3. Migration and Asylum-Seeking in Switzerland

In addition to affective qualities, home is also defined by legal and political structures and the social frameworks, including cultural and religious values, embedded in these systems. Many definitions of home take shape through national and local laws, policies, and bureaucratic systems related to citizenship, migration, and borders. Sometimes these systems explicitly reflect the home discourse, using language such as *Heimat* or *homeland* in policies about security, economy, and citizenship. These are seen in the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and Germany's *Heimatministerium*. These policies and systems also address home in more implicit ways, establishing systems of inclusion and exclusion, regulating rights and obligations, and defining parameters of belonging and difference.[1] "First of all, integration or citizenship regimes are more than just legal regulations, as they embody collective concepts of inclusion by defining who belongs to a specific community and who does not."[2] Behind many of the explicit structures are less identifiable values, social expectations, and normative ideas of belonging. Many legal and political discourses about home are rooted in definitions of citizenship, the ultimate legal arbitrator of belonging. Citizenship laws and policies filter down to migration systems, which often include policies that are intended to shape migrants through local normative systems and value structures.

For asylum-seekers in Basel, these systems are rooted in the specific geographic and historical contexts of Switzerland and its specific cantons and municipalities. In Switzerland, citizenship entails meeting specific obligations to integrate into Swiss legal, political, economic, and social systems. Yet not all aspects of citizenship are legal or political. Citizenship often indicates a home country, sometimes only as a formal or legal designation, but often it is connected to real or imaged feelings

1 Anita Manatschal and Isabelle Stadelmann-Steffen, "Cantonal Variations of Integration Policy and Their Impact on Immigrant Educational Inequality," *Comparative European Politics* 11, no. 5 (2013), https://doi.org/10.1057/cep.2013.16.

2 Manatschal and Stadelmann-Steffen, "Cantonal Variations," 673.

of belonging and affective associations.[3] Yet belonging also often involves exclusion and border-making and defines group dimensions. Integration requirements in Switzerland include meeting requirements for language acquisition and for economic and political participation, as well as being "familiar with the Swiss way of life."[4] This emphasis on the "Swiss way of life" is an expectation to adopt values and lifestyles considered normative in Swiss society.

Each of these systems, political and social, becomes inscribed on specific bodies based on legal status, gender, ethnicity, employment, and other characteristics.[5] Those who arrive in Switzerland seeking asylum apply based on circumstances that put them in danger in their country of origin. Yet, they also become part of a complex legal system based on definitions of citizenship and concepts of belonging, which are embedded in the historical context of Switzerland. Like other migrants who are ethnic and religious minorities in Switzerland, especially those who arrive from less democratic and wealthy countries, asylum-seekers are particularly impacted by the legal and bureaucratic dimensions of citizenship and migration systems.[6]

Migrants occupy a liminal space of having left one context of home and arrived in a new place where it is often uncertain if they can remain. This uncertainty can last for an extended period of time. Most of the asylum-seekers and refugees I met at Projekt DA-SEIN had arrived in 2015 or 2016 and were still waiting on decisions on their asylum cases in 2018. The asylum process, as it functioned in 2018, generally lasted three years, from arrival until the time a decision was rendered.[7] Much of this time is spent by asylum-seekers waiting for the next steps and decisions while navigating the legal and political systems and social expectations that structure the asylum process. Many of those I spoke with learned quickly that their hopes for success in their asylum claims and beyond rested in large measure on their ability to know the system and not deviate from its parameters. Their lives are highly regulated by these laws, while at the same time they are removed from many parts of

3 Irene Bloemraad, Anna Korteweg, and Gökçe Yurdakul, "Citizenship and Immigration: Multiculturalism, Assimilation, and Challenges to the Nation-State," *Annual Review of Sociology* 34, no. 1 (2008).

4 Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft, *Bundesgesetz über die Ausländerinnen und Ausländer*, 142.20; Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft, *Bundesgesetz über das Schweizer Bürgerrecht*, 141.0; Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft, FDJP, *Swiss Citizenship / Naturalization*.

5 Michel *Foucault, Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan, 2nd ed. (Vintage Books, 1995).

6 Irene Bloemraad and Alicia Sheares, "Understanding Membership in a World of Global Migration: (How) Does Citizenship Matter?," *International Migration Review* 51, no. 4 (2017): 823–67, https://doi.org/10.1111/imre.12354.

7 In 2019, the asylum process was refined with the hope of creating a more streamlined process and reducing its duration, as well as of providing clearer information and more support to asylum-seekers. The new system contracts with non-governmental organizations to work directly with migrants to help them navigate the system.

society, such as employment, family relationships, and social networks. During the two to three years that they are waiting for results of their asylum claim, they are separated from their previous homes, expected to adapt to Swiss lifestyles and values, and made reliant on the government's asylum and migration system. This section explores the context of Basel as well as how legal and social systems related to citizenship, migration, and integration become intertwined with discourses about home and impact the lived experiences of asylum-seekers.

3.1 The Context of Basel

Basel is a city of 170,000 residents in northwest Switzerland and is the third-largest city in Switzerland, after Zürich and Geneva. Switzerland has a population of 8 million people and comprises 26 cantons under a federalist model. Switzerland is culturally diverse and has four national languages (German, French, Italian, and Romansh). In German-speaking cantons, each city or region also has its own dialect of Swiss German. Basel is bisected by the Rhine River and directly borders both France and Germany. Basel is also a canton, called Basel-Stadt, one of only two city cantons in Switzerland, with Zurich being the other. Government in Switzerland is highly decentralized, thus governments of the cantons have a large influence in their own jurisdictions. In addition, cantons often have distinct cultures, languages, dialects, and traditions.

Basel has historically connected people and served as a hub of commerce, industry, and government. Occupying a significant location on the Rhine River, Basel traces its roots to settlements that appeared as early as the fifth century BCE and that became more permanent starting in the first century CE. It has historically served as a center of political, religious, economic, social, and intellectual power. Industrialization during the nineteenth century, especially in the textile industry, caused rural populations to move to the city of Basel.[8]

Today, the economy is dominated by the chemical and pharmaceutical industries. Several large pharmaceutical companies are headquartered in Basel, including Roche, Novartis, and Basilea Pharmaceutica. Though Basel is small by international city standards, many aspects of modern urbanization and the development of global cities are relevant for situating Basel in its larger context. As manufacturing declined after the Second World War, production shifted to economic, intellectual, and social

8 Kanton Basel-Stadt, "Basel Geschichte / Basel History: Von der Altsteinzeit bis zu den Life Sciences," accessed March 28, 2019, https://www.bs.ch/Portrait/einleitung-weltstadt/Geschichte-von-Basel.html.

capital.[9] New "global cities" concentrated power in industries of finance, business, and production.[10] These cities became centers of innovation, key marketplaces, and powerful actors of economic organization.[11]

Over time, populations have become more concentrated in cities. In 1950 less than 30% of the world's population lived in cities, but in the 1960s this number rose to 36%, and by 1990 50% of the population lived in cities.[12] In Switzerland, it is estimated that over 73% of the population lives in urban centers.[13] Despite new technologies that allow people to be connected across space, a "geography of centrality" continues to concentrate power in key cities.[14] In global cities, employment is highly stratified according to education levels, and employment is concentrated into low-wage and high-wage sectors.[15]

Basel exhibits characteristics of a global city. Centralization of production is seen in the pharmaceutical industry as well as the banking and finance industries, which are dominant within Switzerland. The University of Basel, Switzerland's oldest university, was founded in 1490; the city boasts numerous cultural resources, including art museums and theaters; and its position on two borders makes it a central confluence of people and commerce between Germany, France, and Switzerland.

3.2 Migration Data

Due to its international industries, university, and location on two international borders, Basel has a particularly high percentage of non-Swiss residents. In 2018, 40% of Basel residents did not hold a Swiss passport.[16] This diversity of residents reflects the international draw of Basel. Yet, not all of those who migrate to Basel interact with

9 Saskia Sassen, *The Global City: New York, London, Tokyo*, Princeton Paperbacks (Princeton University Press, 1991), 3–4.

10 Saskia Sassen, *Globalization and Its Discontents* (New Press, 1998), xxv.

11 Saskia Sassen, *Cities in a World Economy*, Sociology for a New Century (Pine Forge Press, 1994), 2–4.

12 Philip Sheldrake, *The Spiritual City: Theology, Spirituality, and the Urban* (John Wiley & Sons, 2014), 2.

13 Trading Economics, "Switzerland – Urban Population (% of Total)," accessed February 3, 2021, last modified July 20, 2020, https://tradingeconomics.com/switzerland/urban-population-percent-of-total-wb-data.html.

14 Sassen, *Globalization and its Discontents*.

15 Sassen, *Cities in a World Economy*, 5–8.

16 Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft, *Total Bestand Ausländische Wohnbevölkerung Nach Ausländergruppe (Ausländerstatistik Januar 2018)*, (State Secretariat for Migration, SEM, 2018), https://www.sem.admin.ch/sem/de/home/publiservice/statistik/auslaenderstatistik/archiv/2018/01.html.

or are impacted by the global city in the same way. Non-citizens are subject to laws, requirements, and policies of the Secretary of Migration (*Staatsekretariat für Migration*) based on their country of origin and their reasons for relocating to Switzerland. Many non-citizens live in Basel on a short-term or long-term basis due to employment, education, or family relationships.

The Swiss migration system is divided into two categories: EU/EFTA state citizens and everyone else, from "third states." This division, in effect since 1998, is a refinement over the previous three-category system (introduced in 1991), which divided migrants to Switzerland into EU/EFTA citizens; other western, economically similar countries, such as the US, Canada, and Japan; and, finally, all other "third states."[17] These earlier divisions can still be seen in the ways policies are enforced. For example, many laws related to integration do not apply to EU/EFTA citizens and highly qualified, economically prosperous "third state" citizens. This varied implementation means highly-qualified, financially stable migrants from EU/EFTA or other wealthy countries are not the focus of many migration and integration policies. Instead, these systems focus on a third category of poorly qualified migrants from "third" countries, whose backgrounds arguably vary the most from Switzerland's values and systems.[18] While still subject to a battery of immigration laws, they face different expectations and norms than those who arrive in search of asylum.

The asylum process is regulated by the Swiss Asylum Act, originally adopted in 1998.[19] At the same time, in keeping with the federalist model of Swiss government, individual cantons manage many details of the asylum process. For refugees and asylum-seekers, a highly regulated bureaucracy, some of which is specific to the cantonal and municipal levels, shapes their experiences with the city.

Basel-Stadt is bordered by the canton of Basel-Land, and two other cantons are in close proximity to Basel-Stadt: Aargau and Solothurn. These four cantons, Basel-Stadt, Basel-Land, Aargau, and Solothurn, make up the northwest region of Switzerland and also comprise one of six asylum regions in Switzerland under the new asylum system, which was rolled out in 2019.[20] But even before the new asylum

17 Susanne Bachmann, *Diskurse über MigrantInnen in Schweizer Integrationsprojekten: Zwischen Normalisierung von Prekarität und Konditionierung zur Markttauglichkeit*, Beiträge zur Regional- und Migrationsforschung (Springer VS, 2016), https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-658-13922-3; Die Bundesbehörden der Schweizerischen Eidgenossenschaft, *Ausländerregelung 1998/99: Drei-Kreise-Modell Wird Abgelöst: Pressemitteilung* (Eidgenössisches Justiz- und Polizeidepartement Informations- und Pressedienst, 1998), 26, https://www.admin.ch/cp/d/357BEA79.BA8@mbox.gsejpd.admin.ch.html.

18 Bachmann, *Diskurse über MigrantInnen in Schweizer Integrationsprojekten*.

19 Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft, *Asylgesetz AsylG* (*Asylum Act, AsylA*), CC 142.31 (Fedlex, 1998), https://www.admin.ch/opc/en/classified-compilation/19995092/index.html.

20 Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft, *Asylverordnung 1 über Verfahrensfragen (Asylverordnung 1, AsylV 1)*, 142.311 (Fedlex 1999), https://www.admin.ch/opc/de/classified-compilation/1999

law, the asylum-seekers of this region were connected. Basel is the largest city in the region and is easily reachable from many areas within neighboring cantons via public transportation and the railway system. All of the refugees who attended Projekt DA-SEIN and who I got to know during my time in Switzerland lived in one of these four cantons.[21]

Of the 40% of non-Swiss citizens in Basel-Stadt, less than 2% are refugees or asylum-seekers in some stage of the process.[22] All cantons are required to take asylum-seekers, and Basel-Stadt is assigned 2.3% of all asylum-seekers in Switzerland.[23] Basel-Land, Aargau, and Solothurn are assigned an additional 14.9% of asylum-seekers. Thus, of all asylum-seekers who arrive in Switzerland, 17.2% live in northwest Switzerland, in close proximity to Basel. When I arrived in Basel at the end of January 2018, 1,184 people who were in some stage of the asylum process lived in the canton of Basel-Stadt.[24] In the four cantons of northwest Switzerland, there were 9,990 people in the asylum process in January 2018.[25] When I left at the end of January 2019, 1,123 people who were in some stage of the asylum process lived in the canton of Basel-Stadt.[26] In the four cantons of northwest Switzerland, there were 9,332 people in the asylum process in January 2019.[27]

These numbers indicate a decrease in asylum applications over the previous three years.[28] In 2018, a total of around 15,000 people applied for asylum in Switzerland.[29] In comparison, in 2015, when a surge of asylum-seekers arrived in Europe, nearly 40,000 people applied for asylum.[30] This decrease is due to a confluence

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4776/201703010000/142.311.pdf; Schweizerische Eidgenossen-schaft, EJPD, *Migration Report 2018*.

21 Nicole Schwarz, Projektmanagerin DA-SEIN, *Evaluation Projekt DA-SEIN* (Offene Kirche Elisabethen, 2017).

22 Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft, *Total Bestand Ausländische Wohnbevölkerung Nach Ausländergruppe*.

23 Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft, *Asylverordnung 1 über Verfahrensfragen*, 142.311.

24 Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft, Federal Department of Justice and Police, FDJP, *Asylstatistik Januar 2018: Bestand im Asylprozess in der Schweiz nach Unterprozess* (Staatsekretariat für Migration, SEM, 2018), https://www.sem.admin.ch/sem/de/home/publiservice/statistik/asylstatistik/archiv/2018/01.html.

25 Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft, FDJP, *Asylstatistik Januar 2018*.

26 Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft, Federal Department of Justice and Police, FDJP, *Asylstatistik Januar 2019: Bestand im Asylprozess in der Schweiz nach Unterprozess* (Staatsekretariat für Migration, SEM, 2019), https://www.sem.admin.ch/sem/de/home/publiservice/statistik/asylstatistik/archiv/2019/01.html.

27 Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft, FDJP, *Asylstatistik Januar 2019*.

28 Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft, FDJP, *Foreign Population and Asylum Statistics 2018*.

29 Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft, EJPD, *Migration Report 2018*, 3.

30 Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft, Eidgenössisches Justiz- und Polizeidepartement, EJPD, *Migration Report 2015* (State Secretariat for Migration, SEM, 2015), https://www.sem.admin.ch/dam/data/sem/publiservice/berichte/migration/migrationsbericht-2015-e.pdf.

of circumstances, including shifting policies in Europe and changing patterns of migration. These include changes in migration routes, agreements between Europe and other countries (including Libya and Turkey) to curb migration before departure, and countermeasures both in sending locales and in Europe, such as Italy's restrictions on the rescue of migration ships by private groups.[31] In 2015, 45% of asylum applicants arrived from either Afghanistan or Eritrea.[32] In 2018, Eritreans, Afghans, and Syrians remained the largest groups of asylum-seekers.[33] This was also reflected in the demographics of those who attended Projekt DA-SEIN. Those from Afghanistan and Eritrea were consistently the largest groups, with other attendees coming from a wide variety of other countries.[34]

3.3 Seeking Asylum in Switzerland

Those who arrive in Switzerland to seek asylum must first have their claim processed at an *Empfangs- und Verfahrenszentrum* (EVZ), a federal asylum reception and processing center, where the applicant's identity is established, a survey is conducted, finger prints are made, a health screening is completed, and an initial interview is conducted.[35] Through the Dublin process and Eurodac system, it is established whether Switzerland is responsible for the applicant's asylum case.[36] There are six EVZ (five

31 Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft, EJPD, *Migration Report 2018*.

32 Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft, EJPD, *Migration Report 2015*. These categories are not static, as conditions that influence asylum applications change. For instance, in 2019, Eritrea was deemed a "safe" country by Switzerland and Eritrean nationals are often repatriated.

33 Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft, FDJP, *Foreign Population and Asylum Statistics 2018*.

34 Schwarz, *Evaluation Projekt DA-SEIN*.

35 Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft, Federal Department of Justice and Police, FDJP, *Asylum / Protection from Persecution: Reception and Preparatory Phase* (Staatsekretariat für Migration, SEM, 2019), https://www.sem.admin.ch/sem/en/home/asyl/asylverfahren/empfang.html.

36 While Switzerland is not a member of the European Union, it is a member of several significant agreements with the European Union, especially in regard to movement of people. These include participation in the Schengen Borders Code, the Dublin III Agreement, and the Eurodac Regulation. The Schengen Borders Code allows for open borders between member states. The Dublin III Agreement and the Eurodac Regulation (both adopted in their newest forms 2013) establish which country holds responsibility for an asylum claim. The original Dublin agreement was adopted in 2008 by 32 states, four of which are not in the European Union. When asylum-seekers arrive and apply for asylum, they are fingerprinted, and these prints are uploaded to a central Eurodac database to compare across participating countries. An asylum-seeker must apply for asylum in the country they first enter and where they are fingerprinted. If it is determined that they were already fingerprinted in another country, they are required to return there to lodge their asylum claim. The system is designed to prevent asylum-seekers from lodging asylum claims in more than one country. If a person is denied asylum in one country, they may not apply in another country that is part of the Dub-

before the 2019 revisions), including one in Basel-Stadt, located at the Offenbach border crossing.

During this initial process the asylum applicant is housed at the *Verfahrenszentrum* for a maximum of 140 days.[37] During this time asylum-seekers are given a small per diem and are allowed to leave the center during certain hours (in Basel, from 8 AM to 5 PM).[38] Many asylum-seekers told me that leaving during the day was essential. The cramped quarters and limited options give the center the feel of a prison. Once it is established that a person has presented a legitimate claim to apply for asylum and that Switzerland is responsible for the claim (because Switzerland, and not another country in the Dublin agreement, is the first country of entry), the person is given identity papers and an "N" permit, indicating that they are an asylum-seeker and can remain in the country until their case is decided.

In most cases, the asylum-seeker is then assigned to one of the cantons for the duration of the asylum process.[39] They must remain living in that canton until a decision is reached on their case and, depending on the decision, they may have to remain in that canton for a longer period of time. While they have an "N" permit they are assigned to an asylum home (*Asylheim*) in the canton where they are assigned. These are often converted single-family homes and are run by a non-profit, which is contracted by the canton. Rooms are shared, depending on the number of asylum-seekers currently in the canton, and house rules are in effect (often delineating chores and quiet hours and prohibiting overnight guests).[40] While staff does not usually live at the home, there is someone who is responsible for running the home

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lin agreement. According to SEM, since the Dublin accord went into effect in 2008, 40% of asylum claims lodged in Switzerland were transferred to another state. See: Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft, Federal Department of Justice and Police, FDJP, *Asylum / Protection from Persecution: Dublin Regulation* (Staatsekretariat für Migration, SEM, 2019), https://www.sem.admin.ch/sem/en/home/asyl/dublin.html; Schweizerische Flüchtlingshilfe SFH, "Asylum Law – Legal Basis: Schengen/Dublin and Switzerland," accessed October 26, 2019, https://www.refugeecouncil.ch/asylum-law/legal-basis/schengendublin-and-switzerland.html; Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft, EJPD, *Migration Report 2018*, 25.

37 Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft, Federal Department of Justice and Police, FDJP, *Asylum / Protection from Persecution – Asylum Procedure: National Asylum Procedures* (Staatsekretariat für Migration, SEM, 2019), https://www.sem.admin.ch/sem/en/home/asyl/asylverfahren/nationale-verfahren.html; Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft, *Asylverordnung 1 über Verfahrensfragen*, 142.311.

38 Schweizerisches Arbeiterhilfswerk, "Weiterbildungskurs zum Thema Asylverfahren: Asylparcours Basel-Stadt," accessed October 10, 2018, https://www.sah-bs.ch/projekte.

39 Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft, Eidgenössisches Justiz- und Polizeidepartement, EJPD, *Brief Overview: Recognised Refugees – B Permit Temporarily Admitted Refugees – F Permit Temporarily Admitted Persons – F Permit* (State Secretariat for Migration, SEM, 2019), https://www.sem.admin.ch/dam/data/sem/publiservice/publikationen/info-flue-va/info-flue-va-en.pdf.

40 Convalere, *Asylheim Hausordnung* (Convalere, 2018), http://www.convalere.ch/.

and is often there on a daily basis. This person was consistently referred to as "boss" (*Chef*) by the refugees. Especially when asylum-seekers first arrived, many daily decisions had to first be approved by the *Chef* . These houses are places of dwelling, but also state-run institutions.

In addition to housing, asylum-seekers are provided with social support equal to around 65% of the social support provided to permanent Swiss residents or citizens.[41] In 2018 this was approximately 360 CHF per month. Switzerland has one of the highest costs of living in the world, even when compared to other European countries, especially for food and transportation. The free meal provided by Projekt DA-SEIN was one reason refugees reported that they attended the program.[42] Asylum-seekers sometimes have the opportunity to work in non-profit employment services (such as city clean-up, free-time activities for disabled persons, or textile workshops) in exchange for payment or benefits and privileges, such as a local transportation pass.[43] After three months asylum-seekers are allowed to work, but due the structured nature of Swiss employment and education systems as well as their limited skills in the local language, most who have an "N" permit do not work, or work sporadically and intermittently.[44] In most cantons, asylum-seekers receive an initial language course upon arrival, which includes practical information about life in their local region and in Switzerland as well as education about cultural norms and expectations.[45] In Basel-Stadt, additional language courses are offered and funded for refugees and asylum-seekers beyond the initial course. Yet, the neighboring canton of Aargau offers only the initial course. If asylum-seekers want to continue learning German, they must pay for the courses themselves, something that is financially inaccessible to most asylum-seekers.

The asylum-seekers I spoke with from cantons that offered fewer language programs often expressed jealousy or sadness that their opportunities were limited in this area.[46] They know the migration system requires language proficiency and that delaying this skill was a disadvantage. Many of them took advantage of as many free language courses, conversation groups, and opportunities to work with German speakers on language skills as possible. Learning and improving their German

41 Sozialhilfe, "Asyl: Asyl in Kürze," Department für Wirtschaft, Soziales und Umwelt des Kantons Basel-Stadt, accessed September 24, 2020, https://www.sozialhilfe.bs.ch/asyl/in-kuerze.html.

42 Projekt DA-SEIN, "Ergebnisse Umfrage" (Offene Kirche Elisabethen, 2018).

43 Sozialhilfe, "Asyl"; Schweizerisches Arbeiterhilfswerk, "Weiterbildungskurs zum Thema Asylverfahren."

44 Sozialhilfe, "Asyl."

45 Sozialhilfe, "Asyl."

46 Interview by Katherine Kunz, Basel, Switzerland, September 13, 2018: 20180913_13AS_DA-SEIN_Museum_II, Pos. 3; Interview by Katherine Kunz, Basel, Switzerland, May 5, 2018: 20180705_4AS_DA-SEIN_II, Pos. 3.

was one of the main reasons many asylum-seekers came to Projekt DA-SEIN at the Offene Kirche Elisabethen.[47] This was reflected in many of my conversations, as well as in data collected by the program, where 82% of attendees surveyed said that learning German was one reason they came to Projekt DA-SEIN.[48] Working on German homework with a volunteer or engaging in informal conversation are among the most common activities at Projekt DA-SEIN. Projekt DA-SEIN also supports this focus by requiring that Standard German be the spoken language by everyone while at the program, by organizing conversational and instructional language groups, and by encouraging asylum-seekers to bring homework to work on with volunteers.

Several asylum-seekers had acquired workbooks, dictionaries, or online materials to teach themselves German when courses were unavailable to them.[49] They often brought these to Projekt DA-SEIN to get help and corrections on the exercises. One refugee assigned to canton Aargau had acquired a book listing all German verbs and their conjugations in all tenses. He would bring the book to the program and find a volunteer to work through some of the verbs with him, asking questions about meaning, pronunciation, and tenses.[50] Many asylum-seekers who lived in the cantons of Basel-Land or Aargau would leave the program early on Wednesdays to attend a German language course offered at a local high school in Liestal (canton Basel-Land). This focus on language acquisition is taken up by many organizations working with refugees as well. On the KoFfF website, a clearing house for refugee programs in Basel, there are 17 programs listed that support German language learning, and this does not include organizations that help informally with language acquisition, such as Projekt DA-SEIN.[51] Over and over again, the importance of learning the local language is emphasized by volunteers, governmental organizations, and non-profits.

47 Interview by Katherine Kunz, Basel, Switzerland, September 5, 2018: 20180905_6AS_IN, Pos, 329; Interview by Katherine Kunz, Basel, Switzerland, October 29, 2018: 20181029_8AS_IN, Pos. 198; Interview by Katherine Kunz, Basel, Switzerland, December 12, 2018: 20181212_22AS_DA-SEIN_II, Pos, 3.

48 Projekt DA-SEIN, "Ergebnisse Umfrage."

49 Interview by Katherine Kunz, Basel, Switzerland, July 4, 2018: 20180704_11AS_DA-SEIN_II, Pos. 3.

50 Interview by Katherine Kunz, Basel, Switzerland, July 4, 2018: 20180704_11AS_DA-SEIN_II, Pos. 3; Participant Observation by Katherine Kunz, Basel, Switzerland, May 17, 2018: 20180517_DA-SEIN_v2_PO, Pos. 3; 20180711_DA-SEIN_v2_PO, Pos. 8.

51 Koordinationsstelle Freiwillige für Flüchtlinge (KOFFF) Basel, "Koordinationsstelle Freiwillige Für Flüchtlinge Basel," accessed October 1, 2019, http://fff-basel.ch/.

3.4 The Asylum Process

The asylum process begins with the first interview upon arrival at the *Verfahrenszentrum* and establishes the person's claim for asylum in Switzerland. It also collects and records details about the person, their health, and their reasons for fleeing. A second interview takes place one to two years later (the 2019 revisions to the Asylum Law hope to expediate this timeline). Asylum decisions are rendered after the second interview, but it can take up to one year to receive the decision. Decisions fall into one of three categories: being accepted as a refugee and receiving a "B" Foreign Nationals Residence Permit; being "temporarily admitted" and receiving an "F" permit; and being rejected and receiving a negative decision (*Negativentscheid*). A "B" permit is granted to asylum-seekers based on the definitions established by the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (Geneva Refugee Convention).[52] A "B" permit is issued for one year, but it may be renewed annually. After 10 years, and if the person has met the integration requirements, they may apply for a permanent residence permit ("C" permit).[53]

Asylum-seekers would often identify or introduce themselves by naming the permit letter they currently have, saying, "I am N," or "I have F." During my time in Switzerland I met very few, if any, asylum-seekers who were automatically granted a "B" permit. Most of the asylum-seekers I got to know, and whose residence status I knew, fell into two categories. Either their application was rejected (*Negativentscheid*) or they were granted temporary admission and received an "F" permit. For a person who receives an "F" permit, their asylum claim has been denied but it is impractical or dangerous to return them to their country of origin. The Swiss Secretary of Migration writes in an informational document:

> Asylum seekers whose application has been denied but who cannot return to their country benefit from temporary admission. To obtain this status, they must meet one of the following three conditions: their enforced removal is unlawful (concrete threat abroad; violation of the Human Rights Convention); enforced removal is not reasonable (war, grave personal distress): the enforced removal is not feasible (the journey is technically impossible at the time the removal decision was made).[54]

52 Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft, *Brief Overview*. The document defines the term "refugee" as: "[a] refugee is a person who, because of his/her race, religion, nationality, affiliation with a particular social group or because of his/her political opinions, has been subjected to serious disadvantages or has a well-founded fear of being exposed to such disadvantages in his/her home or country of origin."

53 Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft, *Brief Overview*.

54 Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft, FDJP, *Foreign Population and Asylum Statistics 2018*.

An "F" permit is issued for 12 months and can be renewed for another 12 months. The renewal process is regulated by the canton of residence. After five years the person may apply for a Foreign Nationals Residence Permit ("B") if they have met certain criteria. Those with an "F" permit can pursue more opportunities than those still in the asylum process (with an "N" permit). In particular, they can pursue educational courses and employment opportunities, they can receive a larger stipend (20% less than the full social support), and they are permitted to look for housing outside of the asylum house.[55] They still cannot travel out of the country or move out of the canton where they are assigned. Once an "F" permit is received, the focus is on meeting integration requirements, achieving the required language proficiency, securing educational opportunities, and looking for housing. Employment is usually still difficult to obtain due to lack of language proficiency, lack of education or necessary training, and employers' unwillingness to hire "F" residents due to perceptions that they will not remain in Switzerland. Yet, according to the Basel-Stadt Department of Social Services, 95% of those who are temporarily admitted remain permanently in Switzerland.[56]

A negative decision can be appealed within 30 days, but rates for acceptance after an appeal are low. According to *Beratungsstelle für Asylsuchende*, a legal-aid office for asylum-seekers in Basel, the most common reason an application is rejected is for lack of credibility. If there is any variation in details between the first and second interviews, the case is usually rejected.[57] Due to the length of time between interviews and the lack of information about the process before the first interview, inconsistent stories were not uncommon. Those who receive a negative decision and who are denied asylum must leave the country within 30 days.[58] Depending on the country of origin, those who are denied asylum are forcibly deported (*Ausschaffung*), are expected to voluntarily leave, or are required to participate in a resettlement program. Yet, many asylum-seekers have few good options, no safe place to go, and limited resources, so many stay in Switzerland or go to another E.U. country where they know people, even though they cannot apply for asylum there. Even if their asylum claim is denied, if they are not able to return to their country of origin, they are still eligible to receive emergency assistance from the Swiss government.[59]

Many of the asylum-seekers I got to know at Projekt DA-SEIN arrived during the 2015 and 2016 increase in migration to Europe. Many of them were still waiting

55 Sozialhilfe, "Asyl."

56 Sozialhilfe, "Asyl."

57 Schweizerisches Arbeiterhilfswerk, "Weiterbildungskurs zum Thema Asylverfahren"; Beratungsstelle für Asylsuchende BAS der Region Basel, *Jarhresbericht 2018*.

58 Migraweb: Leben in der Schweiz – Information und Online-Beratung, "Asylentscheide," accessed October 26, 2019, https://migraweb.ch/de/themen/asylrecht/asylverfahren/entscheid/.

59 Sozialhilfe, "Asyl."

for their asylum cases to be decided in 2018. While almost none had received final decisions when I arrived in January 2018, quite a few received decisions during the course of my year in Basel. It was widely understood that it took around three years for a final decision to be issued on an asylum claim. According to the 2018 Migration Report by the State Secretariat for Migration, in 2018 the average length of the asylum process for an individual was 466 days. This number varied widely based on the type of asylum case and related circumstances. For instance, this number includes Dublin cases, which are often resolved within a few months by sending the applicant back to the initial receiving country.[60] Therefore, when looking at applications where Switzerland is the responsible Dublin country (known as priority 2 asylum applications), 70% of asylum cases took an average of 592 days to process. Even though the average processing time was a little over one and half years, the SEM report also noted that many applications processed in 2018 originated in 2015 or 2016, two to three years prior.[61] At Projekt DA-SEIN, the common experience and accepted wisdom was that asylum cases took three years to resolve.[62]

Thus, while asylum claims in Switzerland have decreased from their peak in 2015 and 2016, many decisions rendered in 2018 were on claims from this time period. In 2018 a total of 14,926 people were either granted asylum or temporarily admitted in Switzerland, constituting an admission rate of 60.5% on asylum decisions.[63] In

60 Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft, EJPD, *Migration Report 2018*. The 2018 Migration Report describes the average duration of the asylum process in further detail. "Duration of asylum applications handled in the first instance: In 2018 the average duration of asylum applications handled in the first instance was 466 days. This figure can vary widely depending on the volume of incoming asylum applications, the resources available to process and settle these cases and SEM's case management strategy. In 2017 it was 340 days; in 2016, it was 249 days; in 2015 it was 278 days; in 2014 it was 401 days; in 2013 it was 258 days; and in 2012 it was 163 days. The average duration of asylum applications handled in the first instance is not a very informative indicator. However, settlements can be divided into three categories: Dublin cases, which in 2018 accounted for 18 % of asylum applications received, have an average processing time of two months (61 days); priority 1 asylum applications (low protection rate), which accounted for 7% of the incoming asylum applications, have an average processing time of roughly six months (151 days); and priority 2 asylum applications (high protection rate), which accounted for a share of 70%, have an average processing time of 592 days. Many of the priority 2 asylum applications processed in 2018 had been lodged in 2015 and 2016."

61 Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft, EJPD, *Migration Report 2018*.

62 In 2019 the asylum law was revised, with the goal of completing the asylum claims process within 140 days.

63 Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft, EJPD, *Migration Report 2018*. The 2018 Migration Report details the rate of positive versus negative decisions. "Asylum was granted to 6358 persons (2017: 6360), while 8568 asylum seekers (2017: 7839) were temporarily admitted following a first-instance decision. When these two sets of figures are taken together, the share of positive decisions (protection rate) in 2018 rose to 60.5 % (2017: 57.5 %). 1760 asylum seekers

Basel-Stadt in January 2019, there were 219 people in the asylum process ("N" permit), 765 recognized refugees ("B" permit), and 886 temporarily admitted persons ("F" permit).[64]

For many asylum-seekers, much of the three years in the asylum system was spent waiting for the next step or for decisions from the Swiss government. This waiting is characterized by a lack of agency, as refugees have little influence over the timing of next steps and decisions from the Swiss government. Not only can they not affect the asylum application process, they also cannot take action in other areas of their lives, such as finding employment, securing more permanent housing, getting married, starting a family, or even visiting their own families (see more on how asylum-seekers navigate these challenges in Chapters 7 and 8).

3.5 Swiss Citizenship

Who gets to stay and how they get to stay is subject to definitions of what it means to be Swiss and who belongs within concepts of Swiss identity. These answers are undergirded by implicit beliefs and assumptions about home, belonging, and normative characteristics of Switzerland, its people, and group membership. These assumptions filter down to shape laws and policies on migration, asylum, and integration. Citizenship laws explicitly determine who belongs and has access to benefits and also serve to codify the history, assumptions, and values of a place via specific legal and social structures.[65] How a country defines citizenship affects how migration is understood and regulated and how newcomers are integrated into the society. This section explores how these laws impact the migration experience of asylum-seekers in and around Basel.

Due to Switzerland's federalist structure, citizenship and migration are regulated at three levels: national, cantonal, and municipal, making citizenship not only a national, but also a local question.[66] This multi-located definition of citizenship is anchored in Switzerland's history as a loose federation of cantons, dating back over 700 years. This loose alliance of independent cantons, whose modern form took shape in 1848 with the adoption of a federal constitution, remains an abiding feature of Swiss democracy. Cantons remain independent in significant ways, including by

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were transferred to another Dublin state, while Switzerland accepted 1298 persons from its Dublin partners."

64 Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft, FDJP, *Asylstatistik Januar 2019*.

65 Bloemraad, Korteweg, and Yurdakul, "Citizenship and Immigration," 154.

66 For an in-depth analysis of the impact of Switzerland's local citizenship system, see: Marc Helbling, *Practising Citizenship and Heterogeneous Nationhood: Naturalisations in Swiss Municipalities*, IMISCOE Dissertations (Amsterdam University Press, 2008), https://library.oapen.org/handle/20.500.12657/35252.

setting their own policies on education, social services, and taxation. According to the Swiss constitution, cantons are independent so long as this independence is not limited by federal law.[67] The independence of Switzerland's cantons is perhaps most recognizable in the diversity of national languages. There are four official languages in Switzerland (German, French, Italian, and Romansh) and each canton has one to two official cantonal languages, in addition to a proliferation of dialects, especially in the German-speaking regions.

Another aspect of the decentralized Swiss political system is its emphasis on direct democracy. Many policies are decided by peoples' initiatives and by direct popular vote on the municipal, cantonal, and national levels. Recent examples in Basel include votes on TV and radio fees, hospital consolidation, and church taxation rights. Direct votes are often considered a pure form of democracy, in contrast to a representative system, where elected officials make most policy and legal decisions. Direct vote allows individuals greater control over policies, but it can also lead to decisions that uphold majority positions and deny rights to minority groups. In Switzerland these majority opinions have sometimes served to protect an idea of a Swiss way of life, or of Swiss values, against outside influence.[68] The first recorded peoples' initiative was in 1873, when 60% of Swiss citizens voted to outlaw the ritual slaughter of animals.[69] While the initiative was brought under the guise of animal welfare, it clearly reflected anti-Semitic sentiments at the time. The ban remains Swiss law, though in 1978 it was moved from the constitution to the Animal Protection Act. A recent example of the use of direct democracy to protect Swiss values against perceived foreign influences is a 2009 popular initiative that, by a vote of 57.5%, banned the building of minarets in Switzerland. This initiative was couched within a law about building code, but the rhetoric, media, and debate focused on anti-Islamic sentiments.[70]

In addition to the effect of Switzerland's decentralized and participatory government systems, Swiss citizenship and migration laws are impacted by two other

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67 Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft, *Federal Constitution of the Swiss Confederation* (Fedlex, 1999), https://www.fedlex.admin.ch/eli/cc/1999/404/en.

68 Camille Vallier and Nesa Zimmermann, "Muslims' Rights in Switzerland Between Federalism, Direct Democracy, and Human Rights," in *State, Religion and Muslims: Between Discrimination and Protection at the Legislative, Executive and Judicial Levels*, ed. Melek Saral and Şerif Onur Bahçecik, Muslim Minorities, vol. 33 (Brill, 2020), 500–52, https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004421516_013.

69 Kantonale Integrationsprogramme, *MIX: Magazin für Vielfalt* 1, ed. Kantonen BE / BL / BS / GR (Umlaut – Büro für Kommunikation, 2018), https://www.mixmagazin.ch.

70 For more information see the discussion in Chapter 2, section 2.2.2, as well as: Samuel M. Behloul, Susanne Leuenberger, and Andreas Tunger-Zanetti, eds., *Debating Islam: Negotiating Religion, Europe, and the Self*, Global Local Islam (transcript Verlag, 2013), https://doi.org/10.1515/transcript.9783839422496; Tunger-Zanetti, "'Against Islam, but not against Muslims.'"

factors: Switzerland's history of independence and protectionism at a national level, expressed especially in its neutrality, and its high degree of regulation and order. Switzerland has been militarily neutral for over 200 years, with roots stretching back much further. It is not a member of the European Union or other alliances, and did not join the United Nations until 2001. At the same time, it is situated between major European powers and maintains a military through compulsorily male conscription. This neutrality does not exempt Swiss responsibility or participation in European or world events. For instance, Swiss banks harbored plundered assets during World War II and Switzerland participated in and benefited from European colonialism.[71] Protectionism leads to a high degree of regulation, especially economic and social regulation. Import and export laws and taxes are established to protect Swiss industry, agriculture, and other interests. In addition, education and employment systems are highly regulated in order to guarantee adequate training, fair wages, and economic security, and the social welfare system is highly developed. These threads of protectionism, regulation, and cantonal independence have a unique impact on citizenship and migration systems.

As in other areas, citizenship is governed on three levels, the federal, cantonal, and municipal, and municipalities are the final arbiter of citizenship. As the State Secretary of Migration website states, "In the first place, the communes and cantons are responsible for naturalization matters. The Federal Government lays down the relevant criteria."[72] Citizenship is automatically granted to children only if they have at least one Swiss parent. Even if children are born in Switzerland, they must apply for citizenship through naturalization if they do not have a Swiss parent. Until 1921 cantonal governments regulated their own immigration laws, and today fi-

71 See: Harald Fischer-Tiné and Patricia Purtschert, eds., *Colonial Switzerland: Rethinking Colonialism from the Margins*, Cambridge Imperial and Post-Colonial Studies Series (Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137442741; Andreas Zangger, *Koloniale Schweiz: Ein Stück Globalgeschichte Zwischen Europa und Südostasien* (1860–1930) (transcript Verlag, 2011), Suvi Keskinen et al., eds., *Complying with Colonialism: Gender, Race, and Ethnicity in the Nordic Region* (Ashgate, 2009). These developments have roots in the history of colonialism and the solidification of the nation-state. Despite the fact that Switzerland was never a colonial power, it participated in and profited from colonial activities, including the service of Swiss citizens as mercenaries for British and Dutch companies, the Swiss textile industry's involvement in the slave trade, and the work of Swiss missionary organizations. These activities provided wealth from the colonies to Switzerland. In 2009 Swedish feminist researchers coined the phrase "complying with colonialism" in their book about Nordic involvement in colonial projects. In a similar vein, while Switzerland, a small, mountainous country, is often perceived as outside European politics, it was able to profit by partnering with colonial projects. Even Swiss neutrality positioned it to take advantage of opportunities, regardless of the consequences, and colonial imagery and ideals were reproduced in Swiss society.

72 Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft, FDJP, *Swiss Citizenship / Naturalization*.

nal citizenship decisions rest at the local level.[73] Each Swiss citizen has a designated *Heimatort* (home place), which is the local municipality where a person is considered a citizen. This municipality appears on legal documentation, including passports, and is distinct from the person's birthplace or place of residence. Historically, the *Heimatort* granted rights to its citizens and was passed patrilineally through families, with women automatically adopting the *Heimatort* of their spouse upon marriage.[74] But since 1988, women can maintain their own *Heimatort* and children can take the *Heimatort* of one or both of their Swiss parents. Thus, a *Heimatort* is sometimes a place where a person has never lived or a place to which a person has a limited personal connection. Yet, this highly local identification serves to reinforce historical notions of belonging.

In cases of naturalization, the federal government can give the ok ("green light") for a person's naturalization application to proceed, meaning that they have met the federal requirements for length of residence as well as criteria related to language, integration, and safety. These criteria also include familiarity with Swiss systems and the "Swiss way of life."[75]

> Under the revised Swiss Citizenship Act, a person may be naturalised if they hold a permanent residence permit, have resided in Switzerland for at least ten years, and are well integrated. A person is considered well integrated if they command one of the national languages, show respect for public security and order, respect the values of the Federal Constitution, participate in economic life or in gaining an education, and support the integration of their family. Persons wishing to become naturalised must furthermore be familiar with the Swiss way of life and not pose a risk to Switzerland's internal or external security.[76]

Once applicants meet the national requirements, they may apply for citizenship in their local canton. Cantonal governments have their own additional laws and requirements that vary between cantons. Finally, citizenship applicants must be approved by their local municipality. In Basel-Stadt there are three municipalities: Bettingen, Riehen, and Basel. Municipalities vet applicants in a variety of ways, from individual interviews and tests, up to and including a vote by all registered citizens

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73 Didier Ruedin, Camilla Alberti, and Gianni D'Amato, "Immigration and Integration Policy in Switzerland, 1848 to 2014," *Swiss Political Science Review* 21, no. 1 (2015), https://doi.org/10.1111/spsr.12144.

74 Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft, *Swiss Civil Code*, SR 210 (Fedlex, 1907), https://www.fedlex.admin.ch/eli/cc/24/233_245_233/en.

75 Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft, FDJP, *Swiss Citizenship / Naturalization*; Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft, *Bundesgesetz über die Ausländerinnen und Ausländer*, 142.20; Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft, *Bundesgesetz über das Schweizer* Bürgerrecht, 141.0.

76 Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft, FDJP, *Foreign Population and Asylum Statistics 2018*.

of the municipality on individual citizenship applicants.[77] In the city of Basel directly, naturalization applicants are interviewed by the local town council.[78] There have been some newsworthy examples of local citizens denying citizenship to long-term residents due to local disagreements. In one case, in the canton of Aargau, a long-term resident was repeatedly denied citizenship by vote of the local residents due to her vocal protest of the use of bells on cows, a long-standing and beloved Swiss tradition, based on her beliefs as a vegan.[79] There have also been several cases of municipalities rejecting citizenship applications of Muslim women who wore headscarves. In these cases, it was argued that the headscarf was "supposedly demonstrating that they were not willing to integrate and abide to 'Swiss values.'"[80] In two of the cases this argument was rejected, but in a third it was upheld based on other factors that indicated a lack of integration on the part of the applicant.[81]

3.6 Migration and Integration

While arguably rare, these disagreements over citizenship reflect an important piece of citizenship legislation and sentiment at each level: that new members of Swiss society are appropriately integrated in the "Swiss way of life." While integration can apply to other kinds of social integration,[82] assimilation or integration policies are key

77 Kanton Basel-Stadt, Justiz- und Sicherheitsdepartement, Bevölkerungsdienste und Migration, "Einbürgerungsverfahren," accessed October 20, 2019, https://www.bdm.bs.ch/Einbuergerung/Informationen-Einbuergerung.html#page_section3_section2.

78 Kanton Basel-Stadt, "Der Weg zum Schweizer Pass," (Justiz- und Sicherheitsdepartement, Bevölkerungsdienste und Migration, 2018), https://media.bs.ch/original_file/020137e862b03a982ab875ec405d4c8ce0614aac/der-weg-zum-schweizer-pass.pdf.

79 Megan Garber, "In Switzerland, You Can Be Denied Citizenship for Being Too Annoying," *The Atlantic*, January 14, 2017, https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2017/01/switzerland-citizenship-nancy-holten/513212/.

80 Vallier and Zimmermann, "Muslims' Rights in Switzerland," 537.

81 Vallier and Zimmermann, "Muslims' Rights in Switzerland," 537: Vallier and Zimmermann explain these decisions in detail: "The Federal Court was seized on several instances, after citizens' assemblies in various towns rejected citizenship applications of women wearing a headscarf, thus supposedly demonstrating that they were not willing to integrate and abide to 'Swiss values' (Federal Court, ATF 134 I 49; Federal Court, ATF 132 I 167; Federal Court, ATF 134 I 56). In two cases, the Federal Court affirmed that '[t]he mere fact of wearing a headscarf does not, in itself, constitute a lack of respect regarding democratic and constitutional values.' However, in a third case, the judges considered that the town decision was not discriminatory, because the applicant had effectively demonstrated insufficient integration (she had no contacts with the local population and was unwilling to integrate in the professional life) (Federal Court, ATF 132 I 167)."

82 Integration is a goal and policy that is reserved not only for migrants. Those who exist outside of Swiss social, economic, and other systems, such as those who are unemployed or otherwi-

elements of many migration systems and aim to bring newcomers into greater participation with structural and social systems in the receiving country.[83] There is often a tension between ensuring the ability of migrants to participate fully in the new society and maintaining previous connections and diverse practices. In Switzerland, integration is an especially important pillar of policies related to migration, with variable enforcement depending on whether the migrant arrives highly qualified or from a "third state." Yet, new laws continue to reinforce the centrality of integration in migration and citizenship policies at every level of Swiss government.

At the Swiss federal level, the most recent version of integration requirements was rolled out as the "Integration Agenda" and added as an amendment to the Foreign Nationals Act (FNA), which was renamed the Foreign Nationals and Integration Act (FNIA), further highlighting the importance of integration.[84] The amendments and new act became law in January 2019 for the entire Swiss federation, making integration a nationally supported program.[85] The federal government also increased the money allotted to cantons for integration and implementation of the Integration Agenda, which occurs in partnership with non-governmental organizations, both religious and secular. Integration law is refined at the cantonal and municipal levels with additional requirements and is evaluated across cantons by the *Kantonale Integrationsprogramme* (KIP).[86] The new law hopes to increase support for integration programs through earlier intervention and more intensive outreach to benefit both the Swiss government and migrants.[87]

According to the Swiss federal government, the goal of the Integration Agenda is "to ensure long-term integration in the domestic labour market and the local community."[88] In this vein, integration programs are designed to facilitate migrants' entry into the political, social, and cultural areas of local life.[89] Integration focuses on several criteria, many of which are reflected in the federal government's citizenship

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se reliant on the social welfare system, are also subject to integration programs. See: Kanton Basel-Stadt, Departement für Wirtschaft, Soziales und Umwelt, "Sozialhilfe: Soziale Integration," accessed October 26, 2018, https://www.sozialhilfe.bs.ch/-sozialhilfe/soziale-integration.html.

83 Susan K. Brown and Frank D. Bean, "Assimilation Models, Old and New: Explaining a Long-Term Process," *Migration Information Source* (2006), https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/assimilation-models-old-and-new-explaining-long-term-process.

84 Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft, *Bundesgesetz über die Ausländerinnen und Ausländer*, 142.20.

85 Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft, EJPD, *Migration Report 2018*.

86 Kantonale Integrationsprogramme, "Integrationsagenda: Früher Einsetzen und Intensivieren," Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft, State Secretariat for Migration (SEM), accessed April 20, 2020, http://www.kip-pic.ch/de/kip/integrationsagenda/.

87 Kantonale Integrationsprogramme, "Integrationsagenda: Früher Einsetzen und Intensivieren"; Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft, EJPD, *Migration Report 2018*.

88 Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft, EJPD, *Migration Report 2018*, 38.

89 Manatschal and Stadelmann-Steffen, "Cantonal Variations."

requirements, including participating in local political, educational, and economic activities; not posing a security risk; and achieving adequate proficiency in the local language.[90]

> Successful integration is demonstrated in particular by being able to communicate in a national language in everyday situations, orally and in writing (at least to B1 level orally and A2 level written), showing respect for public security and order, and the values enshrined in the Federal Constitution, participating in economic life or acquiring an education and encouraging and supporting the integration of family members. In addition, applicants must be familiar with the Swiss way of life and pose no risk to Switzerland's internal or external security.[91]

The aim of integration is not only to increase participation by newcomers in society, but also to prevent certain outcomes. Specially, it hopes to prevent the development of parallel communities (*Parallelgesellschaft*en) that exist outside the normative cultural landscape, reliance on the social welfare system, and criminal or disruptive activities. At the same time, the law's requirement to "be familiar with the Swiss way of life"[92] sets up a potentially wide range of interpretations of what it means to be "Swiss enough" to remain in the country.

Meeting integration requirements is critical to decisions pertaining to receiving "B" and "C" residence permits or receiving citizenship (as per the Swiss Citizenship Act – SCA).[93] Yet, because 60% of asylum applicants receive a positive decision (a "B" or "F" permit) and 95% of provisionally admitted people remain in Switzerland, the Swiss government considers it a priority to begin integration programs even before asylum decisions are rendered. Starting with this early intervention, integration has five prongs: ongoing case management, language learning, education, skills for the labor market, and "social integration."[94]

The high degree of regulation of Swiss economic and cultural systems further undergirds this focus on integration, since education, employment, health, and political participation are highly regulated by "rule structures."[95] The emphasis on rules and regulations is especially related to employment, as work is a very structured sys-

90 Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft, *Bundesgesetz über die Ausländerinnen und Ausländer*, 142.20, 26.

91 Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft, EJPD, *Migration Report 2018*.

92 Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft, *Bundesgesetz über die Ausländerinnen und Ausländer*, 142.20.

93 Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft, EJPD, *Migration Report 2018*.

94 Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft, EJPD, *Migration Report 2018*; Kantonale Integrationsprogramme, "Integrationsagenda: Früher einsetzen und intensivieren."

95 Bachmann, *Diskurse über MigrantInnen in Schweizer Integrationsprojekten*.

tem in Switzerland with high societal value.[96] The structure of employment systems clearly regulates involvement in this stratum of society. For example, during a conversation with an Eritrean refugee, who had no formal education before arriving in Switzerland, he described some places he had worked, mostly doing manual labor on the black market. He pointed out a house where he had worked for six hours for 15 CHF/hour carrying stones for new stone flooring that was being installed in the house. But even these jobs were few and far between. He told me:

> In Eritrea you can work but there is no money. You can work wherever, without school or training or having to be a certain age. But then you don't get paid. You can work for a whole day and at the end the person will say, no money, sorry. And you don't get anything. But here, in Switzerland, there are jobs and money, but you can't get them if you don't have the right schooling and internship and language skills.[97]

Integration is designed to help migrants build successful lives by meeting educational and language requirements for employment, thereby reducing the likelihood of relying on state support. Yet, there can be steep hurdles to entering these systems. Even migrants who received education before arriving in Switzerland find it difficult to obtain recognition for their training or degrees. In addition, Switzerland's systematic approach to education means many opportunities are limited to certain age groups (for many training programs participants must be under the age 25). Given the length of the asylum process, refugees often fear missing these age-related deadlines to pursue education.

The federal integration program is guided by the principle: "Expect and Encourage" (*Fordern und Fördern*).[98] This language reflects the emphasis, priority, and investment given to Switzerland's integration initiatives and the necessity of migrants' participation. Yet, as integration requirements become stricter, there is a shift from encouragement to requirement, and even compulsion.[99] Non-participation is not an option. This principle also reinforces integration as a one-way project, compelling

96 Kantonale Integrationsprogramme, *MIX: Magazin für Vielfalt*, 27–29. The publication explains the Swiss emphasis on employment. "'In der Schweiz hat die Arbeit einen hohen Stellenwert,' antwortet denn auch Adrian Gerber, Chef Integration beim Staatssekretariat für Migration (SEM), 'als Erstes auf die Frage, weshalb die Arbeitsmarktintegration in öffentlichen Debatten so viel Gewicht hat.'" See also: Manatschal and Stadelmann-Steffen, "Cantonal Variations."

97 Interview by Katherine Kunz, Basel, Switzerland, September 17, 2018: 20180917_Rheinschwimm_II, Pos. 12.

98 Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft, EJPD, *Migration Report 2018*; Bachmann, *Diskurse über MigrantInnen in Schweizer Integrationsprojekten*, 35.

99 Eva Mey and Peter Streckeisen, "'Integration von Ausländern': Eine kritische Reflexion" (Züricher Hochschule für Angewandte Wissenschaften; Soziale Arbeit; Institut für Vielfalt und

newcomers to adopt to the normative culture without similar requirements for the receiving community.[100] There is an assumption that the "Swiss way of life" has specific parameters that should shape new arrivals in Switzerland but not be reciprocally changed by them. There is also insufficient acknowledgement of the diversity that already exists within Swiss society.[101]

This emphasis on integration of immigrants is rooted in a historical view of migration as a problem and the "Swiss way of life" as something to be protected. Starting in 1931, migration law included a clause that decisions related to migration should take into account the *Überfremdung des Landes* (over-foreignization of the country).[102] This terminology remained in law until it was removed in 2008. Yet, the threat of losing the "Swiss way of life" by an influx of immigrants remains an implicit feature of migration and integration policies, as seen in the results of popular votes related to those perceived as other.[103] A 2006 report by the federal government was entitled "Problems of Integration of Foreigners in Switzerland."[104] Even today, oppositional language framing migration as an issue of the other continues to dominate integration policies and rhetoric in Switzerland, with words such as "native" and "foreign" or "Swiss culture" and "alien culture."[105] In recent years, as in other European countries, the focus on "over-foreignization" has shifted to Islam and integrating Muslim migrants.[106]

Integration and assimilation vary along a scale, with assimilation usually denoting a more intensive effort to bring migrants into normative systems and integration often assuming that communities maintain some of their cultural diversity.

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gesellschaftliche Teilhabe, 2019), https://www.zhaw.ch/storage/shared/sozialearbeit/News/white-paper-integration-von-auslaendern.pdf, 4.

100 Jesus A. Garcia, "Resisting Assimilation and Other Forms of Integration," *Sociology Compass* 10, no. 6 (2016), https://doi.org/10.1111/soc4.12365; Mey and Streckeisen, "Integration von Ausländern."

101 Mey and Streckeisen, "Integration von Ausländern."

102 Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft, *Bundesgesetz über die Ausländerinnen und Ausländer*, 142.20. The provision reads: "Die Bewilligungsbehörden haben bei ihren Entscheidungen die geistigen und wirtschaftlichen Interessen sowie den Grad der Überfremdung des Landes zu berücksichtigen."

103 Ruedin, Alberti, and D'Amato, "Immigration and Integration Policy in Switzerland, 1848 to 2014."

104 Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft, Bundesamt für Justiz, BJ, *Probleme der Integration von Ausländerinnen und Ausländern in der Schweiz: Bestandesaufnahme der Fakten, Ursachen, Risikogruppen, Massnahmen und des integrationspolitischen Handlungsbedarfs* (Bundesamt für Migration, 2006), https://www.bj.admin.ch/bj/de/home/publiservice/publikationen/berichte-gutachten/2006-07.html.

105 Mey and Streckeisen, "Integration von Ausländern."

106 Bloemraad, Korteweg, and Yurdakul, "Citizenship and Immigration."

At its most extreme, assimilation means total conformity to systems and social expectations. As sociologists Richard Alba and Victor Nee write, "In the most general terms, assimilation can be defined as the decline, and at its endpoint the disappearance, of an ethnic/racial distinction and the cultural and social differences that express it."[107]

In Switzerland, integration laws set up strict guidelines and focus heavily on singular notions of belonging.[108] Therefore, Switzerland is often considered to have a more "exclusivist" integration policy or an "assimilationist integration policy,"[109] in contrast to more inclusive policies that assume a higher rate of cultural difference between integrated groups.[110] As Swiss political scientist Anita Manatschal writes, "Support of cultural difference through specific policy measures is much more restricted in typically assimilationist countries like Switzerland compared with traditionally multiculturalist countries such as the Netherlands."[111] Switzerland has a narrower concept of belonging and stricter guidelines for entry into society. Integration ensures that new residents of Switzerland adapt to Swiss standards in civic and social areas, regulates rights and obligations, mediates inclusion and exclusion, and defines belonging and difference.[112] This can be seen in recent educational debates in Basel-Stadt about whether Muslim parents can restrict their children's participation in required swim courses. Recent rulings have sided with the obligation to educate children over the religious rights of parents.[113] These cases also reflect the growing focus of many European integration programs on Muslim migrants.

For asylum-seekers, integration expectations exert a considerable amount of influence over their daily lives. Many asylum-seekers understand that there is a need to integrate in order to survive in the highly structured Swiss system and that integration requirements can create hurdles and exclusions for those who do not already ar-

107 Richard Alba and Victor Nee, "Rethinking Assimilation Theory for a New Era of Immigration," in Special Issue, "Immigrant Adaptation and Native-Born Responses in the Making of Americans," *The International Migration Review* 31, no. 4 (1997), https://doi.org/10.2307/2547416.

108 Manatschal and Stadelmann-Steffen, "Cantonal Variations."

109 Ruud Koopmans, "Trade-Offs Between Equality and Difference: Immigrant Integration, Multiculturalism, and the Welfare State in Cross-National Perspective," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 36, no. 1 (2010), https://doi.org/10.1080/13691830903250881; Manatschal and Stadelmann-Steffen, "Cantonal Variations"; Bachmann, *Diskurse über MigrantInnen in Schweizer Integrationsprojekten*.

110 Manatschal and Stadelmann-Steffen, "Cantonal Variations."

111 Manatschal and Stadelmann-Steffen, "Cantonal Variations," 678.

112 Manatschal and Stadelmann-Steffen, "Cantonal Variations."

113 Marius Rohrer, "Basel's 'Swimming Refuseniks': A Systemic Study on How Politics Observe Muslim Claims to Diversity in State Schools," in *Debating Islam: Negotiating Religion, Europe, and the Self*, ed. Samuel M. Behloul, Susanne Leuenberger, and Andreas Tunger-Zanetti, Global Local Islam (transcript Verlag, 2013), https://doi.org/10.14361/transcript.9783839422496.263.

rive "highly-qualified" by Swiss standards.[114] Yet, they must balance the uncertainty of whether they can remain in Switzerland with the pressure to meet integration requirements in the interim. This tension particularly manifests in a focus on learning the local language and a pressure to adapt to the "Swiss way of life," as seen in the "Expect and Encourage" principle, which creates pressure on asylum-seekers to focus on meeting requirements and adapting to Swiss systems and values.

3.7 Home and Asylum-Seeking

Home is defined by affective experiences as well as by legal and political systems and social expectations. For migrants, especially those waiting for decisions on their cases, experiences of home and belonging are shaped by the place where they arrive, its citizenship and migration systems, and expectations for integration. These systems reflect unique historical and social circumstances. In Switzerland these include the federal model of government and its high degree of cantonal independence, the concept of a "Swiss way of life" as something definable and attainable, and systemized migration and integration systems. These policies and protocols have an assimilationist tendency in Switzerland, and integration is guided by its "Expect and Encourage" principle. They seek to shape newcomers through normative values so that newcomers can participate in Swiss systems of employment, education, and civic engagement. But they also have the effect of reducing difference and setting strict social and legal hurdles for remaining in Switzerland. As a consequence, many asylum-seekers feel it is necessary to focus fully on the requirements needed to integrate into the Swiss system, both legally and socially. This aspect of distancing from the home that was left and focusing on Swiss requirements of belonging will be explored in a later chapter.

114 Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft, Bundesamt für Statistik, *Anteil Der Angestellten Mit Tertiärausbildung, Die Einen Beruf Ausüben, Für Den Eine Solche Ausbildung Nicht Notwendig Ist Nach Migrationsstatus*, accessed April 23, 2021, https://www.bfs.admin.ch/asset/de/19584393.