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### **Border Identites at South East of Turkey**

The paper aims to discuss on the border identity at South East of Turkey via a pilot study conducted at two different frontiers: 'Nusaybin gate to Syria' and 'Habur gate to North Iraq'.

A two years project is designed on both anthropological and sociological methods at three gates of Turkey to Iraq, Syria and Iran. The pilot study made, in this summer, at two frontiers focus on towns of Şırnak and Mardin cities. At this context, some tentative(thick) descriptions on living at the border towns are summarized below, for further discussion:

#### **WHO IS THE " BORDER CITIZEN"?**

- (1) Multi-lingual
- (2) Being at both "sites" simaltenously
- (3) Having access to " other" information sources other than the formal and legal ones.
- (4) Constituting institutional links through illegal practices (marriage with unregistered women from Syria)
- (5) More informed about the issues on citizenship law, border trade, international (trans-national) political movements etc. than the citizens of other regions within the nation-state;
- (6) Having gained the "daily bread" only through "the border" in the past and present without seeking any other source of income.
- (7) Well-informed about international currency rate
- (8) Having different social memory and geographical imaginary.
- (9) Knowledgeable about the different mappings of the region throughout historical periods
- (10) Being involved in and influenced by the national economy only through the economical links with "the border".
- (11) Using the border and one's choice of nationality (at the bureacratic level) as a basis for negotiation in the past and present.

- (12) Using the traditional system as a basis for negotiations with the state institutions .
- (13) Although well informed about the 'facilities' of the other side; justifying and legitimizing the politics of *the* state of which he is a citizen.
- (14) The border citizen can be defined as the subject of transgression who strategically (re)produces/(re)constructs political and economic spaces in and against the state; privileging the traditional forms of relationships such as kinship, religious and aširet(tribal bonds).

As such, the border citizens have different encounters and negotiations with the state vis-a-vis their cultural and historical heritage which is also part of the way in which they are articulated to the global economic system.

Therefore the border as geographical and political sign does make both visible and invisible the relations of the state with citizens. It is possible to imply that; instead of establishing a constitutional relationship between a modern state and the citizens."the state" sustain and tolerate the conditions of the possibilities of the living "at the border", because of the negotiation power of border citizens as cited above

In this respect what needs further inquiry is the politics of being 'subaltern'. What are the uses and abuses of subaltern positionality considering the intermeshed relationship of the state with border citizens?