SOLROUTES

Mobility, Borders and Solidarity.
Node report - Morocco Antenna

M. Lovato

Università di Genova | DISFOR DIPARTIMENTO DI SCIENZE DELLA FORMAZIONE

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Università di Genova

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Introduction: Mobility, borders and solidarity

The opening of the research field of our SOLROUTES Antenna was devoted to making an introduction of solidarity to migration in Morocco. The report of the first node follows the reflection developed in the Country Report relative to our Antenna (Cassarini and Lovato 2023) which describes the process of border construction and makes Morocco a crucial site for the migratory movements encompassing the whole North African region, connecting it with the sub-Saharan countries and with Europe.

Morocco is a *carrefour* (Alioua 2013) of different migratory configurations and route between Europe and Africa. Here we decided to focus on the two main groups of routes crossing Morocco. Regarding the first, we consider the entry movements into Morocco participated by sub-Saharan nationals, secondarily attempting to cross the European borders. To refer to this group of routes we use the definition *boza* movements (Mouna and Kchikach 2020). The routes connecting sub-Saharan countries and Morocco are historical, carrying different migration projects: for study, work, political refuge, religion. We refer to the Country Report of the Morocco Antenna to provide a framework on how these movements have been over time criminalised and irregularised (Lovato and Cassarini 2023). Over the time, different sub-Saharan communities have settled in Moroccan cities. Different migratory projects, in fact, have created alongside the flow of *adventurers* (Bredeloup 2008; Bachelet 2019) who intend to continue to Europe or navigate between the region, also more or less stable communities. It is interesting, hence, to look at how settlement and movement experiences intersect in the routes. The second group of routes we intend to look at is the unauthorised exit routes from Morocco inhabited by Moroccan nationals. One of the definitions of these routes is *harqa* (Arab 2009), invoking the idea of "burning" borders when not authorized to cross them in other ways.

To understand the centrality of Morocco in the migratory movements connecting North Africa and the European space, we look at UNHCR's data with respect to the routes crossing the Mediterranean between 2022-2023. The table below shows the movements for the routes across the central, western, and north-western Mediterranean. By reporting data on departures, arrivals, and missing and dead people, we look at the level of participation in the exit routes during this period.

Table 1. Sea movements. Years: 2022-2023

Sea Movements 2022 - 2023* *January - September						
Route	Central Mediterranean route		Western Mediterranean route		North-west Africa Maritime route	
	Year 2022	Jan-Sep 2023	Year 2022	Jan-Sep 2023	Year 2022	Jan-Sep 2023
Departures*	139,802	175,590	21,794	15,752	16,951	19,473
Disembarkations**	52,299	47,061	7,581	4,389	1,269	4,268
Sea arrivals***	87,503	128,529	14,213	11,363	15,682	15,205
Dead and missing	1,368	2,235	259	219	630	421

Source: UNHCR data on sea movements 2022-2023[1].

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[1]   Online resource, cfr.   https://reporting.unhcr.org/operational/situations/western-and-central-mediterranean-situation#:~:text=Western%20Mediterranean%20route%3A%20From%20Algeria,Sahara%20to%20the%20Canary%20Islands (*Accessed on March 2024*).

In recent years, the most participated routes exiting Morocco have been the Balkan route, in which Moroccans were among the top nationalities until last year; the Canary Islands routes, and the Western Mediterranean route. These routes relate to and are shaped by border policies: at present, the militarisation of northern Morocco has reduced movements to the Western Mediterranean, while the intensification of military controls along the Balkan borders has significantly reduced the presence of Moroccans. Currently, the route directed to the Canary Islands is the most popular. Within this framework, the Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla are particularly sensitive to changes in geopolitical relations between Spain and Morocco. Accordingly, the Ceuta border, from time to time, is open or closed, depending on the political tensions between the two States.

For a better understanding of the national composition in the different migration routes, we can have a look at the most recent Frontex data (2024).

Table 2. Canary Islands route. Nationality. Year 2024 (Jan Feb)
Canary Islands route 2024 (Jan - Feb)

Mali	4 874
Unknown	3 246
Senegal	1 413
Mauritania	1 252
Morocco	767
TOT	12 092

Table 3. Western Med route. Nationality. Year 2024 (Jan Feb)
Western Med route 2024 (Jan - Feb):

Morocco	873
Algeria	484
Unknown	373
Mali	37
Guinea	34
TOT	1 867

Source: Frontex (2024)[2]

As mentioned, the route to the Canaries is the most popular, with sub-Saharan and Moroccan people on the move.

The conceptual framework we adopted for our ethnographic work is the following:

- Morocco is criss-crossed by multiple migratory routes;

- the whole Moroccan territory is subject to a borderisation process, which is is the outcome of a recursive negotiation between EU and Morocco, as well as Morocco and Sub-Saharan countries;

- we look for solidarity practices, understood as concrete efforts to counter the border in its various forms, and that intersect and inhabit the routes.

Looking at routes, we want to observe how PoM inhabiting them experience borders and how solidarity is generated. We decided to start our ethnographic work from the urban scale for multiple reasons. The city is an interesting vantage point for observing different types of movements: it is a place of transit, departure, arrival, or settlement; and it is as well an articulation of the different scales of mobility, linking the local with the global, the micro with the macro (Sheller 2018). In urban space, we examine how the border is reproduced here and how this affects mobility. Mobility, in this case, is studied as a justice problem (Sheller 2020). Accordingly, we highlight a condition of mobility (in)justice (Sheller 2018) in reference to

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[2] Online resource, last accessed on March 2024.

processes producing unequal spatial conditions: the border has an impact on the individual and collective mobility of specific social subjects/groups revealing different mobility regimes according to national, race, gender, age, etc. factors. These impacts can be both direct, visible in spectacular border barriers, and indirect, such as practices of movement control and surveillance. "Global mobility has the underside of forced mobility and involuntary immobility, deportation and detention" writes Sheller (2020), considering "the management of racial mobility, securitization and territorialized injustice." Such mobility management practices have a relationship to colonial history and the historical formation of contemporary patterns of immobility and global mobility. Instead, we emphasize how mobility control is followed by racialized and colonial discourses, which circulate and reinforce its practices (Sheller 2018). Accordingly, we deem important to put in relation between migration routes with the practices of migration mobility control.

The urban space presents infrastructures for mobility enabling and reassuring the mobilities of some specific groups, while actively creating insecurity and discomfort of others. In Morocco this issue affects not only undocumented migrants, but also many Moroccans coming from the poorest social classes and has a strong racial character. Public space is regulated in order to physically exclude this groups from certain spaces, it and leads to social, economic, and political exclusion. In the face of mobility control practices and the exclusion of certain groups from urban participatory space, it is invoked the question of the right to stay (Ellerman 2014; Oberman 2011). The right to stay is a moral concept that has two faces: on the one hand, it is the recognition of resident migrants as members of civic communities – a concept that stands as a justification for the regularisation resident undocumented migrants (right to legalisation), requiring their socio-political recognition (Ellerman 2014), and denouncing deportation practices as a violation of this right; on the other hand, it can be conceived as the right not to be forced to leave the origin country (Oberman 2011), and thus to have reasonable alternatives to the conditions of deprivation that a person wishes to leave. Freedom of movement, by definition, entails the freedom to stay (ibid).

In this framework, in order to construct a reflection on solidarity, we intend to consider the practices, efforts, actors and narratives that on various levels challenge the presence of the border in Morocco, thus the practices of counter-borderisation. The border here is observed in its direct and indirect forms, its material and immaterial dimensions, thus with different degrees of visibility: from the fences to the everyday life of irregular and marginalised people. If we talk about mobility control and exclusion, we want to look at mobilization practices and efforts to counter the border spectacle (De Genova 2013) and practices. Sheller (2020) talks about "appropriation" of mobility to refer to efforts to counter mobility-controlling practices. Are considered forms of appropriation the struggles for accessibility to public spaces and services, as well as the struggles for "bodily freedom of movement". Following this framework, we consider the approach of urban solidarity (Bauder 2021), i.e. policy efforts and practices of inclusion in cities of migrants and refugees, which refer to the right to the city, understood as a real possibility of use and participation in urban space.

In Morocco, there are several actors involved in the field of migration management/support: local, international, self-organised, and institutional. This is what Gazzotti (2019) calls the "migration industry": within it, a first distinction is between humanitarian actors and human rights defenders. The former, according to Bachelet and Hagan (2023a), can sometimes be part of the border itself, operating in such a way as to adapt to the national political migration governance; the latter, on the other hand, are engaged in criticizing, publicly or not, national border practices: this is what is called "subversive solidarity" (Bachelet et Hagan 2023a).

Whitin this framework is crucial to point out that criminalization of migration also reaches solidarity activists, who are more and more suffering multiple forms of intimidation, aggression, and even criminal persecution from the State (Bachelet and Hagan 2023).

Introduction to the research question

The Morocco Antenna started the first node with the intention of observing solidarity practices in relation to migration routes starting from the urban scale. The idea was to look at the city and the interactions that are staged in the urban landscape focusing on three elements: mobilities, borders and solidarities.

Accordingly, we consider the city as a space of intersection between different routes and varying degrees of mobility and immobility. This enables us to observe how the border is reproduced at the urban space and what are the concrete actions challenging the border.

Originally, the space designed for the fieldwork was the Taqadoum neighbourhood on the periphery of Rabat, a space where Moroccans and sub-Saharans live together, where the settlements of different sub-Saharan communities and the movements of *boza* and *harqa* attempts to Europe intersect. The social access to the neighbourhood has been slow and difficult: indeed, our research team was represented by a white woman, speaking English and Arabic. The gender dimension has been limited for my movement in the neighbourhood; furthermore, the relationship with the sub-Saharan community has been circumscribed to the English-speaking community, at least for the beginning. Concretely, it was possible to meet Taqadoum through the organisation of GNW (Generative Narrative Workshop) together with a group of neighbourhood sub-Saharans residents. Thus, through the mediation of an artistic practice – the Theatre of the Oppressed – it was possible to get acquainted to people and situation, which differently resulted hard to meet.

On the other hand, it was easier to encounter experiences related to the routes of Moroccans. Another factor which played a crucial role in enabling my access to the field was the knowledge of the Arabic language. Indeed, the relationship with Moroccan people was facilitated. Accordingly, the fieldwork thus followed the flow of Moroccan people along the routes. The stories encountered in this were various: return experiences more or less voluntary, failed migration attempts, migration aspirations (in various ways, according to opportunities: legally or not). Within this framework, an issue which was raised was the relationship of aspiring migrants with visa agencies and the negotiations and scams related to visas to Italy. Frequently, I

encountered families and friends searching for someone missing on migration, and I had the chance to deepen their experience.

The context experienced by the people I met was visibly difficult: ever higher prices in the face of a wide social gap and poor economic opportunities for the lower classes, schools closed due to strikes until February, poor conditions in the working-class neighbourhoods of the cities. This stimulated a reflection on the meaning of *harqa* as a way of self-empowerment for people who do not find other opportunities here.

A third factor which affected my access to the field was my gender. Being a woman has somehow limited in my movement on the ground and also required a lot of care in modulating relationships and interactions; on the other hand, it has opened up access to Moroccan women's spaces and those who inhabit them, in daily life in Morocco or in relation to the routes. This has facilitated in particular accessibility to the family dimension of migration, and to understand everyday life at living home in the waiting for return or the or for the information about success of a migration journey. A waiting time that many cases deal with death or disappearance.

Finally, being white in the field has required much reflection on how I am perceived and how, based on perceptions, to frame movements and relationships.

It was important to look at the two route groups, Moroccans and sub-Saharans, together: how Morocco is a crossroads between experiences of arrival and departure, of transit. What this intersection generates in terms of imaginaries, of collective experiences, linked to movement and solidarity?

Finally, another crucial element in my fieldwork was the meeting with "civil society" actors. Rabat is Morocco's political centre, and it is the base for headquarters of many international and national organisations working in the field of migration. The University is also active this issue. Here, I encountered many actors: NGOs, transnational networks, national associations, local authorities, informal collectives and networks, and, indeed, research centres and researchers. The "migration industry" gathers many different experiences, with different purposes, different levels of politicization and narratives, as well as different degrees of involvement in the field. On these grounds I found interesting to observe how and if the concept of solidarity applied to such realities, and this led to many reflections. Accordingly, I wonder: what does solidarity mean? Who carry on solidarity actions? What is the difference between delivering assistance and acting solidarity? In a context where civil society has a limited space for expansion, what should be the degree of social or political contestation in order to put in place solidarity?

Briefly, the five months required for the implementation of the first node were intense, full of attempts and course changes. Yet, all this led to the construction of an introductory look at the migratory and solidarity context in Morocco. Accordingly to a research approach which was based on the idea of "following the routes" I tried to trace experiences, collective trajectories, and followed the tracks migrants left behind. In this work I encountered, many issues; yet some of them will be explored as pivotal elements in the next nodes.

At the end of these five months, I try to re-frame the whole fieldwork journey, keeping as a starting point the urban space and focusing on: 1) the presence of migratory routes, experienced mainly by Moroccans and sub-Saharans; 2) the shapes assumed by the border; 3) the concrete efforts to counter borders and claimed rights.

Methodology

The methodology included ethnographic observation, the conduction of semi-structured interviews, and the use of artistic practices (in this case, theatre) as a means of knowledge sharing and co-production. The first node was launched in October in the city of Rabat, with the conduction of field research missions in other cities of Morocco.

Regarding the sub-Saharan people's routes, we tried to initiate observational fieldwork in the Taqadoum neighbourhood on the outskirts of Rabat, due to its features which make it a place of settlement and transit. Access was facilitated by the mediation of a priest of the Catholic Church, and the meeting with Tely, a young *adventurer* from Guinea, inhabitant of the neighbourhood and a key contact for the implementation of the research activities. Time allowed me to gain the trust of many people, as well as to access homes and spaces of intimacy.

Within this framework, GNW proved to be an important tool in allowing to get in touch with people. The GNW envisaged a social theatre project through which a group of nine sub-Saharans almost all living in Taqadoum staged their daily lives. Accordingly, they portrayed the neighbourhood everyday life, enabling storytelling and sharing with us of crucial elements central to our understanding of their conditions.

In relation to the experiences related to the Moroccan people's routes, as mentioned, access to these encounters was more immediate. Daily encounters with people with a migratory experience or aspirations, in random and ordinary movements, made tangible the presence of routes, whether of departure or return. Whitin this framework, there was a stark contrast between the ease of encountering scattered experiences of Moroccan migration and the difficulty of finding it in the public narrative and thus in the socio-political space of the city of Rabat. To explore this issue, the research methods employed have been the following: ethnographic encounters, semi-structured interviews, and observation of digital spaces (*harqa* Facebook groups).

To follow the migration routes, according to the multi-sited ethnography approach (Marcus, 1995), I moved across the country conducting several research missions.

The first mission was in Tangier, a border city, which allowed me to have a look at the reality of
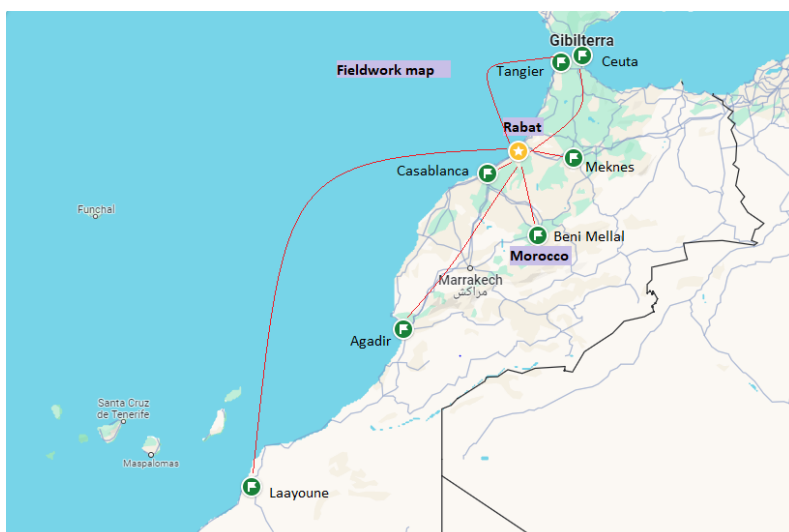
Image 1 Fieldwork Map, Morocco Antenna, Oct - March.

Moroccans trying to enter the port of Tangier, who are often minors. Alongside, Ceuta, a Spanish enclave, barricaded to Moroccans and sub-Saharans attempting to cross it - - the former by swimming, the latter by assaulting the *valla*[3]. Beni Mellal, Casablanca, and Meknes - crossroads of departure, destination, transit, and return movements. In Casablanca, with the Ouled Ziane camp (cleared in February 2024), home to visa agencies such as VFS global (working for the Italian embassy). Further south, Agadir and Laayoune, crucial points as departure and transit cities for the route to the Canary Islands, the most populated at the moment, but also places of settlement.

In these places, I met different actors: PoM, border actors, and people part of Moroccan civil society. International NGOs, local associations, informal or registered networks - actors who in various ways participate in the migration issue in Morocco. Among the variety of encounters, we then chose to favour contact with associations that respond to the category of 'subversive solidarity' (Bachelet and Hagan 2023a).

The semi-structured interviews tried to consolidate the central points of this observation between mobility, borders, and solidarity.

Table introducing interviews and life stories - 1 node

NAME	ROLE	Nationality	Age	Notes	
Tely	PoM	Guinea Conakry	19	Key contact on entering subsharian routes	INTERVIEW
Daud	Solidarity actor – legal officer of Sub-Saharan Collective	Nigeria	25	Experience of solidarity for subsaharians	INTERVIEW
Mehmet	Local contact	Morocco	33	He shares experiences of friends who attempted harqa	INTERVIEW
Adam	PoM	Morocco	35	He attempted harqa	INTERVIEW
Khawla	Solidarity actor, Interculturalitè Project Manager at GADEM	Morocco	60+	She experienced migration and is an activist on it in her origin country	LIFE STORY

Tely, who was the gatekeeper allowing me to access the Guinea Conakry community of Taqadoum, focused on his perception of solidarity as a young man who left his country for political reasons, relying for his staying in Morocco only a paper issued by UNHCR. His experience as a de facto undocumented sub-Saharan migrant is somehow related to that of Daud, legal officer of the Sub-Saharan Collective, who arrived in Morocco as a student from Nigeria; his engagement represents a concrete experience of a counter-borderisation practice. Moroccan routes have been narrated by Adam and Mehmet. Adam is a Moroccan man who attempted *harqa*, failing. His failure, and the wounds it caused, became a way for me to reflect

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[3] Spanish word for barrier.

on the reasons for departure and the injustices around it. Mehmet shared the experience of being a Moroccan from the lower class, with not too many socio-economic opportunities: in these conditions, he tells how the routes, the mobilities are seen. Both reflect on what solidarity is for Moroccan *harraqas*. The life story of Khawla, a Moroccan woman GADEM activist with a migration experience behind her, seems to frame in the same perspective the migration routes of Moroccans and sub-Saharans people. Indeed, her concrete engagement stems from having experienced migration herself, "I know what it means to be a foreigner in another country" (Interview with Khawla).

The Generative Narrative Workshop: Staging borders

The Generative Narrative Workshop (GNW) used Theatre of the Oppressed (Boal 2004) as a practice of knowledge co-production. The young people involved in the Workshop have a migration background, they define themselves "adventurers". They left Guinea Conakry at different times, and came together in Rabat. One of the participants has been here for two months and a half and has a Guinean passport, another has been here for three years and has only a UNHCR registration card. A crucial element which made possible to organise the GNW was the meeting with Dado, an Italian theatre trainer with knowledge of Morocco and its languages. This encounter, in fact, allowed the creation of a Theatre space where through the sharing of individual experiences of adventurers was possible to reach the creation of shared imaginaries, and collective narratives.

Through the connection with Tely we managed to involve in the GNW a group of 9 participants - 7 living in Taqadoum, 1 from Salè, 1 from Kenitra, all men, aged between 18 and 27. The workshop was presented as a space for autobiographical storytelling. Interested people requested a preliminary information meeting, held in Taqadoum the day before the workshop began. This step was important in strengthening aware participation in the project, as well as total freedom to take part in it. At the same time, this moment was a crucial starting point for establishing a relationship between equals (or, at the very least, a condition as close to this as possible). Only after a private meeting they informed us that they would participate in the workshop.

In view of the commitment required, and in order to facilitate participation, it was agreed to provide a financial reward to those who participated in the GNW. In fact, the amount of the hourly commitment in the GNW would not have allowed many of the participants to do attend their work duties. Moreover, it was chosen to give the agreed amount during the first day of the activity in order to avoid creating a sense of obligation due to the expectation of payment.

As for the location we chose the theatre hall of the Pius X Catholic Church in the Agdal district, far from Taqadoum and Rabat centre: among the reasons of our choice, the fact that also a garden was available was relevant. The hall was the space where to work; the garden the place to relax, chat, and make relationships. Having access to the garden was crucial to relax after emotionally intense sessions; even if, must be clear, that those who did not feel at ease or want to participate were free to leave and eventually re-enter the workshop.

On February 27 the workshop has begun: it started with the circle, a shape accompanying all the workshop sessions and symbolizing the relational style we meant to keep. In the circle we used to speak mainly French, with numerous sessions in Pular (one of the languages spoken in Guinea) - that we Italians did not understand. However, everyone had the option of requesting translation. The workshop proceeded with exercises envisaged by Theatre of the Oppressed working method; namely the Image Theatre and Forum Theatre, accompanied by games and activities designed to strengthen the group relationships and trust.

The discussion of the topic to be covered came on the third day. After various exercises and a lengthy circle discussion, it was decided to work on the following issues: 1) the migrant conditions system in Morocco; 2) the beginning of the adventure; 3) Algeria; and 4) the disappearance of an *adventurer* friend in Ceuta. Then we have developed these issues through social theatre techniques - participants split into subgroups, one for each theme. The various issues raised multiple reactions: two people objected to talking about Algeria, while everyone agreed to talk about the missing people in Ceuta – specifically, about a friend of theirs who has gone missing for a year. We noted the temporal progression of the proposed themes: the beginning of the adventure and Algeria (the past), life in Morocco (present), and the disappearance in Ceuta (one of the possible futures). Dado then proposes to deconstruct this very sensitive path, which in this story seems to conclude with the disappearance. We wondered a lot about how to handle this ending of the story, basically because we were not sure this was the end we meant to give to our theatre workshop. What impact would have had our tale (which is intimately linked to real experiences) ending with the event of disappearance?

We proposed that the disappearance in Ceuta should not be one of the themes acted out, but rather an initial tribute to the storytelling. It is to our missing friend that this play is dedicated, by us who are still here. In the division of the sub-groups, it was decided to remove the topic of Algeria, leaving two themes to be represented: the beginning of the *adventure* and the living conditions of migrants in Morocco.

On the last day we decided what shape to give to the stories that have been previously shared among the group. The participants decided not to disclose the narration to an audience. Indeed, there was a relevant emotional load that probably made it difficult to think about a public representation of the collected stories, or at least it made it premature. The presence of the video camera was planned in the GNW, as a form of mediation between staging and a work on the image that narrates the staging, without being staged. However, the presence of the video camera was the subject of a collective discussion, and it is important to report that no one showed any doubts about it, nor had any objections regarding the proposal to share the collected material (including visual material) with the University of Genoa.

Nevertheless, it is necessary to say that since the camera appeared on the scene, relational dynamics have changed: discourses have become more articulate, more elements have been introduced, and different connections have been made. The video camera, in other words, has opened up the space in which participants explained an experience of oppression to the world outside (in this case represented by the University of Genoa and, more generally, Italy). In front of the camera they did, in fact, talk about discrimination, freedom of expression, and rights. The

appearance of the camera, therefore, reinforced the significance of theatre as a space for reporting injustice, allowing participants to raise their voices when the audience is an EU country, such as Italy. The ways of taking the floor also changed: some participants, in the previous days more active, became silent; others, instead, wanted to take more space.

The two groups staged two photos about the topics agreed. They are postcards from Taqadoum, looking back at the way we have come, the place where we live now, a friend who should not be forgotten. The moment of commemoration felt very intimate to us. Anyway, the moment was not videorecorded; we felt that pulling out the camera would have been intrusive of an intense and almost sacred space/moment. Hence, we simply memorized this event then drew its symbolic features. The two pictures and the drawing of the commemoration are the cultural objects of our GNW, and are included in the data analysis section of this report.

Reflections and ethical consideration during GNW

Theatre here also becomes a space for collective management of trauma. The sharing of an individual experience with the group, allows the reflection on it with others'. An experience that is acknowledged as collective, allowing the recognition of forms of oppression and the proposal of practices of disengagement. Accordingly, fiction becomes a language through which is possible to reach self-protection and non-exposure: the stories told refer to participants' lives on distant forms and names, places, and are like viewed from the outside. In this fictional space, new balances and different dynamics are imagined – in the role playing. For instance I (white woman) cab become the border in Ceuta or a sub-Saharan migrant with an expired passport in her pocket, tugged by a black policeman.

Central to this proposal of role reversal and rethinking is the difficulty of getting things out, when we are not able to rebuild them later. Dado refers to this condition as an "earthquake." During the workshop participants shared a situation of oppression that is their own oppression now, they still live in an emergency context. In other words, how to talk about home when home is not there? "Can we talk about rebuilding when we have rubble around?" wondered a Dado in post-workshop reflection. This was evident when during the workshop they talked about the friend D., who disappeared in Ceuta in the attempt of crossing it. D.'s story is not far from the daily life of the participants: they too have tried to cross the Ceuta barrier, several times. The fate of D. could be the one of others here, and this element is tangible inside the group when the story is shared.

Another element concerns the exercise, which theatre does, of observing the dynamics of oppression of a condition and proposing to fight them. We wondered how delicate it was to do this now, in a workshop of such short duration, in a context where the participants deeply experience the condition of oppression. We asked ourselves how constructive it was to talk about oppression and resistance, to people who are here today, but tomorrow will be forced to accept a job at $8 a day in Taqadoum. The theatre space becomes a tool for sharing and relieving the burden of oppression. But what will happen tomorrow when the theatre is gone?

We must be aware that in this perspective a strong limitation has been the short time available, which did not allow to give continuity, even just relational, to our work and does not allow us to cope with the dimension of reconstruction.

Solidarity and Mobilities.

Analysis and interpretation using data collected.

Following the routes, we tried to follow different movements and observe them within the urban space and beyond. In observing how routes cross cities, we kept our gaze on the presence of borders and thus on counter-border practices.

With respect to the sub-Saharan people's route, the focus was on the experiences of *adventurers*, who are irregularised by migration policies. The presence of sub-Saharan communities within Moroccan cities is historical: over time, different communities have settled in Morocco, supporting the integration efforts of those who intend to stay and the expectations of those who are in transit and find in the urban space resources and temporary hospitality. Thus, the city can be conceived as an intersection of different mobilities, of transit, arrivals, departure and circulations; yet, the modalities of space occupation and their temporalities are different. This presence is visible in the sub-Saharan markets within the *suq* in many cities, Senegalese and Guinean restaurants in Rabat, and many sub-Saharan stores. In looking at how such routes experience borders, Rabat has been an interesting space for observation. From here, we looked at unauthorised routes and how they 'inhabit' urban space. In this, the regulation of public space and the mobility control practices are conceived as border practices. In the case of the routes of Moroccans, the border is established along class lines; in those of sub-Saharans, there is a strong racial element.

1) Sub-Saharan routes: between movement and control

Figure 2 Inside view from Taqadoum, Michela Lovato, Oct. 2023.

The first time I enter Taqadoum I am impressed by its bustle. I take a walk through the market and try to observe the variety of people: in the long central street there is alternation between stalls with vegetables and clothes, Moroccan owners, and stalls with sub-Saharan food. Further inland, the streets seem to homogenise: black on one side, Moroccan on the other. The ultras' graffiti on the walls become my signals to recognise the streets, which at first glance all look the same to me.

I meet Tely in October 2023, at the beginning of my fieldwork. He is 20 years old and from Guinea Conakry, at that time in Morocco for a year and a half. "Welcome to the favelas of Rabat" he tells me, proposing a tour inside the neighbourhood. "Do you know why we accept all this suffering? Because our goal is Europe'. He takes me inside his house, a small old building, I go up the narrow stairs, the front door is broken. His companions are still sleeping, it's around noon: "They don't have papers so until the afternoon they can't leave the house, because of the police presence". So we go out, he tells me to watch my pockets and stay close to him. Taqadoum has the reputation of being a risky place: several people I deal with at this time recommend not to go there, and advise me to move my research to quieter areas of Rabat. I look at the makeshift dwellings, as well as the ruined streets: some houses have a plastic tarp for a roof. Interestingly, the root of Taqadoum in Arabic means 'progress'.

Taqadoum's view from Hay Nahda. Michela Lovato, Oct. 2023.

Taqadoum is a neighbourhood on the periphery of Rabat; I get there in 15 minutes by taxi from Rabat Ville station. As the car moves, I see the landscape gradually changing: the wide, elegant and refined space of Hay Khalifa and the military quarter gives way to the narrow streets, the stacked houses of Taqadoum. Historically a working-class neighbourhood, it was created during the Protectorate (1912-1956) to replace the slums (Zerrouk 1986). It is still today a place where the poorer classes are confined. In addition to the Moroccan lower classes, the presence of sub-Saharan communities in the quarter has intensified since the 2000s. In the centre of Rabat Taqadoum is popularly called 'Le Quartier Africain' or 'Le Petit Senegal' (Ntang and Peraldi 2011).

On the road connecting the Rabat city centre with Taqadoum, Morocco's class dualism is materialized: the social gap between rich and poor is just 15 minutes apart. From the centre of Rabat, where the country's social, political and economic life is organised, those excluded from this are moved to the periphery. Space is regulated to keep certain social groups, including undocumented sub-Saharans, away from the centre - Taqadoum exclusion from the space becomes political, social, economic. For this reason, Taqadoum is defined by Natale (2015) as the 'place par excellence of biopolitical control' (Natale 2015).
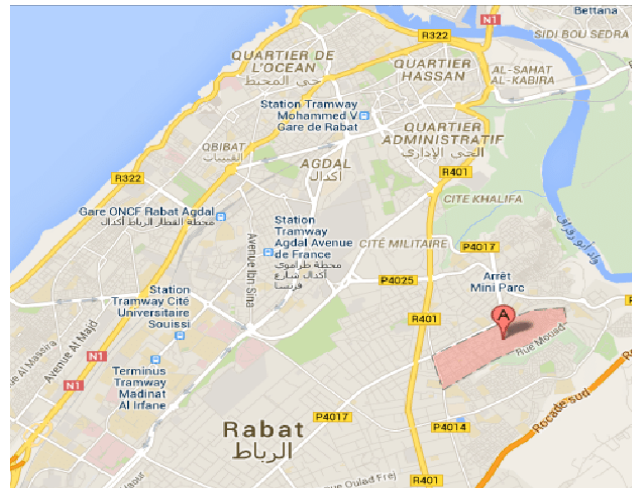
Taqadoum in the map of Rabat. Google maps. Online source.

Here, as well as in the suburbs of several Moroccan cities, the presence of sub-Saharan communities has structured over time, accommodating the plans of those who move towards Morocco with the intention of staying, those circulating, and those heading towards European borders. In the second case, temporalities are different: the success of transit depends on inconstant migration policies, now restrictive, now open, based on geopolitical relations between Morocco and European countries. The lives of the PoM I meet tell me about different temporalities: Tely has been living for two years now, trying from time to time to jump to Ceuta. Masq, on the other hand, is arrived at the beginning of January: he left Guinea by entering illegally and has not yet tried to jump the *valla*. Mache, instead, I meet him for a short time: he has been here in Morocco for two years and returned to Guinea Conakry in February 2024 through the IOM voluntary return programme. "He was tired," Tely explains to me. Jon, a Guinean, has been here for four years: he is waiting to be reunited with his sister in Canada. Deep has been here for five years and works in a restaurant in the upper quarter of Agdal. He speaks Arabic well. Different temporalities impact their lives as undocumented migrants in Morocco: Jon often tells me he is unable to sleep since his life is "too stressful" life here; Tely has given himself an ultimatum: if he does not make it through Ceuta by the summer, he will go back to Guinea; Masq, who arrived recently, has a lot of musical projects and is counting on breaking through to European audiences. Deep talks about Europe in a superficial way, he says he will go if he gets a chance but in the meantime, he keeps the job he has.

Their day-to-day moves in the Taqadoum neighbourhood: Tely, Masq and Jon share the apartment with other adventurers. Jon has a job in the medina, stable. Tely goes every morning to the *Chateau*, a street where sub-Saharans sell their labour force for informal day jobs:

building, gardening, cleaning, catering. Both earn less than ten dollars a day. They speak a little Darija Arabic. Waiting has become settlement, temporary but extended.

Masq, Jon and Tely's life is a life on the move: having left Guinea Conakry, they now live in Morocco, trying their way north. Life in Rabat is an extended transit, made up of efforts to survive and policies of marginalisation. Looking at their route and following a part of their daily life allows me to observe how migratory routes inhabit urban space: the city becomes a space in which to wait, to meet and exchange information and resources, to rest from a failed attempt. Ceuta is over five hours away: when you are ready for an attempt, you leave from here. From Taqadoum, people wait for news from the comrades who left: whether they have arrived to Europe or will return.

Looking at how routes inhabit cities, through the lives of Tely, requires moving my gaze in two directions. The first, is to insert Rabat into the migratory history of the people I meet: the adventure starts in different cities in Guinea Conakry, crosses Mali, the desert, Algeria - enters Morocco and lives there, looking towards the European border. Their route points to Ceuta, the arrival is after the barrier. This aspect of the path is recounted during GNW, which reports on the three stages: the beginning of the adventure, life in Morocco, and the Ceuta fence. So, look at how this settlement is, as previously mentioned, part of a movement. GNW helps me follow this path. The beginning of the *adventure* is portrayed by one of the images staged during the Theatre workshop.

Postcard description

Tely, Masq Pro, and Mandy are walking. In front of the camera, they explain why they are leaving from Guinea: the demonstrations, the lack of freedom of expression, the fact that they have seen some of their friends die. The audience's questions to the three adventurers are strong provocations: *is It real*

Figure 3 Postcard from Taqadoum. Le début de l'aventure.

freedom to end up in Europe sans-papiers?
Wasn't it better to stay at home? Don't you know that the route can lead to death?

On the other side is Ceuta, represented in the commemoration to a missing comrade. During the GNW Ceuta was represented by three symbols of the passage as they appear in the story of the adventurer D. who went missing one year ago: the water bottle, some clothes (a sweater and a jacket), a backpack.
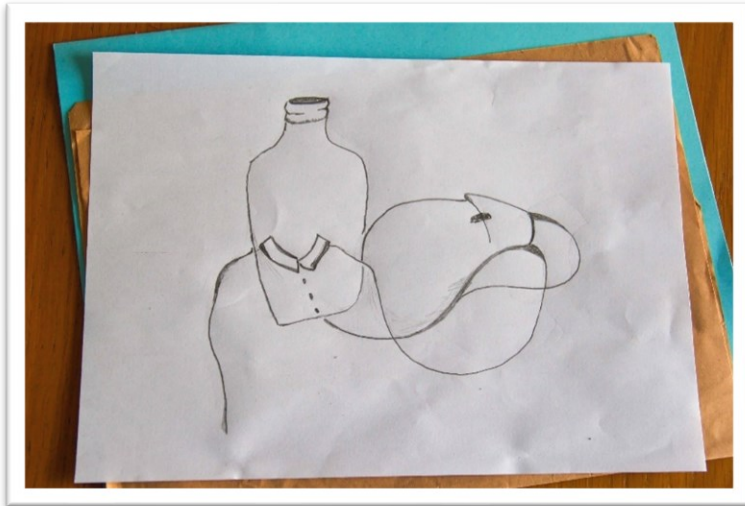
Postcard description

The jacket, the water, the backpack. "You leave them away because they clutter up the *valla* passage" Tely explains. One leaves Rabat with the bare minimum, which is abandoned before trying to jump the border.

Figure 4 Postcard from Taqadoum. Pour ceux qui ne sont ni arrivés ni rentrés.

The gaze follows the route and focuses on Morocco. Looking at the route in urban space, I try to observe how the politics of the border impact migratory mobility from here. The presence of a border, which in Ceuta is made spectacular in the violence of the presence of barbed wire, drones and militars, here in the city what visibility does it take? How does it fit in? How is the border shaped?

At the entrance of Taqadoum there are always two trucks of the Moroccan authorities. I see others in the market street, but not in the inner streets: towards evening they leave. The policemen, in uniform or in civilian clothes, stop and check the documents of sub-Saharan people - this is followed by frequent arrests and deportations to peripheral towns in the country. Those same lorries leave in the evening to reach Beni Mellal, Ouarzazate, Khenifra; there they unload the arrested people, leaving them with no money and no shoes. It is what El Arabi (2021) calls 'the policy of dispersion': people who are victims of such internal deportations have to return home at night from towns hundreds of kilometres away. Police stops have the official aim of checking people's administrative status, but they work according a racial profiling criteria. Arrests are collective and are aimed at controlling black mobility, in a coercive and violent manner. Arrested persons are taken to the police station: if the irregularity of status is confirmed, the person will be deported. The document that should protect the movement is issued by the UNHCR, "the piece of paper that can save migrants' lives" (Tely, Field Diary February)[4]. The UNHCR issues a document certifying the status of asylum seeker, which should be followed by the grant of a residence permit by the Moroccan government; yet, at this last

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[4] EA_NODE1_Mor_Rab_ML_Obs_13022024 14022024_FNC.

step, the process always stalls. The possession of the UNHCR document, however, does not guarantee security, as witnessed by several field contact and activists (GADEM 2023). During then GNW, when participants enacted the everyday life of undocumented migrants, the border was represented by the policeman, or his civilian henchman, stopping migrants and asking for documents, and deploying deportations and arrests as mobility control practices (Sheller 2020).

This is reported by another image staged during the GNW "The life system of migrants in Morocco".

Figure 5 Postcard from Taqadoum. Le mode de vie des migrants au Maroc.

Postcard description

Totorina, Toronto are the police officers, while Trendy boy is a civilian taking money for the sub-Saharans delivered to the police, Nayly and Djallu are two sub-Saharans. The scene revolves around two situations of interaction between Moroccan authority and two sub-Saharans: Djallu has papers and is a minor, the police affirms that he is not the one in the document picture, so, he will be deported to Khouribga, with violence; Nayly has no papers and is twenty-eight years old, pays off the policemen and is released without suffering any violence. The scene is later discussed and reviewed by the audience, who then have the opportunity to interview the actors. During the interview, a trial to the policemen takes place: *do you have the right to treat people this way, to use violence? Do you have the authority to deport a minor? Do you have the right not to recognize the card issued by UNHCR?*

The border is mobile and influences movements. When I walk with Tely in the market area the pace is fast and cautious. Movement becomes 'stealthy' (Sheller 2018), determined by the feeling of being under surveillance. It later relaxes when we reach the area inhabited by sub-Saharans. Here, the border is met on the basis of individual movement – embedded in the migrant's own body. Being undocumented becomes an experiential dimension: it is the body itself that carries the border (Khosravi 2019), and is internalized by the accounts of contacts heard – Tely tells of having "deserved" a deportation to Ouarzazate, as he forgot his papers at home:

> *"I should have gone out with the papers." "I'm in another country and I respect its rules" "if I hadn't forgotten my papers, they would have let me go." (Field diary, February).*[5]

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[5] EA_NODE1_Mor_Taq_ML_Obs_26012024_FNC.

The lack of documents is an obstacle hampering access to various social services. Accordingly, the borders are materialised in migrants daily life in the difficulty of accessing hospitals, and schools as well; in finding paid and protected jobs. The labour market is located in the neighbourhood's external streets, where, in the morning, rows of sub-Saharans wait for a job offer, which in the end is always underpaid, informal, and insecure. In Taqadoum this place is the *Chateau*. Furthermore, the marked itself embed a border, because prices, in general, are higher for sub-Saharans: both for housing and for purchasing food in supermarkets. When I enter Tely's home, I am told about the life in that house: the rent is high, almost three times what Moroccans are charged, and this leads to overcrowding, as a way to share expenses. Within Taqadoum, the Sub-Saharan presence is concentrated in specific locations of the neighbourhood, in the inner streets.

Accordingly, we can say border becomes ad device to make structural, racial exclusion, thus preventing any possible integration.

The sense of rejection experienced by the people I met was strong, passing through verbal and physical racist attacks from local people. The structural level of racial discrimination is summarised trough an anecdote told by Tely, relating to a racist assault suffered by a friend, which he witnessed – and which was not reported because "if you go to the Police no one will help you anyway" (Field Diary, March).

The lives of the adventurers I met fluctuate between efforts to stay and a sense of still being on the way. At Tely's house "*boza*" is written on the bathroom door. GNW participants, on various occasions, told me of their attempts and techniques to climb the fence. In this framework, Europe, which is one of the destinations, stands in the background of a daily struggle to resist and survive, keeping alive the connection to home and those left behind. Home has been rebuilt in some way here: in shared apartments, informal community groups, the informal economy of origin. And in sharing the everyday with people who have had a similar experience, other *adventurers*.

What impressed me, during my first meetings with Tely and his adventurous friends, was how little they knew about Rabat in its public space: they had not been able to mention to me organisations supporting migrants, neither they knew about many parts of the city. Their everyday life is grounded in Taqadoum, and it is built around relationships within their own community and other inhabitants of the neighbourhood, or around interactions with external actors (e.g. the Church).

2) Moroccan routes: burning oppression and borders

Although there is no space in the public debate for Moroccan migration, I often encountered experiences related to it in my daily life in Morocco. The people I met on the street, in taxis, in cafés: after the first chats, I often found myself listening to experiences and dreams of migration.

From Rabat, and other Moroccan cities, I encountered involuntary returns, failed attempts of migrations, aspirations. I also encountered a strong sense of deprivation, of social suffocation,

deep reflections on the desire to redemption. Adam and Mehmet help me look at the routes and the experiences inhabiting them. I reflect together with them on the meaning of the word "*harqa*", one of the terms used to refer to unauthosized migration.

> *(It's called like that) because when you leave a place you burn what belongs to that place, to go toward something else (Interview to Adam).*

Adam tried to reach Europe trough the Balkan route, but this attempt ended in deportation from Greece to Turkey. He, then, decided to return to Morocco. He has been working since he was a young boy earning just enough to live on. For him migration was setting on fire his present. His story helps me to understand that long before the negation of movement there was the negation of the possibility to stay, and that is exactly there where the injustice starts: in the denial of the right to stay. That is, in Morocco, Moroccans from the lower social classes experience violent internal borders. The border in this case in experienced in the impossibility of staying, as well as in the lack of opportunities to live a decent life (Vacchiano 2022). Public healthcare is not accessible to those who do not have the money to afford it. Access to the labour market, universities, economic and social opportunities are mediated by class background. Adam speaks of 'privileges': some people have them and some do not; Morocco is no place for those who do not have them, who remain confined to *hogra* (oppression/humiliation). The posture of Moroccan government to emigration is hostile. In March 2024, I am told from Ceuta that Police refuse to admit back Moroccans over the age of 18 who are rejected by Spanish police (Meeting with NNK, Field Diary, March). Irregular emigration is punished by Law 02/03, penally, and legal migration routes are limited to highly skilled travellers. The criminalization affects immigration as well as emigration, although this is communicated in different ways. With respect to Moroccans, also in treating the issue as a national taboo, as something that somehow hurts national pride.

Looking at the Moroccan routes I encountered the deprivation experienced by many people who cannot find their place here: low wages, structural corruption, social closure. Moroccans also experience borders in the city and all the way to the sea, where young *harraqas* try their way to Europe. Moroccans arrested at the border also sometimes experience the policy of internal deportations, and are taken to the suburbs of towns or cities into the south-central part of the country. I write after the field mission in Tangier, where I encountered the reality of Moroccan minors trying to jump on port trucks and sleeping on the street – at that moment I can feel this border:

> *The cemetery is a short distance from the centre of town, and I am struck by the quick passage: the central square with the cinema, cafes, a few street performers, and then the entrance to the medina, with its colourful stores and mixing of Arabic with Spanish and French - built especially to welcome tourists; and then just above, a cluster of burial niches amid lawns and garbage, with torn clothes, plastic containers and forks now assailed by cats, blankets dropped at the edges of old graves. Remnants of lives violently cast aside, yet so close to Tangier's elegant centre. The narrow streets of the Tangier medina are white with blue strokes and flowers - here everything is dirty, and dark. A couple of steps, and the border of the tourist city is surrounded by that of those who cannot be part of it: from here one*

dreams of Spain, seeks it with unorganised and continually doomed attempts. At times, the border is crossed: Moroccan kids walking, people begging. To keep the centre clean, police raids and load the kids onto pickup trucks -take them to the outskirts of the city, removing their shoes: that way, they will have a harder time returning. (Field Diary October)[6]

From the deprivations experienced, you burn the distance, Mehmet gives me back the load of this experience:

… they burn steps, from the verb "hrq," meaning "to burn." (…) like when you go through a red light, because you skip the necessary steps, they burn their life, their family, everything…they make their family suffer, they burn themselves first of all and how do you know then if something happened to them, if you drown… (Interview to Mehmet).

The frustration of not being able to move, thus the attempts to do so: the waiting lines in front of visa agencies and people sent back constantly, the Facebook groups for fake marriage contracts, the WhatsApp groups for self-organizing *harqa*, the selling of contracts for the "Flow Decree" in Italy. The digital space faces the routes: platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Telegram, Instagram become a space to seek advice, exchange information, organise in groups. The observation focused on the Facebook platform, in particular on three types of pages/groups:

1. Pages advertising services offered by traffickers or intermediaries;

2. Pages exchanging information between PoMs and harraqas that had arrived at their destination;

3. Pages providing daily information on routes and migration.

The material with respect to the first category contains advertisements with proposals, prices, contacts. It contains information regarding proposed routes and reviews by those who have benefited from the passage services. It contains surveys, advertising material (music, photos, texts). One example, a post published in January 2024, shows as an image the Milan cathedral and a woman (in European clothes) in front of it. And the following text (translated from Arabic darija) *'We have a date with Europe, so hurry up and don't delay'*. The post has almost 1800 likes and over 400 comments. On the same page, travel services are offered in exchange for payments.

The space for the second category, on the other hand, features posts, conversations, requests from those on the move and asking for advice - and on the other hand, the sharing of travel stories from those who have arrived at their destination and share their experience, both in practical information and as an emotional experience. *Harqa* is told here as an emotionally and politically charged experience, in which exchange with other *harraqas* is shared as necessary. In February, a young Moroccan asks on a group dedicated to those travelling to Europe via Turkey-Balkans: *'Why are there so many people telling you to go to Bulgaria and not to go to Greece, what's the difference?'* 87 comments reply giving him advice, opinions and directions. Or a young Moroccan interviewing arrived *harraqas* in Italy to share information and services to 'brothers' who want to leave.

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[6] EA_NODE1_Mor_Tan_ML_Ob+_10102023 11102023 12102023_FNC.

The third category concerns not registered news channels that report daily on migration routes: news of departures, disappearances, deaths, police interventions, shipwrecks, information on European policies. One of the pages I follow introduces itself by saying it wants to share information on unauthorised migration by making it clear that it does not support it. It reports arrivals or returns by giving details and sharing photos and videos. Look also at the Libyan and Tunisian borders, but mainly the Moroccan ones. I notice that some of the Moroccan people I meet for research follow this page.

3) Looking for solidarity: between self-organization, migration industry and subversive practices

Sub-Saharans and Moroccans meet in the routes but while maintaining their own relatively independent mobilities. They inhabit the routes, meeting and interacting in only some: for example, the Balkan route and the self-organized routes to the Spanish peninsula are inhabited by Moroccans; Ceuta is entered by both, but while sub-Saharans mainly climb into the border, Moroccans attempt to swim to it. The route to the Canary Islands, however, is mixed. As we have seen, structurally, borders persist for Moroccans and sub-Saharans, with varying degrees of visibility and varying levels of violence.

Reflecting on solidarity requires looking at how PoM experience borders while inhabiting the routes. With respect to the experience of the *adventure* in Morocco, the movement's reflection called into question the concept of the right to stay, here invoked in two different senses: not having had the right to stay at home in Guinea, not having the right to be able to stay here. It is interesting how this same right is invoked in relation to the routes of Moroccans. It seemed important to me, therefore, to reflect on the concept of "staying" in a broader sense: Morocco is a country where many people do not have the right to stay, either Moroccan or sub-Saharan, though at different degrees. It is in this concept one of the first points where the routes meet. For both, at different levels, the right to stay is linked to the lack of accessible regular opportunities for migration to Europe, which could allow an individual to leave for work and "decide to come back" later (Interview to Adam).

The right to stay is called out by Sub-Saharans who claim access to regular status, a real respect for it, and the issues that follow in terms of social protection. The right recalled by Moroccans claims the possibility of not having to choose between unauthorised migration and an undignified life in Morocco.

From the city of Rabat, following the routes encountered and the border experiences, I wondered where to look for solidarity - understood as the real effort to counter the presence of borders. In order to do so, I sought to understand from the people I encountered what support was being sought and found - at the same time, I sought to enter the sphere of the 'migration industry' (Gazzotti 2019), i.e. the field of actors involved in the migration mangement field in Morocco. The reflection thus follows two levels of observation: solidarity practices within groups and those in the space of the migration industry.

The term used in darija for solidarity is تضامن (*tadàmun*): the root ضمن is used to indicate the inside of something. In Pular, Tely tells me they use the word "*ballal*", that can also be translated into "assistance" (Interview to Tely). From the experiences I hear from both groups, solidarity is firstly perceived on the relational and group level. Having a group dimension to rely on is central for both Moroccans and sub-Saharans in migratory movements: support for those who are recognized as similar in condition and need of assistance – the relationships with the community of origins, the "brothers" *harraqas*, the comrades *adventurers*. Solidarity are the ties that make possible movement and resistance to staying. This concerns various levels: at the interpersonal relationship. Adam, in crossing the Turkish-Greek border, takes on his friend exhausted by the journey (interview with A1o). Tely recounts how he protected an adventurer on the Algerian border, at a very critical time, from the violence of the trafficker – it was natural for him to do so, despite the danger of his position (Interview with Tely). They both recount sharing the few resources they each had with their fellow travellers. It then expands to the collective dimension.

The dimension of in-group support is strong in sub-Saharan communities, both in interpersonal relationships and in the formation of informal or registered networks. Supporting and sharing relationships tend to be built within the same community of origin. In resistance and devising strategies against authority control and risks of deportation, the group is a safe dimension. The life of sub-Saharan undocumented people in Taqadoum is based on practices of collective resistance. Observing Tely's everyday, I notice how space is negotiated and how mobility control is also addressed, with various practices and strategy of resistance. Tely and his comrades explained to me that within Taqadoum they move in groups of at least three people, because collective movement somehow deters the possibility of arrest. The presence of the group protects and creates space. It is pointed out to me that the police never enter some of the streets of Taqadoum, "if they do and ask for documents, all sub-Saharans go out into the streets to counter it"[7].

Secondly, self-organisation is a way in which group solidarity is expressed. I encounter it in Agadir, along with a sub-Saharan solidarity association in suburban villages, an example of self-organized solidarity:

> As we walk Paul stops to talk to a woman: she then explains to me that she is the "President of Ivory Coast." She explains to me that there in the village every sub-Saharan community has a president. (…) He explains to me that in this house they gather to talk…- I ask him who gather, he answers presidents and associations. "When there is a problem, we meet here and discuss." I ask him if Moroccan people also attend, he says no. A man arrives, he is the president of Guinea Conakry (Field Diary, November).[8]

I end up shortly after at a meeting of the village's informal solidarity networks: they discuss specific cases of need and propose solutions. I get to know one of the associations, a registered Sub-Saharan network, which works to facilitate the regularisation of Sub-Saharans in the territory. Exchanges observed in digital space can be included among these examples: from the

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[7] EA_NODE1_Mor_Rab_ML_Obs_02032024_FNC.
[8] EA_NODE1_Mor_Aga_ML_Obs_16112023 17112023_FNC.

exchange of useful information to others to meeting spaces to collectively self-organise for migration.

With respect to the migration industry field, the perspective is different. Here, there are several words used to name the work on migration: assistance and charity, support, management, prevention, denounce, empowerment. These words indicate the heterogeneity of experiences in the field. Indeed, the actors are various: international associations, local and national entities, transnational networks, academics, informal or registered sub-Saharan networks. They engage in practices ranging from denouncing, documenting and advocating cases of violations suffered by sub-Saharan migrants; material support to migrants; sensibilization; legal support and accompaniment to integration. We do not presume here to propose a classification or mapping of the actors and realities present, but rather to encourage a reflection on solidarity, starting from the inputs and experiences of the actors encountered, trying to observe their experiences, and how these relate to border practices and routes.

The level of accessibility to the actors met has been variable. In some cases, it has been immediate, and I have found a strong willingness to share and an accompaniment going far beyond my initial requests - as in Agadir, where a quick contact with a sub-Saharan association leads me to direct encounters on the field of community marginality. In other cases, the contact was permeated by distrust: twice I happened not to be allowed into some spaces because of "security issues", due to the fact that I am a PhD student working in a EU funded project. Often, when I introduced myself as a doctoral student dealing with migration, I was asked 'how is it that you do not work on Lampedusa but I you are there?'.

Getting in contact with multiple social actors allowed me to encounter different types of solidarity. By putting them alongside each other, I am able to create parameters of observation and relate them to the context. To do this, I become aware of the hostility of doing "subversive activism" (Bachelet and Hagan 2023a) in migration in Morocco. Hostility varies according to areas of Morocco, on the degree of political sensitivity and proximity from the borders, and on the positionality of activists, their political position, color and gender, social class. Having listened to the experience of border violence on the routes and considering the context, I try to make distinctions between the various actors in the field: how do they relate to these borders? How much they question them, if they really question them? To whom do they give responsibility for them?

The solidarity practices of our interest involve concrete efforts to counter urban borders: lack of access to social services as well as risks of arrest and deportation. The solidarity we seek then in this case is a concrete response to the borders that people on the move experience. A response which is not merely adaptive, but confronts political governance of migration, sometimes negotiating with it or some other countering it. This includes advocacy and denunciation activities, documented by many associations working to demand institutional change to ensure the protection of migrants' rights: for example, GADEM and the Collectif des Communautés Subsahariennes au Maroc provide legal, social and economical support to integration and to ensure access to health care, housing, schools. Another example can be found in the cases of international activists or Moroccan citizens of accompanying migrants to the hospital. Tely tells

us about the breaking of his arm falling from the Ceuta barrier and about being supported in his hospitalization by the Catholic Church in Casablanca (interview to Tely). This case allows us to understand that the humanitarian posture does not rely on a politicized narrative; yet, ensuring individual rights to health, it questions the presence of border in the denial of access to health services.

On another level we meet the experiences of a diversified group of international and local associations whose work is determined by the presence of international funds and the limitations of carrying on project-based work. The activities carried out vary from material support to sub-Saharan migrants, projects on gender protection, raising awareness of the "risks" of unauthorised migration, and support in return projects. They thus relate to present routes and borders by staying within migration policies, following European and domestic migration policy defined by donors. These kind of action and subjects respond to the category of "humanitarianism" proposed by Bachelet and Hagan (2023a) and in fact lie within the framework in which border practices take shape. Within these, however, there are experiences of negotiation and "transgression," somewhat encountered in this first period of the field: we intend to explore this aspect further in the coming months.

The attitude of subversive solidarity relates to migration governance in a different way, and calls to political responsibilities regarding the protection of migrants' rights. The narratives brought forth by these are varied: sometimes they call out for Morocco's political responsibilities, that is the sense of national civil society and the protection of what is encompassed in the right to stay; some other they report the closure of European borders and their externalization, as well as the violence of European policies, and the right to movement; or they call out for everyone's right to stay in their own country.

Within the reflection on solidarity, Daud and Tely helped me to start an exploration of relationship lying within the dynamic of the solidarity exchange. This concerns the element of empowerment of the receiver: "Don't give me fish, teach me how to fish" (Daud, Field Diary, February). This is what Tely in fact considers when he tells me that solidarity "must make people free":

> *If you give him independence.... (Otherwise) ... he's not free! There is a kind of chain. It's in the neck of the one who is receiving. Because, you are not... You are not free at all (Interview to Tely).*

> *Tely When I was in the hospital.... If I'm alone and if R. was behind me, it was not the same, I swear to God, do you understand? If sub-Saharan had come alone in the hospital they would be neglected, you understand? But if there is a... a...*

> *Michela A white man...*

> *Tely Yes! A white... from Europe or America behind you, they will take care of you. Is is...I mean... it is that If you need help today I shouldn't look around... You understand? I should help you for free, right? (Interview to Tely).*

This element, too, can become a focus for reflection on solidarity and its meanings, and which should be explored further. A reflection on the motivations that move the various actors encountered has not been made here, but an interesting element on the individual level is the involvement in solidarity activism of people who have had an experience of migration and this the starting point of their engagement. Like Khawla, who returns to Morocco after a long migration to France, and from her experience as a foreigner wants to engage in the integration of foreigners in her country. Or a sub-Saharan activist whom I meet in Agadir, has a "clandestine" experience and thanks to the 2017 regularisation campaign has documents: today he is president of an association working for access to regularisation for sub-Saharans, "I know what it means to be undocumented" (Field Diary, November)[9].

Final remarks and suggestions for future research

The first node opened up many reflections on mobility, borders and solidarity in Morocco. Starting from the urban space was important to observe how cities are crossed by different routes and thus host different migration projects and experiences – here observing individual projects and placing them in the routes, to look at them in the framework of mobilities. Following the routes from urban space allowed us to observe how the border is present in the daily lives of unauthorised migrants, in transit and settled as well as departing: *adventurers* and *harraqas*.

The insights we have received in this first period of fieldwork have been many: we have encountered different migration experiences, which have their own political imaginaries and narratives; we have found points of contact between Moroccan and sub-Saharan migration routes, and it will be interesting to explore them further from the perspective of solidarity; now we would like to see how the border takes shape in different spaces and scales, from the city to the border, or to transit areas.

Subsequent nodes planned by the SOLROUTES project will allow the exploration of solidarity from different angles. The introductory node proposed a number of insights that can be explored further. It will be interesting to explore, for example, the interaction between Moroccans and sub-Saharans in the routes and thus in the solidarity dynamics, as mentioned; to deepen the migratory experience and activism from a gender perspective, because this aspect was not covered in this first part. Or again, we aim to look further into what it means to do subversive solidarity in Morocco, and what the impact of the elements of gender and race is, and continue the reflection on ethical considerations in conducting research on migration here.

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[9] EA_NODE1_Mor_Aga_ML_Obs_16112023 17112023_FNC.

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