

# Rising Tensions at Boğaziçi: Pluralist Democracy vs. Absolute Democracy

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For those of our readers who are not familiar with the term pluralist and absolute democracy; pluralist democracy is a political system where organized groups compete with each other to influence the policy instead of one single group dominating the politics<sup>(1)</sup>, whereas absolute democracy is a hypothetical form of government where the needs and wants of the majority are prioritized, and the minorities are neglected<sup>(2)</sup>. As the protests continue in Boğaziçi University as well as in other parts of Turkey, we witness the lack of plurality in Turkish democracy. Instead of taking an approach to protect the rights and welfares of every citizen, including the minorities, the government and the police force are seen to be not only neglecting but also violating human rights and freedom of speech of the ones who disagree with the government policies. During countless protests that happened and are still happening all around the country, the government's reaction was excessive police force which led to police brutality, unlawful arrests, and banning of everything they disagree with. This shows that apart from lacking plurality, Turkish democracy is starting to resemble an absolute democracy.

As for Boğaziçi Protests, police brutality, unlawful arrests, and claims about the protesters being made on national televisions have been present since day one. We have witnessed countless number of our friends getting taken into custody and getting arrested with excessive and unnecessary police force. While the ones who were taken into custody were shortly released, the arrests led to house arrest or imprisonment for days. Even though all our friends are free now, we know the traumas they experienced scarred them both psychologically and physically.

People expect to be represented inside the government, which is the institution people permitted to govern them. We expect the people inside the government to hear us, represent us, help us and protect our rights, not neglect us and violate us. Therefore, to have the needs and wants of every single one of us to be taken care of, we need a more pluralist democracy instead of one resembling an absolute democracy. Also, as a society, we should not ignore the continuous attempts to oppress the minorities all around the country, including the Boğaziçi students.