

# Regional Responses to Emigration: Historical Comparative Analysis of Cantons Neuchâtel and Glarus

## Abstract

Through a historical comparative analysis of the two Swiss cantons of Neuchâtel and Glarus, this study seeks to answer the question of how regional governments perceive and address emigration in contexts where it is not prioritised at the national level. Regional responses are significant, as emigration can deepen territorial imbalances and undermine state cohesion. Empirically, the paper is based on a qualitative analysis of policy documents and interviews with regional policymakers and officials. It finds that emigration policies are highly selective, embedded within other policy frameworks, and best understood through political intent rather than explicit policy labels. Additionally, emigration is not always problematic and can sometimes serve as a solution, and responses involve incorporating residential-based development strategies rather than relying solely on export-oriented models.

**Keywords:** Emigration, Switzerland, growth-models, Neuchâtel, Glarus.

## Introduction

In public discussions, Western European countries are often portrayed as mere destinations for immigration (Kyriazi et al., 2023). However, shifting the analytical perspective from the national to the regional level reveals a more complex scenario, with some regions experiencing a demographic boom due to international or internal immigration while others face relative or absolute decline due to emigration.

Regional emigration, whether to the rest of the state or abroad, could result in demographic decline, economic downturn, and political contestation. Although this work focuses on the policy responses to regional emigration and not the political contestation of the phenomenon, studying emigration from the regional perspective is important for different reasons: Firstly, the cost of interregional migration is significantly lower than that of international migration, given the integration of domestic markets and the absence of entry/exit requirements. Furthermore, inter-regional emigration may exacerbate existing territorial imbalances, thus jeopardising state

cohesion. Finally, regions are embedded in a political and constitutional relationship with the central state, the other regions, and the municipalities. This makes it crucial to understand how they navigate emigration flows given their defined constitutional competencies and multilevel relationship. This study examines the policy implications of mobility flows at the subnational level, focusing on how regions respond to emigration when it lacks national salience. It seeks to identify the conditions under which emigration becomes problematised locally and to analyse the resulting policy responses and their underlying growth models.

The prevailing orthodoxy suggests that emigration is only significant for ‘sending’ states and at the national level, where scholars have focused on containing brain drain (Lenard, 2021; Yuksekdog, 2019). This paper challenges that perspective by focusing on Switzerland—an unlikely case for national emigration concerns, given its economic and population growth. The cantons of Glarus and Neuchâtel were chosen as case studies due to their comparable structural conditions—specifically, industrial history and episodes of demographic contraction.

The analysis begins in 1970, a decade marked by economic crisis and rising emigration from historically industrial regions. The study draws on qualitative analysis of policy documents and interviews with regional government officials, and the findings contribute to the literature in three ways: Conceptually, it shows that emigration policies are embedded in broader socio-economic agendas and should be interpreted through their political intentions rather than formal labels. In this sense, it underscores how post-industrial, declining regions adapt to emigration by integrating residential-based economic strategies alongside traditional export-oriented approaches. Empirically, it demonstrates that emigration is not always a problem and policy responses are selective.

In the following sections, I explore the broader literature on the implications of emigration before presenting my research design and analytical framework. Subsequent sections provide an empirical overview of my case studies, followed by an analysis of key policy proxies—shaped by the cantons' development approaches—that have been used to respond to emigration. I then summarise my findings and conclude with prospects for future research.

## The Politics and Economics of Regional Emigration

Although often overshadowed by immigration in European migration studies, studying emigration remains crucial for its demographic, economic, and political impacts at both regional and national levels (Bruzelius, 2021; Kyriazi et al., 2023). While national perspectives (Botev,

2012; Hirschman, 1993) dominate the literature on emigration, the phenomenon has also been examined at the European Union level (Roos, 2021; Udochi, 2026) and the regional level in countries such as the United States (Romans, 1974), Italy (Bonifazi et al., 2021), Spain (López-Gay, 2014), and Germany (Weisskircher, 2020). In economic terms, regional emigration has an ambiguous impact on regional income. On one hand, it could have a detrimental effect on rural economies (Bonifazi et al., 2021) and regional income (Myrdal, 1957; Okun and Richardson, 1961), particularly if emigrants have above-average earnings (Weisbrod, 1966), while also shifting the tax burden and the cost of public services onto lower-income residents (Weisbrod, 1964). On the other hand, emigration can benefit remaining workers by driving wages upward (Romans, 1974) and also reduce local prices by lowering demand for domestically produced and consumed goods (Greenwood, 1973).

Emigration also reinforces territorial inequalities by drawing young, educated, and productive individuals, which boosts productivity in receiving regions while reducing it in sending regions (Myrdal, 1957). This, in turn, amplifies wage and economic disparities, fuelling further emigration (Myrdal, 1957). Also, emigration results in a loss of the spillover benefits of public investment in education (Romans, 1974). However, this loss is limited if knowledge and skills are freely transferable across regions (Greenwood, 1975). Nonetheless, when a region loses individuals—whose education was funded by local taxes—it also loses the ability to tax the higher earnings that their education enables, hampering the recoupment of educational investment (Johnson, 1965).

Politically, emigration diminishes the political influence of sending regions, as population size plays a key role in determining political power at the national level (Grubel and Scott, 1966). Additionally, emigration can result in the rise of right-wing parties in specific regions of Germany (Weisskircher, 2020) and Sweden (Dancygier et al., 2025) by altering the electorate's composition and influencing the preferences of those who remain (Dancygier et al., 2025). Furthermore, emigration reduces the number of young people, educated individuals, and women in public office while leading to a decline in political participation (Anelli and Peri, 2017). These regional studies have mostly addressed the political and economic implications of emigration. However, how regions respond to the phenomenon is still largely underexplored.

Emigration is not always viewed as a problem; historically, it has also served as a means to remove certain groups, such as the poor (Constantine, 1990) or marginalised minorities (Dowty, 1987), and has frequently been used to support domestic or foreign policy aims (Kaya and Drhimeur, 2022). These perspectives, however, are very state-focused, making it crucial to

understand how regions perceive and react to emigration, especially when it is not politicised nationally.

Existing scholarship documents the impacts of emigration on development, fiscal capacity, and political influence, but offers limited insight into how subnational governments interpret and respond to these dynamics when emigration lacks national salience. This paper fills that gap by shifting attention from the consequences of emigration to the governance of emigration at the regional level. As regions are unable to explicitly control “exit,” this paper claims that their responses are embedded in broader socio-economic strategies and must be identified through policy proxies and political intent rather than formal policy labels. To interpret these proxies analytically, the paper applies a regional growth-model framework. It argues that emigration is problematised when it undermines the reproduction conditions of a canton’s development strategy, prompting policy responses aimed at stabilising or reconfiguring that strategy—most notably through a shift from a predominantly export-oriented model towards a hybrid approach incorporating residential-economy mechanisms. By examining the impact of emigration on regional development strategies, this paper attempts to better integrate emigration into the regional development literature and to connect the region to broader discussions of emigration that have predominantly emerged from a state-centric perspective.

## Research Design

This research investigates the policy implications of regional emigration through the Swiss cantons of Neuchâtel and Glarus. Here, a region is defined as a recognised political and territorial space embedded as an intermediate between the national and local levels with the capacity to frame and debate issues, make choices, and allocate resources (Keating, 1997). Additionally, I define regional emigration as the crossing of a regional jurisdictional boundary for long-term stay or settlement. In Switzerland, this movement, although mostly from one canton to another (interregional), could also be from a canton to a different country (international). Consequently, emigration policies are policies intended to influence either the volume or the composition of emigration flows (De Haas and Vezzoli, 2011).

Switzerland was selected as the least likely case for emigration concerns nationally, given its stability, prosperity, fiscal equalisation mechanisms, immigration-induced population growth, and low territorial inequalities (Stohr, 2018). Hence, I expect that if emigration matters for peripheral regions of Switzerland, then it could also matter for peripheral regions elsewhere. The

cantons of Neuchâtel and Glarus were selected for their shared structural characteristics, namely long-term industrial history and demographic contraction since the economic crisis of the early 1970s. While cantons like Vaud, Geneva, and Zurich saw population booms between 1971 and 1980, population in Neuchâtel dropped by 5.4%, and in Glarus by 4.7%. Since then, both cantons have experienced certain periods of demographic stagnation and shrinkage. However, both cantons differ in ways that may shape emigration and policy responses. Glarus, located in East/Central Switzerland within the Zurich agglomeration, is both exposed to potential brain drain and positioned to benefit from Zurich's demographic expansion. By contrast, Neuchâtel, in Western Switzerland, lacks similar proximity to a comparable economic hub, limiting similar risk and opportunity. Additionally, Neuchâtel has politically mostly maintained a strong left-wing majority, whereas Glarus has maintained a centre-right dominance. Furthermore, Neuchâtel has a university, unlike Glarus, which enhances its capacity to retain and attract students.

I began by qualitatively analysing economic and social policy documents from the two cantons between 1970 and 2022 to understand the implicit or explicit role of emigration within them. Policy documents were primarily obtained from the official websites of the respective cantonal administrations using the keywords "emigration," "population decline," and "brain drain," "demography", which are commonly associated with the literature (Anelli & Peri, 2017; Botev, 2012). Additional documents were collected during in-person visits to the relevant cantonal departments. In total, 9 policy documents in German were analysed for Glarus, and 10 in French for Neuchâtel, all of which have been properly cited and referenced. All documents were translated into English using the DeepL translation tool, followed by verification from native speakers.

Additionally, 11 semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders and experts in Neuchâtel were conducted to elucidate the intended emigration implications of relevant policies. Interviewees included cantonal and municipal officials identified through policy documents and snowball sampling. In Glarus, a public event was first held to introduce the research topic and identify stakeholders, followed by 9 semi-structured interviews with cantonal and municipal officials, journalists, and private-sector employers identified through the event and snowballing. Ethical standards were fully observed: participation was voluntary, interviewees were informed of the research purpose and their right to withdraw, and oral consent was obtained for data use. With consent, interviews were recorded, transcribed, and analysed separately using qualitative coding and interpretive techniques. Interviews were conducted in English, French, and German, with transcripts translated via DeepL and verified by native speakers.

Table 1 shows the list of interviewees.

Table 1: List of Interviews

<b>Case</b>	<b>Office</b>	<b>Code</b>	<b>Mode</b>
<b>Neuchâtel</b>	Cantonal Domiciliation Strategy	NE1	In-person
	Tax Department	NE2	In-person
	Municipality of Val de Travers	NE3	In-person
	External Relations and Communications	NE4	In-person
	Economic Department	NE5	In-person
	Department of Territorial Development	NE6	Webex
	Department of Justice, Security, and Finance	NE7	Email
	Municipality of Neuchâtel	NE8	In-person
	Labor Market Office	NE9	In-person
	University of Neuchâtel	NE10	In-person
	University of Neuchâtel	NE11	In-person

<b>Glarus</b>	Cantonal Chancellery	GL1	In-person
	Municipality of Glarus North Secretariat	GL2	Webex
	Cantonal Location Promotion	GL3	In-person
	Municipality of Glarus North Presidium	GL4	In-person
	Location Promotion, Glarus South	GL5	In-person
	Department of Forest and Agriculture, Municipality of Glarus	GL6	In-person
	Cantonal Office for Municipalities	GL7	In-person
	Independent Journalist	GL8	In-person
	Private Sector Employer	GL9	In-person

The empirical analysis employs a historical-comparative design, reflecting the long-term and incremental nature of emigration problematisation and policy responses across multiple domains. Policy documents and interview transcripts were coded to capture (i) the timing and framing of emigration as a problem; (ii) the resident groups implicitly or explicitly targeted; (iii) the policy proxies deployed; and (iv) the mechanisms through which these proxies are expected to affect retention, attraction, or population composition. Historical policy reconstruction thus

serves as a methodological strategy to trace shifts in cantonal development logics, rather than as a distinct analytical framework.

## Analytical Framework: Growth Models and Emigration

### Policy Proxies

A key challenge in analysing emigration at the regional level is that policymakers cannot implement measures that explicitly restrict or prevent individuals from leaving. Subnational governments cannot restrict mobility, yet they shape the conditions under which staying becomes more or less viable for specific groups. Accordingly, this article identifies regional responses to emigration through policy proxies embedded in fiscal, social, and development agendas—most visibly in tax policy, family support, housing facilitation, territorial marketing, and municipal or administrative reforms affecting service provision and fiscal capacity. While empirically framed as “tax reform,” “economic promotion,” “cantonal marketing,” or “municipal restructuring,” their relevance to emigration governance is inferred from political intent and the mechanisms through which they aim to retain, attract, or selectively shape resident populations.

To interpret these proxies without reducing the analysis to descriptive policy history, the paper adopts a growth-model lens adapted to the regional scale. Growth-model debates in comparative political economy have largely been developed at the national level, often contrasting production-centred accounts (e.g., *Varieties of Capitalism*) emphasising institutional configurations and competitiveness (Hall and Soskice, 2001) with approaches that foreground demand, consumption, and the coalitions that sustain distinct growth trajectories (Baccaro and Pontusson, 2016; Baccaro et al., 2022). For this article, the main value of this literature is not to resolve debates about national growth theories, but to enhance the analytical framework of treating development strategies as patterned configurations of policies that prioritise certain income sources and social groups, and recognising that these configurations can shift over time in response to economic and demographic pressures.

At the regional level, this analytical distinction is between an export-oriented growth model and a residential-economy model. The export-oriented model is rooted in economic base theory and related traditions that treat the production of tradable goods and services and the attraction of firms as primary drivers of growth (Hoyt, 1954; Moulaert and Sekia, 2003; Porter, 1998). In this framework, place-based policy prioritises job creation, investment attraction, and cluster-building, and population retention is expected to follow indirectly from improved employment

prospects. The residential-economy logic instead foregrounds the circulation of incomes tied to residence, including commuters' earnings generated elsewhere, pensions and transfers, and other non-local income streams that sustain local consumption and services (Davezies, 2008, 2009). From this perspective, development strategy is not only about producing for export but also about securing and reproducing a stable resident base. Policies therefore target the feasibility and desirability of living in the canton, including fiscal conditions for households, work-family compatibility, housing pathways, and the territorial image that mediates residential choice.

The relationship between emigration governance and regional growth models is, therefore, understood as a two-way process. First, a canton's growth model influences when emigration becomes problematic and what types of emigration are seen as costly, whether due to loss of taxpayers, working-age households, or reputational effects that reinforce decline. Second, once emigration is considered problematic, governments adopt policy proxies that either sustain an export-oriented strategy or shift it towards a hybrid approach that combines residential-economy mechanisms with production-centred goals. The article, therefore, views shifts in policy proxies not merely as reactive measures but as signs of an evolving regional growth or development model.

## 1970s to 2000s: Emigration as a short-term solution

In both cantons, the initial response to the industrial crisis unfolded within a predominantly export-oriented growth model. Policy makers focused on sustaining production and exports, while emigration—especially of redundant workers—was treated less as a policy problem than as a labour-market adjustment mechanism.

### Neuchâtel

Canton Neuchâtel, once the hub of Swiss watchmaking, experienced strong economic growth from 1944 to 1974, driven by post-World-War-II demand and the decline of European competitors (Twinam, 2022). However, the mid-1970s quartz crisis struck due to Swiss watchmakers' slow adoption of new technology (Landes, 2000), rising Japanese competition (Twinam, 2022), industry fragmentation (Aguillaume, 2006; Donzé, 2014), and a strong Swiss Franc (Donzé, 2014; Twinam, 2022).

Before the crisis, watchmaking employed 24% of all workers and nearly 60% of secondary-sector workers in Neuchâtel (Garufo, 2015). By 1990, only 11% worked in the industry, and total employment fell by 9% between 1970 and 1980 (Twinam, 2022). Between 1974 and 1985, the canton's population dropped by almost 8%, while Switzerland's overall population grew by 2% (Federal Statistics Office, 2023c). Many affected workers, including foreign nationals legally required to leave, emigrated (Aguillaume, 2006; Twinam, 2022).

In response to the crisis, Neuchâtel enacted an economic promotion law in 1978 (Grand Conseil, 1978) that did not frame emigration as a problem, but rather as a necessary consequence of workforce redundancies. The primary concern at the time was the broader economic downturn—characterised by declining exports, job losses, and reduced public revenues—underpinned by the assumption that people would return once employment opportunities reemerged. Exogenously, the law facilitated the hiring of a consultant to attract foreign companies, offering tax incentives that led to the establishment of 350 firms and the creation of 2500 jobs between 1979 and 1993 (Forster and Jeanrenaud, 1993). Internally, it supported business diversification and local innovation by funding 141 projects between 1979 and 1992 (Maillat and Schnetter, 2000). Both strategies were further reinforced by the federal Bonny Decree, which provided loan guarantees and tax relief to promote employment in economically vulnerable regions (Maillat and Schnetter, 2000).

## Glarus

Canton Glarus began its industrialisation with handcraft spinning in the 18th century, shifting to mechanised textile production by the late 19th century and expanding into metal and machinery industries by the early 20th century (Morisson et al., 2021). Post-World War II prosperity fuelled further growth, especially in textiles, construction, and metalwork (Feller-Vest et al., 2011; Von Arx et al., 2005). However, the 1970s oil crisis and the 1990s recession severely disrupted this trajectory, exposing the canton's vulnerability to industrial shocks (Laupper et al., 2017).

In response to the crisis, Glarus passed an economic promotion law (GS IX A/2, 1973) offering credit-based incentives for job creation. Nonetheless, employment fell from 13,700 in 1960 to 9500 by 1990 (Morisson et al., 2021), and the population declined from about 38,000 in 1971 to 36,000 in 1980 (Federal Statistics Office, 2023c). Though a temporary recovery brought the population to 39,410, the 1990s recession triggered renewed industrial shutdowns and a decline to 38,322 inhabitants by 2003.

As in Neuchâtel, Glarus' industries relied heavily on foreign labour, although unemployed domestic workers were also forced to emigrate. Emigration was not explicitly problematised in the economic promotion law; instead, economic downturns and falling exports were framed as the real issues. The challenges faced by foreign workers in Switzerland— whose permits were largely annual or seasonal— during the economic crises of the 1970s and 1990s have been well documented (Katzenstein, 1980; Leitner, 1986). The 1970s crisis provided both an opportunity and a justification for Swiss authorities at the cantonal and federal levels to enforce stabilisation policies while actively reducing the number of foreign workers by not renewing temporary permits, citing the need to protect local jobs (Leitner, 1986). Between 1973 and 1976, approximately 250,000 foreign workers and 8,000 Swiss citizens exited the workforce due to return migration, hiring freezes, and contract expirations (Katzenstein, 1980).

Interviews reinforce this narrative: NE10 from Neuchâtel noted that foreign workers “*had to leave as jobs disappeared*”, while NE11 explained that emigration was indeed an “*immediate solution to unemployment*”. GL9 from Glarus similarly observed that “*Unemployed foreign and local workers had to leave as industries shut down and there were no more jobs*”. Therefore, during the economic crisis, emigration—especially of foreign workers—was less a problem and more of a strategic solution to unemployment and labour market adjustments.

## 2000s to 2020s: Rediscovery of a problem

Policies introduced from the early 2000s constitute a turning point in which emigration moved from an implicit adjustment mechanism to an explicitly problematised issue, becoming a central policy concern alongside the simultaneous adoption of a residential-oriented regional growth strategy. This shift is reflected in the reorientation of tax, childcare, housing, and marketing policies toward retaining existing residents and attracting new ones, particularly middle-income households and taxpayers.

### Neuchâtel

The 1978 economic promotion policy in Neuchâtel successfully created jobs and diversified the economy beyond watchmaking (Forster and Jeanrenaud, 1993; Maillat and Schnetter, 2000). Between 1985 and 2009, the population increased due to positive net-migration, despite a rise in emigration over the years. However, the first problematisation of emigration emerged in a 2011 report from the Council of State to the Grand Council regarding a tax reform bill (Conseil d'Etat,

2011). The report problematised emigration since 2001, emphasising the continuous annual net departure of taxpayers. Between 2001 and 2009, these departures led to a loss of CHF 241 million in taxable income and CHF 90 million in estimated revenue. Most who left were middle-income earners aged 20 to 60 (Conseil d'Etat, 2011).

In 2013, emigration, especially inter-cantonal, reached its highest level since the watchmaking crisis, although net-migration remained positive. That year, a tax reform introducing full childcare cost deductions was implemented, and a 200 CHF tax rebate per child was added the following year. The policy had a label of “tax-reform” with a written objective of giving “significant tax cuts for all citizens of the canton, with a particular emphasis on families, especially those where both spouses are employed” (Canton Neuchâtel, 2023a). However, my interview with NE7 sheds light on the motivation for the reforms: *“To make the canton more attractive for residency, we have implemented major tax reforms over the last decade, resulting in tax savings for all categories of taxpayers and particularly for working families.”*

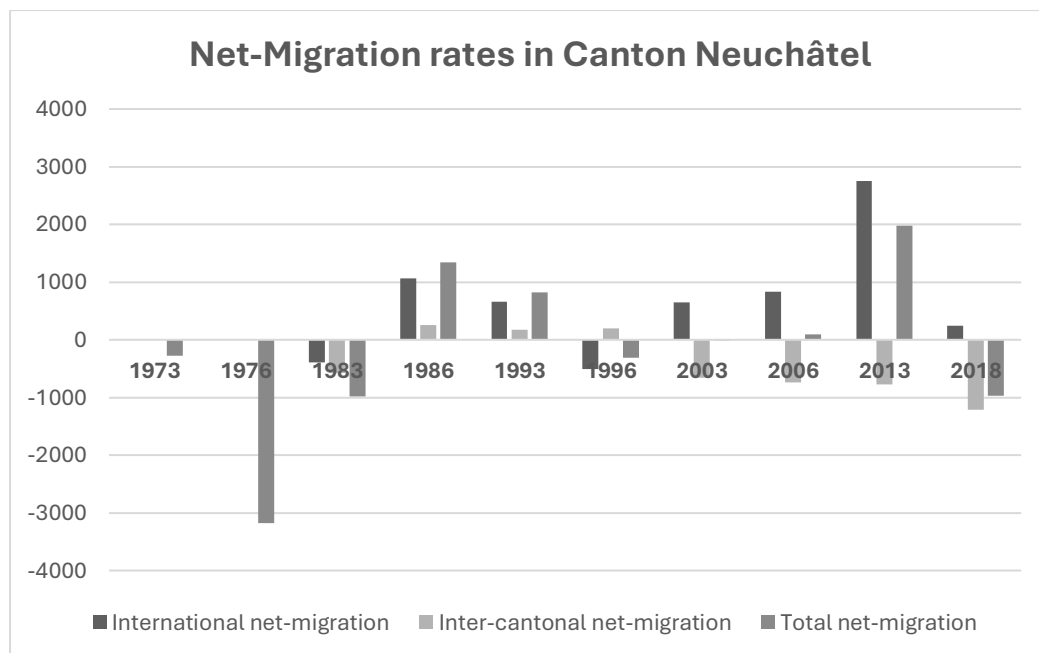
At the municipal level, population loss led to financial and administrative challenges—prompting mergers to stabilise finances, improve services, and enhance competitiveness. The number of municipalities decreased from 62 in 2008 to 27 today. Mergers included Val-de-Travers in 2009 and Valde-Ruz in 2013, both with populations over 10,000, as well as Thielle-Wavre and Marin forming La Tène in 2009 and Auvèrnier, Bôle, and Colombier forming Milvignes in 2013 (Ville de Neuchâtel, 2016). Further consolidation occurred in 2016 when BrotDessous and Rochefort merged into Rochefort (Ville de Neuchâtel, 2016). In 2021, CorcellesCormondrèche, Neuchâtel, Peseux, and Valangin merged, following a 2014 process. In the words of NE3 on the mergers, *“Population loss was important; this was why we decided to have a merger in 2009. It was the biggest merger ever had in Switzerland at the time, aimed at giving the municipalities more power. Our first preoccupation was to reverse this tendency of demographic and economic decline”.*

In 2015, a new economic promotion law introduced strategic business areas to amplify the strengths and know-how of the region (Loi 900.10, 2015). However, negative net-migration in 2017 and 2018 marked a reversal of previous trends (Federal Statistical Office, 2023a), as shown in Figure 1. In response, the cantonal government prioritised residential attractiveness in its 2018–2021 legislative program, with the stated goal of “improving the framework conditions offered by the canton and actively promoting the canton's residential assets” (Canton Neuchâtel, 2017). More tax reforms were also introduced with additional deductions for children, a reduction in the maximum tax rate and general tax scale, and lower homeownership

taxes (Canton Neuchâtel, 2023a, 2023b). Corporate income taxes were also significantly reduced, dropping from 22.18% in 2007 to 13.6% in 2019 (KPMG, 2023). As confirmed by NE2, “The 2019 reform was mostly targeted at middle-income families”. NE7 further adds, “Savings from our tax reform can even exceed 30% for certain categories, particularly working families, i.e., those where both spouses are in employment and have children, especially if they own their own home”.

Additionally, the canton created Switzerland’s first domiciliation office and launched a policy labelled ‘domiciliation strategy’ aimed at enhancing the canton’s residential appeal through marketing, housing, healthcare, and social initiatives (Canton Neuchâtel, 2021). The document specifically problematised inter-cantonal emigration, which had led to a cumulative loss of 14,600 residents since 2000, with most emigrants relocating to neighbouring cantons (Canton Neuchâtel, 2021).

Figure 1: International and inter-cantonal net-migration rates of Canton Neuchâtel. Source: Author’s compilation from Federal Statistics Office(2023b)



The domiciliation strategy was developed under the 3A framework—*Ancrer* (Anchoring), *Attirer* (Attracting), and *Accueillir* (Welcoming)—to enhance Neuchâtel’s residential appeal. The canton’s response to emigration, therefore, involves trying to not only anchor existing residents but also attract and welcome new ones. To promote this initiative, the newly established domiciliation officer launched a media marketing campaign titled “*Neuchâtel: un canton à vivre*” (Neuchâtel: A Canton to Live In). This campaign featured a dedicated website, social media

channels with a distinctive brand logo, short promotional videos, and multilingual media outreach. To better understand emigration drivers, the domiciliation office also surveyed both recent and past emigrants and has since then introduced other measures to encourage domiciliation.

To address family concerns and strengthen work-life balance, the canton introduced “*Ma journée à l'école*” (My Day in School). This initiative, developed in collaboration with local associations, aims to expand childcare services to meet evolving societal and family needs, promote equal opportunities for children, support parental workforce participation by improving childcare access, bridge school and extracurricular care, and increase the canton's appeal to families (Canton Neuchâtel, 2023c).

Recognising that homeownership fosters long-term residency, the domiciliation office actively promotes housing opportunities. The domiciliation officer partners with the building department to identify available properties and encourages homeowners over 85 years old to transition to care homes, freeing up housing for younger residents. As NE1 stated, *"Housing is also foreseen in the strategy, as it is a form of anchoring people. We have tried to find ways to make it easier for people to become homeowners. In general, advertising options for home ownership is a way of accelerating the move towards home ownership. When people have a house, it is emotionally difficult to leave it"*. The Annex includes a table that outlines the net migration balance and associated policies across the years, highlighting their labels, stated intentions, and implicit intentions.

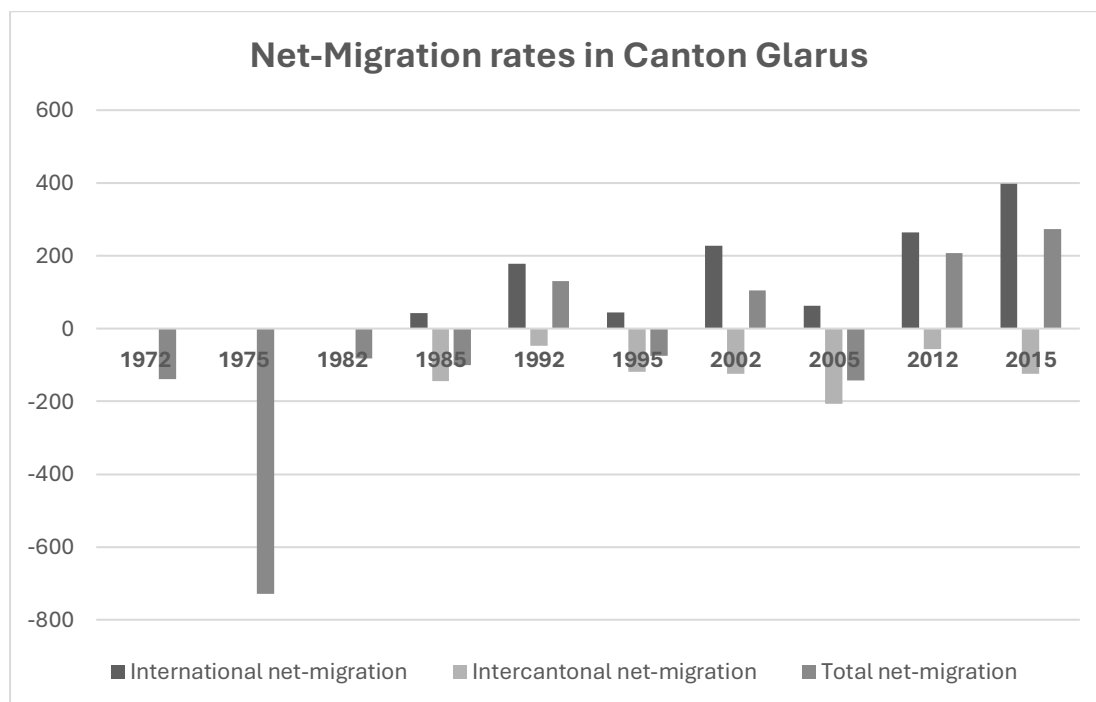
## Glarus

In Glarus, the demographic decline following the economic crisis was addressed by the cantonal government in 2004 with a proposal to reform the municipal structure (Kanton Glarus, 2004). At that time, the canton had 25 local municipalities, 18 school municipalities, 16 welfare municipalities, and 9 Tagwen. This proposal came after net-migration turned negative in 2004, signalling a shift similar to Neuchâtel, where emigration became a policy concern amid population decline. The reform aimed to consolidate municipalities into three: Glarus North, Glarus, and Glarus South. This proposal was approved in 2006 and implemented in 2011. Speaking on the reform, GL1 said, *"The issue of emigration began in the 1970s and 80s, but only gained political attention in 2004. While Switzerland's population grew, Glarus did not. The merger aimed to save money and rationalise spending in response to demographic decline. Raising taxes was not an option, as we had to remain below the national average"*.

The canton has no university and relies on nearby institutions. Consequently, many students do not return after their studies, contributing to demographic decline, particularly among youth and young working-age populations, with the southern part of the canton most affected. Between 2004 and 2006, Glarus experienced consistent negative net-migration (Federal Statistical Office, 2023b), as shown in Figure 2.

From the late 2000s, policies shifted from focusing solely on job creation to also addressing resident retention and attraction. Between 2007 and 2022, the canton introduced tax reforms that reduced corporate income tax by 4.3%, exceeding the Swiss average reduction of 3.1% during the same period (KPMG, 2018). Personal income tax for single individuals without children or religious affiliation was lowered by 2.9%, a much higher reduction than the Swiss average of 0.9% between 2007 and 2018 (KPMG, 2018). The canton also introduced tax splitting for married couples and increased deductions for children, presented to the General Assembly in 2010 (Carnazzi Weber et al., 2009). In speaking about the tax reforms, GL3 emphasised: *“Switzerland grew quite a lot in the 70s-2000s, while Glarus remained pretty much the same. The strategy was to spend less, save more, and reduce taxes so we can stay attractive”*.

Figure 2: International and inter-cantonal net-migration rates of Canton Glarus. Source: Author’s compilation from Federal Statistics Office (2023b)



In 2009, the canton launched a marketing campaign centred around the slogan "Glarnerland makes beautiful" (Kanton Glarus, 2023a). Since then, the campaign has been continuously

expanded, featuring the *Glarnerland* branding in establishing a distinctive identity for the canton. In 2010, the canton also revamped its communication strategy by hiring an external agency to manage both external and internal communication and marketing efforts. As part of this overhaul, the cantonal website was redesigned, and the canton began utilising social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, YouTube, and LinkedIn to engage with the public. The policy is officially labelled ‘cantonal marketing’ with a written aim of “promoting Glarus and increasing the awareness of Glarus as a residential/business location” (Kanton Glarus, 2023a). According to GL1, *“Our cantonal marketing, which started in 2007, is aimed at promoting our canton as an attractive place for businesses and residents. We worked alongside an external agency to decide how best we could sell the canton, and then we built a catalogue of policies, which was approved by the general assembly”*.

In 2012, with the canton’s support, municipalities established a *Taggestrukturen* department to create day structures and lunch counters across the region (Ingold-biwa, 2023). These facilities provide care for children of all ages, from nursery to upper school, outside regular school hours. The written aim is to ‘foster child development and support the compatibility of family and career’(Kanton Glarus, 2023c); however, with an implicit intention of making Glarus a residential location.

This shift towards policies focusing on both job creation and residency was explicitly outlined for the first time in the canton’s economic policy. In 2013, the canton introduced a new location promotion law (GS IX A/4, 2013), to position the canton as an attractive destination not only for businesses but also for private individuals. Additionally, the canton’s political development plan for 2020-2030 set clear targets, including ‘attracting people from other regions’and ‘addressing demographic challenges’ (Kanton Glarus, 2018).

In 2017, the canton surveyed a representative sample of 2,000 residents to assess their satisfaction with living in the canton and gather feedback on cantonal policies, initiatives, and future priorities (Schwenkel et al., 2017). Between 2018 and 2022, the canton further reduced the personal income tax rate by 0.5%, along with additional reductions for couples and single parents, and an increase in childcare deductions (KPMG, 2018; KPMG, 2023). According to GL1, *“We [The Canton] use our tax policies to maintain our attractiveness for residency”*. The canton also passed a ‘Child Care Act’ in 2022, with a stated aim of supporting the development of preschool and school-age children and enhancing the compatibility of work and family life (GS IV B/1/13, 2022). Speaking on this, GL5 said, *“The main goals of our policies are to retain and anchor*

*people, and not just to win new people. So, first, to anchor people, and then secondly, to win new people”.*

In 2018, the canton consolidated its communication efforts by establishing a dedicated communication office and creating a working group with representatives from each department. Since then, several online initiatives have been launched, including *Hello Glarus*, *Glärner Agenda*, *Visit Glarnerland*, *Geo-Portal*, *Code of Laws*, *Job Offers*, and the latest addition, *Smart Glarus* (Kanton Glarus, 2023b). These platforms aim to provide a wide array of information and communication channels for both current and prospective residents. In demonstrating the anchoring intent of these initiatives, GL3 emphasised, *“Regarding marketing and communication, a lot of it is focused on people within the canton and not merely as a promotion for outsiders”.*

The canton has also integrated housing into its broader strategy to encourage residency, with a focus primarily driven by the three municipalities, but in close collaboration with the canton. Each municipality now features a section on its official website dedicated to a building land database, which lists available plots across all zones and villages, along with details such as prices, surface area, and purchase readiness. Additionally, the municipalities maintain an up-to-date section on their websites dedicated to the real estate market, listing available rooms, apartments, homes, parks, and office spaces for rent or sale. According to GL5, *“Housing is a policy tool, and we consider how to shape it politically. Over the past five years, Glarus municipality has supported housing cooperatives by investing in affordable projects and providing public land to boost cooperative homeownership”.* The Annex presents a table summarizing the net migration balance alongside the relevant policies over the years, detailing their labels, stated objectives, and underlying implicit intentions.

## Regional Development and Emigration Policies

The comparative analysis of Neuchâtel and Glarus shows that regional responses to emigration are best understood as elements of an evolving growth model or development logic rather than as a distinct policy domain. In both cantons, emigration is not uniformly problematised: during periods of industrial crisis, emigration—particularly of displaced workers—may be tolerated as part of labour-market adjustment. Emigration becomes politically salient when demographic and fiscal indicators threaten the reproduction of the development strategy, notably through the loss of working-class families and taxpayers, rising percapita service costs, and concerns over territorial decline. Once emigration is framed in these terms, cantonal responses mobilise a

common set of policy proxies centred on anchoring and attracting workingclass families and individuals. Tax reforms extend beyond attracting businesses to targeting household retention and in-migration, particularly through measures benefiting working families. Communication and marketing shift from solely promoting the canton as a location for work and businesses to incorporating place-based branding aimed at residents. Marketing policies aim at attracting new residents (Eimermann, 2013), as well as improving the territorial image of the canton for those who remain. Housing policies, especially those facilitating homeownership and residential land mobilisation, serve as ways to anchor and attract population by increasing long-term attachment, while childcare reforms retain and attract families by improving work–family compatibility. Municipal and administrative reforms further support residential attractiveness by stabilising public finances and service provision.

Interpreted through the growth-model framework set out above, these proxies signal a reorientation in both cantons from a predominantly export-oriented model towards a hybrid development strategy that explicitly incorporates residential-economy mechanisms. The shift is not an abandonment of export-oriented policy. Economic promotion and firm attraction remain central, but they are increasingly complemented by policies that treat the resident base as a development asset in its own right. In this sense, emigration governance redefines what counts as economic development by linking living conditions, household retention, and territorial image to the reproduction of the local economy.

Despite differences in regional political coalitions, proximity to core cantons, and institutional resources, Neuchâtel and Glarus converge on a similar set of policy proxies related to emigration. This convergence is analytically meaningful. It suggests that under the Swiss conditions of high mobility and inter-cantonal competition, the feasible subnational policy toolkit for responding to emigration is relatively constrained, and that similar demographic pressures can generate similar instrument choices. At the same time, the cases differ in how these policies are packaged and institutionalised. Neuchâtel's domiciliation strategy illustrates a more formalised and centralised approach to coordinating residential promotion, whereas Glarus relies more on crossdepartmental coordination and municipal implementation. In Glarus, liberal dominance within the governing council facilitated tax reductions, both as a strategic response to competitive pressure from low-tax neighbouring cantons such as Schwyz and Zug (GL3), and as a politically tractable measure given their popularity and approval through the general assembly. By contrast, Neuchâtel's strong socialist presence and the absence of a general assembly make income tax reductions more politically constrained (NE2). Politics, therefore, appears less decisive in determining whether cantons adopt policy instruments for the

residential-based growth model, but more decisive in shaping how such instruments are internally framed, debated, and implemented.

This approach that combines both the export and residential economic models recognises the relationship between production and consumption (Segessemann and Crevoisier, 2016). It involves two key dimensions: First, theories on urban production patterns (Storper and Scott, 2009) and the spatial division of labour (Massey, 1995) explain how economic activities within a region—such as design, creation, and production—shape local trends, influence the types of residents, and impact their consumption patterns. In this view, local production systems play a significant role in determining regional growth (Segessemann and Crevoisier, 2016). Second, urban growth theories that focus on consumption and amenities (Clark, 2004; Gottlieb and Glaeser, 2006), as well as the Creative Class hypothesis (Florida, 2002), argue that residential and consumer preferences drive local growth. In this framework, actions that enhance community amenities and attractiveness are likely to stimulate regional revenue and growth (Segessemann and Crevoisier, 2016). This approach recognises how commuting separates residential from employment/production spaces (Gottlieb, 1995) and emphasises the role of residential attractiveness in drawing wealth and jobs to a region (Davezies, 2008; Segessemann & Crevoisier, 2016). Policies within this framework focus on attracting skilled, high-income residents (Florida et al., 2008) and fostering gentrification (Doucet et al., 2011) to create dynamic neighbourhoods that appeal to affluent residents and investors, thereby marketing the region's residential and economic image.

As summarised in Table 2, the policy focus shifts over time from firm-centred job creation to residential attractiveness, with tax, childcare, housing, and marketing policies increasingly deployed for selective retention and attraction.

Table 2: Emigration policy proxies at two critical junctures in cantons Neuchâtel (NE) and Glarus (GL)

<b>Policy</b>	<b>1970s - 2000s</b>	<b>2000s - 2020s</b>
<b>Tax NE</b>	Goal: Generate revenue and create jobs	Goal: Generate revenue while remaining attractive for businesses and residents
	Mechanism: Corporate tax break; Relatively high personal income tax	Mechanism: Decrease in corporate and personal income taxes; Childcare deduction
<b>Tax GL</b>	Goal: Generate revenue and create jobs	Goal: Generate revenue while remaining attractive for businesses and residents
	Mechanism: Corporate tax guarantees; Relatively high personal income tax	Mechanism: Decrease in corporate and personal income taxes
<b>Communication and Marketing NE</b>	Goal: Attract foreign corporations	Goal: Promoting local initiatives while retaining and attracting residents
	Mechanism: Market the canton to foreign businesses through a consultancy	Mechanism: Establishing a domiciliation strategy, domiciliation office, and communication office
<b>Communication and Marketing GL</b>	Goal: Communicate internally	Goal: Retaining and attracting businesses and residents

	Mechanism: The Office of the Chancellery alongside a consultancy	Mechanism: Creating a marketing and image-framing strategy, a communication office, a communication working group, a cantonal economic promotion office, and location promotion offices for municipalities.
<b>Housing NE</b>	Not applicable	Goal: Encourage residency
		Mechanism: advertise housing offers and identify more residential land; encourage aged homeowners to move to care homes
<b>Housing GL</b>	Not applicable	Goal: Encourage residency
		Mechanism: Regular update on available homes and properties for sale
<b>Child Care NE</b>	Not applicable	Goal: Retain and attract families
		Mechanism: program offering full day care of children; child tax credit; full deductibility of pre-school and after-school care costs
<b>Child Care GL</b>	Not applicable	Goal: Retain and attract families
		Mechanism: Daily structure department; contributions to providers of day care centers; Childcare Act

## Discussion and Conclusion

By examining the Swiss cantons of Neuchâtel and Glarus, this article has explored how regions respond to emigration when it is not politicised nationally. The central empirical finding is that emigration is unevenly problematised. In both Neuchâtel and Glarus, emigration is tolerated during periods of industrial decline, when population loss is framed as labour-market adjustment. Emigration becomes a policy concern when demographic and fiscal indicators threaten the cantonal development strategy, notably through the continuous loss of taxpayers, negative net migration, and increasing pressures on service provision and municipal finances. These conditions enable cantonal governments to define emigration as a problem that must be addressed.

The paper's main conceptual contribution is to demonstrate that regional emigration governance is best identified through policy proxies and interpreted using a regional growth-model framework. In the absence of direct exit controls under free internal mobility, emigration policies neither bear the emigration label nor operate as an independent policy domain, but are embedded in fiscal, social, housing, marketing, and administrative measures that aim to shape selective residential outcomes. Interpreted through a growth-model framework, these proxies jointly serve as instruments for maintaining or reorienting development strategies, serving a dual goal of retaining and attracting a selected population. Empirically, both cantons shift from a predominantly export-oriented strategy—where job creation and firm attraction are expected to anchor population—towards a hybrid model that explicitly incorporates residential-economy mechanisms. Residential attractiveness, therefore, becomes a development objective that is closely intertwined with increased export and production.

A further contribution relates to the interpretation of similarity across cases. Despite differences in regional politics, metropolitan proximity, and the presence of higher education institutions, both cantons deploy broadly similar policy options in the period when emigration becomes problematised. Rather than treating this as an analytical limitation, this article interprets it as a finding with three implications. First, subnational governments have limited policy options to shape mobility given that they cannot control exit, resulting in functional convergence on tax incentives, family-oriented supports, and residential marketing. Second, inter-cantonal competition under fiscal autonomy makes relative attractiveness important (Feld, 2000; Bessard, 2017), thereby reinforcing the utility of these instruments across different contexts. Third, similarity is consistent with policy diffusion and learning (Meseguer, 2005; Meseguer and

Gilardi, 2009), understood not as an alternative framework but as a mechanism that helps explain why comparable solutions circulate across cantons facing similar demographic pressures. In this interpretation, politics matters, but it appears to matter more for the framing, sequencing, and institutionalisation of policies than for the basic selection of instruments.

The analysis must, however, be situated within the institutional context of Swiss federalism, which shapes both the interpretation and generalisability of the findings. The considerable economic and political autonomy of Swiss cantons fosters inter-cantonal competition while enabling resource mobilisation and significant discretion in policy responses— unlike more centralised systems. Additionally, the small size of Neuchâtel and Glarus—and Switzerland generally—facilitates commuting and regional mobility, shaping both the nature of emigration and the scope of policy responses in ways not directly replicable in larger states. Furthermore, the modest sampling size of the interviews and the sampling strategy of snowballing present additional limitations to the research.

To conclude, emigration policies may be disguised with phrases like “residential attractiveness” or “domiciliation strategy” or embedded as an intention (occasionally among other intentions) in economic, social, tax, housing, marketing, urban planning, and marketing policies. Ultimately, the intentions of policymakers play a crucial role in defining emigration policy. Future research could explore how such intentions shape outcomes and expand the empirical base through diverse regional case studies.

## References

- Aguillaume C (2006) The Swiss watchmaking industry faced with globalisation in the 1970s. *Icon* 12: 190–217.
- Anelli M and Peri G (2017) Does emigration delay political change? Evidence from Italy during the Great Recession. *Economic Policy* 32(91): 551–596.
- Baccaro L and Pontusson J (2016) Rethinking comparative political economy: The growth model perspective. *Politics & Society* 44(2): 175–207.
- Baccaro L, Blyth M and Pontusson J (2022) How should we think about modern capitalism? A growth models approach. *Transfer: European Review of Labour and Research* 28(4): 505–513.

- Bessard P (2017) Tax competition: The Swiss case. In: Gissurason H and Herbertsson T (eds) *Cutting Taxes to Increase Prosperity*. Bokafelagio Publishing with RSE- Centre for Social and Economic Research, pp.85–104.
- Bonifazi C, Heins F, Licari F, et al. (2021) The regional dynamics of internal migration intensities in Italy. *Population, Space and Place* 27(7): 1–15. DOI: 10.1002/psp.2331.
- Botev N (2012) Population ageing in central and Eastern Europe and its demographic and social context. *European Journal of Ageing* 9(1): 69–79. DOI: 10.1007/s10433-012-0217-9.
- Bruzelius C. (2021). Taking emigration seriously: A new agenda for research on free movement and welfare. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 28(6), 930–942.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13501763.2020.1768280>
- Canton Neuchâtel (2021) STRATÉGIE CANTONALE DE PROMOTION DE LA DOMICILIATION. Available at: [https://www.ne.ch/sites/default/files/2026-01/210204\\_Consultation\\_Domiciliation\\_Rapport.pdf](https://www.ne.ch/sites/default/files/2026-01/210204_Consultation_Domiciliation_Rapport.pdf) (accessed 11 January 2023).
- Canton Neuchâtel (2017) Les principaux projets de la législature 2018–2021. Available at: [https://www.ne.ch/sites/default/files/2025-12/PL2018-2021\\_Programme\\_legislature\\_2018-2021.pdf](https://www.ne.ch/sites/default/files/2025-12/PL2018-2021_Programme_legislature_2018-2021.pdf) (accessed 6 January 2023).
- Canton Neuchâtel (2023a) Réformes Fiscales : qu’est-ce qui a changé? Available at: <https://calculette.ne.ch/reformes-fiscales> (accessed 6 January 2023).
- Canton Neuchâtel (2023b) Barèmes. Available at: <https://www.ne.ch/autorites/DFS/SCCO/impot-pp/Pages/Baremes.aspx> (accessed 27 January 2023).
- Canton Neuchâtel (2023c) MAÉ: MA JOURNÉE À L’ÉCOLE. Available at: <https://www.ne.ch/themes/vie-quotidienne-et-famille/enfants-et-jeunes/majournee-lecole-mae> (accessed 26 January 2023).
- Clark T (2004) *The City as Entertainment Machine*. Elsevier.
- Constantine S (1990) Introduction: Empire migration and imperial harmony. In: Constantine S (ed.) *Emigrants and Empire: British Settlement in the Dominions Between the Wars*. Manchester University Press, pp. 1–21.
- Conseil d’Etat (2011) Rapport du Conseil d’Etat au Grand Conseil à l’appui d’un projet de loi portant modification de la loi sur les contributions directes LCdir (imposition des personnes physiques). Available at: [https://www.ne.ch/autorites/GC/objets/Documents/Rapports/2011/11025\\_CE.pdf](https://www.ne.ch/autorites/GC/objets/Documents/Rapports/2011/11025_CE.pdf) (accessed 5 January 2023).
- Carnazzi Weber S, Etzensperger C, Kaufmann P, et al. (2009) *Swiss Issues Regions: The Canton of Glarus Structure and Prospects*. Credit Suisse Economic Research.

- Dancygier R, Dehdari S, Laitin D, et al. (2025) Emigration and radical right populism. *American Journal of Political Science* 69(1): 252–267.
- Davezies L (2008) La République et ses territoires. La circulation invisible des richesses. Seuil, coll. « La république des idées », 109 p., EAN: 9782020925587.
- Davezies L (2009) L'économie locale "résidentielle." *Géographie Economie Société* 11: 47–53.
- De Haas H and Vezzoli S (2011) *Leaving matters: The nature, evolution, and effects of emigration policies*. IMF Working Paper Series, 34.
- Donzé P (2014) The Watchmaking Crisis of 1975–1985. In: Donzé P (ed.) *A Business History of the Swatch Group*. Palgrave Macmillan, UK, pp. 10-24. DOI: 10.1057/9781137389084\_2.
- Doucet B, Van Kempen R and Van Weesep J (2011) "We're a rich city with poor people": Municipal strategies of new-build gentrification in Rotterdam and Glasgow. *Environment and Planning – Part A* 43: 1438–1454.
- Dowty A (1987) *Closed Borders: The Contemporary Assault on Freedom of Movement*. Twentieth Century Fund.
- Eimermann M (2013) Promoting Swedish countryside in the Netherlands: International rural place marketing to attract new residents. *European Urban and Regional Studies* 22(4): 398–415. DOI: 10.1177/0969776413481370.
- Federal Statistics Office (2023a) Demographic Balance by Cantons (Neuchâtel). Available at: [https://www.pxweb.bfs.admin.ch/pxweb/en/px-x-0102020000\\_101/px-x0102020000\\_101/px-x-0102020000\\_101.px/table/tableViewLayout2/](https://www.pxweb.bfs.admin.ch/pxweb/en/px-x-0102020000_101/px-x0102020000_101/px-x-0102020000_101.px/table/tableViewLayout2/) (accessed 5 January 2023).
- Federal Statistics Office (2023b) Demographic Balance by Cantons (Glarus). Available at: [https://www.pxweb.bfs.admin.ch/pxweb/en/px-x-0102020000\\_101/px-x0102020000\\_101/px-x-0102020000\\_101.px/table/tableViewLayout2/](https://www.pxweb.bfs.admin.ch/pxweb/en/px-x-0102020000_101/px-x0102020000_101/px-x-0102020000_101.px/table/tableViewLayout2/) (accessed 5 January 2023).
- Federal Statistics Office (2023c) Glarus. Available at: <https://www.bfs.admin.ch/bfs/en/home/statistics/regional-statistics/regional-portraits-key-figures/cantons/glarus.html> (accessed 10 January 2023).
- Feld L (2000) Tax competition and income redistribution: An empirical analysis for Switzerland. *Public Choice* 105(1): 125–164.
- Feller-Vest V, Hertach R, Howald S, et al. (2011) *Hauptort Glarus—Schauplätze seiner Geschichte*. Baeschlin Bücher.
- Florida R (2002) *The Rise of the Creative Class. And How It's Transforming Work, Leisure and Everyday Life*. Basic Books.
- Florida, R., Mellander, C. & Stolarick, K. (2008). Inside the black box of regional development – human capital, the creative class and tolerance. *Journal of Economic Geography* 8, 615–649

- Forster, S. & Jeanrenaud, C. (1993). *La promotion économique neuchâteloise: Bilan et perspectives*.  
Université de Neuchâtel: IRER.
- Garufo, F. (2015). *L'emploi du temps L'industrie horlogère suisse et l'immigration (1930–1980)*.  
Lausanne: Antipodes
- Gottlieb, P. (1995). Residential amenities, firm location and economic development, *Urban Studies*  
32, 1413–1436
- Gottlieb P and Glaeser E (2006) Urban resurgence and the consumer city. *Urban Studies*, 43, 1087–  
1103.doi:10.1080/00420980600711399
- Grand Conseil de la République et Canton de Neuchâtel. (1978). Loi sur la promotion l'économie  
cantonal. Available at <https://rsn.ne.ch/DATA/program/books/RSN2013/20135/htm/9001.htm>
- GS IV B/1/13 (2022) Kinderbetreuungsgesetz (KiBG). Available at:  
[https://gesetze.gl.ch/app/de/texts\\_of\\_law/IV-B.1.13](https://gesetze.gl.ch/app/de/texts_of_law/IV-B.1.13) (accessed 20 January 2023).
- GS IX A/2 (1973) Beschluss über Massnahmen zur wirtschaftlichen Förderung des Kantons Glarus.  
Available at: [https://gesetze.gl.ch/app/de/texts\\_of\\_law/IX%20A%2F2](https://gesetze.gl.ch/app/de/texts_of_law/IX%20A%2F2) (accessed 20 January  
2023).
- GS IX A/4 (2013) Gesetz über die Förderung der wirtschaftlichen Entwicklung  
(Wirtschaftsförderungsgesetz). Available at: [https://gesetze.gl.ch/app/de/texts\\_  
of\\_law/IX%20A%2F4/versions/623](https://gesetze.gl.ch/app/de/texts_of_law/IX%20A%2F4/versions/623) (accessed 21 January 2023).
- Greenwood M (1973) Urban economic growth and migration: Their interaction. *Environment and  
Planning* 5(1): 91–112.
- Greenwood M (1975) Research on internal migration in the United States: A survey. *Journal of  
Economic Literature* 13(2): 397–433.
- Grubel H and Scott A (1966) The international flow of human capital. *The American Economic Review*  
56(1/2): 268–274.
- Hall P and Soskice D (2001) An introduction to varieties of capitalism. In Hall P and Soskice D (eds)  
*Varieties of Capitalism: The Institutional Foundations of Comparative Advantage*. Oxford  
University Press, pp.1–62.
- Hirschman A (1993) Exit, voice, and the fate of the German democratic republic: An essay in  
conceptual history. *World Politics* 45: 173–202.
- Hoyt H (1954) Homer Hoyt on development of economic base concept. *Land Economics* 30: 182–  
186.
- Ingold-biwa (2023) Vom Schülerhort zur Tagesschule: Die Entstehung und Weiterentwicklung der  
Kinderbetreuung in Glarus [From after-school care to day school: the emergence and further

- development of childcare in Glarus]. Available at: <https://www.ingold-biwa.ch/dech/themen/glarus-schuelerhort/> (accessed 13 June 2023).
- Johnson H (1965) The economics of the “brain drain”: The Canadian case. *Minerva* 3: 299–311.
- Kanton Glarus (2004) Gemeindestrukturereform Glarus. Available at: [https://www.gl.ch/public/upload/assets/1118/Weg\\_zur\\_Gemeindestrukturereform.pdf?fp=1](https://www.gl.ch/public/upload/assets/1118/Weg_zur_Gemeindestrukturereform.pdf?fp=1) (accessed 19 January 2023).
- Kanton Glarus (2018) Politischer Entwicklungsplan 2020–2030. Available at: [https://www.gl.ch/public/upload/assets/4922/Politischer\\_Entwicklungsplan\\_2020\\_2030.pdf?fp=1](https://www.gl.ch/public/upload/assets/4922/Politischer_Entwicklungsplan_2020_2030.pdf?fp=1) (accessed 5 April 2023).
- Kanton Glarus (2023a) Canton Marketing: Glarus. Available at <https://www.gl.ch/html/1658> (accessed 30 January 2023).
- Kanton Glarus (2023b) Canton Glarus. Available at <https://www.gl.ch/> (accessed 30 January 2023).
- Kanton Glarus (2023c) Kinderkrippen und Tagesstrukturen; Angebote im Kanton. Available at: <https://www.gl.ch/public/upload/assets/54531/Angebots%20C3%BCbersicht.pdf?fp=2> (accessed 29 June 2023).
- Katzenstein PJ (1980) Capitalism in one country? Switzerland in the international economy. *International Organization* 34(4): 507–540.
- Kaya A and Drhimeur A (2022) Diaspora politics and religious diplomacy in Turkey and Morocco. *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies* 23(2): 317–337.
- Keating M (1997) The invention of regions: political restructuring and territorial government in Western Europe. *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy* 15(4): 383–398.
- KPMG (2018) *Clarity on Swiss Taxes*. Swiss Tax Report.
- KPMG (2023) *Clarity on Swiss Taxes*. Swiss Tax Report.
- Kyriazi A, Mendes M, Rone J, et al. (2023) The politics of emigration in Europe: A research agenda. *Journal of Common Market Studies* 61(2): 563–575.
- Landes D (2000) *Revolution in Time: Clocks and the Making of the Modern World* (1st ed. 1983). Belknap Press.
- Laupper H, Peter Schindler M, Tresp E, et al. (2017) Glarus (Kanton). *Historisches Lexikon der Schweiz* (HLS). Available at: <https://hlsdhs-dss.ch/de/articles/007374/2017-05-30/> (accessed 29 January 2023).
- Lenard P (2021) Restricting emigration for their protection? Exit controls and the protection of (women) migrant workers. *Migration Studies* 10(3): 510–527.

- Leitner H (1986) The state and the foreign worker problem. A case study of the Federal Republic of Germany, Switzerland, and Austria. *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy* 4(2): 199–219.
- Loi 900.10 (2015). Loi sur l'appui au développement économique (LADE). Available at: <https://rsn.ne.ch/DATA/program/books/RSN2023/20236/htm/900.1.htm> (accessed 10 January 2023).
- López-Gay, A. (2014). Population growth and re-urbanization in Spanish inner cities: The role of internal migration and residential mobility. *Quetelet Journal*, 2(1), 67-92.
- Maillat D and Schneiter A (2000) Economic development policy in the Canton of Neuchâtel. *European Planning Studies*, 8(2): 157-167.
- Massey D (1995) *Spatial Divisions of Labour: Social Structures and the Geography of Production*. Macmillan.
- Meseguer C (2005) Policy learning, policy diffusion, and the making of a new order. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 598(1): 67–82.
- Meseguer C and Gilardi F (2009) What is new in the study of policy diffusion? *Review of International Political Economy* 16(3): 527–543.
- Morisson A, Bole D, Kozina J, et al. (2021) *Transformation in industrial towns in Slovenia and Switzerland*. Center for Regional Economic Development. Research Paper No. 34.
- Moulaert F and Sekia F (2003) Territorial innovation models: A critical survey. *Regional Studies* 37: 289–302.
- Myrdal G (1957) *Rich Lands and Poor; the Road to World Prosperity*. Harper.
- Neuchâtel: un canton à vivre (2022) Un canton à vivre, Neuchâtel. Available at: <https://www.Neuchâtel-uncanton-a-vivre.ch/> (accessed 20 January 2023).
- Okun B and Richardson R (1961) Regional income inequality and internal population migration. *Economic Development and Cultural Change* 9(2): 128–143.
- Porter M (1998) Clusters and the new economics of competition. *Harvard Business Review* November– December: 77–90.
- Romans J (1974) Benefits and burdens of migration (with specific references to the brain drain). *Southern Economic Journal* 40: 447–455.
- Roos C (2021) Compensating for the effects of emigration. Eastern Europe and policy response to EU freedom of movement. *Journal of European Public Policy* 30(1): 174–192. DOI: 10.1080/13501763.2021.1984547.
- Segessemann A and Crevoisier O (2016) Beyond economic base theory: The role of the residential economy in attracting income to Swiss regions. *Regional Studies* 50(8): 1388–1403.

- Schwenkel C, Duarte M and Rieder S (2017) Bevölkerungs Befragung im Kanton Glarus 2017é Ergebnisse der Bevölkerungsbefragung als Grundlage für den Politischen Entwicklungsplan 2020–2030. Available at: [https://www.gl.ch/public/upload/assets/4923/Auswertung\\_Befragung\\_2017.pdf?fp=1](https://www.gl.ch/public/upload/assets/4923/Auswertung_Befragung_2017.pdf?fp=1) (accessed 2 February 2023).
- Stohr C (2018) Multiple core regions: Regional inequality in Switzerland, 1860–2008. In: Hanes C and Walcott S (eds) *Research in Economic History*. Emerald Publishing Limited, pp.135–198.
- Storper M and Scott A (2009) Rethinking human capital, creativity and urban growth. *Journal of Economic Geography* 9: 147–167.
- Twinam T (2022) Trade competition and migration: Evidence from the quartz crisis. *Journal of International Economics* 138: 103653.
- Udochi G (2026) From entry to exit: how and why the European Commission politicised EU emigration. *Journal of European Integration* 48(3): 403–424. DOI: 10.1080/07036337.2025.2491621.
- Ville de Neuchâtel (2016) Votation communale du 5 juin 2016 sur la fusion entre Corcelles-Cormondrèche, Neuchâtel, Peseux et Valangin. Available at: [https://www.Neuchâtelville.ch/fileadmin/sites/ne\\_ville/fichiers/votre\\_commune/Fusion\\_documents/Brochure\\_VotationCommunale\\_Fusion-DEF.pdf](https://www.Neuchâtelville.ch/fileadmin/sites/ne_ville/fichiers/votre_commune/Fusion_documents/Brochure_VotationCommunale_Fusion-DEF.pdf) (accessed 20 January 2023).
- Von Arx R, Davatz J and Rohr A (2005) *Industriekultur im Kanton Glarus—Streifzüge durch 250 Jahre Geschichte und Architektur*. Verein Glarner Industrieweg GIW Südostschweiz Buchverlag.
- Weisskircher M (2020) The strength of far-right AfD in eastern Germany: The east-west divide and the multiple causes behind “populism.” *The Political Quarterly* 91(3): 614–622.
- Weisbrod B (1964) *External Benefits of Public Education: An Economic Analysis*, Princeton: Industrial Labor Relations Section (No. 105). Research Report Series.
- Weisbrod B (1966) The international flow of human capital: Discussion. *American Economic Review* 56(2): 277–280.
- Yuksekdag Y (2019) The right to exit and skilled labour emigration: Ethical considerations for compulsory health service Programmes. *Developing World Bioethics* 19(3): 169–179.

## Appendix A

Here, I present tables summarising the net migration balance and corresponding policy measures over the years, detailing their labels, stated objectives, and underlying intentions across the different cantons. These timelines should not be interpreted too rigidly, as policy formulation and adoption often involve lengthy deliberations that may cause temporal overlaps between years.

## Neuchâtel

Table A1: Overview of policies and net-migration balance NE

Year	Inter-cantonal net migration	Total net-migration	Policy label	Stated intention	Implicit intention
1978		-696	Economic promotion law	Attract foreign companies and investments	Create jobs
2009	-786	337	Municipal Merger	Financial rationalisation due to economic and demographic decline	Address emigration-induced demographic decline
2013	-772	1982	Tax reform	Reduce general tax scale and full deduction of childcare cost	Anchor working-class families
2014	-889	869	Tax reform	Tax rebate of 200 CHF per child	Anchor working-class families
2015	-820	753	Tax reform	Flat-rate deduction for child(ren) regardless of income level	Anchor high-income families
2016	-892	317	Tax reform	Increased deductions to offset cost incurred by children, particular health insurance	Anchor working-class families
2017	-989	-583	Tax reform	Reduction of maximum tax rate	Anchor high-income earners
2020	-955	-354	Tax reform	Reduction in general tax scale and housing tax	Make home ownership more attractive and anchor working residents
2020			My day in school	Expand childcare services to meet evolving societal and family needs and increase canton's appeal to families	Anchor working-class families

<b>2021</b>	-732	208	Tax reform	Lower splitting rate	Anchor married couples/single parents
<b>2021</b>			Domiciliation Strategy	Enhance the canton's residential appeal	Anchor/attract residents
<b>2021</b>			Neuchatel: a canton to live in	Market the canton's residential appeal and boost the self-esteem of locals	Anchor/attract residents
<b>2021</b>			Housing	Foster home ownership	Increase ties of people with the canton

## Glarus

Table A2: Overview of policies and net-migration balance GL

<b>Year</b>	<b>Inter-cantonal net migration</b>	<b>Total net-migration</b>	<b>Policy label</b>	<b>Stated intention</b>	<b>Implicit intention</b>
<b>1973</b>		-8	Economic promotion law	Create jobs	Create jobs
<b>2004</b>	-179	-56	Municipal Structural Reform	To address economic stagnation, reduction in tax revenues, demographic decline, increased expenditure and increased pressure from the federal government	Address emigration-induced demographic decline
<b>2007-2022</b>	-546	3975	Tax reform	Reduction in corporate income taxes by 4.3% and personal income taxes by 3.4%	Attract and anchor businesses and working-class residents

<b>2009</b>	-104	190	Marketing Policy	Promote Glarus and increase awareness of Glarus as a residential and business location	Anchor/attract businesses and residents
<b>2010</b>	44	328	Tax reform	Tax splitting for married couples and increased deductions for children	Anchor/attract working families
<b>2012</b>	-57	207	Daycare centers, after-school programs and family day care; services in the canton of Glarus	To support the compatibility of family and career	Anchor/attract working families
<b>2013</b>	-147	223	Location Promotion Law	To make the canton attractive for businesses and residents	Anchor/attract businesses and residents
<b>2018</b>	-66	31	Housing	Municipal support to housing cooperatives	Increase home ownership and ties to the canton
<b>2022</b>	44	286	Childcare Act	To support the development of preschool and school-age children and enhancing the compatibility of work and family life	Anchor/attract families