Patterns of the Parliamentary Debates: How Deliberative are Turkish Democratic Opening Debates?

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Politics in Central Europe (ISSN 1801-3422)
Vol. 18, No. 2
DOI: 10.2478/pce-2022-0008

Abstract: This study attempts to measure the deliberation quality of the Democratic Opening Debates in the Turkish Parliament through the Discourse Quality Index (DQI). The majority of studies have been conducted on the deliberation quality of relatively homogenised and developed Western societies and on less conflictual or contentious topics. In these countries, democratic culture has been institutionalised. On the contrary, Turkey is a developing country and has been going through an ethnic conflict involving violence for many decades. Thus, this case study aims to make an original contribution to empirical deliberation studies. Researchers have examined the 88-page stenographic records of the Democratic Opening Debates and put forward a DQI score. According to the findings, the controversial debates fulfill only 40% of high-level deliberative discourse ethics. This result demonstrates that the ideal deliberation process does not exist in Turkey even though a convenient atmosphere is created for deliberations by means of official procedures. Ethnic division in the society has a profoundly negative impact on the quality of deliberations.

Keywords: ***Deliberation, Discourse Ethics, Discourse Quality Index, Turkish Parliament, Democratic Opening, Divided Societies.***

Introduction

Since the 1990s, when democratic theory took a deliberative turn, there has been a growing interest in deliberative practices in which citizens resolve their differences through dialogue rather than voting (Dryzek, 2002). Decision-making

processes need an approximation of pluralised opinions through deliberation because today's societies get more pluralised and face more complex issues. It forms a holistic mechanism of decision making to handle social issues via deliberative democracy methods. The parties of a debate need to persuade each other by rational arguments. In this respect, deliberative theorists agree that political conduct through communicative means can overcome the fragmentation and stratification that characterise modern life (Habermas 1991; Gutmann and Thompson 1998).

A significant number of empirical studies have tried to summarise the convenient conditions under which the deliberative action can emerge in the context of non-violent political antagonism (O'Flynn 2007; Steiner, 2012; Ugarriza and Caluwaerts, 2014). Researchers assert that participants will be pushed to act respectfully as a result of a convenient institutional design. In this way, they will be able to convince one another through well-justified and consensus-oriented action proposals. These studies show that formal deliberations guided by open rules and for which free participation is provided make a good example of a deliberation that leads deliberators to consensus (Fishkin and Luskin 2005).

The majority of this empirical data about deliberation is gathered from deliberations in the informal public sphere that ensure direct participation of civil society and citizens in discussions about topics of public importance (Felicetti et al. 2016; Stela 2014; Fishkin 1997; Pedrini 2014). However, deliberations that take place in parliaments are not studied as much (Bachtiger and Steenbergen 2004; Lord and Tamvaki 2013; Steiner et al. 2005; Steiner 2012). Many political scientists question whether a real deliberation can occur in parliaments as they are institutions for voting, rather than gathering information and reconciling (Rasch 2011; Bachtiger, 2014). Contrary to this opinion, prominent deliberative theorists argue that parliaments are an important deliberation space to legitimise decisions and unify the public (Habermas 2015). For this reason, Habermas (2005: 389) claims that the parliament deliberation sits at the very centre of deliberative politics.

Accordingly, this study analyses the deliberative quality of the Democratic Opening Debates in the Turkish Parliament (TP), held on 13 November 2009. The case choice aims to provide original contribution to empirical deliberation studies because most of them have been conducted in relatively more homogeneous Western societies where liberal democracies have been institutionalised[1] and on less conflictual or contentious issues that do not include violence (Bachtiger et al. 2008; Lord and Tamvaki 2013; Himmelroos 2020). On the other hand, the Democratic Opening Debates of Turkey took place in a highly controversial and divisive atmosphere. The Democratic Opening indeed

1 It is claimed that a positive correlation has formed in the light of Western democracies between high development and income level and democracy and that this situation makes high-level deliberation possible in the pluralist structure of the society by reliving social conflict (Azmanova 2011).

caused a serious polarisation among the political elites from the first time it was brought up. Opposition parties accused the government of betraying the homeland and dividing the country.[2] Ethnic dividedness and the accompanying conflict and terror environment that has surrounded Turkey make this research an original case study. In this way, this research will not only demonstrate the quality of deliberation in Turkey, but also test whether deliberative democracy can transform beliefs and behaviours of opposite sides in a violent conflict. Deliberation in the parliamentary context is assessed using the Discourse Quality Index (DQI). The DQI measures the equality of speakers in a debate, the level of justification, orientation towards the common good, respect or disrespect and constructive politics.

This study mainly comprises of four main sections. The first section is about the background of the Democratic Opening project initiated by the Turkish government in order to end the conflict between Turkey and the PKK (*Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan* / Kurdistan Workers' Party) that has been going on for decades and to find a peaceful solution to the Kurdish question in Turkey. In this section, Turkish political parties' perspectives on the Opening process will be clarified for readers unfamiliar with the Turkish political party system. The second section will discuss how a high-quality deliberation can be defined by providing a theoretical framework. The authors have focused merely on deliberation tradition and discourse theory in a Habermasian sense. Works of prominent intellectuals, such as Foucault and Laclau, who had views opposing those to Habermas, will be mentioned as well. Then, how the discourse theory of Habermas differs from other discourse theories will be demonstrated and the reason for making a Habermasian discourse analysis will be explained. The third section is the method section, where the analysis units of the DQI will be introduced. Lastly, the research findings will be revealed via categories of the DQI one by one. These findings will be evaluated in terms of Turkish political party/political ideology to understand them better. The authors try to have more generalisable findings in the conclusion to contribute to academic discussions about the deliberation quality in highly polarised societies like Turkey.

Background

The Turkish state and the PKK started 'secret deliberations' in Oslo (through backchannel communications) in 2005–2006 following a long lasting and bloody conflict. While exact numbers are unknown, various sources state that the conflict between Turkey and the PKK came at the cost of approximately forty

2 For views of the CHP leader, Deniz Baykal, on the Opening, see: 'Baykal'dan Kürt açılımı açıklaması' (Hürriyet, 24. 08. 2009). For views of the MHP leader Devlet Bahçeli, see: 'Bahçeli: İhanet Projelerine Katkıda Bulunmamızı Beklemek Akıl Tutulması' (Milliyet, 29. 09. 2009).

thousand people's death, obligatory immigration of millions of people and 400 billion dollars over 30 years before the deliberations (Ünal 2016: 91). The situation was too costly and risky for both Turkey and the PKK, and neither of the parties could tolerate any further military struggle. While Turkey made efforts against it, the organisational structure of the PKK grew stronger. In 2007, the Union of Kurdistan Communities (KCK) was established by the PKK as a quasi-state structure to build a de facto autonomy in the long-run. Moreover, the PKK wanted to weaken Turkish state authority by continuing its regular terror attacks and targeting civilians, business people and public officials. Yet, the violence was repetitive with no effective results. The PKK was convinced that it would not be able to defeat the Turkish security forces. Even if the PKK was in an advantaged position regarding the Kurdish insurgency in the country, it was far from achieving its target of clearing the southeastern region from the authority of the Turkish state. As a result, both parties involved in the conflict found themselves locked in a state of mutually hurting stalemate (Ünal, 2016). So, something beyond military struggle was needed. Ultimately, the ruling party AKP (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi* / Justice and Development Party) came up with a novel way of dealing with the Kurdish question. This situation made the Democratic Opening process viable. Following various democratisation packages, Turkey entered into the process in 2009.

The Democratic Opening process was started with the aim of finding a peaceful solution to the Kurdish question. In this regard, it was important in terms of institutionalising the democracy in the country and assuring its stability. However, the peace process would not lead to a solid resolution agreement between the two sides. The early meetings and deliberations generally revolved around constitutionally acknowledging/securing Kurdish rights. Yet, a sufficient effort towards social transformation and decreasing prejudice between the two sides was not made. Thus, the peace initiative remained fragile against daily domestic politics and regional issues from the very beginning. Then, the process collapsed in the summer of 2015 and armed conflict started again. The conflict is still ongoing today. It hurts the stability of Turkey and threatens its national security. Finally, it directly affects Turkish foreign policy towards its neighbours, such as Iraq and Syria, which have significant Kurdish populations.

A number of questions were raised regarding the process from the first moment it was initiated. Different opinions were put forward. Firstly, the AKP, which had had the parliamentary majority from 2002, was the initiator of the process. It aimed that the Kurdish question, which had until then been reduced merely and simply to 'PKK terror', be discussed with its different dimensions and that these discussions be recognised by the public (Şentürk 2012). The AKP stated that it wished to end the conflict, believing that the Kurdish ethnic nationalist movement did not represent the Kurds. This stance was highly related to the party's emphasis on the religious unity between the Kurds and Turks (Sarıgil

and Fazlıoğlu 2013: 560–561). In this context, the AKP positioned itself as the only actor that could resolve the issue within the scope of 'the country's unity, brotherhood law and citizenship law'. The AKP also used the process to criticise previous governments and the opposition party. To illustrate, it criticised the opposition parties with a series of accusations such as 'abusing the Kurdish question, taking advantage of terror, disorder and chaos; preventing Turkey from becoming a major and strong country' (Parlak and Öztürk 2015: 93).

When the Democratic Opening was announced, the main opposition party in the parliament was the CHP (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi / Republican Peoples' Party). The CHP was a left-wing party mainly representing the secular and Kemalist voters in Turkey. While the CHP adopted an attitude in favour of resolving the issue, it heavily objected to the AKP undertaking the process single-handedly and to the way the process was managed. Led by Deniz Baykal, the CHP asserted that the process would lead to social separation rather than consolidation. It ruthlessly criticised that the content of the process was not clearly determined, that the process could not be socialised and that the government did not put forward its own concrete recommendations. Baykal even claimed that the Opening was planned by 'certain foreign powers' and the AKP was given the responsibility to manage it (CHP Group Meeting, 04. 08. 2009).

The MHP (*Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi* / Nationalist Movement Party), which was the second opposition party in the parliament, gave the harshest reaction to the Opening process. Representing the far-right and ultra-nationalist voters, the MHP denied the existence of a separate Kurdish identity and rigidly framed the Kurdish question over terror and ethnic separatism. It strongly opposed any possibility of deliberations towards the resolution of the Kurdish question. Therefore, the MHP accused the ruling AKP of ethnic separatism and asserted that the AKP was posing a threat to the national unity/security by establishing relations with the PKK (Bacık, 2011). In short, the main policy of the party was to protect the Turkish identity of the country and fight against any development that would undermine this.

Lastly, the pro-Kurdish DTP (*Demokratik Toplum Partisi* / Democratic Society Party) supported the deliberations, hoping that the Kurdish question could be resolved. It is known that the party members have organic ties to the PKK. The main position of the party during the Opening process was towards the recognition of Kurdish identity, gaining cultural rights, strengthening the political decentralisation and local administrations. In this context, the DTP stated that the primary interest of the sides was the resolution of the issue in a political / 'peaceful' manner.

In the light of this information, it can safely be said that the political parties in the Turkish parliament were highly divided regarding the Opening process. This division in the political sphere also spread over the public sphere. A study conducted by a research company, Metropol, showed that more than half of the

people (51.6%) did not support the Opening Process.[3] Also, a report prepared by KONDA in June 2011 is important to demonstrate the seriousness of the division among the ethnic groups. The report suggests that 57.6% of Turks do not want a Kurdish bride, 53.5% do not want a Kurdish business partner and 47.4% do not want a Kurdish neighbour. In return, 26.4% of Kurds disapproved of a Turkish bride, 24.8% disapproved of a Turkish business partner and 22.1% disapproved of a Turkish neighbour.[4] Moreover, according to the findings of a study conducted in İzmir in 2011, 40% of Turks stated that 'what comes to their minds regarding Kurds is "ignorant, uneducated, rude, uncultured and backwards"' while Kurds in return describe 'Turks' over nationalist adjectives (Ok 2011).

The Democratic Opening was first brought before the Speaker's Office of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey on 3 November 2009 with the 'motion regarding a general debate at the parliament on the democratic opening' by then Prime Minister and the leader of AKP Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. Erdoğan stated in this motion that he wanted a debate to be set up not only to inform the parliament on the process of Democratic Opening but also to handle all aspects of the opening before the parliament and to call on the parliament's contribution on the issue (GNAT Minutes, 03. 11. 2009: 742). The general debate request of the Prime Minister was accepted, and it was decided that pre-debates would take place on 10 November 2009. General debates of the Democratic Opening started on 13 November 2009. Speech times were determined to be 60 minutes for the government and political party groups, 30 minutes for the government as the motion owner and 10 minutes for individuals. Debates started at 13:00 and ended at 19:10 (GNAT Minutes, 13. 11. 2009).

Theoretical Framework

As mentioned above, scholars who study deliberative democracy emphasise that it is possible to successfully deal with fragmentation and stratification through political conduct in a communicative way (Bohman and Rehg 1997; Dryzek 1990). However, there is very little consensus as to the proper form of this communication. Further, while discourse quality is significant in deliberation theory, a consensus is yet to be reached regarding what discourse is today. The fundamental contradiction of the 20th century is between two influential thinkers – Michel Foucault and Jürgen Habermas (Stahl 2004).

3 For detailed information, see: Metropol: Demokratik Açılım ve Darbe Araştırması: http://www.metropoll.com.tr/arastirmalar/siyasi-arastirma-9/1597 Accessed: (28. 03. 2021).

4 For detailed information regarding this research, see: http://www.konda.com.tr/tr/raporlar/2011_06_KONDA_Kurt_Meselesinde_Algi_ve_Beklentiler.pdf, Accessed: (28. 03. 2021).

Foucault defines discourse as 'ways of constituting knowledge, together with the social practices, forms of subjectivity and power relations which inhere in such knowledges and relations between them. Discourses are more than ways of thinking and producing meaning' (Foucault 1972: 49). Foucault puts forward that discourse is never independent from power relations. He thinks that discourse should not be conceived of as the product of an independent, sovereign and creative human mind. On the contrary, discourse is embedded in power and knowledge relations, and it forms out of these relations. This is because being able to use a discourse is the expression of knowledge possession from a specific area. Those who possess this knowledge can achieve dominance and control over those who do not possess it (Foucault 1980).

Laclau and Mouffe were highly influenced by the discourse theory of Foucault, as well. They theorise discourse mainly within the framework of the concept of hegemony. Laclau and Mouffe view the area of hegemony as one where different particularities, such as individualities, subjectivities and identities, coexist. A class is given its identity by its position in a hegemonic formation. In this regard, identity is not fixed or determined; it is completely relational. All objects came into being as discourse objects, and every discourse has a material dimension. Accordingly, there are no subjects, no fixed identities, no absolute interests that can be defined outside of discourse (Laclau and Mouffe 2014). Discursive practices are the major tools for building interests and conducting politics. Therefore, according to Laclau and Mouffe, just like Foucault, ideological and political interests can only be established through discourse.

On the other hand, in the theoretical writings of Habermas, the concept of discourse is as central as in Foucault's writings. *The Theory of Communicative Action* (1981), the most important work of Habermas, explains what discourse is and its function. According to the 'communicative action theory' of Habermas, individuals take part in a deliberation not only to realise their egocentric interests but also they are ready to agree on options for the common good. Thus, individuals can reach a settlement on a common good by making compromises of their own interests thanks to rational arguments. In this framework, the major goal of the individuals interacting with one another is consensus pursuant to their horizon and daily linguistic communication practice. Individuals who interact with this goal try to reach a consensus on a matter through explanations and comments put forward based on tradition and culture (Habermas 1981). Hence, in Habermas, discourse is no longer what people use when they fight for power, but it is a tool for consensus and persuasion. The quality of debate processes plays an important role in deliberation, and the goal is to ensure that debates are rational and ethical via various principles.

Action types are important indicators of the quality of a debate, and Habermas classifies action types into two groups, namely 'strategic' and 'communicative' action. In 'strategic action', the actor is interested in having others do

things as a way of achieving their own goals. This process is shaped by pressure and force. However, in 'communicative action', the actor cannot engage in authoritative action while getting others to accept norms. In 'communicative action', individuals' acceptance of norms occurs through argumentation and persuasion. According to Habermas, argumentation is a speech form based on rationalist debate whereby debaters exchange messages on the basis of reciprocal claims and try to justify these claims in a rationalist way. Habermas thinks that if a proposal can be justified, it becomes valid and can be accepted. Individuals should have the tendency to admit their own mistakes when appropriate as well. Participants should be open to other ideas by taking others' views into account and showing empathy towards them (Habermas 1981: 40–46, 385).

Many deliberative democrats argue that deliberation should be rational by considering the 'communicative action theory' of Habermas (Bohman, 1990; Warren, 2007). According to this model, 'Type 1 Deliberation', a good deliberation is characterised by several values such as putting forward claims, presenting evidence supporting these claims and assessing factual data against the claims. The primary goal of the model is to create an understanding between the parties and thus reach a settlement. In this sense, Type 1 deliberative democracy model signifies a systematic process.

In 'Type 2 Deliberation' model, on the other hand, emotions are more important for a good deliberation rather than rationality (Condit 1993; Fraser 1989; Mansbridge 1999). According to this model, emotions are significant in public deliberation because they reduce the exclusion that is inherent in many rational argumentation models and helps ensure participation. The principle that deliberation should rely on rational argumentation could lead to the exclusion of socially disadvantaged or marginalised groups that have different access to information, power and resources (Young 2001). So, this model of deliberation that relies less on rigid communicative norms is seen as more overarching and legitimate. Yet, its openness regarding limitless communication and being bound by fewer rules about the means of communication might make it more vulnerable to illegitimate claims and attempts to deform the communication. Especially in situations where discourse is marginalised and weakened, the focus on the common good might be replaced by more calculative and strategic aims. When there are fewer rules about communication, the criteria of truthfulness may be overlooked by the parties and it may turn into an attempt to mobilise the other party in accordance with one's own aim (Rawl 2020; Dryzek, 2002; Bachtiger et al. 2010).

In the light of this information, the Habermasian deliberative democracy model (Type 1 Deliberation) is adopted in this study. It enables us to measure the level of deliberation empirically. A high-quality deliberation is assessed via the principles of free participation, respect towards the opposing group and the counter demand, rational argumentation, tendency for the common good and openness to change one's view as a result of the strength of a better argument.

Research Method

There are various techniques to measure the quality of deliberations. For instance, Holzinger tried to examine the level of discourse within the framework of quantitative research method. Examining the debates about waste management in a German settlement, Holzinger distinguished between two aspects of the deliberation process: 'bargaining' and 'negotiation'. According to Holzinger (2004), bargaining occurs, unlike negotiation, under conditions in which negotiators try to justify their positions even in situations with no common interest or generalisable reasons among them. Holzinger classified words and word groups one by one to indicate bargaining and negotiation basically by using Speech Act Theory in his method. Gerhards, on the other hand, developed an analysis regarding abortion discourse in two German newspapers. First, Gerhards assessed the representation of the actors in newspaper articles. Second, he measured the level of respect stated towards the other participants in the debate on a scale of five points, with 'very positive' and 'very negative' being the endpoints of the scale. Third, he measured the level of justification of the claims with a dual indicator (justification versus no justification). Last, he measured the rationality of the discourse quality by focusing on the number of values referred to and reconciliation of these values (Gerhards 1997).

Since there are different approaches to the phenomenon of deliberation, Marco Steenbergen and his colleagues developed the DQI in 2003 as a more global and theory-based scale derived from the 'communicative action theory' and 'discourse ethics' studies of Habermas to assess the quality of discourse. Yet, the index does not contain all the elements of discourse ethics of Habermas. In the index's preparation, only measurable principles were chosen. For instance, discourse ethics of Habermas requires that parties not act deceptively while stating their intentions and be authentic (Habermas 1981: 149). However, deciding whether an act of speech is authentic cannot be directly observed. Accordingly, the index contains seven categories that mostly harbour the rational debate criteria of Habermas. These categories of the DQI are: participation, level of justification, content of justification, respect, respect towards the demands of others, respect towards the counterarguments and constructive politics.

The analysis unit of the DQI is speech, public discourse a certain individual presents at a certain point of a debate. In this way, discourse is divided into smaller units of speech. According to the DQI, if a person makes multiple speeches, each one of these speeches is coded differently, even if the codes are the same as those of the former speech. If a person is interrupted, the interruption itself is also counted as a speech. For every speech, including interruptions, relevant and irrelevant parts are separated from each other, and only relevant parts are coded. Relevant speech is a proposal that makes a demand as to what decision should and should be not taken. Irrelevant parts do not contain any

demand. These parts may clarify questions or explanations not related to the debate. Here the importance attached to demands is derived from the fact that they form the heart of a deliberation. In other words, demands stipulate what should and should not happen, and this normative character puts them at the centre of discourse ethics (Steenbergen et al. 2003: 27). If a speech contains relevant parts; demands are noted, and speech is coded for discourse quality. Later, these speeches are coded in accordance with the categories of the DQI.

The first of coding categories is 'participation'. In order to determine to what extent the principle of participation is fulfilled, which pertains to the free participation of the participants and whether the participants face any obstacles, speeches are examined in two such contexts as 'interruption of a speaker' and (whether) 'normal participation is possible'. While assessing the participation, interruptions regarding the end of the legal time spared for a debater and interruptions that come from other people and do not contain a demand are ignored. In order for an interruption to occur, the speaker should state discontent because of being interrupted, or an interruption should happen with an official decision.

Another important category of deliberation quality index is 'level of justification'. Justification constitutes one of the building blocks of the deliberative democracy model. According to Benhabib (2021), debaters would accept counterarguments only when they contain valid reasons, and a coherent cooperation can be ensured as a result only of such debate. So, the debater should present a reasoning why a claim they put forward should be accepted. In this sense, in order to understand to what extent justification is provided in the speaker's messages, they are assessed in four contexts: namely, 'no justification' if the debater makes a claim and does not provide any justification for it; 'inferior justification' if the debater provides a justification, but there is not a relation between the justification presented and the claim; 'qualified justification' if a rational relation can be established between the claim and the justification; and 'sophisticated justification' if the debater can present multiple justifications for the claim.

One of the most significant aspects of deliberative democracy in the Habermasian sense is for the deliberators to melt their own self-interests under the common interest umbrella and make it possible for everyone to settle. In this sense, 'content of justification', another important category when looking at to what extent the common good is taken as a goal, is basically assessed in four contexts: namely, 'explicit statement concerning group interests' if the debater sends messages towards its own group's interests; 'neutral statement' if the debater does not point to the interests of any groups in their messages; 'explicit statement of the common good in utilitarian terms' if the debater aims for the common good and expresses this in utilitarian terms; and 'explicit statement of the common good in terms of the difference principle' if the debater points to the common good in non-utilitarian terms.

Another one of the coding categories is 'respect'. There are three categories of respect in the DQI. The first one of them is respect towards opposing groups. If the speaker makes only negative statements regarding the opposing group, it is coded as 'no respect'. If the speaker does not openly make negative or positive statements, it is coded as 'implicit respect'. If the speaker makes at least one positive remark about the opposing group, it is coded as 'explicit respect'.

Another category is 'respect towards the demand of others'. This category uses the same codes as the indicators of the respect towards the opposing group. Yet, respect towards demands is not always coded. It is coded only when a demand is brought up and the speaker supports it.

In the category of 'respect towards the counterarguments', coding happens only when there is a counterargument. In order to assess whether there is respect for the counterargument, mainly four codes are used. If there is a counterargument and it is overlooked by the speaker, this situation is marked as 'counterarguments ignored'. If the speaker acknowledges the counterargument but criticises it with negative sentences, the message is marked as 'counterarguments included but degraded'. If the speaker makes neither positive nor negative remarks about the counterargument while acknowledging its presence, the message is marked as 'counterarguments included — neutral'. If the speaker acknowledges the counterargument and makes positive remarks about it, the message is marked as 'counterarguments included and valued'.

And the last category in coding is 'constructive politics'. The goal of this category is to measure whether participants come up with policies that will make reconciliation possible. Accordingly, if the participants do not develop any policies that will build up reconciliation and merely impose their own realities, there is no constructive understanding of politics in this case, and the message is marked as 'positional politics'. If the speakers come up with a reconciliation proposal but this proposal is not related to the issue debated, the messages are marked as 'alternative proposal'. If the speaker makes a mediating proposal and it fits the existing agenda, there is constructive politics in this case, and the message is marked as 'mediating proposal'.

In this study, the Democratic Opening Debates brought before the parliamentary counsel on 13 November 2009 are coded within the framework of the categories of the DQI.

Coding Procedure

The Democratic Opening Debates was coded by two coders: Çiğdem Görgün Akgül (Coder 1) and Musa Akgül (Coder 2). Coding took place in two steps. Firstly, researchers examined the 88-page transcription involving the Democratic Opening Debates independently from each other and identified relevant speeches. In the Democratic Opening Debates, both coders identified 60 relevant

speeches, meaning at least one speech involving a demand. There have been no differences of opinion between the coders as to the identification of these speeches. Following the identification, the relevant speeches were re-coded by both coders independently using the DQI tool.

In the second step, the coders came together to compare the codes. In case of disagreement, the coders re-read the speech and discussed discrepancies. At the end of this discussion process, a certain code was decided upon (once each coder deemed that code right). The speeches were assessed according to the DQI indicator, and the researchers presented the gained data in percentages (%) after the results were determined.

Research Findings

The First Criterion: 'Participation'

In the analysis of the speeches, only instances where speakers were interrupted by other speakers and stated their discomfort were counted as 'interruption of a speaker' as per Steenbergen and his colleagues (2003). Accordingly, eight speeches out of 60 are coded as 'interruption of a speaker'. In this context, interruption rate in all speeches is 13%, which means the speech was interrupted in one out of every seven speeches. This violates debate and speech ethics. The then-Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's following speech is an example of interrupted speeches in the debates,

> *'Dear Chairman, neither me myself nor my group has even slightly interrupted while other leaders were speaking. See, right now here, I unfortunately observe that two opposing groups are constantly rounding on each other... Learn how to listen. In this country, you cannot make any points unless you listen...'* (GNAT Minutes, 13. 11. 2009: 74).

Besides interruptions from other members of the parliament, protests coming from the audience at different parts of the debate made the speech unfeasible. For example, while Ömer Çelik was speaking on behalf of the AKP Group, slogans of 'for the homeland' were shouted from the audience chambers and a flag was unfurled. Chairperson of the parliament had to pause twice since the slogans and protests made the speech unfeasible (GNAT Minutes, 03. 11. 2009: 42, 47). Moreover, during the speech of the then-Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, MPs from the CHP left the parliament, protesting the speeches (GNAT Minutes,13. 11. 2009: 83).

The Second Criterion: 'Level of Justification'

In terms of the level of justification, it is observed that most of the speeches contained at least one or two justifications that clearly stated the reasons for the positions taken.

Fifty-eight percent of the demands voiced by the speakers were based on qualified justification. The speech of Ahmet Türk, who spoke on behalf of the DTP Group, is an example of qualified justification:

> *'Dear members of the parliament, if you claim that we are equal citizens and that we have no issues, please show some empathy. Think for a moment. Would you feel yourself as an equal citizen in this country if someone turned up to say "There is no such language on earth as Turkish" and forcefully taught your child, who does not speak one word of Kurdish, in Kurdish? Can you protect your human dignity if you do not stand up to this injustice? I am sure even the thought of this gives some of you goosebumps. Can you understand what kind of trauma it would cause for one's language to be denied, banned, ignored in their homeland by their own state? See, we have actually been living through this trauma, even the thought of which gives you goosebumps. We stand up to these policies to at least protect our dignity'* (GNAT Minutes, 13. 11. 2009: 15).

In his speech, while Türk demanded that denial policies come to an end and equal citizenship issue be resolved, he justified this demand by calling for empathy over mother tongue.

Twenty-seven percent of the speeches, on the other hand, are coded as sophisticated justification because they contained multiple demands. An example of this is the speech by the Interior Minister Beşir Atalay:

> *'Dear members of the parliament, the Democratic Opening has two interrelated fundamental goals. The first one is to end the terrorism, and the second one is to elevate the standard of our democracy… Let me state right away that the heroic deeds and success of our security forces in the fight against terror is the most important element that secures our unity and solidarity. We will keep giving our security forces all kinds of support from now on, just as until now, in the fight against terror. Dear members of the parliament, one of the raisons d'être for our party, and maybe the most important one, is to close the democratic deficit of Turkey. We indiscriminatingly see [each one of] our people as dignified beings because humankind is ashraf-i mahlukat, the most dignified of all creatures… Democratization will allow for the enhancement of a political order that our people deserve, in which a sense of belonging as equal and free citizens will develop'* (GNAT Minutes, 13. 11. 2009: 5–6).

The percentage of speeches in which there was no justification, but only a demand was made, is 15%, and the speech of Ömer Çelik who spoke on behalf of the AKP Group is an example of this:

> *'After he says, "Everything the government does is wrong, in fact the core of what the government does is wrong too". Do we hear anything tangible from him to stop this bloodshed? No, we don't. Merely a wish. And what is that wish? [For us] To tell those on the mountains to lay down arms. Go ahead, you visit Iraq and tell them'* (GNAT Minutes, 13. 11. 2009: 49).

While Çelik demanded from the critics of the Opening process they come up with a tangible proposal as per their criticism, he did not justify this demand. Therefore, it is coded as 'no justification'.

The Third Criterion: 'Content of Justifications'

When the speeches are assessed in terms of the integrity and comprehensiveness of justifications, it is seen that 53% of them are justified by referring to mutual interests, mutual rights and mutual values. An example of statements highlighting common good is the speech of Hasan Erçelebi, a member of the parliament from İstanbul:

> *'We want that the Democratic Opening and the fight against terror be separated. Terror should not be the reason and base of the Democratic Opening. Otherwise, the solution will not be permanent and the Democratic Opening will not work, will not be a solution to the problem. In order to fight against terror, it is necessary to cut off its economic resources, to bar its ammunition paths and ensure border security. Also, security forces should not be demoralized, our martyrs and veterans should not be hurt. The Democratic Opening should extend all over Turkey and be inclusive of the freedom and demands of all our citizens. There is no regional and ethnic democratic opening'* (GNAT Minutes, 13. 11. 2009: 86).

Erçelebi justified his speech over common value/good by demanding a democratic opening that will be inclusive of all parts of Turkey, rather than aim for one specific regional or ethnic group.

Nonetheless, the speakers justified their demands in 31% of their statements by explicitly highlighting the interests of either their own groups or a specific group. The speech by Devlet Bahçeli can be shown as an example:

> *'What the government is supposed to do is not to scratch identities, to provoke them, to divide one by 36 and make it one again. Turkish nation is one already; its state is one, its homeland is one, its flag is one and its language is one. What you shall do*

is not to surrender to terror, but rather annihilate it. Terrorist, as the name implies, is the definition of villains who take up arms and engage in bloody attacks. They are not those who want the former name of Güroymak or innocent people who took to the mountains because they could not seek their rights in legal ways…' (GNAT Minutes, 13. 11. 2009: 25).

While Bahçeli demanded in his speech that the unity and solidarity of the homeland be protected, he justified this demand with negative statements towards not only a specific group's interests but also the opposing group.

During the debate, 16% of the speeches that contained a demand are coded as neutral statement. The following statements from Deniz Baykal are an example:

'…My dear friends, look, what needs to be done in this region is without a doubt to respect everybody's identity, to ensure that all agents of the state show that respect, to ensure that no one will face any pressure due to their ethnic identity, to admit that everybody's ethnic identity is their dignity…' (GNAT Minutes, 13. 11. 2009: 38).

While Baykal demanded that the state respect identities, he voiced his demand with neutral statements without referring to any groups.

The Fourth Criterion: 'Respect Towards the Groups'

Seventy percent of the coded speeches involve disrespect towards the other group or the speaker. Devlet Bahçeli's following speech can be shown as an example of no respect for the opposing group category:

'…In this honorable fight, the back of terror was broken, and it was brought to a point of ending in the year of 2002. The AKP Government, which came to power on 3 November 2002, took over a Turkey where terror reached the zero level. However, within the seven years from then, terror re-escalated, ethnic separatism gained courage and a position as never seen in any other period. The AKP government, which comes before the grand parliament with the PKK opening today, has come to the point of surrendering to the terrorist organization following its ineffectualness and weakness during its seven-year rule. The fight against terror is let go of, and the period of negotiation and ceasefire with terror has been started…' (GNAT Minutes, 13. 11. 2009: 21).

Bahçeli is accusing the government of escalating the terror and negotiating with terrorists, which is why it is coded as no respect.

There is no positive or negative comment towards the speaker or the opposing group in 25% of the speeches, an example of which is Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's following speech:

'...In this country – I said it just now too – we love and respect all ethnic elements – no matter how many – be it Turk, Kurd, Lazca, Circassian, Georgian, Abkhasian, Romani... As I said, we love for the creator's sake. We have given Turkish Republic citizenship to all of them, and we are [still] doing so...' (GNAT Minutes, 13. 11. 2009: 79).

Erdoğan does not make any negative remarks about any groups in his speech and uses a general language. Therefore, his speech is coded as 'implicit respect'.

In as little as 5% of the speeches, there was at least one positive comment regarding the opposing group or the speaker. Statements of Deniz Baykal can be shown as an example of this:

'...I respect the feelings and sensitivities of people who lived through those agonies and would like to stress one more time that it is of utmost importance that they should not be brought into a point a political contention. Certainly – as Mr. Türk pointed out in his speech – quite a few unacceptable, bitter statements and inappropriate comments were made in the past, but we cannot look to future over those memories, they are now forgotten...' (GNAT Minutes, 13. 11. 2009: 41).

As seen from his statements, this speech of Deniz Baykal shows respect to the opposing speaker explicitly, which is why it is coded as 'explicit respect'.

The Fifth Criterion: 'Respect Towards the Demands of Others'

This code is coded in situations where speakers make positive/negative comments regarding the agenda. For example, one can look at Hasan Erçelebi's speech in which he explicitly mentions his negative stance towards the opening process:

'As the DSP, we will not stand by any opening and action that will cause trouble for our people, hint at the slightest possibility of the danger of separation. We will not let our heart get divided into two. This meeting held today results from pressure applied from the outside... ' (GNAT Minutes, 13. 11. 2009: 87).

In this speech, it is observed that there is a negative attitude towards the Opening process, which was brought up as a solution to the Kurdish question. For this reason, it is coded in the category of no respect towards the demands of others. No speaker except those who spoke on behalf of the government adopted a positive attitude about the Democratic Opening. So, all speeches coded in the category of 'respect towards the demands of others' are coded as 'no respect'.

The Sixth Criterion: 'Respect for Counterarguments'

This criterion is coded if there is a counterargument on the table. Therefore, firstly, it is identified whether there is a counterargument. Secondly, it is identified whether a speaker ignores a counter argument. An example of this is seen in the speech of Ömer Çelik.

> Devlet Bahçeli: *'Look at the heroes who joined hands in order to bring together a demoralized, desperate, poor nation; who formed a great nation out of daunted, dispirited, demoralized masses. And look at the inclinations of those who try to divide this same great nation by thirty-six. What are we to discuss here today? How we will get divided, how we will get separated, how we will abandon our brothers? On what topic are we supposed to come to terms today: How we will betray our martyrs, how we will hurt our veterans once more, how we will trample on the memories of our soldiers, police officers, and guardians?*' (GNAT Minutes, 13. 11. 2009: 20).

> Ömer Çelik: '*...Those who unrightfully blame us for damaging the unitary state structure and opening the door for federation should think of this: The only structure so far in Turkey that resembles federation is state of emergency rule... If this structure; whose administrative rules were different from those of overall Turkey, whose legal measures were different from those of overall Turkey, whose security practices were different, was not a de facto federation. I don't know what is. Why did those who put up a Turkish-style Berlin wall between us and our brothers in the Southeast and East not draw attention to the then-consequences of this structure? Then let's ask this: Who annihilated this Turkish-style Berlin wall in order to establish national unity and brotherhood? The AKP government did...'* (GNAT Minutes, 13. 11. 2009: 44).

As seen from the speeches, Ömer Çelik reacts negatively to Devlet Bahçeli's argument that the Opening process will divide the country. Therefore, the speech is coded as 'counterarguments included but explicitly degraded'.

Out of 62 speeches during the debates, 32 were assessed in the category of 'respect for counterarguments'. These 32 speeches developed a negative argument towards counter arguments.

The Seventh Criterion: 'Constructive Politics'

This category aims to measure whether participants produced policies that would lead to an agreement. Accordingly, if the speakers do not develop any policies that will build agreement and if they impose only their own facts, it does not count as a constructive understanding of politics and their statements are marked as 'positional politics'. If the speakers produce a proposal

for agreement but it is irrelevant to the subject, their statements are marked as 'alternative proposal'. If speakers come up with a mediating proposal and it fits the current agenda, it counts as constructive politics and their statements are marked as 'mediating proposal'. In the debate examined, only 43% of the speeches are coded as 'mediating proposal'. The then-Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's speech can be shown as an example of mediating proposal:

> *'...We have started a vital process for Turkey. We have taken a brave step to resolve the most chronical issues that pose an obstacle to the growth, development and progress of Turkey. We are utterly sincere. Each one of our 72 million citizens will win in this process. The process will open up much wider horizons for Turkey. I believe Turkey will welcome 2023, the hundredth anniversary of the foundation of our Republic, as quite a different Turkey. We have hope, excitement, enthusiasm; we will build future Turkey altogether with love, passion, peace and brotherhood...'* (GNAT Minutes, 13. 11. 2009: 85).

On the other hand, it is observed that in such a significant percentage of the speeches as 50%, the groups did not lean towards reconciliation and maintained their positions, not allowing for any reconciliation. Devlet Bahçeli's speech is an example of this situation:

> *'Those who say that they will go until the end in the wrong path they have entered should know very well that the Nationalist Movement Party is ambitious and determined to prevent Turkey's future from being thrown into fire no matter what it takes to do so...'* (GNAT Minutes, 13. 11. 2009: 29).

As for alternative proposals; 7% of the speeches include topics that do not fit the agenda but can be discussed. Deniz Baykal's proposal that the government should drop its current opening policy and go for an economic opening instead in an example:

> *'...Here is what needs to be done: if you want to go for an opening, it should not be PKK opening; it should genuinely be Kurdish opening, aimed towards our people of Kurdish descent. What will you see when you look at those people? The need for huge economic and social reforms there is obvious... Quite a big economic program should be implemented in the region'* (GNAT Minutes, 13. 11. 2009: 38).

All seven categories mentioned have been used by the researchers. The results that were obtained were rated from 0 to 10. The maximum point that can be collected is 70. Criteria are as follows: I – participation, II – level of justification, III – content of justification, IV – respect, V – respect toward the demands of others, VI – respect toward counterarguments, VII – constructive politics.

The data's percentage will be determined, and it will accordingly be rated from 0 to 10.

The criterion of participation is rated 9 since uninterrupted speech percentage is 87%. Level of justification, on the other hand, is rated 9 too with 85% of the speech being counted as justified. Content of justification is rated 5 because the percentage of speeches that emphasise common good is 53%. Respect for the groups is rated 1 with explicit respect recorded in 5% of the speeches. Respect for counter arguments is rated 0 since all the speeches contain negative attitude. Respect towards the demands of other is rated 4 since merely 41% of the speeches contain respect for the demands of others. The criterion of constructive policy is rated 4 because in 50% of the speeches the groups maintained their positions, allowing for no reconciliation, while in 43% of the speeches they engaged in a more conciliatory language.

Table 1:

Criteria	Maximum Point 10
Participation	9
Level of Justification	9
Content of Justification	5
Respect for the Groups	1
Respect towards the Demands of Others	0
Respect for Counterarguments	0
Constructive Politics	4
Overall Points	28 = 40 %

From 70 potential points, the level of deliberation in Turkish Parliament during the debates over the Democratic Opening was 28. Converting this data into percentage, we get the following result: the debates about the Democratic Opening fulfill only 40% of high-level deliberative discourse ethics (Table 1).

Reliability Test

Both researchers decided on 360 coding in total. They agreed on 350 of these decisions. The agreements include certain coding and judgements about whether a specific indicator applies. In percentage terms, the coders agreed on 97% of the coding, which is a perfect reliability score.

Table 2:

Category	The Ratio of Coding Agreement (RCA)
Participation	100 %
Level of Justification	98 %
Content of Justification	92 %
Respect for the Groups	98 %
Respect towards the Demands of Others	100 %
Respect for Counterarguments	94 %
Constructive Politics	97 %

Table 2 shows reliability statistics for certain coding categories. As for the first category of participation, both coders agreed on all speeches and did the same coding. This way, RCA came out at a perfect rate of 100%. As far as level of justification is concerned, since it includes four codes, each code was put to a separate reliability test. The RCA is 100% for the first two codes, as the coders fully agreed on the speeches that do not contain justification or contain inferior justification. Since the speeches that contain justification contain one or multiple justifications, the coders firstly decided on whether it was qualified or sophisticated justification. Accordingly, the coders fully agreed on qualified justifications, which is why the RCA for this code of the justification level is 100%. On the other hand, the RCA is 94% in sophisticated justification level. As for the overall category of justification level, RCA is 98%, which is accepted as a very good reliability score.

Since three different codes can be given for the content of justification, three separate reliability tests were performed. While coders reached 86% of agreement over the code of explicit statement concerning group interests, the agreement rate for neutral statement is 100%. The coders came to an agreement of 93% over statements towards the common good. When content of justification category is taken into consideration in a general sense, the agreement rate between the coders is 92%, which is statistically meaningful and indicates a good rate of agreement.

Reliability for respect indicator also came out very high. Coders agreed on each other's judgements regarding the speakers' respect for the opposing group at a rate of 98%, which again is a high level of agreement. Results of respect towards demands are better. In this category, the RCA is 100%, which shows a perfect agreement. In the last dimension of respect, which is respect for counterarguments, the coders reached a perfect agreement and RCA = 94%.

The last coding category is constructive politics. Here, the coders fully agree on which speeches are alternative proposal and which speeches are mediating proposal. Additionally, there were only two speeches on which the coders could not agree in terms of positional politics. Therefore, in terms of constructive politics, RCA = 97%, which signifies a good rate of agreement.

Conclusion

This study has focused on the deliberation aspect of the debates in the parliament about the Democratic Opening, which was an important step in terms of the resolution of the Kurdish question in Turkey, and attempted to measure the quality of deliberation through the DQI. According to the major findings from the study:

It is observed that unusual interventions towards the speakers take place. This situation poses an obstacle to free participation, which is one of the most important rules of deliberation. Further, even though the speakers mostly base their demands on rational arguments, it is observed that they frequently base these arguments on group interests. Furthermore, mutual respect was rarely shown during the debates. The deliberators saw the debates as the field of contest they were determined to win. Ultimately, they showed attitudes such as refusing the views, claims and arguments of others, making many critical remarks, attacking others personally, experiencing emotional outburst.

Using the DQI indicator for this research has made it possible to assess the deliberation process in numbers and to show how important these debates are. Discussion and evaluation of the stenographic analysis of the debates about the Democratic Opening enabled us not only to measure the quality of the deliberation but also to reveal the baselines of the debate.

The AKP basically approached the issue within the question of democratisation and human rights. It developed a discourse in which the security-oriented perspective of the state, which turned into the official policy towards the region in the past, was explicitly rejected. The AKP promised that economic and democratic steps would be taken in the region to deal with the issue. In this context, the AKP indicated that mistakes made by the state in the past should be admitted.

The opposing parties CHP and MHP, which objected to the way the AKP interpreted the issue, adopted a different approach by rejecting that there is a Kurdish question in the country and stuck with this attitude until the end of the debate. During the debate, the Turkish nationalist MHP was maintaining its attitude in the 1990s and saw the Kurdish identity merely as a folkloric element. It incorporated the integrity and indivisibility of the country into the political discourse frequently by referring to nationalist justifications in case any rights were to be granted to the Kurdish people. For the MHP, any right to be granted to

Kurds would count as 'negotiation with terrorism'. The CHP, on the other hand, was highlighting the ambiguousness of the content and goal of the Democratic Opening and cornering the government about whether the goal of the opening was 'to change the constitution' or 'to grant amnesty'. Moreover, it criticised the government and tried to suspend the Democratic Opening by saying that enough preparations were not made prior to the process, early deliberations were not complete and the process was not transparent. Lastly, the DTP was labelled by the MHP and some CHP deputies as in 'PKK=DTP'. Especially the nationalist wing of the CHP accused the DTP of carrying out a secret plan to establish a separate state.

On the other hand, the DTP took a completely different approach towards the issue and put its Kurdish identity at the centre of the whole deliberation process. According to the DTP, the assimilationist state policies are the crux of the Kurdish question. The DTP argued that the PKK results from the question and the security-driven policies on the pretext of fighting terrorism just aggravated the problem. Accordingly, it constantly made public statements referring to coming to terms with the past, apologising and making an amnesty law if the Opening was to be successful. The DTP criticised the government for dragging the Opening process out and emphasised that it should carry out the policies swiftly and consistently to resolve the Kurdish question. These policies should be inclusive of diverse identities, languages and cultures.

All in all, in this case study, it is tested whether deliberative democracy can change the attitudes of opposing sides of a violent conflict in a polarised society. Considering the Turkish Democratic Opening Debates, it can be said that conflicting sides may try to firmly maintain their positions regarding the debated topics. Yet, turning towards moderation and consensus building is the key principle of deliberative democracy. Even if the parliament procedures provide the proper conditions for a deliberation to be held among the elite, the historical burden of the conflict can prevent the conflicting groups from forming a democratic dialogue. Further, political systems in divided societies generally carry the solid legacy of elitism in which personal and factional interests are sought after. The elite in these societies may not act in a reconciliatory manner. Their stance would have a more polarising effect and weaken the dialogue process. When the goal of the politicians is merely to take forward their own interests / agenda at the expense of other groups, official procedures cannot impede negative polarisation. Then, deliberations might deepen the divisions. Hence, conflicting sides should not enter deliberations with a rigid point of view. They should not see deliberation as a field of a war in which they are determined to beat the opposing side. Otherwise, the expected goal of the deliberation cannot be realised and peace cannot be attained.

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