

## Chapter 3

# Creating Attractive Places



*I think that everything that is financed by the state must not necessarily be completely transparent. ... If there was complete transparency, cantons would spend a lot of time justifying their choices and our cantonal colleagues would have very little time to carry out their other tasks.*

Philippe Monnier (2015). Promotion économique de la Suisse occidentale: Radiographie sans complaisance. Genève: Slatkine. (The original text reads: “Je pense que tout ce qui est financé par l’Etat ne doit pas forcément être complètement transparent. ... S’il y avait une transparence complète, les cantons passeraient beaucoup de temps à justifier leurs choix et nos collègues cantonaux auraient très peu de temps pour accomplir leurs autres tâches.” All translations are by the author unless otherwise noted.)

Having analysed the practices of cantonal authorities in selecting foreigners who are considered “wanted”, this chapter focuses on place-branding strategies that are developed by the state administration to actively attract and retain those from whom an economic benefit is expected. In addition to continuing the discussion on the conceptualisations of highly skilled migrants in Switzerland, this chapter provides an analysis of the way different levels of state administrations collaborate with private sector institutions. It also raises the question of the frontier between the public and private sectors, as well as the role of the state in a context that situates economic interests as central.

With the modernisation of international mobility, marketing strategies are increasingly being utilised by nations, cities, and regions to attract capital and to compete in the globalising world. In accordance with this trend, the concept of place branding gained popularity towards the end of the 1990s. According to Simon

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This field research was conducted in collaboration with Metka Hercog. Laure Sandoz and Metka Hercog presented their preliminary results during the annual conference of the International Society for Ethnology and Folklore (SIEF) on 23 June 2015 in Zagreb, Croatia. This section is partly based on that presentation.

Anholt, one of the main theorists of this notion: “Branding is the process of designing, planning and communicating the name and the identity, in order to build or manage the reputation” (Anholt, 2007, p. 4).

The debates around place branding display many similarities to the debates on highly skilled migration: both deal with the issue of attracting and retaining people perceived as valuable. On the one hand, many researchers who study highly skilled migration are concerned with how national and local policies influence the behaviour of skilled immigrants (Boeri, Brücker, Docquier, & Rapoport, 2012; Boucher & Cerna, 2014; Docquier, Lohest, & Marfouk, 2006; Shachar, 2006), while on the other hand, researchers who study place branding highlight the ways different actors contribute to creating attractive places for potential immigrants (Anholt, 2007, 2008; Gold & Ward, 1994; Kotler, Haider, & Rein, 1993; Lucarelli & Per-Olof, 2011). However, little research has analysed the connections between these two trends, and place branding has rarely been studied from the angle of migration (Glick Schiller & Çağlar, 2009).

This chapter is divided in two parts. The first analyses strategies developed by organisations working under the mandate of the state at different administrative levels to promote the economic development of their region. The second focuses on integration services developed by state and non-state institutions in order to make their locality attractive for current residents. The main objectives are to observe how policy makers in Switzerland brand their city or region as attractive and to analyse who they define as their target group. The analysis is based on both interviews and observations in the cantons of Vaud and Basel-City with representatives of institutions that work to attract or retain “valuable” citizens. The main research question for this chapter is:

*How do major cities in Switzerland develop strategies to attract and retain “wanted” immigrants?*

### **3.1 Attracting Companies Through Economic Promotion**

During the nineteenth century, the development of tourism in Switzerland triggered important investments in the construction of a positive image of the nation as a leisure destination (Bertron, 2016; Tissot, 2004). Romantic ideals about the Swiss countryside, in particular the Swiss Alps, were popularised by the British bourgeoisie and aristocrats. Switzerland represented a mandatory stop during one’s Grand Tour across Europe (Humair, Tissot, & Lapointe Guigoz, 2011). By the end of the nineteenth century, various actors for which the promotion of a Swiss “brand” represented a valid economic strategy reappropriated and further developed these imaginaries. In her doctoral thesis, Caroline Bertron (2016) shows how private boarding schools in the Lake Geneva area promoted the Swiss Alps as an ideal educational location where natural settings met cosmopolitanism, quality, and security. Laurent Tissot (2004) argues that the excellent reputation of the Swiss brand

emerged from a combination of circumstances: investments in tourism and transportation infrastructure during the late-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, as well as the creation of tourism offices during the same period, contributed to the institutionalisation of place branding. In addition, private and state-sponsored publications such as travel brochures, postcards, posters, and guidebooks participated in the diffusion of an advertising iconography. Finally, the official foundation of the Swiss state in 1848 provided political support for the promotion of a national identity.

Nowadays, various actors continue to invest considerable time and resources into influencing Switzerland's image, both generally and for specific locations within the country. These "place sellers" (Kotler et al., 1993) can be economic development agencies, tourism promotion agencies, cultural and sports institutions, companies, economic associations, and public administrations. Place sellers adopt two main types of marketing strategy: external (targets customers outside the location by generating a positive image to attract new people and economic relationships) and internal (targets customers already present in order to maintain or improve satisfaction and to encourage them to stay in or maintain a relationship with the location) (Ancarani, 2001, p. 10). Place sellers may also focus on different target groups depending on their objectives, such as short-term visitors (e.g. tourists, students, temporary workers), long-term residents (e.g. investors, highly skilled workers, companies), specific groups (e.g. wealthy people, entrepreneurs, highly skilled workers), or the general population.

In this section, I focus on strategies developed by cantonal administrations to attract long-term residents and examine collaborations between administrative levels (federal, cantonal, municipal) as well as between cantonal administrations and actors from the private sector. In so doing, I draw attention to the intermediary role of economic promotion agencies mandated by cantonal authorities to attract foreign companies. My research shows that these agencies not only communicate the canton's (or region's) brand abroad, but also facilitate negotiations between companies interested in relocating to Switzerland and the administrations in the targeted locations.

### ***3.1.1 Place-Branding in the "Greater Geneva Bern Area"***

My first research task was to find state-mandated institutions whose aim is to convince specific categories of people to move to a selected location. I was influenced by the broader literature on highly skilled migration, which presents the attraction of "talents" and other "creative people" as a central issue for national and local governments (e.g. Florida, 2005; OECD, 2008; Shachar, 2006). I was, however, surprised to find no such practices directed at individuals in the cantons under study, with the exception of tourism offices and other institutions focusing on short-term visitors. An employee of the city of Lausanne's marketing unit (in the canton of Vaud) explained to me that attracting long-term residents was not an issue: the

economic dynamism of the region was already drawing people in and the local authorities did not consider it a priority to further support this process. Their focus rather consisted in encouraging current residents to form deeper attachments to the location through various offers targeted at the general population. Interviewees from a chamber of commerce and a cantonal labour market office confirmed that Switzerland is already very attractive to immigrants, owing to its stable economy and high quality of life. This means that public institutions do not have a direct interest in attracting long-term residents, in particular within the context of rising anti-immigration movements. In fact, it could even be politically risky to actively work to attract new people when the general political orientation leans towards limiting immigration.

However, other institutions actively convince targeted companies to move to specific regions in Switzerland. Although these practices are not part of official immigration policy, they influence the composition of migration flows by offering incentives for certain employees within the companies to relocate. I observed that people who work for institutions for economic promotion tend to perceive the mobility of individuals as an incidental consequence of the mobility of companies, and thus do not explicitly define targeted groups of “wanted” immigrants. Yet the types of companies they identify, attract, and support during relocation contributes to structuring the demographics of the locations concerned, and influences the mobility of individuals. For this reason, I propose taking a closer look at the practices of these institutions.

There are many economic promotion agencies in Switzerland. At the federal level, Switzerland Global Enterprise is a non-profit organisation mandated by the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) to promote Switzerland as an attractive business location. With an annual budget of approximately 45 million Swiss francs (39 million euros), its tasks involve supporting the international business ventures of companies from Switzerland and Liechtenstein, promoting imports from selected countries to Switzerland, and encouraging investment in Switzerland. The Swiss Business Hubs represent the organisation abroad. These are present in 21 countries,<sup>1</sup> usually at a Swiss embassy or consulate, and serve as contact points for approaching interested investors and communicating a positive image of Switzerland (Switzerland Global Enterprise, 2017) (Fig. 3.1).

In addition, five regional economic promotion agencies oversee the branding of specific areas, most notably the Greater Geneva Bern area (GGBa) – which is financed by the cantons of Bern, Fribourg, Vaud, Neuchâtel, Geneva, and Wallis – and the Greater Zurich area (GZa) – which brings together the cantons of Glarus, Graubünden, Solothurn, Schwyz, Uri, Zug, and Zurich, as well as more than 20 companies based in this region. These promotion agencies provide free services to companies interested in investing in their region and actively communicate their region’s strengths. The larger regional promotion agencies also use prospectors to contact potential investors directly.

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<sup>1</sup>USA, Canada, Brazil, Spain, Great Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Austria, Poland, Russia, the Gulf States, South Africa, India, Singapore, China, Japan, Korea, Hong Kong, Mexico, and Turkey.



**Fig. 3.1** The business hubs of Switzerland Global Enterprise. (Source: Switzerland Global Enterprise: <https://www.s-ge.com/en/swiss-business-hubs> (last accessed 11 March 2019))

Apart from these larger-scale organisations there are many local economic promotion agencies that work at the cantonal, municipal, or intermunicipal level. I take as an example the canton of Vaud to illustrate how these institutions coordinate their activities. This case study shows how economic promotion activities derive from the broader political and economic context, and how they contribute to positioning a specific region internationally. A closer look at the discourses of economic promotion agents demonstrates how they perceive their mission, as well as how they consider the relationship between immigration and economic development. Finally, the analysis further develops the question of “wanted immigrants” by discussing who exactly economic promotion agencies target, and how these practices may have direct or indirect consequences on immigration flows.

In Vaud, the *Développement Economique Vaudois* (DEV) performs the role of the canton’s economic promotion agency. Founded in the mid-1990s, this non-profit organisation operates under the mandate of the cantonal Department for the Economy. Its main mission is to promote the settlement of foreign companies in the canton. Its services are free of charge and financed by the canton and its members, which include all of Vaud’s municipalities and approximately 250 corporations that operate in the canton. The DEV employs eight people in Switzerland and two international representatives based in Turkey and Japan. An analysis of their LinkedIn profiles indicates that the DEV employees based in Switzerland have strong roots in Vaud – where they have all lived for many years – and extensive experience living and working abroad. Three of the four directors completed technical training at a regional university and worked in management positions at companies based in Vaud. The fourth director has less management experience, but she studied at both a private business school and a local university. Moreover, she did not grow up in Switzerland, unlike her other colleagues. This overview illustrates that the DEV employs people with good local networks, a knowledge of the regional business environment, and international experience.

During my field research I interviewed one of the DEV directors, who explained that this cantonal promotion agency originated from a political decision to attract people from abroad at a time of economic slowdown:

During the 1990s, the cantonal situation was bad .... in general, it was a period of crisis. ... And what happened? The canton that initiated the economic promotion was Neuchâtel ... they set up the concept of economic promotion by saying: ... we need to attract people from abroad ... And how do you attract people? You need to facilitate things at the fiscal level .... So certain criteria were taken into account to define the “Bonny areas” that were eligible for a tax break at the federal level .... It was a driving force for reviving the economy. And seeing that, the canton of Vaud – which was in a bad position too – said: we also need an economic promotion tool to attract people. So contacts were made and then the DEV was created by a cantonal minister.<sup>2</sup> (Personal communication, 27 May 2015)

“Bonny areas” were introduced by federal decree in 1995 to support development in certain areas by giving federal tax breaks to companies generating notable economic value in these regions (Swiss Federal Council, 2004).<sup>3</sup> This was replaced in 2008 by another policy for regional development that was less generous on the fiscal level (Swiss Federal Council, 2016).

In reference to the connection between fiscal policies and the emergence of economic promotion practices, the interviewee added:

We were talking about the famous Bonny decree ... if you add in cantonal and municipal exemptions, companies in certain regions got a 100% tax break ... There were some areas on the coast [of Lake Geneva] that could benefit from these implementations ... Then it all disappeared, so the attractiveness for company headquarters declined... we have observed an evolution over the past few years, with companies arriving that are smaller but much more qualified on a technological level. So we see a change: from headquarters with full administrations ... to engineering companies with technological skills that are attracted by the ecosystem we offer.<sup>4</sup> (Personal communication, 27 Mai 2015)

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<sup>2</sup>“D’une part, en effet, dans les années 90, la situation du canton était mauvaise .... Et de façon générale, c’était période de crise aussi. ... Le canton qui a initié au départ la promotion économique, c’était Neuchâtel. ... Ils ont mis en place ce concept de promotion économique en disant: ... il faut attirer du monde d’ailleurs ... Et comment on attire les gens? Il faut leur faire des facilités au niveau fiscal .... Voilà, il y a des critères qui ont été pris en comptes pour définir des ‘zones Bonny’ qui étaient éligibles pour une exonération fiscale au niveau de l’impôt fédéral direct .... Ça a été un élément moteur pour redynamiser. Et en voyant ça, le canton de Vaud qui était aussi dans une mauvaise situation s’est dit: il faut qu’on se dote aussi d’un outil de promotion économique pour attirer du monde. Donc des contacts ont été établis, ensuite il y a eu mise-en-place en parallèle du DEV par un conseiller d’Etat.”

<sup>3</sup>French: Arrêté fédéral; German: Bundesbeschluss.

<sup>4</sup>“On parlait du fameux arrêté Bonny ... Donc si vous additionniez encore les exonérations cantonales et communales, vous pouviez exonérer à 100% les entreprises dans certaines régions ... sur la côte il y avait des zones qui pouvaient bénéficier de ces déploiements ... Tout ça a disparu ensuite, donc l’attractivité pour les sièges a baissé. Alors on voit une évolution et depuis quelques années on a de plus petites structures qui arrivent ici mais qui sont beaucoup plus qualifiées au niveau technologique. Donc on voit le changement. On passe de quartiers généraux, avec toute l’administration ... à des sociétés plutôt d’ingénierie, plus de compétences technologiques qui viennent attirées par l’écosystème qu’on peut offrir.”

At the beginning of the economic promotion scheme, these tax incentives played an important part in attracting multinational companies to Vaud. After the policy reform in 2008, fiscal aspects ceased to be the main incentive but a very specific environment started to develop around a few institutions, such as the polytechnic school in Lausanne (EPFL) and several internationally renowned research institutes in the fields of medical device development and biotechnologies. The strong concentration of scientific resources in the region helped the DEV to convince similar types of companies to settle there.

Currently, the DEV has three main directives. The first is to serve as a point of contact for companies interested in the canton. DEV employees not only provide tailored information in response to specific requests, but also accompany company representatives during site visits. They also arrange meetings with potential regional partners, including representatives of relevant organisations (universities, research institutions, hospitals) and private service providers (tax advisors, real estate agents, professional recruiters), as well authorities from the canton's public administrations (department of finance, labour market office, municipal authorities or promotion agencies). The main objective of these visits is to establish a trusting relationship with the interested representatives in order to convince them that the canton is willing to support the company's relocation. In this case, the DEV clearly plays the role of an intermediary by facilitating contact and negotiations between foreign companies and local institutions.

The second directive of the DEV is to assist newly arrived corporations with hiring employees in the region. The DEV collaborates with specialised recruitment agencies to help companies find a local workforce. They also support the preparation of admission requests in cases where a company wants to bring existing employees from abroad. As one DEV employee mentions:

We accompany them during all the steps to obtain work permits ... We have very close ties with the labour market office here, which is in the Department of Economics ... so that when we make a request, we can be assured of obtaining it.<sup>5</sup> (Personal communication, 27 May 2015)

In this case, the promotion agency negotiates the acquisition of permits for the interested company directly with the cantonal labour market office. The privileged relationship between these institutions does not mean that a promotion agency can obtain permits for anyone; they still need to justify the request based on the criteria mentioned earlier (economic interests, qualifications, priority for local workers etc.) and meet the requirements controlled at the federal level. Nevertheless, DEV employees are able to prepare convincing dossiers because they know what the authorities expect and can discuss certain cases in advance with the cantonal departments in charge of approving applications. They can also dissuade a company from attempting to bring in a specific employee if they think that the admission request is unlikely to succeed. According to the DEV interviewee, because of this preliminary

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<sup>5</sup>“On va les accompagner dans toutes les démarches afin d’obtenir des permis de travail, c’est aussi chez nous. On a des liens très étroits avec le service de l’emploi ici, qui est dans le département de l’économie, de manière à ce que quand on fait une demande, on soit assuré de l’obtention.”

selection, expertise, and privileged access to authorities, the promotion agency's admission requests have never been rejected. This confirms the important role of intermediaries in this process.

The DEV's third directive is to target specific markets and sectors for development. In this case, the collaboration with the promotion agency in charge of branding the Greater Geneva Bern area (GGBa) contributes to structuring these activities. At the time of its creation in 2010, representatives of the six cantons sponsoring the GGBa decided to concentrate their prospecting activities on eight countries: The United States (identified as a priority); France, Germany, and Italy (neighbouring countries); and Brazil, Russia, India, and China (the most important emerging markets at that time). The GGBa employs around ten people to develop business networks in these countries and to contact companies potentially interested in relocating. Their task is to promote the GGBa without favouring any of the six member cantons: for example, Vaud cannot prospect independently in the same places as the GGBa in order to avoid competition with the other cantons. For this reason, Vaud's representatives chose Japan and Turkey for their own sector-specific recruitment and development activities. Based on market research and analysis, the sectors they chose to focus on included the life sciences, information technologies, micro-technologies, and international sport. Currently, the DEV employs one prospector in Istanbul and one in Tokyo, who promote the canton of Vaud and identify potential settlement projects in those countries.

The connection between the DEV and a company interested in the canton can happen in different ways. A company might contact the promotion agency directly, or a DEV prospector could manage to arouse a company's interest in Vaud. Generally, however, the connection is established through other institutions. For this reason, DEV employees also nurture relationships with management consultants, fiscal analysts, and lawyers specialising in global mobility issues. For instance, the "Big Four" professional services companies<sup>6</sup> sometimes refer contacts to the DEV. In economic promotion parlance, these institutions are called "multipliers".

The GGBa and Swiss Global Enterprise (SGE) are the other main sources of contacts. Because Swiss cantons compete to attract business, the GGBa and the SGE are not allowed to influence a company's choice of canton. For instance, the GGBa is supposed to brand the Greater Geneva Bern area in general and to provide information on a specific canton only upon request. Once a relocation project becomes more concrete, the GGBa asks the company to choose two or three cantons for an assessment visit, which is then organised by local promotion agencies in the selected cantons. For its part, the SGE conveys a list of companies interested in relocating to Switzerland to all 26 cantons and five regional promotion agencies every year. In his polemical work on the GGBa, Philippe Monnier (2015) explains that this process creates coordination difficulties for local economic promotion agencies and dilutes their influence, because each is in competition with at least 30 other institutions interested in approaching the potential clients.

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<sup>6</sup>Deloitte, Pricewaterhouse Coopers (PwC), Ernst & Young (EY), and Klynveld Peat Marwick Goerdeler (KPMG).

The DEV thus operates at the intersection of several institutions. Its role is to provide a bridge between foreign companies and Vaud's administration and labour market. Its status as a non-profit organisation also enables it to network with corporate actors more freely than it could if it were part of the cantonal administration. In the words of one of its employees, the DEV is "the armoured arm of the [cantonal] Department for the Economy for attracting foreign companies".<sup>7</sup> It supports the settlement of approximately 35–40 companies per year (Cantonal Service for Economic Promotion, 2015).

### ***3.1.2 Targets of Economic Promotion***

The field research on economic promotion practices indicates that the main external branding strategies aimed at attracting resources to Switzerland primarily focus on companies rather than on individuals. In fact, the number of jobs created locally is the main criterion presented in activity reports and other communication documents for evaluating and legitimising organisations such as the DEV or the GGBa. In this sense, economic promotion policy follows a similar logic to immigration policy: while companies are welcome, the number of employees that they bring from abroad should be kept as low as possible in order to benefit the local labour market. For this reason, economic promotion agencies are required to submit estimates of the number of jobs created locally in the case of each new settlement and these estimates are fundamental for justifying the attribution of public funds to these organisations.

The focus on specific countries and economic sectors contributes to defining profiles of privileged access to the Swiss labour market. These profiles include people from countries with an expanding economy oriented to the tertiary sector. While the United States and Switzerland's neighbouring countries appear to be first choice, economic promotion agencies increasingly expand their activities to include new key economic players, such as the BRIC countries. In this case, the selection of target countries officially follows a technocratic logic rather than an approach based on cultural prejudices. Nevertheless, discussions on the importance of attracting Chinese companies, for instance, which are in this case often presented as "culturally different", indicate that the question of desirability from a cultural perspective is not absent from economic promotion strategies. For instance, Monnier (2015, pp. 41–42) writes in "China: Opportunities or risks for the GGBa":

With Chinese bosses, it is more personal and less rational. Getting to know the right person well (often the owner or the CEO) and winning their trust is essential, which necessarily takes time. Communication is almost always difficult because this "right person" rarely speaks a European language. For instance, even if they speak English, understanding the

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<sup>7</sup>"... le bras armé du Département de l'économie pour attirer des entreprises étrangères."

words they say does not guarantee that you understand what they really mean. The cultural gap is huge.<sup>8</sup>

This illustrates an ambivalence towards a country that has become a key economic player but that still appears as different, difficult to understand, and even frightening. One of the DEV directors also referred to cultural distance with China to explain why his organisation chose to focus their prospecting activities on Japan:

Switzerland and Japan share a certain number of values at the level of the notion of work, of precision, of the respect of things. We have lot of commonalities with the Japanese, and this is not the case with China, for instance, which is very different.<sup>9</sup> (Personal communication, 27 May 2015)

The interviewee highlights common cultural values to legitimise the privileged relationship that his organisation is building with Japanese industries. When justifying the choice of Turkey as a target country, he also mentions this idea of proximity. In this case, the whole argument is interesting to read:

It's interesting for Turkish societies to have a foothold in Europe. And the non-membership of Switzerland to the EU is considered an advantage by Turkish businesses ... Switzerland is very favourable to companies, and Turkish companies appreciate that. In addition, there is a particular link in the background – the two treaties that were signed in the canton of Vaud and here in Lausanne ... it still resonates in Turkey. So we grant [Turkey] a privileged link ... We settled two companies here last year ... To be Swiss reinforces their image. For some products, of course, you can imagine that “Swiss Made” is not the same as “Made in Turkey”.<sup>10</sup> (Personal communication, 27 May 2015)

Here the interviewee emphasises three elements for justifying the DEV's special interest in Turkey: an expanding market directed at Europe, a long-lasting relationship between Turkey and the canton of Vaud, and the benefits of the Swiss brand. The interviewee presents the situation as if Vaud were doing Turkey a favour by enabling its companies to access the benefits associated with Switzerland. The favour is justified by a “privileged link” based on an old tradition of diplomatic exchanges that positions the canton in a supportive – and even paternalistic – role.

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<sup>8</sup>“Avec les patrons chinois, c’est plus personnel et moins rationnel. Il est essentiel d’arriver à bien connaître la bonne personne (souvent le propriétaire ou le CEO) et de gagner sa confiance, ce qui prend nécessairement du temps. La communication est presque toujours difficile car cette ‘bonne personne’ ne parle très rarement une langue européenne. Et même si elle parle par exemple l’anglais, ce n’est pas parce que vous comprenez tous les mots qu’elle prononce que vous comprenez véritablement ce qu’elle veut dire. Le fossé culturel est immense.”

<sup>9</sup>“La Suisse et le Japon partagent un certain nombre de valeurs au niveau de la notion du travail, de la précision, du respect des choses. On a beaucoup de points communs avec les Japonais, ce qui n’est pas le cas avec la Chine, par exemple, c’est très différent.”

<sup>10</sup>“C’est intéressant pour les sociétés Turques d’avoir un pied en Europe. Et le fait de la non-appartenance de la Suisse à l’UE est considéré comme un avantage par les sociétés turques ... La Suisse est très favorable quand même aux entreprises au fond, donc les entreprises turques sont sensibles à ça. En plus il y a un lien un peu particulier qui est toujours en filigrane, c’est celui des deux traités qui ont été signés dans le canton de Vaud et ici à Lausanne ... ça résonne encore en Turquie. On lui accorde un lien privilégié ... On a installé ici deux entreprises l’année passée ... D’être en Suisse, ça les renforce dans leur image. Pour certains produits, évidemment on peut imaginer que le ‘Swiss Made’, plutôt que le ‘Made in Turkey’, ce n’est pas la même chose.”

In this sense, it could be argued that the relationship is presented as development aid. This construction blurs economic issues and suggests a power balance in favour of the canton. In the context of the interview, the rhetorical structure of the argument presents the choice of Turkey as obvious, while at the same time providing reassurances of the DEV’s ability to deal with Turkish companies. Here again, these various elements suggest a tension between different interests and representations regarding new major economies: on the one hand, these markets have become inevitable from an economic perspective, while on the other hand, they often trigger criticism and suspicion. The field research does not enable an analysis of the way economic promotion agencies deal with this ambivalence in their daily practice, but further research on this topic would certainly be interesting for highlighting the role played by representations of cultural desirability in economic promotion schemes.

In terms of skills, companies with a technological orientation and growth potential are clearly preferred. In this case, the fact that Vaud already contains an important pool of workers trained in the fields of IT, life sciences, and micro-techniques serves as an argument for attracting companies. The key objective is to create employment in the canton, meaning that attracting skilled foreign workers is not perceived as desirable in itself.

Although economic promotion agencies focus mainly on *attracting* companies and *facilitating* their settlement, they are nonetheless part of a larger immigration system that aims to select people perceived as economically valuable and culturally close. On this point, it is interesting to note that the people I met during my field research generally had a positive image of work-driven immigration, which they regarded as an essential factor in economic prosperity. Nevertheless, their positions also enable them to discourage companies from bringing people into Switzerland who are “not absolutely needed” according to the standards of the State Secretariat for Migration. To justify this, employees usually say that Switzerland cannot welcome everybody, and that even if immigration is profitable, limits must be set. Economic promotion agents are thus involved in a larger process of migration governance which involves a complex network of actors and institutions that do not only belong to the state administration. These actors contribute to attracting people to Switzerland, but they do not work to challenge the current restrictive immigrant selection system which is based on economic interests.

### 3.2 Retaining “Wanted Immigrants”

Having discussed the practices that aim to attract certain companies to Switzerland, this section focuses on branding strategies directed at people who are already in the country. I start by comparing two events organised in the cantons of Vaud and Basel-City to welcome newcomers. These events constitute interesting case studies of the ways different institutions perceive mobile people and define who should be encouraged to stay in the long run. In both cases, the organisations involved speak of “integration” to describe the services they provide, but I will show that they use this

notion in a very specific way when it applies to “wanted immigrants” compared to other groups of foreigners. Then, I analyse the way local definitions of “wanted immigrants” are co-constructed by the migrants themselves. More specifically, I show how certain people become politically active in order to defend their right to be treated as “expats” (wanted/highly skilled) rather than as “migrants” (unwanted/socially disadvantaged) in a context of hostility towards immigrants. This case study highlights the complex construction of migrant categories by showing the variety of actors and processes involved. It also exposes some of the tensions related to the presence of well-educated – and often wealthy – foreigners in certain places.

At the beginning of my fieldwork, I attended an event organised by the canton of Basel-City to welcome newcomers and provide information about administrative and practical issues. This particular event was conducted in English, but it is also presented in other languages. Each event is organised three times a year. The concept started in 2010 and was supplemented by a more social and festive element in 2013. All newly registered residents in Basel-City receive an invitation, including both Swiss and non-Swiss people who have recently moved to Basel, either from abroad or from another Swiss canton, and each event is publicly advertised on the website of the canton’s administration. The invitation is thus theoretically open to everyone.

*Copy of the invitation letter to the Basel Welcome Event*

Basel, 15th January 2015

**Welcome to Basel & Welcome on Board**

Dear Sir/Madam

I am very pleased that you have recently moved to Basel and that you have chosen our city as your new home. Please allow me to invite you to an official welcome event for new residents at Basel City Hall.

**Date** Tuesday, 10th February 2015, 19:00 h (in English)

**Place** Rathaus/Grossratssaal (City Hall/Great Council Chamber),  
Marktplatz 9

During the first “**Welcome to Basel**” part of the event, you will be addressed by a member of the cantonal government, **President of the Government**, at 19:00 h (admission from 18:45 h) in the City Hall. Experts in the field of administration will inform you about relevant subjects such as residence permits, social insurance, labour law, as well as the tax and education systems. Finally, our special **guest** will share her own experiences as a newcomer to Basel with you.

This is followed by the second “**Welcome on Board**” part of this get-together. You are invited to take part in a **boat ride including an aperitif** on the Rhine at **19:50 h** (departure at 20:00 sharp from the boat landing place). During the tour, you will have the opportunity to meet other newcomers and

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local people from Basel. You can also make use of extensive information about cultural and leisure activities as well as advisory services provided on the boat.

I am looking forward to seeing you there.

Yours sincerely

**Head of Department of Presidential Affairs**

Shortly before 7 pm on 10 February 2015, I entered the council chambers at the city hall, an ancient and beautifully decorated room. Each of the approximately 100 participants received a small pack of *leckerlies* (a local biscuit), a pen, and a file covering administrative issues and information on relevant institutions. I observed that most of the guests appeared to be Caucasian. Several of the men were wearing suits, as if they had come directly from work or had dressed formally for the occasion. When the head of the integration office asked the audience about their reasons for coming to Basel, I learnt that the majority had come for work, while about ten had come for family, and about five for studying. The same integration officer then asked the audience who intended to stay in Basel forever. When nobody raised a hand, she said: “We want to make you change your mind!”

After this welcoming statement, the president of the cantonal government emphasised in his speech the important role of labour migration in the city’s economic development:

Our economic region is one of the most dynamic in Switzerland, it is known for being innovative and for the international environment. Because of our position as a border city on the Rhine, employment has always played a unique role and has influenced the development of the city. People from many different countries have lived and worked here and shaped today’s business location. (Welcome event in Basel, 10 February 2015)

Five short presentations followed during which the representatives of several cantonal departments addressed daily administrative issues such as immigration, labour and tax regulations, education and childcare infrastructure, and opportunities to attend integration and language courses. In addition, an English woman who had been living in Basel for 30 years talked about her experiences and gave the newcomers tips for adjusting to their new environment. She insisted on the importance of learning German and meeting “the locals”. (On another occasion, the head of the canton’s integration office described this person to me as a “super migrant”, explaining that the event’s organisers usually invited someone who corresponded to their idea of an exemplary case of integration in order to motivate the participants to imitate this model.)

After the official welcome was over, the participants left the council chamber and were directed to a waiting boat. Two musicians were playing at the entrance and we

were greeted by a young and smiling person who showed us to a room containing tables on which flyers and brochures about life in Basel were displayed. At each table a person was available to answer questions. We were offered wine, sodas, and enough appetisers to constitute a meal. During this time, the boat travelled across the city on the Rhine River before bringing us back to our departure point.

I joined a conversation between two couples of various origins (England, Poland, and Australia) who had just met. They explained that they had come to Basel to work. In the case of both couples, the men had found jobs and the women were currently unemployed. They seemed very happy to meet other people living in Basel and we exchanged contact details. After about an hour and a half, we disembarked. As we left, we were given a small gift bag containing delicacies and a discount voucher from the event's main sponsor.

Intrigued by this experience, I searched for a similar event in Lausanne, Vaud's capital city. While the welcome event in Basel had been easy to find online, I could find no such information on the Lausanne or Vaud websites. Later, a person in charge of the municipality's city marketing strategy told me that although there was a welcome event for Lausanne's new residents, in her opinion it was very formal and old-fashioned. For this reason, her department was currently trying to improve it. Since no welcome event existed at the cantonal level in Vaud, each municipality was in charge of organising a reception for their new residents, which created disparities between places.

Nevertheless, I found information online about another kind of welcome reception that piqued my curiosity. Organised by the canton's chamber of commerce, this event specifically targeted new employees of the region's international companies and their families. The event was advertised on the chamber of commerce website and through the organisers' contacts within the companies. I contacted the chamber of commerce to explain the aims of my research project and they invited me to participate as an observer.

This time, only 25 people were present. Most of them had recently arrived in Switzerland and seemed happy to meet other people in a similar situation. The event took place in a more intimate atmosphere than the event in Basel: tables were arranged in a square in a conference room to create a more appropriate space for discussion. The two organisers from the chamber of commerce welcomed each participant warmly on arrival and offered a cup of coffee to those who arrived early. The language of communication was English. The moderator asked us to introduce ourselves briefly, from which I learnt that the participants represented 13 nationalities and almost all had worked and lived previously in various countries. Most of them were working for the region's main multinationals such as Nestlé and Philip Morris.

The speeches included an overview of the canton's attractions by a representative of the tourism office, followed by an introduction by a cross-cultural coach on "how to assimilate into Switzerland without losing yourself" and a presentation by one of the organisers on daily life in Switzerland. The event lasted about an hour and a half and a lot of time was allowed for questions and the exchange of personal experiences. During the break we tasted local specialities and wine.

The next day I interviewed the main organisers and learnt that the organisation in charge of the event was an association founded in 2011 by the chamber of commerce of Vaud and the DEV (Développement Economique Vaudois, see previous section). This association was created to support the integration of companies and their employees after relocation to the canton. Although the association maintains close ties with the chamber of commerce, officially it is independent. It employs two people, one in charge of organising information and training for international companies, the other focused on support for new employees. The main sponsors of these welcome events are the canton of Vaud, a local bank, and one of the “Big Four” professional services companies.

### 3.2.1 *Integration Services in Basel and Vaud*

A comparison of these welcome events illustrates different ways of welcoming newcomers and promoting their settlement in specific locations. Although Basel-City opted for a more inclusive approach – inviting all new residents to a lavish reception – the choice of language, topics, and speakers at both events suggested a general focus on affluent people. Hence, although they share similar objectives – to welcome newcomers perceived as valuable, facilitate their transition through information and networking, and promote attachment to the location – different means are used to achieve them. I analyse these differences by situating each event in a larger institutional context.

One contrast concerns the division of tasks between institutions in the two cantons. In Basel-City the canton is in charge of the event, while a private institution takes over this task in Vaud. Moreover, the Basel-City integration office plays an important role in the organisation of the first event, while collaboration between the canton of Vaud and the private institution responsible for the second welcome event takes place through the economic promotion office, which plays a relatively indirect role.

The development of an integration policy in the two cantons happened at different times, which greatly influences present practices. Basel-City is a pioneer in this regard, since its integration policy dates back to 1999 and has inspired other locations in Switzerland and abroad (Wichmann & D’Amato, 2010). In addition, the policy in Basel-City was first debated at a time of growing awareness about city development and economic promotion (D’Amato & Suter, 2012). This explains why, in 2009, the integration office ceased to be part of the Department for Justice and Security and became part of the *Präsidentialdepartement* under the section Canton and City Development.<sup>11</sup> In contrast, Vaud adopted an integration policy in 2007 (Hanselmann, 2013). Prior to this, non-governmental organisations and some municipalities carried out most of the integration measures. The integration office in Vaud is currently part of the Department for the Economy under the “Population”

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<sup>11</sup>“Kantons- und Stadtentwicklung”.

section and its mission is oriented more towards the prevention of racism.<sup>12</sup> These elements highlight different approaches to integration in the two cantons.

The welcome event in Basel is thus part of an institutional structure that closely connects integration to city development. An employee of the Basel-City integration office confirmed that attracting companies and making their employees want to live in Basel are two clear goals of the canton, or as he put it, “We have the task to make Basel as attractive as possible” (Panel discussion in Basel, 27 September 2016).<sup>13</sup>

The promotion of a welcoming culture through events such as the one described above aims to fulfil this task. Another objective of the canton is to prevent the development of subcultures, as the integration office’s employee calls them: “We want that newcomers learn the German language so that they can have contact with the local population” (Panel discussion in Basel, 27 September 2016).<sup>14</sup> In order to fulfil that aim, the canton coordinates several integration opportunities in collaboration with other organisations in the region. For instance, free German courses financed by the canton are offered to all newcomers during their first year of residence. The canton’s integration policy is based on the general principle of *fördern und fordern* [encourage and demand]; the canton facilitates foreigners’ participation in local social and economic life but also expects compliance with integration requirements, and the welcome events communicate both the offers and the expectations regarding integration. As a coercive measure, the canton can impose “integration contracts” that put conditions on the extension of residence permits, for example, the obligation to acquire a certain proficiency in German, or participate in integration courses.

The objectives mentioned by the integration office employee – to make the location attractive and to promote integration – were visible at the welcome event that I attended in Basel. In addition to the hospitality statement, participants were repeatedly encouraged to engage in city life and “meet the locals”. This combination of marketing objectives – communicated through a generally attractive setting – and sociocultural objectives – communicated through normative discourses about integration – suggests a tension between different positions regarding the integration of foreigners in the canton. This tension is even more apparent in other debates about integration in the canton. I briefly introduce two of these debates here in order to stress the role of welcome events in the integration and economic development policies of the canton.

In 2010, several right-wing parties presented three motions in favour of stricter integration rules, which led to intense discussion in the canton’s parliament about the possibility of making integration contracts obligatory for all newly arrived foreigners. Opponents of this measure criticised the unfairness of such a broad implementation of integration contracts, as well as the risk that it represented for the

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<sup>12</sup>The name of the integration policy is the Law on the Integration of Foreigners and Prevention of Racism (in French: Loi sur l’intégration des étrangers et la prévention du racisme).

<sup>13</sup>“Wir haben die Aufgabe, Basel möglichst attraktiv zu gestalten.”

<sup>14</sup>“Wir wollen, dass Neuzugezogene die deutsche Sprache lernen, damit sie auch mit der Bevölkerung in Austausch kommen.”

canton’s economy, since “hundreds, if not thousands of qualified workers from science and research would be affected” (Basler Zeitung, 2010).<sup>15</sup> Sensitive to this argument, the motions’ proponents suggested an exception for “immigrants with good language knowledge, good education as well as good professional and economic situation”.<sup>16</sup> This exception was nicknamed the “pharma-clause” in reference to the pharmaceutical companies present in the canton that would mainly benefit from it, since they hire most of the specialised workers from abroad (Wichmann & D’Amato, 2010, p. 67). Eventually, the proposals for tougher integration rules were rejected, thus maintaining the status quo.

Four years later, the right-wing nationalist Swiss People’s Party (SVP) came back with a cantonal initiative asking for a stricter integration policy. Obligatory integration contracts were once again proposed as a means to force foreigners to learn German and to control their adherence to Swiss rules and customs.<sup>17</sup> However, the SVP proposed an exception for “short-term stayers, students, and persons integrated in our economic system, e.g. the highly qualified and the employees of local businesses” (Swiss People’s Party Basel, 2014).<sup>18</sup> In reaction to this initiative, the cantonal government submitted a counter-proposal, which was strongly endorsed by the socialist party. Supporters of the counter-proposal criticised the initiative for endangering the welcoming culture of the canton and for focusing on the potential deficits of foreigners rather than on their potential contributions. They suggested that the canton should be responsible for inviting all new residents to a welcome event in order to inform them of both their rights and their social obligations. In addition, the counter-proposal introduced a commitment on the part of the canton to offer free language courses to all foreigners during their first year of residence. The initiative to automatically impose integration contracts was eventually rejected, but the counter-proposal introduced the possibility for cantonal authorities to invite foreigners to personal integration meetings before deciding on the first extension of their residence permit, as well as the possibility of demanding participation in a language or integration course (Justice, 2014). The initiative and the counter-proposal were both submitted to a vote by the general population and the counter-proposal won with a large majority (Jäggi, 2014). In this way, both the organisation of welcome events and the possibility of making residence permit renewals condi-

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<sup>15</sup>“Hunderte, wenn nicht Tausende hoch qualifizierter Arbeitskräfte aus Wissenschaft und Forschung betroffen wären.”

<sup>16</sup>“Bei Zugewanderten mit guten Sprachkenntnissen, guter Ausbildung und beruflicher Stellung sowie in guten wirtschaftlichen Verhältnissen ein Ausnahmeregelung vorzusehen ist.”

<sup>17</sup>The Swiss People’s Party stated that “Zwingende Ziele der Integrationsvereinbarung müssen dabei das Erlernen der deutschen Sprache, die Integration in die hiesigen Verhältnisse sowie das Akzeptieren unserer Rechtsordnung sein [The binding objectives of integration contracts must be the learning of the German language, the integration in local relations (hiesigen Verhältnisse) and the acceptance of our legal order]” (Swiss People’s Party Basel, 2014).

<sup>18</sup>“So sind bspw. Kurzaufenthalter, Studenten und in unser Wirtschaftssystem integrierte Personen, also z.B. Hochqualifizierte und Fachkräfte der hiesigen Unternehmungen, vom Abschluss einer Integrationsvereinbarung ausgenommen.”

tional on integration training became part of cantonal law (art. 7a and 7b of the Law on the Integration of the Migration Population<sup>19</sup>).

This case highlights the importance of welcome events in the canton's integration strategy, as well as the relatively high degree of politicisation of this topic. While welcome events were initially designed as part of a city marketing strategy, the political discourse following the SVP's initiative on stricter rules of integration led to a reappropriation of these events by the initiators of a counter-proposal. This shift in focus helps to explain the tension between marketing objectives and integration objectives at the event I attended.

Although the canton's guiding principle of integration to "encourage and demand" is supposed to involve all foreigners, those with a high socioeconomic status seem to be more often exposed to the "encouraging" part of the policy. In their report on integration policies and practices in Basel, Wichmann and D'Amato (2010, pp. 64–67) note that cantonal authorities tended to consider learning German less important for anglophone foreigners, since English is an accepted lingua franca in Basel. In the same vein, their research revealed a general consensus that wealthy foreigners should be exempted from integration contracts. For instance, the exception to stricter integration rules for short-term visitors proposed by the SVP (Swiss People's Party Basel, 2014) reflects the idea that people who are not expected to stay should not be expected to integrate. Yet it also implicitly limits the definition of temporary visitors to highly qualified people who migrate to Basel for work-related reasons and leave when their contract ends.<sup>20</sup> Moreover, the political debates around Basel's integration policy shows interesting connections between integration and economic promotion: both right- and left-wing parties argued that authorities cannot be too demanding in terms of integration if they want to promote Switzerland internationally as an attractive location to work and live.

Nevertheless, Basel's administration also follows a principle of equal treatment: its integration offers should be open to all foreigners in order to avoid favouritism. For this reason, the welcome event in Basel is officially open to all newcomers regardless of their origin or social background, and the message is supposed to address a large and diverse audience. However, the persons who designed it had to take both political priorities and their perceptions of the needs – and value – of different foreigner categories into account in order to define their communication strategy. The event thus entails a tension between an officially inclusive approach and a set of messages implicitly addressed to different target groups. Even though the event communicates the normative idea that newcomers should "meet the locals" and "learn the language", the risk of being subjected to sanctions in the case of non-

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<sup>19</sup>"Gesetz über die Integration der Migrationsbevölkerung (Integrationsgesetz)", Grosse Rat des Kantons Basel-Stadt, 18 April 2007. See [http://www.gesetzessammlung.bs.ch/frontend/versions/3244/embedded\\_version\\_content](http://www.gesetzessammlung.bs.ch/frontend/versions/3244/embedded_version_content)

<sup>20</sup>The perception of highly qualified foreigners as short-term visitors is challenged by studies that show an increase in the average duration of stay for this category. For instance, Wiener and Grossmann (2011) estimate that 70% of highly qualified foreigners who come to Basel for work stay at least 3 years and 27% stay 10 years or more.

compliance does not exist for most participants. For the highly qualified workers and their families, the message about integration is nothing more than a political statement without consequences. However, it is important for the organisers to communicate it in order to show consistency with their political objectives and to avoid giving the impression that the event addresses only the most privileged categories of foreigner.

The welcome event at the Vaud chamber of commerce did not display the same ambivalence: the target group was better defined, and the event’s framework was clearly business-oriented. In this case, the canton was only indirectly involved: even if it supported and collaborated with the organisers when initiating the event, the connection happened through the economic promotion office and not through the integration office. This underscores a clear economic reasoning behind the decision to offer special services to “international employees” and their families.

The incentive to establish an organisation specifically dedicated to the integration of this category in Vaud is linked to the decrease in the number of company headquarters settling in the region. We have already seen that policy reform concerning tax breaks resulted in changes in the kinds of companies that settle in the region. A general tendency to reduce relocation services and to favour local contracts has also been observed at an international level (Cartus, 2014; Le Temps, 2015). In Vaud, the replacement of multinationals’ headquarters by smaller technological companies and the increase in local contracts has resulted in a decrease in workers arriving with relocation packages that include financing for services provided by a specialist organisation that operates under the mandate of the hiring company (Ravasi, Salamin, & Davoine, 2015). These services often include the specific needs of accompanying family members as well.

An employee of the DEV explained:

There was a glory period for relocation companies ... Now that it is calmer, some have closed down or scaled back ... The framework conditions have changed, which slowed the arrival of headquarters ... In general, [the relocation contract] is mostly for executives ... I once had a phone call with [the director of the chamber of commerce in Vaud] who told me: We have new members coming to the chamber of commerce that you settled here but we don’t have international competences ... So we sat at a table together and created a group that delivers services that maybe were delivered by the relocations before.<sup>21</sup> (Personal communication, 27 Mai 2015)

The interviewee is referring to the association that organises welcome events for international employees at the Vaud chamber of commerce. According to him, this

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<sup>21</sup> “Il y a eu une période de gloire pour les sociétés de relocation ... Maintenant ça c’est beaucoup calmé, il y a des relocations qui ont mis la clé sous le paillason, elles ont fermé, elles se sont réduites ... C’est quand même les conditions cadre qui ont changé, qui ont freiné, on va dire, l’arrivée de quartiers généraux ... En général, c’est surtout pour les cadres des entreprises ... J’avais une fois eu un téléphone avec [la directrice de la Chambre vaudoise du commerce et de l’industrie, CVCI] qui me dit: Nous on a des nouveaux membres qui viennent à la CVCI, que vous avez installés, mais nous on n’a pas de compétences internationales à la CVCI ... Alors on s’est mis autour de la table et on a créé un groupement ... qui délivre des services qui peut-être justement, à l’époque, étaient livrés par les relocations.”

association was created in order to compensate for the reduction in relocation services directly financed by companies: with the decrease in headquarters settling in the region, relocation companies received fewer contracts, but this does not mean that foreign workers stopped coming – the new arrivals were simply no longer managers at the headquarters of large companies, and, for this reason, received less corporate support for relocation. These lower-level employees searched for support elsewhere, including at the local chamber of commerce. This new dynamic encouraged the chamber of commerce to launch its own integration services, which induced a shift in responsibility from international companies to local organisations partially financed with public money.

The integration office was not involved in this process. This lack of involvement is partly due to its late establishment (after 2007), as well as to a generally less intense politicisation of integration. In addition, the integration office in Vaud defines its target population more explicitly than in Basel. According to one of the welcome event's organisers "We work a lot more for expats, for highly qualified people... the integration office, they don't have the same audience at all. They work with socially disadvantaged people" (Personal communication, 27 February 2015).<sup>22</sup> The interviewee also mentioned a project that is currently under way involving an information package that would provide newcomers with information about the canton. This project would involve the integration office, the economic promotion office, the tourism office, and the city of Lausanne. However, the question of the target audience makes collaboration difficult:

We discussed with the SPECO [economic promotion office] who really wants the expats, or at least this kind of audience. I don't know if the integration office ... maybe it's too different an audience, so we'll still need to keep two different platforms.<sup>23</sup> (Personal communication, 27 February 2015)

This division of work is interesting: while the integration office focuses on socially disadvantaged migrants, the economic promotion office focuses on highly qualified ones. Although the word "integration" is used to describe activities undertaken in both cases, economic arguments play a prevailing role when it comes to international employees. During the interview, one of the two organisers explained:

We consider that the integration of people is connected to the integration of companies. There was a study about four years ago that looked at what made foreign employees stay and what made them leave, and in 72% of cases it was bad integration, especially when family members who followed didn't want to settle here.<sup>24</sup> (Personal communication, 27 February 2015)

<sup>22</sup> "Nous on travaille quand même nettement plus pour des expats, des personnes très qualifiées. Et le bureau d'intégration, eux ce n'est quand même pas du tout le même public. Eux c'est plutôt les gens socialement défavorisés."

<sup>23</sup> "Là on discute avec le SPECO [Service de la promotion économique] qui eux veulent plus être sur la partie expats, ou en tous cas ce genre de public. Je ne sais pas si le Bureau d'intégration... peut-être que c'est quand même trop différent comme genre de public et qu'on va quand même devoir garder deux plateformes séparées."

<sup>24</sup> "On considère que l'intégration des personnes arrive en bout de chaîne de l'intégration d'une entreprise et en fait partie. Il y avait eu une étude il y a 4 ans à peu près qui regardait ce qui faisait

According to this person, the early termination of contracts has a negative impact on companies and should be avoided for this reason. In order to address this issue, the association organises monthly 2-h meetings specifically for the partners of international employees. The official goals of these events are to provide information, promote integration, and enable networking. They usually address topics related to language, job searches, and personal development, and always include an informal part during which participants can get to know each other. They are free of charge for the partners of the member companies’ employees.

I noticed that the events organised at the chamber of commerce generally present integration as a set of useful information and small adjustments that participants are invited to make in order to enjoy their stay better. For instance, the presentation about life in Switzerland at the welcome event in Vaud included general information about the country’s political and social organisation, followed by tips on how to park a car without being fined, how to recycle, how to register with the municipality, and so on. In the same vein, the presentation on “How to assimilate into Switzerland without losing yourself” started with a general discussion on the notion of cultural difference and concluded with recommendations such as “you don’t meet cultures, you meet people”, “forget about stereotypes”, and “enjoy your time here”. Integration was not presented as obligatory but rather as something “nice to have” that participants were invited to try for their own sake – and, implicitly, for the sake of their (or their partner’s) company. In contrast, political objectives related to social cohesion and sociocultural values were absent. Furthermore, both the participants and the organisers discussed difficulties involved in meeting local people, which were expressed by some newcomers as a problem within Swiss society rather than a lack of engagement on their part.

In this sense, the discussion did not start from the assumption that the participants were in a situation of deficit and would have to catch up in order to adapt to their new environment, as it is often the case in state-oriented approaches to integration (Do Mar Castro Varela, 2008; Hess & Moser, 2009). The participants rather presented negative aspects of Swiss society, which some perceived as too “closed” and “rigid”, as reasons for difficulties in adapting. This perspective contrasts with the common idea that foreigners are either entirely responsible for their own integration or that they need to be forced into integration. At the same time, it highlights a power balance in favour of wealthy and well-educated foreigners in comparison with other immigrants. While integration is often a precondition for the admission and stay of less privileged categories of immigrants (Scuzzarello, 2013), this case study shows that it can also become a retention strategy in the case of mobile workers perceived as particularly valuable. Although the integration and economic promotion strategies in Vaud and Basel present clear differences, I observe a similar construction in both two cantons whereby foreigners are divided between (wanted/highly skilled) “expats” and (unwanted/socially disadvantaged) “migrants”, with the former being the target of economic promotion measures and the latter of (some-

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rester les employés étrangers et ce qui les faisait partir, et dans 72% des cas c’était une mauvaise intégration, surtout quand il y avait de la famille qui suivait et qui ne voulait pas s’implanter ici.”

times obligatory) integration measures. Integration thus becomes a way to select between “wanted immigrants”, who are perceived as beneficial, and the “Others”, who are perceived as a burden.

The boundary between these two groups is never explicit, but a number of characteristics contributes to its definition: in this context, the term “expat” usually refers to “wanted immigrants” with a social status that associates a relatively high level of education and material ease with other attributes corresponding to what Anne-Catherine Wagner refers to as “international capital” (see also Wagner, 1998, 2007; Wagner & Reau, 2015, p. 34):

The international capital is constructed from all the social, cultural, linguistic, economic and symbolic resources associated with familiarity with several countries.<sup>25</sup>

The characteristics involved in the constitution of international capital include institutional resources (e.g. internationally recognised diplomas, passports and permits that enable travelling), symbolic resources (e.g. expertise, behaviours, and attitudes that facilitate adaptation to mobility) and material resources (e.g. economic goods that enable feeling “at home” in different places). However, the notion of capital does not refer to a simple set of characteristics. More important is the way these characteristics can be transformed into power in specific social contexts. On this point, the author says:

If the fact of coming from another country, of knowing another language, of having relations abroad or of having a partner with a different nationality can be considered as indicators of an international capital for middle and upper classes, they are much more frequently perceived as stigma, as signs of insufficient integration in the host country or as indicators of a dominated position for lower classes. It is not the access to foreign experiences in itself that creates hierarchies between social groups, but the value attributed to these experiences. (Wagner, 2007, p. 102; Wagner & Reau, 2015, p. 37)

The characteristics associated with international capital depend on other forms of capital and interact with them. For instance, economic capital may enable a certain cosmopolitan way of life, which in turn may provide access to new economic resources. Linguistic capital may enable international experiences, and at the same time builds on them. Finally, the constitution of an international network depends on as much as it develops symbolic resources that may in turn transform into new forms of social and cultural capital.

The distinction between the categories of (wanted/highly skilled) “expat” and (unwanted/socially disadvantaged) “migrant” relies on this dynamic interaction between different forms of capital: the privileged position attributed to “expats” in this context is not a result of international experiences alone, since these can also be associated with a deficit that needs to be remediated through integration. Yet, the presence of other forms of capital enables the transformation of international experiences into something positive and valued.

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<sup>25</sup>“Le capital international se construit à partir de l’ensemble des ressources sociales, culturelles, linguistiques, économiques et symboliques liées à la familiarité avec plusieurs pays.”

In this process, the existence of hierarchies between resources associated with different national systems is important:

The relations between nationalities present similarities with the relations between social classes within a country. Those who can assert the “international” value of their national attributes oppose those who rather tend to repress them in order to adapt to dominant norms.<sup>26</sup> (Wagner, 1998, p. 213)

The value of international capital relates to normative systems whereby some resources are de facto perceived as international, and others are confined to specific local contexts. The social value of languages largely depends on such normative systems. In Switzerland, “expats” are usually constructed as English-speaking people: English is not necessarily their first language, but they use it to communicate until they master another local language (German, French, Italian). This proficiency in English contributes to their social status since English is recognised as a resource in most contexts. In contrast, other languages are limited to small communities and can only become capital in very specific situations. Hierarchies also exist between the four official national languages (German, French, Italian, and Romansch), as well as between these languages and other languages spoken in the country: French, German, and Italian foreigners are often conceived as separate categories, even though they may be included in the “expat” category depending on the context.<sup>27</sup> The tension between High German and Swiss German dialects is interesting in this regard: although High German is generally valued on the labour market, native High German speakers sometimes face discrimination from native speakers of Swiss German dialects (Helbling, 2011). The value of languages thus depends to a certain extent on the organisation of the nation-state – which recognises certain languages as more legitimate than others – and on transnational dynamics, through which some languages (English and French, for example) transcend national borders.

Capital is always connected to a specific social field structured by power relations, which means that the analysis of the value of a language – and other characteristics – cannot be detached from the specific context in which it is negotiated (Bourdieu, 2002). The contextual dimension of capital contributes to explaining why “wanted immigrants” are so difficult to define (Pavic, 2015): their characteristics change through space and time and involve negotiations between various social actors, including the migrants themselves.

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<sup>26</sup>“Les relations entre les nationalités ne sont pas sans présenter des homologues avec les relations entre les classes sociales au sein d’un pays. Ceux qui peuvent faire valoir la valeur ‘internationale’ de leurs attributs nationaux s’opposent à ceux qui, au contraire, tendent à les refouler pour s’acculturer aux normes dominantes.”

<sup>27</sup>Until the 1990s, Italians coming to Switzerland were mainly manual workers with low social status. However, since the entry into force of the free movement of persons with the EU, an increasing number of Italians living in Switzerland have been well-off from a socioeconomic perspective. This situation has contributed to changing stereotypes of Italians in Switzerland.

### 3.2.2 *Negotiating Migrant Status*

A US American interviewee living in Basel told me once:

“Migrant” to me has a negative connotation in English. Maybe it doesn’t in German and French but in English, it’s negative, that’s why I don’t like it. It should be something positive, these people are bringing something positive to the countries they go to. (Personal communication, 18 November 2015)

Similarly, the organisation BaselConnect, which promotes the interests of “expats” in the Basel area, defines the word “expat” as follows:

Expats usually have a tertiary education and/or special skills that are sought after in other countries. Expats in the Basel region include musicians, dancers, dental hygienists, and physicians as well as scientists and business managers. The overall perception of expats is that they have come here with something to contribute both in the workplace and the community. (BaselConnect, 2012, p. 2)

These quotes insist on the idea of “contribution”, which their authors associate with “expat”. Taken here as an alternative to “migrant”, “expat” describes a category of mobile people whose “special skills” enables them to “contribute” at a local level. According to BaselConnect, their contribution derives from their cultural capital rather than from their economic capital (Bourdieu, 1979), which introduces a definition of “wanted immigrants” that is slightly different than the definitions of state authorities which were previously described. Both of these quotes come from people who describe themselves as expats. However, the term is not always associated with positive images in Switzerland and thus is subject to contestation and negotiation.

In December 2007, the president of the University of Zurich’s student council suggested to a reporter from the *Tages-Anzeiger* – one of the most influential newspapers in German-speaking Switzerland – that the University of Zurich employed too many German professors (Helbling, 2011). The interview led to a heated controversy largely supported by the media (Imhof, 2008; Leimgruber, 2011). For instance, the *Blick* – a sensationalist Swiss-German journal – launched a series of articles entitled “How many Germans can Switzerland tolerate?” (Rüttimann, 2007),<sup>28</sup> which problematised the presence of an increasing number of German nationals in Switzerland by discussing topics such as stereotypes about Germans, competition for jobs, and communication difficulties between Germans and Swiss nationals. Most of the articles presumed the existence of radical differences between the Swiss and the Germans and underlined a fear of cultural takeover that was reminiscent of the discussions about *Überfremdung* during the previous century. In his analysis of the discussion about Germans in the media, the sociologist Kurt Imhof (2008) argues that this controversy led part of the Swiss population to realise for the first time that the socioeconomic status of immigrants had fundamentally changed.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>28</sup>“Wie viele Deutsche verträgt die Schweiz?” (Blick, 15 February 2007)

<sup>29</sup>Since 2002, Germans have become the second largest group of foreigners in Switzerland – after Italians and before Portuguese – with a large share occupying high-paid positions. In 2010, less

Many economic, intellectual, and state elites celebrated this change. For instance, in 2008 the liberal think tank Avenir Suisse<sup>30</sup> published a book, *Die Neue Zuwanderung: Die Schweiz zwischen Brain-Gain und Überfremdungsangst* (Müller-Jentsch, 2008),<sup>31</sup> which included contributions by professors at Swiss universities, members of the state administration, journalists, human resources managers, and corporate directors. The book argues that the “new immigration” in Switzerland is composed mainly of highly educated people from northern and western European countries. In general, the authors underline the benefits of this “new immigration” and deconstruct the fears associated with it. Largely distributed in the German-speaking part of Switzerland, the book can be seen as an attempt to communicate a positive view on immigration in reaction to ongoing debates and anxieties.

However, this positive view was not shared by everybody. Besides the hostility experienced by many Germans living in the German-speaking part of Switzerland (Helbling, 2011; Leimgruber, 2011), other discussions have emerged that concern the mobility of socioeconomically affluent individuals. In the Italian and French-speaking parts of the country, the debates have rather focused on *frontaliers* or cross-border commuters (Delaugerre, 2012).<sup>32</sup> In Geneva, the Mouvement Citoyen Genevois – a cantonal political party created in 2005 – mainly targets people who live in France and work in Geneva. The party’s slogan is “Priority to the People from Geneva”.<sup>33</sup> In the Italian-speaking part of the country, the Ticino League – a cantonal political party founded in 1991 – defends the idea that residents of Ticino should be given priority over immigrants, including those from Italy. In addition, it openly displays an anti-Islam and anti-EU agenda. The Ticino League became the second most important political party in Ticino after the 2007 elections and the Mouvement Citoyen Genevois became the second most important political party in Geneva in 2009.

The discussions about the *frontaliers* address the issue of competition between residents and non-residents. Contrary to the debates on “the Germans”, the *front-*

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than 18% of Italians and less than 5% of Portuguese in Switzerland were working in jobs for which an academic education was required, whereas more than 39% of Germans were working in such jobs (Jey Aratnam, 2012, p. 155).

<sup>30</sup>The Avenir Suisse is “an independent free-market Swiss think tank which promotes liberal and scientifically substantiated ideas in economics, politics and society at large”. Its sponsors include many international companies based in Switzerland. See <https://www.avenir-suisse.ch/en/our-donors/> (last consulted on 22 May 2017).

<sup>31</sup>“The New Immigration: Switzerland between Brain-Gain and Fear from Foreign Takeover”.

<sup>32</sup>In 2011, 250,000 people were working in Switzerland with a “frontalier” permit, among whom 25% were working in the canton of Geneva (French-speaking), 21% in the canton of Tessin (Italian-speaking) and 21% in the two cantons of Basel-City and Basel-Land (German-speaking). In Geneva, the number of “frontaliers” doubled during the decade that followed the entry into force of the agreement on the free movement of persons (from 33,210 in 2001 to 61,700 in 2011). In 2010, 93% of the “frontaliers” in Geneva were French nationals who worked mainly in qualified but subordinate jobs of the services sector (Delaugerre, 2012).

<sup>33</sup>“Priorité aux Genevois”.

*aliens* debate concerns middle and lower segments of the labour market. Salary dumping and access to jobs are among the most common topics, as shown in newspaper articles such as “Frontaliers, nos meilleurs ennemis”<sup>34</sup> (*L’Hebdo*, 31 August 2011), “Polémique à Genève sur l’engagement de frontaliers plutôt que de chômeurs”<sup>35</sup> (*RTS info*, 19 May 2016) and “Les Tessinois veulent mettre fin au dumping salarial”<sup>36</sup> (*Le Temps*, 25 September 2016). However, these debates can reach higher positions, as shown in an article published in the non-specialised daily newspaper of French-speaking Switzerland *Le Temps* (Dubas, 2016), which presents the stories of an engineer and a finance specialist who experience discrimination in Geneva because they live in France.

Another interesting discussion concerns the category “expats” (Schneider-Sliwa, 2013). The problematisation of expats in the media has mostly occurred through the most influential Swiss-German newspapers (*Tages-Anzeiger*, *Blick*, and *NZZ*) with headlines such as “Sommaruga sieht Integrationsproblem bei hochqualifizierten Ausländern”<sup>37</sup> (*Tages-Anzeiger*, 4 February 2012), “Die Elite ist nicht integriert”<sup>38</sup> (*Tages-Anzeiger*, 5 May 2012) and “Ein Ausländerproblem der etwas anderen Art”<sup>39</sup> (*NZZ*, 22 August 2012). The issue of “expats” in the media is sometimes discussed in relation to rising housing prices and gentrification, in particular in larger cities such as Zurich, Basel, Geneva, and – more recently – the coastal area of Lake Geneva, which includes part of the canton of Vaud. Linked to this issue, these discussions often assume the presence of “parallel societies” or “expat bubbles” in Swiss cities (Fournier, 2012; Schneider-Sliwa, 2013). The articles are often ambivalent and raise diverse issues: it is not always clear whether the alleged lack of integration of “expats” is problematic because parallel societies may endanger social cohesion, because the departure of unintegrated “expats” may have negative economic consequences, or because the “expats” themselves may suffer from isolation. The proposed solutions are also controversial: should integration be demanded in the case of “expats”? Is it legitimate to treat “expats” differently from other foreigners? Should the state invest resources to promote the integration of this privileged category of migrants? In these discussions, the representation of “expats” as beneficial from an economic perspective opposes their image as ungrateful guests who make little effort to adapt and contribute to their host society. Such representations reflect specific expectations regarding the role and position of foreigners in Switzerland (Yeung, 2016).

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<sup>34</sup>“Frontaliers’, our best enemies”.

<sup>35</sup>“Controversy in Geneva on the hiring of ‘frontaliers’ rather than unemployed persons”.

<sup>36</sup>“Ticino wants to end salary dumping”.

<sup>37</sup>“Sommaruga [federal minister of justice] sees an integration problem with highly qualified foreigners”.

<sup>38</sup>“The elite is not integrated”.

<sup>39</sup>“A foreigner problem of a different kind”.

In this context, some individuals have actively positioned themselves as advocates of integration in relation to the “expat” issue. Ellen<sup>40</sup> is a woman from the US who settled in Switzerland in the 1980s and has become a notable spokesperson for immigrants in the Basel area. Besides participating in various institutional networks, she is present in the media and contributes to ongoing debates about the integration of “expats” in Switzerland.

### ***3.2.3 Portrait: The Political Engagement of an American Woman***

During my interview with Ellen at her home in October 2015, she explained that her studies in philosophy offered an opportunity to escape the small town in Connecticut where she grew up, and to distance herself from her blue-collar middle-class background. Thanks to a student job selling books door-to-door 80 h a week during the summer, she managed to realise her dream of travelling in Europe. After learning German for 4 months at a Goethe Institute, she went to the Swiss Alps and fell in love with the man who would later become her husband.

After completing her studies, Ellen found a marketing job in a multinational company in the US. However, she did not like this job and eventually decided to move to Basel to live with her Swiss boyfriend. She arrived in Switzerland in 1982. Because her tourist visa would only allow her to stay for 6 months, she enrolled at the University of Basel in order to regularise her legal status and to improve her German proficiency. Her goal was to become an English teacher, but her diploma from the US was not recognised, meaning that she had to start studying from the beginning again. Nevertheless, she managed to work as a private English teacher until she found a position in language training at a multinational company and eventually founded her own company.

This time was difficult for Ellen: despite her Swiss partner, her job, and her ability to speak Swiss German fluently, she still felt like an outsider and experienced serious depression. During her treatment she developed an interest in psychotherapy and decided to train herself in this field. She subsequently started offering free workshops on culture shock and specialised in communication training and coaching. Nowadays, she is well known in Basel as an expert on migration, integration, and intercultural issues. She has also become an important resource person for English-speaking newcomers. In her own words:

I became known as someone to come to as a newcomer in Basel. Informally, people come to me who are not coaching clients. But also I have the coaching clients, and then I have all the participants to my culture shock workshops, plus all the participants to my courses. They are also mostly expats. So more and more people throughout the years. That means that I have a gigantic network. (Personal communication, 1 October 2015)

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<sup>40</sup>Research participants’ names have been changed to maintain their anonymity.

In the early 2000s, Ellen started to involve herself in advocacy. This enabled her to actively contribute to a cause that she considered meaningful:

I really only felt integrated when I started being invited to participate in these official events around expats. Because to me, being integrated means feeling welcome and being able to contribute, and have that contribution recognised. That's my definition. (Personal communication, 1 October 2015)

The fact that she was invited to participate in official events related to immigration and integration is also connected to the political context of this period, when authorities realised that the “new immigrants” differed from the foreign workers of the previous periods. She explains:

Expats weren't on the radar of government authorities at all in Basel until Stadtmarketing [the city marketing unit of Basel-City] began. And Stadtmarketing was interested in expats because they realised these people have a lot of money. (Personal communication, 1 October 2015)

She was first invited to participate in a discussion organised by the city marketing unit – which is part of the city development department – that involved representatives from one of Basel's main multinational companies as well as from the integration office. The goal was to discuss how to better provide information to newcomers and their families. A few years later, she was invited to a meeting with the head of the city development department and members of the Christoph Merian Stiftung, an influential foundation in Basel. In 2009, this foundation organised a round table entitled “Integration von ‘Expats’ in Basel: Mobilisierung der ‘Expats’ für soziale und kulturelle Belange”.<sup>41</sup> The 47 participants included representatives from the business sector, the canton administration, the charity sector, and various migrant associations. According to Ellen, this was the first time that local authorities in Basel had organised an official event for “expats”. Of course, she was invited.

These events illustrate the growing interest of local authorities in new categories of foreigners. Yet, this awareness would probably not have occurred in the same way without Ellen's active involvement. For instance, she strongly influenced a study on “the potential and challenges of the integration of expats in the Basel region” (Wiener & Grossmann, 2011) that the Christoph Merian Stiftung foundation organised as a follow-up to the round table, in collaboration with the canton, the two main pharmaceutical companies in the region, and a consulting company in charge of the research. Ellen describes her role:

I was on the advisory board of the study, and we had huge debates about what expat means and what integration means. And I was the only person who was an expat fluent in Swiss German. And I really tried hard to make my voice heard. I had a very big influence on the study because I found all of the interviewees ... they wouldn't have been able to do the focus group without me. 75 to 80% of the people who participated in the focus groups were people I found for them. (Personal communication, 1 October 2015)

Ellen thus contributed to framing the focus groups on which the study was based. However, she was not always able to contribute her views. One point of contention

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<sup>41</sup>“The integration of ‘expats’ in Basel: Mobilisation of ‘expats’ for social and cultural interests”.

remains the fact that the authors of the final report defined “expats” as “highly qualified and financially secured labour migrants and their family”<sup>42</sup> (Wiener & Grossmann, 2011, p. 5), whereas she wanted to include professionals that are specially qualified but not necessarily well paid, as well as people who have lost their financial security because of personal difficulties such as unemployment or divorce. If the issue of qualifications was not questioned, it was important for Ellen to communicate the fact that “expats” are not always in a privileged situation. Specifically, she wanted to draw attention to the specific integration challenges of “expats”, as well as their potential for social participation, particularly accompanying partners who have difficulty finding employment after relocating. Her own experience, as well as the stories that she heard through her coaching activities, convinced her that the authorities should offer more chances for “expats” to participate locally. For this reason, she considered it essential to advocate politically for better recognition of “expat” contributions and needs:

I think there was a real sense at that time among expats that they weren’t being welcomed here at all; and I think the understanding among expats of what they were contributing, especially also financially, tax-wise, that they weren’t getting any acknowledgement or services in particular for that. (Personal communication, 1 October 2015)

Ellen thus decided to organise a conference with two other women from the US and Canada to further discuss the “expat” issue. For this purpose, they founded BaselConnect, whose main objective was “promoting collaboration between expats and locals in the Basel region”.<sup>43</sup> The first BaselConnect conference attracted 125 participants and featured workshops where discussions of relevant topics in small groups were followed by a round table with representatives of the canton’s administration and businesses.<sup>44</sup> The official goal of the conference was to gather concrete proposals “to foster a better understanding of what expats need to become more integrated into Basel life” (BaselConnect, 2012, p. 9). Implicitly, it also aimed to pressure both the canton’s administration and the main companies to implement these proposals. According to Ellen, the addition of a festive dimension to the Basel welcome event mentioned earlier was one concrete consequence of this conference.

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This case study shows how Ellen and others have contributed to constructing the category “expat” as a political issue. In a context of transforming immigration structures and growing political awareness of the economic potential of new immigrants,

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<sup>42</sup>“Um die rasch wachsende Bevölkerungsgruppe der hoch qualifizierten, finanziell abgesicherten Arbeitsmigrantinnen und -migranten mit ihren Familienangehörigen zu umschreiben, hat sich in den letzten Jahren der Begriff ‘Expats’ durchgesetzt. Die vorliegende Studie übernimmt aus pragmatischen Gründen diese Definition, zumal sie auch von den Expats selbst so verwendet wird.”

<sup>43</sup>See <http://baselconnect.ch/> (last consulted 23 May 2017).

<sup>44</sup>The topics discussed included education, employment/entrepreneurship, internet solutions, volunteer opportunities, language learning, and access to information for newcomers.

some people have become advocates of “expat integration” by emphasising the benefits of highly educated newcomers and by highlighting some of the challenges they experience. In particular, they insisted on the idea of “contribution”, arguing that if “expats” are welcomed and supported locally, they will integrate and contribute to their places of residence. Hence, they have appropriated the economic logic of state authorities in order to reframe discussions on “expat integration” by pointing to local structures as a main obstacle to social participation experienced by many newcomers. Moreover, they have expanded the definition of wanted immigrants by emphasising the importance of cultural capital over economic capital. Building on their experience, resources, and networks, they have made their demands heard and, in some cases, these demands have been met. Their activism has thus contributed to making local authorities aware of certain challenges experienced by newcomers.

However, using the term “expat” as a common denominator for people who supposedly share similar characteristics has certain implications. To the extent that it refers to a category of immigrants defined by cultural capital, presenting “expats” as contributors implicitly suggests that they – more than other immigrants – deserve to be welcomed and supported by the state. Although the objective of people who identify as “expats” is usually not to communicate a negative image of immigration, or to negate the legitimacy of other categories of foreigners to receive state support, insisting that they make a special contribution reinforces that some immigrants are more valuable in cultural and economic terms. The ambivalence between economic promotion policies and integration policies mentioned in the previous section, as well as the general opposition between highly skilled and low skilled immigrants observed in policy documents, draws attention to the implications of this dual mode of categorisation. Furthermore, in a context of relative hostility towards immigrants, the fact that some people prefer to identify as an “expat” can be understood as a strategy of self-preservation and social distinction. By emphasising the value of their cultural capital, these individuals construct a positive identity that legitimises their presence in the country and their demands to the state.

Hence, the term “expat” plays an important role in the process of defining “wanted immigrants” in Switzerland: on the one hand, it has enabled Ellen and other immigrants to raise political awareness of their challenges and to assert their social status in a relatively hostile environment; on the other hand, it has helped state authorities to make sense of regional societal changes regarding the characteristics of immigrants and to define target groups for place-branding activities. Although “expat” reproduces and reinforces the dichotomy between highly skilled/wanted and low skilled/unwanted migrants, it also involves many grey areas and contested spaces that further emphasise the complex and context-dependent nature of these categories.

### 3.3 A Neoliberal State?

This chapter focused on place-branding strategies that target foreign companies and mobile individuals perceived as valuable. We have seen how cantonal authorities in Vaud and Basel develop and support various kinds of services that facilitate the settlement of new businesses and their employees. Cantonal administrations play an intermediary role between companies and the federal government by defining local economic priorities and serving as a point of contact for companies. However, cantonal authorities also delegate part of these tasks to other intermediaries – such as economic promotion agencies – that present themselves as private organisations, even though their mandate and a significant part of their funding comes from the canton. This external status enables organisations to establish direct relations within the business sector and to negotiate with the canton’s administration on behalf of companies, for instance with regard to residence permits and tax issues. In this context, companies that generate more revenue – and by extension their employees – often benefit from special treatment.

The analysis also shows that public administrations focus more on attracting companies and less on supporting the individuals who accompany them. The responsibility for the latter task tends to rest on the companies or on the individuals, who are perceived as having enough resources to support themselves. However, in both Basel and Vaud, local authorities have recently become involved in the organisation of welcome events and integration opportunities that target well-paid foreigners working for international companies – and their families – due to a recognition of the economic potential of such immigrants as well as a decrease in corporate relocation support for employees. In addition, individuals and organisations that use the term “expat” to mark the specificity of their contributions with respect to other immigrants have actively advocated for this recognition.

There are various ways to conclude theoretically on these observations. First, following Loïc Wacquant (2012), one could argue that the neoliberal state increasingly acts as an instrument in the service of markets by supporting the economic interests of powerful actors – in this case, multinational companies – that generate more revenue. Wacquant suggests that neoliberalism relies on “the reengineering and redeployment of the state as the core agency that sets the rules and fabricates the subjectivities, social relations and collective representations suited to realising markets” (Wacquant, 2012, p. 66). The reorganisation of state structures does not imply the demise of the state. On the contrary, the state remains an active agent that adopts liberal practices at the top of the class structure and punitive paternalism at the bottom, which results in increased differentiation between social classes:

[The state] is uplifting and “liberating” at the top, where it acts to leverage the resources and expand the life options of the holders of economic and cultural capital; but it is castigatory and restrictive at the bottom, when it comes to managing the populations destabilised by the deepening of inequality and the diffusion of work insecurity and ethnic anxiety. (Wacquant, 2012, p. 74)

Wacquant's description of a "Centaur-state" divided between liberalism and punitive paternalism could apply to the observed distinction between highly skilled "expats" and socially disadvantaged "migrants", with the former identified as contributors whose presence is encouraged in various ways and the latter expected to fulfil various requirements in order to be allowed to stay. The authorities' supportive attitude towards businesses might also reflect Wacquant's idea of a state actively working in favour of markets and economic capital.

Connected to this idea, James Ferguson (2010) argues that another characteristic of the neoliberal state is the adoption of market mechanisms within its own structures. According to this author, a central distinction between liberalism and neoliberalism is the fact that liberalism maintains a clear distinction between "state and market, public and private", while neoliberalism "puts governmental mechanisms developed in the private sphere to work within the state itself, so that even core functions of the state are either subcontracted out to private providers, or run ... 'like a business'" (Ferguson, 2010, p. 172). A state that delegates some functions to external private providers corresponds to my observations regarding the way immigration, integration, and economic promotion activities are in fact undertaken by complex networks of actors with various objectives and institutional affiliations. This does not mean that the state is disappearing. On the contrary, the entanglement of the state with market structures might even reinforce the controlling power of the system, although it becomes unclear who the actors in power really are: Does the state work for the market or does the market work for the state when fulfilling tasks such as selecting immigrants, attracting businesses, and retaining residents? Does it even make sense to use words such as "state" or "market" in such a complex system?

The main problem with these analyses is that they do not sufficiently take into account the heterogeneity of the word "neoliberalism" (Collier, 2012; Kalb, 2012; Peck & Theodore, 2012) and tend to overestimate its explanatory power by connecting diverse phenomena with a single and abstract cause (Ferguson, 2010). In its stricter sense, neoliberalism refers to a political project that valorises private enterprise and deregulation and that can never be fully reached in practice (Harvey, 2005). Yet there exists no fixed definition of this word, which is often used in an abstract and negative way (Collier, 2012; Ferguson, 2010; Kalb, 2012; Peck & Theodore, 2012). Hence, neoliberalism hardly works as an explanatory concept. Moreover, it would be too much of a shortcut to simply call "neoliberal" a situation formed by so many levels, individuals, opinions, and (often contradictory) logic. Like other all-encompassing concepts such as culture or development, neoliberalism is an entry point that needs to be deconstructed and reconstructed in order to generate meaning.

Although Wacquant's and Ferguson's arguments offer interesting avenues for reflection, I propose setting aside the term neoliberalism for now in order to formulate my conclusions for this chapter in a different way. First, the analysis raises the issue of the role of the state in relation to the economy. It shows that economic arguments play a central role in legitimising decisions, such as who is allowed to enter the country, how corporate resettlement should be supported, and which services are

offered to various categories of residents. In this context, “economic interests” work as a central legitimising argument that is rarely questioned, or even defined.

However, local authorities’ perceptions of economic interests include dimensions that go beyond benefitting corporate actors, including the creation of local jobs and the protection of residents. Even in cases where regional authorities offer generous taxation incentives to relocating businesses, they argue that it will create new employment opportunities for residents. In addition, the restrictive admission system encompasses sociocultural concerns, such as protecting residents against *Überfremdung* and outsider competition, as well as maintaining a balance between conflicting political priorities. One may or may not agree with these practices, but it is worth noting that in this case economic interests include ideas of public good and order that go beyond purely economic considerations. Similarly, the efforts of local authorities in Basel and Vaud to welcome newcomers and support their integration cannot be reduced to a strategy to please large businesses. Besides promoting the region’s economic development, other central concerns include encouraging social cohesion and avoiding the development of parallel societies. Again, the debate does not exclusively involve economic arguments. For these reasons, it is too simplistic to say that the state works in the interests of the market only.

Second, the analysis highlights the local complexity of both the state and the market. Rather than using abstract terms, it makes visible the interactions between various individuals and institutions working with different priorities. This complexity is partly due to the organisation of the Swiss federal state, including the autonomy of cantons and municipalities as well as the system of direct democracy that enables special interest groups to influence political decisions. Moreover, the diversity of the economic sector implies that the economic interests of some companies do not necessarily meet those of the others. In this context, it is impossible to define the general interests of either the state or the market. Even if a shift has been observed in terms of state authorities’ priorities, with policy decisions increasingly taking into account the interests of sectors with high added value compared to more traditional and less competitive economic sectors (Afonso, 2007; Amarelle & Nguyen, 2010), other decisions – such as the February 2014 popular vote on the initiative “against mass migration” – have clearly disadvantaged the firms that most rely on international exchange and competition. It is thus impossible to speak of the state and the market as single actors with unified goals and strategies. There is, rather, a complex network of relationships between federal and cantonal administrations, as well as between state and non-state institutions, within a context that is at the same time local, cantonal, national, international, transnational, and global.

At the same time, the case study on place-branding strategies confirms a phenomenon observed by other authors: People who have nothing to do with migration management come to be involved in place of – or under the mandate of – state actors (Cranston, Schapendonk, & Spaan, 2018; Groutsis, Van den Broek, & Harvey, 2015; Kunz, Lavenex, & Panizzon, 2011; Lindquist, Xiang, & Yeoh, 2012). For instance, economic promotion strategies deal indirectly with migration issues because they target a transnational field. The case study in Vaud showed how a private economic promotion agency operates under the mandate of a canton in order to

facilitate the mobility and settlement of certain people and companies, mitigating in this way the impact of restrictive national regulations and cumbersome bureaucratic processes. In the same way, many companies select potential immigrants, organise their mobility, and facilitate their integration, which explains the numerous collaborations between employers, business associations, and state authorities at different levels. In this context, distinctions between state/non-state and public/private are unclear. Yet, this blurring of boundaries does not necessarily mean that the state loses power. According to Rahel Kunz and her co-authors, “the pursuit of partnerships with non-state actors ... is less a phenomenon of abandoning sovereignty than one of reasserting or redefining it by creatively extending authority to issue areas traditionally controlled by industry associations, employer unions or manpower agencies” (Kunz et al., 2011, p. 17). At the same time, delegating state-related tasks to the private sector contributes to depoliticising some issues by reframing them into technocratic questions to be solved outside the state sphere (Kunz et al., 2011, p. 18). Hence, the increasing participation of non-state actors in migration management is an important phenomenon that involves the restructuring of power dynamics in migration management processes.

A third element that emerges from the analysis is the importance of place in the process of increasing mobility and globalisation (Glick Schiller & Çağlar, 2009; Sassen, 2005; Van Riemsdijk, 2014). Basel and the Lake Geneva area have become important nodes in networks that transcend territorial borders. However, mobility is not evenly distributed within these places. While some individuals and institutions can easily relocate according to current priorities and prevailing circumstances, others do not have this luxury. As other authors have shown, different forms of access to mobility contribute to the transnationalisation of social inequalities (Beck, 2007; Weiss, 2005). Yet, researchers rarely acknowledge that state administrations are by definition bound to the places that they administer, although they have to contend with mobility.

Nation-states are built on an ideal of congruency between territory, citizenry, polity, culture, and belonging. This ideal, however, can never be met in practice and is subject to various forms of reinterpretation and negotiations of belonging (Brubaker, 2010). The research in Basel and Vaud presents interesting cases where non-Swiss citizens who may be temporary visitors are encouraged by state institutions and other organisations to develop an attachment to a location. These situations could be interpreted as economic strategies to attract and retain capital in specific regions, yet they might also reflect a transformation regarding perspectives on belonging and social participation.

Several authors have recently observed in various locations the development of policies and programmes that address issues of integration and social cohesion in ways that do not make a clear distinction between “foreigners” and “natives”, but rather target a “place-based community” of local residents (Baudouï & Gianni, 2016; see also Collett & Petrovic, 2014; Gebhardt, 2014; Papademetriou, 2014). Although nation-states remain a central actor for defining the rights and conditions associated with citizenship, other types of relationships between individuals and state actors should not be overlooked. In this case, local administrations (cantonal,

municipal etc.) may have a different approach to national administrations in the regulation of residents. This leads back to the question of social participation which was raised by many “expat” organisations. In a context of free movement of persons with the EU, intense professional mobility, competitiveness, and locational attractiveness, citizenship and long-term residency become insufficient criteria to define who belongs to a place. From an administrative perspective, other questions may arise: Who is better positioned to participate? Who brings more benefits? How can social cohesion be maintained?

In answering these questions, my research shows that distinctions in terms of social status, educational level, and cultural values can in some cases be perceived as more important than distinctions based on citizenship. This reasoning explains local authorities’ growing concern for individuals considered to be active, responsible, and able to contribute without depending on social welfare, even though they are neither citizens nor long-term residents. At the same time, values of democracy, equality, and solidarity prevent authorities from offering these individuals special treatment – at least, not in obvious ways. Collaborating with institutions from the private sector to ensure that the most resourceful newcomers feel welcomed and supported enables state administrations to avoid public scrutiny while undertaking a task that many authorities consider to be of public interest. In parallel, local administrations in charge of place development, marketing, integration, and social cohesion can offer services that increase the satisfaction of the general resident population while supporting social groups perceived as disadvantaged or problematic, without the risk of being accused of favouritism.

During my interviews with migration intermediaries, I was surprised that respondents were in general very open to talking to me about their strategies for selecting, attracting, and retaining both individuals and businesses. In my view, some of these practices were highly controversial, particularly when they involved personal contacts between public authorities and private institutions and direct support of certain companies, as in the case of the organisation for economic promotion in the canton of Vaud. However, I realised that for many state authorities and service providers, offering special treatment to privileged individuals and institutions did not contradict their idea of working towards the common good. On the contrary, they saw these privileges as necessary in order to maintain Switzerland’s economic dynamism, which they linked directly to the general population’s well-being.

Recognising this interpretation of economic interests is critical for understanding administrative decisions related to immigration, integration, and economic promotion in Switzerland. In addition, it relativises the idea of a purely neoliberal state working in the interests of the economy, since economic and social interests are associated in this logic. The nation-state organisation remains central to this understanding, because the population concerned with state protection and support is defined in reference to political borders. Interestingly though, the definition of citizens goes in many cases beyond a restricted group of Swiss nationals, and includes class in addition to nationality. This observation opens stimulating perspectives for further research on differentiated processes of inclusion and exclusion in a country composed of almost 25% foreigners.

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