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Mobilities in the Swiss Alps: Circulation and Rootedness*

Movilidades en los Alpes suizos: circulación y arraigo

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Andrea Friedli
Andrea Boscoboinik
University of Fribourg

Abstract

In this contribution, we wish to shed light on narratives and imaginaries of new inhabitants in two Swiss mountain regions, concerning place and belonging, and how these are shaped by concerns of (im)mobilities, circulation and rootedness. Taking into consideration the diverse profiles of people living in the mountains, our aim is to analyse the processes of attachment to place, as enacted both by inhabitants who have migrated for labour reasons and by lifestyle migrants. How do different types of mobilities, and ways of belonging by new inhabitants of urbanized mountain resorts influence their strategies of making sense of place and (local) community? What expectations do both the newcomers and the residents established for several generations carry about each other and the place? How do social processes not only affect people "on the move", but also the localities that are travelled, visited, inhabited, and invested by these people? We will see that the economic, financial and social backgrounds of the mountain inhabitants have a strong impact on their regimes of mobility, but also that place-attachment, rootedness and commitment to the local community have an influence, and that these vary in the intersection of gender, origin, and social class dimensions.

Keywords: mobilities; imaginaries; mountains; lifestyle mobilities; labour migration; Swiss Alps

Resumen

En esta contribución, examinamos las narrativas y los imaginarios sobre localidad y sentimiento de pertenencia de nuevos habitantes de dos regiones en los Alpes suizos, y cómo esas narrativas e imaginarios están conformados por preocupaciones de (in)movilidad, circulación y arraigo. Tomando en consideración los múltiples perfiles de las personas que viven en las montañas, analizamos los procesos de apego al lugar de los habitantes que han inmigrado por trabajo y los inmigrantes por estilo de vida. ¿Cómo influyen los diferentes tipos de movilidades y presentaciones de pertenencia de los nuevos habitantes de las estaciones de montaña urbanizadas en sus estrategias para dar sentido al lugar y a la comunidad local? ¿Qué expectativas tienen tanto los nuevos como los antiguos habitantes sobre los otros y sobre el lugar? ¿Cómo afectan los procesos sociales a las personas "en movimiento", a las localidades recorridas, visitadas, habitadas e implicadas por estas personas? Los orígenes económicos, financieros y sociales de los habitantes de la montaña tienen un fuerte impacto en sus regímenes de movilidad, pero también el apego al lugar, el arraigo y el compromiso con la comunidad local pueden variar en función de la intersección entre las dimensiones de género, origen y clase social.

Palabras clave: movilidades; imaginarios; montañas; movilidades por estilo de vida; migración laboral; Alpes suizos

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Introduction

In Switzerland, as in other regions of the world, mountain landscapes have, over time, become ideal places for people in search of a better life, particularly wealthy urbanites. The Alps have been a tourist attraction since the 18th century, following the birth of a Romantic sensitivity to alpine environments. Since then, increased urbanization, the transfer of urban culture to the Alps, and the rise of mass tourism, have fundamentally altered mountains' demography. These socio-economic transformations, alongside the improvement of infrastructure and increasingly easy mobility, means that since the late 1990s, mountains have become a trendy place, where urbanites have migrated and settled, more or less permanently, to be closer to nature.

Mountains, like other non-urban areas, tend to attract an increasing amount of people in search of tranquillity and a lifestyle different from the urban one. As a result, a range of inhabitants who differ in their motivations, backgrounds, mobility, resources and wealth choose to live in the mountains today. There are natives who have decided to stay; or who have left and came back; newcomers who have chosen to settle there; mobile people who frequently change their places of living, such as tourists, travellers and multi-residents; and also workers who are looking for a job, seasonal or permanent, in the resorts. Furthermore, asylum seekers also find themselves in mountains, though it may not have been their choice (Cretton et al., 2021).

Migration and dwelling patterns in such regions are thus very diverse. Focusing specifically on those who choose mountains deliberately as places of living, we find not only (former) tourists, second-home owners and high-skilled workers[1] who move, stay and settle in mountain areas, but also (former) working tourists, labour migrants and seasonal workers. With their different cultural and social backgrounds, these new inhabitants can be said to be situated in different "regimes of mobility" (Glick-Schiller & Salazar, 2013) leading to different positions in global and local social hierarchies (Salazar, 2020).

In this contribution, we wish to shed light on narratives and imaginaries of new inhabitants about place and belonging. We will work in the context of an attachment to place (spatial) and embeddedness in a (local) community (socio-cultural), taking into account their (im)mobilities in, through and beyond places.

We are interested in the question of how imaginaries and narratives of new mountain dwellers about place-attachment, local belonging and community, are shaped by concerns of (im)mobilities, circulation and rootedness. We will therefore address the dialectical relationship between place (or locality according to Appadurai) as a spatial and sociocultural phenomenon, and the local subject (Appadurai, 1996). How do different types of mobilities and presentations of belonging by new inhabitants of urbanized mountain resorts influence their strategies of making sense of place and (local) community?

As a theoretical background we would like to describe movement and mobilities, as well as immobilities and sedentarism, as socially and politically framed notions. They can be valued differently according to the context of these (im)mobilities, as is for instance argued in the notion of "regimes of mobility" by Glick-Schiller and Salazar (2013). Nationality, economic resources, political

[1] The term "high-skilled" is problematic, as it evaluates an individual's competence based on subjective norms of what is considered as a high skill or not, according to education, diplomas or other type of knowledge, which arises from specific cultural environments.

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situation, and physical condition are all variables that affect individuals' mobility or immobility.

Practices of place-making and narratives of community and belonging are embedded in a "space at the intersection of structure (social position/social effects) and agency (social positioning/meaning and practice)" (Anthias, 2008, p. 15), which makes the concept of translocational positionality by Floya Anthias (2008) useful for our purpose of investigating the dialectical relationship between the production of locality and the local subject.

The setting

We conducted ethnographic research for more than three years in two urbanized and famous mountain locations in the Swiss Alps, Verbier and Zermatt[2]. We made repeated observations on everyday practices in key places of daily life (such as bars, bakeries, public places or shops), public events and leisure activities (festivals, concerts, public holidays, sport conquests), in both summer and winter time, between 2018 and 2021[3]. Participant observation was complemented by 79 interviews, both semi-structured and informal. 40 of these were conducted in Verbier, and 39 in Zermatt, and covered a diversity of positionalities: male and female, new and long-time residents, national and international citizens, wealthy and less wealthy, independent workers and employees, regular and occasional visitors.

The two resorts in the Swiss Alps are each situated in different parts of the bilingual Canton of Valais, a federal unity in the South-West of Switzerland, on the southern side of the Alps. Zermatt is located in the upper, German-speaking part of the region (Oberwallis /Haut-Valais/ Upper Valais) while Verbier is in the lower, French speaking part (Unterwallis /Bas-Valais / Lower Valais).

Verbier, once a mountain hamlet, developed from a small alpine village into a vibrant ski resort in the 1960s[4]. The demographic and architectural growth was so overwhelmingly fast that Verbier was described with attributes such as "mushroom resort", "the miracle of Verbier" or the "phenomenon Verbier" (Deslarzes, 1998, p. 20). The construction boom of chalets[5] began in the late 1940s, with an influx of ski and hiking amateurs from nearby, more urbanized, cantons such as Vaud and Geneva. According to Deslarzes, in 1959, more than 60 chalets were built in Verbier (Deslarzes, 1998, pp. 104-120). From the 1990s, the number of permanent residents has also doubled (from 1850 in 1990, to 3158 in 2018, according to the Office de Population, 2018). Among these 3158 residents, approximately 60% were not Swiss citizens[6]. Of those, around 61% were from France, 26% were from the UK, 14% were

[2] The fieldwork was carried out within the framework of the research project "Becoming local in mountain areas: diversification, gentrification, cohabitation. A comparison between Swiss Alps and Spanish Pyrenees", financed by the Swiss National Fonds (2017-2021). FNS Project No 10001A_172807. Although the ethnographic research was done both in the Pyrenees and in the Alps, in this article we will take into account only the results in the Alps resorts.

[3] The fieldwork was carried out by Andrea Friedli in the Alps.

[4] For a deeper study of this development see Deslarzes, 1998.

[5] A chalet is a traditional Swiss construction in mountain areas, built in wood with a gable roof, mainly used as a secondary home (for holidays or weekends), but can also be a main residence.

[6] This number includes people with permanent residence permit (permit C), annual residence permit (permit B), but not the categories "seasonal" residence permit (permit L) and temporary registrations ("annonce").

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from Portugal, and around 6% were from Sweden and Italy[7]. This increase in numbers and diversity of profiles partly reflects a recent trend of transforming secondary homes into main residences, or of tourists or seasonal workers deciding to settle.

As in many other ski resorts, tourism in Verbier brought about an urbanization beyond cities (Stock & Lucas, 2012). It is nowadays a local economic centre, with a strong international and cosmopolitan flair (see also Petite & Camenisch, 2012, p. 10). It is famous for skiing, especially off-piste skiing (hosting, e.g., the famous *Xtreme Freeride World Tour*). Moreover, Verbier, located on a south oriented (and thus sunny) high plateau with breath-taking views, also attracts pop starlets and royals, giving the location a certain exclusive touch.

Zermatt has a longer tourist history than Verbier, beginning in the middle of the 19th century. The first hotel in Zermatt (Hotel Mont Cervin), was launched in 1852 by a lawyer from Visp, a small town in the plain; the following year Alexander Seiler, originally from another valley in Valais, began to build his hotel empire in Zermatt. The reaction of the local population, who made their living with a mixed economy of agriculture and transhumant animal husbandry, towards the foreign investors and the new economic possibilities of hired labour in the hotels, was mostly skeptical, especially among the men. The only profession linked with tourism that was perceived as respectable was working as a mountain guide (Antonietti, 2000, p. 52-56). Over time, local families got involved with the hotel businesses and the Seiler family lost its monopolistic dominance. In 2011, around 70% of the hotel business in Zermatt were run by members of local families, who have been in the business for several generations (Heldner quoted in Guex, 2016, p. 393). In comparison to Verbier, the population in Zermatt has been slowly declining in the last few years. In 2018, the number of permanent residents was 5460 inhabitants (5671 in 2016), of which almost 39% were foreigners. The largest proportion of foreign citizens is found among the Portuguese (17,5%), followed by the Italians (5%), the Germans (4,3%) and British (1,8%)[8]. The neighbouring municipality of Zermatt, Täsch, has a reputation in Switzerland as being one of the villages with more foreigners than Swiss inhabitants (58,1% of foreigners in 2018, out of 1322 inhabitants), which means that the village occasionally appears in local and national media[9]. What is significant is the fact that about 40% of the inhabitants of Täsch have Portuguese citizenship, and that most of them originally come from the same region in Portugal (Castro Daire). The situation of "the Portuguese" in Zermatt and Täsch is very particular, since they have the possibility – in contrast to other much less concentrated nationalities in the place – to build local community networks along cultural and linguistic criteria. This was mentioned several times by our local Zermattian respondents, with the fact that this leads to a "parallel world" which hinders social contact with others beyond these community networks. Another feature of Täsch is the existence of a Portuguese Association, created by a group of Portuguese women in the 2000s. Its aim is twofold: helping integration, through learning the local language, offering advice on Swiss laws and local life; but also maintaining the transmission of Portuguese culture for the children who grow up there.

[7] Information from personal communication with Population office of the commune of Bagnes as well as http://www.bagnes.ch/uploads/default/id-2923-population-2018.pdf (last accessed 30.10.2019)

[8] https://gemeinde.zermatt.ch/unser-dorf/einwohnerstatistik

[9] See https://www.blick.ch/schweiz/westschweiz/1300-einwohner-aus-ueber-30-nationen-so-lebt-es-sich-in-taesch-vs-id15417641.html,https://www.swissinfo.ch/ger/ein-schweizer-dorf-spricht-portugiesisch/32053886,https://www.1815.ch/news/wallis/aktuell/mehr-auslaender-als-taescher/,http://www.integration-ow.ch/uploads/2/8/1/8/28186161/beitrag_hebdo.pdf

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(Im)mobilities in the mountains

Alpine societies have long been considered to be immobile, living out of time; isolated from the rest of the world. Mountain dwellers were thought to be stuck, both spatially and socially (Niederer, 1996; Mathieu & Boscani, 2005; Cretton et al., 2012). Nonetheless, regular movements are not a new phenomenon for people living in the mountains. From the Middle Ages onwards, the Alpine Arc hosted various forms of mobility, motivated by economic goals (transhumance of local peasants, seasonal work in tourism) but also socially embedded, such as the tradition of having a secondary home or cottage in the mountains (Head-König, 2011; Deslarzes, 1998).

However, this traditional mobility increased dramatically during the second half of 20th century, thanks to the improvement in transports technology and infrastructure (trains, roads, cars). This increase has been particularly visible since the end of the 1990s, when the alpine region transformed into a privileged place for a relatively well-off urban social class, mobile in its work and ways of life (Cretton et al., 2020). Moreover, population movements between the plain and the mountains were no longer restricted to national residents, but became internationally accessible thanks to the development of air transportation, and the spread of low-cost air companies, allowing the mobility of even larger amounts of people.

The processes of urbanization of former rural, coastal and mountainous spaces, mostly in Europe, have led recent studies on migration and mobilities to focus mostly on amenity migration, lifestyle mobilities and multilocal residentialities (see, for instance, Cohen et al., 2015; Benson & Osbaldiston, 2014; Perlik, 2011; Moss & Glorioso, 2014, among others). Indeed, an important number of new inhabitants in the mountains are those usually called "lifestyle migrants" (following the term coined by Benson & O'Reilly, 2009) or "lifestyle mobiles" (as Cohen et al., 2015 named them) in academic literature. Not necessarily extremely wealthy, although some of them are, they are members of professional or economic élite, those called high-skilled workers, artists, or people with liberal professions who have chosen the Alps to live, on a temporary basis or more or less permanently. Here, we include all those whose activities, or ways of life, allow them to choose where they live. The reasons for choosing the mountains as a place to live can be the environment, the nature, the sun, the infrastructure and the opportunity to combine work and leisure. Living in the Swiss Alps makes it possible, for instance, to alternate indoor and outdoor activities during the working day, from working in the office in the morning to skiing during lunch time. They consider life in the mountains as contributing to having a better quality of life, meaning that the air is purer, less polluted; nature is more accessible; the alpine village is less populated than the city, with less traffic, the overall result being a more relaxing and healthy way of life.

As a result of the tourist urbanization of the mountains, as well as the presence of a new urban population that request services, there has been a subsequent growth of the hospitality industry and corresponding migrations and mobilities of the so-called "low-skilled workers"[10]. These labour migrants are those people working in hotels, in restaurants, in supermarkets, but also in the building industry, in roadways,

[10] In Switzerland, the Federal Office for Migration identifies low-skilled workers as those in "the construction industry, the hotel and catering industry or in agriculture" while "highly-qualified personnel" are employed in the areas of commerce, management, health, [and] technology" (2008, p. 8, quoted by Yeung, 2016, p. 738).

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in infrastructure. They are largely marked by low-level employment, low wages, economic insecurity and a form of cultural and social invisibility. It is important to point out the hierarchies that can be found within this category of workers, such as the differentiation between "labour migrants" and "working tourists" (Uriely, 2001). The latter can be described as workers whose labour is valued for a strong professional identity, such as sports instructors (ski instructor, mountain guide, paragliding, climbing, river rafting, etc.). They can be self-employed, proposing their services autonomously, or accept temporary jobs in ski schools. The so-called "ski bums" (young tourists who work in a bar in the evening and go skiing during daytime; see Thorpe, 2017) are also "seasonal working tourists", whose social status and visibility is different from those working as technical and service employees in ski lifts, hotels or restaurants. These hierarchies among workers, as well as the distinction between highly skilled and low skilled workers, has been repeatedly conceptualized through normative dimensions, according to Laure Sandoz (2019), as these notions entail ideas about what is good or bad, normal or abnormal, problematic or unproblematic, familiar or alien, wanted or unwanted.

The people we met in Verbier and Zermatt are involved in different types, periods and frequencies of (im)mobility. Imaginaries of place and belonging, circulation and rootedness thus vary according to life-cycle contexts, social positions, and life experiences. Despite the diversity of individual positionalities, categories such as "high-skilled migrants" or "labour migrants" are used both in specialized literature, in policy documents, in the media and in common speech. They reproduce labels that do not always correspond to personal identities or mobile trajectories. Indeed, categories are risky, because they tend to essentialize and stereotype profiles. Yet, they should be understood as intellectual constructs designed to unscramble and classify social complexity. They usually consist in ideal-types that are necessary to discovering the essential traits of various social realities. This is the reason why we use them here. Nevertheless, we should keep in mind that the labels used to identify the mobile individuals do not represent fixed categories. Instead, they can be flexible, and their boundaries are porous. Accordingly, mobilities, returnings and place-attachment can vary depending on multiple factors.

Finally, the different profiles found in both sites confirm that mobilities in the mountains, although not a new phenomenon, have become multiple, echoed in the plurality of individual reasons that encouraged it (nature, work, lifestyle, amenity, fantasy, landscape, imaginary, money, love, amongst others). They differ from historical mobilities in the motivations, frequency and their international dimension, as well as in terms of the means of transport available.

Circulation and rootedness

Within the frame of multiple mobility profiles, we want to understand how place-attachment and belonging are imagined, produced and bargained by the mountain inhabitants. As Gregorič Bon and Repič (2016, p. 2) affirm, movement not only entails mobility but also involves place-making. This makes locations and/or people to be seen as either more central or marginal, while generating imaginations and imaginaries of roots and return, circulation and belonging. The concept of translocational positionality, coined by Floya Anthias, is useful here as it "addresses issues of identity in terms of locations which are not fixed but are context, meaning and time related and which therefore involve shifts and contradictions" (2008, p. 5).

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Given its intersectionality, it pays more attention to processes and social locations than on gender, ethnicity and class groups (Anthias 2008, p. 5). For instance, instead of speaking of Greek Cypriot identities in London, Anthias demonstrates the complex "narrations of belonging" of her interlocutors in relation to categories such as black and white as well as European and Non-European, in a specifically British context. Identity narratives are thus always produced "in relation to socially available and hegemonic discourses and practices" (Anthias, 2002, p. 511). The tensions between different "regimes of mobility" (Glick-Schiller & Salazar, 2013) inherent in labels such as "lifestyle mobility" (Cohen et al., 2015), "lifestyle migration" (Benson & O'Reilly, 2009) or "labour migration" shall here be addressed in a more accurate way by taking into account "the complex nature of positionality faced by those who are at the interplay of a range of locations and dislocations in relation to gender, ethnicity, national belonging, class and racialization" (Anthias, 2008, p. 15-16). Finally, these social processes identifiable as "translocational" do not only affect people "on the move", but also the localities travelled, visited, inhabited, and invested by these people, "converting them to translocational spaces, thereby affecting in different ways all who live within these spaces" (Anthias, 2008, p. 6). Such translocational spaces would be characterized by what Debarbieux et al. (2008) have called crossed mobilities (*mobilités croisées*). This means that when people with different motivations move, different social, ethnic, gendered, positionalities can come together in one place in complex intersectional relationships.

The diversification of the population in Verbier and in Zermatt embraces people within many different regimes of mobility, whose attachment and sense of belonging varies between circulation and rootedness. In regard to the location, in the narratives of affluent lifestyle-mobile people, there is a noticeable goal of enjoying the place, and the feeling of belonging to a cosmopolitan community, which they consider themselves to be a part of. This relation of cosmopolitans to locality is clearly illustrated by Hannerz (1990, p. 240): "The cosmopolitan may embrace the alien culture, but he does not become committed to it. All the time he knows where the exit is". As we have shown in previous publications, in Verbier, the international community composed by the "new cosmopolitan mountaineers" is united both by the fascination for sport and mountains, and by the open and entrepreneurial spirit they share (Friedli, 2020a, 2020b). These new cosmopolitan mountaineers bring in innovative projects and events, like the Verbier Art Summit, inaugurate co-working spaces and launch new brands, which stimulates social development and economic growth, attracting further innovative and entrepreneurial talents (see also Cretton & Decorzant, this issue). The mountain is seen as a source of inspiration, a place of "pure energy", in the words of Verbier's tourist slogan. For the people who can choose to move, their narratives on place-attachment and the imaginaries of the locality are based on openness and equality in diversity, particularly in Verbier. For those whose main reason to come to the mountains is to work, the identity strategies and narratives about relationship to locality may be different[11].

[11] We would like to emphasize that interviews were done by a Swiss anthropologist living in a (German speaking) city. Previous studies on interactions and ethnographic methodology have noted that interviewees often try to present a narrative framed by the social situation of the interview, and that narratives are thus subject of "impression management" to speak in the words of Erving Goffman (see Goffman, 1956).

QUADERNS, 38 (2) (2022), 249-263
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While in recent publications we have focused mostly on (hyper)mobile lifestyle migrants (Cretton et al., 2020; Friedli, 2020a, 2020b; Boscoboinik, 2018), we wish here to shed more light on those new mountain inhabitants who come to the mountains not for lifestyle but for economic reasons; many of them would not have chosen to live in these remote mountainous regions if economic conditions had allowed it. In what follows, we will rely on a selection of interviews with people who came to the Swiss Alps, particularly from Portugal, in order to making a living (and in some cases to support their families "at home")[12].

Zermatt development shows the traces of a cohabitation of separate groups that goes beyond tourists' temporary presence. Whereas local natives keep a strong identity and attachment to the place, labour migrants from Portugal, for instance, trace their identity and attachment both to the place where they live (Zermatt or Täsch)[13] and their place of origin in Portugal. However, some of them developed an attachment to the mountains and the place, together with the attachment to the place of origin. This is the case of Joao[14], a man in his fifties when we met him, born in Portugal and who arrived in Zermatt very young. He does not have Swiss citizenship (although he could apply for it), but he told us about the village where he lives that "this is my home" (*Da ist mein Heim*[15]). At the same time, he admits that sometimes he and his best mate (who migrated from the same region in Portugal) toy with the thought of "going down" to Portugal and try to set up something; but then they abandon, because they feel that they are not "really Portuguese" anymore, as they say[16]. The same is the case with Maria[17], who emphasizes that she and her family feel at home in the village. So much so, that when they finally decided to visit Portugal with the children, she had to reassure the kids that they would come "back home" (to the village) after the holidays. Nonetheless, Maria is very much engaged with the Portuguese community in Täsch, notably through her role as the president of the local association of the Portuguese. Rather than being connected to solely one place, mobile people thus often have multiple moorings and links to several places. Accordingly, networks such as familial and friendship may become more important than national boundaries (Cohen et al., 2015, p. 166).

However, labour migrants are expected to actively work towards "social integration", and in Zermatt, both the municipality and local associations offer help for the organization of German language courses and provide translated information concerning the school system. Children born in Switzerland from Portuguese parents keep links with the country of origin through language, following classes at the Portuguese school alongside classes at the local school, spending the holidays with grandparents in Portugal, and keeping traditional festivities and events.

For these migrants, keeping the transnational ties to their home countries, but also a link to a national community in the host country, allows them to allocate resources through their networks and exchanges, to confront daily needs, and to provide economic niches and jobs at the place of immigration. However, as Faist (2013, p. 1642) affirms, this transnationality and community spirit are often perceived to lead into a social mobility trap, as it could contribute to a marginalized

[12] We focus mainly on interviews done in Zermatt region, including Täsch, because the presence and visibility of foreign workers is stronger than in Verbier.
[13] As already mentioned, many labour migrants work in Zermatt and live in the nearby village of Täsch, the population of which is more than half composed of foreigners.
[14] All names have been changed for the sake of anonymity.
[15] Interviews were made in Swiss German, German, English and French by Andrea Friedli.
[16] Joao, interview on 21.11.2018.
[17] Maria, president of the Portuguese Association in Täsch, interview on 25.4.2018.

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status in the immigration country. Thus, the transnationality of these migrants, in contrast to the cross-border contacts of the people who choose mobility as a lifestyle, is usually considered to hinder successful social integration (Faist, 2013, p. 1642). However, many of our interlocutors, in their narratives addressed to us, try to stress their rootedness in the local community, at least for the second generation, as we will see.

The idea of an (im)pending mobility is less present in the lives of working migrants than in that of the "lifestyle mobiles". Although they have narratives about returning to the country of origin at some point of time, this is usually after retirement for the elders, or after having saved some money, for the younger people. There are also stories told of failed returns, as shown by one family from Portugal who tried to (re)settle in Portugal but who chose to come back to Switzerland because of the economic situation in Portugal. In this context, mobilities are often restricted to some weeks of holidays in Portugal to see the rest of the family.

Local inhabitants carry expectations of commitment to the local community not only towards labour migrants, but also towards the cosmopolitan international community. For instance, in Verbier, where English became more and more a lingua franca in shops, bars and on the streets (especially during the winter season), there were stickers distributed saying *"A Verbier, on parle français. Merci"* (In Verbier we speak French, thank you). However, we noted that some people are aware that the expectations towards the labour migrants are much more explicit and higher. One Swiss woman, who had been living in Zermatt for more than 25 years and is married to a Zermattian says: "Often we talk about the Portuguese when we talk about foreigners. But there are other subcultures, for example the English, they clearly have their own businesses. But nobody criticises them when they still only speak English after 20 years [living in Zermatt]"[18]. And even if there is criticism (as for example the case in Verbier), more often than not, the English-speaking members of the international community are less concerned by these reproaches, since their social networks are not restricted to one (or two) places. We must note, however, that many highly skilled migrants in Verbier, have made the effort to learn French and sometimes speak it at a high level of fluency.

In the narratives of newcomers, we often find the reproduction of romanticized narratives of locally born individuals, who regret the "loss of tradition" by more or less recent transformations in the valley. This could be interpreted as a way to show their attachment to the place and the local community. As a consequence, mostly those considered labour migrants appear to act in conformity with two cultural systems of reference, i.e., of both their society of origin, and of the society of residence.

In contrast to the entrepreneurial spirit emphasized by mobile people who choose the mountains for lifestyle reasons (see e.g. Friedli 2020a, 2020b; Cretton & Decorzant in this issue), the ones who came for economic reasons underline the fact that they are hardworking, and that they reached a lot by their own force, sometimes stressing the improvement in education by the second generation. In their narratives, there is a valued socially upward mobility. This is illustrated by Miguel's parents, who came to Zermatt from Portugal as teenagers. They had no education and worked in the hospitality sector. Miguel (17 years old at the time of our interview) now

[18] Barbara, interview on 24.07.2018.

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studies at a commercial school in a bigger city down the valley, and his brother is a medical student in the capital city. Miguel proudly presents his function as a deputy head of the local Youth Center[19] and his activities in many organizations and events in Zermatt:

> I don't know, something [inside myself] told me that the youth club is for me. I am a person who likes to do something, not just going home after school. So, after school I was always at the youth club. Then I said, I want to be part of the organizing team. (…) Then she [the local youth worker] said, let's take [Miguel] [as her deputy in the youth club]. And then we had the discussion about the salary and about what they need, and I said, yes, this is it. And then I am on a higher level. This is important for me. And yes, now I am [the local youth worker's] deputy.[20]

As with many other migrants we met in Zermatt and Täsch, Miguel emphasizes the fact he learned the local cultural features, and that he is committed to community-based activities (see also Cretton et al., 2012).

Similarly, Joao (53 years old at the time of the interview) focuses on his hard working and his commitment to the local community. He had no education in Portugal, and he arrived to Zermatt, where his sister already worked, when he was 18 years old. He worked in different jobs in construction, as a canteen cook, operating the cable car, and since 2001 he has been working for the local waste disposal company in a leading position. He centres his knowledge of the locality through hiking and with direct contact with the environment such as touching the glacier, collecting crystals, going on photoshoots of local wildlife, often accompanied with his friends who are locals[21]. We encountered more narratives of place-attachment linked to a local community among new inhabitants who came for economic reasons rather than among lifestyle migrants: this is also illustrated by the case of Teresa. She is a Portuguese woman living in a village close to Verbier, who after her divorce with a Portuguese man, married a Swiss man who grew up in the valley. Teresa associates herself to a very locally-rooted community by for example regularly playing "Jass", a Swiss cards game, and going to meetings with her peers (those born in the same year) in the municipality, which is usually a tradition done by people who were born and living in the place for several generations[22].

If we look at these identity strategies and processes of place-attachment, we can observe that there is not only a framing in terms of (im)mobilities, but also an "inter-connection of social divisions" (Anthias, 2008) concerning translocational positionalities along categories of ethnicity, gender, social class, among others. While for example Maria in Täsch positions herself as "local" in her engagement with integration issues and commitment in school, she simultaneously fulfils the expectations towards a "Portuguese (working) woman" who would not give her children to a public childcare, but rather leave them with her mother. She also dedicates a lot of her time to the local Portuguese community in Täsch. And finally, she is planning to move from the mountains to the plain, when her children need to have better access to educational institutions. She plans to make the move primarily as she does not feel very attached to the mountainous landscape and secondly,

[19] There are youth clubs (Jugendtreffs in German) organized by the social services in different communities in Switzerland. They usually aim to provide a place for local teenagers to gather and spend time together in a more or less structured and safe environment.
[20] Miguel, interview on 16.11.2018.
[21] Joao, interview on 21.11.2018.
[22] Teresa, interview on 28.8.2019.

QUADERNS, 38 (2) (2022), 249-263
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because she could not financially afford to pay accommodation for the children in the plain while staying herself in the mountains.

If we look at the mobility regimes of the different new mountain inhabitants, *de iure* they are not so different one from the other. Those who arrived for lifestyle reasons, but also those who arrived for work, often first come with a temporary working permit, occasionally for many seasons, before getting a longer-term permit, and finally - some of them - getting naturalized. Still, the economic, financial and social backgrounds have a strong impact on the *de facto* regimes of mobility, allowing the lifestyle mobiles and migrants to modulate the extent of their commitment to the international community, or to the more rooted local community of people living in the valley for multiple generations. Labour migrants are more restricted in this aspect, because they often do not have access to the English-speaking international community, and rather learn the local language (French or Swiss German respectively in our case) or stay in their ethnic (transnational) communities as it is the case with the Portuguese community in the Zermatt valley.

Place-attachment, rootedness and commitment to the local community can also be an issue for those who arrive for lifestyle reasons and who decide to settle. They are, however, far more likely to be a part of the cosmopolitan game of cultural fluency and legitimisation (a kind of "local marketing") of their entrepreneurial personal projects, and "to do business" with local inhabitants. While the question of place-attachment and belonging for labour migrants is a question of economic and social survival within the local economy and community, for the "lifestyle migrants" their commitment to the local community is a means to promote their entrepreneurial activities. Since "lifestyle migrants" sometimes are seen as promotors of economic (and cultural) innovation and progress, local entrepreneurs can be keen to have access to the international community. However, this is not the case with labour migrants, who are just needed to keep the local economy going and who are criticized by indigenous inhabitants in missing what they call "integration", when they for example open their Portuguese shops or send their children to the Portuguese school. This is, as Faist (2013) argues, where transnationality can be perceived as an unwillingness to "get rooted" in the new place and as a danger for the cohesion of the local community.

Conclusion

Increased mobilities, landscape imaginaries, economic reasons and the search for a better life, either linked to work opportunities or for leisure, have all led new inhabitants to settle in the mountains. However, their "regimes of mobility" influence the ways they consider their own movements and the ways they are considered by local people and authorities. Moreover, identity strategies of circulation and identity moorings are multiple. Following the hierarchization of different categories of cross-border people, the narratives of each group can be understood as answers to their perceptions in general public debates. By generalizing people as "labour migrants", they are perceived by policy makers and local population as immigrants, wanted but not welcome, whereas the highly skilled, lifestyle mobiles, even if they also have to follow local and national regulations concerning their stays, are considered by authorities and locals as people free to move and stay, wanted *and* welcome.

QUADERNS, 38 (2) (2022), 249-263
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While lifestyle-mobile people present their relationship with a place as a creative and innovative act, as a realization of the self, labour migrants need to prove their hardworking attitude, their successful attachment to the local society, and their engagement towards the place where they live, even if they keep connections to the place of origin. They often adapt local narratives about the loss of the rural idyll, even if it was not rurality or nature they were looking for when they arrived. In the narratives of the lifestyle mobiles, the mountains are represented as a free space of all possibilities (also in an entrepreneurial sense), a globally embedded platform for cosmopolitanism. Labour migrants, in their strategies of "becoming local", tend to appeal to a more locally embedded imaginary of mountains including the idea of a locally rooted community.

Finally, as we see, the different "regimes of mobility" are not only given by legal structures, but also conditioned by social possibilities. Thus, despite local narratives of mountain resorts as a place where everybody comes together in peace and equality, the mountains remain a contested space between playground and economic necessity, where hierarchies and power relations are reproduced and bargained between a very heterogeneous population.

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