

Social Significance of the Night-Watchmen (Bekçiler) in Turkey's Security Force

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This paper aims to try to understand the social significance of the night-watchmen (bekçiler) as a part of the security forces in Turkey. The social changes based on the example of the night-watchman (bekçi) as a surveillance mechanism between the years 2016-2019 under the rule of AKP (Justice and Development Party) is worthy of sociological inquiry in relation to the everyday routines of the people. To do so, we adopted a literature review as a methodological tool and to bring a kind of historical analysis on the basis of Foucauldian notions.

Keywords: night-watchman, bekçi, Turkey, power, modernity, discipline, visibility, disciplinary power, control society, state, policing

INTRODUCTION

In this paper, we started with the question of what is the social significance of the night-watchman (*bekçi*) in the security forces in Turkey. We decided to focus on the social significance of the night-watchmen (*bekçiler*); because, starting from 2016 they have become part of our lives. To be more precise, by the term social significance we wanted to emphasize the significant effects of the night-watchmen (*bekçiler*) on the daily practices or everyday routines of the people. We assumed that they played a role in controlling, disciplining, or governing people's actions and their work practices have helped to expand surveillance over public space. To ground our points, we decided to refer to Foucault's concepts in the surveillance theories. Besides, we wanted to mention about political utilization of the night-watchmen (*bekçiler*) in Turkey context. We thought that the social changes based on the example of the night-watchman (*bekçi*) as a surveillance mechanism between the years 2016-2019 under the rule of AKP (Justice and Development Party) is worthy of sociological inquiry.

We want to start with Foucault's concept of disciplinary societies. According to Foucault (1980), when everybody is under surveillance, people will internalize control, morals, and values, and discipline will be a type of power or a strategy (p.39). Therefore, it can be said that the night-watchmen (*bekçiler*) could be utilized as disciplinary power since they are visible on purpose. Visibility is important based on internalizing control, morals, and values. We were expecting that a considerable number of employed night-watchmen (*bekçiler*) created a change in disciplining or controlling people's actions.

While surveillance practices have long been mobilizing, we were aiming to explore the social significance of the night-watchman (*bekçi*) in Turkey's security forces. Night-watchmen (*bekçiler*) take their place in the field as a force that appears to provide control of the state. In our paper, we looked at how the state surveillance policies have a processing system through night-watchmen (*bekçiler*). For this reason, our inquiry was based on a literature review. We were aiming to bring a kind of historical analysis of the night-watchmen (*bekçiler*) based on the concepts of Foucault.

History of the Night-Watchmen (Bekçiler) in the Context of Turkey

The starting point of the night-watchman (*bekçi*) can be traced back to the seventeenth-century Ottoman Empire with a lack of visibility in the streets due to limitations in street lighting (Aksungur, 2018). Therefore, to maintain security in the neighborhood (*mahalle*), the task of the night-watchman (*bekçi*) was undertaken collectively by neighbors. According to Batuman and Erkip (2019), apart from night patrols, the night-watchmen (*bekçiler*) helped several daily tasks like making announcements or helping the neighbors. Therefore it can be said that the profile of the night-watchman (*bekçi*) was characterized as middle-aged and friendly (due to these secondary tasks he can enter the houses) rather than young and virile as the primary task would require (Aksungur, 2018, p. 103–104).

This brief history of the Ottoman the night-watchman (*bekçi*) shows the origins of the predominating traditional image of the patriarchal figure of the night-watchman (*bekçi*) with a dual character: a friendly and reliable officer seen as a member of the community and an authority figure assuming the responsibility of preventing immoral behavior in the neighborhood (*mahalle*). Although employed collectively by the neighborhood (*mahalle*), the night-watchman (*bekçi*) began to be viewed as an authority figure as an extension of the state in the nineteenth century (Batuman et.al., 2019).

The establishment of police organizations different from the military affected and transformed the tasks of the night-watchman (*bekçi*). The night-watchman (*bekçi*) was institutionalized as a governmental organization as some kind of assistant to the police in 1914. Two physical spaces, which are marketplace (*çarşı*) and neighborhood (*mahalle*), have merged with the new regulation in 1914. Within this framework, the night-watchman (*bekçi*) started to be considered as an assistant to the police and major force responsible for security in the city. The Turkish Republic was founded in 1923; but, interestingly, the organizational structure of the night-watchman (*bekçi*) has not changed until 1966 (Batuman et.al., 2019).

The rapid social and economic changes have been taking place in Turkey since World War II. These changes also affected the rapid urbanization of the country. It is largely because of the urbanization of the country is a consequence of rural-to-urban migration. On the other hand, the cities were not ready, either physically or economically, to receive migrants. The newcomers were the low-income people and; because of the lack of housing conditions of the cities, in addition to the other problems these newcomers experienced a lack of housing in the urban areas. Therefore, the newcomers built their squatter (*gecekondu*) housing (Erman, 1997). To cope with the new urban condition, not only the organization of the places but also the organization of the night-watchman (*bekçi*) has changed. In 1966 through the law called “*Çarşı ve Mahalle Kanunu*”, the night-watchmen (*bekçiler*) gained an official role in the security forces. According to Batuman and Erkip (2019), the night-watchmen (*bekçiler*) were further formalized with uniforms, handguns, and salaries provided by the Ministry of Interior. Furthermore, the squatter (*gecekondu*) neighborhoods (*mahalle*) were seen as a threat to the urban order that required close monitoring of the central state.

In the late 1980s, with the end of the city of squatters (*gecekondu*), social movements; and, with the technologically equipped police force, the growth of surveillance technologies led the night-watchmen (*bekçiler*) began to lose their importance. It was decided not to employ any new night-watchmen (*bekçiler*) and they gradually lost their significance as a part of the security forces. Suddenly in 2007 with the related law has been repealed. In 2016 this situation has changed with the adjustments in the law. Since 2016, 19.600 night-watchmen (*bekçiler*) have been employed. The night-watchman (*bekçi*) was revived by the Ministry of Interior. The night-watchmen (*bekçiler*) were nicknamed as “night hawks”.

Topak (2017) states that under the rule of AKP (Justice and Development Party), the surveillance mechanisms change gradually into totalitarian tools (p.541). Therefore, the social changes based on the example of the night-watchman (*bekçi*) as a surveillance mechanism between the years 2016-2019 under the rule of AKP (Justice and Development Party) would be worthy of sociological inquiry.

DISCUSSION

Theoretical Framework

Power

“Discipline and Punish” turns out to be a very significant work, in which Foucault works out genealogical methodology, which primarily concerns the question of incorporating the concept of force into the previously developed notion of the discourse. The force is in the foreground under the Foucauldian conceptualization of power, and it is through the operation of the force or power, things have come to be organized as a structure. The book enters into the discussion with the presentation of a “spectacular” event that belonged to the second half of the 18th-century scene of public torture. In those times, torture was not something accidental but rather, on the contrary, a very strictly well-defined, well-organized procedure. It was also not merely a way to inflict pain on to the victim or to exert some kind of superiority over the tortured. Foucault (1975) would find out that actually, the torture dominates two phases of the punishing process; one is the establishment of the truths of the crime, and the other is the setting down the punishment (p.7-12).

The Foucauldian question in that context ‘Why about just a hundred years ago torture was so commonplace and so well accepted instrument both as well as the investigation and punishment, and just some eighty years later, it turns out to be a scandal?’ The usual answers given to this question are this because we have been advanced in our considerations of humanity in other words we have been much more humanized, rational. However, Foucault’s answer to that question is (1975), this is not the result of the increasing rationalization, and rather the development of rationality should be understood under the light of the change taken place in the organization of power relations in the society (p.102). Thus, he flashed down the notion of power into the whole of his analysis. According to Foucault (1982), what we call power is nothing else than what has been generated in an encounter. It implies that before the encounter, there is not going to be power at all and the power is the function produced by that encounter. It is something produced in the encounter for the ensuring inequality of the parties (p.788-793). What the parties are is not important, and that means every encounter produces power. According to Foucault, power is produced between us while we are interacting with each other in friendly or unfriendly manners. The crucial thing is to generate friendly and hostile relationships. Therefore, Foucault (1975) describes his conceptualization of power as “capillary” (p.198). Capillary means power relations are produced in the most remote assesses of our social relationships, as a result, power relations are not produced through the hierarchical organization of the state political parties, private cooperations, and so on; power relations are produced by us, between us, through our encounters.

These power relations under certain historical circumstances assume certain systematic characters. When we analyze the pre-modern society through this, we can come to appreciate why the panel system and relations of power had been organized in those ways; why torture, for instance, turned out to be the key understanding that organization of the panel system on the late medieval society. More importantly, that is why while describing the panopticism, Foucault (1975) mentioned that “there was also a political dream of the plague, which was exactly its (the system of panopticon) reverse: not the collective festival, but strict divisions; not laws transgressed, but the penetration of regulation into even the smallest details of everyday life through the mediation of the complete hierarchy that assured the capillary functioning of power” (p.197-198).

Modernity

Foucault depicts torture as the basic form of punishment in the second half of the 18th century under a certain power regime. When we proceed to the 19th century, however, torture would become

increasingly interpreted as something scandalous. Foucault (1975) compares these two periods and points out to the contrast between eras in terms of the society's approach to a particular form of punishment that would envision the transformation of the power regime (p.73-78).

In the first period, this power regime which he refers to as the sovereign power has been organized around several factors, one of which is the division of human existence into two different domains. Our lives had been determined by our bodily existence in contrast to the afterlife which has been characterized by our spiritual existence (soul). According to this division of human existence into two parts actually, Foucault would argue, it had been reflected in the separation of powers; the earthly power on the one hand, and the spiritual power. Since the soul is under the authority of the church what remains left to the sovereign is to establish power over the body of the individual.

In addition to bringing the sovereign as the sole authority over life, there is another principle that is taken from the Roman law (1975, p.48). This certain principle is usually called as "Patria Potestas". It refers to the power of the father to give life to his children and to take their life; therefore it is the power over life. What we see here from a legal point of view is that the equation between the crimes committed against the father and the crimes committed against the sovereign. Within this regime of sovereign power, Foucault would comprehend that crime is conceived as if it is a failure in terms of a personal relationship between the subject and the sovereign. By committing the alleged crime, the subject is understood as breaching the law of the sovereign. Thus, under the conditions where social control mechanisms had not developed yet, in the 18th century, when the police were absent and so forth; the only outlet was let for the sovereign to be able to demonstrate and reenact its power on the body of those who challenge the commands. That is why Foucault would argue that power assumed the form of torture in those times.

In about 80 years, the whole power dynamics changes in parallel with the transformation of the panel system. Torture disappears as being the main form of punishment in the public spectacle and some new institutions such as prisons begin to replace it. By the end of this period people, the onlookers increasingly began to identify with the culprit there suffering torture rather than favoring the power of the sovereign. Foucault's (1982) argument is that it was not up to the reforming desire of the reformers, it was not up to the increasing rationalization, nor up to the increasing humanization of human perspective; but rather it results of the certain changes in the organization of the power regime itself (p.782). Transformation of power regime triggers that shift from torture to prison. In this new regime of power what has aimed at is no longer the body separated from its soul but its unified form. Body and soul turned out to be the target of the basic exercise of power under prisons.

Discipline

The collapse of social relations, that previously prevailing under the rule of the powerful monarch, had also led to the division of areas dominated by the different lord members of the nobility. The basic constituents of these components were the noble lords and serfs, and as a result of this transformation, the overwhelming majority of the population had been freed from their previous social ties in a relatively short time. This period also corresponds to the problem of the emergence or development of capitalism in those countries. That is why modernity is thought to be having a resolving effect concerning the previous social ties, by releasing the serf from its bond both to the noble Lord as well as to the land.

Foucault (1982) argues that, once the diffusion of power began to happen, a huge field of undefined legalities opens up. In other words, people are released from their previous ties and turn toward vagabondage (p.83). They were adopting a life of a vagabond rubbing and creating a danger. These newly emerging capitalist relations open up a new field of activity at the same time which has not been determined by any law. It was in this new social environment, the new institution began to show itself according to Foucault's argument, especially in those cities facing the problem of dealing with this phenomenon of massive vagabondage. A new ideology which especially in those days about work has began to develop. A person's worth has been increasingly connected with the working capacity of the individual. It is in the institution of the workhouses, Foucault (1975) would find out the seeds of the contemporary prison. They have been devised to put those potentially dangerous elements coming outside the cities, into a kind of enforced work for the benefit of the community. The framework of this ideology

was the criminal where considered being the result of moral corruption which can be corrected through work (p. 241-244). All these elements falling outside the world of social relationships, interwoven around the concept of work, actually began to be put under control and put to work as well, in these workhouses. What was the basic mechanism of this institution is the timetable which detailed control of the individuals' lives in these confinement places. Timetable referring to that daily schedule carefully planned about what these individuals should do in the run of a day. The name Foucault gives to this procedure is "discipline" and he argues that power in this new social constellation assumes the form of discipline.

Later on, this culminates in the formulation of the panopticon, a certain architectural shape specifically designed to imposed and ease these operations of that disciplinary power. When the panopticon comes into the picture, the pure form of prison according to Foucault (1975), what has been most emphasized is the control of the lives of the inmates (p. 205). Surveillance centers here in the organization or constitution of disciplinary power as an enhancing factor and peculiarity of surveillance is that it does not need to be there in actuality, thus making it quite an efficient form of an exercise of power.

Visibility

The Foucauldian conception of power is situational; it can be connected to positions in a confrontational situation. Situational means it is practically everywhere. These confrontations themselves are the generative factor of that power (1982, p. 793-795). Therefore Foucault would argue that power in that sense is not that something can have. It depends upon the situation and character of confrontation which practically means inequality. This inequality is defining the terms of that confrontation at the same time. That is why Foucault would see power as not something emanating from the higher structure, state, or government, but rather produced through that pores of our social relations which there in society, it is we who produce them. Power is operating, exercising by itself, and also producing new subjectivities by itself.

In our contemporary time, one of the main justifications for the maintenance of those panel systems being prevention from crime, what aimed is to prevent harm done in society. As Foucault emphasized that, "The scarcely sustainable visibility of the monarch is turned into the unavoidable visibility of the subjects" (1975, p.189). The relationship between sovereign and the subject cannot be established within such a tradition of the framework of a certain conceptualization of power. Producing sovereign and the penal institutions of torture as the basic institution of the society has been changing and given way to another constellation of the forces, this time is not the sovereign power but a specific strategy of power; disciplinary power.

The exercise of the sovereign power was a matter of interruptions, therefore, it needed that public spectacle to engrave itself through its atrocity on the minds of the individuals watching the event; now there are no such necessities, what is required is a continuous exercise of power. Furthermore, while Foucault explained disciplinary power, he also mentioned that "Disciplinary power is exercised through its invisibility; at the same time, it imposes on those whom it subjects a principle of compulsory visibility. In the discipline, it is the subjects who have to be seen. Their visibility assures the hold of the power that is exercised over them. It is the fact of being constantly seen, of being able always to be seen, that maintains the disciplined individual in his subjection" (1975, p.187). Therefore, through its operations exactly producing the individual, making what the individual is in this new society. Disciplinary power has a very function of taming the individual through all these normalizing processes, and it creates the individual as well.

Methodology

In this paper, we adopted a literature review as a methodological tool. This qualitative method helped us to develop a historical analysis based on the surveillance theories of Foucault. Through the qualitative method, we wanted to contextualize the night-watchmen (*bekçiler*) in the history of Turkey. We want to trace the development of the very notion of the night-watchman (*bekçi*) in Turkey's history. In other words, our main problem in this paper was to understand what the social significance of the night-

watchmen (*bekçiler*) in the context of Turkey is. By the social significance, we mean that the socially significant effects of the night-watchmen (*bekçiler*) on the everyday routines, practices of the people. Through analyzing the history of the night-watchmen (*bekçiler*) with the help of the concepts of “power”, “modernity”, “discipline”, and “visibility” in Foucault’s theories, we were aiming to find some kind of patterns. We believed that patterns that show power relations, discipline, and control mechanisms found in the history of the night-watchmen (*bekçiler*) in the context of Turkey together with the process of modernization are going to help us to synthesize. On the basis of this kind of analysis, we aimed to trace the historical transformation and aimed to concentrate especially between the years 2016-2019. We thought that the political incidents have happened between these years, together with the social changes under the rule of AKP (Justice and Development Party) affected the night-watchmen’s (*bekçiler*) position within the surveillance mechanisms of Turkey’s security force.

We wanted to investigate the history of the night-watchmen (*bekçiler*) in the context of Turkey chronologically in order to grasp the transformation of the night-watchman’s (*bekçi*) social, political roles. We aimed to examine chronologically; because, we want to find connections between the historical development of the night-watchmen (*bekçiler*) and Foucauldian concepts. In this sense, it can be said that “narrative provides a framework for interpreting both past and present, a means of linking together past, present and future, and a way of understanding personal lives in the context of social contexts and social interaction” (Lawler, 2002).

In the literature, the night-watchmen (*bekçiler*) in Turkey are issues which are quite overlooked. There were very limited sources or academic writings about this issue, although it is a promising issue for researching. It is not only suitable for historically analyzing in the context of Turkey through the surveillance theories of Foucault but also it is very much related to our daily experiences in contemporary urban places. Therefore, by making an analysis in this paper we wanted to contribute to the literature.

As we mentioned earlier, the concept of visibility is important both for tracing, understanding the history of the night-watchmen (*bekçiler*), and situating the night-watchmen (*bekçiler*) in the theoretical framework. If it is followed through this path, almost every historical transformation of the night-watchmen (*bekçiler*), the cause-effect relationship in the process of this transformation would be associated with Foucauldian concepts.

In general, it can be said that our academic position is about building relationality between the actual historical situations of the night-watchmen (*bekçiler*) and the theoretical notions from the perspective of Foucault. For example, the presence of the power of the night-watchmen (*bekçiler*); the presence of power in here stands for having the capacity to execute power, maintain a kind of authority, and representing the state power on the streets. As can be understood this might be associated with the concept of “power” as a theoretical notion. Another relationality between empirical situations and theoretical notions would be exemplified through the changes of the night-watchmen’s (*bekçiler*) job definition through the historical process. This would be associated with the concept of “modernity” of Foucault.

The night-watchmen (*bekçiler*) affect how public space is used. In other words, they control and discipline the practices of the people. Therefore, this would come together with the Foucauldian notion of “discipline”. Another empirical situation would be being visible on the purpose and patriarchal appearances of the night-watchmen (*bekçiler*). These would be associated with the “visibility” concept of Foucault.

Analysis

In this part of the paper, we want to talk about four concepts; which are power, modernity, discipline, and visibility; in relation to the history of night-watchmen (*bekçiler*) presented before by referring to Batuman and Erkip (2019).

Power

Power would be considered as something produced by the encounter. In the case of the night-watchman (*bekçi*), the encounter stands for the confrontations between the night-watchman (*bekçi*) and

the people. As it is known the night-watchmen (*bekçiler*) have a non-negligible amount of authority in maintaining public order. It is almost equivalent to the authority that the police have. Therefore, it can be said that the relations of power are constructed upon the initiatives of the night-watchmen (*bekçiler*). The fear element is important in terms of the notion of power. Fear is related to both the position of the night-watchmen (*bekçiler*) and the perspective of the people. Especially 2016 was a significant year in terms of the relations of fear and power. The threat of the Gülenist movement within state structure and security forces together with the failed coup on 15th July in the same year created a fear of terrorism. Therefore, the night-watchmen (*bekçiler*) were employed to close the gap that was opened due to arresting in the security forces. From the people's perspective, as it is claimed by Batuman and Erkip (2019), the night-watchmen (*bekçiler*) became a nostalgic cure for the internal crisis of the police (p.5). Therefore, it can be said that the encounter is regardless of it is friendly or unfriendly; the night-watchmen (*bekçiler*) have the power to maintain order or have the power of representation of the state. Also, the capillary power concept of Foucault would be associated with the increasing number of night-watchmen (*bekçiler*). Since they are "watching" the people's actions in as many places as possible, it might be claimed that they have Foucauldian capillary power in terms of the power relations that are produced by us and are produced between us.

Modernity

The term modernity is related to urbanization in Turkey. After World War II, not only in Turkey but in the world a rapid rural to urban migration has experienced. The specificity of the case in Turkey would be squatter (*gecekondu*) settlements due to a lack of housing in the urban areas. The population in the cities has increased; therefore, the organization of the public spaces has changed. With the increase in the population and diversities in the population, it can be said that both the crime rates and the unemployment rates have affected. It is quite a versatile situation; because, the high unemployment rates may have led to an increase in 'vagabondage' in Foucauldian terms at the same time, may have provided employment opportunities for more night-watchmen (*bekçiler*). This could be observed through the everyday routines in the city life; because the city has its own pace. Compared to night-watchmen (*bekçiler*) in Ottoman times, it can be seen that they have a dual character. They were reliable officers at the same time member of the community. But, after 2016 the image of the night-watchmen (*bekçiler*) has changed. Today the night-watchmen (*bekçiler*) and the people are more distant from each other. There is a more formal relationship. Also, different from the police forces, the night-watchmen (*bekçiler*) are more mobile in encountering people. As Batuman and Erkip (2019) have mentioned the urbanites walkthrough police control, while the night-watchman (*bekçi*) moves toward the person he will search (p.8). The searched person in this situation is the one as seen as 'marginal', 'different', 'threat', or 'vagabond'. These labels are under the initiatives of the night-watchmen (*bekçiler*), in other words, they are rather under the initiatives of the state.

Discipline

As we mentioned under the title of modernity, the city has its own pace. The work experiences determine this pace, and it is quite fast in the city. Therefore, the people maintain their lives through the timetables which refer to a kind of carefully planned daily schedule. The people should stick to this in the run of the day. Foucault calls this procedure as "discipline". The night-watchmen (*bekçiler*) are playing role in disciplining the people through intervening or directing their everyday routines. The people work 8 hours on average on weekdays. It is generally between 8 am – 5 pm or 9 am – 6 pm. After 6 pm, the night-watchmen (*bekçiler*) start their patrolling shift. Therefore, people understand that today's work time is over, it is time to go home; because, the streets are not 'safe' at the night, although the job of the night-watchman (*bekçi*) is to provide safety. Especially after 2016, utilizing the night-watchmen (*bekçiler*) as a surveillance tool through controlling the time spent in the public areas might be a strategy of specifically preventing terrorism. Another understanding of the 'safety' could be associated with the AKP's (Justice and Development Party) conservative discourse. Therefore, it can be said that the night-watchman (*bekçi*) represents the extension of a (conservative) social control mechanism that belonged to the residential

neighborhood to the city centers (Batuman et.al., 2019, p.11). Especially after 2016, utilizing the night-watchmen (*bekçiler*) as a surveillance tool might be a strategy of specifically preventing terrorism.

Visibility

Anxiety is evoked when the night-watchman (*bekçi*) is introduced—or rather shown—in the public areas of the city center. The police may carry out routine searches and random searches in the public space, which the citizens would see as normal. The interference with the night-watchman (*bekçi*), however, is different.

The word night-watchman (*bekçi*) literally derives from the Turkish word for 'waiting' (in the sense of 'guarding'). The night-watchman (*bekçi*) is not an anonymous figure and his approach (instead of gaze) is causing anxiety. Here the types of visibility of security checks carried out by police and the night-watchman (*bekçi*) must be distinguished. The first encompasses "random visibility" which temporarily addresses the citizen. This involves a citizen's acceptance of the police (and by extension the state power), but the understanding that the procedure is random rapidly makes the citizen invisible right after the meeting. The safety inspection conducted by the night-watchman (*bekçi*), by contrast, encompasses "target visibility." The choice of the individual who has to be examined and searched is marked; even when the security forces end, they remain visible to the crowd as a potential suspect.

Another aspect of the visibility issue is the visibility of executing authority in the name of the state. Batuman and Erkip (2019) argue that this is the new regime of visibility it generates regarding the social control of public space (p.2). In this sense, visibility is something used as a controlling tool. At the same time, there is a kind of need for the appearance of the night-watchman (*bekçi*), in order to utilize their visibility as a controlling tool.

CONCLUSION

The year 2016 was a turning point for the political history of Turkey. After the failed coup on 15th July 2016, Turkey witnessed a state of emergency that lasted until 2018. These enormous political incidents resulted in significant social changes in society. Increasing employment of the night-watchmen (*bekçiler*) played role in these changes. They represented the state power in the public spaces. Together with modernity, especially after 2016, their image has changed. It can be said that they directed people's lives; in a way, are utilized as a disciplinary tool. Furthermore, they became the image of the AKP's (Justice and Development Party) conservative discourse. It can be said that the visibility of the night-watchmen (*bekçiler*) in the urban spaces played a significant role in leading people with a kind of self-disciplining process.

Although the technological advances have increased the surveillance techniques in Turkey, interestingly, we can talk about a need for a physical existence of a person as a surveillance mechanism. According to Batuman and Erkip (2019), the Turkish historical and cultural context indicates the pervasiveness of authority, conservatism, and patriarchy (p.10). This might be related to the culture in Turkey; the culture that is developed through interaction. People need a person that could be seen, a person that his/her effect could be felt upon the people. This person is generally a male figure that holds power, represents authority.

The place of the night-watchmen (*bekçiler*) in our lives has not been fixed yet. Their expansion as being part of the security forces of Turkey is increasing through time. But, what significant about them is their potential power to control, to discipline, to represent the discourse of the existing government. Although it is claimed that the night-watchmen (*bekçiler*) should not be evaluated as an illustration of AKP's intrinsic conservatism, the historical analysis that we have developed showed that there is such a possibility.

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