of his idealized view of private, domestic life. See Marie Fleming, *Emancipation and Illusion : Rationality and Gender in Habermas's Theory of Modernity* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997).
[84] That is how Durkheim explains the development of the modern state; where democracy becomes the system through which society acquires consciousness of itself; hence the equation: the more deliberating, the more democratic the society becomes. Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action Vol. II*, 77 – 82.
[85] Ibid., 100.
[86] Ibid., 99.
[87] Ibid., 101.

to reach an understanding, which is the “inherent telos of human speech” for Habermas.[88] Instead of de facto accords, the agreements that are reached by speaking and acting actors are those outcomes that are presupposed as valid by the participants. On the contrary, Habermas refuses to consider any decision that is obtained by force, violence, or direct or indirect influence, as subjective agreement.[89] In that respect however Habermas forces force and violence outside speech. This renders the notion of deliberation geared towards understanding open to the criticism that it misses how the political, and political communication, cannot be thought apart from power and manipulation. Deliberation is justified as the better alternative when compared to force, but force in politics is not limited to physical force. Habermas’s idea of an ideal community is one in which instead of violence, the community uses discursive means of will- and opinion- formation to settle disputes, and hence deliberation is an antidote to violence.[90] Yet the rhetoric of replacing weapons with words does not question the violence within speech as well as other structural violences that are at work in any act of communication. Furthermore how language itself generates violence but also construes violence is not addressed in Habermas’s model. (See Chapter 4)

Discourse ethics entails the idea that actors are prepared to harmonize their plans through internal means and committed to the possibility that their plans, definitions of the situation, or prospective outcomes can be negotiated.[91] This ideal situation implicitly

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[88] Ibid., p. 287.
[89] Ibid.
[90] Simone Chambers, *Reasonable Democracy : Jürgen Habermas and the Politics of Discourse* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1996), 1 – 2 The dichotomy between weapons and words is also reflected in the predominant understanding of silence as the effect of violence and power, and the loss of communication, whereas examples of silent protests of war and militarism around the world portray a different picture where silence becomes a powerful response to violence rather than signaling its victory. See Chapter 4 and 5.
[91] Habermas, *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action*, 134.

assumes certain personality characteristics from the actors that are reflected in contemporary accounts of deliberative democracy, but also accepts three fictions about the society, a) the autonomy of the actors, b) independence of culture, and finally c) transparency of communication so that no pseudo-consensus is taken by force.[92] Habermas holds onto these as fictions, but also as regulative ideas. However, even as regulative ideas, they mask how actual political conflict and communication cannot disregard but embody the disruptions that Habermas aims to leave out of this purified notion of communication. These assumptions, even as regulative ideas transfer into a model of deliberative democracy that expects from democratic subjects a priori what it proposes to create, namely, enlarged mentality, the ability to view from different perspectives and the willingness to reach consensus. Yet a purified account of communication fails to offer a model of viable democratic practice even as an ideal. It is not that the purification posits a naïve account of actual politics but the very intention to purify political communication distinguishes between a protected zone of deliberative decision-making and the disruptive, impure lesser publics. In fact Habermas locates public communication in various arenas but divides the spheres of deliberation into two, the informal/weak publics and formal/strong publics, with respect to their functions in democratic decision-making. Via this distinction he detaches deliberation aimed at decision-making from deliberation as everyday communication in the public sphere while making them mutually dependent. He envisions a vibrant flow of information between the two spheres, as communications in weak publics are given the role of agenda setting and informing and influencing the decision-making structures.[93]

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[92] Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action Vol. II*, 149.
[93] Habermas, *Between Facts and Norms*, 307 – 308.

Habermas defends this distinction as a means to protect weak publics by lifting from public communication the burden of decision-making. However, the distinction also results in his relegation of everyday communication, both on the basis of form and substance, to the outside of valid discourses. The constraints on what counts as reasoned deliberation where, excludes the underprivileged as the well as the radical elements of the society from deliberative decision-making structures. Hence Habermas is not able to fully replace the Enlightenment idea of the "impartial reasoner" with a view from nowhere, which he aimed to dismantle with this theory of communicative rationality. Young argues that Habermas communicative ethics goes further in terms of recognizing the plurality of subjects in the public realm and by linking the formation of subjectivity to communicative interaction by making moral rationality dialogic rather than monologic.[94] However, he is not able to move to a radically pluralist participatory politics because he separates discourse about feelings from discourse about norms; "His model of language itself, moreover, relies heavily on a paradigm of discursive argumentation,

[94] In Iris M. Young, *Justice and the Politics of Difference* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1990) Young makes a compelling critique of the idea of a homogenous civic public arguing that it rests on the differentiation between the private from the public, and passion from reason. She challenges the Enlightenment idea of impartial moral reason that leads to the conceptualization of the public realm of politics as the realm of universal general will, which then it leaves difference and particularity as well as the body behind in the private realm. This moral "view from nowhere" eliminates difference and passion, as well as the body and its needs, inclinations and feelings in the name of particularity. (97 – 98) The notion of a subject who is able to embody the view of everyone, in other words, "the impartial reasoner" denies that in reality subjects are not opaque to one another. Especially in terms of differences due to class, race, ethnicity, gender, age, social locations it becomes impossible for one to fully emphatize with the other Habermas's communicative ethics is an alternative to the idea of a "view from nowhere" in that it recognizes the plurality of subjects and even further, makes subjectivity the product of communicative interaction by way of which moral rationality becomes dialogic. So the "view from everywhere" better explains the idea behind discourse theory and deliberative democracy, but still it only works with generalizable interests, that is why Young argues that Habermas is unwilling to give up on the idea of a standpoint of universal normative reason that truly transcends particular perspectives. Instead he vacillates between the neutral/impartial and the "concrete other." (105).

deemphasizing the metaphorical, rhetorical, playful, embodied aspects of speech that are important aspects of its communicative effect."[95]

Benhabib defends the distinction on the basis that it separates formal deliberations from informal means of communication, arguing that they have different styles of speech and distinct mechanisms. On the other hand the separation also affirms the relegation of the disruptive and the informal to an inferior role in politics.[96]According to Habermas informal bodies of communication are fluid, open and inclusive and hence more prone to uneven distributions of power and more fragile to easy disruption of speech he disbelieves in their capacity to constitute decision-making structures.[97] However, the attempt to secure the formal publics from disruptions revitalizes the distinction between the private and public, which throughout modern political theory posited a false notion of a homogenous public sphere and impartial reason that is abstracted from particularity and needs, and opposed to feelings and emotions.[98] In that respect, Young invites a skeptical position towards any project that aims to revitalize vibrant public life and communication without attending to the necessity of a congruent transformation of the "distinction between public and private that does not correlate with an opposition between reason and affectivity and desire, or universal and particular."[99]

Via the discourse theoretical model of democracy Habermas is able to bring together decision-making with communicative construction of values and interests, which is also his most elaborate response to the debate between constitutionalism and popular

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[95] Ibid., 118.
[96] Seyla Benhabib, "Toward a Deliberative Model of Democratic Legitimacy," in *Democracy and Difference : Contesting the Boundaries of the Political 1996,* ed. Seyla Benhabib (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), 83.
[97] Habermas, *Between Facts and Norms*, 307 – 308
[98] Iris M. Young, "Impartiality and the Civic Public," in Feminism as Critique, ed. Seyla Benhabib and Drucilla Cornell (London: Polity Press), 73.
[99] Ibid.

sovereignty, however he leans too much on the side of constitutionalism at the expense of the informal, weak or "wild publics" that he pushes them outside of any real influence in terms of decision-making. As Honig states, he reduces activism in the so-called weak publics to a means to agitate the already instituted rights; but limits their role to agenda setting and influencing from a distance.[100] Thereby, the theory becomes prone to undermining forms of politics, which require thinking beyond the constitutional limitations he places on democratic sovereignty.[101] Gutmann and Thompson's argue in fact that deliberations should be extended to any setting in which citizens come together on a regular basis to reach collective decisions about public issues, be it governmental or nongovernmental, court proceedings, legislative sessions, administrative hearings, or grass roots organizations, professional associations, shareholders meetings and citizens' committees.[102] However, their arguments are exclusively drawn from congressional hearings or parliamentary discussions and examples are strictly confined to formal, argumentative mode of communication. Deliberative democracy's initial promise of an open-ended communication of all perspectives and values as the basis of democratic dialogue and decision-making comes into conflict with the theory's empirical basis, where examples are exclusively drawn from formal proceedings. Whatever is left of public communication is left to imagination.[103] The critique is taken up by contemporary

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[100] Bonnie Honig, "Dead Rights Live Futures," *Political Theory* 29, no. 6 (2001): 800.
Grodnick interprets this as Habermas's attempt to allow the anarchist and radical potential of weaker publics to do their work without interruption by formal procedures, so finds the distinction to be the radical democratic element in *Between Facts and Norms*. See Stephen Grodnick, "Rediscovering Radical Democracy in Habermas's *Between Facts and Norms,*" *Constellations* 12, no. 3 (2005): 400.

[101] Devenney, *Ethics and Politics in Contemporary Theory,* 126.

[102] Gutmann and Thompson, *Democracy and Disagreement*, 13.

[103] See Lisa Wedeen, "The Politics of Deliberation: Qat Chews as Public Spheres in Yemen," *Public Culture* 19, no. 1 (2007) for a study of qat-chews in Yemen as communicative public spheres. *Qat chews* are coffeehouses where ordinary people as well as politicians gather to chew *qat,* a leafy stimulant

agonists, which then leads to a preference between democracy as deliberation and democracy as agonistic action, as if all democratic action is either deliberative or disruptive and combative, a false dichotomy that is taken up in the following chapter.

Deliberative Democracy as a School for Democrats

In one of the earliest formulations of deliberative democracy, Manin explains deliberation as the process of will-formation, and locates it in the moment that precedes choice.[104] Procedures enable free and open participation of all those affected into the deliberation process, and deliberations enable the formation of a consensus among various moral and political views and convey legitimacy to decisions.[105] Deliberative democracy is not just another name for participatory democracy though; it refers to a distinct mode of communication:

> Deliberation as a social process is distinguished from other kinds of communication in that deliberators are amenable to changing their judgments, preferences, and views during the course of their interactions, which involve persuasion rather than coercion, manipulation, or deception. The essence of democracy itself is now widely taken to be deliberation, as opposed to voting, interest aggregation, constitutional rights, or even self-government.[106]

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drug with effects similar to caffeine, while they engage in political conversations. She argues that they recall Habermas's 17th and 18th-century public spheres and concludes that democratic subjects are formed through discursive practices in the absence of a formal framework of democracy. Yet an uncritical celebration of any communicative environment as the existence of a democratic space within an authoritarian regime also has to be approached with skepticism. In fact, Wedeen shows that communication is hierarchically structured based on age and status in the qat-chew, which are visited by men alone. Hence as much as it is valuable to pin down and acknowledge political innovations and understudied practices, one should also be careful of the ways in which authoritarian relationships and discourses pervade into all spheres and levels of society.

[104] Bernard Manin, "On Legitimacy and Political Deliberation," *Political Theory* 15, no. 3 (1987): 345.

[105] Bohman and Rehg, *Deliberative Democracy*, ix.

[106] John S. Dryzek, *Deliberative Democracy and Beyond: Liberals, Critics, Contestations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 1.

In that respect, the deliberative turn in democratic theory reflects a challenge to both liberal and competitive elitist models of democracy, which take preferences as given and understand democracy as the representation of the will of all, that is achieved through the mere aggregation of preferences via various mechanisms.[107] Deliberation is also different from social choice theory in that the core logic of deliberative democracy does not rest on the aggregation of raw and selfish preferences which operate as if in the market; but on the public debate of informed, other-regarding preferences.[108] In addition to actors' initial commitment to finding persuasive reasons in defense of their perspectives, deliberation makes any outcome effectively different from a mere aggregative result.[109] Hence deliberative democracy represents a renewed concern with the authenticity of democracy, argues Dryzek, because democratic control is made substantive by way of the communicative interactions of competent citizens.[110] Collective will formation is understood as an intersubjective process during which actors care about orienting their arguments in regard to the other and open to reconstructing and changing their perspectives during this process:

> We need not argue that individuals, when they begin to deliberate political matters, know nothing of what they want. They know what they want in part: they have certain preferences and some information, but these are unsure, incomplete, often confused and opposed to one another. The process of deliberation, the confrontation of various points of view, helps to clarify information and to sharpen their own preferences. They may even modify their initial objectives, should that prove necessary. It is, therefore, necessary to alter radically the perspective common to both liberal theories and democratic thought: the source of

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[107] Anthony Downs. *An Economic Theory of Democracy* (New York: Harper & Row, 1965); Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy.*
[108] Jon Elster, "The Market and the Forum: Three Varieties of Political Theory," in ed. Bohman and Rehg, *Deliberative Democracy,* 11.
[109] Joshua Cohen, "Deliberation and Democratic Legitimacy," in ed. Bohman and Rehg, *Deliberative Democracy,* 76.
[110] Dryzek, *Deliberative Democracy and Beyond*, 1.

> legitimacy is not the predetermined will of individuals, but rather the process of its formation, that is, deliberation itself.[111]

In deliberative democracy, the value of the process of arriving at decisions is strengthened vis-à-vis the moment of decision-making, because opinion- and will-formation is constructed as a communicative process enabled through unrestrained discussion. Procedural requirements of deliberation secure three principles: the norms of equality and symmetry, the right to question the assigned topics and the right to initiate reflexive arguments such that only the force of the better argument prevails.[112] The process that is secured by procedures that enable the free participation of all affected parties to deliberation, as moral and political equals, in turn secures the legitimacy of outcomes.[113] However, the reaching of outcomes does not finalize deliberation. Although consensus is sought with every deliberation, no consensus finalizes the process; outcomes are never fixed and as Benhabib states, nothing ever leaves the table, all decisions are ideally open to recursive validation.[114]

Among its various justifications, deliberation is also celebrated for its intrinsic virtues; for example Manin argues that the deliberative process makes it more likely to realize reasonable results because the temporal and educative functions of repeated deliberation.[115] Almost all proponents of deliberative democracy stress its educative functions; arguing that deliberation constitutes a "learning school" for citizens; necessitates giving account of one's perspective, develops the ability to think from

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[111] Manin, "On Legitimacy and Political Deliberation," 351 – 352.
[112] Benhabib, "Toward a Deliberative Model of Democratic Legitimacy," 70.
[113] Ibid., 69.
[114] Ibid., p. 72.
[115] Manin 1987, p.363.

multiple points of view, and promotes a particular path for the development of political subjectivities thereby creating an enlarged mentality.[116]

> Political deliberation and argumentation certainly presuppose a relatively reasonable audience. They also require a certain degree of instruction and culture on the part of the public. But they constitute processes of education and of training in themselves. They broaden the viewpoints of citizens beyond the limited outlook of their private affairs. They spread light.[117]

According to Manin this does not have to imply the education of the masses by an enlightened elite. Thinking in light of J. S. Mill, he concludes that the very act of exchanging opinions, which is refereed by public will, constitutes an education on its own.[118] Yet, the theory cannot escape the implication of the enlightened teacher because it presupposes a linear development towards a learned citizenry who are able to produce more rational outcomes. Rationality and progress are tied to deliberative speech with the assumption that over time, citizens will learn to make better arguments, to leave aside their private interests and passions and grow more open to changing their views if only given some impetus by fair procedures and institutional design. Yet aside from the procedural requirements, deliberation requires a certain character type from citizens, as Gutmann and Thompson put it, the agreement to disagree, constructive interaction, a favorable attitude and an excellence of character.[119] In short, citizens who are:

> Morally committed, self-reflective about their commitments, discerning the difference between respectable and merely tolerable differences of opinion, and open to the possibility of changing their minds or modifying their positions at some time in the future if they confront unanswerable objections to their present point of view.[120]

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[116] Benhabib 1996, p.72.
[117] Manin, "On Legitimacy and Political Deliberation," 354.
[118] Ibid.
[119] Gutmann and Thompson, *Democracy and Disagreement*, 79.
[120] Ibid., 80.

The developmentalist attitude to democracy is present in almost all theories of deliberation.[121] It is believed that "the practice of presenting reasons will contribute to the formation of a commitment to the deliberative resolution of political questions."[122] Hence the theory rests on the assumption of a particular subject without which the model cannot work. Even though historical evidence shows democracy to be the embodiment of long processes of struggle and hard work, the model of development that deliberative democrats suggest for an idealized society with citizens who learn to make arguments, who listen to each other, but more importantly who are able and willing to participate in deliberative forums, posits a metaphor of classroom learning on democracy without critical inspection of its premises. The formation of democratic identifications are taken as a linear process without due discussion of how these engagements are sustained aside from processes of reason giving. This difficulty reflects the problems with Habermas's prior formulation of communicative action, where according to Devenney, in modeling social development via communicative interaction via reflection of theories of individual development, he only takes those aspects of individual development that are compatible with his implicit idea of the democratic society and does not give account of the failures and disjuncture that are part and parcel of the development process.[123] Hence deliberative democrats are not able to account for periods of disruption or unlearning that take place during social transformation.

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[121] Gutmann and Thompson argue that the principle of reciprocity, or reflexivity, promotes moral learning; not that citizens should necessarily change their first-order moral beliefs but that they are encouraged to discover what aspects of those beliefs can be accepted as principles and policies by other citizens with whom they disagree. Deliberative process is about being open to such change, to be able to reach mutually justifiable policy solutions, and "cultivation of a set of civil virtues that can guide citizens through the maelstroms of moral controversy in a pluralistic society." Gutmann and Thompson, *Democracy and Disagreement*, 93 – 94.
[122] Cohen, "Deliberation and Democratic Legitimacy," 76.
[123] *Ethics and Politics in Contemporary Theory*, 103.

While deliberation is celebrated as a process of education, the social-psychology of deliberation and what motivates citizens to deliberate is not adequately discussed. Curiously enough, the motivation to speak is taken-for-granted within much of what could be considered the first decade of deliberative theorizing.[124] According to the proponents of the theory the absence of deliberation renders citizens without means to justify themselves to one another on the face of disagreements, whereas deliberations allow the expression of disagreements and of respect to one another as political equals.[125] Yet deliberative approaches still remain underdeveloped with respect to the relationship between deliberation and institutional design, such that there is more to be explored about the social psychology of deliberation under conditions of conflict and the institutional structuring of incentives to deliberate.[126] The implicit assumption about the willingness to deliberate and the effectiveness of speech as a method of political expression is also accompanied by a general lack of empirical evidence or the prevalence of "stylized facts" and simplified empirical observations in normative political theory.[127] According to

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[124] In contrast to a more recent phase of deliberative democracy that attempts to abridge the empirical and the normative through studying the effects of small scale deliberative exercises such as citizen juries and mini publics. See Archon Fung, "Minipublics: Deliberative Designs and Their Consequences," in *Deliberation, Participation and Democracy : Can the People Govern? 2007,* ed. Shawn W. Rosenberg (Basingstoke [England] ; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007). Yet findings do not direct towards a coherent set of answers about the effectiveness of deliberation. For example Michael A. Neblo, Keving M. Esterling, Ryan Kennedy, David Lazer, "Who Wants To Deliberate? And Why?," *American Political Science Review* 104, no. 3 (2010):567, show a willingness on part of the people to deliberate in the American society, especially among those who are not active in traditional partisan politics. Skeptical findings are also striking, such as the exposure to disagreement demobilizes people. Diana C, Mutz,. *Hearing the Other Side : Deliberative Versus Participatory Democracy* (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006). For a critique of too much focus on deliberation in designed mini-publics for diverting attention from the radical origins of the theory that conceives of deliberation as a mass phenomenon rather than a stylized exercise see Simone Chambers, "Rhetoric and the Public Sphere: Has Deliberative Democracy Abandoned Mass Politics", *Political Theory* 37, no. 3 (2009) and Nadia Urbinati, "Unpolitical Democracy," *Political Theory* 38, no. 1 (2010).

[125] Chambers, *Reasonable Democracy*, 99.

[126] Michael E. Warren, "Institutionalizing Deliberative Democracy," in ed. Rosenberg, *Deliberation, Participation and Democracy : Can the People Govern?,* 284.

[127] Dryzek, "Theory, Evidence, and the Tasks of Deliberation," in ed. Rosenberg, *Deliberation, Participation and Democracy : Can the People Govern?,* 238.

Dryzek, Habermas formulates communicative rationality only on evidence about developmental psychology then ends up with the "logical presupposition of speech."[128] The lack of empirical basis of assumptions and no real understanding of who, how and where deliberates, translates into a notion of deliberation that can be quite demanding while it is inadequately critical about its own assumptions and abstractions. While Gutmann and Thompson simply dismiss those who reject finding fair terms for cooperation or pressing their claims in public accessible to fellow citizens from their model, reducing deliberation down to a matter of routine choice is problematic without due analysis of the above conditions.[129] Deliberative democracy is an ideal theory, it does not have to meet real practices but inform them, however, when the approach to democracy-as-deliberation is translated into a model for democratic practice, the theories suggest increased deliberation as a solution for the democratization of democracy, as a learning-school for democrats, and as a means to construct better citizens. At that point it is crucial to realize that the problem is not merely a discrepancy between the ideal and the real, but the limitation of the ideal theory.

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[128] Ibid.

[129] Gutmann and Thompson, *Democracy and Disagreement*, 55. Distinct from the Habermasian strand, Gutmann and Thompson's concern is not defining democratic legitimacy via deliberation but making a case for the necessity to devise ways in which existing democracies can be made more deliberative. They start with democratic society as given and make a case for why it has to be more deliberative. I argue that the Habermasian strand does the same. Gutmann and Thompson do not think that deliberative democracy can guarantee social justice but believe that "when citizens deliberate in democratic politics, they express and respect their status as political equals even as they continue to disagree about matters of public policy." (18) Certain disagreements, and especially the political ones, can be resolved through political tools such as bargaining and negotiation whereas the most pervasive form of disagreement, namely, moral disagreements are hard to resolve because they result from incompatible values and incomplete understanding. (24 – 25). Yet their examples of moral disagreements exclusively come from examples of religious difference, which paves the way to the drawing of a hierarchy between different sources of disagreement. Arguing that moral disagreements are more pervasive and divisive reiterates the almost untouchable character of matters such as religion, under the cloak of "sensitivity" and "tolerance" and underestimates other sources of division within societies.

A common justification for deliberation is that, when compared to reasoning in secret, people will tend to be less dishonest and mean when they have to make their reasons public.[130] However shame can also cause hesitancy in bringing about a change of heart and people end up sticking to claims even when they actually change their minds. [131] Elster admits that certain arguments cannot be stated publicly, but finds this sort of self-censorship enabling in terms of the construction of rational arguments.[132]The underlying idea is that even if people might first be obliged to pay lip service to the common good out of sheer shame, over time they will be swayed by these considerations; which is a psychological rather than a conceptual premise:

> By speaking with the voice of reason, one is also exposing oneself to reason. To sum up, the conceptual impossibility of expressing selfish arguments in a debate about the public good, and the psychological difficulty of expressing other-regarding preferences without ultimately coming to acquire them, jointly bring it about that public discussion tends to promote the common good.[133]

The problem with such arguments is the assumption of a linear relationship between deliberation, truth and the good, and a belief in the possibility of rooting out distorted communication.[134] According to Dietz, the entire framework that Habermas establishes is

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[130] Ibid., 99.
[131] Ibid,, p. 101. In fact recent empirical research on deliberation reveals such skeptical findings: such that instead of reasoning people stick to group norms in deliberative settings. Tali Mendelberg and Christoper Karpowitz, "How People Deliberate about Justice: Groups, Gender, and Decision Rules," in ed. Rosenberg, *Deliberation, Participation and Democracy : Can the People Govern?* See also Cass Sunstein, "The Law of Group Polarization," *Journal of Political Philosophy* 10. See John R. Hibbing and Elizabeth Theiss-Morse, *Stealth Democracy : Americans' Beliefs About How Government Should Work* (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002) for the argument "real life deliberation can fan emotions unproductively, can exacerbate rather than diminish power differentials among those deliberating, can make people feel frustrated with the system that made them deliberative, is ill-suited to many issues and can lead to worse decisions than would have occurred if no deliberation had taken place." (191)
[132] Elster, "The Market and the Forum: Three Varieties of Political Theory," 12.
[133] Ibid.
[134] Mary G. Dietz, *Turning Operations : Feminism, Arendt, and Politics* (New York: Routledge, 2002) She finds an implicit sense of "purification" in Habermas's vocabulary, such that his use of the words "vindication" or "redemption" refer to cleansing, or carry ethical references to the fulfillment of a promise. She finds in it a "new spirituality" that is closer to Havel's understanding of politics as truth and purity (148).

an "attempt to limit human violence by elaborating a code of communicative conduct that is designed to hold power in check by channeling it into persuasion, or the "unforced" force of the better argument."[135] Deliberation assumes an actor who "must recognize his dialogue partner as responsible and sincere in her desire to reach agreement, even if he disputes the validity of her claim", in other words an actor who is not interested in deception or manipulation.[136] Whereas in a politician's world, argues Dietz, speech cannot be readily separated from any of the other elements that Habermas relegates to strategic action such as the pursuit of outcomes through the use of weapons, goods, threats, enticements; in other words, speech cannot be cleansed.[137] Miscommunication and manipulation are not accidental or secondary effects but part of the nature of language; that is why posing deliberation as a model of democracy even as a regulative ideal is thus problematic.[138] The exclusive focus on particular forms and venues of communication undermines many acts of communication that people are already engaged in various other venues, that Habermas relegates outside of decision-making, one of which is silence that is elaborated in the following chapters.

According to Gutmann and Thompson, deliberation is the answer to the question "When democratic citizens morally disagree about public policy, what should they do?"[139] Within the question lies the assumption that deliberation comes after democracy, that citizens have to be become democrats before they start deliberating. According to Warren, while Habermas formulated communication as an autonomous force in social

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[135] Ibid.
[136] Chambers, *Reasonable Democracy*, 99.
[137] Dietz, *Turning Operations*, 152 – 153.
[138] Margaret Kohn, "Language, Power, and Persuasion: Toward a Critique of Deliberative Democracy," *Constellations* 7, no. 3 (2000): 410.
[139] Gutmann and Thompson, *Democracy and Disagreement*, 346.

organization, this formulation also led to a misguided generalization from everyday communication to communication under conditions of political conflict, thereby producing a misplaced set of expectations on deliberation.[140] The ability to deliberate in the sense of having the means to participate is an important issue, which is addressed via procedural formulations of empirical studies of institutional design, however, a disbelief in deliberation and its power to bring about change still remains undertheorized. Most of the empirical work on mini publics or citizen juries today either support or weaken the normative thesis of deliberative democracy, however they still take deliberation for granted and do not question its meaning and desirability within a comparative perspective.[141] For example Dryzek explains the upsurge of interests in deliberative democracy in the United States was part of an effort to make the polity more deliberative rather than balkanized.[142] However, on what lines a polity is divided or how the political discourse is itself structured differs with respect to context. Democratic theory has to rethink deliberation with consideration to "communicative extremism" that is especially a problem in societies that are under or emerging from authoritarian structures.[143]

In Turkey, the Kemalist reforms were aimed at creating a unitary nation-state to replace the multi-ethnic, multi-religious Ottoman Empire. The new leadership accepted a

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[140] Michael E. Warren, "Institutionalizing Deliberative Democracy," 276. For Warren, deliberation is demanding because it requires a level 'maturity' but it is also 'fragile' because it is vulnerable to unequal power, cultural and linguistic differences, market forces, threats, time constraints.

[141] Especially in divided societies where there is no consensus on how matters shall be disputed. See Dennis Thompson, "Deliberative Democratic Theory and Empirical Political Science", Annual Review of Political Science 11 (2008): 511.

[142] Dryzek, "Theory, Evidence, and the Tasks of Deliberation," 243.

[143] John S. Dryzek, "Deliberative Democracy in Divided Societies: Alternatives to Agonism and Analgesia", *Political Theory* 33, no. 2 (2005): 231. Dryzek rightly points out that the same decade that is marked by extensive debates in deliberative democracy also witnessed the rise of identity politics taken to murderous extremes. Hence deliberative democracy still has to answer the question whether it can work in divided societies. In fact, issues generated by background culture can be very pressing on processes of public reasoning. Especially difficult are cases where identities are validated and constituted by the suppression of others, and when the suppression is enacted by the sovereign state and pathological homogenization that create murder and misery. (226)

single source of sovereignty embodied in “people’s will”, which actually means the collaboration of the people with the will of the state. The will of the state, with the military as its guardian, defined internal and external enemies, and while trying to create a homogenous nation-state continuously named internal and external enemies, such that the Kurdish population, among others at various junctures, was continuously forced outside the law. Political discourse itself was constructed around discursive antagonisms via binary oppositions such as: secular/Islamic, modern/reactionary, western/eastern, global/local and Turkish/Kurdish.[144] Within that respect, the Saturday Vigils employed silence as a means to avoid this extremism in a context where argumentation no longer relevant.[145] Does this mean that people who live in places which do not have a history of democratic institutions as comparable to western liberal democracies can never learn to make arguments, to listen to each other and reach mutually justifiable decisions? Deliberative democracy seems to require so much from the citizens and an implicitly distinct “political culture” that it undermines its own assumptions about open-ended dialogue and communicative rationality in multiple spheres. That is why more work and thinking about democratic communication is needed especially in contexts where the effectiveness of deliberation as a democratic method invites more question than it does in a western liberal-democratic framework. Contextualized discussions of democracy are not only necessary as an add-on empirical evidence to the existing literature on deliberative democracy but are useful insofar as they invite rethinking the origins and the assumptions of the theory. It is especially important to rethink deliberation from the

[144] Keyman, *Türkiye ve Radikal Demokrasi* [Turkey and Radical Democracy], vii.
[145] See Chapter 5.

perspective of those who do not want to deliberate, but are engaged in alternative participatory venues or in fact abstain from engagement.

Conclusion: "Deliberation" Stretched

Deliberative democrats assume willingness to argue on behalf of everyone and even when it is not explicitly assumed, the contrary is never considered without a derogatory attitude, simply put, those who do not want to argue while they can are considered as self-contained people who are unwilling to compromise and listen to the perspectives of others, or those who reject finding fair terms for cooperation or pressing their claims in public accessible to fellow citizens.[146] Moreover, the physical ability to speak is rarely addressed in discussions of deliberative democracy.[147] While theorists emphasize the developmentalist effects of deliberation they disregard how deliberation and participation have disciplinary functions of their own. Not only does speech carry its own tools of subjugation but processes of deliberation also circumscribe the open-ended conversation the theory promotes in ideal, into a set of procedures that is accessible to only one type of a citizen. In response to the most common charge of elitism, Elster admits that the people "who survive a high threshold for participation are disproportionately found in a privileged part of the population" which could lead to paternalism at best and to the creation of a self-elected elite who spends time on politics merely because they are after power at its worst." [148]As Hindess states:

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[146] Gutmann and Thompson, *Democracy and Disagreement*, 55.
[147] On a very insightful piece about disability and deliberation, Clifford argues that the experiences of speechless populations refute deliberative democratic norms that require transparent speech, reasonableness, and communicative reciprocity. See Stacy Clifford, "Disabling Democracy: How Disability Reconfigures Deliberative Democratic Norms," *APSA 2009 Toronto Meeting Paper*. Available at SSRN: http://ssrn.com/abstract=1451092
[148] Elster, "The Market and the Forum: Three Varieties of Political Theory," 14.

> Actual participation in deliberations often requires a considerable degree of self-restraint, an ability and a willingness to conceal one's own views and a capacity to deal peacefully with periods of boredom and intense frustration. Those who participate in making the political decisions which govern their lives, invariably find themselves governed in ways they have not decided upon – and sometimes in ways that many recent advocates of increased participation would find oppressive.[149]

Political parties, according to Cohen, can deal with the problem of material inequality since it is their function to "provide a means through which individuals and groups who lack the "natural" advantage of wealth can overcome the political disadvantages that follow on that lack."[150] Yet accessing deliberative forums is only one side of the problem. Deliberation is also limiting as a form of communication. The emphasis on rationality, cautiousness, reserve, quietude, community, selflessness, and universalism render deliberation a distinct but also exclusive mode of communication, leading even to the critique that it is antidemocratic and conservative.[151] Reasoned argumentation restricts communication to certain modes and forms of expression, which are – dispassionate, orderly and articulate – which in turn leads to the exclusion of those who cannot express themselves as such, who are usually the underprivileged in society and in politics.[152] In any communication structural inequalities and epistemological authority determines not only who makes the better argument but also who will be

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[149] Barry Hindess, "Representation Ingrafted Upon Democracy," *Democratization* 1, no. 2 (2000): 10.

[150] Cohen, "Deliberation and Democratic Legitimacy," 86.

[151] Sanders, "Against Deliberation," 348. In "Unpolitical Democracy" Urbinati also cautions against the tendency of "the strategic use of deliberation as an antidote against democracy" because, supporting extended deliberation and deliberative impartiality in expert groups and other deliberative fora turn into means to bypass partisan politics. She fears that the attempt to prioritize impartiality and good decision-making falsely prioritizes truth against passions, rhetoric and the partisan nature of politics, and hence denigrating the political. (66)

[152] Sanders, "Against Deliberation," 349. Gutmann and Thompson respond to these critics arguing that the spokespeople for marginalized people always come up with the most rational of arguments and that deliberation is actually a useful tool for the marginalized. *Democracy and Disagreement*, 132. They accuse their critics for confusing deliberation with socioeconomic disadvantages and the lack of power, yet they do not explain how the two can be dissociated.

listened to.[153] So the question of those who routinely speak less and are not listened to remains to be answered. Studies in juries and classrooms show how quantity takes over quality in speech, as those who speak more are likely to be considered more persuasive regardless of the content of their arguments, so the force of the better argument becomes a myth. That is why Sanders concludes, even if deliberation is posited as a regulative idea, as long as actual power structures are not examined and attended to the force of the better argument will continue to be a myth, since prejudice and privilege are "too sneaky, invisible and pernicious for that reasonable process."[154]

Furthermore, these implicit requirements of dispassionate and disembodied speech posit a false distinction between reason and emotion. Theorists who do not want to give up on the idea of democracy as deliberation but also wish to address the problems with a constricted notion of communication try to reform the theory to make it more inclusive. Young's solution is a reformed and more inclusive model of communicative theory that is grounded on everyday communicative ethics and that highlights three aspects of communication, which are greeting, rhetoric, and storytelling.[155] She proposes story telling as a new normative language that is mostly suitable to local publics and to those who suffer grave injustice, who are not always able to make their claims in given normative discourses. In that respect, story telling as a mode of communication is believed to be able to transfer people from total silencing into public expression.[156]

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[153] Sanders, "Against Deliberation," 349.
[154] Ibid., 353.
[155] Young, *Inclusion and Democracy*, 59. Greeting entails the public acknowledgment of the other through a subject-to-subject recognition process; rhetoric involves passionate and embodied modes of communication such as protests and symbolic gestures, and story telling refers to political narratives that are different from mere argumentation. Stories present a particular point of view and construct "situated knowledges" with an aim to make a claim and justify it to an audience (67 – 72).
[156] Ibid., 72 – 73. Young thinks that this is the best means to understand the experiences of those situated differently and to correct misunderstandings.

Deliberative theorists such as Gutmann and Thompson find testimony or story telling useful methods of communication as long as they are understood within a deliberative framework, only on one condition, that the statements which give public voice to a critical stance of an individual or a group have to seek justifiable perspectives in order to contribute to democratic efforts to resolve moral disagreements.[157] However the condition of justifiability under all conditions renders deliberative democracy unable to account for expressions of certain experiences within particular contexts where argumentation becomes futile, such as in responses to extreme violence, or the case of enforced disappearance that is discussed with respect to the Saturday Vigils.

Recently democratic theorists have challenged purely rationalist accounts of deliberation on their distinction between reasoned deliberation and emotional, rhetorical language use.[158] Scholars aim to broaden the horizon of what constitutes deliberation through the inclusion of storytelling, narrative, testimony or as Dryzek also adds, alternative forms of speech such as gossip and humor.[159] To what extent "deliberation" could be stretched as a concept and still remain loyal to a theory of deliberative democracy requires further discussion, since deliberative democracy is not only a theory of public communication but a distinct model of democracy where a particular notion of

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[157] Gutmann and Thompson, *Democracy and Disagreement*, 136.
[158] According to Yack, rather than excluding rhetoric, Aristotelian deliberation relies on appeals to character and emotion. Yack argues that instead of its contemporary theoretical counterparts, Aristotelian deliberation is much closer to what actual political deliberation looks like. Yack, "Rhetoric and Public Reason," 418. In *Saving Persuasion*, Garsten argues that an artful practice of persuasion is integral to democratic communication. In the place of purely rationalistic accounts of deliberation, he emphasizes the role of partiality and passions to a more engaged democratic discourse. CITE GARSTEN HERE
[159] Dryzek, *Deliberative Democracy in Divided Societies,* 223. Dryzek calls his version discursive democracy, because it locates communication in discourses within the public spheres. A discourse is defined as a shared way of making sense of the world that is embedded in language. They are accounts which can be shared in intersubjectively meaningful fashion. See also Dryzek, *Deliberative Democracy and Beyond*.

communication is understood to yield legitimate outcomes.[160] Hence in the next chapter, I take up the agonistic critique of democracy to see whether agonistic accounts are helpful in challenging this constricted account of communication to make room for alternative democratic experiences, such as those in silence. The agonistic critique of deliberative democracy departs from attempts to reform the theory from within, such as those of Dryzek, Garsten, Yack, or Young, because poststructuralist or agonistic theorists such as Mouffe or Laclau reject the core idea of the theory that there can be a rationalistic account of legitimacy that explains democratic decision-making.

In this chapter, I challenged the notion of communication that is put forward by deliberative democrats because the theory takes the ability, competence and the motivation to speak in a particular form for granted without critical inspection of its underlying assumptions about the democratic subject and the political framework it assumes. In response to Norval who criticizes deliberative democrats for giving scant attention to the subjectivities of the participants of deliberation, the chapter showed that the deliberative model implicitly introduces and affirms a particular subject as *the* democratic subject without which the model would fail.[161] In fact the respective theories are built on the assumption of the existence of an outspoken, courageous political subject who can appear in public, make arguments, listen to others, see from various perspectives

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[160] For instance according to Dryzek, discursive democracy communicates difference without erasing difference, remains reflexive towards established traditions including its own, is transnational and ecological in its capacity to also involve communication with the non-human nature. "A defensible theory of deliberative democracy must be critical in its orientation to established power structures, including those that operate beneath the constitutional surface of the liberal state, and so insurgent in relation to established institutions." Dryzek, *Deliberative Democracy and Beyond*, 2. On one hand, Dryzek's notion of communication is too broad to fit into mainstream models of deliberative democracy, on the other hand, he still holds onto the idea of the achievement of understanding and consensus between different moral and political perspectives.

[161] In *Aversive Democracy*, Norval criticizes deliberative democrats for missing the importance of the moment of "identification as a democrat" because they focus too much on the procedures and not enough on how democratic identifications happen and how political subjectivities change or are sustained over time. (119).

and who is also willing and ready to change her convictions without shame; moreover, one who willingly accepts deliberation as *the* model of resolving disagreements, and hence the model of democracy. This notion of subjectivity is both accepted a priori so that the model can celebrate deliberation as an antidote to democracy and also advocated as a virtue of deliberation, which is supposed to constitute a learning-school for democrats. The overemphasis on argumentation in deliberative democracy is built on a narrow conceptualization of power that expects too much from deliberation without analyzing what deliberation expects from the people. When political communities and public spheres are envisioned solely through a particular form of communication, and that is stylized deliberation on given issues, then it becomes hard to dissociate the celebration of deliberation as a democratic theory that rests on the communicability of all values and perspectives from one that insists on the speech act without adequate attention to its quality and content. Much communicative work is done through nonverbal and emotive forms of communication, for which deliberative democrats do not have codeable concepts.

In the following chapter I turn to the agonistic critique of deliberative democracy because poststructuralist accounts of democracy better evaluate the role of passions and power in the formation of political communities and in the process of democratic decision-making. In that respect, they offer a useful perspective for explaining the role of passionate identifications and emotive forms of communication in democracy, and they depart from the rationalistic emphasis in deliberative speech. However, the exclusive reliance of theorists such Laclau and Mouffe only on the combative and disruptive elements of political action, and particularly Mouffe's emphasis on a purely antagonistic

explanation of the political, renders the agonistic account equally weak to make sense of actions, such as silent protests, that take their democratic character from the circumvention rather than the expression of antagonism.

CHAPTER THREE
AGONISTIC DEMOCRACY AND ACTION AS CONTESTATION

The previous chapter challenged deliberative democracy's constrained account of communication, its exclusive focus on the speaking citizen and its reliance on a particular mode and sphere of action, namely the rational-argumentative speech in designed deliberative forums. The chapter surveyed the critics of this model, underlined the exclusions this particular mode of communication potentially creates, and challenged the distinction between reasons and passions. The chapter ended with a note that attempts to reformulate deliberation require further discussion as to what extent the concept can be stretched and still be true to the origins of the model. In the end deliberative democracy is not simply a theory of communication but a model of democratic legitimacy where decision-making is understood to be connected to communicative processes of opinion and will formation. Hence beyond the critique of the form and sphere of deliberation, what still remains is a rationalistic account of politics where there is a normative commitment and an ontological presumption that democratic legitimacy can be attained through rationality. It is in fact exactly this assumption that the poststructuralist, or agonistic critics of deliberative democracy challenge. This chapter raises two questions in light of but also in response to the works of the theorists Chantal Mouffe, William Connolly and Ernesto Laclau respectively. First, do radical or agonistic democracy offer a perspective beyond the criticism raised in the previous chapter in terms of a constricted account of communication, such that a perspective on silence as a mode of political action and communication becomes relevant. Second, whether it offers a better

theoretical framework for the discussion of democracy in the context of Turkey, as it is discussed in the following two chapters.

Comparable to the discourse theoretical model of democracy, or deliberative democracy in particular, the radical or agonistic models of democracy also constitute a departure from the liberal and communitarian models and from purely formalistic accounts of democracy as interest aggregation. Distinct from the deliberative model though, poststructuralist accounts of democracy, such as those put forward by Connolly, Laclau and Mouffe reject the possibility of a union between legitimacy and rationality. According to these scholars, legitimacy is the name given to the political act of closure and can never be representative of any universalistic account of rationality. Influenced by poststructuralist and psychoanalytical paradigms, they reject pre-established universalities whether in the form of the discourse of human rights, historical teleology that centers on the working class, or rational discourse.[162] Poststructuralist accounts acknowledge the instability of all meanings and hence the impossibility of any closure to the definition of democracy. Any consensus or decision is believed to be the expression of the hegemonic crystallization of power relations. Hence consensus is in the end always an act of power rather than the sign of a power-stripped collective rationality. Any closure is a "contingent" and "temporary" articulation of the people through a regime of inclusion and exclusion.[163] The influence of psychoanalysis in their thinking shapes an understanding of identity as the site of a fundamental agonistic struggle.[164] The political

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[162] Tønder and Thomassen, *Radical Democracy Between Abundance and Lack.*
[163] Ibid., 49.
[164] For Lacan, identity is constituted in language through identification with a signifier. As soon as the subject enters symbolic order, it experiences a lack that is from then on posited onwards to partial objects in a myth of fullness. This has important political implications. Theorists such as Ernesto Laclau define any political regime as organized around an indeterminable lack. What makes democracy special is that it is the only regime that institutionalizes the contest for the continuous reoccupation of the lack by various social

implication of this perspective is a view of politics as the site of collective antagonism where contestation becomes the primary aspect of the political that is continuously disrupted by social movements. Democracy is valued because it is the only political system that institutionalizes and enables the continuation of this contestation. Laclau and Mouffe believe that democracy can be radicalized by way of the deepening of the meanings of liberty and equality and the extension of their application to more people and wider spheres of engagement.[165]

In *Hegemony and Social Strategy*, Laclau and Mouffe offer their conception of radical and plural democracy, defining the democratic project as the ensemble of subject positions linked through inscription in social relations.[166] This conception firstly owes to the poststructuralist notion of identities as centered around and constitutively defined with respect to difference. If identities are constructed in difference, rather than given, then democracy becomes the constitutive gap between the people and its various identifications.[167] Difference marks any identity as the incomplete product of an agonistic struggle that takes place between multiple discourses that define a particular subject. A similar process determines the construction of collective identities and hence political identifications, such that agonistic accounts affirm but also celebrate contestation and conflict as the central aspects of politics. According to Mouffe, agonistic struggle is the constitutive aspect of politics and democracy institutionalizes the contest via its ethico-

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forces. Radical democracy further radicalizes this idea by extending this analysis to every other aspect of society and by acknowledging that the fulfillment of the empty place of power is only partial and hegemonic rather than rational or legitimate. See Tønder and Thomassen, *Radical Democracy Between Abundance and Lack* for a discussion of the works of radical democrats whose work is inspired by the category of lack.

[165] See Laclau and Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy.*

[166] Ibid.

[167] Mouffe, *The Democratic Paradox*, 56.

political principles such as liberty and equality.[168] The promise of radical and plural democracy is the multiplication and the pluralization of the loci of struggle, instead of their confinement to teleological or rationalistic theories that push the political outside of politics.

Despite these common influences there is no single notion of agonistic democracy that is shared by the above listed thinkers, on the contrary, there are significant differences in their political theories.[169] This chapter starts with a discussion of Mouffe's critique of deliberative democracy that is elaborated in her later work, rather than her earlier with Laclau. This latter body of work includes elements of the post-Marxist paradigm they have initialized, yet also significantly differs from it in that in her proposition of agonistic pluralism as an alternative to deliberative and rationalistic accounts of democracy, Mouffe actually moves closer to the model she criticizes, in terms of her reliance on consensus on the principles of liberal democracy. On the other hand, she relies on Carl Schmitt's categorization of the political as the distinction of friends from enemies and thus ends up celebrating a form of political action that exclusively privileges the combative elements of action at the expense of its associational elements, thus fails to give an account of how democratic relationships can be sustained over time. The chapter analyzes her emphasis on the role of passions to the construction of democratic identifications, to affirm her critique of the constricted account of communication deliberative democracy puts to fore, but also challenges Mouffe's own

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[168] Ibid.

[169] The concept of the *agōn*, meaning struggle, comes to Anglo-American political theory from the Ancient Greeks via nineteenth-century Germany. Contemporary political theorists such as William Connolly, Bonnie Honig and Chantal Mouffe turn to agonism for an alternative normative vocabulary to that of deliberation and communicative rationality, which has tended to dominate recent debates about democratic legitimacy. See Andrew Schaap ed., *Law and Agonistic Politics* (Farnham, England ; Burlington, VT: Ashgate Pub. Company, 2009).

constricted account of political action that falls short of offering a viable perspective to understand actions that aim to circumvent antagonism rather than affirm it.

Since Mouffe does not offer a convincing account of what a democratic ethos entails, the chapter turns to Connolly for an analysis of his notion of agonistic respect and an ethos of care. According to Andrew Schaap, their agonism is different; while Mouffe presents a pragmatic version of agonism that explicates the political strictly between collective identifications and hegemonic constellations of power, Connolly offers an expressivist version of agonism, where the conflict and contestation that contemporary agonists celebrate take place not only on the level of collective identification but also within one's relation to the collective, and to one's self.[170] Yet Connolly's definition of the agonistic democratic ethos is too demanding on the political subject but also dependent on the existence of a democratic culture that he believes radical democracy would thrive.

Finally the chapter turns to Laclau for a discussion of what it is that makes up the character of a democratic demand. Laclau's theory is different in that he does not celebrate agonism, in other words, he does not celebrate contestation and conflict because they revitalize the public sphere or affirm differences, but acknowledges them in the make up of collective mobilizations along with those elements that create solidarity and totality. All three accounts are valuable in so far as they emphasize the disruptive, sometimes extra-legal moments of politics and affirm the role of communication and action that Habermas and deliberative democrats relegate to an inferior position under names of weak publics, or wild publics. As useful as this affirmation for understanding the significance of actions that go under the radar especially in quasi-democratic or

[170] Schaap, *Law and Agonistic Politics,* 1.

authoritarian contexts, such as the Saturday Vigils in Turkey, focusing only on the disruptive character of political action invites the risk of naming any act that is critical of dominant powers, for instance state policies, as democratic purely based on form. According to Thomson, agonists seek to reconceptualize the relation between democracy and politics on the one hand and political theory and democratic practice on the other. Instead of representing conflict in terms of communicative rationality, they make it constitutive of politics and criticize mainstream political theory for subordinating politics to transcendent reason.[171] However, "They remain modernists in wanting to establish a *new* ground for politics in praxis. This leads them to an anti-theoretical politics, in which they substitute conflict for consensus as the lodestar of democracy."[172] Political action and democratic engagements embody consent and contestation, conformity and resistance at the same time. That is better made visible with a perspective on silence, which is the subject of the following chapter.

Mouffe and Agonistic Pluralism

Within the poststructuralist approach, it is Chantal Mouffe who primarily develops her account of agonistic democracy as a critique of the deliberative model. In most of her works on the political and democracy in the last decade, she has waged a relentless attack on deliberative approaches with her criticism of "consensus" at the center. While Habermas and his followers posit ideal discourse as a regulative idea given the practical and empirical limitations of social life, Mouffe thinks that this impossibility is not an empirical limitation or a shortcoming of the theory. Inspired by Schmitt, she

[171] Alex Thomson, "Polemos and Agon," in *Law and Agonistic Politics 2009*, ed. Andrew Schaap (Farnham, England ; Burlington, VT: Ashgate Pub. Company, 2009), 107.
[172] Ibid.

argues that the impossibility is the very essence of the democratic logic that is based on an inclusion/exclusion dynamic.[173] Like Schmitt, Mouffe believes democracy requires exclusion at the moments of closure in defining the demos, however contra-Schmitt she argues that the tension does not necessarily push liberal democracy to self-destruction, but is a productive tension that can be renegotiated.[174] For her, the democratic logic is necessary to subvert the abstract universalism of the liberal logic, and the liberal logic is necessary to challenge the exclusions that the democratic logic produces. In that respect, Mouffe finds deliberative democracy ill equipped to deal with problems deep differences and passionate identifications pose, because it eliminates from politics what is truly political, namely, conflict and power.

Mouffe's criticism of deliberative democracy is illuminating in that she endorses the critics that are raised in the previous chapter and even goes beyond to argue that deliberation is not only a constricted account of communication but is one that is not able to explain the role of passions in the construction of collective identifications and thus address the problems of allegiance they pose. Although she celebrates Habermas's replacement of instrumental with communicative rationality as a worthwhile project, she finds deliberation as a form of communication too constrained to address these problems. For her, the availability of democratic forms of subjectivity is more urgent than finding rational justifications because democracy is not simply a matter of establishing the right procedures.[175] However, when explaining what democratic forms of individuality are, Mouffe also leans towards a constrained account of political action. She rightly emphasizes that democratic relationships are constructed with hard work and that is why

[173] Mouffe, *The Democratic Paradox*, 48.
[174] Ibid., 44.
[175] Ibid., 95.

the central task of a radical democratic project has to be the multiplication of those institutions, discourses and forms of life that foster identification with democratic values,

> The condition of existence of democratic forms of individuality depends on a specific form of ethos that neither liberal democracy with its focus on procedures, nor Habermas's discourse theoretical procedural democracy can understand with its sharp division between moral-practical and ethical-practical discourses.[176]

Democratic values, argues Mouffe, cannot be fostered by sophisticated rational arguments and context-transcendent truth claims; on the contrary, strong adhesion to democratic values requires practice, and rationalism is an obstacle for practice. Yet Mouffe is unclear about what practice entails aside from her argument that it is combative. She substitutes action for deliberation and argues that two people come together to "combat" rather than give reasons. In the end the combat comes down to a matter of persuasion. Agonistic action is a particular democratic form of combat that is different from mere antagonism. Whereas antagonism describes the relationship between friends and enemies, which is the essence of the political according to Schmitt, agonism describes a contest that takes place between adversaries. Distinct from enemies, adversaries have "mutual respect" for each other's beliefs and respect each other's "right to defend them". In other words, adversaries recognize each other's positions as "legitimate."[177] Agonism is antagonism tamed, or as Gürsözlü states, it is "domesticated antagonism."[178] The primary task and value of the democratic regime is turning antagonism into agonism because adversaries share and are willing to share some degree

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[176] Ibid., 69.
[177] Ibid., 70.
[178] Fuat Gürsözlü, "Agonism as Deliberation—Recognizing the Difference," *Journal of Political Philosophy* 17, no. 3 (2009).

of commonality such as a common political association and a symbolic space in which they regard each other's positions as legitimate.[179]

It is exactly the distinction she is forced to make but cannot sustain between antagonism and agonism that weakens Mouffe's criticism of deliberative democracy. There are two problems with this account. First, her reliance on Schmitt's friend-enemy dichotomy is incompatible with her account of democracy as an open-ended, multi-loci political struggle. Because she starts with a notion of antagonism, she needs to confine it into a democratic framework, hence she introduces a notion of legitimacy, without which she cannot differentiate between democratic and undemocratic contestation. However, when she introduces a notion of legitimacy, although she claims it to be political rather than procedural one, she has to rely on procedural criteria and ultimately also on rational discussion to determine what is an acceptable form of agonistic politics. Mouffe's solution is to exclude those who put into question the basic institutions of the democratic society and favor those who want a new interpretation of liberty and equality without touching its basic institutions.[180] Although she claims this to be a political decision, she has to give an account of where this consensus, albeit minimal, about the "ethico-political principles of democracy" comes from.[181] For Mouffe, the purpose of political action is the identification of oppression and subordination and the organization of collective action against it. However, what is considered as subordination and moreover, what is identified as an adversarial rather than antagonistic reaction requires consensus rather

[179] Mouffe, *On the Political*, 20.
[180] See Mouffe, *The Democratic Paradox.*
[181] In Andrew Knops, "Agonism as Deliberation—on Mouffe's Theory of Democracy," *Journal of Political Philosophy* 15, no. 1 (2007) Knops argues that Mouffe's account requires deliberative politics rather than eliminating it. In her earlier with Laclau, she shows that objectivity only collapses with hegemony. Yet in her later work she moves closer into the terrain of deliberative democracy as she insists on a reconciliation between the political, organized against an enemy and the democratic, organized between adversaries; which requires a consensual account of legitimacy.

than eliminates it, hence renders her alternative open to the critique that it is indeed quite alike the deliberative and rationalistic models she criticizes.[182] The contest she advocates presumes a strong a common bond and consensus on the ethico-political values of liberty and equality for all.[183] Hence as Breen states, "Mouffe's agonistic theory ends up mirroring those of her deliberative democratic rivals. Like Rawls, she believes there must be fundamental agreement (consensus!) on the core values and overarching procedures that are to regulate, channel and legitimize political conflict."[184]

While Mouffe claims that agonistic democracy is an endless contestation with established hegemonies, she does not evaluate whether such contestation would pose a threat to the terms of the political association. Lindahl points to Mouffe's avoidance of dealing with this risk, arguing that it is always the historically dominant groups that precisely exclude the subaltern groups from the "common symbolic space" that Mouffe assumes in which agonistic relations takes place.[185] This paves the way to a second problem with Mouffe's account of agonistic politics and that is the lack of any convincing discussion as to why agonism does not revert back to antagonism. This is a pressing problem in a context such as Turkey, and is especially palpable in terms of the Kurdish problem, where the political is already constituted on friend-enemy lines by the historically dominant state-military alliance, where any consensus is built outside the State of Exception to which the Kurdish minority and the problem is relegated to. Mouffe's denial of the ineradicability of many forms of political antagonism, or in

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[182] Ibid., 117.
[183] Mouffe, *On the Political*, 20, 121; *The Democratic Paradox*, 102–103.
[184] Keith Breen, "Agonism Antagonism and the Necessity of Care," in ed. Schaap, *Law and Agonistic Politics*, 138.
[185] Hans Lindahl, "The Opening: a Legality and Political Agonism," in ed. Schaap, *Law and Agonistic Politics*, 68.

Breen's words, "the truth that they cannot be readily converted into agonistic conflicts" is the most significant problem with her account of agonistic democracy. In that respect, Mouffe's agonistic democracy either appears a partisan politics with no real partisans, where parties to disputes are largely of similar mind and contend over issues where little is at stake, or antagonism cannot readily transfer into agonism and adversarial relationships of mutual respect.[186] Within this equation, Breen is critical of Mouffe's quietism; in other words she accuses Mouffe for not being radical enough and for failing to provide an antagonistic ethos of democracy. On the other hand, I argue that the problem is not that Mouffe tames antagonism, but that because she celebrates it her theory becomes irrelevant in terms of crediting efforts that circumvent antagonism and are thereby able to sustain a democratic struggle. The overemphasis on the disruptive moment of politics that is characteristic of agonistic accounts of politics and democracy are inadequate as a viable theory of democratic practice without a concomitant explanation of how agonistic relationships are sustained over time. While deliberative democrats focus too much on dialogue and procedures, agonistic accounts fail to account for the ordinary moments in politics that are crucial for sustaining democratic identifications; democrats require constant persuasion to stay as democrats.[187] Mouffe

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[186] According to Breen, in contrast to the Greek-agonism, Mouffe has an "unduly optimistic view of agonistic conflict" which is a very quietist conception of radical democracy that discounts conflict that would threaten the survival of the political association. According to Breen, because Mouffe presumes that all antagonistic conflict can be sublated into agonism, she does not provide any guidance as to how to deal with intractable conflict in which the other remains our enemy. Breen, "Agonism Antagonism and the Necessity of Care," 140.

[187] Norval accuses agonistic accounts for emphasizing the disruptive moment to the extent that they fail to account for the ordinary moments in politics that are crucial for sustaining democratic identifications. *Aversive Democracy*, 250. According to Knops suggests that Mouffe should either give up on her alternative or rehabilitate her notion of rationality with the idea of deliberative democracy. "Agonism as Deliberation, 118. Knops aims to rehabilitate deliberative democracy with agonism and suggest that Habermasian approaches also understand liberal democratic values to be the product of an open-ended debate, where meanings are open to recursive validity and further contestation. However, according to Gürsözlü the attempts to reconcile the two approaches undermine the deeper differences between the two

focuses exclusively on the combative and disruptive character of political action and misses the elements that are fundamental to the continuation of democratic relationships or their revitalization after periods of disruption or even unlearning.

As valuable as Mouffe's discussion of the role of passions in politics, the problem is her reduction of the mobilization of passions to an ambiguous notion of contestation that she ideologically locates simply on the Left/Right cleavage.[188] In order to sustain her criticism of deliberative democracy and its reliance on a notion of consensus, Mouffe confines democratic mobilization into a single type of partisan politics. The Saturday Vigils that are discussed in Chapter 5 offer a perspective on the futility of such partisanship, where the choice of silence strategically aimed to bypass the predetermined cleavages and to make a claim, in silence, for the right to life alone. In the Turkish political context, because political discourse was burdened with dichotomies such as modernist or backward, nationalist or separatist, Turkish or Kurdish, there was little room for identification beyond aforementioned pre-constructed polarized categories.[189] On one hand, partisanship is an inescapable part of politics for Mouffe, because within the psychoanalytical tradition she is inspired by, identities are constructed in partial

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models. "Agonism as Deliberation," 356. Gürsözlü looks at Mouffe's earlier writings with Laclau to show the divergence with the deliberative model, where their discussion of hegemony rules out any reconciliation with a rationalist model of legitimacy. Nevertheless, in her later work Mouffe's attempt to domesticate her Schmittian inspiration into agonism, moves her closer to the theories she criticizes.

[188] She is concerned with the blurring of the frontiers between the traditional Left and Right in European politics that rendered democratic parties inadequate in offering clearly distinguished positions to their constituents. Populist, Right wing parties were able to present voters outlets for their passions, hence took over the political arena by filling the void. Whereas a rationalist model of democracy that emphasizes dialogue and deliberation is vulnerable when confronted with populist politics with highly affective contents that appeals to notions such as nation, culture, religion and unity of the people that work with friend/enemy distinctions. Mouffe, *On the Political*, 69 – 70.

[189] Keyman argues that the governmental crises that is characteristic of Turkey from 1990s onwards is a result of the changes within the relationship between the state and the society due to rising demands with respect to the recognition of cultural identities and the coming to surface of the problem of secularism in Turkey. The problems enter political discourse through the construction of discursive antagonisms via binary oppositions such as: secular/Islamic, modern/reactionary, western/eastern, global/local and Turkish/Kurdish. Keyman, *Turkiye ve Radikal Demokrasi* [Turkey and Radical Democracy], vii.

attachments to external objects and positions, yet she confines the formation of identifications into a strictly antagonistic framework.[190] Hence the effort to resist or keep away from existing alternatives cannot be given due credit in this account. For Mouffe, democratic identifications have to work with clear distinctions because "mobilization requires politicization," but "politicization cannot exist without the production of a conflictual representation of the world, with opposed camps with which people can identify, thereby allowing passions to be mobilized within the spectrum of the democratic process."[191] Dialogic politics is not adequately radical for Mouffe, however she conflates the notion of deliberation as a regulative idea with the actual deliberations in the political sphere to end up in a false dichotomy between deliberation and strife as would they would spell each other out as political strategies.

William Connolly on the other hand tries to eliminate this dichotomy with his account of an agonistic ethos of democracy. Connolly's model of agonistic politics also rests on the acknowledgment of a fundamental antagonism that takes place in the formation of identities. A fundamentally contested identity prevents all political conceptions from acquiring a final meaning, hence, according to Connolly, agonistic democracy should be a model "in which no positive social vision is enunciated and contestation takes priority over every other aspect of politics."[192] Democracy is constitutively ambiguous because of the very contingency and uncertainty in identity. The maintenance of conflict and contingency allows a democratic culture to thrive. In contrast to Mouffe, Connolly reflects on the kind of ethos that makes up a democratic

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[190] Mouffe is inspired by Freud's analysis of libidinal love and aggressiveness, such that according to Mouffe, communities are formed with the requirement of a "they" to hate. Mouffe, *On the Political,* 25 – 26.
[191] Ibid., p. 25.
[192] Connolly, *Democracy, Pluralism and Political Theory*, 142.

culture. At its center are social movements that disrupt the completeness, closure and moral innocence of dominant formations.[193] Democratic citizenship requires political agents who interrogate, doubt, dissent, protest, organize and disturb as much as they mandate and obey general laws. Hence the citizen is a participant of representative politics and an activist in social movements making citizenship *the* site of the constitutive ambiguity of democracy.[194] Rather than eliminating this tension and separating the realm of consensus/ obedience from the realm of dissidence/ disruption, Connolly recognizes the citizen/ dissident as a productive tension that alludes to the perfectibility of democracy: "It is possible to construct democratic theory appropriate to late-modern states that combine critique of consent and consensus when they are absent and critical engagement with them when they are present." [195] Thereby, Connolly attempts to unite consent and contestation yet this dichotomy that he tries to reconcile is created in the first place by the very idea of antagonism.

Although poststructuralist accounts of democracy rests on the dislocation of the sovereign subject as the rational political agent who enters voluntary relationships, they still need to offer an account of political subjectivity in order to escape nihilism. The problem with their alternative conceptions of political subjectivity though is the privileging of only mode of political and democratic relationship, which is the agonistic, combative action that is elaborated previously vis-à-vis Mouffe. Connolly's account is different in that he locates agonism not only in the relationship between political movements and the hegemonies they embark to disrupt, but rather in all forms of relationship including the relationship with one's self. According to Schaap, Connolly's

[193] Connolly, *The Ethos of Pluralization*, 97.
[194] Ibid., p. 100.
[195] Ibid., p. 101.

is an expressivist agonism, where struggle is valued and celebrated for serving freedom and plurality against oppressive social identities, whereas Mouffe's is a pragmatic agonism where the agon is what motivates people to participate in politics by making a clear choice between Left and Right in terms of what decision to make.[196] For Mouffe, agonism is vital because it serves the function of providing a legitimate outlet for antagonisms, whereas Connolly extends the sphere of agonism as far to the self. For Connolly democratic relationships require agonistic respect and an agonistic ethos is based on "an ethic of care for differences and agonistic respect between contending perspectives". The ethic of care, which Connolly discusses with reference to Foucault's later work on the practices of the self, but without due reference to the feminist work on care, is a civic virtue that allows people to honor different final sources, to cultivate reciprocal respect across difference, and to negotiate larger assemblages to set general principles.[197]

An agonistic ethos based on care is different from mere respect and toleration in the sense that people do not have to accept the other's claim or faith but they keep an agonistic distance to it, while acknowledging that any position is contestable including one's own. This ethical sensibility is embodied as care for an enlarged diversity of life in which plural constituencies coexist in creative ways.[198] He argues that "this ethical

[196] Schaap also talks about a third version of agonism, which is strategic agonism, that is present in Jacques Ranciere's work. In this third version the agon is believed to be existing between first and second-class rather than between co-citizens, in other words, agonism is the character of the political struggle that is waged by second-class citizens against social inequalities. Schaap, *Law and Agonistic Politics*, 1 – 2.
[197] Connolly, *Democracy, Pluralism and Political Theory*, 142.
For feminist work on care see Eva Feder Kittay and Ellen K. Feder, *The Subject of Care : Feminist Perspectives on Dependency* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2002); Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice : Psychological Theory and Women's Development* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1982); Joan C. Tronto, *Moral Boundaries : A Political Argument for an Ethic of Care* (New York: Routledge, 1993).
[198] Connolly, *Democracy, Pluralism and Political Theory*, 223.

sensibility will be strengthened by its ability to amplify important themes already operative in the culture of democracy and the conceptions of democracy can be improved by testing them against such sensibility."[199] This unfolds as a political suggestion into a more generalized ethos of democracy that includes: the pluralization of the sites of democratic action and allegiance, the creation of spaces above and below the state and the cultivation of an ethos of agonistic respect. In other words, it requires a lot of work that involves constant engagement, negotiation, and interrogation. Moreover, it is also demanding on the citizen because, according to Connolly, insurgency might at times require a totalistic definition or the domination of certain concerns over the others while a politics of engagement with the self might resist that.[200] That is why Connolly argues that democracy as a mode of governance, namely, the governance of otherness comes into clash with democracy as the freedoms of the self.[201] Democracy is a distinctive culture "in which constituencies have a significant hand in modeling and moving the identities that constitute them, then negotiation of a democratic ethos of engagement becomes very pertinent."[202] Connolly's version of agonism is three-fold: first, it is the character of collective dissidence and disruption that is the basis of an interrogative citizenry; second, it is the agonistic struggle that takes place within each social movement to acknowledge difference and challenge "the self-confidence and congealed judgment of dominant constituencies;"[203] and finally, it is the agonistic ethos that belongs to the individual dissident with respect to her position towards both the movements she is a part of and to

[199] Ibid.
[200] Ibid., 226 – 228.
[201] Two productive ambivalences define the democratic ethos: one that exists between the governance of the populace through established standards and the periodic interruption of social movements, and the other that exists within these movements which are forged by a variety of constituencies who each honor different moral sources. Connolly, *Democracy, Pluralism and Political Theory*, 246.
[202] Ibid.
[203] Connolly, *The Ethos of Pluralization*, xv.

herself. "Radical democracy has the best chance to progress if and as a significant minority of citizens in a large variety of positions – including labor leaders, feminists, environmentalists, the elderly, church goers, professors and the young – come to terms actively with the abundance of life."[204]

The problem with Connolly's account is the level of expectation from the political subject and political movements for a theory that wants to contain and celebrate rather than eliminate contingency and open-endedness in politics. He locates his model as distinct from the liberal democrat who endorses value pluralism without realizing that the source of pluralism is indecisiveness that undermines the legitimacy of any decision. His model on the contrary acknowledges the contingency of decisions. This puts on the radical democrat the responsibility to make decisions while accounting for the "illegitimate violence" in making the decision.[205] So the democrat has to constantly subject one's self, one's actions and decisions to revision and interrogation.[206] Connolly seems to confuse the task he sets for the theorist of democracy who constantly revises and interrogates decisions with citizens and political actors who do not act like political theorists, and his agonistic politics, as the "work of the self," that presumes a lot fits perfectly, according to Villa, with "the subjectivist assumptions of a therapeutic age."[207] Hence, Connolly is not able to offer a convincing account by which this ethic can translate into practice[208], but also fails to transcend the vicious cycle that he proposes to

[204] Ibid., 251.
[205] Devenney, *Ethics and Politics in Contemporary Theory*, 161.
[206] Ibid.
[207] Dana R. Villa, *Politics, Philosophy, Terror : Essays on the Thought of Hannah Arendt* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1999), 122.
[208] Also see Alan Keenan, *Democracy in Question : Democratic Openness in a Time of Political Closure* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2003), 172 for a critique of Connolly's account as unconvincing.

eliminate, that is whether a democratic culture precedes democrats or democrats construct a democratic culture.

Just like Mouffe's, Connolly's understanding of democracy understood as interrogation, questioning and the shifting of existing meanings and the making of new ones loses ground when it is translated into a model of democratic citizenship. Within his account, the speaking citizen of the deliberative model takes the form of the interrogating, acting citizen who not only interrogates established structures and consensus but also its self-organization and constructs various ethical practices to be able to maintain the tension of democracy.[209] Neither the speaking/ deliberative nor the contesting/ agonistic model translate their commitments to the open-endedness of democracy into their political projects and while they seemingly transcend the vicious cycle they take a liberal-democratic framework and democratic culture for granted, and thus actually bypass the cycle.[210] They introduce a strong definition of what makes a democratic community when it exists and a rather strictly defined list of expectations when it does not. In so doing they have in the background the uncontested institutions and structures of a liberal democratic regime. One of the initial starting questions for the dissertation was whether we can talk about democratic engagements in contexts where there is no consensus on the ethico-political principles. The agonism and the exclusive focus on disruptive politics, particularly on the Left/ Right spectrum Mouffe advocates, is limited in understanding the prospects of democratic action in contexts where the

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[209] Villa argues that the contemporary agonist' understanding of politics which is centered around "incessant contestation and resistance" is too essentially reactive and constricted and reduces politics to fighting. *Politics, Philosophy, Terror*, 125 – 127. He contends that those like Honig who take their agonism from Arendt miss that for Arendt, agonism is also about "public-spiritedness, independent judgment, and self-distance in addition to initiatory action," as such it is care for the world and the public realm. (127)

[210] Connolly calls it his version of a Rousseauian paradox in that democratic virtue presupposes a democratic way of life, while a democratic way of life presupposes the virtues it should precede. He proposes to assume that they arise simultaneously. *Democracy, Pluralism and Political Theory*, 203.

political is disrupted by state-military hegemony to name anything else as the enemies of the state. The problem is not only a mistranslation of the theoretical models into a viable political practice but the discrepancy is a sign that the basic assumptions about the antagonistic structuring of the political and the disruptive character of political action do not respect the complexity and the unprecedented character of action, and inaction as will be discussed in the following chapter. A more flexible understanding of how democratic engagements form and how political action is constituted has to move beyond the speaking/acting citizen framework and think of political action and communication in a broader sense. In response to the empirical limitations, the discussion of democratic practice has to be contextualized in order to pay attention to the local, global and historical relations and discourses that order political life within a given context. Laclau's work on democracy is particularly insightful for linking the particular and the universal in explaining the coming into being of democratic demands.[211] Hence it is worth analyzing what he has to offer to our understanding of democratic action.

Laclau and the Making of Democratic Demands

Laclau rejects existing sociological perspectives on popular mobilization that focus on group and structural paradigms, and takes "demands" as his basic unit of analysis in explaining the formation of collective identities. Social mobilization is the process of the articulation of demands, which do not ever correspond to a stable configuration. The order of the sequence during articulation is not determined a priori, but instead contingent on historical as well as present discourses and the relations of power. In this respect, democracy is one form of popular mobilization among many other

[211] Ernesto Laclau, *On Populist Reason* (London ; New York: Verso, 2005).

contingently articulated sequences of demands, or in other words, the chains of equivalence.[212] This concept is first raised in Laclau and Mouffe's earlier work on post-Marxist, radical democracy. New social movements are defined as the embodiment of multiple axes of struggle against capitalism; they promote the formation of solidarities and temporary blocs between separate struggles that come together through "articulation," while each retains their autonomy.[213] In fact, their conjoining of unity and autonomy, where unity is conceptualized as the hegemonic articulation of each movement that simultaneously retains its autonomy, is according to Smith, the single most important contribution Laclau and Mouffe made to democratic theory.[214] In the chain of equivalence, the value of each movement is determined in relation to other movements and each subject position is determined in relation to the others. Each demand retains a peculiar relation to the whole, in that it is both a claim to the established order but also exists within and outside of that order; hence "logic of equivalence" is also the "logic of difference." [215] Any social whole or meaning is constructed through the interaction of differences and involves both moments of identification and moments of

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[212] Laclau distinguishes between populism as popular mobilization and the pejorative labels attributed to populism in contemporary politics, such as its vagueness, indeterminacy and lenience on rhetoric. He argues that any discourse on social reality is bound to be vague and indeterminate because no conceptual structure can find inner cohesion without appealing to rhetorical devices. *On Populist Reason*, 67. Radical democracy is also a form of populism but it is different in the sense that democracy institutionalizes and keeps open the contest for closure the "empty place of power," in Lefort's words, rather than eliminate the alternatives.

[213] Articulation is the transformative combination of two or more discursive elements, written documents, speeches, ideas, concrete practices, institutions, rituals, and empirical objects. It is transformative in the sense that articulation is not merely the aggregation of separate demands but it forges something new due to contingent power relations, hence no sequence is repeatable yet can owe certain characteristics to historical processes. See Anna M. Smith, *Laclau and Mouffe the Radical Democratic Imaginary* (London ; New York: Routledge, 2003), 88. No hegemonic discourse is complete so we cannot talk about any form of political solidarity in advance. A plurality of discourses always competes for the construction of popular identities. Laclau takes this element of historicity from Gramsci, in his emphasis that although we cannot know what discourses will emerge from a given crisis we know that there is some historical structure to the crisis.

[214] Smith, *Laclau and Mouffe the Radical Democratic Imaginary,* 32.

[215] Laclau, *On Populist Reason*, ix-x.

difference. This is a process that takes place both between isolated demands in a collective and between the collective and its outside. The moment of identification is at the same time the moment of differentiation that is why collective mobilization like the construction of identity is fundamentally based on a negative, namely, a relation of difference.[216] While equivalences are established between differences, the whole is represented in one particular difference because, at one point, one particular demand becomes hegemonic and assumes the representation of the whole. Yet the hegemonic identity is simply an "empty signifier" of totality because the fullness it acquires is only an assumption.[217]

Following this lengthy explanation of Laclau's theory of the coming into being of democratic demands, the most legitimate question is what makes a demand democratic, in other words, what guarantees, if it does, what comes into being as the representation of totality is not xenophobic, totalitarian but democratic?[218] In fact this question is highly relevant for any discussion of democratic action or engagement that emphasizes form, including a silent act of communication, as discussed in Chapter 5. According to Laclau, the naming of a demand as democratic has nothing to do with the teleology of a particular regime, nor does it carry a normative judgment about the content of demands.[219] He

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[216] According to Marchart, in the tradition of Saussurian linguistics, the discursive field is conceived as a system of differences that is equivalently divided into two camps. "The only 'identical something' that holds the chain together is a common orientation towards 'what it is not': its negative, threatening outside." See Oliver Marchart, "The Absence at the Heart of Presence: Radical Democracy and the Ontology of Lack," in ed. Tønder and Thomassen, *Radical Democracy,* 140.
[217] Laclau, *On Populist Reason*, 68 – 71.
[218] Smith argues that it is not possible to know in advance because in Laclau and Mouffe's perspective, "theories that decide the political value of democratic demands in advance cannot be reconciled with radical democratic pluralist principles." See Smith, *Laclau and Mouffe the Radical Democratic Imaginary,* 91.
[219] According to Laclau a demand is a request or a claim that has not been met. A request gains force when it turns into an "unfulfilled demand," and the accumulation of unfulfilled demands create the chain of equivalence. This process of isolated/democratic demands coming into being of popular demands ultimately explains the construction of 'the people.' The ambiguity in the choice between the words

thinks that a fascist regime can articulate democratic demands as much as a liberal one.[220] His naming is strictly descriptive. Demands which are formulated "'to' the system 'by' an underdog of sorts," in other words, those that are implicitly "equalitarian" and presupposing some kind of an exclusion or deprivation, a "deficient being" in their very emergence are democratic demands.[221] The fact that Laclau dissociates the coming into being of a democratic demand from the particular regime is useful as far as it allows recognition of political struggles that go under the radar in authoritarian settings, which are mostly subaltern struggles, or women's grassroots activism. However, a strictly descriptive naming of a demand as democratic on the basis that it is formulated to the system, or it disrupts hegemonic powers, invites the danger of naming all resistant action as democratic without, for instance the concomitant analysis of the pervasiveness of the state.

Laclau argues that the moment when the claim is made creates a new space by disrupting the existing order and making the wrongdoing visible; nothing is political in itself but they become political in the moment of disruption, Laclau also only focuses on the disruptive moments of politics as truly political moments. However, unlike the prior two theorists, he has a more complex understanding of resistance and contestation. The chain of equivalence is formed neither through deliberation nor a homogenous resistance. It is explained in fact an ambivalent, uncertain and non-transparent process. Particular unfulfilled demands come together in the face of unresponsive power because they

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'request' or 'claim,' is a useful one because the transition from a request to a claim is the defining feature of populism. *On Populist Reason*, 73.

[220] Ibid., 125.

[221] Laclau argues that democracy in this new sense of radicalism is synonymous with the constitution of the people – the masses, as a new historical actor. In that sense, radical democracy is always populist. See Ernesto Laclau, "The Future of Radical Democracy," in ed. Tønder and Thomassen, *Radical Democracy,* 259.

require each other for their strength, however when one gets singled out and privileged to constitute the common denominator, the end result is indeterminate because the enemy is not as clear as it was when they were single demands.[222] While they lose clarity of the enemy on the one hand, they also gain corporeality, which they otherwise would have lacked.[223] So people's autonomy is constructed with the crystallization of the chain.[224] As Ranciere states, "the demos attributes to itself as its proper lot the equality that belongs to all citizens."[225] On one hand, the achieved totality is false because it is achieved via a hegemonic act; all popular identification is identification with empty signifiers. Laclau's account of popular mobilization is informed by Lacan's description of identity formation. For Lacan, identity is constituted in language through identification with a signifier, because as soon as the subject enters the symbolic order, it experiences a lack that is from then on posited onwards to partial objects in a myth of fullness.[226]The principles justice and equality are not empty signifiers because they are abstractions, but because during the French Revolution, they came to substitute for particulars, namely, other demands

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[222] Laclau, *On Populist Reason*, 86.
[223] Ibid., 88 – 89.
[224] Ibid., 93.
[225] Jacques Ranciere, *Disagreement: Politics and Philosophy*, trans. Julie Rose (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 88 – 9.
[226] "Lack theorists" take from Lacan the idea of radical difference, as a non-symbolizable lack that operates at the heart of any subject or system of signification. Within Lacanian terminology subject is only a subject in language and is constituted through identification with a signifier, such as white or male. Because fulfillment of the lack is only temporary and never complete, subject's identity is always decentered. See Tønder & Thomassen, *Radical Democracy*, 5. According to Lacan, the ego is uncertain to itself because of the workings of the unconscious from a very early stage of its life. As he elaborates in his theory of the mirror stage, when the child is six to eighteen months old, it becomes initially aware of itself for the first time as a biological organism at a preverbal stage. The mirror stage describes a situation in which the child views itself as an Other in the mirror, thus setting up a dialectical process, and initiating an imaginary dual relationship between the mirror image and the child, which then becomes the basis of all personal relationships with others and a condition for primary narcissism as well as a source of aggression. Misrecognition, rather than completeness characterizes the relationship of the self throughout life, and thus Lacan concludes that there is no complete self, but there are rather fragmented pieces attempting to combine into a whole through identifications and fantasies, and this condition frustrates the subject. See Edith Kurzweil, "Jacques Lacan: French Freud," *Theory and Society* 10, no. 3 (1981): 425.

such as "bread, peace, land."[227]The articulation between the universal and the particular is not inherent to the construction of the people, nor is something that just takes place at the level of words and images but it is also sedimented into various practices and institutions. The discursive process does not merely happen through the articulation of words and actions; the quilting function is never merely verbal, it is also embedded in material practices.[228] It is this analysis that helps discuss the articulation of silence in the practices of the Saturday Mothers and to analyze the potential of constructing a feminist democratic practice from the politics of mourning. (See Chapter 6)

The relationship between liberalism and democracy that deliberative democracy tries to eliminate by way of turning it into a necessary implication is, for Laclau, another historically contingent articulation.[229] Because "there can be no democracy functioning without the construction of the 'people',"[230] he concurs that democracy, as emergence of the people, can take place without the emergence of liberalism. This is not only a critique of deliberative democracy or the discourse theory of sovereignty as it embodies the co-originality of basic rights and popular sovereignty, but also a departure from both Connolly and Mouffe in that Laclau does not base the emergence of democratic demands on any prior consensus. In that respect, unlike Mouffe whose alternative model becomes quite similar to the one she criticizes, Laclau stays truer to the radical democratic critique of consensus and legitimacy. Yet his model is only abstract without a concomitant

[227] Laclau, *On Populist Reason*, 97.
[228] Ibid, 106.
[229] See Mouffe, *The Democratic Paradox*.
[230] Laclau explains that democracy is grounded only on the existence of a democratic subject whose emergence depends on the horizontal articulation between equivalential demands. An ensemble of equivalential demands articulated by an empty signifier is what constitutes a people and the very possibility of democracy depends on the constitution of a democratic people. That is why if there is to be an articulation between democracy and liberalism means the combination of demands of two different types. Laclau, *On Populist Reason*, 169 – 171.

discussion of how democratic demands actually come into being in illiberal environments; that is why contextualized and empirical studies of political action are urgent in such settings. Otherwise, the stakes are too high to name any political action within an authoritarian environment as democratic solely because it is disruptive. Without an analysis of the particular discourses in relation to which political action or communication are structured, any naming will be theoretically abstract and politically dangerous. According to Laclau, democratic demands have a variety of aims and it cannot be granted that they will all move in the same direction.[231] In many places such as Latin America in 1970s and 1980s, including Turkey since 1980s, liberal demands are part of the chain of equivalence but not crystallized as principles.[232] Human rights and civil liberties are far from becoming the rules of the game in Turkey. That is why any discussion of political action or democratic process in Turkey, including the dissertation's own focus on silence, has to take into consideration the current state of freedom of speech, but instead of considering it as an inhibition to democratic politics, understand the articulation of democratic demands within the various discourses that structure political language in Turkey. Only then, a silent protest can be understood as a method of political communication rather than merely the sign of repression.

What makes democracy special if all validity is determined by power? According to Laclau, the radical democrat retains allegiance to democracy because it is the only form that allows for the openness and uncertainty of meaning to continue. It is the only

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[231] Laclau, "The Future of Radical Democracy," 261. In the case of liberal democracy, radicalism was linked to universalization, which meant doing away with differences and exceptions. In the case of populist democracy, universality was attributed to a subject who was less than the community as a whole but claimed the right to be identified with the latter. In radical pluralism, on the other hand, the very principle of universality is put into question, while all three of the senses of pluralism are active. Radical democracy is the first strictly political form of social organization because it is the first one in which the posing and the withdrawal of the social ground is entirely dependent on political interventions.
[232] Laclau, *On Populist Reason*, 171.

political system that keeps contingency alive through equality, liberty and the rights discourse, such that a space for difference is instituted through freedom of speech or free and fair elections.[233] There are definitely limits to claims that are raised in such a system; in line Mouffe, Laclau also argues that a decision, albeit political, has to be made to distinguish between claims. Democracy allows openness because it closes on those who do not allow it, namely, the burden is put on those who do not play by the rules of the game.[234] The case of enforced-disappearance in Turkey, poses a puzzle because it is the state that does not play by the rules of the game especially towards those who are waged as the enemies of the state, such as the Kurdish population.

Conclusion

Agonistic models of democracy, specifically Chantal Mouffe's work is insightful in terms of pointing to the limits of rationalistic accounts that overemphasize dialogue at the expense of the political. However, Mouffe prioritizes a certain ontology of the subject and reduces action to an exclusively combative form. She revitalizes Schmitt's friend-enemy distinction at the risk of missing the value of political practice that aims to avoid or circumvent antagonism, such as a silent protest. The overemphasis on the exclusively antagonistic and disruptive elements of politics is especially problematic in contexts where political discourse is structured on friend-enemy distinctions that leaves citizens little room for doing politics outside given categories, in fact this is highly relevant to the discussion of the Kurdish problem in Turkey. In that case silence and inaction become

[233] Devenney, *Ethics and Politics in Contemporary Theory*, 142.
[234] Ibid. Devenney argues that Mouffe and Laclau are doomed to face this question because their analysis is limited to the nation-state, whereas contemporary realities require an analysis beyond the nation-state to include transnational solidarities between popular movements as well global networks of power.

valuable strategies and political realities that necessitate further evaluation. While Connolly works with a more expressivist rather than pragmatic notion of agonism, he also celebrates conflict and contestation at the expense of the lack thereof and ends up with a theory of agonistic ethos that is quite demanding on the part of democrats, leaving it in doubt whether this constricted account of democratic relationship can turn into a viable political practice without the kind of democratic culture he implicitly presupposes.

Both the deliberative and the agonistic models of democracy are valuable insofar as they depart from purely formalistic or aggregative models of democracy that understand it merely as the clash or the aggregation of pre-determined interests of rational subjects. Instead they both attend to the deepening of democratic processes and take political practice outside electoral confines seriously. Yet the deliberative model exclusively privileges a particular mode of political practice that confines communication into a narrow notion of deliberative speech, which then risks missing myriad ways in which communication takes place including sometimes, in silence. The agonistic critique of deliberative democracy points to the problems with this constricted account of deliberation and aims to emancipate democratic theory from the reign of reasons such that the "political" is brought back in. However, agonistic accounts focus exclusively on the disruptive moments of politics and end up prioritizing only the combative elements of political action, thus, are not able to account for how democratic relationships are sustained over time. Neither can they offer a convincing account as to why agonism does not revert back to antagonism. Markell shows that quite the contrary to his critics, Habermas's account of the public sphere actually requires agonistic, disruptive action. A democratic politics after sovereignty embodies open-endedness rather than cloaking it

under communicative rationality. "In such a vision of democratic politics, agonistic political action in which existing agreements are shattered and differences are expressed is not treated as alien and threatening, but is paradoxically embraced and encouraged as a condition of the fragile presumption of democratic legitimacy."[235] According to Markell the different interpretations result from the differences between Habermas's and Arendt's accounts of the public sphere. Whereas Habermas emphasizes the idealistic moment in communication with anticipation of a future consensus, Arendt's main concern is plurality, thus she emphasizes the capacity of political action as a force of interruption and contestation.[236] Agonistic theorists pose a false dichotomy between consensus and contestation, and deliberative and disruptive action in order to sustain their criticism. This does not mean of course the two models of democracy can actually be reconciled, but simplifying the distinction down to a choice between deliberation and contestation is misleading. In the following chapter, I discuss silence, as a mode of action that does not fit well with either the deliberative or the agonistic model of politics. Silence is analyzed to explore when and how people do not speak, do not act or act by not speaking both as a response to and in a dialogue with the deliberative and agonistic models of democratic theory.

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[235] Patchen Markell, "Contesting Consensus: Rereading Habermas on the Public Sphere," *Constellations* 3, no. 3 (2006): 393.
[236] Ibid.

CHAPTER FOUR
SILENCE, POLITICS AND DEMOCRACY

Deliberative and agonistic accounts of democracy have irreconcilable differences in terms of their ontologies of the political; nevertheless, both privilege a particularly expressive notion of political action that confines democratic practice in deliberative speech or agonistic action alone. Deliberative democrats prioritize the speaking subject, where communication takes the form of deliberative speech. Yet the willingness and ability to participate in this form of communication is presupposed. Agonistic critics of deliberative democracy, such as Chantal Mouffe, criticize this constrained account of communication that is geared toward consensus, and underline the role of passions and contestation in politics. Yet focusing only on the disruptive moments of politics and on the combative character of democratic action, they confine democratic action into an antagonistic framework, without due analysis of practices that do not easily fit into this paradigm. As Villa states, it is in fact easier to agree with contemporary agonists, such as Bonnie Honig or Chantal Mouffe's diagnosis of liberal and deliberative models, but harder to be persuaded by their cure.[237] Although deliberative and agonistic accounts put to fore two distinct ways of understanding the nature of politics, an aspiration common to both accounts of is making citizens more expressive.[238]

Aside from a very few exceptions that are discussed in this chapter, in political theory silence has often been understood on negative terms as - compliance,

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[237] Villa, *Politics, Philosophy, Terror*, 109.

[238] Villa thinks that contemporary agonists' urge to revitalize expressive politics is a common theme in the history of political thought such as Machiavelli and Rousseau's attack on Christian passivity, or Mill and Tocqueville's attack on conformity. He argues that "Making citizens more expressive, and demanding that their expressions be heard in the public realm, may not, in the end, make them any less subservient to the rule or any more resistant to 'normalization.'" Villa, *Politics, Philosophy, Terror*, 109.

acquiescence, conformity and subordination - or merely as disinterestedness that leads to inaction and disengagement. What follow from these associations is a false dichotomization of silence with speech and an understanding of silence as the outside of communication and action. This chapter aims to discuss silence in a rather non-conventional way to explore what it has to contribute to political theory. The first question is whether silence is political and communicative, given a broader understanding of communication that allows exploring silence as it operates in discourses. The second question I raise in this chapter is whether silence can help frame democratic engagements in given frameworks and also signify a constructive break with conventional modes of speaking and doing politics. A non-conventional perspective on silence complicates taken for granted categories of political action such that we see the complexity of political action and how it embodies both complicity and resistance, or consent and refusal at the same time.

The chapter starts with a discussion of how speech and silence are located in political theory with respect to conceptions of the public sphere and political communities. It is often speech that is perceived as constructive of communities and of the political sphere. Yet acknowledgment of a dynamic relationship that exists between speech and silence within public communication shows that both speech and silence have different modalities, and silence can often be constructive of public and political spheres. Furthermore, given the right circumstances, silence also plays a transformative role in politics depending on how authorities perceive it and how actors utilize it. Thus silence is useful as a category that blurs boundaries between complicity and consent, and disruption and consensus. Secondly, the dissertation suggests silence, as constituting a break from,

or a refusal to, given forms of communication or structures of political discourse. I specifically endorse a gender perspective to explore the engendering of silence within political theory. As such it poses a challenge to deliberative democracy's presumption about actors' willing and readiness to deliberate. Thirdly, the dissertation briefly explores the possible meanings silence can acquire as a form of collective action in non-verbal performative politics such as silent protests and vigils. Finally, silence is also considered as representative of collective politics of inaction, such as voters' abstention and boycotts, with a particular example from Turkish politics, where it challenges the legitimacy of conventional democratic outlets.

Speech, Silence and the Political

Traditionally silence indicates negativity, denoting an effect of power rather than an act of power, or the absence of communication rather than an act of communication. Political theorists have inherited the legacy of postcolonial thought to bring to fore the absences in texts as well as silences in history.[239] In political philosophy, silence is often understood as lack, absence, passivity or inaction. Passivity is either attributed to the inability to act or speak due to discipline and force, in other words, "being silenced," or the irresponsibility that is portrayed in the lack of involvement in politics and in political communication, such that it indicates withdrawal, disengagement or disinterestedness. Phrases that refer to the oppressed as the "silenced," or as those who "lack voice," should come as no surprise, neither should common perceptions of the silent as apathetic or apolitical. Speech has always been conceived as constructive of communities whereas silence single handedly as a threat. In a major line of thinking about the public sphere

[239] See Trouillot, *Silencing the Past* .

extending from Arendt to Habermas, the common spaces in which citizens come together and act are always envisioned through the concept of speech rather than silence. That is why both the deliberative and agonistic accounts of democracy, which in different ways try to revitalize communitarian notions of an active citizenry and to make democratic participation substantive, put to fore a notion of political action that is based on speech and expression. The underlying assumption in the deliberative model is, given the right conditions and procedures such as more inclusive mechanisms; the marginalized and the silenced get a chance to speak up. Even in critical accounts, as seen previously in Young's reformulated account of deliberation, whether it is reasoned speech or situated story telling, the assumption is that speech liberates.[240] Thus silence is usually understudied as a mode of communication. Minh-ha puts it elegantly when she says: "Silence has been so commonly set in opposition to speech that silence as a will not to say or a will to unsay, as a language on its own, has never been questioned."[241] This quote rightly captures the impetus behind this project in general and the spirit of this chapter in particular. Silence is not necessarily a break with communication or action, but on the contrary, sheds lights on to the multiple ways in which relations of power shape forms and spheres of communication.

Speech and action play a significant role in Arendt's thought whose work on the political is a major source of inspiration for contemporary theories of agonistic democracy.[242] For Arendt, political freedom is synonymous with agonism; through

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[240] See Young, *Inclusion and Democracy.*
[241] Trinh Minh-ha, "Not You/Like You: Post-Colonial Women and the Interlocking Questions of Identity and Difference," in *Making Face, Making Soul = Haciendo Caras : Creative and Critical Perspectives by Women of Color* 1990, ed. Gloria Anzaldúa(San Francisco: Aunt Lute Foundation Books, 1990), 373.
[242] Among the huge body of secondary literature on Hannah Arendt's work I have mainly consulted Margaret Canovan, *The Political Thought of Hannah Arendt* (New York,: Harcourt Brace

striving for excellence individuals transcend the social, which is concerned with the preservation of life, and become political.[243] Contemporary agonists have found Arendt's expressivist conception of agonistic politics useful in developing resistance to socially determined identities.[244]Arendt was a great appreciator of the Athenian polis where speech and only speech made sense and when all citizens talked to one another, in fact according to Kalyvas, along with Nietzsche, Arendt is the last survivor of the "ancient" understanding of agonism.[245] She argued that, unlike force and violence, which are pre-political, human beings construct the political by speaking and acting together.[246] Through speech and action, human beings reveal their unique distinctiveness, which is the condition of human plurality, and also engage in an intersubjective process of constructing the world as a collectivity.[247] Through acting and speaking, actors make a

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Jovanovich, 1974). Hanna F. Pitkin, *The Attack of the Blob : Hannah Arendt's Concept of the Social* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1998). Villa, *Politics, Philosophy, Terror*. For feminist interpretations of Arendt and her conception of political action see; Susan Bickford,*The Dissonance of Democracy : Listening, Conflict, and Citizenship* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1996). Mary G. Dietz, *Turning Operations : Feminism, Arendt, and Politics* (New York: Routledge, 2002). Bonnie Honig, *Feminist Interpretations of Hannah Arendt*, *Re-Reading the Canon* (University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995). Linda M. Zerilli, G. *Feminism and the Abyss of Freedom* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

[243] Arendt's distinction of the social and the political has become a major source of criticism especially for feminist theorists. In the Human Condition, Arendt lays out her concern with the rise of the social, namely the overabundance of the political sphere with social concerns. In *The Attack of the Blob*, Pitkin interprets this as Arendt's prioritization of the political at the expense of and in contrast to the private sphere. According to Pitkin, the achievement of genuine freedom for Arendt requires leaving behind necessities, private concerns and thus downgrades of the body. Arendt's deployment of the private/public distinction is criticized by feminists for undermining and ignoring the ways in which women and their bodies have been excluded from the political. See Wendy L. Brown, *Manhood and Politics : A Feminist Reading in Political Theory* (Totowa, N.J.: Rowman & Littlefield, 1988). Howerver, Arendt's account of political action also offers ways in which her shortcomings can be transcended via her conception of political action, such that it allows the reformulation of feminist action that challenges the distinctions she relies on and opens up new roads to emancipation See Bonnie Honig, "Toward an Agonistic Feminism: Hannah Arendt and the Politics of Identity," in Honig, *Feminist Interpretations of Hannah Arendt.*

[244] Schaap, *Law and Agonistic Politics*, 3.

[245] Arendt, *Human Condition*, 27. Kalyvas argues that although contemporary poststructuralists find their most positively political moment in agonism, they do not draw adequately on the resources of the origins of agonism in Hellenic thought. See Andreas Kalyvas, "The Democratic Narcissus: the Agonism of the Ancients Compared to that of the post(Moderns)," in ed. Schaap, *Law and Agonistic Politics,* 15 – 43.

[246] Arendt, *Human Condition*, 27.

[247] Ibid., 175 – 176.

claim to immortality; appear and confirm themselves vis-à-vis each other, and even when the particular words and deeds perish, they create their own remembrance.[248] By appearing in the world human beings seek glory and immortality.[249]

> In acting and speaking, men show who they are, reveal actively their unique personal identities and thus make their appearance in the human world, while their physical identities appear without any activity of their own in the unique shape of the body and sound of the voice. This disclosure of 'who' in contradistinction to 'what' somebody is – his qualities, gifts, talents, and shortcomings, which he may display or hide – is implicit in everything somebody says or does. It can be hidden only in complete silence and perfect passivity, but its disclosure can almost never be achieved as a willful purpose, as though one possessed and could dispose of this 'who' in the same manner he has and can disposes of this qualities.[250]

Thus, speech is understood as the means through which human beings interact and communicate with each other.[251] Through words and deeds, human beings bring something new into the world to which they have no control over, because all action has unprecedented consequences, actions only fully reveal themselves to the storytellers.[252]Arendt thinks that although we can live without labor or work, a life without speech is meaningless; because through speech we become political and thus free. So a life without speech makes the world, dead.[253]

Is there room for silence in Arendt's account of political action or the political? The following chapter gives an affirmative answer to this question with the condition that silence is considered a mode of communication and a form of collective action. A reading

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[248] Ibid., 207 – 208.
[249] Pitkin bases her criticism that Arendt's actors are like "posturing little boys clamoring for attention" solely on a Homeric reading of appearance in public as seeking glory and immortality in public. Pitkin, *The Attack of the Blob*, 338. See Chapter 5 for a different reading of Arendt's notion of "appearing in public," where the intersubjective dimension of being together is emphasized.
[250] Arendt, Human Condition, 179.
[251] Ibid., 183.
[252] Ibid., 192.
[253] Ibid., 176.

of Arendt that strictly focuses on the agonistic aspects of her thought, which emphasizes only the expressivist elements of her account of action, one is more inclined to locate silence outside the political, within the sphere of the household, and the private. In fact, according to Allen, there is no room for silence in Arendt's public sphere; silence is rendered private, for Arendt, "the sacredness of this privacy was like the sacredness of the hidden."[254] Yet she adds that it is possible to re-conceptualize the public sphere not as a space apart from the private, but as a set of rituals and common practices that determine how private and public systems relate to each other, in fact that is the aim of contemporary feminist interpreters of Arendt who take their cue from Arendt's account of political action to unsettle all established relations, including the distinction between the private and the political.[255] However, this requires thinking beyond the narrow framework of the speech act, to include variety of forms of communication that are politically relevant yet ignored.[256] In fact, it has predominantly been speech that is conceived as constructive of communities whereas silence as threatening. However silence is also often what brings people together and is necessary along with speech for

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[254] Allen, "Anonymous: On Silence and the Public Sphere," 107. Her story of the ancient Greek lawgivers Zareudus and Charondas is illuminating within this respect. The lawgivers wanted to limit the proposals for the revision of laws through the use of an interesting procedure such that citizens had to propose revisions with their heads in a noose. If the proposal is accepted they were to be let free, and if not, executed. The plan aimed to limit sounds in the public sphere so that only valuable speech is uttered. Allen gives this as an example of how silence rather than speech characterizes publicness and rationality (pp. 108-110). In this utopian public sphere "the force of the silent recognition of self-evident truths" had the upper hand where "all enunciations are useful, reasonable and plainly (if trivially) truthful." (p. 110)

[255] Contemporary feminists employ Arendt's non-sovereign interpretation of political action for the construction of a non-essentialist feminist politics. See Dietz, *Turning Operations*; Honig, "Toward an Agonistic Feminism"; Zerilli, *Freedom's Abyss*. Feminist democratic theorists rescue Arendt from the critique that her account of politics leaves no room for a feminist consciousness. Instead they make the case that Arendt's account of subject-formation during political action allows for a non-essentialist feminist politics that focuses on what actors do and bring to the world rather than who they are.

[256] Allen, "Anonymous: On Silence and the Public Sphere," 107.

the persistence of a community.[257] The belief that anything and everything can be dealt with speech is ingrained in the imaginaries of political theorists because of the restlessness with prevailing injustices. This restlessness leads us to ignore how in certain contexts speaking can make things worse, and thereby is avoided. The ambivalence before silence stems from the difficulty in reading silence to see whether it signals consent, compliance or repression.

Poststructuralist theorists, such as Laclau and Mouffe, criticize the liberal notion of the individual political actor as a fully conscious being, capable of abstracting oneself from history in making rational decisions. In its place, they put a subject of lack, that is inescapably incomplete yet only partially so in her identification with external objects, discourses or in relation to other identities.[258] In that respect, they depart from Habermas, who according to Devenney, is not able to dissociate the subject of enunciation "I am," from the subject of statement, namely the "I" in the "I am," who is never totally the "I" fully certain of itself because of the distance between the ego and the ego ideal.[259] Whereas this failure is the basis of the political for Laclau, communicative rationality does not recognize the impossibility even as an ideal. Habermas tries to argue for the universality of validity claims in the here and now of the context in which they are made whereas the deconstructive notion of "iterability" shows that no meaning is ever closed, and no speaker is sovereign over the utterance; utterances are always open to new

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[257] Ferguson argues that avoiding speaking about certain issues is a commonly used strategy in many families. It enables the continuation of the domestic community in the face of radical discontinuity, specifically in cases of disagreement on issues such as religion, sexuality and politics. He concurs that silence should be taken seriously because it creates connection and commonality aside from failure and malfunction. See Ferguson, "Silence: A Politics," 50.
[258] See Chapter 3.
[259] Devenney, *Ethics and Politics in Contemporary Theory*, 48.

meanings.[260] Political theorists who agree on the incomplete and decentered constitution of the ego do not always agree that this should be conceived on the basis of a lack, namely, on negative terms and antagonistic relations. Nevertheless, once we agree that the ego is not an abstract autonomous ego but is constituted and constitutive of the various and contingent relations of power then it becomes inevitable that we rethink what constitutes action and communication in consideration of the frustrations, limitations as well as the possibilities in the construction of democratic spaces. This has important ramifications for an analysis of silence. It shows that silence operates within all discourses and that every speech contains and also depends on silence, as Ihde states, ordinary language contains the richness of the unsaid.[261]While silence is predominantly associated with involuntarism, all subject positions are situated with respect to power relations that delineate "what is possible, what can be said and done, what positions may legitimately be taken, what actions may be engaged in;" according to Norval these imaginary horizons delimit set boundaries to social practices.[262] Similarly linguistic horizons shape the relationship between speech and silence.

Silence is often read as the absence of resistance to authoritarian powers, however, consent often embodies less contentment then assumed. Silence can indicate a voluntary or tacit agreement with the status quo, namely, with a particular social or political order as in the social contract tradition. It can also indicate conformity and acquiescence due to oppression and powerlessness, in other words, the inability to act due to hopelessness and destitution. Often times, tacit consent and complicity overlap but

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[260] Ibid., 72.
[261] Don Ihde, *Listening and Voice : Phenomenologies of Sound* 2nd ed. (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2007), 181.
[262] Aletta Norval, *Deconstructing Apartheid Discourse* (London: Verso, 1996), 4.

they are also mistakenly or deliberately confused by those who are silent, or those who are in power. Especially in political contexts where all dissent is physically or psychologically discouraged, silence might only seemingly look like consent and complicity. When looked closely, it is possible to see the complexity of any such given situation and how compliance and resistance, consent and disagreement do not readily distinguish from one another in many circumstances, which is perfectly elaborated in Havel's account of Czech society under authoritarian rule. Havel's title, the *Powers of the Powerless*, speaks for itself in that, while the silence of the powerless may look as if they are in full agreement with the existing authority, they are actually powerful in the sense that the system ultimately needs and actively seeks their compliance to create the particular metaphysical order where it has to look strong to itself.[263] Havel thinks that those who seem to us as spectators from the outside are actually active contributors of the panorama; in fact they constructed the panorama, and therein lays their power:

> Individuals need not believe all these mystifications, but they must behave as though they did, or they must at least tolerate them in silence, or get along well with those who work with them. For this reason, however, they must *live within a lie*. They need not accept the lie. It is enough for them to have accepted their life with it and in it. For by this very fact, individuals confirm the system, fulfill the system, make the system, *are* the system. [264]

Within Havel's analysis, silence is the means through which conflict, and thus the disruption of the community are avoided. Yet it also indicates the fear of facing truth that paves the way to living a life within a lie, which for Havel is an aspect of modern societies each person is capable of doing to a certain degree.[265] The power of the

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[263] Václav Havel and John Keane, *The Power of the Powerless : Citizens against the State in Central-Eastern Europe* (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 1985), 35.
[264] Ibid., 31.
[265] Ibid., 38.

powerless, on the other hand, is to acknowledge their active contribution to the panorama and to resist the lie in search for truth. In that respect, like Habermas, Havel equates politics with truth and purity, such that the lie becomes unpolitical. According to Havel, "the original and most important sphere of activity, one that predetermines all the others" is the attempt to promote an independent society that lives within the truth and serves truth "consistently, purposefully, and articulately."[266] Despite his association of speech with truth or his view of politics as a matter of purification, there is value in his analysis for simply avoiding connecting silence to complicity. He acknowledges that there are thousands of nameless people who seem to be in a state of silent complicity while only a few dozen randomly chosen are labeled as dissidents.[267] As a matter of fact, only the outspoken are labeled as dissidents, and this labeling unintentionally supports the impression that the dissident are a group of chosen people who have some vested interest in challenging the power structures or creates the illusion that "since there is not more than a handful of malcontents to whom not very much is really being done, all the rest are therefore content, for were they not so, they would be 'dissidents' too."[268] Hence the equation of political action with speech or agonistic expression implicitly supports the notion that those who are silent are complicit; otherwise they would have spoken out.

For those who are familiar with Foucault's analysis of power, namely, power that permeates everyday life and orders the self, Havel's account of the *Powers of the Powerless*, or Janeway's similarly entitled *Powers of the Weak*, are no longer groundbreaking in terms of their account of power.[269] However, what is valuable in both

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[266] Ibid.
[267] Ibid., 59.
[268] Ibid.
[269] See Elizabeth Janeway, *Powers of the Weak*. 1st ed. (New York: Knopf, 1980). Janeway makes a gender

is the component of the "subliminal awareness that's expressed in behavior rather than words." [270]Whereas the idealized accounts of the public sphere in Arendtian or Habermasian accounts of politics are associated only with speech and disclosure, looking at the public sphere from the perspective of silence suggests the necessity of a broader conceptualization of communication.[271] In contrast to the public sphere theorists who focus only on the deliberative aspects of politics, these intermediary forms of communication bring to fore elements of politics that are overlooked in the choice between reason and passion, or consensus and disruption. Many political practices inhabit somewhere between outright resistance and simple complicity. In Ralph Ellison's novel the *Invisible Man*, the grandfather advises the anonymous black protagonist to acquiesce in silence and to put his head in the lion's mouth to be able to deal with the white power structure. Moving from this example, Allen states that affirmative silences stabilize the status quo, however,

> If powerholders take silences as affirmative or acquiescent when in fact they are negative and resistant, powerholders will develop significant misperceptions of the realities they inhabit until the misalignment between their perceptions and reality becomes so great as to reach a breaking point, and their capacity to act in the world, their power, simply gives way. Silence, or fake acquiescence, can serve

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analysis about the power of women in resisting imposed definitions about herself to challenge the status quo. She finds it important that a power analysis to specifically focus on women because they are most aware of the subliminal workings of power, and who express this in behavior rather than words (21).

[270] Ibid., 21.

[271] For instance Allen suggests that there is often a third mode of communication situated between silence and speech, which is *anonymous* or *dark speech*. Allen, "Anonymous: On Silence and the Public Sphere," 130. Example to this is Wedeen's (1990) discussion of Syrian people gathering in city squares as a façade for Hafiz al-Asad's power, where underneath they make a mockery of the political authority in the form of gossip and cartoons, thereby creating small but significant fractures of dissent. Wedeen calls this the "ambiguities of domination," what Scott (1990) in a similar analysis of the seemingly powerless calls "off-stage dissent." See James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance : Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990). Lisa Wedeen, *Ambiguities of Domination : Politics, Rhetoric, and Symbols in Contemporary Syria* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1999).However one also has to be careful with such analyses not to over-read or romanticize resistance when it does not exist. While not all submission is impotence, it is vital to refrain from the tendency to sentimentalize and glorify the weak and glamorize authority, a tendency that Janeway calls "underdoggism." Janeway, *Powers of the Weak,* 156.

> as a political weapon when it is used to mislead powerholders about the truth of their situation; not knowing the truth of their situation, they will fail to make sound practical judgments about it.[272]

The opacity of silence, the fact that it does not simply reveal a position makes it difficult to claim a clearly defined politics of silence, however the difficulty stems from the multifaceted character of power rather than a particularity of silence. It is important to also understand how silence is witnessed and perceived in order to make a political judgment. In fact, as Allen argues, silence can be taken as affirmative when it is actually negative, she calls this "pluralistic ignorance," or taken as negative when it is actually affirmative.[273] Ignorance can disguise a potential dissent and lead to rapid change once people realize there is enough discontent to mobilize with as it happened in the Soviet bloc, also explained by Havel.[274] So it is possible that isolated demands get articulated in silence rather than speech. The difficulty in not being able to associate silence with a simple yes or no position could potentially turn out to be productive within a given context. Furthermore whereas only silence is associated with this difficulty, speech is also not revealing of the intentions of the actors. In fact, the presumption that speech constructs a purely transparent communicative experience is one of the most elemental problems with deliberative democracy.

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[272] Allen, "Anonymous: On Silence and the Public Sphere," 116-117.
[273] Ibid., 116.
[274] Ibid., 117.

Silence as Not-speaking

It was first feminist theorists who politicized silence by showing the ways in which not only political institutions but also political theorists silenced women.[275] Theories of deliberation since Aristotle onwards have gendered underpinnings that either directly leave women out or implicitly build their theories on the assumption of that exclusion. [276] Most of the time, silence has been perceived as something that happens to women, or women do to themselves, either in the form of self-censorship as a result of years of oppression by men or by other women who are differently located vis-à-vis power structures. Elshtain argues that women's silence does not mean that they do not have anything to say but that they lack the public voice and the space in which to say it, or that they are rendered inarticulate in male dominated structures.[277] For years feminist literature tried to put women back into history and rewrite the entire history of women's struggle which itself has been "muffled with silence over and over."[278] Yet while doing that they also sometimes reproduced these structures by making essentialist distinctions between women's style of speech and men's style of speech or women's silence and men's speech.[279] Within last decades, feminism and gender studies have moved beyond essentialism to explore the ways in which dominant relations of gender and sexuality structure the speech and silence of all subjects in different ways due to the contingent

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[275] Tillie Olsen, *Silences* (New York: Delacorte Press/Seymour Lawrence, 1978). Adrienne Rich, *On Lies, Secrets, and Silence: Selected Prose*, *1966–1978* (New York: W.W. Norton. 1979).

[276] In ancient Greece, deliberation was an activity reserved to men while women were supposed to keep silent and bear soldier-citizen/deliberators to the city as Pericles stated in the *Funeral Oration.* See Chapter 5 for an elaboration of the gendered notions of citizenship vis-à-vis a discussion of militarism, mourning and democracy. See Nicole Loraux, *The Invention of Athens : The Funeral Oration in the Classical City*. 2nd ed. (New YorkCambridge, Mass.: Zone Books ; Distributed by the MIT Press, 2006).

[277] Jean B. Elshtain, *Public Man, Private Woman: Women in Social and Political Thought* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1981), 15.

[278] Rich, *On Lies, Secrets, and Silence,* 11.

[279] See Gilligan, *In a Different Voice.*

coming together of various structural relations such as colonialism, nationalism and racism. In fact, the earlier feminist ambition to give voice to women, such as consciousness raising groups were criticized for turning the presence of women of color to mere spectacle, where only the act of speaking mattered rather than the content of speech.[280]As Foucault argues the attempt to break silence, which is conceived as the very tool of emancipation carries with it its own techniques of subjugation.[281] Just as in theories of democratic participation, the modal feminist also appeared to be the self-sufficient individual adult, and a female subject, who is admired in literature which Spivak characterizes as one who “articulates herself in shifting relationships to… the constitution and ‘interpellation’ of the subject not only as individual but as ‘individualist.’[282] It was the women of color who showed that speaking freely and openly has different meanings for people coming from exploited and oppressed groups, and as Spivak famously stated, the subaltern could not speak at all, as she was locked in various discourses that spoke in her name, either to understand or to represent her, but also because her voice is structurally written out of the dominant narratives.[283]

Audre Lorde associates silence with fear that causes an avoidance of the responsibility to act and to resist oppression:

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[280] bell hooks, *Talking Back : Thinking Feminist, Thinking Black* (Boston, Ma.: South End Press, 1989), 14. According to Uttal women of color were not listened to but just nodded during these gatherings See Lynet Uttal, “Inclusing Without Influence: the Continious Tokenism of Women of Color,” in *Making Face, Making Soul = Haciendo Caras : Creative and Critical Perspectives by Women of Color* 1990, ed. Gloria Anzaldúa(San Francisco: Aunt Lute Foundation Books, 1990), 317.
(p. 317).

[281] See Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*. 1st American ed. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978).

[282] Gayatri C. Spivak, “Three Women’s Texts and a Critique of Imperialism,” *Critical Inquiry* 12, no. 1 (1985): 243-244.

[283] Gayatri C. Spivak, “Can the Subaltern Speak?,” in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture 1988,* eds. Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988).

> In the cause of silence, each of us draws the face of her own fear — fear of contempt, of censure, of some judgment, or recognition, of challenge, of annihilation. But most of all, I think, we fear the visibility without which we cannot truly live… And that visibility which makes us most vulnerable is that which also is the source of our greatest strength. Because the machine will try to grind you into dust anyway, whether or not we speak. We can sit in our corners mute forever while our sisters and our selves are wasted, while our children are distorted and destroyed, while our earth is poisoned; we can sit in our safe corners mute as bottles, and we will still be no less afraid.[284]

However, as previously argued, silence is not always a sign of oppression, or an escape from the responsibility to act. According to Glenn silence is the "most undervalued and *under*-understood traditionally feminine site and concomitant rhetorical art."[285] Glenn argues that the fear of silence in communication is groundless; it is a gap, or a pause in conversation, which might come to mean that a party is not being able to voice their point or concerns because the other(s) insist on speaking in a different language. Although this gap might isolate us in our corners, it is also sometimes what holds us together:

> Employed as a tactical strategy or inhabited in deference to authority, silence resonates loudly along the corridors of purposeful language use. Whether choice or im/position, silence can reveal positive or negative abilities, fulfilling or withholding traits, harmony or disharmony, success or failure. Silence can deploy power; it can defer to power. It all depends.[286]

Glenn sees in silence the potential of becoming a specifically feminist rhetorical art, and often one of resistance. Although she does not perceive speech as particularly masculine or powerful, and likewise silence as always feminist or successful, she discovers rhetorical dimensions in the silence and in the process of the coming out of silence of Anita Hill, in whose story a feminist position is observable that resists

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[284] Audre Lorde, "The Transformation of Silence into Language and Action" (presentation, *Modern* Language Association's "Lesbian and Literature Panel, Chicago, Illinois, December 28, 1977).
[285] Glenn, *Unspoken*, 2.
[286] Ibid., xi.

disciplinary pigeon-holing and embraces a political resistance.[287] This does not mean that speech or silence, one or the other, is more successful, it all depends on the rhetorical situation. But Glenn's analysis is valuable insofar as she challenges the predominant position speech has enjoyed as the authorized medium of culture and power "since ancient times as a gift of the gods and thus as a distinguishing characteristic of humans."[288] However, an association of silence with feminine has to be approached with skepticism, as Minh-ha states, "silence can only be subversive when it frees itself from the male-defined context of absence, lack and fear as feminine territories."[289]

Silence can be indicate the refusal to speak or to argue because of a disagreement with the very structure of the given act or sphere of communication, such as the procedures or the language of deliberation. On the other hand, silence can be a voluntary or strategic refusal to speak about a particular subject because it is simply hard, and sometimes impossible to speak and argue certain things, underlining the irrelevance of argumentation upon certain experiences. In all cases, silence is structured in relation to speech rather than as an antithesis to it. In Lacanian psychoanalysis what the subject is not saying during the psychoanalytic session is more important in terms of finding out the ways in which the Unconscious expresses itself through the gaps, irregularities, and lapses in language.[290] This has important implications for political theory and principally informs poststructuralist accounts of democracy. It also poses a challenge to the overvaluation of deliberation by deliberative democracy, as the means to achieve

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[287] Glenn reads Anita Hill's long period of silence before she testified against Clarence Thomas, whom she accused of sexual harassment, as her strategy to avoid turning into a public spectacle and to protect her professional life. So although we cannot argue that silence was directly imposed on her, her self-inflicted silence cannot be easily dissociated from the structural factors that have made silence about sexual harassment the norm in private and professional life for long years.
[288] Glenn, "A Rhetorical Art," 281.
[289] Minh-ha, "Not You/Like You," 373.
[290] Kurzweil, "Jacques Lacan," 427.

understanding and consensus. According to Lacan, the intersubjective realm that is created by language forces the subject to face ambivalences and ambiguities, which is why speech often creates anxiety.[291] Similarly, the unsaid, along with what is said and discussed, structures political spaces and the collective memory of a political community. Silence may not only stem from the impossibility of speaking upon experiencing or witnessing sheer atrocity, but also from the futility of argumentation and reason-giving upon such experience, as is the case with enforced-disappearances in Turkey. As Nichanian argues, everything can be said, understood, pardoned, accepted, or even loved with human speech, but "only one thing remains beyond all speech, beyond every power to integrate, beyond all human apprehension. This thing is not death, it is not murder or burned houses, it is not even extermination. It is the will to extermination."[292]

Deliberative democrats presume willingness to speak up and to give reasons on behalf of everyone. Even when it is not explicitly assumed, the contrary is never considered without a derogatory attitude, simply put, those who do not want to argue while they can are considered as self-contained people who are unwilling to compromise and listen to the perspectives of others. Empirical evidence confirms the skepticism that citizen juries and opinion polls attract everyone and that the public sphere is one big space where everyone is willing to deliberate about anything that concerns them. (See Chapter 2) Added to this are the difficulties deliberation poses as a form of speech, as elaborated previously with respect to the criticism raised to deliberative democracy by theorists such as Sanders and Young. According to Bourdieu, in the linguistic field, while habitus and field easily match for upper classes, lower classes lack the necessary habitus

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[291] Ibid.

[292] Mark Nichanian, "Catastrophic Mourning," in *Loss : The Politics of Mourning 2003* ed. David L. Eng and David Kazanjian (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 115. (See Chapter 5)

altogether which explains their hesitation to speak in many social situations.[293] Speakers make calculations based on their linguistic capacity as well as the style and form of speech and bodily disposition and hence the anticipation of results that precede an utterance sometimes results in self-censorship for certain people or groups.[294] The hesitancy can also translate into disbelief in deliberation or a questioning of speech as the most efficient mode of communication as it is often assumed. Being interested or able to deliberate in the sense of having time, energy and aspiration is a separate issue, in fact such inequalities are addressed within deliberative democracy through procedural reformulations. (See Chapter 2) What matters is whether deliberation is relevant as a form of democratic action in all contexts to the extent that it enjoys an uncontested status. Habermas argues that a skeptic who sees in advance that he will be caught in performative contradictions will reject the game of wits from the outset, and "the *consistent skeptic* will deprive the transcendental pragmatist of a basis of his argument … taking the attitude of an ethnologist vis-à-vis his own culture, shaking his head over philosophical argumentation as though he were witnessing the unintelligible rites of a strange tribe."[295] He thinks that a cognitivist, on the other hand, would argue that the willingness to argue and think about one's actions must be presupposed for moral theory

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[293] Pierre Bourdieu, and John B. Thompson, *Language and Symbolic Power* (Cambridge: Polity in association with Basil Blackwell, 1991), 8.

[294] In *Language and Symbolic Power*, Bourdieu argues that it is usually women and petite bourgeoisie that care for the dialect or style of speech and resort to self-censoring; silence (70). Censorship does not only occur in utterance, but is also preceded by a prior act censorship because who will use language in what way or who has the authority to speak is determined beforehand during the formation of the group. Bourdieu argues that the dominated are either pushed to silence or sometimes become weirdly outspoken because they revert to popular speech forms including slang, which are not readily available to upper classes (94). Yet, he also warns that subversive speech participates in the discourse that it tries to subvert because it reiterates the binaries by accepting the standard. This validates the point that identifying silence as resistance is as simplistic as associating silence with compliance or, in the same way, speech with freedom.

[295] Habermas, *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action*, 99.

to makes sense at all, while the skeptic will "assert his point mutely and impressively."[296] So Habermas thinks that although the skeptic refuses to argue:

> He cannot extricate himself from the communicative practice of everyday life in which he is continually forced to take a position by responding yes or no. As long as he is alive *at all*, a Robinson Crusoe existence through which the skeptic demonstrated mutely and impressively that he has dropped out of communicative action is inconceivable, even as a thought experiment.[297]

Within this passage, Habermas actually shows that communicative rationality is structured as a dialogue and even the refusal to argue is part and parcel of communication rather than an escape from it. However, when his theory of communicative action is translated into a politics of deliberation, and when deliberation is further equated with democracy, this aspect of refusal is disregarded. In its place is a judgment of those who close themselves off to the possibility of an agreement.[298] On one hand, the underlying idea is that nothing is off the table and everything is open to discussion, on the other hand, the primacy deliberation has gained, as a mode of democratic practice, within democratic theory in the last two decades is not sufficiently discussed. According to Ferguson, when Habermas reinforces a normative communicative theory as the ideal formation of political democracy, "he positions silence exclusively on the side of partiality, inequality, and oppression." [299] Habermas's theoretical approach not only ignores the ways in which silence figures within people's lives, "it makes the grounds of community (which he ostensibly defends) insupportable and implausible."[300] Furthermore, the envisioning of political communities solely through speech invites the

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[296] Ibid., 100.
[297] Ibid.
[298] See Gutmann and Thompson, *Democracy and Disagreement.*
[299] Ferguson, "Silence: a Politics," 54.
[300] Ibid.

danger of celebrating the act of speech for its own sake, which resonates a call for coming out and of confession.[301] Deliberative democracy does not aim to suggest the creation of deliberative forums in order to collect voter data and preferences.[302] However, it is important to recognize how the insistence on the speech act could turn into an obsession about the very act of deliberation itself, which is not adequately critical of its presumptions, as well as its regulative and disciplinary functions, nor the role it plays in reproducing already established hierarchies and creating new exclusions. Brown asks, "Do we presume that we have nothing of value to protect from public circulation and scrutiny?"[303] In fact, according to Foucault confession has become the most highly valued technique for producing truth in the West, turning it into a "confessing society."[304]

> The obligation to confess is now relayed through so many different points, is so deeply ingrained in us, that we no longer perceive it as the effect of a power that constrains us; on the contrary, it seems to us that truth, lodged in our most secret nature, "demands" only to surface; that if it fails to do so, this is because a constraint hold it in place . . . and it can finally be articulated only at the price of a kind of liberation.[305]

Silence is at times a form of resistance or refuge. It can be used as a strategy of resistance to any institution or procedure that requires verbal participation, such as oath taking; public recantation of heresy, self-incrimination, and pledges and to this we can

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[301] For a discussion of the contemporary desire to know exacerbated by technology and digital communication systems, see Jodi Dean, *Publicity's Secret : How Technoculture Capitalizes on Democracy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002).
[302] See Bart Engelen and Thomas Nys, "The Deliberative Case against the Secret Ballot and Why It Fails," in *Problems of Democracy: Probing the Boundaries 2010,* eds. Nico Bechter and Gabriele De Angelis (Oxford, United Kingdom: Inter-disciplinary Press, 2010) http://www.inter-disciplinary.net/publishing/id-press. Engelen and Nys make a hypothetical exercise about open ballot as a deliberative exercise that suggests otherwise; they discuss the possibility of a deliberative system in which everyone is forced to publicly declare the reasons for voting as they do.
[303] Brown, "Freedom's Silences," 322.
[304] Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, 58.
[305] Ibid., 60.

add deliberation.[306] In political theory, “voice” does not only denote direct or representative forms of self-government on a metaphorical level, but especially in the deliberative school, it refers to the actual, physical voice of the citizenry. Subsequently, silence becomes what is to be avoided or criticized. According to Urbinati, silence, “like secrecy, renders democracy an empty concept” because “voice is the medium wherein active and passive citizenship meet and shape the complex identity of the modern polis.”[307] There is a difference between any speech act and deliberative speech; deliberation suggests a certain argumentative form that presupposes a constructive exchange of opinions geared towards agreements, as well as social learning. The advocacy of deliberation for its intrinsic values, such as constituting a learning school for democrats, implicitly relegates silence to the outside of this process. Vis-à-vis J. S. Mill, Urbinati makes a case for the compatibility of representation and deliberation and advocates a talking, deliberative, dialogic parliament to the silent Spartan parliament, where participants come to the table with their minds already made up, with participation limited to a yes/no vote. That it is in fact the reason why Rousseau wants to limit deliberation between citizens so that they do not get distracted by particular preferences but instead arrive at the general will through their inner deliberative capacity.[308] The distinction that has to be made here is between celebrating communication as a model of intersubjective process of opinion and will formation and the exclusively verbal form it takes in the models of deliberative democracy. Because the second tendency associates deliberative speech with laying the cards out in the open and refers to the willingness to

[306] Ferguson, “Silence: a Politics,” 56.
[307] Nadia Urbinati, Mill on Democracy : From the Athenian Polis to Representative Government (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 47.
[308] Ibid., 47.

not only share but also to talk about preferences, opinions and desires with others, who are also often strangers. When posited as such, speech is associated with openness to change, dynamism and transparency while the opacity and the ambivalence silence causes is perceived as unsettling, scary and following this logic, ultimately undemocratic. Such accounts not only neglect that speech itself is often opaque, ambivalent, manipulative and impure, but they also undermine the communicative powers of silence, even when silence is a deliberate act and a break with existing modes of communication.

The underlying moral idea in J.S. Mill's celebration of verbal consent is the valuation of dissent for the development of the society.[309] When silence is understood as part and parcel of communication, then disengagement with speech and the refusal of dominant modes of doing politics also contributes to our understanding of the democratic process. Urbinati celebrates Millian republicanism and the emphasis on public interaction and performance that promotes "being under the eye of others."[310] She finds the psychological pressure of expressing oneself and one's choices "publicly" useful and productive, as it constitutes a mechanism of control and accountability.[311] In fact some level of shame is a necessary part of democratic exchange as it fosters self-critique and a sense of responsibility towards others, however shame is not simply insincerity in disguise, nor can it be thought without reference to competence, which is Bourdieu's point about language use. Deliberative theories associate democratic action with a conception of courage that is understood narrowly, insofar as it is displayed in the ability to face scorn, hence putting fore one type of citizen as the modal democrat. In order to

[309] Ibid., 61. Urbinati celebrates the Millian or the Machiavellian deliberative republicanism to Rousseau's silent will-formation because the former entail a Socratic notion of the formation of individual judgment and allow people to learn to give reasons and think in future-oriented terms.
[310] Ibid., 115.
[311] Ibid.

envision political engagement and responsibility beyond voice we need to rethink its relation to publicity and visibility, to see for example how nonverbal expression can also reflect political responsibility effectively in the absence of the disembodiment of words. In fact, much communicative work is done through nonverbal and emotive forms of communication, for which deliberative democrats do not have codeable concepts. Ignoring the reality of silence merely as a matter of psychological disposition is misleading and paves the way to the celebration of only one type of citizen as the modal democrat. The distinction between weak and strong publics, as well as that between the private and the public, paves the way to the undermining of the former and various forms of communication that are elemental in constituting the political. Presence and appearance in public are highly relevant in collective acts of silence, such as vigils and protests that are discussed in the following chapter. In fact the analysis of the Saturday Vigils show that the absence of speech even amplifies the effects of visibility that is one of the foremost mechanisms in which performative politics become successful.

Any exploration of silence has to take into account the ways in which silence is located with respect to power and authority. Silence cannot simply be associated with a democratic act without looking at who is silent and with respect to what. Especially when silence is structured as a refusal, the authority behind the refusal becomes crucial, such that the tortured prisoner's silence is not the same with the torturers' silence when asked about the whereabouts of the prisoner. The refusal to speak a certain language or to argue within given norms, silence in defense of privacy or in a situation of mere inability due to the unspeakable nature of the event, are all examples of silences that can be empathized

with to a certain extent.[312] However, Milosevic's refusal to testify for his crimes is also an act of silence, and indeed also symbolically powerful and equally political. In the next chapter, I discuss the parents of the disappeared-under-arrest in Turkey who hold silent vigils to draw attention to their situation, however, their protest is ignited by the silences of the state officers who refused to give account of the whereabouts of the arrested. Like speech, silence is also structured differently for those in power positions. Hence the interpretation of silence also requires proper contextualization. This calls for another way in which silence can be framed and understood, which is as a mode of collective action.

Silent Collective Action

Silence has political value embodying the potential to escape regulatory practices and becoming a shelter from the regulatory potential of speech "preserving certain practices and dimensions of existence from regulatory power, normative violence and scorching rays of public exposure."[313] Yet Brown distinguishes this sense of freedom from Arendt's conception of freedom in political action, where people act together in "making the world."[314] The next chapter discusses the Saturday Vigils in Turkey as an example of such world-making silence. Silent vigils, as a form of collective action, did not originate in Turkey, neither it is a common form of mobilization in the country's history. In fact it was the contrary that made the vigils successful in creating awareness. Yet this particular case is interesting and deserves analysis around a discussion of the state of political communication and civic participation in Turkey. A close analysis of the

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[312] Glenn makes a distinction between expected and unexpected silences; she argues that the silence of those who are from already subordinated groups, such as children, women and servants, are expected silences. *Unspoken*, 23.
[313] Brown, "Freedom's Silences," 85.
[314] Ibid., 96.

vigils with respect to the Kurdish problem in Turkey opens up to a constructive dialogue with both the deliberative and the agonistic models of democracy. Furthermore, despite men's participation, the vigils were presented in the mainstream media as women's protest, hence the name *Saturday Mothers*. In that respect the case also allows looking at silence from a gender perspective. There are numerous examples of silent protests in history and social scientists have accounted them in their discussions of history and social movements. However, while most of the time it is the protest, which gets acknowledgment in these accounts, the "silence" in the silent protest is ignored where silence only becomes an adjective that denotes the passivity or pacifist nature of the particular protest. Silent protests deserve more attention than merely a passing reference within the civil disobedience literature. There are contextual and symbolic meanings preceding and following the act of a silent protest, which have a lot to reveal about the nature of politics and political discourse in the given context, as well as the positioning of the actors vis-à-vis available political outlets. Moreover, collective silent protests are important because they open up to discussion assumptions about publicity and performance and their association with voice and speaking. They also show that silence is an act, rather than lack, and indeed a political, sometimes also democratic act. Embodied non-verbal communication also underlines the value of perceptive activities such as, seeing, attention and listening, to democratic engagements, which are generally regarded as passive states of being rather than intersubjective qualities of democratic relationships. (See Chapter 5)

Silence as Not-Acting

A protest framed in silence is still a form of action, and in fact a political and sometimes a democratic engagement. However, in certain cases, it is harder to associate silence with the political. The difficulty does not only stem from the nature of the silence in question but from predominant views on what constitutes political action and communication. The previous chapter showed that agonistic action is understood both as a practice of the self and as a form of collective political struggle where action is structured as combat. Deliberative and agonistic models of democracy converge on the aspiration of cultivating a deeper sense of participation on the part of the citizenry, where speaking and acting are put to fore as models of political action. On the other hand, silence, the refusal of given forms of speaking and acting are not adequately analyzed. It was the former United States president Nixon who popularized the term "silent majority." Nixon was referring to a part of the American population who did not express their opinions publicly about the Vietnam War and who did not take part in the protests and the counterculture movement. In his famous *Address to the Nation on the Vietnam War*, he asked for their support, whose content he thought was turned in malcontent due to the vocal minority. It is remarkable how Nixon's distinction between the vocal minority and the silent majority perfectly juxtaposes with Havel's critique of the characterization of dissent as the practice of a vocal, select few. Nixon stated, "If a vocal minority, however fervent its cause, prevails over reason and the will of the majority, this Nation has no future as a free society."[315] The assumption is that the silent majority is the content majority and thus is not engaged in the protests. Yet, as previously argued, silence is not

[315] Richard Nixon, "Address to the Nation on the War on Vietnam", http://watergate.info/nixon/silent-majority-speech-1969.shtml

always an indication of contentment or a sign of disengagement. While Nixon's silent majority includes those who are content with his politics, due to structural dynamics of power, disengagement many times also conceals reasons ranging from those who act content because they fear losing privileges and those who are malcontent but show that in their disengagement, rather than active engagement.

The previous chapter analyzed Mouffe's account of political action and challenged her restriction of passions to a notion of partisanship that rested on rigid distinctions between friends and enemies. She believed that political participation requires clearly defined camps to be able to make decisions. However it is equally important to look at collective inaction, such as in the form of boycotts, and to those who circumvent or escape partisanship. Such actions reveal alarming distrust of the political system, disbelief in existing democratic outlets and opens up to question the legitimacy of the processes as well as the results. Such disengagement can only become truly political when the concealed reasons are made visible and subsequently analyzed. In September 12th, 2010, on the 30th anniversary of the 1980 military coup d'état, citizens of Turkey went to the ballot boxes to vote in the referendum to accept or reject the proposed amendments to the 1982 Constitution. The period preceding the referendum was characterized by total confrontation between the governing Justice and Development Party and the major opposition Republican People's Party, as well as stark divisions in public opinion. Distinct opinions did not always spell out as different views on the content of the articles but turned into a full on war between the government and its critics who feared that JDP's alarming majority in the parliament and influence in politics would even exacerbate if its proposed amendments are accepted in the referendum. However,

the pro-Kurdish Peace and Democracy Party (PDP) and various activists and intellectuals who supported their cause called for a boycott of the referendum. Preferring an inclusive constitution-making process, the PDP questioned the legitimacy of the parliament that holds a referendum, because of the constitutional threshold in Turkey that prevents parties which gain less than 10 % of the votes from entering the parliament, hence has become a major block in the representation of the Kurdish minority in the Turkish Grand National Assembly. The closure of the pro-Kurdish Democratic Society Party by the Constitutional Court in 2009 was another reason that challenged the legitimacy of the formal political process.

The boycotters were not only critical of the process because of their lack of involvement in it but also because the so-called democratic opening declared by the government for resolving the Kurdish problem did not produce any tangible results in the reformation of the constitution. Many criticized the boycotters calling their action, or inaction, disengaged and irresponsible. Upon the refusal of the Turkish Industrialists' and Businessmen' Association to publicly declare a position before the referendum, Prime Minister Erdoğan stated, "impartials will be disposed of," cast out of the way.[316] Prime Minister Erdoğan's take on the boycott was equally clear, he stated: "We find the boycott to be antidemocratic practice. There is 'yes' and there is 'no'"[317] In his view, democracy is choosing whatever is given to you as an option.

People in authority positions fear boycotts because they complicate known categories of political behavior and participation. Portuguese novelist Jose Saramago's

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[316] The Turkish phrase "tarafsızlar bertaraf olacak" involves a pun, meaning that those who do not take sides on this issue will be cast aside.

[317] "Erdoğan: Boykot Antidemokratik" [Erdoğan: The Boycott is Antidemocratic], *Kanalturk*, September 4, 2010, http://www.kanalturk.com.tr/haber-detay/32487-erdogan-boykot-antidemokratik-haberi.aspx

novel *Seeing,* revolves around similar questions. When over seventy percent of the citizens cast a blank vote in the municipal elections, elections are repeated again the following week with this time 83 percent cast blank votes. Tronto discusses the ramifications of the novel for political theory and argues that no matter how dark it looks it is actually a novel about hope. In the novel as in the case of Turkey, political authorities find the actions of the citizenry antidemocratic fearing that blank votes strike a blow to democratic normality.[318] Despite the unsettling turn of events upon the declaration of a State of Emergency in the city, Tronto argues: "Saramago's 'blankers' are content to live in peace, to be 'blank,' to be uninscribed politically. At the same time, they are the people, the demos, acting collectively, bravely even, to simply allow themselves to each live their lives well by living them together."[319] Boycott is definitely a clear political act when it works as a protest of the legitimacy of a system or a process. Yet Saramago's novel also shows how a boycott can be political even in the absence of a clearly indicated protest; the citizens declared fear instead. So the refusal to take sides can reveal the fear of wrongdoing as well as the fear of becoming party to a clash that one does not believe in. Zizek argues that the government is thrown in panic by the voters' abstention because it is "compelled to confront the fact that it exists, that it exerts power, only insofar as it is accepted as such by its subjects - accepted even in the mode of rejection."[320] In fact he concurs:

> The threat today is not passivity, but pseudo-activity, the urge to "be active," to "participate," to mask the nothingness of what goes on. People intervene all the time, "do something"; academics participate in meaningless debates, and so on. The truly difficult thing is to step back, to withdraw. Those in power often prefer

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[318] See Joan Tronto, "Emergency?! Saramago on Blindness and *Seeing,*" (paper given at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, September, 2009).
[319] Ibid.
[320] Slavoj Zizek, *Violence* (London: Profile, 2008), 216.

> even a “critical” participation, a dialogue, to silence – just to engage us in “dialogue,” to make sure our ominous passivity is broken. The voters’ abstention is thus a true political act: it forcefully confronts us with the vacuity of today’s democracies.[321]

Janeway writes three decades ago, but it is still relevant today, that our contemporary view of apathy is influenced by our own apathy that makes us consider it smug and naively unpolitical.[322] Conventional wisdom regards failure to vote as an ineffective judgment of the system giving advantage to the interests of the others, but Janeway argues, “it is wrong, however, to define this withdrawal as ‘irresponsible,’ for surely to vote without conviction is less responsible still.”[323] Yet there is always the question of how to distinguish a resistant silence from one that results from the mere lack of interest. Classroom behavior studies show how some students’ silences indicate resistance to the authority of the teacher and the “linguistic management of the classroom” while others might truly result from boredom or disinterest.[324] Hence while silence and inaction are always contextual and multifaceted, the ambiguity should not constitute a reason for refraining from making closer analyses. Only political analyses that focus merely on the outcomes and understand democracy as a win/lose game will avoid the process, the dissent and the silence recorded that precede the outcomes. However, an analysis of silence should also not be confused with the frustration to find out the truth about everything such that everyone is forced to speak up afterwards. It is the method and also the sole intention to have everyone speak for the sake of speaking

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[321] Ibid., 217.
[322] Janeway, Powers of the Weak, 173.
[323] Ibid., 174. She also thinks though that it is an instance of insufficient dissent because while the rules and the definitions of governance put forward by the powerful are refused, the boycotters still accept the definitions that apply to themselves and their interests and see themselves as unimportant and incapable of changing things because “The weak have been told that politics is a matter for leaders and that they are by nature followers” thus hesitate to see in themselves any capacity for action.
[324] Ferguson, “Silence: a Politics,” 55.

and act in the name of acting, which clouds such thoughtful analyses of silence. This chapter suggested paying attention to silence because it is a refreshing concept; as Ferguson perfectly puts, "it resists neat categorizations."[325] So as much as it is essential that we learn to speak, it is equally important to learn to stop speaking at certain points and to listen not just to others who are speaking but also to the silences.

Conclusion

> There is also deafness which shields us against a deep-seated ontological anxiety – little deaths from moment to moment; and this is deafness to silence, a listening which constantly insists on making noise, or surrounding itself with other people or audio equipment, in order to fight off the horror of a 'deathly silence'. For many people, silence is the sound of death; its open quality, a clearing where there is nothing for hearing to hold on to, is an experience of unbearable anxiety, and not the gift of a resting-place, an *Aufenhalt*, for the quiet recovery of the weary soul.[326]

Silence creates anxiety, it is ambivalent and at times, concealing. However, this chapter suggested that silence is also revealing when taken seriously. It is in its fluidity and ambivalence, in the way that it disrupts and escapes "neat categorizations," barren dichotomies and given options, wherein the power of silence lies. Silence can reveal deep submission and oppression, but it is also true, as we know from Foucault, that where there is power there is hope. Ferguson warns that a search for the politics of silence, for the determinative classification of the power dynamics inherent within silence is consequently doomed to fail because "the multiple, fragmentary, and overlapping dynamics of silence can be iterated, investigated, and explored, but they cannot be fixed

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[325] Ibid., 58.
[326] David M. Kleinberg-Levin, *The Listening Self : Personal Growth, Social Change, and the Closure of Metaphysics* (London ; New York: Routledge, 1989), 79.

or predetermined."[327] The impossibility, on the other hand, is not merely an attribute of silence but in general, of power, which is radically indeterminate. In other words, submission, compliance and resistance overlap and co-exist not only in silence but also in deliberations and combative action.

Silence is a concept rich in paradoxes; it complicates general notions about what constitutes political and democratic action and the symbolic meanings that are attributed to voice and visibility. It allows questioning taken for granted categories of protest, resistance or compliance and invites a democratic theorizing that is more attuned to the varieties of political and democratic experience. These aspects of silence speak to the overall concerns this dissertation has with the deliberative and agonistic variants of contemporary democratic theory. Although often times situated as critical of one another, deliberative and agonistic democrats work within similar assumptions about political participation and rest their theories on societies in which the institutions and practices of democracy have already been in place for long years. This is not to suggest that democratic theory works in some contexts and not as well in others. On the contrary it calls for the necessity of engagement with the fundamental concepts of democratic theory in a wider spectrum. It is in fact more urgent in contexts where the consolidation of democracy has been painful thus far, where silences can be quite revealing.

Silence is not an alternative to verbal communication, or a last resort for the already underprivileged groups or societies. It is a risk that especially scholars who study non-western societies or underprivileged groups face, namely, exoticizing cultural, traditional or religious practices at the expense of undermining relations of power and the exclusion of the other within the other. Silence is a concept and a political practice that

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[327] Ferguson, "Silence: a Politics," 63.

we need to pay attention to without valorizing it or overextending its meaning. The chapter did not suggest the priority of silence over the right to speak, it merely directed attention to non-conventional democratic practices as well as the multiple meanings of silence that disrupt taken-for-granted assumptions about speaking and communication.

*"We express directly stable emotions, not strangling them with words but expressing them with the body….We go out, physical in silence in order to listen to others. Through the silence, we gradually value the forgetting of the body and the feelings. Silence for us is not the norm, it is chosen to convey the act of mutiny." (*Women in Black, Turin*)*

CHAPTER FIVE
COLLECTIVE ACTION FRAMED IN SILENCE: THE SATURDAY VIGILS

In the previous chapter, I suggested a non-conventional perspective on silence and explored the possible meanings silence acquires in response to communication and politics. This chapter builds on the previous chapter and analyzes the Saturday Vigils, which were held in response to enforced-disappearances in the aftermath of the 1980 military intervention in Turkey. The chapter starts with a brief description and the narrative of the events that prepared the conditions of the Saturday Vigils. It is precisely the 1980 military coup d'état and the civil and dirty war between Turkish armed forces and the Kurdish movements and population that is the contextual background of the vigils. I describe the process of the mobilization of the vigils with information gathered from first hand accounts and from an interview with Nadire Mater, a prominent human rights activists who is also one of the initiators of the Saturday Vigils. This section answers questions such as when, why and how the vigils were organized, what kind of decisions the participants had to make, the political environment in which they mobilized as well as what impact they made on to the Turkish political scene. In the backdrop are general assessments of Turkish politics and political action in the post-1980 period. In what follows, I turn to the choice of silence in framing the vigils and assess the risks and possibilities involved in this form of political action where silence is strategically useful for the success of the action in creating awareness.

Silence is also conceptually analyzed as it blurs the distinctions between complicity and resistance to rethink the debate between the deliberative and the agonistic models from the perspective of a political practice framed in silence. To deliberative democracy, I raise the question, what kind of a communicative experience do silent protests constitute, and to agonistic democrats, the question, what we can say about political action where political discourse is constituted by friend-enemy distinctions. Via the discussion of the vigils as examples of silent protests, the chapter shows that the deliberative model exclusively privileges speech as *the* mode of political communication whereas silence is not only an effective form of communication under given conditions, but also conceptually points to the irrelevance of argumentation upon certain experiences. The chapter discusses silence both as a political strategy and as a conceptual tool to explore whether silence brings out the limits of what can be argued and expressed in given situations where political discourse is already ordered around antagonistic distinctions, and shows that any political action or communication is marked by paradoxical elements such conformity and resistance that is better made visible in a gendered perspective to silence.

Agonistic models of democracy, specifically Chantal Mouffe's work is insightful in terms of pointing to the limits of rationalistic accounts that overemphasize dialogue at the expense of the political. However, Mouffe also prioritizes a certain ontology of the subject and reduces action to an exclusively combative form. Hence she revitalizes Schmitt's friend-enemy distinction at the risk of missing the value of political practice that aims to avoid or circumvent antagonism, such as a silent protest. The overemphasis on the exclusively antagonistic and disruptive elements of politics is especially

problematic in contexts where political discourse is structured on friend-enemy distinctions that leaves citizens little room for doing politics outside given categories, in fact this is highly relevant to the discussion of the Kurdish problem in Turkey. Innovative practices such as the silent vigils held in response to enforced disappearances during the 1990s in Turkey took place at the height of the Kurdish problem and the civil and dirty war. The Saturday Vigils are not only examples of ad hoc, unmediated direct action; they also challenge antagonistic political discourses and underline the democratic potential of a political practice that is driven from loss. They make a claim to right to life for all persons instead of revitalizing antagonistic, vengeful discourses. Attending to this prominent debate within contemporary democratic theory in light of the coming into being of democrats in a silent vigil in Turkey, invites a rethinking of the normative and the empirical, and the theory and the practice of democracy in the world, as well as a broader conceptualization of communication that ventures beyond the expressive components of political action. In order to construct fuller understanding of democratization and political change we need to account for intermediary forms of communication and envision ways of relating to the other that exceeds both rational deliberation or combative action.

The Saturday Vigils present a form of democratic engagement where presence in public becomes an important aspect of the action. A discussion of the notion of presence, and particularly women's presence within the Turkish political context reveals how silence is an active, rather than passive engagement. This is in fact why I especially focus on gendered responses to militarization and violence, because the traditional association of silence with passivity and death is overturned in these vigils. In feminist discourse in

Turkey, a well-pronounced idea for a long time was that women are only symbols in Turkish politics. The woman question was attached to the modernist question, and during the formation of the modern nation-state women got caught between conflicting definitions of femininity, somewhere between the west and the east, or the modern and the traditional.[328] Feminists characterize this as women's "schizophrenic identity"[329], because women had to be "seen" in the public sphere but only in "desexualized" forms as mothers or sisters.[330] They were supposed a retain a place somewhere between "a la Turca and unchastely," in other words, they were not to remain backward but also no supposed to westernize to the extent that they became completely like Western women, defined as unchaste when compared to an authentic notion of Turkishness.[331] These discussions involved the way women bodies were "seen" in the public sphere rather than what they did, and women gained status insofar as they were "seen" in the public sphere.

A widely held perspective in women's studies in Turkey is that women could not manage to become autonomous individuals. When they attempted to do so, they were only allowed in politics in desexualized ways, such as mothers of the nation, socialist sisters, or as veiled sisters.[332] Starting with the early Republican years the woman question had been an adjunct to the modernization movement, where women have been attributed the role of protecting and establishing modernization either as mothers or

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[328] Nilüfer Göle, *The Forbidden Modern : Civilization and Veiling* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996).

[329] Şirin Tekeli, ""Birinci ve İkinci Dalga Feminist Hareketlerin Karşılaştırmalı İncelemesi," [A Comparative Analysis of First and Second Wave Feminist Movements] in *75 Yılda Kadışnlar ve Erkekler* [Women and Men in 75 Years] *1998*, ed. A. Berktay Hacimirzaoglu, Türkiye Is Bankasi., et al. (Istanbul: Türkiye Ekonomik ve Toplumsal Tarih Vakfi, 1998).

[330] Deniz Kandiyoti, *Cariyeler, Bacılar, Yurttaşlar* [Concubines, Sisters, Citizens] (Istanbul: Metis Yayinlari, 1997).

[331] Ayşe Kadıoğlu, "Cinselliğin İnkarı: Büyük Toplumsal Projelerin Nesnesi Olarak Türk Kadınları," [The Denial of Sexuality: Turkish Women as the Subject of Grand Social Projects] in *75 Yılda Kadışnlar ve Erkekler* [Women and Men in 75 Years] *1998*, ed. A. Berktay Hacimirzaoglu, Türkiye Is Bankasi., et al. (Istanbul: Türkiye Ekonomik ve Toplumsal Tarih Vakfi, 1998).

[332] Kandiyoti, *Cariyeler Bacılar Yurttaşlar*; Kadıoglu, "Cinselliğin İnkarı."

teachers of the modern, secular nation or as the representatives of modernization and secularism, displayed particularly in their self image and presence in western style events such as balls or theaters. This was a notion of true Turkish femininity, which only pertained to urban, ethnically Turkish, mostly meaning Sunni Muslim, middle or upper class women. Such an attitude risks repeating the mistake that some sections of western feminism have been criticized for, namely, the classification of women in the Middle East as passive victims of patriarchal cultures and male-led initiatives. Although it is important to acknowledge that the frontiers of the Turkish nation and the top-down modernization project was being drawn on the image of women, confusing this acknowledgment with an attitude that denies women any active role in politics dismisses the actual history of women's organizing that dates as far back to the Ottoman reform movements in the 19th century.[333] Although not particularly an example of feminist mobilization or women's rights issue, the Saturday Vigils were primarily organized and initiated by women, and were reflected in mainstream media as women's events, hence the name Saturday Mothers. That is why it is important to analyze this particular practice with a gender perspective. The 1980 coup d'état is principally responsible for the repression of dissent, with thousands arrested and executed, including students leaders, activists, journalists and university professors along with the political exile and banning of political party leaders. Yet, post-1980 is also the period when the rhetoric of democracy emerged on many fronts, especially with regards to women's movements that created significant openings in the vacuum created by leftist movements. At a time when

[333] Women's rights were not handed over as a grant by the republican elite but were hard won through years of social and political organizing that was repressed many times. For a discussion of women's movements in the Ottoman era and in early republican years see Çakır, *Osmanlı Kadın Hareketi* [Ottoman Women's Movement] and Ayşe G. Altınay, *Vatan Millet Kadınlar* [Homeland Nation Women] (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2000)

"politics had ended" women have helped enliven contentious action in ad hoc, non-hierarchical, informal ways of organizing.[334] They created significant political openings and challenged the gendered make up of democratic citizenship via innovative or learned practices and international solidarities they formed. Saturday Vigils, considered by many of its participants as one of the first examples of civil disobedience in Turkey, shall be treated within this respect.

The September 12th 1980 Military Coup and Its Aftermath

International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2006 defines enforced disappearance as:

> The arrest, detention, abduction or any other form of deprivation of liberty by agents of the State or by persons or groups of persons acting with the authorization, support or acquiescence of the State, followed by a refusal to acknowledge the deprivation of liberty or by concealment of the fate or whereabouts of the disappeared in person, which place such a person outside the protection of the law.[335]

Enforced disappearance is a systematic phenomena characteristic of military regimes, authoritarian rule or quasi-authoritarian political environments established temporally such as during civil wars or struggles with terrorism. It has been a common method of political repression and elimination of dissent and works through the use of brute force that aims to extinguish those who are allegedly perceived to constitute a danger to the state. By forcing them outside the law and outside state's accountability,

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[334] Şirin Tekeli, ""Birinci ve İkinci Dalga Feminist Hareketlerin Karşılaştırmalı İncelemesi" [A Comparative Analysis of First and Second Wave Feminist Movement].
[335] For full text see: http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/disappearance-convention.htm

enforced disappearance not only aims to make dissent disappear but also renders the alleged enemies of the state invisible, and even beyond invisible, non-existent. It is also used psychologically as a method of dirty war in order to create an environment of fear and terror among particular sections of the society, such that they are kept under constant control. In Turkish history, one can trace this phenomenon to the early years of the republic or even before, to the period of rising Turkish nationalism from within the declining Ottoman Empire. From then on enforced disappearance has been used often times by the "deep state," a term that is used in Turkey in reference to the illegal organizations within different levels of the state including security forces and political elites. Enforced disappearance was used to repress social movements, and specifically targeted the minority Kurdish population and the rising Kurdish nationalist and political movement within Southeast of Turkey but also in major cities such as Istanbul and the capital Ankara. Human rights organizations and activists came to acknowledge enforced disappearance as a systematic phenomenon in the aftermath of the 1980 military intervention, which is the third and most violent interference of army generals into civilian politics in the then 57 years-old history of the republic.

September 12, 1980 marks an important turning point in Turkish political history as well as in the collective memory of the state because of the impacts of the coup and its immediate aftermath on the political and civilian culture. Five generals single-handedly wrote the constitution and shaped the frontiers of Turkish politics and political life in the period of three years they were in power from 1980 to 1983.[336] The ramifications of this

[336] 1982 Constitution was amended many times with the most recent amendment made with the constitutional referendum that took place on the anniversary of the coup d'état on September 12, 2010. Some of its anti-democratic clauses have already been reformed and many more await reformation. The current government is proposing to start a new constitution writing process upon the elections in June 2011.

period are still felt today, as most of the authoritarian institutions that keep political parties and civic participation under strict control including the democratically infamous 1982 Constitution are remnants of the period. Military control over civilian politics and more importantly the militarization of everyday life also owe to 1980 and its aftermath. The antagonistic structuring of political discourse in Turkey was also strengthened in the aftermath of the 1980 coup d'état when the Kurdish population was forced outside the law with the declaration of the State of Exception in Southeastern provinces in 1987 that lasted until 2002.

1980 is also a symbolic date for the history of contentious action in Turkey because of its largely negative impact on social movements. The coup d'état is principally responsible for the depoliticization of the society as all political movements were violently repressed with thousands arrested and executed including students leaders, activists, journalists and university professors along with the political exile and banning of political party leaders. While depoliticization was supposed to be the "punishment" of the already active parts of the society, in contemporary popular imaginary, the post-1980 decades are also held responsible for bringing into an "apolitical" generation, who were born either immediately before or after 1980 and had to grow up in the post-coup environment. The 1980s and 1990s alike are characterized as decades where politics and political ideals were devalued and replaced by an apolitical, consumerist culture, upon the opening of the economy to global markets as part to the neo-liberal policies of the post-1980 government. Understanding this impact the intervention has created not only in the political institutions and political culture but also in popular conceptions of political action is important for understanding the institutional and political environment in which

social movements rise and how they are perceived in the 1990s. In that respect, the choice of silence becomes all the more symbolic in response to a state-military alliance that positions itself antagonistically towards the Kurdish population but also towards popular mobilization, which was structured along the Left-Right spectrum until violently repressed in 1980. However, depoliticization, as a strategy of political control does not necessarily translate into apoliticization of the society.

The apoliticism that is often used to describe the post-1980 citizenry stems from a narrow understanding of the political, that takes the 1968 generation and the student and workers' movements of the 1970s as the standard, such that political action is only associated with partisanship on a Left/Right scale, that Mouffe wants to revitalize today. The second-wave feminist movement in Turkey came into being in this period as the socialist sisters of the earlier decade became feminists in the 1980s and employed new political strategies and demanded their autonomy from male-led movements. Mouffe is concerned with the blurring of the frontiers between the traditional Left and Right in European politics that rendered democratic parties inadequate in offering clearly distinguished positions to their constituents.[337] This chapter constitutes a response to this narrow understanding of political and democratic action as the heroic, combative, agonistic ethos that is only characteristic of the left-right polarization. The Saturday Vigils were able to surpass both the political and the ethnic cleavage that was exacerbated in the 1990s in their silence, and thus able to create awareness to the human rights violation alone.

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[337] Mouffe, *On the Political*, 69 – 70. Whereas a rationalist model of democracy that emphasizes dialogue and deliberation is vulnerable when confronted with populist politics with highly affective contents that appeals to notions such as nation, culture, religion and unity of the people that work with friend/enemy distinctions. Populist, Right wing parties were able to present voters outlets for their passions, hence took over the political arena by filling the void.

Cumartesi Anneleri: The Saturday Vigils[338]

On September 12, 1980, in the leadership of General Kenan Evren, who later became the seventh president of the Turkish Republic, five generals took over the government in the name of "restoring order" to the Turkish society, which was by then extremely divided and polarized along ideological, and primarily Left/ Right cleavage. The generals suggested as justification for the intervention, the inability of the government and political parties to put and end to the chaos and violence caused by the extreme polarization between the Leftists and the Rightists in the 1970s. The 1980s coup d'état was a hard blow on the Kurdish political movement and the Kurdish population; in fact is was the single most important contributing factor behind the militarization of the Kurdish movement upon this era. Thousands of Kurdish intellectuals and activists were arrested while Turkish security forces violently clashed with Kurdish organizations in the Southeastern region of Turkey. A civil strife has been going on ever since, described in the official discourse as the war on terror, with intermittent periods of ceasefire. In 1987, the State of Emergency was declared in the Southeastern provinces that lasted until 2002 and put the whole region under military control. Among those arrested over the years, many did not come back. The security forces either denied the arrests or acknowledged the arrests but did not attest to any knowledge of the whereabouts of the disappeared. The first known case of disappearance in this period was Hayrettin Eren, known to have been arrested in November 1980. Twelve others were reported as disappeared until 1990 and the numbers steadily increased in 1990s. 345 people were claimed as lost in 1994 and

[338] It can also be translated as the Saturday Mothers phenomenon because as I explain later, although the participants wanted to call themselves the Saturday People, they were assigned the name Saturday Mothers by the mainstream media. The word, vigil, is my choice, in that it is the best term that explains the nature of the action. The participants referred to the meetings either as Saturday gatherings or simply as Saturdays.

1995 alone.[339] Most of the reported cases were from the State of Emergency region. It was Hasan Ocak's disappearance in 1995 in Istanbul that brought his family and many others together for the first time. Frustrated by the state's lack of response, the family and supporters started hunger strikes and marches in various cities, during which Emine Ocak, Hasan's mother, who is by now the well-known face of mothers of the disappeared, served jail time. Ocak's tortured, dead body was found in a graveyard of the unidentified 55 days after this arrest; around the time another disappeared Rıdvan Karakoç was also found dead.

While the Ocak campaign came to an end and reported cases of disappearance steadily increased, a group of former activists started discussing what could be done. It was a small group of mostly women who were already acquainted with one another from an ad hoc campaign they had initiated before called "Do Not Touch My Friend."[340] It was a campaign built to raise awareness about the oppression of and the discrimination against people, whether Jewish, Kurdish or Armenian. Such early acquaintances between the participants created an environment of political trust and friendship from day one.[341] As a journalist who had followed the Ocak campaign closely, Nadire Mater was frustrated by the condition in which Hasan Ocak was found and started thinking about "new spaces where the frustration could be expressed."[342] A group of activists immediately got together to discuss what could be done. The Argentine example of the

[339] Berat Günçıkan and Erzade Ertem, *Cumartesi Anneleri*. [Saturday Mothers] 2nd ed. (*Bugünün Kitapları ;* Istanbul: Iletisim, 1996), 15 – 16.
[340] Participants used to distribute pins that read "Do Not Touch My Friend," and went to public spaces such as theaters to distribute flyers. Nadire Mater, *personal communication*, June 9, 2009.
[341] Filiz Koçali, "'Cumartesi Anneleri'nin İnadı," [The Stubbornness of the Saturday Mothers] in *Kamusal Alan 2004* [Public Sphere], ed. Meral Özbek (Beyoglu, Istanbul: Hil, 2004).
[342] Mater is a well-known journalist and human rights activist. She has served as the representative of Interpress Service in Turkey and has been active in numerous human rights movements including the Saturday Vigils. Mater still works as the editor of BIA, Independent Network of Communication. I owe a great deal of this chapter to our interview.

mothers, now grandmothers of the Plaza de Mayo was put on the table as a source of inspiration.[343] Kayılı, who was one of the few men in the initial group, states that they wanted to plan an action in which anyone could easily participate; where continuity would be key to create awareness.[344] Their claims had to be simple and clear; ethnic, religious, cultural identities or political leanings of the disappeared should not be the matter, what mattered was that they were disappeared.[345] As Hüsniye Ocak, Hasan Ocak's sister stated in a recent interview:

> All of us families are saying if our children, our brothers were guilty they should have been put in to jail. We would not have anything to say to that. At least then we would have a place to go to look for them; now people do not have anywhere to go. Of course we know that some people have reactions. We understand them, but we hope they do not experience what we experienced. Think about it, you are driven mad when your child comes home only an hour late; these people are waiting for their children to return for years.[346]

They decided that the best way to create awareness would be the planning of a non-violent action that had a simple and legitimate claim so that they could keep away from manipulations. Kayılı classified it as "naked disobedience," a term he describes by two characteristics: non-violence and non-institutionalization. A third element, silence, also fit these goals, as described by another organizer/participant Tanrıkulu, "they used silence to have their voices heard."[347] The decision not to use slogans or banners was

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[343] Starting in 1977, Argentinean mothers, now grandmothers, of the disappeared have held weekly vigils in Plaza de Mayo in Buenos Aires every Thursday at 3:30 PM to demand information about the whereabouts of their children who had disappeared under the military junta regime that ruled the country from 1976 to 1983.

[344] Erkan Kayılı, "'Çıplak' İtaatsizlik Olarak 'Cumartesi Anneleri'," [Saturday Mothers as an Example of Naked Disobedience] in *Kamusal Alan 2004* [Public Sphere], ed. Meral Özbek (Beyoglu, Istanbul: Hil, 2004), 350.

[345] Ibid.

[346] Devrim Sevimay, "Ergenekon'un Fırat'ın Öteki Yakasına Geçmesi Şart," [Ergenekon Has To Go Beyond Fırat] *Milliyet Dailynews*, February 16, 2009.

[347] Nimet Tanrıkulu is one of the initiators of the vigils and a member of the Human Rights Association Commission Against Disappearances. See Nimet Tanrıkulu, "Bizde yok!," [We Don't Have Them!] In

jointly taken by the initial organizers of the vigils. They wanted to take an action in which anyone could easily join in the publicizing of the issue as an individual, having left institutional and political affiliations behind, and silence fit that purpose. They expected to encounter certain difficulties due to the negative attitude that the state took towards activists, what Kayılı describes as a general dislike of dissonance, which causes many to approach any act of contention in distrust due to the memory of the pre-1980 period.[348] Kayılı accounts to his concern that "traditional leftists," who he regards as unfamiliar with methods of civil disobedience and more inclined to transform any action into their own agenda and claim its leadership. Therefore the participants decided to stay away from politicization, which they regarded as positioning themselves on a partisan status as Leftists. On the other hand, they also did not embrace any ties with the Kurdish movement or organizations. They wanted to avoid becoming a party to any existing opposition, or to fall into the enemy category of state. If they were to speak about the economic, political or ideological backgrounds of the disappeared taking sides would be unavoidable, which would then prepare grounds for the state to justify the disappearances based on political reasons. Instead they framed the issue solely in terms of creating awareness to the disappearances, hence right to life alone. Initially, without much preparation they decided to go public in the form of a weekly vigil to be held every Saturday at 12 pm in the Galatasaray Square at Taksim; a visible spot in a central neighborhood:

Toplumsal Hareketler Konuşuyor 2003 [Social Movements Speak], ed. Leyla Şanlı (Cağlıoğlu, Istanbul: Alan Press, 2003), 279.

[348] Kayılı, "'Çıplak' İtaatsizlik Olarak 'Cumartesi Anneleri'," [Saturday Mothers as an Example of Pure Disobedience], 351.

> It had to be Saturday because everyone is on the street. 12 pm to 1 pm because then journalists can easily come and write about it. They should sleep a little, go to Galatasaray, write about the vigil and have it published the next day. Where would it be? Galatasaray, because it's a central area, thousands pass by the square all day. So we decided to go on with it, but actually we did not know what we were going to do. Okay, we would be going there but what would the police do? It was not a demonstration that got permission. I want to state this in another friend's words "we wanted to sit so that everyone stands up"[349]

The first vigil in Galatasaray was held on May 27, 1995. Around thirty people, mostly women, went to the meeting point and sat down holding a carton panel with two pictures and a text attached which read: "*Hasan Ocak was taken under custody, hundreds disappeared and found dead. We want the murderers. Rıdvan Karakoç was arrested, disappeared like the hundreds of them and found dead. We demand the murderers.*"[350] Excited, they went and sat and the police also did not know what to do since back then Galatasaray was not accustomed to hosting protests. The choice of the location was interesting because the square is on a very famous boulevard in Istanbul, the Istiklal Street, which had by then already became a symbol of political protests and marches. But this particular square was not accustomed to host this kind of a political action, where a group of people, predominantly women, sat down in total silence. Mater recalls that police officers, who probably had not seen the panel, came to ask what they were doing and, nervously activists replied, "We are tired so we sat down."[351] They immediately realized that an hour would be too long so they dispersed after half an hour and met in a teahouse to discuss what to do for the following week. From then on they kept going to Galatasaray for four years. At first the police did not do anything, "Our number was low and we did not make any noise so we were treated as the "Saturday Fools." But the

[349] Mater, *personal communication*, June 9, 2009.
[350] "Cumartesi Anneleri" [Saturday Mothers], *Bianet*, February 17, 2001, http://www.bianet.org
[351] Mater, *personal communication*, June 9, 2009.

arrests started when our actions started to take effect."[352] During times when the police tried to disband the vigil, they would defend themselves based on the constitution[353], and from time to time famous people, activists, and artists would join for support. After half an hour of sitting they would meet up in the "cheapest teahouse," for discussion and division of labor.[354] The Saturday People/Mothers had a mutual understanding to be in Galatasaray every week and during the rare times when they could not make it they would let each other know beforehand.[355] Such a long lasting act of civil disobedience was only possible with wholehearted commitment to the issue since it was not easy to go to Galatasaray every week for four years, especially in older age.[356]

The immediate aim of the vigils was twofold: to stop the disappearances and learn the whereabouts of the already disappeared. In terms of organization, there were no elections, decisions were taken together; only those who worked the hardest and took responsibility came to be the ones who were listened to the most and this was also true for the relatives.[357] The absence of hierarchies and the lack of organizational affiliations allowed people from different backgrounds to come together in Galatasaray.[358]

> We did not call this an organization, it was not an organization but we cannot say it was disorganized. There was no hierarchy. Let's say there is this ten people, each week one would take on the task of thinking about the week after and call the other ten, one would prepare the press statement, one would let the press know

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[352] Devrim Sevimay, "Ergenekon'un Fırat'ın Öteki Yakasına Geçmesi Şart," [Ergenekon Has To Go Beyond Fırat] *Milliyet Dailynews*, February 16, 2009.
[353] Turkish Law on Meetings and Public Demonstrations, Clause 2911, Ratified on October 6, 1983; Resmi Gazete, no. 18185, October 8, 1983 includes the right to peaceful protest in certain situations yet the original article also contained a statement that actions that threaten the indivisible unity of the nation could be banned.
[354] Mater, *personal communication*, June 9, 2009.
[355] Koçali, "'Cumartesi Anneleri'nin İnadı," [The Stubbornness of the Saturday Mothers]
[356] Mater, *personal communication*, June 9, 2009. Although it is described as civil disobedience, at the time they did not conceive of their action as such. Only after reading Thoreau, Mater has realized that what they did fit into the attributes of civil disobedience.
[357] Koçali, "'Cumartesi Anneleri'nin İnadı," [The Stubbornness of the Saturday Mothers]
[358] Tanrıkulu, "Bizde Yok!" [We Don't Have Them].

> that we would be in Galatasaray again next week etc. Those were the kinds of things we did. We could say we were organized without an organization.[359]

Only Ocak and Karakuş's families were present in the first vigil since it was an ad hoc action where people informally notified each other, but in time other relatives joined, some traveling to Istanbul from their hometowns. More people had started talking about the vigils and soon Galatasaray was filled with journalists. The name Saturday Mothers was chosen for them by the media although they insisted on calling themselves Saturday People. In time they started to call themselves Saturday People/Mothers, which indicated the two groups involved: the activists and the relatives. Although they were called Saturday Mothers, the group involved men as well, the name was not chosen by them.[360] Within the group, there were those who had already found their relatives dead and those who had no clue of their whereabouts but hoped to find them dead or alive.[361] For example, the Ocak family, who knew that their son was dead, was almost feeling ashamed to have a grave they could visit while the others did not know what to expect from the future.[362]

The relationship between the Saturday People and the Mothers was one of mutual trust and empathy. Tanrıkulu says: "even though we had no relatives who were disappeared the relatives sensed our sincerity, and in a way we were equal with them."[363] Mater described their role in the struggle as taken on the task of "carrying out the struggle in their name," meaning giving support and help to the relatives.[364] Unlike the

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[359] Mater, *personal communication*, June 9, 2009.
[360] See Chapter 6.
[361] There have been cases in Argentina where the disappeared came back after twenty years.
[362] Tanrıkulu, "Bizde Yok!" [We Don't Have Them].
[363] Nimet Tanrıkulu, "Gözaltında Kayıp Yok Diyenlere bir Yanıt," [Response to Those Who Say There is No case of Disappearance Under Custody] *Bianet*. May 17, 2002, http://www.bianet.org
[364] Mater, *personal communication*, June 9, 2009.

Argentinean mothers/grandmothers who were mostly educated, middle class women and already politicized when they started the vigils, the parents in Turkey were mostly from rural backgrounds and a lower socioeconomic standing. Most of the Kurdish women did not even speak or feel comfortable speaking Turkish. Mater argues that the presence of the non-Kurdish activists showed the police that the Kurdish women were not alone and the co-presence made the vigils long lasting, which would, otherwise be allegedly associated with illegal terrorist action and repressed much sooner. If it was a only a group of Kurdish parents, it would be much easier for the state to classify them as part of an illegal organization, whereas the existence of Turkish activists, and some well known faces and journalists, made it harder to associate the vigils with any existing group. In fact this was one of the reasons for the choice of silence. They had to make clear that they had no political affiliations, since as Mater argues, people in general had doubts about all kinds of institutions but none about the people who sat in Galatasaray as individuals. On one hand, women sitting together was an ordinary image, however, doing sitting on the street with the passerby looking was extraordinary. Therefore the vigils effectively juxtaposed the everyday and the ordinary with the extraordinary. Added to this was the uncanny feeling silence gave to the action. The sitters constituted a surprising sight for those who saw them for the first time; thereby could make a difference solely by their persistent presence.

International media and human rights organizations were quick to take notice of the vigils. In 1996 the Habitat Summit took place in Istanbul, hence hundreds of foreigners joined the vigils. Same year famous documenter Bernard Debord made an award winning movie about the vigils "The Mad Women of Istanbul;" people in cities

such as Paris, Sidney and London held vigils in support; and mothers came from Argentina to sit in Galatasaray. Sezen Aksu, a famous Turkish singer, made a song about the mothers, which sold out the magazine that distributed the album. In December 1996, Saturday People/Mothers were awarded the Carl Von Ossietzky Human Rights Award by the International Human Rights League. Mater says that these international interactions were extremely important and helpful.[365] The fact that institutions such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch followed the vigils and the violations the participants faced, enabled the issue to constitute a significant place in Turkey's human rights record such that when the prime minister at the time traveled to meetings overseas, the first case she was asked to talk about would be the Saturday People/Mothers.[366]

The attention the vigils got in such a short time also popularized the Galatasaray Square. People who, in Kayılı's terms, wanted to "revolutionize" and "politicize" the vigils, namely to integrate it into their own ideological agenda, started paying a visit to Galatasaray on Saturdays.[367] As their actions were noticed by increasing numbers of people and received wide international coverage, the Galatasaray Square was becoming a space of hope for anyone who had a demand, and at the time, there were many reasons to protest in Turkey, a country that unfortunately has a notable list of human rights violations. On the one hand they wanted anyone to join their action by coming and sitting with them, but they also wanted to keep their distance from those who did not go with the flow of the action and the way it was framed. Tanrıkulu states that it were mostly young

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[365] Along with a mother she still attends the biannual Voix de Femmes festival in Brussels to participate the working group on enforced disappearances with many women coming from all over the world.
[366] Mater, *personal communication*, June 9, 2009.
[367] Kayılı, "'Çıplak' İtaatsizlik Olarak 'Cumartesi Anneleri'," [Saturday Mothers as an Example of Pure Disobedience], 353.

people who had difficulty adapting to the form of silent protest.[368]The Saturday People/Mothers had to keep warning those who wanted to shout slogans. The difficulty expressed by Mater was that everyone wished to claim as their own the quick success the vigils got in terms of creating awareness and stopping the disappearances.

The awareness they created and the attention they received also alarmed the state and the security forces. Especially the year 1998 marked a turning point, then after the participants was confronted with immense violence, including some mass lynching attempts. 1998 was the year when the Kurdish political organization PKK's leader Abdullah Öcalan was arrested in Italy which spurred national sentiments and everyday violence in Turkey. [369] The police started taking extreme measures to prevent the Saturday People/Mothers from going to Galatasaray. The participants were beaten, dragged on the streets, and arrested every week. The legitimacy of the vigils was no longer an issue, it was already established by their persistency. The pronounced reason for repression was the alleged claim that the vigils were acting as a cover for illegal terrorist organizations, while the participants stated that they have no institutional affiliations other than to the Human Rights Association, which only acted as a communication center for activities that required office facilities.[370]The police were arresting anyone who "looked suspicious'" in the wider Taksim area in order to prevent them from gathering, thus the participants had to devise multiple strategies to maneuver

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[368] Tanrıkulu, "Bizde Yok!" [We Don't Have Them], 291.
[369] Kurdistan Socialist Party, the paramilitary political organization of the Kurdish separatist movement which has been the number one internal enemy of the Turkish state, which defines it as a terrorist organization.
[370] Mater, *personal communication*, June 9, 2009. Yet HRA has also been accused many times of being affiliated with illegal Kurdish organizations. The fact that the association is formed for the advancement of human rights and the prominent number of cases of human rights violations coming from the Southeast made these alleged claims inescapable.

their way into the square from the narrow side streets of this old neighborhood.[371]The participants had started feeling helpless after all since what started as an action, which anyone could participate had turned into something only those who could undertake the risk could dare to join. "The environment of terror that hundreds of police officers with masks, cops, dogs created every week had changed the face of our action beyond our will."[372] They had to risk their jobs, their health and especially those with young children also feared "if something happens to the rest of their children."[373] Nevertheless they insisted on going to Galatasaray because for them it was no longer only a place to protest; the square had turned into a space of commemoration, it was a graveyard where they could remember and share. When asked if she is happy to see the vigils start again in 2009 one of the relatives, Doğan answers:

> Very much… my deceased mother would run to these vigils. She would forget her pain when she saw others. It was like that for me too. It happened so many times that when I saw a photograph of a disappeared person in someone's hands I dropped mine on the ground.[374]

On the 200th week, Saturday People/Mothers decided all together to suspend the vigils. Especially in the last thirty weeks human rights violations against the participants had reached a significant threshold with 431 people arrested, forty put on trial, and sometimes kept in custody as long as five days. Mater thinks that the first set of goals, bringing down the number of disappearances and creating awareness about this issue were realized to a great extent. Moreover the vigils went on for four years becoming the

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[371] Gülsüm Baydar and Berfin Ivegen, "Territories, identities, and thresholds: The Saturday Mothers phenomenon in Istanbul," Signs 31, no. 33 (2006) for a comparison of the vigils with Argentinean Mothers Vigils at Plaza de Mayo in terms of their spatial organizing.
[372] Koçali, "'Cumartesi Anneleri'nin İnadı," [The Stubbornness of the Saturday Mothers], 358.
[373] Ibid.
[374] Devrim Sevimay, "Ergenekon'un Fırat'ın Öteki Yakasına Geçmesi Şart," [Ergenekon Has To Go Beyond Fırat] *Milliyet Dailynews*, February 16, 2009.

longest lasting act of civil disobedience in Turkey. She explains that success with their ability to form international solidarities and their novel form of action and resistance of institutionalization.[375]After ten years, in February 2009, Saturday People/Mothers started meeting in Galatasaray once again.[376]Today Galatasaray is much different, police always guards the square, and as Mater ironically states, "you almost have to make reservations on Saturdays to protest in Galatasaray."[377] Most of the initial participants still try to be there every Saturday. Human Rights Association Commission Against Disappearances have helped organize the vigils and bring relatives together, some of who have found their own organizations in the mean time. Ten years have changed the political landscape in Turkey, there has been democratic reform initiatives due to the European Union candidacy processes and the Ergenekon Trial that investigates coup d'état plots and contra-guerilla organizing within cadres of social, political and military elites brought the issue of enforced disappearances once again onto the agenda. The goal of the vigils today is finding out the whereabouts of the disappeared but also demanding judgment of those responsible. Saturday People/Mothers have a list of names to be judged, among whom are prominent political figures such as the prime minister and president of the time when most of the disappearances took place.[378] The activists pressure the government to sign the *Declaration on the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance*, which could create the possibility of criminalizing those accountable for the deaths and disappearances.[379]

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[375] Mater, *personal communication*, June 9, 2009.
[376] See Chapter 6.
[377] Mater, *personal communication*, June 9, 2009.
[378] Moreover they are demanding that the state allow excavations to attest for the alleged mass graves in various regions of the southeast.
[379] The Declaration is adopted by the UN General Assembly and signed by 81 countries since 2007. The declaration legally bans enforced disappearances and demands countries to declare it as crime in their laws.

Framing the Action in Silence

In the following I discuss the Saturday Vigils and their choice of silence, not as an alternative to deliberation or as antithesis of communication but on the contrary, as it constitutes and enables a discursive practice.[380] In the previous chapters I showed that in political theory meaningful political participation is predominantly associated with deliberation or agonistic action. Similarly in social movement theory political mobilization is associated with voice. In the seminal study on social movements, McAdam et al pose the question in the form of a title, *what are they shouting about*?[381] Mater states, “Silence is very important. Thinking about our initial worries, if we were to allow noises then it would be hard to perceive what would be voiced there. Silence actually shouts the action you want to make in a better way.”[382] On a strategic level, silence enabled the sitters’ longer presence in the public space as noted earlier. By rejecting a verbal form, they avoided having themselves associated with any existing political group or agenda and escape polarizations that would direct attention away from the real issue at hand. The sense of responsibility enacted in these vigils was one that resulted from their persistence and continuity in appearing in the public space. Their visibility constituted stark contrast to the invisibility of the disappeared, which is the aim behind enforced disappearances. Such an action based on visibility is especially striking and powerful because of the immense bodily presence that comes to fore even more strongly when it is accompanied by silence.

It also opens up way for the compensation of the families and for legal processes to judge those responsible for the disappearances.

[380] Dryzek, “Deliberative Democracy in Divided Societies,” 223. See Jaworski, *The Power of Silence* and Tannen, *Perspectives on Silence* for two prominent works within linguistic theory that take a non-essentialist approach to the study silence and study silence in practice through its operations in discourse.

[381] Doug McAdam, Sidney G. Tarrow, and Charles Tilly, *Dynamics of Contention*, *Cambridge Studies in Contentious Politics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

[382] Mater, *personal communication*, June 9, 2009.

Mouffe is highly critical of deliberative democracy's structuring of political communication as a philosophy seminar to force contestation and conflict to the outside of politics, thereby eliminating the political. By way of simplifying democracy into a matter of establishing the right procedures, deliberative democrats pay inadequate attention to the ways in which popular identifications form.[383] According to Mouffe, democratic values cannot be fostered by sophisticated rational arguments and context-transcendent truth claims; but requires strong adhesion to democratic values upon which rationalism is an obstacle. However contemporary agonists' understanding of politics is centered on "incessant contestation and resistance," which is also too constricted, and ends up reducing politics to fighting.[384] Mouffe's alternative account of agonistic, combative action is also not able to account for the significance of a silent protest, because she focuses exclusively on the antagonistic character of mobilization and the combative elements of political action. During the Saturday Vigils, silence was a means to escape partisanship. The antagonism in Turkish political discourse is congruent with the modernist project of the construction of the nation-state, which was maintained by the state-military alliance and supposedly restored via the respective interventions of the military into civilian politics.[385] This alliance has constructed its position by reference to a friend/enemy dichotomy naming internal and external enemies, hence ordering public discourse under dichotomous positions leaving no room for identification beyond the binaries: modernist or backward, nationalist or separatist, secular or Islamist. Such that a

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[383] Mouffe, *The Democratic Paradox*.
[384] Villa argues that those like Honig who take their agonism from Arendt miss that for Arendt, agonism is also about "public-spiritedness, independent judgment, and self-distance in addition to initiatory action," as such it is care for the world and the public realm. Villa, *Politics, Philosophy, Terror,* 125 - 127.
[385] Keyman, *Türkiye ve Radikal Demokrasi* [Turkey and Radical Democracy], vii.

democratic position that Mouffe advocates as an agonistic struggle is impossible without being positioned within these dichotomies.

When public discussion is structured in an agonistic fashion citizens find it hard to find a nexus outside the role of spectatorship if and when they do not easily identify with any of these camps. Where the terms of the discussion are already set a priori, when deliberations start at a point where the fundamental categories are already decided that leaves no choice to participants but adopting the aforementioned pre-constructed polarized categories. That is why the choice of silence promises emancipation from such labeling even if, in the mean time, it embodies elements of complicity. Political parties also cannot present clear political alternatives in Turkey because they also often have to resort to self-censure to stay legitimate. If they are associated with the enemy position they risk being closed down. In fact, a total of twenty-seven parties were closed in the history of the Turkish republic on alleged claims of association with illegal organizations or reactionary movements, with the most recent case of the closure of the pro-Kurdish Democratic Society Party. That is why it is crucial to look at practices of those citizens who cannot find outlet in political parties. As Mouffe and Laclau warn outlets can be found in movements that are not democratic but quicker to mobilize on passions. However passions do not have to be reduced to contestation, contra-Mouffe they can very well be part and parcel of a democratic engagement in the form of a silent vigil.

The Saturday Vigils present a model of democratic engagement where the creation of shared meanings is to a certain extent enabled through the absence of speech. It is in the judgment of the Saturday Vigils that such a shared understanding becomes possible, not a priori, and this judgment should also refrain from assuming that the vigils

are examples of outright resistance. Most of the participants conform to what is expected of them by not speaking, in fact ironically enough, when the violent police confrontations started the state justified its intervention on the basis that radical groups were using these women as a tool to voice their divisive claims. On the hand though, their continued presence in the square was also enabled by the absence of speech. It is because the participants were not saying, because they could escape the barren dichotomies of political rhetoric that it turned into an effective protest, bringing awareness on an international scale, which then allowed international organizations to pressure the Turkish government. During these vigils, the absence of speech allowed the co-existence of plurality of positions and people from various backgrounds. These women did not take positions, they did not speak about militarism, they did not use political slogans; it would be wrong to impose a deliberate feminist agenda onto these practices, however, as Arendt argues actions have unprecedented consequences which are up to the narrators to uncover and judge, hence I propose to study the vigils as they constitute gendered responses to the militarization of everyday life and promise the construction of an antimilitarist discourse. Considering that all forms of violence, whether enforced disappearance, police violence on the street, or the various forms of violence the Kurdish problem proliferates in women's lives are interrelated, an analysis of the implications of the Saturday Vigils in the construction of an antimilitarist discourse becomes ever more pressing. (See Chapter 6)

After the Palestinian Intifada in 1988, Women in Black (WIB), a group of women in Israel, started holding weekly vigils against the occupation, and today WIB has turned today into a global network of women's peace and antimilitarist activism. Certain

sections of WIB, such as WIB Belgrade also frame their actions in the form of silent vigils. Women in various peace activism and antimilitarist movements have found holding vigils as a powerful form of action in terms of claiming space; and doing democracy away from the power structures that are usually associated with democracy.[386] Vigils create persistence and a sense of responsibility, as silence constitutes a powerful response to militarism, elaborated by a member of WIB as:

> We chose not to speak excessive words, and therefore we think that it is important to express and experience these feelings and experiences with silence. With silence like a protest here from where the war is waged, a visible silence like a cry and a warning. With silence and black we also want to speak shame and compassion.[387]

The traditional association of silence with mourning and death should not necessarily lead to the association of silence with negation, which is why it is important to look at the ways in which people respond to extreme violence in democratic ways. Specifically women's silence is all the more significant as for reasons that are explained in the previous chapter. Whereas deliberation is associated with men, reproduction of soldier citizens and mourning for them when they are killed is associated with women and the regulation of mourning by the state is a way in which women are controlled.[388] In this case, the coming together of mourning with silence, both of which are associated with essentialist notions of femininity, also present a potential to unsettle the association of these categories with passivity and consent. I argued in the previous chapter that silence shows the multiple and conflicting ways in which power works. In the case of women's silence, it is both a strategy but also a last resort. On one hand, it is a refusal to

[386] Cynthia Cockburn,*The Space between Us : Negotiating Gender and National Identities in Conflict* (London ; New York New York: Zed Books ;, 1998), 216.
[387] Vesna Pavlovic, *Zene u cronom*, (Belgrade" Standard 2, 2002), 62.
[388] See Chapter 6.

be categorized and a protest of the attempts of the state to render them invisible. On the other hand, it is a strategy to survive longer as a political mobilization; hence there is also a sense of acquiescence to the state, namely, they do not engage in an open resistance to Turkish state's policies of repressing Kurdish identity and movements.

Saturday Vigils, which are considered by many today as one of the first examples of civil disobedience in Turkey, created a space where people came together in their differences to create solidarities and networks in an unmediated, non-hierarchical way; a democratic space that promises a ground for the construction of a critical stance against the militarization of everyday life. However, identifying any movement as a sign of the rise of civil society and uncritically associating it with democratization is misleading since much of political practice in the Middle East takes place under the auspices of an authoritarian state. Rather than treating the state as an all-powerful entity, which has clearly demarcated boundaries, following a Foucauldian notion of power as dispersed and productive, anthropologists have studied the state in its effects.[389] The effects of the state as they pertain to the everyday level make the study of public rituals, celebrations and practices such as mourning necessary and the treatment of any contentious practice as part of an autonomous civil society misleading.[390] We have to see the ways in which certain norms purported by the state are challenged but also embedded and reproduced in public actions. In contrast to the ideal of transparency in liberal democracy, Taussig talks about a circle of secrecy that surrounds the state.[391] The secrecy around the kidnapping

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[389] See Philip Abrams, "Notes on the Difficulty of Studying the State," Journal of Historical Sociology 1 (1988) and Timothy Mitchell, "The limits of the state: beyond statist approaches and their critics," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 85, (1991).
[390] Yael Navaro-Yashin, *Faces of the State : Secularism and Public Life in Turkey* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2002).
[391] Michael T. Taussig, *The Magic of the State* (New York: Routledge, 1997).

and disappearances that are discussed in Turkey, the so-called "deep state," refers to the multiple levels of connections within the state between political, economic and military elites and paramilitary groups. When Saturday People/Mothers gathered in public space to direct attention to the disappearances they on one hand constituted a contrast to this secrecy and invisibility but on the other hand their action was still opaque rather than transparent, such that no one knew what ideological background or affiliation the parents came from and what political aims, if any, they had on the agenda. What I showed in the previous chapter was that this opacity is not a particularity of silence but a characteristic of any communicative relationship because language is never transparent, and we can never assume a transparent relationship between the interlocutors.

Hanssen argues that the "insidious violence that inheres in political liberalism" and its understanding of speech as transparency and universal freedom continues in the discursive politics of Habermas where all speech is seen as the medium of freedom as exercised and performed.[392] For Arendt, as well, politics is vocal whereas violence is understood to be external to language; hence, "mute aggression."[393] Poststructuralist or agonistic theorists criticize this approach for ignoring the structural and discursive violences. However, I agree with Hanssen that within this critique they also fall into another form of universalism "by positing an a priori negative" and understanding all politics based on disruption.[394] Hanssen argues that Butler is different because she is able to reconcile the violence in language with its transformative and radical potential by looking at how the performative creates its own possibilities by transforming

[392] Beatrice Hanssen, *Critique of Violence : Between Poststructuralism and Critical Theory* (London ; New York: Routledge, 2000), 159 – 160.
[393] Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution*. Reprinted. ed. (London ; New York: Penguin Books, 1990), 19.
[394] Hanssen, *Critique of Violence,* 165.

relationships, constructing new meanings and forging new subjectivities.[395] I argue that silence embodies the same performative aspect in that while it portrays the impossibility of a pure communication with the other, it also forges new meanings and subjectivities and opens up to an array of possibilities. McNay accuses post-identititarian feminist accounts for holding up indeterminacy as a political good in itself, and thus paving the way to the "fetishisation of the non-identical and inchoate, qua desire, as the source of subversion."[396] According to McNay, the conceptualization of agency as resistance that is characteristic of traditional forms of uncritical populism is reformulated into contemporary theories of identity in terms of ideas about of "unruly emotion, disruptive desires and other indeterminate features of social existence."[397] While the Saturday Mothers/People called the state into action, namely, to protect their relatives and themselves, they also implicitly made the interrogation of state actions possible, even if it took place in the public imaginary at first. In other words, the state became an "object of ambivalence."[398] The security officers were also within a state of ambivalence, trying not to harass the participants thinking that they are a group of silent mothers hence "prone to protection and respect," but also beating and accusing them of not being "proper mothers," who would rather sit at home and raise "proper citizens." An uncanny feeling surrounded the state as violence and paternalism, force and intimacy were conflated, that Aretxaga describes as the "paternalistic longing for the state."[399] A longing for a protective state existed side by side with the frustration felt towards the state which was

[395] Ibid., 173. See Butler, *Excitable Speech*.
[396] Lois McNay, "Feminism and Post-Identity Politics: The Problem of Agency," Constellations 17, no. 4 (2010): 521.
[397] Ibid.
[398] See Wendy Brown, *States of Injury : Power and Freedom in Late Modernity* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1995).
[399] Begona Aretxaga, "Maddening states," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 32 (2003): 397.

either passive or took “meaningless action” such as the initiative of the “bus of the disappeared”[400] or Istanbul Chief of Police suggesting the Saturday People/Mothers a new, significantly less central, meeting point as if all they wanted was a place to get together.

Presence in Silence

Chapter 2 explained the role the speech act plays in Habermas’s thought in terms of creating an intersubjective forum where actors take turns playing the communicative role of the speaker, the addressee, and the bystander. A traditional understanding of silence, as the absence of communication, poses silence as a solitary state of being and hence the antithesis of intersubjectivity. Similarly traditional understandings of pain also conceive of pain as a solitary emotion and a passive state of being, whereas Ahmed emphasizes the “sociality of emotion,” and discusses emotion as a social form rather than an individual feeling or form of self-expression.[401] In the vigils, silence is a form of communication and the way in which pain is expressed collectively but also experienced socially and politically.[402] Embodied action in silence communicates the suffering beyond the need for argumentation.

> We express directly stable emotions, not strangling them with words but expressing them with the body…We go out, physical in silence in order to listen to others. Through the silence, we gradually value the forgetting of the body and the feelings. Silence for us is not the norm, it is chosen to convey the act of mutiny. (*Women in Black, Turin*)

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[400] The “Bus of the Disappeared” was an initiative started by the Ministry of Interior Affairs. The bus would park in Galatasaray where well-dressed female officers announced that relatives should report the disappeared, although they had already done so several times.

[401] See Sara Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (New York: Routledge, 2004) In line with sociological and anthropological studies of emotions, Ahmed argues that emotions are not just psychological states but are social and cultural practices (9 – 10).

[402] See Nichanian, Catastrophic Mourning.

In the lack of verbal communication what is left is the ability to notice, watch and witness, hence attention becomes a central component of a silent vigil. Bickford finds in Aristotle's discussions of deliberation, the importance of the practice of "giving something your attention." Paying attention is the effort to see from the other's perspective and to understand the other.[403] During the vigils, the actor-audience relationship is extended to include the passer-by also as actors. The collective silence of the vigillers is the primary political act in this relationship. However, the passer-by are also included in the "sociality of emotion;" as Ahmed explains, in what she calls the "outside-in" model of emotion, crowds' feelings take one in and emotions, such as grief, become a social presence.[404] According to Norval, even visceral activities, such as noticing and seeing, play a vital role in reminding people that they are "democrats," hence in reactivating moments of democratic identification. During a vigil, people become subjects and objects, actors and spectators at the same time and they keep shifting within these roles. According to Bickford, this interchangeability between the roles of actor, spectator and judge is the basis of a democratic model of citizenship.[405] This may be true for any political performance, not necessarily a silent vigil, however, silence adds on to the sheer effect this performance creates within the square, which would otherwise be just another marching protest on Istiklal Street.[406]

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[403] Susan Bickford, *The Dissonance of Democracy : Listening, Conflict, and Citizenship* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press 1996), 35.
[404] Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion,* 1 – 20.
[405] Bickford, *The Dissonance of Democracy,* 90.
[406] In a different vein, in *Disabling Democracy*, Clifford talks about how the physical presence of disabled bodies expand the value of publicity in deliberative democracy showing that "the publicity of bodies" can provoke new nonverbal conversations similar to rational speech acts but also offer a reformed way of looking at participants as vulnerable and dependent beings rather than rational and autonomous individuals (2). Through this analysis, Clifford aims to show that deliberation is a messy, bodily process, whereas "Disembodiment promotes the illusory belief that language is always clear and coherent. However, like bodies, language can be messy, opaque, and open to interpretation." (12)

Arendt identifies as “worldliness” a feeling that is born of a vivid “space of appearance,” that is, according to Villa, different from mere public-spiritedness or participatory politics. Villa concurs that Arendt’s “affirmation of political action as the existentially supreme human activity flows from her desire to preserve worldliness at all costs.”[407] Chapter 2 suggested two different ways in which Arendt’s account of the public sphere was understood by political theorists: as an arena in which actors speak and act in competition for glory and immortality, but also one in which people act collectively to “make real the human capacity to make our presence felt in the world.”[408] For Arendt, appearing in public is inherent to the human condition because the world we live in is a phenomenal world; we are meant to be seen, heard, touched, tasted, and smelled.[409] Hence, on one hand, is a theatrical, Homeric notion of the public sphere which is home to heroic competition of individual actors, on the other hand, is a public sphere that is home to collective action and communication.[410] Performative politics, such as vigils, reconcile these two senses of appearance in public, while silence creates a challenge to the predominance of speech in understanding political expression.

The massive bodily presence of the vigillers was able to create an intersubjective experience that is not marked by the give and take of opinions but by creating awareness to what was disregarded. Anyone who lived in Turkey during the 1990s had knowledge about the civil war taking place between the Turkish state and military forces and Kurdish groups, but the civil war belonged to a State of Exception and militarization was perceived as something took place only on the warfront. What these parents continuously

[407] Villa, *Politics, Philosophy, Terror*, 134-135.
[408] Bickford, *The Dissonance of Democracy,* 55.
[409] Ibid., 61.
[410] Villa, *Politics, Philosophy, Terror*, 107 – 128.

reminded each week, in their silence, was the proximity of the war and the fact that violence was not an exception but was part of the everyday. According to Martin Luther King, nonviolent direct action creates a crisis and fosters a constructive tension so that a community, which constantly refuses to negotiate, is forced to confront the issues it avoids.[411] In this case silence was not only the right strategy in the given political context, but also a powerful reminder of a reality that required no further convincing or argumentation. For Arendt the presence of others is necessary in politics because human beings require others' perceptions to construct their own reality. According to Bickford, we enact such confirmation in everyday language by asking questions such as "did you see that;" to make own experience real.[412] The vigils embody this logic as the participants have their reality confirmed, while as a strategy, enforced disappearance denies reality and relegates militarization to the warfront only. Like listening, seeing and being seen are perceptive activities that create an intersubjective relationship when they are framed in a political context such as this one.[413] In this case, "being seen" as mothers on a street that is associated with militant political activism carries important political and symbolic connotations. The vigillers mere presence in the Square was political because the presence of especially women, from different socioeconomic, geographic and ethnic backgrounds constituted a challenge to the idea that women are only symbolically present in Turkish politics. In the following chapter, I discuss the politicization of motherhood to show how the symbolic order that is assigned to motherhood in both Turkish and Kurdish nationalism is also challenged by the actions of the mothers and fathers, and "being seen"

[411] Martin L. King, "Letter From Birmingham Jail" (1963), http://abacus.bates.edu/admin/offices/dos/mlk/letter.html
[412] Bickford, *The Dissonance of Democracy,* 61.
[413] Ibid., 142. In response to the devaluation of seeing for not binding the other to a situation of responsiveness, Bickford emphasizes its importance as a perceptive activity.

in public takes a critical stance.[414] According to Merleau-Ponty, the silent human gaze is the most discomforting of all because “it takes the place of possible communication,” thereby feeling objectifying and unbearable.[415] However it is exactly this discomfort that silence creates which plays a serious role in the success of the vigils in creating awareness because the vigillers invited people to responsibility in such a way that there is no point for further argumentation.

Seeing also provides an interpretive context that enriches listening, which should be cultivated primarily as an aspect of democratic citizenship, thus far ignored in communicative theories.[416] There are a few but important works that focus on listening, which is an aspect of communication that neither Habermas nor other deliberative accounts give adequate attention to.[417] Kleinberg-Levin argues for the centrality of “good listening” to communicative praxis how “skillful listening,” or what Bickford calls “active listening” is as important as speech and in fact necessary for it. Silence is an important component of such democratic listening, because silence, constitutes a listening openness: “in order to hear something, we must first *give* its our silence.”[418] Silence has an important role within dialogue for creating a co-existential space.[419] In fact it can be used in two ways: as an instrument of listening like Kleinberg-Levin approaches it, or as a non-verbal form of communication, as taken up in this chapter. Both of these modes

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[414] Focusing solely on women’s presence and the way the nation is constructed with reference to femininity ignores the ways in which citizenship and various other political identifications are also constituted and constitutive of masculinities and sexualized subjectivities. (See Chapter 6)

[415] Maurice Merleau-Ponty, The Primacy of Perception, and Other Essays on Phenomenological Psychology, the Philosophy of Art, History, and Politics (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1964), 361.

[416] Bickford, *The Dissonance of Democracy,* 143.

[417] See Ihde, *Listening and Voice* and Kleinberg-Levin, *The Listening Self* for a discussion of the significance of silence to listening.

[418] Kleinberg-Levin, *The Listening Self*, 232.

[419] Gemma Corradi Fiumara, *The Other Side of Language : A Philosophy of Listening* (London ; New York: Routledge, 1990), 99.

also overlap in that silence as a non-verbal form of communication creates a space for attentive listening which then open up space for meaningful discussion. Corradi Fiumara calls the space silence creates a *hiatus*, which is a way of being with the interlocutors that allows for the meeting of space-time to create a new beginning from which new meanings can emerge.[420] The temporal aspect is significant when we consider the remobilization of the vigils after a period of ten years from the day they were suspended.

Conclusion

Direct action in silence is valuable for opening up to question both the value and the limits of speech and argumentation upon certain experiences, such that we recognize how silence also gives space to the inexpressible.[421] In the case of the Saturday Vigils, the state inflicted violence is something that neither the state could admit, nor the participants of the vigils could express. Corradi Fiumara values silence for giving space to the inexpressible.[422] In the Saturday Vigils, silence reflected the ambivalence of the situation, particularly that of the relationship between the state and with its citizens, who are at its margins.[423] The uncanny quality to silence marks that ambivalent relationship between the citizens and the state in a context where the state itself is the projector of violence. Silence, unlike speech, is not revealing, yet it is symbolically powerful; it is neither the representation of the voice of the excluded in a heroic fashion, nor a direct confrontation with the state, yet creates an important symbolic space where these questions can be asked. "We might even understand it to mean that only when we know

[420] Ibid., 102.
[421] Ibid., 98.
[422] Ibid.
[423] Aretxaga, "Maddening States."

how to be silent will that of which we cannot speak being to tell us something."[424] Silence allows for such kind of listening openness and creates a gap, a space, which is required for the creation of shared meanings and understanding. Silence makes possible the construction of a space for the creation of shared meanings and what Arendt calls, beginning anew, which for her is among the most valuable qualities of the human condition. Hence it is important to avoid treating silence merely as a symbol of repression, an indicator of distorted communication, or the tendency to shy away from disruptive speech and action, but instead recognize it as part and parcel of communication and sometimes the very condition of any meaningful dialogue that is to come.

The Saturday Vigils, as examples of silent protests, pose a challenge to deliberative democracy's overemphasis on dialogue and the speaking subject. Silent protest show that silence is a discursive practice and part and parcel of communication broadly defined. On the other hand, as much as the vigils confirm the agonistic critique of deliberative democracy by showing the importance of the disruptive role of the wild publics and passionate politics, the element of silence that played a strategic role in escaping pre-determined antagonisms in Turkey also points to the problems with agonistic democracy. From the perspective of deliberative democracy, there is no democracy in the absence of the speaking subject, silence merely signals the distortion of communication; from the perspective of agonistic democracy, there is no politics in the absence of antagonism. As valuable as Mouffe's discussion of the role of passions in politics, the problem is her reduction of the mobilization of passions to an ambiguous notion of contestation that she ideologically locates on the Left/Right antagonism. In order to sustain her criticism of deliberative democracy and its reliance on a notion of

[424] Corradi Fiumara, *The Other Side of Language,* 99.

consensus, Mouffe confines democratic mobilization into a particular type of partisan politics. The Saturday Vigils actually offer a perspective on the futility of such partisanship, where the choice of silence strategically aimed to bypass the predetermined cleavages and to make a claim, in silence, for the right to life alone. Silence is not merely the opposition of dialogue or "the desire to keep one's thoughts inside a well-defended fortress, but also a positive gap where new meanings can emerge."[425] In fact the vigils had a clear central demand, they wanted to bring awareness to the enforced disappearances and to the plight of the disappeared and their relatives. However, they also opened up space for the discussion of many other issues that pertain to the case, which I shall engage in the following chapter. The creation of an empty space is necessary for letting deeper meanings to emerge, but for that one has to first listen to the silence.[426]

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[425] Ibid.
[426] Ibid., 103.

CHAPTER SIX
LISTENING TO SILENCE: POLITICS OF MOURNING AND THE POSSIBILITY OF A DEMOCRATIC OPENING

Thus far, I suggested silence as an alternative way of thinking about political action to step away from conceptions of democratic action that focus on deliberative speech and agonistic action alone. In the previous chapter, I looked at silence as a mode of collective action where it made possible the escape from binary thinking and partisanship, and enabled the vigils to go on for four years. I argued that silence amplifies the effects of perceptive activities such as attention, seeing and listening that are necessary components of any intersubjective democratic engagement, yet often undermined as important components of democratic action. Thus far, I predominantly discussed the vigils with respect to their political form. Following up from the conclusion of the previous chapter that paying attention to silence opens up to an array of new meanings, this chapter aims to listen to silence to explore the implications of the analysis of the Saturday Vigils for a discussion of democracy in Turkey. I suggest discussing the vigils, as they constitute gendered responses to the militarization of everyday life. Enforced disappearance is an extension of the Kurdish problem in Turkey that has more than one dimension, yet in this chapter, I particularly focus on the possibility of the construction of a feminist democratic antimilitarist stance from this particular practice.

The chapter starts with an analysis of the way in which the vigils were received and represented in nationalist media. Nationalist media played a significant role in creating an alleged tension between Saturday Mothers and soldier-mothers, or as popularly called "mothers of martyrs," to discredit the former by appealing to the discourse of martyrdom for a more respectable form of motherhood. I argue that the

Saturday Mothers' discursive silence did not incite hatred and vengeance or reinvigorate friend/enemy categories, but instead constructed a space in which their response to enforced-disappearance stressed the right to life for all. This chapter also surveys feminist discussions of the category of motherhood as a source for radical politics and I stress the necessity of the construction of a feminist democratic practice in Turkey that does not stem from or reinforce essentialist roles and identities. In the final section, I explore the rhetoric of mourning that is employed in political speeches by the Justice and Development Party government in order to gain support for the democratic initiative the Prime Minister announced in 2009, as a part of a civilian resolution to the Kurdish problem. This rhetorical appeal to the image of the "mourning mothers" is then discussed along with actually existing politics of mourning to explore the possibility of constructing feminist democratic politics that is mobilized around common grief.

Listening to Silence

The previous chapter made the case that when silence is used to frame performative collection actions, it becomes possible to acknowledge the significance of perceptive activities such as attention, seeing and listening, which are otherwise often undermined when the focus is only on the expressive component of democratic citizenship. I argued that the Saturday Vigils constituted democratic engagements as examples of ad hoc, unmediated, horizontally organized action that brought awareness to a gross human rights violation. Thus far, I only discussed the vigils in terms of their form. Among discourses that make up the character of deliberation in the public sphere, Dryzek counts rhetoric, gossip, performance and jokes, insofar as they create an intersubjective

environment by inducing reflection, practicing non-coercion and linking the particular into the general, such that instead of inciting vengeance and hatred, they refer to basic rights of humanity, as portrayed in the example of the vigils, beyond the point of argumentation.[427]

As previously discussed, Laclau's work on democracy is particularly insightful for linking the particular and the universal in explaining the coming into being of democratic demands.[428] According to Laclau, the democratic subject emerges in and through the process of making claims and a claim gains force when it turns into an "unfulfilled demand." Yet this argument paves the way to the question, what makes a demand democratic, in other words, what it is that gives the vigils their democratic character. In Chapter 3, I argued that, for Laclau, the naming is strictly descriptive and demand that is formulated to the system by an underdog acquires the character of a democratic demand. One of the most important elements of Habermas's proceduralized definition of popular sovereignty is his bringing together of decision-making with discussion, such that the present addressees of laws are democratic co-legislators. Via a distinction between weak and strong publics, Habermas detaches deliberative decision-making from deliberation at large, such that while strong/formal publics are entrusted with the role of decision-making, weak/informal publics where everyday communication outside valid discourses reign carry out agenda setting roles and inform the former.[429] However, as shown previously, he is also widely criticized for this separation on the grounds that it excludes the underprivileged, such as women, both on the basis of the form and the content of the discussion in the strong publics, or for pushing the radical

[427] Dryzek, "Deliberative Democracy in Divided Societies," 224.
[428] See Chapter 3.
[429] Habermas, *Between Facts and Norms*, 307-308.

elements of the public sphere to the outside of decision-making.[430] Activism in the so-called weak publics is reduced to a means to agitate the already instituted rights; but its role is limited to agenda setting and influencing from a distance. As such, Habermas leans too much to the side of constitutionalism at the expense of the wild publics.[431] Thereby, the theory is prone to undermining forms of politics, which require thinking beyond the constitutional limitations he places on democratic sovereignty.[432] However if we solely focus on the disruptive aspect of popular mobilization, as does Laclau, then it becomes harder to answer how what comes into being is democratic and not xenophobic and totalitarian.

In fact, the Saturday Vigils faced such exogenous threat when mainstream media named the mothers of the soldiers who died during the civil war, Friday Mothers, and portrayed them as rivals to the Saturday Mothers, to draw a hierarchy between different forms of motherhood. Dryzek warns, that especially in divided societies, only those discursive practices that link particular experiences to more generalized forms are able to forge reconciliation rather than exacerbating already existing cleavages by inciting vengeance.[433] In fact the discursive silence employed by the Saturday Vigils not only

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[430] Honig, "Dead Rights Live Futures."

[431] Ibid.

[432] Devenney, *Ethics and Politics in Contemporary Philosophy*, 126. Habermas thinks that civil disobedience is an extension of public deliberation through different means. Yet it should be a last recourse when all other routes are exhausted. Lasse Thomassen, *Deconstructing Habermas* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 97.The disobedient has to be wiling to accept the legal consequences as they stand somewhere between legality and legitimacy. For Habermas, justification is fitting in cases where the minority feels systematically excluded. Thomassen rightly asks, what if those who resort to civil disobedience are not registered within a present political system and civil society, and criticizes Habermas for holding still the legal and a particular political culture. (107) Earlier I talked about the feminist criticism of deliberative democracy on the point that the existing structures of deliberation systematically biased against certain groups and forms of political engagement. Thomassen argues that in some cases it s the very constitution of the discourse that leaves no outlet, where "the otherness of the other escapes inclusion no matter how sensitive we are to the singularity of her voice." Hence some are never heard when exclusion is inherent to discourse rather than a direct act. (109)

[433] Dryzek, "Deliberative Democracy in Divided Societies," 224.

represented nonviolence but also made a case for the right to life for all. The vigils had a clear aim; they wanted to bring awareness to the reality of enforced disappearances and to call the state into account for finding the whereabouts of the disappeared. Aside from that, in their silence, the participants did not suggest anything about the war, about militarism or the Kurdish issue. Yet I propose to explore the possible meanings that can emerge out of their silence as far as to constitute a gendered response to the militarization of everyday life, and moreover a contribution to a democracy-to-come in Turkey.

In the previous chapters I argued that silence has the ability to express what is hard or impossible to express and the unspoken can actually reveal a great deal when we know how to listen to silence. According to Nichanian silence reflects the inability of language to represent horror that is human doing but inhuman; survivors are stricken in language upon the unrepresentable and language is always shattered when the event is continuously present and never past.[434] As a political strategy of repression and control, enforced disappearance aims to create that very ambivalence and deny reality to crime. However, Nichanian is also skeptical of naming horror, which he argues risks constituting another crime by denying the event its unnamable, unspeakable character. So the irrepresentability of pain often goes hand in hand with its over-representation.[435] The "unspeakable" for Adorno denies application of an equivalential logic to other atrocious events to be codified into categories.[436] Enforced disappearance is in fact named and

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[434] Nichanian, "Catastrophic Mourning," 112.
[435] Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*.
[436] See Theodor W. Adorno, *Minima Moralia : Reflections from Damaged Life* (London: Verso, 1974). For similar reasons, Nichanian is skeptical of public theaters of condemnation or mass-apology campaigns because any attempt to name, to ask for recognition or to recognize is a repetition of the crime by virtue of denying the event its unforgivable and unspeakable essence. According to Derrida forgiveness creates an aporia because one never asks for forgiveness except for the unforgivable; and one never has to forgive the forgivable. Jacques Derrida,*The Gift of Death ; &, Literature in Secret*. 2nd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 127.

codified by the United Nations so that states can be held responsible for their crimes, in that respect it is different from the Adorno's sense of the "unspeakable." However, it still does not give us authority to codify the experience of the relatives of the disappeared. Although Ahmed is critical of testimonies of suffering becoming media spectacles, she also believes in the possibility of the wound to be brought into action in a different, constructive kind of remembrance.[437] I do not intend to speak in the name of the people who lost relatives or to confine their actions into certain meanings. However, we can use our democratic quality of judgment to pay attention to the vigils and think about what possible meanings and struggles can emerge from out them. Herman argues that it is in fact very tempting to take the side of the perpetrator because all the perpetrator asks from the bystander is do nothing, "he appeals to the universal desire to see, hear and speak no evil," the victim on the contrary "asks the bystander to share the burden of pain. The victim demands action, engagement and remembering."[438] Hence being careful not to name an experience or speak for someone else should also not free us from the responsibility to give our attention and listen to silences and to envision a democratic future.

It is a fact that most of the disappeared were of Kurdish origin and abducted or arrested for political reasons as part of the "deep state" effort to deny an ethnically distinct Kurdish identity and to repress Kurdish social and political organizing. One can talk about multiple dimensions of the Kurdish problem in Turkey, about the repression of language and cultural rights, forced migrations, forced assimilations and the civil war; the phenomenon of enforced disappearance is both a representation and an extension of the

[437] Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, 32 – 33.
[438] Judith Lewis Herman, *Trauma and Recovery*. (New York, N.Y.: BasicBooks, 1992), 7 -8.

manifold problems. Hence any discussion of democracy within the context of Turkey cannot but not take into consideration the Kurdish problem; in fact it was the very denial of the problem that constituted the gravest threat to the prospects of Turkish democracy. While democratic theorists discuss moral disagreements today and consider ways in which we can speak or act over our differences to be able to "live together," war and militarism continue their salience in most parts of the world including Turkey, but are treated as if they exist outside the democratic system, reinvigorating the idea of a State of Exception. However in Turkey militarization does not only take place in the warfront but pertains to the everyday life of citizens and noncitizens, while militarized concepts and forms of discipline structure experiences of citizenship and creates gendered subjectivities. In that respect, Saturday Vigils open up a space in which these processes could be acknowledged and challenged.

During their active presence in Galatasaray for 200 weeks, the Saturday People/Mothers did not talk about the war or about militarism; neither did they have a feminist or anti-militarist agenda. When asked if there was an antimilitarist stance during the vigils, Mater stated that it was hard to talk about antimilitarism, since most of the mothers came from the State of Emergency region where militarism in all forms constitutes an acknowledged daily experience.[439] Mater does not necessarily imply with this statement that those who live in the war zone or who are of Kurdish origin necessarily have a celebratory stance towards militarism. What she underlines is the difference between experiencing militarism as part of daily reality, namely, more closer to skin, with parts of your family living in mountain camps and your village watched over by army officers and that of observing militarism as a distant reality, when you do not

[439] Mater, *personal communication*, June 9, 2009.

have immediate connection to the war zone. Yet when we acknowledge that all forms of violence are interrelated especially in women's lives, and that militarized discourses shape the experience of both Kurdish and Turkish citizens, then we are faced with the necessity to create solidarities across different experiences. The enforced disappearance and the police violence towards the participants of the vigils are related to various structural and discursive forms of violence that pertain to the Kurdish problem in Turkey but also shape the possibilities of democratic ways of living together.

Mothers, Militarism and Democracy

When talking about the relationship between militarism and democracy in Turkey, we have to consider the institutional presence of the military in politics, strengthened in the post-1980 period and challenged today in attempts to restructure the military-civilian relationship. However we also have to take into account the salience of militaristic discourses in the public sphere as well as their effects in everyday life. Enloe defines militarization as "a gradual process where a person or a thing becomes controlled by the military and depends on militaristic ideas."[440] This process becomes successful when it normalizes and goes unnoticed and unquestioned. Militarization specifically acquired normalcy in Turkey in the 1930s where the soldiering discourse acquired a nationalist, racist notion of Turkishness that all Turks are soldiers.[441] This distinguished the relationship of men and women to the state, as well as some men to others because

[440] Cynthia H. Enloe, *Maneuvers : The International Politics of Militarizing Women's Lives* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 2000), 3.
[441] See Ayse Gül Altınay,. The Myth of the Military-Nation : Militarism, Gender, and Education in Turkey. 1st ed. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004).

soldiering is compulsory for healthy, heterosexual males.[442] As Elshtain argues, in history women have been integrated into militarist paradigms in multiple ways such as beautiful souls to be protected, as life-givers, or as female warriors.[443] The role of the life-giver, or motherhood, is also one of the indirect relationships through which women belong to the nation-state. As previously argued, in Turkey the role and the image of the feminine was central to the construction of the modern nation-state where motherhood became one of the dominant roles through which women's citizenship was defined. In the Turkish Republic's founding father Atatürk's words, "woman's biggest role is motherhood," hence women's ultimate role was defined as raising dutiful citizens to the Turkish Republic.[444] The institution of soldiering is backed up by this discourse. Defending the nation becomes equivalent with defending a feminine conception of the nation and hence protecting its honor and its women.[445] Militarization also requires mothers' active collaboration to legitimize killing and dying in the name of the nation.

Around the same time with the Saturday Vigils, another group of mothers in Turkey were also establishing a visual presence in the public sphere. They were the mothers of the martyred, namely, mothers of soldiers who died during military combat in the southeast. Nationalist media portrayed these women as Friday Mothers, since they got together in cemeteries for the martyred on Fridays. Nationalist media and politicians presented soldier-mothers as rivals to the Saturday Mothers to discredit the pain of the

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[442] See Özgür Heval Çınar and Coşkun Üsterci, *Çarklardaki Kum: Vicdani Red* [Sand in Cogwheels: Conscientious Objection] (Istanbul: Iletisim Yayinlari, 2008) for a discussion of conscientious objection in Turkey.
[443] Jean Bethke Elshtain, *Women and War* (New York: Basic Books, 1987), 168.
[444] Altinay, Vatan Millet Kadınlar [Homeland Nation Women]. However it does not mean that women's role was only confined to motherhood. For example, Altinay shows with her discussion of Sabiha Gokcen, Ataturk's adopted daughter, that she became the world's first female war pilot but also a national hero by participating in the bombing of the Kurdish province of Dersim in 1938.
[445] See Afsaneh Najmabadi, "The Erotic *Vatan* [Homeland] as Beloved and Mother: to Love, to Possess, and to Protect," *Comparative Study of Society and History* 39, no. 4 (1997).

latter, hence constructing a hierarchy of grief. At the time “mothers of the martyred” had become highly visible and were celebrated especially in times of national fervor. They were invited to television shows, suggested roles in miniseries, applauded in football games. The discourse of martyrdom turned into propaganda for war, while soldier-mothers were celebrated as rivals to “other mothers.” Upon the death of her soldier son, a mother was quoted to say, “Don’t you cry sons … the country should be saved, mothers of martyrs do not cry, Ishak’s friends in arms will have the mothers of these killers cry.”[446] The question is, is it possible to construct a democratic politics from the category of mourning when grief can well also be articulated into exclusive and chauvinistic discourses. This particular mother’s statement suggests that *mater dolorosa*, the mother of sorrows, which Ruddick believes could potentially turn into a peace figure, could also ignite hate and vengeance.[447] The conventional view of the women as peacemaker fails when confronted with a rhetoric of motherhood as portrayed above, but also when confronted with one that regards death as “inevitable, acceptable, and meaningful,” a rhetoric of “letting go” that Scheper-Hughes finds strikingly similar to the discourse of martyrdom that is a pillar of military thinking in Turkey.[448]

Upon interviews conducted with Turkish and Kurdish parents who have lost family members in war, Sancar observes that Turkish mothers express anger to politicians and “politics,” narrowly defined, while they show gratitude to the army with whom they have retained close relationships to.[449] In fact, militarization needs the collaboration of soldier-mothers to legitimize soldiering, hence it is essential for the

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[446] “Acımız Ders Olsun” [Our Pain is a Lesson] *Hurriyet* Dailynews, December 1, 1998.
[447] Ruddick 1989.
[448] Nancy Scheper-Hughes, “Maternal Thinking and the Politics of War,” in *The Women and War Reader 1998,* ed. Lois Ann Lorenzten (New York: New York University Press, 1998), 229.
[449] Sancar 2001.

mothers to accept death as acceptable such that they do not question or challenge it.[450] What they are expected to do is to direct their fury to those people/institutions, "the enemy," that caused the death of their sons.[451] Hence, the Saturday Mothers and the Friday Mothers were set as rivals by the mainstream media and the two groups of women were presented as confrontational, where martyr mothers' grief was sacralized and presented in ways to delegitimize the suffering and the presence of Saturday Mothers.[452] The image of the painful mother and political propaganda, which fed on it, turned parents' grief into a justification of war, as motherhood became a new source for nationalist politics.[453] If this is a possibility among the many contingent ways in which isolated demands get articulated into the construction of the mothers as a political identity, how come can we talk about a democratic potential that emerges out of mothers' action?

In order to do that we first need to acknowledge the contingency of motherhood as a basis for political mobilization. We need to acknowledge that women are not passive symbols of politics or only marginally important to militarism. A feminist democratic anti-militarist struggle can only be built on the realization that conceptions of gender and gender roles are central to militarism. Only upon such acknowledgment it can be possible to get to the real sources of grief, to reveal the multiple and interrelated forms of violence that structure people's life. We need to study the vigils as they promise the construction of alternative discourses while we safeguard against essentialist, homogenous definitions

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[450] Enloe 2000, p. 237.

[451] Serpil Sancar, "Türkler/Kürtler, Anneler ve Siyaset: Savaşta Çocuklarını Kaybetmiş Türk ve Kürt Anneler Üzerine Bir Yorum," [Turks/Kurds, Mothers, Politics: Some Interpretations on Turkish and Kurdish Mothers Who Lost Their Children in War], *Toplum ve Bilim* 90 (2001).

[452] Similarly, *Peace Mothers Initiative*, another mothers' group in Turkey that consists mostly of Kurdish women who protest war and military conflict have been portrayed as rivals to the mothers of the martyred.

[453] Koçali, "'Cumartesi Anneleri'nin İnadı," [The Stubbornness of the Saturday Mothers].

of subjectivities that are also reproduced when the appeal is made to motherhood. Neither Saturday People/Mothers nor the Friday Mothers are a homogenous group, yet it is possible to construct a feminist discourse in their differences and bring together the two groups for the critique of militarism and all forms of violence it generates in people's lives; and men were not exempt from this struggle. The very acknowledgment that the mothers have a central role to play in militarism rather than a peripheral one is the first step toward the creation of such an alternative discourse. The Saturday People/Mothers have proven in their actions and in the awareness they have created, their central role in politics and their ability to bring change rather than wait for "high politics." According to Kaplan, women often mobilize grassroots within a third space between the private and the public and through collective action seek practical transformations in everyday life. It is these informal practices that give democratic struggle a concrete basis where the fight takes place on a daily basis, whereas within studies of collective action, it is usually the big events and the leaders of the movements who gain importance while informal ties and networks are overlooked.[454] Like the mothers/grandmothers of Plaza de Mayo who created a democratic movement out of women's social needs rather than abstract political visions,[455] or similarly, Women in Black, who according to Berkowitz did "politics through the backdoor," Saturday Mothers also forged democratic relations. [456] Women in Black vigils all around the world, mothers protests in Latin America, or Mourning Mothers in Iran who also meet weekly in various locations to protest enforced disappearances and the ill treatment of political prisoners are all examples of politics that

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[454] Kaplan, *Crazy for Democracy*, 180 – 181.
[455] Marguerite G. Bouvard, *Revolutionizing Motherhood : The Mothers of the Plaza De Mayo* (Wilmington, Del.: Scholarly Resources Inc., 1994).
[456] Sandra J. Berkowitz, "Can We Stand With You? Lessons from Women in Black for Global Feminist Activism," *Women and Language 26*, (2003).

has grief and mourning in the center of the protest of powerful militaristic states. Even when the participants are not all women, and such was the case in the Saturday Vigils, dominant discourses tend to attribute such movements to crying women and mothers alone in an effort to either downplay the actions with the assumption that women are doing what is expected of them by crying, or paradoxically to degrade these women, who supposedly trespass the boundaries of proper femininity. The ambivalence of the state and militarist discourses in the treatment of such actions is a significant acknowledgment of the ways in which the actions constitute powerful gendered responses to the militarization of everyday life.

Mater stated that it was never their intention to present the vigils as mothers' events, the media coined the name for them; yet, on a pragmatic level this label helped get wider acceptance and empathetic responses. Baydar ands Ivegen argue that the category of motherhood or the choice to focus on the maternal identity on the part of media and the state was an effort to turn attention away from the political character of the vigils and to take emotions as central:

> The name Saturday Mothers domesticates the sittings, renders them safe and harmless in the eye of the public. It turns public attention away from the political content of the protest to the private realm of emotions. That is, possible political outrage is instead channeled toward private sentiments toward a mother who has lost her child.[457]

In contrast, Arat argues that the mothers revolutionized the traditional mother role by insisting that the state be responsible for and accountable to its citizens.[458] In the previous chapter I argued that the Saturday Vigils brought the everyday in confrontation with the

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[457] Baydar and Ivegen, "Territories, identities, and thresholds," 696.
[458] Yeşim Arat, "Feminists, Islamists and political change in Turkey," *Political Psychology* 19, no. 1 (1998).

state, hence challenged that very boundary as the privacy of the home and the emotions of the relatives restructured the public space. Hence, we need to refrain from thinking about a mere bringing of the private into the political and instead question that very dichotomy to uncover the ways in which the private and the political are constructed in relation to one another vis-à-vis relations of power and essentialist understandings of gender. It is not necessarily the revolutionization and politicization of a sentiment or emotion that is necessarily private that is the case here. On the contrary the vigils are important because they invite the possibility to recognize how political and democratic engagements are inherently passionate and emotional rather than cold, unattached and autonomous. There is deep-seated fear of the category of emotions within feminism because emotions have long been subordinated along with the feminine and the body.[459] Yet the very opposition between reason and emotion is a false dichotomy. We cannot think of the political as separated from the yearning and the sorrow mothers brought to the square every Saturday, hence it is wrong to assume that grief or mourning belong to either the private or the feminine. Passions, desires, emotions and silence are political, yet they are not exclusively feminine. It is possible to take a critical stance against any essentialist understanding of gender or maternal identity while thinking of emotions as part and parcel of democratic engagement.[460] There were men within the Saturday People and they were also engaged in a public display of emotions, hence if there is an overriding of traditional gender roles it would be wrong to merely focus on the participation of the women, in fact Baydar and Ivegen argue that the fact that men were

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[459] Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, 3.

[460] The solidarities and friendship that the Saturday People created and sustained over time are among the most important elements of the movements, which are often overlooked in press accounts (Tanrıkulu 2002) They formed long lasting bonds marked by political trust and friendship. Even after the vigils were suspended the Saturday People and the Mothers kept in touch on collective or individual levels.

also crying in public space and unable to protect their wives from police beating also challenged traditional notions of masculinity.[461] However, while it would be a mistake to overlook the participation of men, it is also not totally accurate to characterize the vigils as mixed-gender actions. Mater explains the discrepancy between the numbers of women and men involved in the vigils with the distinction she makes between high and low politics, as follows:

> In this interview I answered your questions. If another female friend were to be here she would only fill in the gaps and not repeat the same things. Whereas most men, even if they have nothing new to say, always come to fore and speak. Women are generally not like that. There are such women as well but generally they are not, they are practical. We were practical during our meetings. We would sometimes meet in each other's houses, drink wine, and do everything together. I could explain this as the difference between "high politics" and "low politics."[462]

Kayılı, one of the few men in the vigils explains the presence of more women then men by what he believes to be the ability of women to relate to pain and solve conflicts: "They were able to understand and share the mothers' pain better than anyone. Also, the soft solutions they found in all conflict situations, their intention to avoid displays of power and their rationalism had naturally put them to the fore."[463] We see many gendered notions at work here. Kayılı seems to adhere to a traditional association of women with emotions and pain although we could very well explain women's presence in peace and antimilitarist activism as having more stakes in change and a different experience of war and militarism.[464] Both Mater and Kayılı's accounts also reveal their association of

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[461] Baydar and Ivegen, "Territories, identities, and thresholds," 712.
[462] Mater, *personal communication*, June 9, 2009.
[463] Kayılı, "'Ciplak' itaatsizlik olarak 'cumartesi anneleri'," 352.
[464] See Cockburn, *From Where we Stand* and Enloe, *Maneuvers*. According to Kaplan it is no surprise that most of the participants of such informal community organizing are women. She argues that women fight or struggle on the basis of their mother/wife/domestic identities in concern with problems related to food, healt or the community, or they seek their loves who are disappeared and then turn out to be freedom fighters or human rights activists. Contemporary collective action theorists look at social movements only

women with practical thinking and the avoidance of unnecessary displays of power. The irony in the turning of what is considered "low politics" into a long lasting act of civil disobedience proves how important it is to expand our notion of the political. The simple act of a half-hour silent sitting had the potential of challenging borders of legitimacy and subjectivities beyond the expectations of the subjects themselves.[465] The expansion of the political however does not conclude the valorizing of one form of doing politics over others or the association of each with a particular notion of gender. At first it was a surprising sight to see women sitting on the street, especially those Yurtsever describes as traditional women coming from villages to find themselves "in the middle of politics."[466] There are two problems with this observation. First, these women were far from the center of politics considering that they came from the State of Emergency region where militarism shaped their everyday experience. Second problem is the discrediting of life outside the public space and celebrating the vigils for transforming poor homemakers into heroic activists, thereby attributing to democratic action a condition of heroism which necessarily requires leaving the private sphere behind.

Mourning and the Subversion of the State

Much of what is said about mourning in political theory thus far is done around the allegory of Sophocles's Antigone, who is celebrated for turning the private act of mourning into political action, thereby becoming a heroine in her subversion of the

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in those places where the system is democratic, hence they overlook such masses of women protesting in Latin America or South Africa. *Crazy for Democracy*, 180 – 181.

[465] Kayılı, "'Çıplak' İtaatsizlik Olarak 'Cumartesi Anneleri'," [Saturday Mothers as an Example of Pure Disobedience], 356.

[466] Leman Yurtsever, "Neden Cumartesi, Neden Anneler?," [Why Saturday, Why Mothers?] *Amargi* 13 (2009): 14.

state.[467] What we need to see is that Antigone's mourning is inescapably political even if she did not defy Creon to enact her familial duties. Instead of associating the political with the "disruptive moment" of the transformation of the private into the political, we have to realize how what is considered private in this case already has political implications and happens for and within the sphere of democracy. Feminist scholars have done a great deal of work to reveal the links between gender and militarism or nationalism.[468]However, democracy rarely becomes an element of those relationships in these analyses. When we underline the gender underpinnings of nationalist or militarist discourses, we tend to forget that these relationships also parallel notions of democratic citizenship and happen in what are considered democratic spaces or structures. Militarized violence is assumed to be the outside of democracy, as if war and militarism happen at the margins of a state, which is otherwise democratic at its center. The tendency of discussing democracy in abstract, almost as an entity that can be studied on its own is not only misleading but also leads to an understanding that treats structural violence as the outside of democracy whereas democracy entails inclusion and exclusion, opening and closure, freedom and structural violence. Although fixing a meaning to democracy or fully institutionalizing it is impossible the very struggle for it is still important because as Keenan argues, democracy is the productive tension between the constant struggle for the expansion of rights and freedoms and the moments of closure in defining the demos.[469]

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[467] Rajeswari S. Rajan, "From Antagonism to Agonism: Shifting Paradigms of Women's Opposition to the State," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa, and the Middle East* 30, no. 2 (2010): 172.
[468] See Cockburn, *From Where We Stand*; Enloe, *Maneuvers*; Nira Yuval-Davis, Floya Anthias, and Jo Campling, *Woman, Nation, State* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Macmillan, 1989).
[469] Alan Keenan, *Democracy in Question : Democratic Openness in a Time of Political Closure* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2003).

Contrary to the popular reading of Antigone as a civil disobedient and a heroine of the extra-institutional, Honig focuses on the ways in which Antigone performs and defends traditional practices of public mourning which were banned in the fifth century with Solon's reforms. Public mourning started to be controlled and regulated because traditional practices, where men and women wept and cried out loud in public spaces was considered excessive. Excessive mourning posed a threat to Athenian democracy because it represented Homeric individuality and uniqueness instead of the notion "replacability" that Honig argues, Athenian democracy required. According to Honig, democracy works with an "economy of substitution," hence requires replacability rather than uniqueness from male citizen-soldiers.[470] If one dies in war it should be easy to replace him with another, thus, women's role is to keep bearing children so that loss is never too pronounced. Old practices and rituals of mourning were banned because they could easily ignite vengeance, hatred and in some cases lead to a challenging of killing and dying for the nation because they expressed the uniqueness of the dead. In Baydar and Ivegen's study of the spatial configurations of the Saturday Vigils the element of the uniqueness of the disappeared is pronounced in contrast to the uniqueness of the mother, as revealed in the following statement of a mother:

> I always took photos with me. I kept silent. … I used to hold up Rıdvan's photograph so that I would not be seen. … I wanted nobody to see me. If people saw the photograph it was enough for me. I was embarrassed. We went to Rıdvan's grave once. I took up a flag. I did not even see what the flag was like. My face was not seen.[471]

Baydar and Ivegen interpret the covering of the face as women's attempt to

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[470] Bonnie Honig, "*Antigone's Laments*, Creon's Grief: Mourning, Membership, and the Politics of Exception," *Political Theory* 37, no.1 (2009):16.
[471] Asiye Karakoç, quoted in Baydar and Ivegen, "Territories, identities, and thresholds," 707.

disguise herself with the masculine face of the husband or the son. Hence the authors interpret this act as a symbol of the impropriety of the image of mothers visibly protesting in public space and concur that that the covered face inadvertently depoliticizes the movement because mothers are put in a position to represent their sons rather than themselves.[472] On the contrary, holding a picture in remembrance upon loss is ritual of mourning. Rather than attributing to the political the task of taking away the authentic identity of women, we have to consider the significance of this particular imagery of the face. These were the faces that were rendered invisible by the state, as the enemies of the state, in other words, those bodies whose lives were ungrievable. Whereas as Butler shows, the face is the apprehension of the precariousness of life:[473]

> Those who remain faceless or whose faces are presented to us as so many symbols of evil, authorize us to become senseless before those lives we have eradicated, and whose grievability is indefinitely postponed. Certain faces must be admitted into public view, must be seen and heard for some keener sense of the value of life, all life, to take hold. So, it is not that mourning is the goal of politics, but that without that capacity to mourn, we lose that keener sense of life we need in order to oppose violence.[474]

According to Butler, grief brings to fore relational ties and helps construct a community through the recognition of the deep vulnerability of the other and the precariousness of all bodies. Yet we also know that not all acts of mourning open up to an apprehension of the value of life or constitute democratic engagements. As previously argued with respect to the Friday Mothers, some public acts of mourning incite nationalist hatred and racialized violence and “martyr funerals” in Turkey among such

[472] Baydar and Ivegen, “Territories, identities, and thresholds,” 707.
[473] Judith Butler, *Precarious Life : The Powers of Mourning and Violence* (London ; New York: Verso, 2004).
[474] Ibid., xix.

phenomena.[475] In the case of the martyr funeral, the manner of mourning is strictly defined and controlled by the state-military power, while voices that condemn the duty of dying for the nation are not allowed to be pronounced as highly as the popular slogan "martyrs do not die, the homeland will not be divided."[476] Mourning is inadvertently political both in the case of the enforced disappearances and in martyr funerals because the losses are derivative of political decisions and processes.

The "Democratic Opening" and the Politics of Mourning

Because Mouffe focuses exclusively on the combative and disruptive character of political action, she misses the associational element that is fundamental to the continuation of the vigils for four consecutive years, and their reactivation after a period of ten years. As Villa states, "If the conflict of opinions that *is* political life is not to devolve into a struggle defined by Schmitt's friend/enemy distinction, it is imperative that action be informed by a faculty of judgment which is sensitive to particulars, which is not bound by a set of rules or an ideology.[477] Whereas contemporary agonists only revive the Nietzsche in Arendt, they ignore other aspects of her thought such as the value of judgment and the care for the world.[478] In that respect, the vigils point to the limits of agonistic accounts. In fact the Saturday People/Mothers insisted on going to Galatasaray

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[475] For a discussion of martyr funerals and their place in the national imagery and as the representation of state power in rituals see Navaro-Yashin, *Faces of the State*.
[476] See Sinem Gurbey, "Islam, Nation-State, and the Military: A Discussion of Secularism in Turkey," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 29, no. 3 (2009) for a discussion of the way in which military service is normalized in defending the secular constitution through an appeal to the Islamic conception of martyrdom.
[477] Villa, *Politics, Philosophy, Terror,* 123.
[478] According to Benhabib, Arendt's account of political action generates two distinctive but interrelated models of the public sphere: the agonal and the associational. Whereas the former is based on an account of theatricality, uniqueness and greatness, the latter represents "the kind of democratic or associative politics that can be engaged in by ordinary citizens who may or may not possess great moral prowess but who acquire the capacities of political judgment and initiative in the process of self-organization." Seyla Benhabib, *The Reluctant Modernism of Hannah Arendt* (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 1996), 125.

not only because it was a place to protest; but also because the square had turned into a space of commemoration, a meeting point where they could remember and share. The analysis of this movement cannot only take into consideration the decrease in the number of disappearances yet overlook the solidarities formed and sustained by these vigils, which are critical for the formation of long lasting bonds marked by political trust and friendship. In fact the Saturday Vigils were suspended in 1999 but started again in 2009 after ten years of intermission. The current investigations of coup d'état plots and contra-guerilla organizing within political, intellectual and military cadres brought the issue of enforced-disappearance back onto the agenda. The parents of the disappeared have formed their own organizations in the meantime and the current vigils are more institutionalized, and also, more vocal. They no longer only hope to bring awareness, which is already established by now, today they pressure the government for punishment and hope for reconciliation.

In 2009 the Justice and Development Party (JDP) government started talking about a "democratic opening" referring to plans of a democratic resolution to the Kurdish problem. The use of the phrase democratic opening signaled that what had been considered a national security issue and a terrorism problem for decades would now be resolved through democratic means instead of arms. President Abdullah Gül opined: "good things will happen."[479] In fact a lively discussion of the Kurdish issue started to an extent that did not exist before. Commentators, NGOs, politicians, artists and the people in general started discussing issues such as broadcasting and education in Kurdish and what a possible resolution plan should include. Looking back at the past two years though

[479] "Türkiye İçin Güzel Şeyler Olacak," [Good Things Will Happen for Turkey], *Sabah Dailynews*, July 27, 2009.

reveals no substantive step in terms of the resolution of the Kurdish problem. The initiative is stalled because the government resists acknowledging the Kurdish people and their political representatives as legitimate parties to deliberations and military actions continue with intermittent periods of ceasefire. As the Turkish government unraveled its plans of democratic reform, the parliament, military elites, commentators and NGOs all talked about what this democratic opening/initiative, or the "Kurdish initiative" should entail. There were different views but most seemed to agree on the following: that mothers shall not cry any more. The below quote is an example of Prime Minister Erdoğan's description of the democratic opening:

> When I talk to the representatives of my nation as the Prime Minister of the Republic of Turkey I make a call to the crying mothers whose hearts are wounded. I am talking to the mothers who have lost part of their own lives. I am talking to my sisters who were waiting for letters from their fiancés but received their death notifications instead. It is time to say something to both Ms. Ayşe who waits for her son who is a soldier in Şırnak and to Ms. Fatma whose son died on the mountains.[480]

There are countless examples of similar appeals to mothers' grief, which stress that the democratic opening is first and foremost addressed to the mothers of the nation, promising them that they will not cry anymore. Similarly, the Minister of Interior Affairs states: "Our nation knows very clearly what our problem is. Mothers' consciences understand us. As our Prime Minister has explained, the road we chose is the road to a

[480] Ayse and Fatma are common female names in Turkey. The Prime Minister is referring to Turkish and Kurdish mothers by making a reference to the Turkish soldier and the Kurdish rebel on the mountain. See "Siyasiler Altı Saat Atıştı Türkiye Demokratik Açılımın İçeriğini Yine Öğrenemedi" [Politicians Argued for Six Hours but Turkey Still Does Not Know the Content of the Democratic Opening] *Radikal Dailynews,* November 14, 2009, http://www.radikal.com.tr/Radikal.aspx?aType=RadikalHaberDetay&ArticleID=964279&Date=31.05.2010&CategoryID=98

stronger Turkey where mothers do not cry anymore."[481] It is important to discuss to what extent these references are genuine calls for peace, a nationalist celebration of motherhood or a populist appeal to sentiments, and perhaps all, yet what is more vital to acknowledge is the very central role conceptions of gender and their regulation play for nationalism and militarism, and also democracy. Different conceptions of femininity, and particularly motherhood proliferated during debates on the democratic opening and were diversified along ethnic, racial, sexual and class lines. What I believe that needs to be stressed even further is the relationship these gendered discourses have to democracy. References to gender always come up during times of transition; however, democratic theory and the democratization literature pay little attention to gender. In her study of the links between democratization and gender in Latin America and post-socialist Eastern Europe, Waylen explains the lack of gender in the democratization literature as a result of the narrow, formal definitions of democracy adopted by the democratization school.[482] Narrow conceptions of democracy that formulate the link between gender and democracy only as a matter of inclusion and look at the representation of women in the parliament as the sole measure of gender equality cannot make account of the multiple ways in which conceptions of gender are central to democratic processes. While Prime Minister Erdoğan described the democratic opening as a process open to all, as any deliberative notion of democracy would require, the sole political actor that came to fore turned to be the JDP government. Çağlayan on the other hand, presses for the necessity of the involvement of women, and especially Kurdish women in the discussions:

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[481] "İşte Hükümetin Kürt Açılımı Paketi" [Government's Kurdish Initiative], *Hurriyet,* January 15, 2010, http://hurarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/goster/ShowNew.aspx?id=13485171

[482] Georgina Waylen, "*Women* and *Democratization*: Conceptualizing Gender Relations in Transition Politics," *World Politics* 46 (1994): 332.

> Whenever someone feels the need to refer to the fraternity of Turks and Kurds the first thing that comes up is the Battle of Gallipoli[483]; that 'we fought together in Gallipoli. We have to have better references for fraternity and peace than wars… it is essential that women enter this process as subjects. Because women do not need to look in war for proof of peace. [484]

Çağlayan argues that the process has to involve women as active subjects because war is a gendered phenomenon and the one in Turkey that is for years handled as a problem of national security not only propagates hegemonic masculinities and patriarchy but also promotes other violences in women's lives. That is why issues such as forced migration, pressures on Kurdish identity and language, patriarchal pressure and control, the system of village watchmen as it promotes domestic violence, war crimes, women's conditions in prisons, the masculinities that are shaped in the war zone and that in turn also effect women's lives back home should all be discussed as part of the process.[485] It is crucial to see Kurdish women as political subjects and not just victims of violence and war.[486]

> Today what is called a resolution is negotiations made upon items listed on paper and President, Prime Minister, National Security Council, party leaders, newspaper columnists or "rational men" talking or bickering in bass baritone voices. If it is going to be something beyond a practice of weighing the other's strength, taking guard, developing tactics and maneuvers, then women's experiences are needed.[487]

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[483] The Battle of Gallipoli was one of the fronts in which Ottomans fought against the occupying forces France and England during the 1st World War who wanted to colonize different parts of the declining Ottoman Empire. It is regarded as a significant turning point in the nation's history as the piece of land was successfully defended and later became a national symbol of victory.

[484] Emine Özcan, "Barış Mücadelesi Kadınların Özgürlüğünü de İçermeli" [The Struggle for Peace Should Include Freedoms for Women] *Bianet* August 21, 2009, http://www.bianet.org/kadin/toplumsal-cinsiyet/116602-baris-mucadelesi-kadinlarin-ozgurlugunu-de-icermeli

[485] Handan Çağlayan, "Çözüm Sürecine Toplumsal Cinsiyet Perspektifinden Bakmak," [Looking to the Resolution Process Through a Gender Perspective], *Kültür ve Siyasette Feminist Yaklaşımlar*, (BGST Yayınları, Istanbul, 2010), 14 – 15.

[486] Ibid., 16.

[487] Emine Özcan, "Barış Mücadelesi Kadınların Özgürlüğünü de İçermeli" [The Struggle for Peace Should Include Freedoms for Women]

With an increased pace in the last decade, Turkish and Kurdish women have been organizing conferences, panels, discussions, workgroups, and forming practices of living together. They are organized on a level that no ideology has ever done before in Turkey, which is why Çağlayan suggests that there is too much to gain from women's collaborative experiences.[488] Saturday Mothers collaborate with other movements, such as the Peace Mothers Initiative, organized by Kurdish mothers against war and also with Turkish mothers and soldier mothers who say no to war. The politicians assume that it is natural for women to sacrifice their sons for the nation and have them kill and ask for vengeance when necessary, or stop crying when the time comes. Yet voices of those parents who actually want to stop the war are undermined, because the Prime Minister states that, "Mothers don't have ideologies, mothers don't have politics; there is no left or right for mothers."[489] In his statement, the emphasis is made to the unchanging and apolitical character of motherhood. The implicit logic is that if and when mothers are politicized, men do it. On the other hand, by referring to such essentialist notions of motherhood the Prime Minister wants to assure that even if things will change with a democratic opening, mothers will stay as mothers, hence what is natural will not be subverted. Alluding to the unchanging quality of motherhood and to similarities between women's experience regardless of ethnicity, is different from an appeal that is not made to the fraternity of Turkish and Kurdish sons. While mothers' grief is explicitly pronounced, killing and dying are not, because violence is the unpronounced requirement of the democratic system that that gives citizens the right to become a soldier.[490]

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[488] Yack, "Rhetoric and Public Reason," 433.
[489] "Analarin İdeolojisi Olmaz" [Mothers Do Not Have Ideologies], *Vatan Dailynews,* August 11, 2009.
[490] The Turkish Constitution Section I refers to soldiering both as a duty and a right.

Mothers and what they go through is taken up as seemingly important yet they, themselves, have no role in putting an end to those tears. In all the political speeches, mothers are addressed and portrayed as if they are central to the process, yet, at the same time, they are outside the process of the democratic opening; somewhere where politics cannot reach, a sacred, natural, apolitical, yet at the same time very political place, political as long as they do not exceed their boundaries. In fact none of the speeches addressed to the mothers of the nation promote an anti-militarist or pro-peace message promoting their active organization. Moreover, implicit in the idea that mothers shall not cry, is hidden the fact that men kill and men die; yet any specific reference to individuals who kill and die, or to the hundreds of conscientious objectors whom the Turkish state wants to make invisible are not addressed since that would make explicit the links between democracy, militarism and soldiering which requires the disposability of bodies and sustenance of a particular notion of masculinity. Instead of death, the emphasis is always made on birth. Ruddick identifies in mothers' mobilization in Latin America against state crimes, "preservative love, singularity in connection, the promise of birth and the resilience of hope."[491] She argues that "women's language" of loyalty, love, and outrage turn into anger in public spaces. Yet as previously argued, it is one thing to acknowledge that mourning is political and that all persons grieve and mourn, and another to introduce a maternal subject that is possessive of these qualities. Dietz criticizes Ruddick's approach, along with other maternalist arguments, for suggesting an exclusive, non-generalizable identity such as motherhood as the basis of democratic citizenship.[492] Emphasizing a link between reproductive capacity and democratic

[491] Sara Ruddick, *Maternal Thinking : Toward a Politics of Peace* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1989), 229.
[492] Dietz, *Turning Operations*, 58.

characteristics and sentiments works to reiterate women's role as the biological reproducers of the nation, where motherhood becomes a tool to regulate and control sexuality, reproduction and fertility.[493] In fact, it is no coincidence that Prime Minister Erdoğan frequently urges "Turkish" women to bear three children each, around the same time discussions of a democratic opening to the Kurdish problem is on the public agenda.

The following dialogue between a famous transsexual singer Bülent Ersoy and a female colleague on a primetime show and the wide reaction the dialogue spurred, sheds lights onto the relationship between sexuality, fertility and motherhood. When Bülent Ersoy argued that she would not want to send her son to die in war, if she were capable of having a child, the female colleague immediately reacted in a chauvinistic sentiment to argue that she would send her son to war with much pride and honor.[494] Upon this dialogue not only did famous women compete to show how patriotic they were by dismissing Ersoy's statements but a regional Chief Prosecutor of the Republic filed a case against Bülent Ersoy for "insulting the Turkish military and discouraging men from soldiering."[495] Chief prosecutor stated: "It will be naïve to consider those words which provoked Turkish mothers as freedom of speech, when they come from *someone who is medically incapable of giving birth*." [496] [Emphasis added] When a member of the parliament criticized the government for not showing enough courage as Ersoy, a government member's response was:

> If we were as courageous, we would have some part of cut off as well… we only have our beards to cut and we do that… it is also courage to go off borders to fight terrorists under this snow in these winter days. I will not measure my

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[493] Yuval Davis, *Woman, Nation, State*, 2.
[494] Nilüfer Zengin, "Nationalist Uproar at Singer's Anti-war Stance," *Bianet*, February 27, 2008, http://www.bianet.org
[495] Turkish Criminal Code Article # 318 criminalizes the discouraging of people from military duty.
[496] Zengin, "Nationalist Uproar at Singer's Anti-war Stance."

> courage against Bülent Ersoy. I have three sons. When the time comes they will all go do their military service."[497]

According to the member of the parliament Kutlu, courage is the display of masculinity on the war zone whereas Ersoy's comments on war cannot be taken seriously because she does not fit into a proper gender identity. She can neither be attributed the masculine role, hence the disposition of courage, nor the feminine role, hence the disposition of care. In Kutlu and many others' consideration, since Ersoy fits none of the roles she should not have any authority to hold a stance, and especially a critical one, against militarist policies of the state. Yet the very fact that her seemingly irrelevant contribution spurred such a heated public debate is a perfect example of the extent to which soldiering rests on the active collaboration of women. Although Ruddick acknowledges that there is no homogeneous maternal identity, she understands motherhood as tied to birth giving; "mothers have always been the custodians of the promise of birth; they who make us feel what it is that violence kills and will kill again.[498] The associating care and mourning with the ability and willingness for biological reproduction, even when it is made for the construction of a peace oriented politics invites the danger of the denouncement of pro-peace messages, as seen above, when they come from those who do not fit into predetermined roles. To be able to envision and construct a democratic politics of mourning, it is crucial that we challenge essentialist gender roles and identities and acknowledge the various ways in which Turkish and Kurdish citizens, LGBT communities, soldiers, conscientious objectors forge democratic solidarities.

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[497] Ibid.
[498] Ruddick, *Maternal Thinking*, 251.

Conclusion: Mourning, Emotions and Democratic Engagements

Throughout the dissertation continuous reference is made to the role of passions and emotions in politics. Specifically in this chapter mourning is discussed, as it constitutes basis for democratic mobilization. I juxtaposed the government's rhetorical appeal to mothers' grief with actual mobilizations upon grief. Yet, when do we know whether an appeal to emotions is just an appeal, demagoguery, and populism, and when it is sincere? We do not and we cannot. I suggested earlier that speech is never free of power, manipulation and rhetoric; as Dietz suggests politicians always work with half-truths.[499] Feminist scholars are skeptical of the category of emotions in politics, because of the traditional association of the women with what is private and emotional as opposed to public and rational. Such dichotomous thinking is not transcended with an approach that celebrates women as women and the feminine as naturally emotional, passionate, pro-peace and hence different from the masculine. An approach that adds men in, to argue that fathers also grieve is also not adequate to transcend gender dichotomies. Only when we understand that the categories of femininity and masculinity are constituted in power relations, we can acknowledge what sort of exclusions take place when political action materializes in the hegemonic articulation of one category, which is in this case motherhood. Only when emotions and passions are situated alongside justice and democratic citizenship rather than associated with any particular construction of gender that a critical democratic practice can be established.[500]

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[499] Dietz, *Turning Operations*, 153.
[500] See Tronto, *Moral Boundaries* for a discussion of the practice of care as a political idea that describes the qualities necessary for democratic citizens to live together in a pluralistic society. (161-2).

I argued earlier that when certain modes and forms of expression, which are – dispassionate, orderly and articulate – are valorized over others they in turn lead to the exclusion of those who cannot express themselves as such, those who are already underprivileged in society and politics, who then sometimes revert to silence that embodies these emotions.[501] Rhetoric and emotions are part and parcel of any democratic communication or deliberation; in fact as I showed in the previous chapter they can also be displayed in silent actions. Against the argument that emotional appeals in heterogeneous communities threaten impartiality, Yack argues, with reference to Aristotle, that there is a difference between courtroom judgment and political deliberation. While courtroom judgment requires cold reason, political judgment does not require impartiality; instead it requires a good mix of desire and intellect.[502] In fact, impartiality is never possible or desirable in politics, which is always about conflict and power and where any decision is some form of constellation of power. The belief that power can be bracketed and that people can deliberative and negotiate without violence and exclusion is the biggest problem with contemporary accounts of deliberative democracy. A critical practice can only be built on the acknowledgment that any opening comes with its closures and exclusions, hence the process and the rhetoric of democratic opening in Turkey also has be considered with this in mind. However this does not mean that we should only envision democratic action from the point of view of negativity and put to fore a heroic, combative notion of the political subject as the only way of building a democratic practice. Rather than dismissing emotions and rhetoric altogether we have to accept that in politics we always appeal to our emotions and necessarily talk or keep

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[501] Young, *Inclusion and Democracy*; Sanders, "Against Deliberation."
[502] Yack, "Rhetoric and Public Reason," 432.

silent from a point where emotions are, but also be willing to accept the risk that emotions might take us astray and mislead us.[503] Although it is not always the case for the actors to acknowledge that risk and confront it in an ethos of critical responsiveness as Connolly expects, it is nevertheless a vital task for the political theorist.

The problem with both the deliberative and agonistic approaches is that they confine politics into an exclusive, narrowly defined notion of expressiveness. While the deliberative democrats focus exclusively on processes of speech and dialogue, the agonistic democrats remain stuck on the disruptive moments of democracy unable to account for ongoing politics and the value of democratic engagements that circumvent rather than play with antagonistic distinctions. Both models are unable to give convincing accounts of how democratic solidarities are sustained over time. According to Butler, grief brings to fore relational ties and helps construct a community through the recognition of the deep vulnerability of the other and the precariousness of all bodies, not because mourning is the goal of politics, but because "without that capacity to mourn, we lose that keener sense of life we need in order to oppose violence."[504] Numerous strategies of mobilization within the Kurdish political movements are constituted and constitutive of imageries of Kurdish women as political actors. The image of the grieving mother cannot be conceived independently from the experiences of mothers of the disappeared or mothers of prisoners, which are then utilized by the Kurdish movement as rhetoric of victimization. Yet according to Çağlayan, within the Kurdish movement the maternal imagery also creates a feeling of "duty" which gets entangled with efforts to

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[503] Ibid., 433.
[504] Butler, *Precarious Life*, xix.

protect children from dangers and to secure the right to life.[505] In that respect mothers construct an attitude in response to human rights abuse and give them a political standing.

Skeptical perspectives of the subversive potential of women's mourning are understandable as they stem from the fear that such politics imprison women into prescribed gender roles.[506] Such that women bring their "moral capital – but little else – to their encounter with the illegitimate violence of the state." According to Rajan, practices that code women's struggles in ethical 'universal' terms cedes the terrain of the more narrowly political to others."[507] Yet the problem is precisely this constrained account of democratic politics that exclusively expects disruption and subversion from politics, which is why, silent politics, that embody all the paradoxical qualities of silence, pose a challenge to most existing accounts of political and democratic action. Once we stop thinking of sentiments and care as possessions of women in the private sphere, waiting to be revolutionized in moments of extremity, then we can start thinking of them as constructive of democratic relationships.[508] Democratic identifications are constructed in various spaces, but democrats require "constant persuasion into being democrats" and to stay as such.[509] Hence, neither the Habermasian model, which portrays a "bloodless conception of participation" where citizens move from self-interested mode to the general interest mode, nor the agonistic model which does not pay attention to processes of

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[505] For a discussion of women's mobilization strategies within the Kurdish movement see Handan Çağlayan, *Analar, Yoldaşlar, Tanrıçalar : Kürt Hareketinde Kadinlar ve Kadin Kimliğinin Oluşumu* [Mothers, Sisters, Goddesses: The Construction of Women's Identity in the Kurdish Movement] (Istanbul: Iletisim Yayınları, 2007).
[506] Rajan, "From Antagonism to Agonism," 171.
[507] Ibid.
[508] Unlike maternalists such as Ruddick and Elshtain who suggest maternal love and care as bases for antimilitarist politics, Dietz argues that such an exclusive, non-generalizable identity cannot become the basis of democratic citizenship. See Ruddick, *Maternal Thinking*; Dietz, *Turning Operations*; Jean B. Elshtain, *Public Man, Private Woman: Women in Social and Political Thought* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1981).
[509] Norval, *Aversive Democracy*, 250.

persuasion beyond the disruptive moments, can account for changes and grips in democratic subjectivity.[510] Hence in order to construct fuller understanding of democratization and political change we need to account for intermediary forms of communication, and envision ways of relating to the other that exceeds both rational deliberation or combative action.

[510] Ibid., 185.

"We might think of the public spheres not merely as spaces for lexis and praxis, or speech and action, as Habermas formulates it, but also as patterns of rising and falling voices – an ocean of emergent public claims, sinking silences, confirming quiet, and re-emergent claims."[511]

CHAPTER SEVEN
CONCLUSION: DEMOCRATIC THEORY CONTEXTUALIZED

The dissertation did two things via the discussion of silence: discussed the deliberative and agonistic models of democracy in the light of the concept, and explored the merits of silence both as a concept and a political strategy. Since 1990s, democracy has largely become a matter of deliberation; democratic theory has witnessed two decades of condensed discussion on deliberation with normative concerns setting the groundwork in the 1990s, and more empirical works to follow up predominantly within the last decade. Multi-methodological research within deliberative democracy abridges the empirical with the normative through studies that focus on small-scale deliberative exercises, citizen juries and minipublics. Most of the empirical work on mini publics or citizen juries either support or weaken the normative theses of deliberative democracy, however they take deliberative forms for granted and do not question its relevance within a comparative perspective. I suggested that even though deliberative democracy is an ideal theory, which does not aim to meet real practices but inform them, it is imperative to realize the limitations of its expectations and presuppositions.

The overemphasis on the speech act, and particularly deliberative speech is not accompanied by a concurrent problematization of the motivation or the ability to speak. I argued that, in order to be able to work as a sustainable model, deliberative democracy has to presuppose the existence of a political subject characteristically defined as one

[511] Allen, "Anonymous: on Silence and the Public Sphere," 133.

who is willing and able to speak, make arguments and listen to others, but more importantly who embraces deliberation as an efficient political strategy. Moreover, increased deliberation is proposed to develop this character when it is not present. (See Chapter 2) Deliberative democrats perceive democracy as a matter of education, in other words, the underlying idea is that the more deliberating a society the more democratic it will eventually become, which entails an understanding that everyone who is party to some issue or disagreement should eventually learn to make and remake arguments, defend their convictions and listen to others. Otherwise deliberative democrats have nothing to say to those who are disengaged other than that their silence therefore indicates irresponsibility or the unwillingness to achieve consensus. Furthermore, although deliberative models are almost exclusively focused on ways in which deliberations can be made more inclusive such that more people including the formerly excluded can join, the attempts to include people does not question the disciplining and regulatory functions of deliberation as a medium of communication. As radical as the move from a purely formalistic or aggregative account of democracy to an understanding of popular sovereignty that is dispersed in public communication and communicative will formation, deliberative democracy circumscribes both the spheres and mode of communication to a constricted notion of rational speech.

In Chapter 3, I surveyed poststructuralist democratic theories, and particularly agonistic democracy, in the works of Connolly, Laclau and Mouffe, and criticized their suggestion of agonistic action as an alternative to deliberation. I argued that by positing “contention” and “agonism” as a response to and in criticism of “deliberation” and “consensus,” they actually limit themselves to an exclusively disruptive notion of

politics. They celebrate antagonism at the expense of reducing politics and democratic struggle to disruption and resistance alone. Once identity is only described from the point of view antagonism, as it forms in resistance or subversion, then political voice is exclusively theorized as the voice of the excluded, and political action is conceptualized with respect to the practices of the "underdog." (See Chapter 3) Imposing on the democratic subject an a priori negative identity that finds partial closure only in subversion and resistance, they fall short of giving a convincing account of what keeps an agonistic relationship from reverting back to antagonism. This is especially problematic in contexts where it is the hegemonic constellation of power in the state that structures the political and political discourse on friend/enemy lines. The confinement of the political expression of passions to the category of disruption alone undermines forms of action that circumvent rather than embrace partisanship.

The dissertation turned to silence in dialogue with the deliberative and agonistic accounts of democracy. To deliberative democracy, the dissertation raised the question, what kind of a communicative experience do silent protests constitute, and to agonistic democrats, the question, what we can say about political action where political discourse is constituted by friend-enemy distinctions. Chapter 4 challenged the traditional association of silence with the absence of communication or of political action. Whereas it if often speech that is perceived as constructive of communities and of the political sphere, I discussed how speech and silence have different modalities and they interact with each other in the making and the breaking of political communities. The chapter showed that given the right circumstances, silence plays transformative roles in politics depending on how authorities perceive it and how actors utilize it. Thus silence is useful

as a category that blurs boundaries between complicity and consent, and disruption and consensus. If political theory continues to focus exclusively on what is voiced or those who speak and act in certain ways, then it will risk missing the practices that go under the radar, or the silences and inaction that point to the problems with existing political systems and languages.

I argued that silence is useful as a conceptual tool because it blurs the boundaries between consent, complicity and resistance, but also, in given circumstances, as a political tool for the very same reasons. Silence does not always constitute a threat to community or to emancipatory politics, but can also be strategically useful because unlike verbal expression, it resists categorization into a simple yes or no. The fact that we cannot easily know whether which silences are voluntary choices and which are the involuntary outcomes of subordination is not a malfunction of silence as a concept but an indication of the very nature of power and the way in which power relations structure the speech, silence and actions of political subjects. In the same way we cannot know for sure if a collective silence or the refusal to speak points to mere disinterest or a radical democratic criticism, we also cannot know if a rational argument or a dissident protest is simply transparent. Silence is helpful in showing this as a refreshing conceptual tool that indicates how we should give away searching for complete transparency within political actions as well as in democratic participation.

There are three broad substantive discussions to follow up from the conclusions of the dissertation. First is the contribution the discussion of silence makes to the literature on deliberative and agonistic democracy. When political communities and public spheres are envisioned solely through a particular form of communication, and that is stylized

deliberation on given issues, then it becomes hard to dissociate the celebration of deliberation as a democratic theory that rests on the communicability of all values and perspectives from one that insists on the speech act without adequate attention to its quality and content. Havel argued that people's silence in the face of authority actually created a spectacle that worked to confirm authority. Deliberative democracy today has to take caution against deliberation in designed publics from becoming such spectacle without having any substantive effective on decision-making. When Habermas distinguishes between formal and informal publics, he relegates the role of agenda setting to the latter while decision-making is confined to formal, strong publics. Yet this separation also works to diminish the influence of informal, grassroots mobilizations, by pushing them outside the realm of decision-making. Moreover, deliberative democracy does not have much explanatory power about the communicative work that is done through nonverbal and emotive forms of communication, one of which discussed in the dissertation is silence. It is important for democratic theory to think about ways in which silence is a collective choice, such that it becomes collective inaction, as in voters' abstention or boycotts, insofar as they indicate problems with existing political outlets and forms of expression. Treating silence instead as the unwillingness to cooperate is thus blind to the criticism that is embodied in such inaction. Moreover, considering any possible disinterest in deliberation as a matter of social psychology or psychological disposition is indicative of the prioritization of one form of expression over many others, in which people feel comfortable but still are engaged and responsible.

Through an analysis of the Saturday Vigils in Turkey, I suggested that silence that is employed to frame the mobilization of the vigils allowed escaping barren dichotomies

in which political discourse is structured in Turkey. The state-society relationship in Turkey is ordered in political discourse through the construction of discursive antagonisms via binary oppositions such as: secular/Islamic, modern/reactionary, western/eastern, global/local and Turkish/Kurdish.[512] When Mouffe advocates the revitalization of partisan politics so that passions have clearly defined alternatives to identify with, she overlooks how the same antagonistic structure can be employed in the ordering of political discourse leaving citizens no choice outside the already set labels. That is why I suggested that silence constituted an escape from partisanship and categorizations, and allowed the expression of passions without necessarily requiring partisan politics. If popular mobilization is solely conceived of its antagonistic aspects, we are confronted with the risk of undermining the elements of political action that enable the continuation of democratic engagements over time.

The distinguishing line for many of the binaries in Turkey are determined with respect to conceptions of gender, and particularly defined with reference to women's presence in certain ways in the public sphere, namely, the way women are seen in public.[513] That is why women's presence in silence in an unconventional political act was all the more important for resisting such categorizations, and constituted a different experience of "being seen" in public. The persistent presence of the vigillers created a stark contrast to the invisibility enforced-disappearance aims to create as a political tactic. Silence adds to the effect of the performance because of its uncanny quality that attracts attention from a point that is beyond words. Furthermore, I argued mainly with respect to Bickford's insightful exploration of the categories of attention and appearance in the

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[512] Keyman, *Turkiye ve Radikal Demokrasi* [Turkey and Radical Democracy], vii.
[513] Göle, *The Forbidden Modern*.

works of Aristotle and Arendt, that silence allows underlining the intersubjective relationships that are formed not only by the speech act but also by attention, seeing and being seen that are significant, yet undervalued qualities necessary for the formation of democratic relationships and responsiveness. (See Chapter 5)

The second point that demands further discussion is the gender dimension that is necessary in studying the relationship between communication and democratic citizenship. In political theory silence has been attributed to women as a quality or a virtue, or defined as something that happens to women by patriarchal structures and masculine forms of communication that render women speechless. (See Chapter 4) Vis-à-vis the discussion of the Saturday Vigils, I suggested that women's silence overturned the association between silence and passivity and the vigils constituted powerful responses to the actions of the state but also to the militarization of everyday life. Saturday Vigils, along with similar silent vigils and protests elsewhere contribute to the literature on feminist democratic theory and practice. *Women in Black* is different in terms of the network's explicit and pronounced feminist, anti-militarist agenda that is shared by all strands of the movement around the world, while the issues each problematize vary according to the different regions in which they take place. In Turkey, there is few, yet important feminist anti-militarist mobilizations, including men and women's joint mobilization as conscientious objectors. The Saturday Vigils are different in the sense that their primary concern was enforced-disappearance and there was no feminist or anti-militarist agenda embraced openly by the participants. Yet mobilizations that center around grief and mourning, and particularly that include mothers as mothers, such as the *Mourning Mothers* in Iran or various mother's protests of enforced-disappearance in

Latin America with the Argentinean Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo as the chief example, should be analyzed as they make possible the construction of a feminist democratic practice. Enforced-disappearance and women's relation to war and militarism are closely related and a feminist perspective has the potential to bring this relationship to surface and to turn the act of mourning into substantive feminist democratic criticism. Any suggestion of a democratic resolution of the Kurdish problem in Turkey or the creation of communicative forums, to replace "weapons with words" have to pay attention to the various forms structural violence that shape men and women's lives. Moreover, any such analysis of the underlying relationship between militarism and democracy, and between men and women's distinguished relationship to speech and action, have to transcend a simplified notion of women mourning the death of men.

The final point the dissertation brings to surface is the necessity to rethink the relationship between ideal theories of democracy and the existing models of democratic politics with attention to variety of contexts but also with skepticism of the rhetoric of democracy that is embraced by ruling powers. Within the case of Turkey, the dissertation problematized two interrelated phenomena that pertain to the formation of political subjectivities and shaped democratic politics. First is the organization of political discourse on antagonistic lines within the process of the construction of a homogenous Turkish nation-state and the Turkish army's consecutive attempts to maintain this homogeneity, and to supposedly "protect democracy" via interventions into democratic politics. I showed that this antagonistic structuring of political discourse was especially strengthened in the aftermath of the 1980 coup d'état when the state positioned most parts of the society, and primarily the Kurdish population, as its enemies. The second

phenomenon is the increasing militarization of the state and of everyday life, which shapes the meaning and experience of democratic citizenship along ethnic and gendered lines. The historical bloc in Turkey favored state interests to individual freedom, security to democratization and state-public distinction to public participation.[514] The state has always been a strong state that orders around citizens rather than "penetrates the society."[515]That is why Keyman argues; that citizenship in Turkey was for a long time only understood based on duties, hence a passive citizenship rather than an active one based on the civil society. [516] Yet I argued that while the 1980 made a harsh blow on Turkish society and existing contentious action, it was also a period when the rhetoric of democracy emerged on many fronts, which is what I showed with respect to the discussion of women's activism. Keyman argues that the democracy rhetoric of the NGOs and social movements is accompanied by insecurity on the part of the individuals, in terms of the expression of difference or freedom of speech and basic rights, which then resembles a "democracy without democrats."[517] He concurs that the top-down modernization process that created homogenous and confused, rather than "modern individuals," is partly responsible for the coming into being of what Kadioglu calls a "following citizenry," rather than a rights-bearing active citizenry.[518] It is because he understands modern individuals only on the basis of Kantian rights bearing or Aristotelian participating citizenship that he identifies Turkey as a democracy without

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[514] Fuat Keyman, *Değişen Dünya Dönüşen Türkiye* [Changing World, Transforming Turkey] (Istanbul: Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayinları), 166. Keyman uses Gramsci's term "historical bloc" but argues that in Turkey it includes more than the more than the bureaucratic and military elite, but also political, cultural, and intellectual actors.
[515] Henry Barkey, "The Struggles of a Strong State," *Journal of International Affairs* 14, no.3 (2000): 88.
[516] Keyman, *Değişen Dünya Dönüşen Türkiye* [Changing World, Transforming Turkey], 166.
[517] Keyman, Turkiye ve Radikal Demokrasi [Turkey and Radical Democracy], 123.
[518] Ayse Kadıoğlu, *Cumhuriyet İradesi Demokrasi Muhakemesi* [The Will of the Republic and the Judgment of Democracy] (Istanbul: Metis Yayinlari, 1999).

democrats.[519] While it is indispensable that we pay attention to historical-political processes that play an important role in the democratic experience within a given context, such as the role played by the Turkish state's top-down modernization process, if we fail to see how citizens construct and transform the definitions and roles attributed to them, even in what are considered visceral or informal politics, then it will not be surprising that we still keep looking for democrats. There is a risk entailed in overlooking existing forms of political practice and thinking about how they can be improved, and that is reverting to a notion of democracy as elite-negotiation and citizens of non-western countries as passive followers.

While I showed with respect to Laclau that a chain of equivalence established among various movements could end up being articulated into an antidemocratic content, it is equally important to receive any rhetoric of democracy with the same skepticism, especially when iterated by authoritarian powers. Smith argues, with reference to Laclau and Mouffe, that authoritarian hegemonic discourses perpetuate domination and yet may sometimes become "organic" to the extent that they resonate with already mobilized popular anxieties and incorporate fragments of some popular traditions. Given the fact that the democratic revolution remains one of the defining discourses of contemporary politics, authoritarian hegemonic projects often construct themselves as a pseudo-democratic mobilization of "the people" against "the establishment."[520] Hence while they seemingly accept the plural character of the social, they nevertheless deal with it through assimilationist, disciplinary and exclusionary strategies.[521] This is why I argued that Turkey's current Justice and Development Party government's discourse of the

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[519] Keyman, Turkiye ve Radikal Demokrasi [Turkey and Radical Democracy], 182.
[520] Smith, *Laclau and Mouffe: The Radical Democratic Imaginary*, 177.
[521] Ibid.

“democratic opening” that employs a rhetoric of “putting an end to mothers’ cries” by solving the Kurdish problem has to be juxtaposed with the actual practices of the people upon a united response to grief, that entails more than the rhetoric of mourning but has the potential to dig deeper into the real sources of grief.

This line of inquiry has to be followed in the future especially with respect to Turkey because Turkey is held today, in international politics, as “the model democracy” that should set a standard to democratic transitions in the Islamic Middle East. We shall not forget that in Turkey the liberal, the radical and the democratic, as well as the nationalist and the militarist are being articulated simultaneously. In the face of such articulations, silence shows the limits of given paradigms for political communication but also underlines the existence of democratic practice in different, often undermined, modalities of speech as well silence. As Eschle argues, studying women’s practices in the world is useful for the democratizing impulse in global feminist thinking, denoting the abandonment of monolithic, universalizing conceptions of patriarchy in favor of notions of power that are global yet diverse.[522] There is a great deal that transnational feminism and its focus on the politics of location and connection can contribute to democratic theory.[523] Likewise context-specific discussions of democratic action, such as the one this dissertation undertook, contribute to the rethinking of the dominant models of democratic theory. Deliberative and agonistic models of democracy have to be celebrated in their denial of metaphysical justifications for democracy, their celebration of pluralism and difference, and their emphasis on a constructive relationship between the

[522] Catherine Eschle, Global democracy, social movements, and feminism, Feminist theory and politics (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 2007), 207.
[523] See Grewal and Kaplan, *Scattered Hegemonies*; Mendoza, “Transnational Feminism in Question”; Mohanty, *Feminism Without Borders*.

institutionalization and the practice of democracy. However, contemporary democratic theory also has to attend to contexts where consensus on the constitutional essentials or the ethico-political values of democracy do not exist, and where political communication is structured on deep antagonistic cleavages. Such cases not only constitute a challenge to some of the taken-for-granted assumptions about democratic institutions and practices but also open up to question the prospects of democracy beyond the global North, which is one of the most pressing questions in the world and in political science today. Even though there cannot be a context-irrelevant form of democratic theory that is relevant to, or applicable in, all contexts, it is still possible to theorize democracy without delimiting political action into narrow forms and spheres while taking caution against identifying all political practice as democratic and all political change as democratization.

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