

SOLROUTES



Solidarities and migrants' routes across Europe at large

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Research question and objectives

The SOLROUTES project aims to explore unauthorized movements of migrants in Europe, focusing on the emergence, transformations, and social spaces created by these movements. The core research question is how to make sense of these routes by examining Europe from the margins, specifically through the lens of solidarity networks supporting migrants in transit. The project spans a wide scale, encompassing EU countries with restrictive internal border policies, Mediterranean countries facing externalization of borders, and overlooked migratory systems in the Outermost Regions of the EU in South America and the Indian Ocean.

Research Objectives:

1. Explore the functioning and cultural imaginaries of local and trans-local networks supporting migrants.
2. Assess how routes change due to encounters between unauthorized movements and solidarity networks in the context of public health issues.
3. Develop a large-scale multi-site ethnographic approach using live and collaborative methods and digital research.
4. Develop innovative theory in migration studies on the nexus between solidarity and unauthorized movements.
5. Foster debates involving local communities and institutions, generating research objects (web series, art exhibit, graphic novel) and inspiring new narratives for policymakers and broader audiences.

Spotlight on solidarity

The project challenges the prevailing push/pull paradigm in migration studies, emphasizing the agency of migrants and introducing solidarity networks as crucial actors. Solidarity is viewed as a multifarious set of practices, encounters, and forms of cooperation along corridors/routes, transforming forced corridors into lived-in routes. The research focuses on Europe as a crossroads of forced circulations and lived-in routes, exploring the dynamics between control and autonomy.

Widening the scale

The project identifies and explores 50 crucial nodes along migratory corridors/routes in EU countries, the Mediterranean Sea, and the Outermost Regions of the EU in South America and the Indian Ocean. These nodes are considered as social and temporal spaces of transit where the analysis of the nexus between unauthorized movements and solidarity networks will be grounded.

Towards a cartography of solidarities

SOLROUTES examines how solidarities change and adapt along corridors/routes, exploring actors, practices, discourses/meanings, and the relational field. The project adopts an intersectional approach to analyze gender and solidarities, exploring commonalities in difference and contingent coalitions between various social groups.

Moving beyond the state of the art

The project contributes to solidarity studies in migration by:

1. Overcoming the opposition between state governance and migrants' agency.
2. Conceptualizing routes as lived-in social infrastructure produced by the nexus between solidarity networks and unauthorized movements.
3. Conceiving solidarity with migrants as a space of encounters challenging the dichotomy between "providers" and "beneficiaries".
4. Decolonizing the gaze on solidarities by focusing on Europe at large.

Methodological approach

SOLROUTES combines multi-sited ethnography, public and reflexive sociology, digital ethnography, and live methods. The research uses Ethnographic Caravans across corridors/routes, Ethnographic Antennae in different locations (Morocco, Tunisia, Turkey, Belgium, French Guiana, and Mayotte), and Generative Narrative Workshops to explore the complex space of solidarities.

Research plan and feasibility

The project unfolds in four phases covering 60 months, involving training, fieldwork in different regions, revisiting solidarities, and conducting a meta-ethnography. The collaborative design of the research, ethical considerations, and a scientific advisory board and committee for ethnographic research and ethics to help mitigate risks associated with the fieldwork.

Research outputs, special features, and dissemination

The project aims to produce open-access scientific articles, books, and research PhD theses, international conferences and local workshops. Additionally, it will create collaborative special features such as graphic novels and art exhibits through cooperation between researchers and selected artists invited to participate in specific Generative Narrative Workshops (GNW). A digital multi-platform and a Media Board will be used for the dissemination and communication of the research output to a broader public.

Summary of scientific gain and impact

SOLROUTES seeks to open a new paradigm in the analysis of unauthorized migrations, offering innovative methodologies and contributing to the field of solidarity studies. The project aims to foster debates on alternative ways of managing migration.

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