**3. CENTRAL THEORETICAL CONCEPTS**

Theoretically, this project engages in a critical discussion revolving around three key anthropological themes: the state, citizenship, and the margin of the state. The concepts of the state and citizenship are assumed in various, often unarticulated, ways to raise questions, criticize, or lead to new understandings. By drawing on Derrida and many others to conceptualize these entities as specters, I investigate them through their impact on structuring and orienting social interactions. They thereby become entities whose features cannot be assumed, but can only be established through nuanced and situated ethnographic accounts. The same is true about people and communities. As Talal Asad wrote: “People in society are never homogeneous, that they are always constituted by different memories, fears, and hopes, that they have different histories and live in different social-economic conditions” (Asad, 2004: 283).

However, extending its genealogy of Weberian, Marxist, and Foucauldian thought (Althusser, 2014; Foucault 2009; Weber, 1983) the anthropology of the state has emphasized the logics and effects of state power (Allison 1991; Baumann 1995; Clastres 1987; Gupta & Ferguson 2002; Taussig 1992). Recent anthropological work on the state has adopted post-structuralism approaches to articulate the paradoxical quasi-solidity of state constructs (Navaro-Yashin 2002). The anthropology of citizenship also has a significant Foucauldian heritage and combines these perspectives (Rose 2006) with a strong influence from Anderson (1991) to articulate how states shape the identities of their populations (Castor 2013; Mahmood 2012; Ong 1999). Similarly, Talal Asad’s argues that citizenship works by transcending other identities through state enforcement (Asad 2015; 2003).

The margin of the state literature (Das and Poole 2015) is vital for this project, as it addresses questions of citizenship gaps, and therefore can serve as a thread connecting the literatures of the state and of citizenship. Therefore, building on this framework will enrich some of my research questions, enabling me, for example, not only to understand how people of the community think, imagine, and yearn for better police, but also to understand what they do, creatively, to survive and endure their exposed and vulnerable lives. This approach will also help provide insights into which and how practices at the margins shape the state.