

WARNINGS FOR STUDYING BORDER AND TRACE: HOW MUST BORDER AND TRACE BE STUDIED?

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(paper is in progress, please do not quote)

Border is a widespread subject of the studies in anthropology and social sciences. However the tendency of narration has gaining power.

At the end of 1990s, studies, which were focused on the cultural symbols of narration and place, have recently intensified on the discussions of culture and identity and especially on citizenship, territoriality and sovereignty. These studies that can be named top-down; for example the studies of the political sciences and international relations emphasize intensively the big scale development projects and global systems permeability, currency and possibility. On the other hand, bottom-up studies mainly concern about determining the limits of citizenship and sovereignty over culture-identity researches and interpreting the metaphoric meanings of the border (symbolic dimension of the border and borderland). Symbolic construction of border, identity construction and re-negotiation are still the most attractive subjects for anthropologists.

The first step that should be taken in order to differentiate the contradiction of metaphorical versus material analyses from the identity problem is to show the dynamic formation of the identity. Besides, it is a kind of negotiation not only between the state and the government but also territoriality. This attitude makes us consider border over trace and as a result we can draw a frame, which consists empiric phenomenon and conceptual problem as well. So we can understand how the dynamic political economy supports the joint between border and trace.

MY claim is to take into consider what the material as a base. We need to base the studies on the material process in which the border is a place and the trace is the space in order to explain the reproduction of unequal power relations over economy politics rather than metaphor, mystification and narration. In this presentation, excluding the metaphors on enclosure and the permeability of the border, I discuss over the critical economy politics view the empiric findings of the transitions, which revealed trade opportunities in two border provinces,

Edirne (Europe Gate) and Sırnak (Iraq-Kurd Federal Area Gate: Habur Gate) in Turkey.

Since 2004, there has been a transition through Habur Gate, which is called “*Ant Trade*”. 12 taxi fleets in the three towns of Sırnak started carrying fuel by daily travels with about 350 taxis. These travels were legally approved to carry passengers to Iraq, so some local Kurds, seen as travelers could trade some goods in small amounts. *Ant Trade*’s taking place of the semi illegal, large scaled diesel and fuel smuggling through the gate resulted in Lower-middle income group to join the border trade. *Ant Trade* has got a complex bargain process as it means bribery for the border custom (bureaucracy), liberal economy for the border police (government), and approval of the Kurdish ethnicity for the border military army (TSK).

Another example is the human trade through the Europe Gate in Edirne and the river Meriç. This transition’s in and out flow can be explained by four different types of corporation: Firstly, the human trade with the permission of the government (from 1938 to 1970s the trade controlled by the National Investigation Bureau (MIT), secondly, the government’s illegal integration to the national network’s business (from the 1970s the transition of the leftist groups to the Soviet Union), thirdly the human trade made by the local and national networks (during the 1980s the transition to Europe and the Soviet Union because of the political reasons) and lastly after the collapse of the Soviet Union the human trade accelerated in Turkey by the local and national networks. In this last period, transitions occurred in the most protected and secure points of the border. Since 1938, interviews with various groups performing human trade shows us how Europe’s closing its border created a huge economy which supports all these illegal transitions in the last period. The period called “*Vision Export*” has importance as it supports all the local and national smuggling markets and Europe’s strict moral attitude. Edirne is proud of being the most European city but it is the place where the national and international identity bargains happen.

Just a few of the studies on the permeability of the border deals with the gates and the secure points while referring to the illegality of the border transition. Both *Ant Trade* and *Vision Export* are made not on the borderline but the most secure areas and gates and that is the point to be taken into consideration to study the literature based on illegality.

The process of benefiting the grant of the permeability in these two examples includes not only the bargains of the state and the government but also the territory. Also, it shows the identity bargains carried on through local to national and international.

In the present study, I will ground my arguments on the fact that how borders and traces can create a territorial power domain, both as a space and a place.

Within the scope of the present paper, in which I will keep my distance from metaphors and metonyms, I will claim that Border is a territory of double-faced, insincere and dishonest bargains on citizenship for the inferior and the power,

And that the so-called bargain is, with no doubt, for the citizenship,

And yet, the issue of citizenship is not a separate issue from political economy,

Thus, I will discuss that the so-called issue of ‘being counted as a citizen’, is starting to change its direction and while getting away from the state-citizen dilemma, it is rather becoming a transnational bargain;

And how the above mentioned process is still being carried out by and between the state-the government and the citizens;

And with the new period, what kind of role(s) the transnational connections can play.

Therefore, I will focus on the mechanisms of crossing the border legally and illegally, and how the rhetoric on the border crossing re-constitutes ‘the everyday practices of bureaucracies and the discursive construction of the state in public culture’ as cited by Gupta (1995: 375). Moreover, I will attempt to follow Wolf’s invitation on ‘who controls what and who control whom’ (Wolf, 2001: x) to investigate the power relations. And by following Moore JR,’s stresses that (1967: 518) puts it: ‘It is not only who fights but what the fight is about that matters.’

Moore, B. 1967: *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

I will focus on two case studies: Ant Trade and Vision Export.

‘Ant trade’ is the local name given to the adventures of approximately 350 drivers who have been, starting from the year 2004, daily crossing the border from Habur Gate (on the Iraq-Turkey border) with their taxis and have been filling up their tanks with cheap fuel from the other side of the border. With which permissions, by whose commercial certificates do these vehicles make fuel trade and whose power territory is being strengthened by these daily transitions? In order to present this case study, four people-that were among the partners of the two companies- were interviewed. Besides, four of the company drivers together with another four people whose vehicles are used for company works were interviewed. The so-called interviews were done between October 9-12, 2004.

The second case study is about the refugees that enter Greece from Edirne, the EU border. Which institutions enable the legality of the so-called crossing? Who controls the roads, the mechanisms and the institutions that the refugees get in touch with, for crossing the border? I conducted the mentioned field work between January-July 2010. I interviewed four of the human smugglers.

The common character of these two case studies is that they are “legalized although they seem to be illegal”. It is enough for a border crossing to be counted as ‘legal’ when it is not considered as a crime within the scope of the laws. However, these crossings are illegal because of the goods that are being transported; on the other hand they are legalized by laws. Besides, the things that are being transported are -in the first case it is fuel, and in the second humans- totally meta: rather than having a value in use, they have a value of exchange. Both fuel smuggling and human smuggling is a bargain within the global system. And the local itself is embedded to this system with its own mechanisms. Moreover, both cities (Şırnak and Edirne) are to be a transnational actor through the so-called bargains.

Let’s take a look at the cases in the first place.

Ant Trade:

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(Transporting fuel in the fuel tank of a car from Zaho)

I open and share this presentation in order to discuss with what kind of dynamics the models of ‘being a citizen in the borderline provinces’ are being economically proceeded and

with what kind of bargains and daily conflicts the dominant discourses may be nourished.

While “Ant Trade” was the name of the job which defined the people’s daily crossings through the Habur Gate and reaching Zaho, and taking the permitted goods that they could carry and bringing them to Turkey in order to sell them in the past, nowadays, after the invasion of Iraq, it has become the name of the taxi fleets which carry smuggled fuel in their tanks besides realising the formerly mentioned job.

A commerce network has been created by the permissions (for a daily travel to Iraq) given to the owners of the taxis showing that they can trade (certificate A2) and carry at least one customer in their vehicles. For this business, fleets have been created, and at the same time, individual applications have also been confirmed, but the greatest permission has been given to the ones who had a taxi fleet. In 2004, there was 17 taxi fleets working as “ants” from the Habur Gate. It was said that every company had 45 vehicles or even more. It could not be possible to ascertain the exact number of the individuals doing the job, but it was said to be more than 900.

The owners of the taxi fleets taking part in the “Ant Trade”, state that the cost of the certificate A2 is 25 billion liras (25 thousand liras = ~15-16.000\$). Companies buy most of the vehicles that are to be used for transporting fuel, but 40% of the people just make it look like that they sold their vehicles to the company and drive them with the help of a procurator. It is also possible to get a crossing permission and transport fuel from Iraq without buying a trade plate or without joining to a company’s fleet. However, this kind of trade does not really yield much profit, because, although the entrances to Zaho are not limited in number, exits for individuals are limited, they can only get an exit permit ‘once a week’.

An owner of a taxi fleet, who stated that you could yield a better profit from a taxi when compared to a tanker, said: “Now is the time of tankers and taxis. The fuel is now transported to Habur from Turkey. The petrol refining plants in Iraq were bombed. Crude oil from Iraq is transported to Israel and there it is being refined, then it is brought to Turkey, to the Port of İskenderun and then by tankers it is being sold to Iraq. We can say that now it is very limited. 4-5 months ago [interviews were conducted in October, 2004] people were earning five billion for each run by buying fuel from İskenderun and selling it, by buying two tons from İskenderun and selling it, and then filling the tanker with cheap crude oil from Iraq. The military banned this. Now there are 500-750 tanker crossings daily, trucks make a run twice a month at most, and that brings 1,5 billion only; and from that amount 500 million is given to the driver.”. The tanks of the taxis are enlarged from 70-80 litres to 130-150 litres. Moreover, people are talking about some legendary repairmen who can enlarge the tanks up to 200-220 litres. On the other hand, if the military realizes that a taxi’s tank is enlarged, the driver is made to pay fine for 95 million liras.

The profit of a taxi for a run was between 60-90 million liras when costs were excluded. The company owners told that they could fill the tanks (whatever their volume was) fully in Iraq for 3-4 dollars, and that the peshmargas (for the year 2004 it was KDP) asked for 20 dollars. “People (referring to Kurds) are afraid of the Arabic side. Therefore they don’t go. And Turks are afraid of Kurds, and they don’t go either.”, they added. The costs of a taxi were being counted as follows: the passenger who acted as a customer was paying 7,5-10 million liras to the owner of the vehicle. And he himself was earning 20 million liras. Besides, there was always the possibility for selling some of the goods that the driver had brought to him. And that also was making

a profit around 20 million liras. These vehicles are mostly using LPG and thus, the cost of the needed fuel for the 200-kilometer road between Silopi-İdil and Cizre is saved. The Iraqi side gets 7-8 million liras for each run as a city toll fee (The so-called amount was being paid in liras, not in dollars). Another 21 million liras were paid to the Turkish customs. After the fuel was sold for 2 million liras a litre, the remaining amount would approximately like (for a tank that hasn't been enlarged):

$$2.00 \text{ liras} \times 80 \text{ litre} = 160.00 - 55.00 \text{ liras} = \text{approximately } 100.00 \text{ liras (72 \$)}$$

When the payment done by the passenger and the money they brought themselves were added to the above mentioned amount, it was quite a good profit for a daily crossing. [To whom the fuel is sold to?] “To anybody. Receipt, fake invoice. All gas stations buy it. ... If the passenger carries an illegal thing with himself, then he is responsible of that. If it is found in the vehicle, then the owner of the vehicle is responsible.”. Thus, all the processes were being legally secured. All the possible gaps on the legal level about the travels and the smuggled goods were closed; although the owner of the vehicles seemed to be the company owners, the prices kept unpaid, on the other hand the owners became the drivers of their own vehicles. The legal provision of showing at least one passenger was not operating in real; the ones who were in charge of the control of the border knew it, but were overlooking the issue. Yet, the conflict that was occurring because of the ambiguity about the needed number of the passengers was sometimes causing a polemic that was brought even before the governorships. Just like the scummages that the ones who exit from the Nusaybin Gate or from Doğubayazıt for a daily travel face, were taking place. The difference of this transition was that the risk these border crossers were

facing was personal, but the profit sharing here was more centralized. ‘The Ants of the Habur Gate’ were making another group of day-trippers rich with their each and every transition: ‘The new rich people of the war’.

In an answer to the question [How did it all start?], the partners of the company said the following; “Attention, alertness, being trustable”. Yet, it was obvious that this was not something which anyone could do. Although at present the ones that became the owner of the company, greets themselves for their well-done job and praises their own good abilities, this job was carried out by only a group of people, and not by everyone:

[Who started this business?] “The people of Silopi. They are supported by the oil-rich Iraqi people, and these people have connections everywhere, in Ankara, in İstanbul. First, they started a partnership by an offer.”. The above mentioned statement explains the mechanisms at work much better. The owners of the companies in that territory had close relationships with the existing government (for instance in two districts these owners were the AKP’s county commissioners and their relatives) and besides, these people were skilled in accounting and financial affairs. The above mentioned points were making the big picture a bit more clear. ‘The new rich group of the war’ was making the ones who hadn’t got any chance of earning their lives other than becoming an agent within the scope of the above mentioned system, ‘the hamals of the new period’ using the centralized power’s vague –or more apparent- channels. An in that process the ones who had close relationships with the centralized power could become richer. Thus, once again, for the low-income groups and socio-economic status groups, the metaphor of “The only work area is the Habur Gate” was gaining strength.

Vision Export:

Case 2: Human trafficking and its 'facilitators' in Edirne:

The second case is the human smugglers' network to Bulgaria or Greece from Edirne. I contact to human smugglers in Edirne during my first fieldwork in June, and during my second one in Enez in the end of August. After my gatekeepers connected me; I interviewed two of smugglers in Edirne (on the road of Bulgaria) and two in Enez (on the road of Greece).

The smuggling area is described as '*safe and easy*'. Smugglers use the three ways to make the people cross: One is 'Package technique', second is 'Shaking' and the last one is 'kicking'. Package is to deliver the refugee by supplying his/her passport as French, Italy or German, "*...by taking he/she from Istanbul to deliver to the other side of border without any step in the land, safely*" (C. 45, human smuggler from 1994-95, in Edirne, he arrested in Bulgaria at the end of August).

Total payment of the first is from 2500 Euros pp., and possible more. The tip of this technique is that, the package never arranges by the locals; but the all orders and roots come from upper bosses such as Istanbul and or Trabzon mafia. C. says "*If you are an enough important and a significant person, if you are worth to be taken into consider, already they will arrange for you the all things instead of us. We do not ask questions. Even our share is not as much as they're charging. Sometimes the bosses send some particularly intentioned person to make them to cross the border. Even we know who is who, the business is as usual*" (C., int. in Edirne, in June 2010)

While Enez use the same techniques, the payment is slightly higher "*Because*

their travel road is quite luxury (by race boats to Greece), and the significances of the people are higher”; A. says “Whenever we heard an explosion or a political murder in Turkey, we saw the suspicious in a few days in the race boats, here” (A. 40, Human smuggler from 2002, in Enez).

When I ask “But how the people survive in a foreign country with a fake passport?” the answers are “*It is up to your cost to the process. If you are worth to keep, you can survive*” (A. int. in Enez) and “*It depends why they want to keep on you*” (C. int. in Edirne). A. says “*Whenever we heard an explosion or a political murder in Turkey, we saw the suspicious in a few days in the race boats, here*” (A. 40, Human smuggler from 2002, in Enez).

The second way is “to shake” the migrants in-between two sides endlessly. After a migrants pay his/her bribe, they took him/her from Edirne, made him/her to walk 9 kilometres in 45 minutes by crossing the shallow water; let him/her to reach the other side. And then, they denounce the refugees to the gendarmerie, in order to get him/her for another shaking process. After the refugee or migrant is deported, the human smugglers contact the people in order to have another crossing. The payment is from 1000 Euros pp., C. said “*Daylight is more appropriate because there are thermal cameras in the border, and also two alarmed wires, but nevertheless, omit them, they can be turn off for some hours by depending of your amount of money to cross*”. (C. int. in Edirne). The crossing way is on the road of patrols, and spring and autumn times are more popular than winter, because of the conditions of Meriç (Maritsa) River. C. says “*Some people from Agency know well to stop the alarm, by charging the money to do it*”, and “*To delivery to address is quite difficult, needs more attention, otherwise, without deliverance is easier*” (C. int. in Edirne)

A. insists that *“To cross via Enez is more expensive because Maritsa needs more consideration besides the sea patrols are more intentioned. The payment is higher since the local fishermen may engage the process” ... When they arrest and return, the new crossing payment attacks. I have seen who crossed even 7 times*” (A. int. in Enez). Sometimes, gendarmerie catches the people on the seaside/riverside, or in the boat, which cannot run in any second; sometimes gendarmerie picks the refugees from water if they are lucky.

The other technique, “kicking”, starts when the all the shaking finishes; when the refugee spends all border budgets by shaking in-between two sides. C. says *“It is cheaper than the all, costs only from 250 Euro. I take him/her eve of the town or city, and show to the other side: you go walk, directly, swim by yourself, and find your own way”*. Most of them cannot success to cross the border” (C. int. in Enez).

Although formal Border Gendarmerie and Border Police statistics show the number of arrested in one year (in 2009) is 830 people in Enez, and 1200 people in Edirne, the EU statistics for illegal crossing the Greece border show “In the first half of 2010 a total of 45,000 illegal border crossings were reported by the Greek authorities for all their border sectors. Greece currently estimates that up to 350 migrants attempt to cross the 12,5-km area near the Greek city of Orestiada every day reached at 15 October 2010), totally 63.000 illegal migrants in first six months” (http://www.frontex.europa.eu/newsroom/news_releases/art79.html).

What is the purpose of hiding counts? Both Turkey’s and Frontex’s and the

EU's counts are quite nebulous. The numbers of people who cross legally and illegally are counted altogether. Instead of individual illegal crossings, the numbers announced are about the total crossings, total smuggled goods and total legal and illegal migrants. Neither Turkey nor the E.U discloses their formal statistics. The fact that the statistics are hidden and sometimes exaggerated, feeds the negotiations about the amounts dedicated to the border surveillance of Turkey and the E.U.

Let's calculate this for a small village. I will do it with a simple calculation and some simple statistics. Enez is a border village containing the Meriç (Maritsa) River Delta and it's urban population is around 3500 people. It's a small village subsisting on agriculture.

Normally, there should be 3 time more border crossing that the ones caught (İçduygu, 2003). Therefore, we can say that with a population of 3500 last year, in 2009 there been 3000 crossings only from Enez.

If we count at least 500 euros per person, we can say that the money gained only from the Enez crossing is 1.5 million Euros a year.

Of course, the people of Enez did not get this revenue as locals. This amount shows how remunerating is the black market and the fact that a village with insufficient means to access the illegal networks cannot keep to itself this amount. Even though people of Enez know whom are those subsisting on this business, they are quite distanced to the illegal crossing business and neither they stand on the states side nor on the illegal traffickers' side. They explain the rise of illegal trafficking with "*the increase of problems of making a living*". Enez qualifies itself as "*The last ticket is issued here*".

With the law of the 22nd of December 1981, numbered 17552, Enez was declared totally as a “Forbidden military area”, and this ban continued until 2004. The life of this small town as ruined with the ban and every stranger coming to this town was interrogated. *“Before the military, there were no smuggling”* says one of the former mayors. But, the smuggling is only told as a narrative of the present. *“Between 1971 and 76, the relationships with the other side were very warm. There was fish smuggling but it was only necessity smuggling. Of course there was also big smugglings for sugar, gun etc. In fact we didn’t need the military here. We asked it in 1975. Even in the political Cyprus tension, the conditions were not tense. The border was cut with a knife partly in 1980 and completely with the coming of the military.”* (M. 74. int. in Enez) says the former mayor. 67-year-old inhabitant says: *“The people smuggling historical artefacts in the past and those smuggling people today are the same, but the circle is wider now.”* (A. 67. int. in Enez)

Those who help people to cross borders, the trajectories, and their homes are well known by almost everyone. In fact, everything is done in daylight. At nights, the traces and sounds of migrants become more visible, the car flows increase. The smugglers who shop in markets, pharmacies during their stay, hide themselves at night in their homes near the border, with their pockets full.

During my 10-day stay in Enez, the only foreigners interrogated were 4 foreigners staying in my small hotel. They were 20 years old, and they came a few days ago with their passports and their own car, from Edirne, naïve to begin their trip in Turkey in the archaeological relics in Enez. All the formalities and passports were legal and okay, but they were the only ones interrogated in the

police station. The only ones who were advised to “Not staying too long in Enez” were these 4 young tourists.

Concluding discussions:

These two case studies show how illegality is being embedded in legal margins and dimensions. In both cases the transitions are through border gates. In the first example, we see that a transnational gate is being used for illegality. In the second, transitions are realized through the most guarded part of the border; the most guarded part of the border has become the most secure part for transitions. In the latter example, we see that the borderline has become a gate totally.

On the other hand, being shown in ‘what is legal’ is not within everyone’s means. What does bargain with a state mean and who can conduct such a bargain? Such a bargain requires class mechanisms, and just as that, it also requires to be preserved and be protected by power networks. These requirements are enabled by the close relationships with the power, the government in the first example; and in the second, they are enabled by the illegal relationship between the ones that are on this and on the other side of the border.