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Urban Rituals as Tools for Socio-Territorial Belonging: The case of *Grand Genève*

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**UNIVERSITÉ
DE GENÈVE**

**FACULTÉ DES SCIENCES
DE LA SOCIÉTÉ**

Urban Rituals as Tools for Socio-Territorial Belonging:

The case of *Grand Genève*

by

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Internship-based Thesis: Fall 2022

MSc in Innovation, Human Development and Sustainability

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Abstract

The territory of Grand Genève, shared between two French *départements* and two Swiss cantons, struggles to develop a unified identity shared by inhabitants. It is also a region with high levels of diversity where newcomers struggle to find belonging. Sociologists Sandro Cattacin and Fiorenza Gamba describe urban rituals as important tools for creating meaning, inclusion, and a sense of belonging to a territory. In this work, I seek to understand the needs of this territory and its populations. Through my internship at the Bureau de l'intégration des étrangers (BIE) of the Canton of Geneva, I conducted focus groups and interviews amongst migrant populations in the Canton. Based on my findings, I here propose a ritual which corresponds to the observed needs. My proposed ritual is followed by an action plan which details the practical steps needed in order to implement the ritual. I conclude that only through a multi-pronged approach incorporating social initiatives like rituals, political initiatives combatting territorial inequality, and information-based initiatives promoting shared understanding can we hope to create a unified territory: a Grand Genève with which its inhabitants identify and where all people feel they belong.

Acknowledgements

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Preface

The topic of this thesis is not only a matter of academic and professional interest but also something of personal significance to me. As someone who moved to Geneva from another country, I have observed and experienced first-hand the challenges of integrating and feeling that I belong here. It is a common belief (or stereotype, as the case may be) amongst people who move here from other countries that Swiss people are reserved, difficult to befriend, and even stoic. When I arrived, what was particularly striking to me was the difficulty of sharing a moment of connection with strangers in a public space in Geneva. If I smile at a passer-by, they look away. When sitting on the tram, bus, or train, most people are completely silent and do not exchange a word or even a glance with each other. The only times during my stay in Geneva that I can specifically remember having a personal exchange with a stranger in public beyond a simple “bonjour”, it was with someone who was also of foreign origin. I have the impression that it is simply considered strange to interact with or even smile at strangers, which I find to be somewhat sad and isolating.

In my home state of Texas, people are known for being especially friendly, and positive interactions with strangers always brighten my day. When I flew home for a visit during the holidays, on two separate occasions while simply waiting in line at the airport, I got into a conversation with other Americans, and it made me feel at home and that I belonged in that place. (Though I must mention in all fairness that Texas is not exactly known for being the most friendly place to immigrants, so perhaps a potentially discriminatory friendliness should not be used as an example to follow in a paper about integration of migrants...)

Levels of friendliness and interaction with others in the public space are certainly not only determined by cultural differences, however. Urban spaces tend to be less friendly and the people more brusque, as well, and indeed, sociologists such as Georg Simmel have written a good deal about this trend. While interactions with strangers should certainly have reasonable limits to avoid being intrusive or inappropriate, I believe that a certain level of friendliness is important for social cohesion and belonging, as I discuss further in this paper. In any case, I am convinced that Geneva deeply needs *something* to serve as a catalyst of greater openness and connectedness between its residents, and perhaps urban rituals could play a small role in this process.

I must add that despite these bold critiques of my host culture, I have encountered and become friends with some really wonderful Swiss people, and there are many aspects of life in Switzerland for which I am very grateful; however, I would like to note that the people I managed to connect with over the course of this year and a half were more of the exceptions than the rule of my personal experience in Geneva. It has also been noted to me by many that the culture of Geneva is quite different from the rest of the country in that it is much more diverse and open to differences. If that is the case, then a project of this sort ought to be proposed in the other Swiss cantons as well!

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List of Acronyms

BIE: Bureau de l'Intégration des Etrangers

DI: Département des Infrastructures

DT: Département du Territoire

GLTC: Groupement local de coopération transfrontalière

MAMCO: Musée d'art modern et contemporain

OCPM: Office cantonal de la population et des migrations

OCSTAT: Office cantonal de la statistique

OCT: Office cantonal des transports

SBB-CFF: Schweizerische Bundesbahnen-Chemins de fer fédéraux suisses (Swiss Federal Railways)

SNCF: Société nationale des chemins de fer français (National Society of French Railways)

1. Introduction

Spread across two country's borders and four local jurisdictions, the region of Grand Genève struggles to foster unity amongst the residents who share the territory. There is a large consensus among researchers, professionals, and residents who believe that Grand Genève is missing a sense of belonging and shared identity. Gamba et al. (2020) write that Grand Genève remains "an abstract institutional construction" (12), while Bolomey et al. starkly state that the region is "often compared to a body without a soul"¹ (Gamba et al. (eds.), 2020, p. 97). Many residents simply do not see the point of promoting the discourse of a unified Grand Genève, as it feels like a distant reality from their everyday lives.

In addition to the administrative borders which divide the population, it seems that a strong internal social cohesion is missing as well. Despite having high levels of diversity, non-Swiss appear less likely to find belonging in Geneva than in most other cities. In both 2020 and 2021 editions of a survey of expats living in 66 cities worldwide, Geneva ranked in the bottom 20% of cities in three out of four criteria grouped together in the category of Getting Settled: local friendliness, feeling welcome, and friends & socializing (InterNations GmbH, 2020; InterNations GmbH, 2021). Other Swiss cities were given similarly poor ratings, with Basel faring slightly better and Zurich the same or slightly worse than Geneva, though Lausanne was rated better than all of these (InterNations GmbH, 2020; InterNations GmbH, 2021). The contradictory nature of a place where many differences exist, but where newcomers seem to face difficulty integrating, would suggest that Geneva is not a city which is open to differences.

Some researchers, politicians, and civil society members have noticed these worrisome trends and have been seeking solutions which might help. Sociologists Sandro Cattacin and Fiorenza Gamba describe urban rituals as important tools for creating meaning, inclusion, and a sense of belonging to a territory. Their research and recommendations piqued the interest of state officials in the Canton of Geneva, who sought out symbolic practices which could contribute to the construction of feelings of belonging in Grand Genève. As an intern at the Canton of Geneva's Bureau de l'intégration des étrangers (BIE) ("Office of the integration of aliens") in Fall of 2022, I was charged with the task of proposing a ritual of inclusion for the territory of Grand Genève.

While I did evaluate the value of rituals more broadly, as well as the general need for rituals in Grand Genève, the majority of my own research focused on the relevance of rituals to the target population of the BIE: people of foreign nationality who have immigrated to the Canton of Geneva, whom I largely refer to as "migrants" in this paper. By understanding the needs of migrant populations, as well as the types of activities which would be accessible and attractive to these people, it is my hope that the ritual I propose would meet the needs of the larger territory while being beneficial and relevant to the migrants living there as well. I examined and responded to the following research questions: Is it possible to use rituals as a tool for the integration of migrants? How can we construct inclusive urban rituals that produce a sense of belonging amongst migrant populations and the population at large in Grand Genève? Is Grand Genève a relevant point of reference for these groups?

In the sections which follow, I first seek to understand the subjects of socio-territorial belonging and rituals through a review of the relevant literature. I next explore the contexts which shaped my research: that of my internship at the BIE, that of the territory which this paper concerns, and that of

¹ Translations mine

existing rituals and other relevant projects which have already been implemented. I then delve into the research I conducted, explaining my methodology and results and discussing their implications for my subject. Finally, in light of all of these sources which informed my perspective, I present a proposal of a new ritual to meet the needs and criteria I explored and lay out an action plan of the steps that would need to be taken for this ritual to be carried out.

2. Literature Review

What constitutes belonging, and how can it be created? We first must define what type of belonging we are discussing. When discussing belonging to a spatially-defined area such as Grand Genève, the term territorial belonging is most often used. Territorial belonging is considered to be important for the well-being of an area, for if residents of an area feel a sense of belonging to an area, they will be more civically engaged, and the area will benefit (Blokland and Nast, 2014).

However, territorial belonging does not only refer to the relationship between residents and their place of residence. According to Pollini (2005), territorial belonging is also social in nature, as it implies being part of a spatially-defined collectivity, i.e. the residents of a territory (p. 493). Similarly, cities have been described as "places of encounter" formed by interactions between people of diverse backgrounds (Novy et al., 2012). Blokland and Nast (2014) posit that it is these everyday encounters with other residents that aid in the construction of belonging. An essential element of belonging is the social aspect of feeling part of the larger community of people around us and having meaningful relationships with the people in our lives (Rokach, 2020). Furthermore, numerous researchers have repeatedly cited this need for social connectedness as a fundamental human need that is an indispensable part of well-being, mental and physical health (Rokach, 2020; Rook and Charles, 2017; Weil, 1997; Baumeister and Leary, 2017). As both aspects of belonging – the social and the spatial – are crucial to the well-being of a territory and its residents, it is for this reason that I use the term socio-territorial belonging here, as described by Pollini (2005).

In opposition to the search for belonging, cities are often characterized by indifference and hostility toward differences (Sandercock, 2000). There also exists a distinct distance between urban inhabitants that prevents meaningful encounters from happening. George Simmel (1950) wrote of the cold indifference and individualism that life in a metropolis provokes in its residents. Cultural factors also contribute to the level of connection between people in a society. Mencher (1947) blames individualism in Western societies for social isolation, characterized by a "shrinking from intimacy with others" in an attempt to protect oneself from interference, competition, or conflict (p. 258).

Unfortunately, belonging is not something which can be simply produced at will by those who are planning and governing a territory. Their goal must be to foster an environment of inclusion, where differences are accepted and "all residents are able to participate fully in the society and the economy" (Hambleton, 2015, p. 25). Richard Sennet (2017) puts forth the idea of an open city which is shaped and adapted by its residents, which stands in contrast to the concept of integration in which the ultimate goal is conformity. Sandro Cattacin has expounded upon this idea of an open city, through it painting a picture where migrants are not a target population to be integrated into their host population, but rather all people are accepted regardless of their backgrounds and differences. In an open city, belonging can result naturally because people are free to define their identities as they wish without fear that it will negatively impact their acceptance by the people around them.

In search of a solution for cities and territories which lack a sense of belonging, Gamba et al. (2020) present urban rituals as tools with a “capacity to produce meaning, inclusion, and recognition” (p. 20). Gamba (2020) defines rituals as “a practice which interrupts daily social routines and suspends social roles in everyday life to engage them in the shared experience of a repeated, meaningful event.”² Three important aspects of these public festivities and events are “personalization of participation, sharing of emotions, and weakening of the importance of set institutional protocols” (Gamba et al, 2020, p. 24). Gamba et al. (2020) developed a list of six elements that ought to be present for participants in any ritual: social insusivity, territorial inclusivity (including an open narrative), participation in the ritual’s organization, public legitimacy, emotionality, and a cyclic nature.

A ritual will be more meaningful if participants are allowed to give shape to it, much in the same way that Sennett describes an open city. Additionally, by sharing emotions that meaningful activities can provoke, residents of cities have the opportunity to have the sorts of encounters that compose city life and help construct belonging that Novy et al. (2012) and Blokland and Nast (2014) write about. Gamba et al. (2020) also discuss the role that rituals can play in helping newcomers find belonging in their new place of residence, as well as anyone who is in the territory regardless of legal status. They are open activities, with no criteria for participation. The types of activities in rituals can take many forms, from music and dance, to food-centered rituals, to artistic creations, and so much more.

In discussing the emergence of a post-racial generation in Liège and Brussels, Belgium Martiniello (2018) highlights Zinneke, a street parade which takes place every two years in Brussels. This parade is open for anyone to participate in and celebrates the city’s diversity while linking the two parts of the city together by following a route from the older to the newer part of the city. Organizers employ a post-racial and post-ethnic approach through its openness to allow participants to represent themselves however they wish in the parade. Participants organize themselves into groups which are of diverse ethnicity, race, religion, gender, sexual orientation and socio-economic background, yet groups do not portray cliché images of their ethnic groups. It is rather a display of human creativity and collaboration which brings the city’s diverse inhabitants together.

Such a practice of fostering openness may be one strategy out of many which could be employed in order to allow feelings of socio-territorial belonging to grow amongst the residents of an area. In the sections which follow, I explore the context of Grand Genève as a territory in need of such a ritual, a need presented by Gamba et al. (2020) following their analysis of the territory and the insufficiency of existing rituals.

² Translation mine.

3. Context

In this section, I will provide a background of the specific contexts within which I conducted my research: the professional context of my internship, the social and territorial context of Grand Genève, and the contemporary historical context of relevant rituals and projects which have already been conducted.

3.1 Internship

This research was carried out within the context of a full-time, three-month internship carried out in Fall 2022 at the Bureau de l'intégration des étrangers (BIE) of the Canton of Geneva. This office is situated within the Department of Social Cohesion and exists to "coordinate, develop, and finance actions and projects linked to, on the one hand, the integration of foreigners, and on the other hand, the prevention of racism and discrimination, with its partner associations and institutions. It also has the task of raising awareness and informing the people of Geneva about migration-related questions"³ (OAI - Bureau de l'Intégration des étrangers, n.d.).

I submitted my unsolicited application for an internship to the BIE at the suggestion of my professor, Sandro Cattacin. As such, when I was accepted for the internship, there was no predetermined set of responsibilities or project prepared for me to work on; instead, the Delegate in charge of the office told me I was free to come and learn about the different areas in which the BIE works and choose the project(s) to work on which were of greatest interest to me. Around the same time, the conseiller d'Etat for the Canton of Geneva who presides over the BIE, Thierry Apothéloz, had specifically requested that the BIE propose a new ritual of inclusion for Grand Genève after learning of the research of Sandro Cattacin on the subject. Given that I started my internship at the BIE shortly after this request was made, and given that Dr. Cattacin also happened to be my professor and thesis supervisor, it seemed that I was well-placed to take on this project to develop and propose a new ritual that could cultivate social cohesion and a sense of belonging amongst the diverse residents of Grand Genève.

In order to align the subject more closely with the mission of the BIE, I determined that I would examine the question of rituals from the perspectives of migrants in Geneva in order to determine how these rituals could be used to their benefit. I decided to conduct my work on rituals through this lens for a few reasons. First, it was important that any work I complete be relevant to migrants, as they are the target population of the BIE, the sponsor and host of my internship and research. Second, multiple works on rituals in Grand Genève by Fiorenza Gamba, Sandro Cattacin, and others already exist, so I did not want to duplicate anything that had been or was already being done. Third, migrants compose a large segment of the Genevan population for whom a ritual is intended: official cantonal statistics report that non-Swiss make up 41% of the population (OCSTAT, 2022). It was in this context that I conducted my research via focus groups of migrants as well as interviews with other stakeholders in order to gain valuable perspective to inform my ritual proposal.

In addition to my research and development of a ritual proposal, I worked on a few smaller projects during my time at the BIE. First, I assisted with the set-up and implementation of two BIE events: L'horizon de la démocratie de proximité⁴ and the Journée de concertation. I will discuss the Journée de

³ Translation mine.

⁴ Translation: The horizon of local democracy

concertation in more detail later in this paper, as a workshop I co-facilitated there served as an element of my research. Both events were helpful in terms of learning practical event planning skills and were excellent opportunities to network and meet other professionals in the fields of integration and local governance. I also was able to discuss my project with some of the people I met there and gained helpful insights.

During my internship, I additionally learned how to evaluate funding requests according to the criteria the BIE considers when assessing a potential project. That, in turn, helped prepare me to write my event proposal within this thesis as I considered the aspects that potential funders would want to know.

I benefited from working in an office where my colleagues had excellent experience working in the field of integration and state funded-projects. I learned a lot about topics that interested me, such as the types of support given to asylum seekers and refugees in Switzerland, or the prevention and combatting of racism and discrimination. My colleagues were also able to advise me and provide helpful insights as I developed my ritual proposal. Working for the State also meant that I had access to learn about and meet with a range of very interesting partners who I might not have been able to meet otherwise, including other state actors, associations providing support services to migrants, and innovative social enterprises.

Though my perspective was somewhat limited since the mission of the BIE is specifically focused on issues related to migrant populations, I was happy to be working within this context because it aligned well with my academic interests and my past experience working in migration and refugee resettlement. Though I struggled at the beginning to know how to address the topic of rituals and how to relate a ritual for Grand Genève to migrant populations, the subject of this thesis became an excellent exercise in critical analysis and interdisciplinary practice. The three months' time frame for my internship and research also proved to be quite constraining, and I feel that there was a great deal more that I could have accomplished had I been able to spend more time on the project (but unfortunately, I did not have the time in my degree plan to conduct a longer internship without delaying my entire degree by a semester). Nevertheless, in the end I still benefited greatly from my experience at the BIE and learned a great deal about local politics, territorial development, and the experiences of migrant populations within the Canton of Geneva.

3.2 The background of Grand Genève

Demographically, Grand Genève contains a diverse mixture of people of many other origins. According to Canton of Geneva statistics, 41% of the canton's residents in 2021 were non-Swiss, that is, of foreign nationality (OCSTAT, 2022). Much of the canton's foreign population consists of EU citizens (61%) and elsewhere around the globe who immigrated to Geneva to work, study, or join family members already living in the area. Approximately 12% of the foreign nationals are people who come to Geneva to work for the UN or other diplomatic or international organizations. A small number are asylum seekers and refugees who have come seeking security and support in the canton (OCSTAT (eds.), 2017). This high level of diversity is a defining feature of the canton, and the state invests a significant amount of money into grants for programs supporting the integration of migrants. Neighboring French areas also have diverse populations; for example, 22% of residents of the French municipality of Annemasse are non-French, which is more than twice the percentage found in the department of Haute-Savoie as a whole (INSEE, 2022). This high level of diversity gives the territory what Sandercock (2000) calls a "landscape of

differences” as the populations from a variety of backgrounds make their mark on the urban landscape, both individually and collectively.

Geographically, Grand Genève is uniquely situated as well. The Canton of Geneva is almost entirely surrounded by the neighboring *départements* of France, Ain and Haute-Savoie, commonly called *France voisine* (“neighboring France”) by Genevans, with a small border shared with the Canton of Vaud. All of these share the Lac Léman. The proximity has led to much cross-over between French and Swiss populations, and the territory is functionally shared more and more over the years. Since the 1960s, residents of Ain and Haute-Savoie have been securing employment in Geneva to benefit from higher Swiss salaries while still enjoying a much lower cost of living in France (Hussy, 2017). This has contributed to a resentment that many Genevans harbor toward the neighboring French, who feel that the French come to Geneva to “take their jobs.” Anti-French sentiments were so prevalent that right-wing political parties have made anti-French border residents (*frontaliers*) messaging a central aspect of their campaigns in Geneva. Additionally, a large number of people who come to Geneva for work find housing in France voisine, which in turn increases the cost of housing in these areas.

Today, Grand Genève is simultaneously a territory, a living space, and a legal body (“Agglomération Transfrontalière”, 2022), but these coherent identities of Grand Genève did not exist until very recent history. The increasing cross-over between Switzerland and France required that the two countries’ political leaders collaborate to meet shared needs such as transportation or policies governing French workers in Swiss territory. Starting in the 1970s, various regional committees and agreements were established in order to facilitate cross-border cooperation in regards to political leadership, urban planning, transportation, and civil society. The first of these was the *Comité régional franco-genevois*⁵, established in 1973 between representatives of the French national government, the French departments of Ain and Haute-Savoie, and the Canton of Geneva, with representatives from the Swiss Canton of Vaud added in 2007 as well (Historique et dates clés, 2022). In 2012, the residents of what had been called until that point the *agglomération franco-valdo-genevoise*⁶ were called upon to vote for a name for the region; “Grand Genève” was chosen and thereafter used as the “official” name for this area (Historique et dates clés, 2022). In 2013, the legal body of the same name was created under which French, Genevan, and Vaudois political partners could work. In 2019, French and Swiss local authorities collaborated to open two major means of transportation to facilitate mobility across Grand Genève: the Léman Express and the tram line 17.

Although the physical territory of Grand Genève is shared, that seems to be the only thing that is shared between the Canton of Vaud, Canton of Geneva, Ain, and Haute-Savoie. Social schisms between these cantons and départements resulted in a region which is void of a shared identity and sense of belonging. In the attempts to develop an identity of Grand Genève, Geneva has quite often taken the center stage: the region is named after Geneva, it is the place where everyone from the peripheral areas come to work and socialize or attend events, and the peripheral areas like France voisine remain lower-income, underdeveloped places where people simply go home to sleep (S. Cattacin, personal communication, January 9, 2023). The Canton of Vaud has also been critical of the concept of Grand Genève; in a 2016 interview in the *Tribune de Genève*, a conseiller d’Etat of Vaud, Pascal Broulis, stated that “for us

⁵Franco-Genevan Regional Committee

⁶Franco-Vaud-Genevan Metropolitan Area

Vaudois, Grand Genève does not make sense. We do not identify with it...this does not fit Switzerland”⁷ (Prieur, 2016). In the Canton of Geneva, too, many members of the local population do not feel that Grand Genève is a concept relevant to their daily lives. Grand Genève is said to be “an administrative reality far from the majority of its inhabitants”, which results in a lack of legitimacy and public support for policies carried out at the scale of this territory (Le Sismographe, 2021). Indeed, life in Switzerland is generally very localized and confined to the municipal or cantonal level, so the idea of a regional identity beyond the canton is something that is far from the daily realities of most Genevan residents who do not have any business with the French territory or people.

3.3 Existing rituals and other events for Grand Genève

In light of these socio-territorial tensions, a number of public events at the scale of Grand Genève have taken place: some with the express intention of serving as unifying rituals, and others without this express intention yet which correspond to many of the characteristics of a territorial ritual of belonging. In their research, Gamba and Cattacin have conducted extensive analyses of the existing rituals in this territory. Here I will provide a brief overview of two large-scale rituals which are still taking place each year and which arose the most often in my research, as well as a brief description of some additional smaller events and projects which have taken place for the explicit purpose of engendering a sense of belonging to Grand Genève.

Escalade

Escalade is a Genevan holiday observed on December 11th each year which celebrates the victory of the then city-state of Geneva over the neighboring Savoyards who had attacked their city during the night. A wide array of festivities over the course of two weekends are held to celebrate this holiday. The first weekend consists of a foot race through the city with separate races for a range of age classes and gender. In one special race, La Marmite, participants are encouraged to wear costumes for their run or walk through the streets of Geneva. The following weekend, a procession of cavalry and soldiers parade through the streets of the city into the Old Town. These public festivities are organized by private associations, “La Course de l’Escalade” and “La Compagnie de 1602.” On the day of Escalade itself, children come to school dressed in costumes, much like American children do for Halloween. Throughout the festivities, it is also traditional to break a pot made out of chocolate while shouting, “And thus perish the enemies of the republic!”

While Escalade and the festivities surrounding it certainly constitute a ritual which unites the residents of Geneva, it does not seem to be an event which is very conducive to integration of newcomers to the territory. The sheer number of different festivities taking place over a ten-day period could be quite confusing for a newcomer, especially someone who does not speak French. Additionally, the significance of this event would be totally lost on someone who does not have an existing knowledge of the history behind it, so many newcomers may feel that it does not concern them at all. Lastly, the event is explicitly based on a history in which the French are the enemies of Geneva, so it is not at all conducive to fostering a shared Franco-Genevan identity.

Fête de la Musique

⁷ Translation mine.

La Fête de la Musique is an annual music festival organized by city governments which takes place in Geneva and in Annemasse in neighboring France each summer. The event takes place over the course of three days in Geneva, whereas in neighboring France it is a one-day event around the same dates as the festival in Geneva. This music festival is a popular event in Geneva, as it is completely free to the public and features all kinds of local artists from different cultural backgrounds across the territory.

In many ways, as I note in the Research section of this paper, this festival does meet the need for an accessible ritual. Free, open to the public, and easy to participate in, this event brings together a large number of people to share in a love for music. However, it is not explicitly designed to create belonging. While many residents of neighboring France likely travel to Geneva to attend the festival, Genevans are unlikely to visit France on the one day that it occurs there.

1/3 Lieu 2 Culture

The project 1/3 Lieu_2 Culture, implemented by Le Sismographe and the Institut de Recherches Sociologiques of the University of Geneva, was one of the sources of inspiration for this paper. It consisted of a series of participatory artistic events and consultations for local residents to discuss, brainstorm, and represent various themes related to the cross-border territory of Grand Genève. The initiative simultaneously ran an online participatory platform for residents to contribute their ideas and vote which existing and new rituals would be the most unifying for Grand Genève. Between l'Escalade, La Fête de la Musique, and Les Fêtes de Genève – the three existing rituals which arose the most frequently in the consultations – the 360 participants selected Escalade as that which they believe to be the most unifying for the territory. Participants were also asked to choose between two new rituals which arose through the research of the Institut de Recherches Sociologiques:

1. A musical and culinary event which features concerts by musicians from across Grand Genève as well as food which is representative of the range of cultures and people of the territory, both international and local.
2. A celebration of mobility and transportation in which participants follow recommended routes to go from place to place in the territory using different forms of transportation – walking, biking, train and boat – in order to discover a program of musical and artistic events.

Between these two choices, the majority of the 349 individuals asked chose event #1. Though such an event has not yet been implemented, the booklet published as a result of this initiative served to continue the discussion around Grand Genève as a means of promoting the need for a unifying ritual. In turn, the booklet served as a helpful resource and source of inspiration for this present work as well.

Inauguration of the Léman Express

When the Léman Express was opened in December of 2019, the railway companies and local governments partnered together to organize a variety of events at various train stations across Grand Genève celebrating this new mode of transportation that was linking the region together more than ever. Activities ranged from a music and dance festival in the Genève—Eaux-Vives station, to a game on an app to help passengers discover the region, to a exposition and café-brioche breakfast held at Genève Cornavin. However, in their essay “l'Evenement musicale, source d'identité territorial : Le Paléo Festival à Nyon”, Bolomey et al. critique these events as giving unequal attention to the different cities/train stations, and also of lacking a unifying element which would tie them all together (Gamba et

al. (eds.), 2020). Instead, the authors suggested that the inauguration would have been more impactful if it had been a music festival with a different music genre at each train station performed by local artists from Grand Genève. In this way, music could have been the unifying factor which brought everyone together, and no one station would dominate over the others.

Walk along the border

As part of the 2022 EXPLORE Festival of Geneva hosted by the Office d'urbanisme, guided walks along the border were conducted by Le Sismographe to allow residents to discover the territory, inhabitants, music, and artistic creations from Grand Genève with stops along the way to hear from individuals such as Fiorenza Gamba and Sandro Cattacin.⁸ Unfortunately, whether due to lack of interest or the summer heat, these walks were very poorly attended.

Qu'est-ce qui se Tram⁹

In May 2017, the association FBI Prod created a special bus route which ran along the line of the future tram 17 (inaugurated in 2019) from Annemasse in France to Plan-les-Ouates in the Canton of Geneva. This bus was free of charge and hosted artistic and musical performances to showcase talent from across Grand Genève.¹⁰ Passengers rode this bus as a functional mode of transportation all while experiencing local culture from the territory.

Le Transect

This artistic exposition held in December 2022 at Geneva's Musée d'art modern et contemporain (MAMCO) by Le Sismographe featured artistic cartographic representations of various municipalities and communes from across Grand Genève based on discussions held with residents of these communities.¹¹ The words of each locale's inhabitants which inspired the pieces of art were also available to be read on flyers throughout the exhibition. I visited this exhibition and was impressed by the poignancy with which it captured residents' localized sense of belonging to their neighborhoods. Many neighborhoods were represented which I had not even heard of. The exhibit allowed me to take a symbolic tour through these regions as I saw them through residents' eyes.

La nuit est belle !¹²

Held every September (except 2020) since 2019, "La nuit est belle !" is a night organized by the entity Grand Genève in which communes across the region turn off all public lighting to raise awareness of the impact of light pollution as well as to save energy. Performances, star-gazing events, and informational sessions are held throughout the region on this night to bring attention to these themes. In 2022, 187 municipalities from Grand Genève participated (La nuit est belle, 2022). This ritual, though simple, links together the entire region in a palpable shared experience whose existence cannot easily be ignored.

⁸ Further event details may be found on: <https://www.facebook.com/Sismographe/>

⁹ The title of this event is a play on words using the word "tram" (instead of the correct spelling "trame") in an expression which translates to "What's going on?"

¹⁰ More information at <https://fbiprod.com/realisations/quest-ce-qui-se-tram/>

¹¹ More information at <https://lesismographe.ch/projet/le-transect/>

¹² Translation: The night is beautiful!

There are many more rituals which take place at scales both large and small across Grand Genève – far more than could be listed here – which center around themes of local products and agriculture, music, art, and more.¹³ Despite the multitude of unifying events and rituals occurring across the territory of Grand Genève, Gamba et al. write that Grand Genève still lacks a primary unifying ritual at the larger scale to include the entire territory (Gamba et al. (eds.), 2020, p. 12).

¹³ For more local rituals occurring in the territory of Grand Genève, see the work *Lieux et temps des rituels d'inclusion territoriale dans le Grand Genève*, edited by Gamba et al.

4. Research

4.1 Methodology

In addition to my literature review and study of existing rituals and unifying events within Grand Genève, I also conducted qualitative research in the form of interviews, focus group discussions, and observation and informal conversations throughout the course of my internship period. Here I describe my methodology used for each part of my personal research.

4.1.1 Focus groups and interviews with immigrant participants

I led a mixture of focus groups and individual interviews with immigrant participants at the following institutions: Camarada, Association Découvrir, Université Ouvrière de Genève, Espace Solidaire Paquis, and La Roseraie. The majority of the focus groups took place within the context of French classes at these institutions, and discussions were held in French. I did not have any criteria for participation other than an intermediate level of French, so participants were of a wide variety of origins, legal status, and levels of education and professional qualifications. The only exception was one focus group I conducted with Spanish-speaking individuals from Spain and Latin America thanks to the help of a translator.

The organization and implementation of the focus groups was not as seamless as I might have hoped for a variety of reasons. I often passed through an initial contact at the association to ask to conduct a focus group, who transferred my request to someone else in the administration, who then coordinated with one of the French instructors on my behalf, who agreed to host me in their course for a discussion with their students. This chain of correspondence for the relaying of my request at times led to miscommunications or disorganized planning, such as when one administrative coordinator gave me the wrong time for a class, and I learned upon arrival that the time I had been given was only a half hour before the end of the class, which led to the discussion being rather rushed and haphazard. During another session, the instructor herself spoke as much as all of the students combined, and she continuously pursued discussion of topics that were irrelevant to my discussion, such as difficulties obtaining employment. Her repeated detours led to me running out of time for some of my most important questions. I learned through that experience to move certain questions that I wanted to be sure to have time to discuss earlier in the session.

During the focus groups, I first gathered basic information from participants on the amount of time they have lived in Geneva and whether they hope to settle in Geneva long-term. I then asked questions related to belonging and social integration, such as the notion of “home”, feeling a part of and welcomed in the community in Geneva, and making friends in Geneva. In the second half of the discussion, I asked participants about public events and festivities in general, their awareness of and participation in existing rituals in Geneva, and their needs, hopes, and wants for potential participation in or creation of a new ritual. I also asked if they were familiar with the territory of Grand Genève as a concept and on an experiential level. The complete list of questions I used in the original French with may be found in Annex A, noting that I did not use all of the questions with every group, and the order in which I asked them varied somewhat from group to group.

My initial hypotheses were that the existing rituals in Grand Genève do not meet the needs or desires of migrant populations, and that these groups have not given much thought to participation in these rituals. I expected that these migrants would be more aware of and interested in events and activities happening at a local scale, such as that of their neighborhood or municipality. Through my discussions, I hoped to gain a better understanding of the issues that migrants face so as to design an effective ritual at the scale of Grand Genève which could effectively serve as a tool to create a sense of belonging for these migrants in the territory.

4.1.2 Individual stakeholder interviews and informal discussions

Throughout my internship, I also held formal and informal discussions with a variety of actors who are involved in the work of integration, socio-territorial belonging, or other related fields in Geneva. These conversations and interviews informed my perspectives and are referenced where relevant throughout this paper.

- My colleagues at the BIE working on projects related to integration of persons of foreign origin
- Individuals I encountered, including friends, teachers and staff members at the associations where I conducted focus groups, or people I met at the *Journée de concertation* or other BIE events
- An interviewee working in the Office de l'urbanisme¹⁴, Canton of Geneva who wished to remain anonymous
- Nicolas Croquet, Founder and Artistic Director, Il Fallait Bien Innover Production¹⁵, who has developed, proposed and implemented multiple cross-border projects with a vision of creating a sense of connectedness and identity at the scale of Grand Genève
- Caroline Eichenberger, Director, Camarada, an association providing adult education, French courses and other services for female migrants and their families

4.1.3 Co-facilitation of a workshop at the *Journée de concertation*¹⁶

Just a little more than halfway through my internship, the BIE hosted the *Journée de concertation*, a day when nearly 300 professionals from a wide range of public and private institutions working in integration came together to discuss themes related to the Cantonal Integration Program for 2024-2027. I was asked to co-facilitate a workshop discussion on the subject of rituals along with my academic supervisor Sandro Cattacin. We entitled the workshop "The role of rituals in the construction of a sense of belonging."

Our workshop was very well-attended; more than 40 individuals filled the room. We first asked attendees what words come to mind when asked to think about festivities, holidays, and festivals.¹⁷ Next, we discussed the activities surrounding the Genevan holiday *Escalade*, especially who and in what capacity people participate. After that, we discussed the territory of Grand Genève and rituals that happen at that scale. We then discussed possible obstacles to migrants' participation in these festivities.

¹⁴ Translation: Project Lead, Citizen Participation, Office of Urban Planning

¹⁵ Translation: It was necessary to innovate

¹⁶ Translation: Day of Dialogue

¹⁷ The word used in the question in French was *fête*, which can encompass the English words party, celebration, holiday, festivities, and festival

Finally, we discussed how a new ritual or event might be organized, in a way that is mindful of removing these obstacles.

4.2 Results

4.2.1 Focus groups and interviews with migrant participants

In this section, I have organized the results of my focus group discussions by theme. As my discussions were qualitative rather than quantitative, I do not have exact numbers quantifying the sentiments I recorded. I do my best to indicate when responses came from one of the two somewhat homogeneous groups containing primarily new arrivals (<1 year in Geneva) or primarily well-established participants (>10 years), but otherwise the focus groups were quite mixed in terms of length of stay, making it difficult to indicate how long the respondents of specific questions have lived here.

Social ties and interactions

Most participants agreed that the primary place that they had made acquaintances and friends was in the associations where they study French and receive other services. The more recent their arrival in Geneva, the greater their dependence upon these associations for finding friends and support in multiple areas of life. The group of new arrivals, who were all Spanish speakers, spent every day from Monday through Friday taking French classes in the Espace Solidaire Paquis. It seemed that their entire lives revolved around this association: it was the place they made friends and the only source of support they knew. However, they seemed frustrated because the association was not able to meet all of their needs or answer all of their questions, but they were at a loss of where else to turn.

On the other hand, the longer the individuals I spoke with had lived in Geneva, the more likely they were to have a mixture of friends from different backgrounds that they met in various ways in addition to the associations. Even so, the vast majority agreed that it was easier to befriend others of foreign origin than to befriend Swiss people. The well-established participants who were mostly working professionals spoke of having Swiss acquaintances with whom they had trouble developing deeper friendships. They did not seem to have many concerns about their social lives, though, and the discussion quickly shifted to discrimination they felt in the job market due to their accents or difficulties mastering French. However, when I asked them to think back on their early years in Geneva, they nearly universally agreed that it was difficult to meet people and feel at home when they were newly arrived in Geneva.

When asked about their interactions with Genevans/Swiss, many participants had observed a certain reservedness in the demeanor of members of the local population, finding them distant and generally unapproachable. Some participants seemed at a loss of how to meet and befriend Swiss people at all, especially if they do not speak much French. One expressive young man from Latin America said that in his home country, when you're on the train, people are always laughing and talking with each other. "Here in Switzerland, though--" and at this, he comically crossed his arms, put on a frown, and sat silently in his chair, accompanied by laughter from a few of his classmates. However, a few members in the new arrivals group had a positive impression of Swiss people because of their experiences at the OCPM, where they said staff were courteous and always went to find a Spanish-speaking staff member who could help them.

Belonging and feeling at home

When I asked what elements allowed participants to feel at home in a given place, there were a few topics that frequently arose in their responses: possession of permanent legal status/residency permit, ability to secure employment, presence of family members, and connection to other members of the same linguistic/national/ethnic background. One participant expressed her view of the concept of “home” quite poignantly when she told the lady who was translating for me between Spanish and English: “When I hear you [speaking Spanish], I feel at home.”

In response to my asking if they felt that they belong and are “at home” in Geneva, very few of the new arrivals felt a sense of belonging or being at home in Geneva, and only a portion of the groups of mixed participants felt a sense of belonging. The majority of participants who had lived in Geneva longer than 10 years indicated a strong sense of belonging, often related to the presence of family, permanent residency or citizenship, and secure employment. From the mixed groups, those who said they felt a sense of belonging in Geneva sometimes attributed it to the level of cultural diversity they see around them in the places they frequent. One participant stated that all of the support he received from associations made him feel comfortable here. Others said they feel at home because their family and loved ones are here with them, or to the contrary, if their family and loved ones are not here, they do not feel at home. Despite these difficulties, quite a few participants expressed a strong desire to make Geneva their home, as they plan to stay here permanently and are sure that one day they will feel more comfortable here.

Participation in rituals

When it came to discussion on existing rituals, with all of the groups, it was clear that the participants had not given much thought to the idea of public events as a means of integration into the Genevan society. A majority of participants stated that they had never participated in any large public event in the Genevan territory, and many could not even name examples of public events, festivities, or holidays in Geneva nor had they heard of the events I asked them about. The vast majority of those who were familiar with the events I named had resided in Geneva for longer than 10 years. For those participants who had participated in an event, most had done so when participation was organized through an association or through their children’s school. These individuals said they enjoyed the opportunity to see and understand the local culture and have contact with other people.

One participant, who has lived in Geneva for 7 years and fondly considers it his home, was about to participate in the annual Escalade race for the first time this year with a group of his friends. Another group of participants who had resided in Geneva for several years and were preparing to apply for Swiss citizenship were also going to participate in Escalade together with teachers from their association, Camarada; for the vast majority it would be the first time they had participated in public Escalade festivities.

When I asked participants why they had not participated in these events and festivities, many of them said they simply did not know about them or did not understand what was going on due to language and cultural barriers. Others said that they were not interested or did not have time between working and taking care of their families, or that it really depended if their children or friends wanted to go. A few said that they did not know where places were located when they heard about an event. Still others mentioned that they only attend if an event is free of charge.

Festivities and events

All of the groups I discussed with seemed to place a much higher importance on aspects of integration other than public events and festivities, as our conversations surrounding festivities and rituals were frequently derailed when participants brought up other topics such as the language barrier, employment, and family.¹⁸ With the new arrivals, they were so focused on discussing the multiple problems and questions of their daily lives which were clearly stressful to them that it felt almost insensitive when I raised questions on public events and festivities which had no relevance to the challenges they were facing. Only one person in this group acknowledged that such events could be helpful to them, as they need to find ways of meeting Swiss people in order to practice French. A few participants in the other groups made this observation as well.

All of this is not to say that social relationships and events were not important to participants; to the contrary, relationships and activities built in more local contexts seemed to be very meaningful and a key element of participants' integration in their new life in Geneva. Participants primarily spoke of friends they had made through the associations where they took French classes and received other services and the activities or small parties in which they had participated within these associations. Others spoke of friendships built with neighbors. Newer arrivals who did not speak French seemed especially attached to other speakers of their native language as a sort of oasis of familiarity in a city where nothing else was familiar.

When I asked participants about their favorite types of events to attend in general, or favorite types of activities at events, they often mentioned food, music, and dancing. When I modified the question and specifically asked them what activities they would like to share with others if *they* organized an event or party, participants were quite notably more excited and engaged in the discussion. They enthusiastically shared about their home country's food, music, dances, and clothing. One focus group I held just happened to take place immediately prior to a potluck (*repas canadien*) which had been organized as an end-of-year celebration for students where each one would cook a dish from his or her country to share with others. The students seemed to enjoy trying each other's food while sharing their own.

I recall one lady, who had been rather unexpressive and disinterested while we discussed Genevan festivities, whose face lit up when she exclaimed that if *she* organized a party, there would be tango! Another participant told me that he and the Afghani cultural association to which he belongs would like to organize a public party or small street festival in order to share their culture with other residents of the community, but they do not know the rules and regulations for doing so legally and are afraid of getting in trouble with the police. Yet another participant said that her cultural association does host such parties, but that only members of her ethnic group participate and they have never had outsiders attend.

Grand Genève

When I asked participants if they had heard of Grand Genève, I was universally met with blank stares. One participant simply asked me in confusion: "Are you saying that Geneva is...big?" Even participants who have lived in Geneva for ten years or more and were preparing to apply for Swiss citizenship were completely oblivious to the concept. In that class, however, a discussion surrounding the subject of

¹⁸ It is worth noting that the order of my questions may have had an influence upon this occurrence, as I began with more general questions on integration and belonging and gradually made questions more specific to rituals.

French *frontaliers* was opened at the prompting of the teacher, who asked if her students thought it was unfair that the French were hired in Geneva so easily, whereas they (the migrants in this class) had faced many challenges and worked hard to immigrate to Geneva and find employment. A few of the students nodded in agreement or said yes, they thought that was not fair, and when no one else contributed to the discussion, the teacher continued by saying that if she were in their shoes, she would be frustrated that the French who did not face the same challenges as her came here and found employment. In the other groups, the only thing that was occasionally mentioned in regards to France was the fact that participants sometimes went shopping there.

Apart from the above instance which was instigated by the teacher and not the participants, participants had very little to say on the subject of Grand Genève or a ritual at that scale. At best, they shrugged and said sure, they would come to an event if something was organized. One lady who was not in one of my focus groups, but was also conducting a research project at Camarada and was herself of a migration background, expressed her surprise and even disapproval when she learned of my research topic: “When we [migrants] come here, we have so many other preoccupations. We’re looking for peace, not recreation. Our objective is to find work. We deal with fear, too—to not do things correctly. I used to not go [to places where I would be] in the middle of a lot of people. And to be interested in Geneva—that’s just too much.”¹⁹

4.2.2 Individual stakeholder interviews and discussions

My conversation with Caroline Eichenberger, the director of Camarada, provided me with interesting insights from the perspective of someone who has extensive experience working directly with migrant women. She seemed surprised that I was speaking of Grand Genève within the context of integration of migrants, and described the issue of Grand Genève as something that “is completely lost on them.”²⁰ She explained that the people she works with arrive after a very challenging migratory journey, and once they arrive, are consumed by the many stresses of integration in a new country, including learning a new language, finding work, and becoming independent. She seemed shocked that anyone would even suggest that a ritual for Grand Genève could concern migrants. Grand Genève, she said, is not even a relevant reality for Genevans, so why would we try to use it as a tool of integration for newcomers?

Similarly, in informal conversations with employees of the BIE, they were surprised that this project was being proposed, as it is not the type of event that the BIE would typically finance. In the BIE funding model, projects should not be a one-time event, but rather a series of activities or workshops that bring participants together over a longer period of time. Additionally, the members of the BIE were of the opinion that a ritual for Grand Genève would not interest the local population, and least of all people of foreign origin. According to them, Grand Genève is a concept that is irrelevant to the lives of the vast majority of the population. They believe the scale is far too large, and from their observations of numerous integration projects through different associations, a sense of belonging and inclusion is far more easily and better fostered at a local level. One employee noted that certain permit holders (*permis F* and *N*) are not legally permitted to leave Switzerland, so a ritual involving France would be neither relevant to nor inclusive of them.

¹⁹ Translated from French.

²⁰ Translation mine (original language: French)

In my individual conversations with various individuals I encountered through my research or in my daily life, many of these people commented that there are already so many events going on in Geneva and questioned why we felt that a new ritual was necessary. Other people took interest in the concept and told me about small-scale rituals which they had seen, participated in, or organized, such as neighborhood or association-based events. They believed that these local events and activities played an important role in creating a sense of community, belonging, and friendships amongst participants, but they often had a difficult time understanding how this could be achieved at such a large scale as Grand Genève.

During my conversation with the employee of the Office d'urbanisme, he shared insights from his years of working to promote greater citizen participation within the Territory Department. He has also noticed a complete lack of interest in the concept of Grand Genève on the part of citizens as well as a lack of political willpower to promote the discourse of Grand Genève. He cited a walk along the French-Swiss border which was part of the EXPLORE festival and was very poorly attended in comparison with other events in the festival. According to him, by pushing for a ritual for Grand Genève, the government is putting too much pressure on the people to support a cause that they do not feel concerns them. Instead, the government should be leading the changes and setting the example for the people by reflecting the value for Grand Genève in various ways. For example, a tribute could be made to Grand Genève within existing events rather than pushing to create an entirely new ritual for the territory, which would require a very large amount of resources and planning.

My conversation with Nicolas Croquet provided insight into why some think it is crucial that we make concerted efforts to unify the people of the territory. He explained that as Grand Genève is a territory shared by the populations living in both Switzerland and France, collaboration between these areas of Switzerland and France is simply inevitable. As such, it would be counter-productive to resist or neglect efforts to foster a shared identity and sense of belonging. He has observed a significant shift in perspective over the years, with reduced anti-French sentiments and increased identification with the shared territory. He noted that the creation of public transportation options connecting the French and Swiss parts of the territory—the CEVA/Léman Express and the tram line 17, both of which opened in 2019—marked a turning point in bringing the territory together both literally and figuratively. He also noted that government authorities have started shifting attitudes and policies in favor of greater cross-border collaboration in recent years.

4.2.3 Workshop at the Journée de concertation

During the workshop, participants shared words that they associated generally with festivities and rituals, such as color, joy, beauty, place, belonging, marker of time, shared memory, tradition, friendship, eating, music, and sharing. Some words with more negative or neutral connotations were included as well: noise, trash, and spending money.

This group was the most favorable of any group I spoke with about a ritual for Grand Genève. We discussed rituals as a means of uniting Grand Genève, as events which evoke emotions in participants and instill a sense of civic engagement, then named a few examples: *Escalade*, *Fêtes de la Musique*, and *Antigel*. We chose to specifically focus on Escalade, listing the different activities that make up the festivities for this holiday. We then asked participants to list possible obstacles to participation that

migrants might face in such festivities: finances, a lack of interest, a lack of feeling welcome, not being informed or having access to information, language barrier, feelings of illegitimacy, or not understanding the expected behaviors. Next, we asked participants to suggest specific elements of a new inclusive ritual which could address these obstacles: participation, transport, and food being free of charge, valuing diversity, developing an event with meaning behind it, instilling a sense of hospitality and welcome, and defining the territory for which the ritual is intended.

One participant noted that the *Fête de la Musique* meet nearly all of the criteria we discussed for an inclusive ritual: participation is free of charge, it happens across the territory of Grand Genève, and a wide range of musical genres are performed. Why, she asked, would we create a new ritual when something like this already exists?

4.3 Discussion

The concept of Grand Genève proved to be a difficult concept to broach in my discussions with migrants. These individuals are in the process of adapting to a life very different than that to which they are accustomed, and this task quite often necessitates a focus on their immediate surroundings which are much more relevant to their integration than the larger territory of Grand Genève. As I noted previously, it is clear that social integration is important to migrants, but it happens naturally at a smaller scale such as through associations, neighborhoods, and friend circles, which is understandable and relevant to them. My findings indicate that a ritual specifically at the scale of Grand Genève is not necessary, relevant to, or comprehensible by newer migrant populations living in the Canton of Geneva; however, these small, localized rituals could contribute significant benefits to their process of integration with the local population.

This is not necessarily to say that the narrative underlying a ritual for Grand Genève could not be understandable for some migrant populations. More established, long-term migrants, as they begin adapting, integrating into, and learning more about life in Geneva, could benefit from an awareness of the reality of Grand Genève as a shared territory in which they live. Under certain conditions (see below), this ritual could even be beneficial to newer migrants even if they do not fully understand or are not interested in the underlying concept of Grand Genève. Indeed, it was clear that participants often did not know how to meet members of the local population, and a ritual which allows them to make such encounters and learn about other cultures could be beneficial exposure.

Though some of my findings may seem to imply that a ritual for Grand Genève would not be relevant to migrants populations at all, this is not necessarily the case. It is true that a ritual for Grand Genève would be intended for the population as a whole and would not be explicitly targeting migrants. The goal would be to instill openness to differences in the city, rather than centering a project around those who are different. However, without informed actions to make the ritual accessible and of interest to migrant populations, there is a high likelihood that it would completely fail to reach them at all. In this regard, and in light of my research, I have developed a set of conditions that I believe to be necessary for a ritual to foster openness in the territory of Grand Genève while successfully including migrants in these efforts.

Conditions for a successful ritual of inclusion

First, the single most important action to facilitate the engagement of migrants in a ritual would be a close working partnership with the numerous associations which provide French classes and services to these migrants as well as with cultural associations of migrants from the same national origin or ethnic group. These associations appear to be many migrants', especially more recent ones, primary or only source of social activities, friendship, and understanding of the territory in which they live. The organizers of a territorial must capitalize upon this close relationship the associations hold with migrants by asking associations to tell their participants about the ritual, ensure that they understand the details of the event, and ideally, organize groups to attend together. If associations do not provide such support and encouragement to migrant populations, many migrants will be unaware of the event, not understand the details of participation, or not dare to participate because they do not know anyone else who is attending.

Next, a ritual would greatly increase its appeal to migrant populations if it offered them an opportunity to share something of personal or cultural importance to them. The migrants with whom I spoke often missed their home cultures and, while they were open to learning about or experiencing local Genevan culture, they did not intentionally seek out opportunities to do so unless it was an activity organized by their friends or an association. However, they were passionate about their own cultures and loved opportunities to share the things dear to them. It is also important for their social integration that migrants learn more about the culture of the other inhabitants of the territory, so the ritual should provide them an opportunity to learn about the local culture as well. This concept certainly applies the other way around as well: that local populations should have an opportunity to learn about people who are different than them while sharing something of themselves. Ideally, a ritual would remove the distinction between "foreign" and "local" cultures, and rather than asking participants to share their "traditional" or stereotypical culture, offer an open-ended opportunity for anyone, regardless of origin, to share something of personal significance. Such a ritual would be based upon the idea of a city open to differences of all kinds.

Next, a ritual should be catered to not only migrants, but the entire population of the territory. This would allow for encounters between migrants and locals, or rather between residents of all backgrounds which foster shared identity and sense of belonging. To best engage with the territory's population, participants must be given opportunities to take ownership over the event. Such a ritual would have a bottom-up approach defined by participants rather than the organizers, as recommended by Gamba et al. (2020, p. 124). Additionally, a ritual which is organized from the top down, with an agenda that is imposed upon participants, is sure to only attract certain people who are interested in the content of the event - be it musical performances, athletic activities, or art.

To avoid proposing a ritual which would exclude people who are not interested in a certain type of activity, I reflected upon what things bring all humans together. What are activities that nearly any person regardless of origin can appreciate? Broadly, the types of activities that appealed to everyone I spoke with almost always centered around food, music, and dance. However, when planning an event that is intended to be for all people regardless of origin, it is quite challenging to decide on foods to serve and music to play that will appeal to everyone. Even in a homogenous culture, individual preferences can make it difficult to please everyone, so when a multitude of cultures is added to the list of differences, designing a ritual that attracts everyone seems like a nearly impossible task. I concluded that giving participants ownership over the event could be a solution to this challenge as well, as participants could shape the event to contain elements which appeal to and are important to them.

Lastly, it is important to consider which pragmatic aspects must be addressed in order to remove barriers to participation which were noted by participants in my focus groups, but which could apply to any resident of the territory as well. First, a ritual must never require that participants spend money to take part in order to remove barriers to participation for lower-income residents of the territory. Next, the ritual should take place over a sufficiently long time frame that residents might be able to come for one part of it even if they are busy during another part of it. A ritual should also be physically accessible, with easy transportation options available. Ideally, it should also take place within key locations for each part of the territory (Vaud, Genève, neighboring France) in order to attract the people from that area who might be willing to participate on their “own” territory but who are not willing or comfortable traveling to a different Canton or country, however short and simple the trajectory might be. The practice of offering in multiple locations also serves to equalize the territory, attributing equal value to the different geographical locations rather than making Geneva the central point of the event.

Lastly, a delicate balance must be struck concerning the way that the concept of Grand Genève is communicated in regards to the ritual. Due to the widespread lack of interest in or even opposition to this concept, I do not believe that the term “Grand Genève” should play a central role in event communications. Rather, it should be clear that the event concerns the entire territory and thus contribute to unification of the territory without the potentially off-putting discourse of Grand Genève specifically.

4.4 Limitations

Due to my placement within the Bureau de l'intégration des étrangers of the Canton of Geneva, my research was heavily biased toward the Genevan perspective on this subject, especially in regards to the segment of the Genevan population holding foreign nationality. Unfortunately, my short time frame of three months to conduct my research and analysis were simply insufficient to interview and discuss with the range of people I would have liked to have included: citizens and inhabitants of all backgrounds in the French, Swiss, and Vaudois territories, government leaders from all sides, and other civil society actors. If similar studies were conducted amongst these groups, I imagine that we would hear a wide variety of experiences and opinions that were not at all represented in my samples.

The sample population with whom I spoke was also limited to those who were able to converse in French, apart from the single Spanish-speaking group I interviewed. Language is one of the strongest barriers to migrants' integration, and in this case it was even a barrier to inclusion in my research. This is but one of many potentially marginalized groups I would have liked to include but was unable to.

5. Proposed Ritual and Action Plan

According to the above discussion of my research results, I developed the following ritual which I believe responds to the criteria I developed for a successful territorial ritual for belonging in Grand Genève.

5.1 Le Tour du Léman

The Léman Express will be the focal point of this event: as a regionally significant mode of transportation which physically connects the territory of Grand Genève between Annemasse and Coppet, this train will be transformed into a cultural and musical stage, all while transporting participants to the other end of Grand Genève to take part in a giant potluck (*repas canadien* in French) and share their favorite foods with other residents of the territory.^{21, 22}

5.1.1 Overview

For each participating Léman Express train that makes a trip on the day of the *Tour*, civil society associations, music groups, dancers, or even groups of ordinary citizens from across Grand Genève will be given the opportunity to sign up as a host on one of its train cars, in which they can host a mini-concert, performance, game, or other activity which shares something which is of importance to the host group. The objective for train car hosts is to allow them to take ownership over the event, giving shape to it by leading an activity that is personally, culturally or socially significant to them. The objective for participants is to “shake up” daily life by transforming an ordinary activity, like taking a trip in the train, into an opportunity to experience convivial moments with the hosts and other passengers. In encountering various cultures, music, and talents of residents from across the territory of Grand Genève, passengers will take a symbolic tour to meet the territory’s residents while taking a literal tour across the physical territory.

Additionally, there will be three potlucks, or shared meals, where all participants are encouraged to bring their favorite food: one in Annemasse, one in Geneva, and one in Coppet. I selected these locations for the simple reason that they are the three main stops of the Léman Express in the territory of Grand Genève, and as such, potlucks will be held near the train stations. At these meals, participants will have the opportunity to share a dish that they love while trying others’ food, meeting other residents, and eating with each other. The cities hosting the events can also be encouraged to contribute a communal food of their choice such as fondue. During the potlucks, participants will also have the opportunity to perform music of their choice at an open mic available for anyone.

5.1.2 Detailed Description

I propose that this ritual be held in June 2024 in order to allow time for sufficient planning and preparations. A detailed timeline of steps to be taken may be found in section 5.2.

Léman Express

²¹ The idea of hosting an event and musical performances from across *Grand Genève* inside the Léman Express was first suggested by an anonymous user of the participatory platform participer.ge.ch, from which the responses were published in the booklet *1/3 Lieu_2 Culture*. A similar idea was also independently raised by my colleague at the BIE, Laurent Tichler, during a discussion about my project. I subsequently adapted and incorporated these ideas into my final proposal.

²² Alternative rituals which I considered proposing but opted against may be found in Annex B.

The *Tour du Léman* would take place on the Léman Express line 4 (L4), which circulates directly between Annemasse in France and Coppet in the Canton of Vaud, with a stop at Cornavin Station in Geneva on the way. On the day of the event, between the hours of 3 pm and 10 pm, this specific trajectory would be free of charge to any and all passengers in order to facilitate participation in the *Tour du Léman*. I propose this time frame on a weekday to allow part of the event to happen during the day, part of it to happen at the time when a large number of people would normally be riding the train to go home from work, and part of it to happen in the evening, when the potluck meals would be hosted.

The hours I propose would include fifteen trips on line L4 in direction Annemasse - Coppet and twelve trains in direction Coppet - Annemasse, for a total of twenty-seven train trips participating in the event. Typically, each train has four separated train cars, though during busier hours the trains are extended to have eight train cars. This means that there could be anywhere between 108 and 216 train cars available for associations and groups to occupy throughout the afternoon and evening. If it is logistically possible for Lémanis, the operator of the Léman Express, it would be ideal for the trains participating in this event to have 8 cars each to avoid overcrowding. Additionally, one or more cars in each train could be reserved as a “quiet car” in case there are passengers who would like to work or read in silence during their commute. Passengers should be allowed to move freely between train cars in order to experience the variety of activities being hosted. In order to encourage people to ride the train who might not have done so otherwise, participants could have the chance to keep track of which hosts they visited and vote on their favorite at the end of the day. Prizes could be given for the participant(s) who visited the highest number of hosts as well as hosts who received the most votes from participants.

The opportunity to host a train car activity must be open to anyone and everyone present within the territory of Grand Genève at the time of the event. The nature of the activities could be anything that is important to the hosts, from music and dance to a game or skit. Ideally, train car hosts should be encouraged to lead activities which are as interactive as possible, not simply shows where there is a stark divide between observers and performers. For example, musicians could play music while other members of their group could teach passengers the steps to a dance. (Yes, dancing while on a train might be challenging, but the absurdity is part of what makes this fun!) A group of friends could choose to invite passengers in the train to play their favorite video game which could be shown on the screens inside the train car. The possibilities are endless, and creativity is encouraged above all! The element of surprise concerning what kind of activity awaits passengers upon boarding the train will make the event memorable and dynamic for participants.

In order to coordinate train cars, the organizers will need to distribute a description of the event, recommendations for the type of activity hosted, and an online application form to potential hosts. Hosts and activities should be selected based on their alignment with the intentions of the event as well as remaining availability of train cars if spaces start to fill up. Though a wide range of methods of advertising the event will be utilized (see section 5.2.3, Marketing and communications plan), the numerous local associations will be instrumental in helping reach a diverse audience, especially migrants who are often isolated from the Swiss/French population and may need help understanding the event and its organization.

Potlucks

Potlucks will be hosted over the course of approximately three hours in the evening near the train stations in Annemasse, Geneva, and Coppet. In Annemasse, this could be held in the newly

reconstructed Place de la Gare, which is the square directly in front of the station. This location would allow for a great deal of visibility, and as it is a place where food trucks are often found, it is already a place where people sometimes stop to have a bite to eat. For a quieter alternative, the new park Parvis Nord directly behind the train station could also be used. In Geneva, the potluck could be held in Place des Grottes, which is located behind the train station at a minute's walk and is often used for other community events such as a weekly market. For a quieter, more natural alternative, the Parc des Crochettes is also very near and is used for festivals and other events. In Coppet, the potluck could be held in the gardens of the Chateau de Coppet, which is a three minutes' walk across the street from the train station. These gardens are often used for wedding receptions and other events. Though the Chateau charges for use of the gardens, the Chateau collaborates closely with the Canton of Vaud and the municipality of Coppet, so arrangements could likely be made for its use (whether through cantonal funding or in-kind donation of the space from the Chateau). Photos showing these proposed locations may be found in Annex C.

I recommend that large signs be placed at the train stations indicating the location of the potlucks as well as the fact that it is free of charge, especially in Geneva and Coppet, where the meals cannot be directly seen from the train stations. Anyone who bring food should be provided with a label or card where they can write the name of their dish and a short description if they wish. Though contributing food to the potluck will be encouraged, it will not be mandatory to bring food in order to attend. In that way, anyone who does not have the means to prepare something or who simply sees the potluck on the day of the event will still be welcome to attend. Financial assistance (funded by the event organizers and sponsors) can also be made available for qualifying participants who may not have the means to purchase the necessary ingredients otherwise.

As a central feature of the potlucks, I recommend that the cities of Annemasse, Geneva, and Coppet provide a large communal main dish such as fondues to be shared in addition to any food brought by attendees. Through this act, the municipalities could highlight the local culture by sharing a food that belongs to the local region. Additionally, the act of eating fondue would be very fitting for the purpose of this event, as it would physically bring people together to dip their bread into the common pot of cheese.

Also during the potlucks, I propose that there be an "open mic", sound system, and small stage available for any musicians or other performers to spontaneously use. Sign-ups would be managed during the event, much as is done in a venue which hosts karaoke.

I am proposing three potluck locations instead of only one in order to allow a greater number of people to participate in this portion of the event. First, the reality of an event covering such a large area is that some people simply will not participate in the Léman Express portion of the event and thus will not be travel outside of their city or canton of residence. This could be due to a multitude of reasons including time constraints, lack of interest or lack of comfort in leaving their local community with which they are familiar. Having only one potluck greatly limits the number of people who could and would participate in this portion of the event. Organizing three potlucks shortens the distance required to reach at least part of the event and also increases exposure and visibility to community members who may not have heard about the event in advance but may see the meals while passing by. People who participate only in one of the potlucks will still encounter residents from other parts of the territory who traveled to the potluck

on the Léman Express, as well as diverse residents from their own community, so the goal of intermingling residents of the territory could still be accomplished.

5.1.3 Symbolic significance and impact

I chose the name “Le Tour du *Léman*” intentionally instead of “Le Tour du *Grand Genève*” because I believe that the name “Grand Genève” is a rather counterproductive name to use for the territory that we are seeking to unify, as it elevates Geneva above the other distinct parts of the territory of which we are seeking to inclusive. If Greater Geneva were like any typical metropolitan area, “Grand Genève” might be acceptable because the nature of a metropolitan area is typically that it is centered around one focal city. Although Geneva is in many ways the focal point of this metropolitan area, the fact that the urban area is dispersed over cantonal borders and national borders necessarily leads to the existence of distinct identities (that of neighboring France and the Canton of Vaud) which ought to be included in the name of the ritual rather than excluded by giving Geneva predominance. And thus I settled upon using Léman in the name of the ritual, as that is both the name of the lake around which this territory is located as well as the name of the train which will be the focal point of this ritual.

It is important for me to note that I am well aware that the event I am proposing risks becoming disorderly, noisy, and disorganized. While I think reasonable measures should be taken to keep activities from becoming totally chaotic, I believe that the magic of such an event is that it allows participants as much freedom of expression as possible, as in the open city described by Sennett.

The most significant aspect of this ritual is the nature of participation in the event: rather than being passive observers, participants will have the opportunity to actively take ownership over the activities that make up this ritual and, equally important, to share something of great importance to themselves and their culture with other participants. This is especially true of the train car hosts and anyone who contributes to the potluck meals. Ideally, passengers on the train will also have the opportunity to participate actively in the activities that are hosted depending on the nature of the activity. I expect that the opportunity to share something of great personal meaning will render participation much more attractive to residents of the territory, and the role of participants as *creators* of the event’s content will render the event all the more meaningful to anyone who takes part in it.

The impact of this ritual is not limited to the day of the event itself; to the contrary, the days, weeks, and months of preparations leading up to the event will have an even greater and more lasting impact than a single day event could have. The train car hosts will have the opportunity to self-define the identity that they wish to represent themselves by in the eyes of the territory’s residents. The common themes of openness and everyone’s right to exist in the territory will be reinforced as the event is organized, promoted, and discussed in the preparation phase in the local associations and communities.

The impact of the event itself will be achieved through participants’ exchanges and encounters with the variety of people present within their territory. By sharing activities and foods that are special to them, and by partaking in those that are special to those around them, I hope to create opportunities for genuine human connection through shared emotions and experiences. By creating these social connections in the setting of key places in the territory of Grand Genève, I hypothesize that participants will develop a greater sense of belonging to both the society and the territory. This will serve as an implicit rather than explicit means of creation of a shared identity with the territory of Grand Genève.

5.2 Action plan

The following subsections lay out detailed plans for implementation of the proposed ritual, all of which would be necessary to submit to public and private funders when requesting financial assistance.

5.2.1 Budget and Cost Descriptions

Table 2. Budget

Item	Cost (CHF)
Coordination/administrative costs	9,000
Train tickets	32,400
Potlucks meals supplies	12,000
Communications	11,800
Financial assistance for members of qualifying associations	10,000
TOTAL	75,200

Coordination/administrative costs: This line item would cover administrative costs incurred by coordinators of the event. Projects funded by the BIE are not permitted to have administrative costs greater than 12% of the total project budget, so these costs will need to be limited as much as possible, and a significant number of volunteers would need to be recruited in order to carry out the event.

Train tickets: The event itself would not incur high costs; the most expensive element would be the value of the tickets of passengers who are riding the train free of charge. My rough estimate of the total cost of these tickets is 32,400 CHF, which we could negotiate with the two railway operators to give a 50% discount, bringing the cost of tickets down to 16,200 CHF.

Potluck meals supplies: Food provided by the host cities of the potlucks as well as plates, eating and serving utensils, and rented tables and chairs. If the budget is not sufficient for tables and chairs, scattered standing tables could be used as well as blankets or mats to sit on the ground picnic-style.

Communications: These funds will be used for graphic design of event promotional materials, printing costs of flyers and posters to advertise, as well as signage to direct people on the day of the event.

Financial assistance: I propose that assistance be offered to associations whose participants may not have the financial means to bring food to a potluck meal. Associations could be invited to apply for financial assistance if a majority of their members are recipients of state social assistance or are unemployed. Funds granted to an association for this purpose could then be distributed equally amongst qualifying members (e.g. those who receive social assistance) by the association for the purpose of buying the needed ingredients to cook a dish from their home country.

Alternatively or in addition to this, financial assistance could be offered to groups or associations wishing to host a train car activity but who lack the materials needed to do so. I did not include this as

an official budget item because I do not anticipate most train activities needing materials or equipment that the hosts do not already own, but the need for assistance remains a possibility of which event organizers should be conscious so that no one is prohibited from participating as a host.

5.2.2 Funding Plan

Table 2. Funding Plan

Funder	Amount (CHF)
BIE	25,000
Ville de Genève	4,000
Canton de Vaud	5,000
Département de la Haute-Savoie	5,000
Commune de Coppet	2,500
Ville d'Annemasse	2,500
Lémanis/SBB-CFF/SNCF	16,200
Fondation Hans Wilsdorf	15,000
Total	75,200

Funding for the event will come from a variety of public and private funders. As the primary sponsor of the event as well as the state entity issuing the mandate for the project, the BIE would be the largest funder. Departments from the other governments in whose territory the ritual will take place, the Canton de Vaud and the Département de la Haute-Savoie, will also support the project financially. The three municipalities involved, Geneva, Coppet, and Annemasse, will also have a significant role in providing funds for the event, which will primarily be used for costs of the meals to be held within their city limits. The funds listed here as being requested from Lémanis (operator of the Léman Express), SBB-CFF and SNCF are simply one half of the cost of providing free train tickets during the event. The exact distribution of these funds between Lémanis and the two railway operators may change depending on the result of negotiations with these actors. Some state actors, such as the Canton of Geneva's Department of Infrastructure, may be called upon to help subsidize the costs of this loss of income for the companies as well. If an agreement could be reached with the Office d'urbanisme in the Département du territoire, and perhaps the Office cantonal de la culture et du sport as well, to make this an inter-departmental event, these other departments could provide increased funding to go toward the cost of the coordination personnel to manage the event.

The amount requested from the Fondation Wilsdorf may be adjusted according to the amounts granted by other funders, and as such, the funding proposal for the Fondation should be one of the last funding requests to be sent out, as noted in the timeline below. The Fondation Wilsdorf is known for being very

responsive to funding requests, so sending in the request to their foundation slightly later in the timeline of preparations should not be a problem.

If additional funding or more diversified funding should be required, a few other funders may be considered, including the Loterie Romande, the Fondation Leenaards, and/or the Fondation de Famille Sandoz. The Loterie Romande commonly funds projects in conjunction with the Fondation Wilsdorf, and thus may be a good choice of additional funder. The Fondation Leenaards and Fondation de Famille Sandoz are both Swiss Foundations which fund creative cultural projects contributing to the greater good. Funders may be sought in neighboring France as well if a greater regional diversity is required for the project.

5.2.3 Marketing and Communications Plan

The way in which this ritual is advertised and communicated to the population will be crucial for its success in engaging many members of the population and in achieving the intended results. First, the messaging used in describing the ritual matters a great deal. Advertisements must find a way of showing that it is an open event for all people, regardless of status, origin, or other differences. Care should be taken not to make the event sound like an event specifically centered around international cultures or targeting migrant populations, which will not appeal to all members of the local population. For example, in an advertisement about signing up as a train car host, a sign stating: “Partagez de la musique ou danse traditionnelle de votre culture !”²³ communicates a very different message about the event than: “Partagez une activité qui t’est important, comme ta musique préférée et tes moves de danse, ou bien un jeu de ton enfance !”²⁴

Another consideration for communications is the prevalence of explicit messaging surrounding the concept of Grand Genève. Rather than focusing on the name of the territory, individual places within the territory should be highlighted in communications. Value should also be placed on what individuals have to offer to other residents of the population. Advertisements should always address the audience in the second person so as to be directly engaging.

There will be two phases of event promotion: the first will be to recruit train car hosts, and the second to promote general attendance and participation in the event. The means and channels of advertising the event should be numerous in order to reach the widest audience possible, and both phases should be more or less identical in this regard since there is no distinction between the type of people wanted as hosts vs. participants. Broad advertising strategies should be employed via posters in public spaces and trains, a slide shown in digital screens in public buses and trams, ads on social media, and perhaps even postcards mailed to homes. Targeted outreach should include cultural associations, associations that provide support to migrants, partners of the BIE, artists/musicians/performing arts associations, partners of Le Sismographe, and other local civil society associations, as well as schools and higher education institutions and universities. These associations will be key in promoting the event to their participants, providing assistance in the sign-up process where needed, and organizing groups to participate in the event together.

²³ “Share music or another activity from your culture!”

²⁴ “Share an activity that is important to you, like your favorite music and dance moves, or a game from your childhood!”

5.2.4 Partners

The following is a list of public and private actors from across Grand Genève who will each be key to the successful implementation of this ritual in a range of ways, from direct involvement in implementation to logistical and strategic support to granting official authorizations for the event.

Implementing partner:

- Le Sismographe: In the process of changing its name from *Il Fallait Bien Innover Productions* (FBI Prod) to *Le Sismographe*, this association was by far the most relevant institution I encountered over the course of my research and I thus strongly recommend it as the association which will manage implementation of this project. Le Sismographe is one of the only associations in the region to intentionally carry out projects at the scale of Grand Genève with the explicit purpose of uniting the territory and developing a shared identity. Le Sismographe operates off of its broad knowledge of the public institutional network in Grand Genève as well as a large number of artists, musicians, and other cultural actors from both Switzerland and France.
 - Le Sismographe will thus be responsible for obtaining necessary funding, meeting with state actors to obtain necessary authorizations, and managing all of the logistics needed to carry the event to completion in partnership with the BIE. It may thus be assumed that all of the actions described hereafter in this action plan would be the primary responsibility of Le Sismographe unless noted otherwise. It is of note that although I mentioned Nicolas Croquet as the current director of this association, he will be handing over direction to Justine Beaujouan as of 2023.

State of Geneva partners:

- BIE: As the primary state partner of this project, the BIE will provide funding and strategic support to Le Sismographe over the course of project planning and implementation. The BIE's diverse network of associations with which it partners to support the integration of migrants, asylum seekers, and refugees within the Canton of Geneva as well as its knowledge of numerous cultural associations will be the perfect complement to Le Sismographe's knowledge of artistic associations in the territory. Their combined knowledge of these associations will provide an excellent basis for recruitment of train car hosts.
- Office cantonal des transports (OCT), Département des Infrastructures (DI): Presided over by Conseiller d'Etat Serge Dal Busco and responsible for managing transportation within the Canton of Geneva, the OCT will be another important state partner for granting necessary permissions, strategic support, and possibly funding for the ritual. The OCT will be instrumental in negotiating the partnership with the railway operators. The OCT will also be an important partner in liaising with equivalent transportation authorities within the territory of Grand Genève, as it liaises with these authorities in the Canton of Vaud and neighboring France in order to develop cohesive transportation solutions. These include the 3rd Commission Infrastructures Routières, Déplacements et Mobilité, Bâtiments, Aménagement numérique of the Département of Haute-Savoie and the Direction générale de la mobilité et des routes (DGMR) within the Division management des transports of the Canton of Vaud.
- Office d'urbanisme, Département du Territoire (DT): Presided over by Conseiller d'Etat Antonio Hodgers, the Office of Urban Planning within the Territory Department of the Canton of Geneva

would be another valuable partner for this project, as they deal with projects involving territorial identity and citizen engagement, albeit typically at a smaller scale than Grand Genève.

Transportation partners:

- Lémanis, SBB-CFF, and SNCF: Lémanis is the operator of the Léman Express, while SBB-CFF and SNCF are the parent companies and railway operators of Switzerland and France, respectively. As noted in the funding plan, financial support from the railway operators in the form of subsidized tickets will be important in order to lower the total cost of the project. Additionally, the railway operators' guidance will be needed in regards to logistics of the event within and surrounding the trains to ensure smooth implementation.

Municipal partners:

- Cities of Geneva, Annemasse, and Coppet: These cities will be essential partners in hosting their portion of the event, contributing funding, promoting the event amongst their residents, and helping coordinate the logistics of the event itself.
- Persons responsible for social integration in local government bodies of municipalities in the Canton of Geneva (*postes d'intégration*) to assist in promoting the event amongst their communities.

Canton of Vaud partners:

- Bureau cantonal pour l'intégration des étrangers et la prévention du racisme (BCI), Canton of Vaud: this office in the Canton of Vaud is the equivalent of the BIE in the Canton of Geneva and will be an essential collaborator to connect with the associations supporting migrants in the Canton of Vaud, and will perhaps be a financial supporter as well.

French government partners:

- Départements de l'Ain and l'Haute-Savoie : these neighboring French departments will be important partners in the promotion and strategic vision and in providing some financial support.

Associative partners:

- Partner associations of the BIE providing services to migrants or organizing activities for migrant activities. These associations will be valuable in helping migrants organize groups to host a train car and in advertising the event to migrant populations who might wish to attend. The more support and organization provided by these associations, the more likely migrants will be to participate. Such organizations include but are not limited to: Camarada, Université Ouvrière de Genève, Association Découvrir, La Roseraie, Maison Kultura, and more.
- Associations serving migrants in neighboring France: Organizations such as Association France Immigrés de l'Agglomération Annemassienne (AFIAA) and Association Service Social Familial Migrants (ASSFAM) provide French classes and support services to migrants in Annemasse and

the surrounding areas in neighboring France and will be important partners to reach the migrant populations in these areas to invite them to participate in the ritual.

- Artistic, musical, and other creative associations throughout the territory of Grand Genève, with which Le Sismographe is quite familiar.
- Schools and universities of the region in order to integrate young people into the ritual.
- Other civil society associations, special interest groups, and recreational groups in order to involve a wide range of types of people and interests.

Grand Genève institutional partners:

- Comité régional franco-genevois²⁵, a committee made up of cross-border state actors created to improve cooperation across the region, of which Geneva Conseiller d'Etat Serge Dal Busco is president.
- Conseil du Léman, a council which brings together the Swiss cantons and French departments of Grand Genève to collaborate on topics related to transportation, economy, environment, and culture
- Groupement local de coopération transfrontalière (GLTC)²⁶, a political committee of actors from Grand Genève which governs issues which concern both sides of the border such as transportation, of which Geneva Conseiller d'Etat Antonio Hodgers is president.²⁷
- Forum d'agglomération du Grand Genève, a body attached to the GLCT which coordinates the civil society actors of Grand Genève (Agglomération transfrontalière, 2022).

Other institutional partners:

- Institut de Recherches Sociologiques of the University of Geneva, directed by Sandro Cattacin, will be an important strategic partner in the planning and implementation of this ritual.

5.2.5 Timeline

Please see the graphic providing a timeline overview in Annex F.

February 2023: Seek agreement of leadership of Le Sismographe to formally take on the project as the implementing partner.

February/March 2023: Submission of a formal funding request to the BIE, who seeks the agreement of the responsible Conseiller d'Etat, Thierry Apothéloz. BIE formalizes funding with a Préavis and PLP, the official documents which are drafted for every project funded by the BIE. A model funding request created using the BIE's online funding application platform may be found in Annex D.

²⁵ Franco-Genevan Regional Committee

²⁶ Local Grouping of Cross-Border Cooperation

²⁷ For a complete list of Geneva's *Conseillers d'Etat* who hold positions on cross-border committees, see Annex E.

March 2023: Meet with Conseillers d'Etat Anthony Hodgers and Serge Dal Busco to present the ritual and discuss partnership with the cantonal departments over which they preside as well as the cross-border committees of which they are presidents.

April 2023: Share project proposal and funding request with Lémanis and SBB-CFF and SNCF.

June 2023: Share project proposal and funding requests with the cities of Geneva, Annemasse, and Coppet.

July 2023: Develop promotional texts, guidelines and web page for submission of applications from associations and community members to host an activity in a train car during the event.

August 2023 (or later, depending on progress of other funding requests): Apply for funding from the Fondation Hans Wilsdorf to cover the remaining amount needed after responses have been received from the BIE, the cities of Geneva, Coppet, and Annemasse, and the SBB-CFF and SNCF. If the Fondation does not grant the request or grants an impartial amount, submit a request to other funders in subsequent months.

Begin Phase 1 of event promotion, inviting applications for sponsorship of a train car during an event. Set deadline of January 2024 for submissions. Conduct further outreach and promotion in subsequent months if application numbers are too low.

January 2024: Close submissions for applications to host a train car. Begin reviewing submissions.

Develop promotional materials to be used in public advertising for the event, including flyers, posters, online ads, online event pages, and digital screens in public transportation buses and trams.

February 2023: Contact selected groups to inform them of approval of their application and to confirm their involvement.

February/March 2023: Plan logistics of activities to take place within the train cars, including assignment of a specific time slots, starting point, and train car for each confirmed train car host in accordance with detailed plans of number of trains, allotted train cars, and other guidelines from railway operators.

March/April 2024: Disseminate information with detailed logistics and hold planning meetings with train car hosts. Ensure direct communication with each host at least upon one occasion to ensure that they have a sufficient plan in place in order to smoothly carry out their selected activity and provide support as needed.

Recruit and coordinate volunteers from civil society to assist with event set up, execution, and clean up.

Begin Phase 2 of event promotion: wide public promotion of attendance/participation in the event.

April/May 2024: Place orders for any supplies needed for the event, including food, eating utensils, cups, and plates for the potluck meals, drinks to be provided, and printed signage directing people where to go on the day of the event.

May 2024: Send out reminders to all train car hosts and volunteers of operational details for the day of the event.

June 2024: Final preparations, set up, execution, and clean up of the event.

6. Conclusion

Personally, as noted in the preface of this work, I understand and have experienced the need for *something* to help shift the culture of Geneva to create a greater openness to differences and a greater ease of creating connections between people in the public space. And so we are left with the question: is a ritual for Grand Genève the answer to these needs?

We must be honest and ask ourselves if the institution of a ritual, with all of the planning and resources required, is the most effective use of our time and resources to accomplish our goal of creating socio-territorial belonging. If a ritual or rituals are implemented, it should be done with a great deal of research, planning, and insight to ensure that it truly responds to the needs of the population. It must be something which carries significance for all members of the diverse population of Grand Genève. It must provide opportunities for residents of Grand Genève to hold meaningful encounters where they can share something of themselves. Another “ordinary” event, or something which fails to reach a large portion of the population, risks being a waste of time, effort, and finances.

While I attempted to propose a well-thought-out ritual relevant to the needs of the population, I will not pretend that it is without its shortcomings. For a ritual to be fully informed, more extensive research ought to be conducted amongst both Swiss and non-Swiss, French and non-French, normal inhabitants and government leaders, families and single people, and more. We should also consider the probability that a single ritual’s impact is limited, no matter how well it is carried out. As Gamba (2020) suggests, it may be better to organize a multiplicity of smaller events, equally well planned out, with each targeting smaller geographical areas, may be even more effective than the single large ritual which I have proposed here. If this model of extended engagement and collaboration between the different “sides” (France, Geneva, Vaud) could be incorporated into this ritual through a series of participatory workshops or discussions, it would be arguably even more effective.

Throughout my research, I also questioned whether the BIE was truly the best state entity to take charge of such a ritual – or if such a ritual should be organized by the state at all. As noted in this work, rituals are most effective if organized in a bottom-up manner by participants (Gamba et al., 2020), so to have a ritual organized by the state is rather contradictory, even if it is designed in such a way as to involve participants in the creation of the ritual. It seems that the state is trying to push the subject of Grand Genève in order to create a more favorable environment for the acceptance of necessary cross-border political actions. If the State is to be the organizer or sponsor of this ritual, it seems that the *Office de l’urbanisme* in partnership with the *Office cantonal de la culture et du sport* would be thematically-appropriate organizers who should collaborate in the organization with the BIE.

Lastly, it is important to note that rituals in general cannot be seen as a panacea. In fact, there are no easy fixes to such a complex issue. There are many other actions that can and should be pursued to promote territorial belonging and identity, but these require an accurate understanding of the situation. Territorial tensions such as an aversion to *frontaliers* or a lack of support for government policies in favor of Grand Genève may be symptoms of a much deeper problem related to territorial inequalities. Though many prejudices against *frontaliers* are largely based on misinformation, beliefs are based on at least a sliver of truth. For instance, Geneva is the canton with the highest rate of unemployment in Switzerland at 5% (OCSTAT, 2022), so it could be understandable that Genevans fear greater difficulties securing employment when additional people are allowed to work in the Canton. On the other hand,

residents of Annemasse face a higher unemployment rate than in Geneva, with average salaries 24% lower than the average salaries in France overall and elevated housing prices due to the number of people who want to live near Geneva without paying high rent in Switzerland (INSEE, 2022; Ado Mako Immobilier, n.d.). Perhaps a campaign against misinformation on both sides could ease tensions. More significantly, local authorities need to further pursue equitable solutions to the deeper problems faced by residents of the territory.

Only through a multi-pronged approach incorporating social initiatives like rituals, political initiatives combatting territorial inequality, and information-based initiatives promoting shared understanding can we hope to create a unified territory: a Grand Genève with which its inhabitants identify and where all people feel they belong.

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Annex A: Interview Questions

Général :

- Vous êtes dans le canton de Genève depuis combien de temps ?
- Pourquoi êtes-vous venus dans le canton de Genève ? Avec qui ?
- Vous pensez rester ici sur le long terme / longtemps / de manière permanente ?

Appartenance :

- Quand je vous dis "chez vous", à quel endroit pensez-vous ?
- Est-ce que vous vous sentez chez vous à Genève ?
- Avez-vous l'impression de faire partie de la communauté genevoise ?

Intégration :

- De quelle origine sont la plupart de vos amis ?
- Avez-vous l'impression de pouvoir facilement rencontrer des personnes ici à Genève ?
- Est-ce que vous avez l'impression d'être inclus ou bien accueillis par les autres habitants du canton de Genève ou de votre quartier ou commune ?

Rituels :

- Est-ce que vous avez participé aux fêtes ou aux événements publics ayant eu lieu dans le canton ?
Si oui, lesquels ? Si non, pourquoi pas ?
- Est-ce que vous avez entendu parler de ces événements à Genève ? Est-ce que vous y avez déjà participé:
 - l'Escalade (défilés, course, cortèges),
 - Le festival Antigél,
 - La Fête de la Musique,
 - Les Fêtes de Genève

Si oui, pourquoi avez-vous participé ? Est-ce que l'expérience vous a plu ?

Si non, auriez-vous envie d'y participer au futur ? Pourquoi/pourquoi pas ?

- Est-ce qu'il y a des choses qui vous empêchent ou rendent votre participation moins facile (à vous ou aux membres de votre communauté nationale et/ou linguistique) ? *Ces obstacles pouvant être divers : argent, temps (moment de la journée), intérêt, lieu de la manifestation (accès), famille, etc.*
- A quel type d'événement aimeriez-vous participer dans le canton de Genève ? OU : Quel nouvel événement aimeriez-vous voir être organisé pour pouvoir y participer ?
- Quel type d'événement/fête aimeriez-vous organiser si vous aviez l'opportunité ?

Grand Genève :

- Savez-vous qu'est-ce que ça veut dire le "Grand Genève" ? Est-ce que vous connaissez ce territoire ?

Annex B: Alternative Ritual Proposals

Here I briefly describe alternative rituals which I did not propose in the end for various reasons, but which I still find to be valuable ideas worth considering:

1. *Repères du Territoire* (“Landmarks of the Territory”)²⁸: In a participatory platform, inhabitants of Grand Genève could submit places in the territory which they perceive as symbolic for all of Grand Genève, such as the Lake Léman and the mountain Salève. These locations would then be connected through recommended routes that participants could follow to take a tour of the territory via different modes of transportation (bikes, food, public transportation). Groups could be organized to follow these routes together and participate in various activities along the way. A significant milestone that this ritual could be centered around is the opening of the new cable car of the Salève, scheduled for Summer 2023.
2. *Raconte-nous tes histoires* (“Tell us your stories”): On a given day, participants could unite at specific locations around Grand Genève that are personally significant to them and share stories of their times spent at that place, reinforcing territorial belonging and sharing between residents.
3. *Le territoire est à vous* (“The territory is yours”): Modeled after the already-existing event “La ville est à vous”, a Geneva-based event where various neighborhoods each take a turn hosting a street festival to showcase their local products, musicians, and more, *Le territoire est à vous* could showcase the specialties of each area of the territory in one giant street festival occurring across the territory of Grand Genève.

²⁸ This ritual was in part inspired by the suggestion of a “fête de la mobilité” as recorded in 1/3 Lieu_2 Culture

Annex C: Locations of Potluck Meals

Place de la Gare, Annemasse:



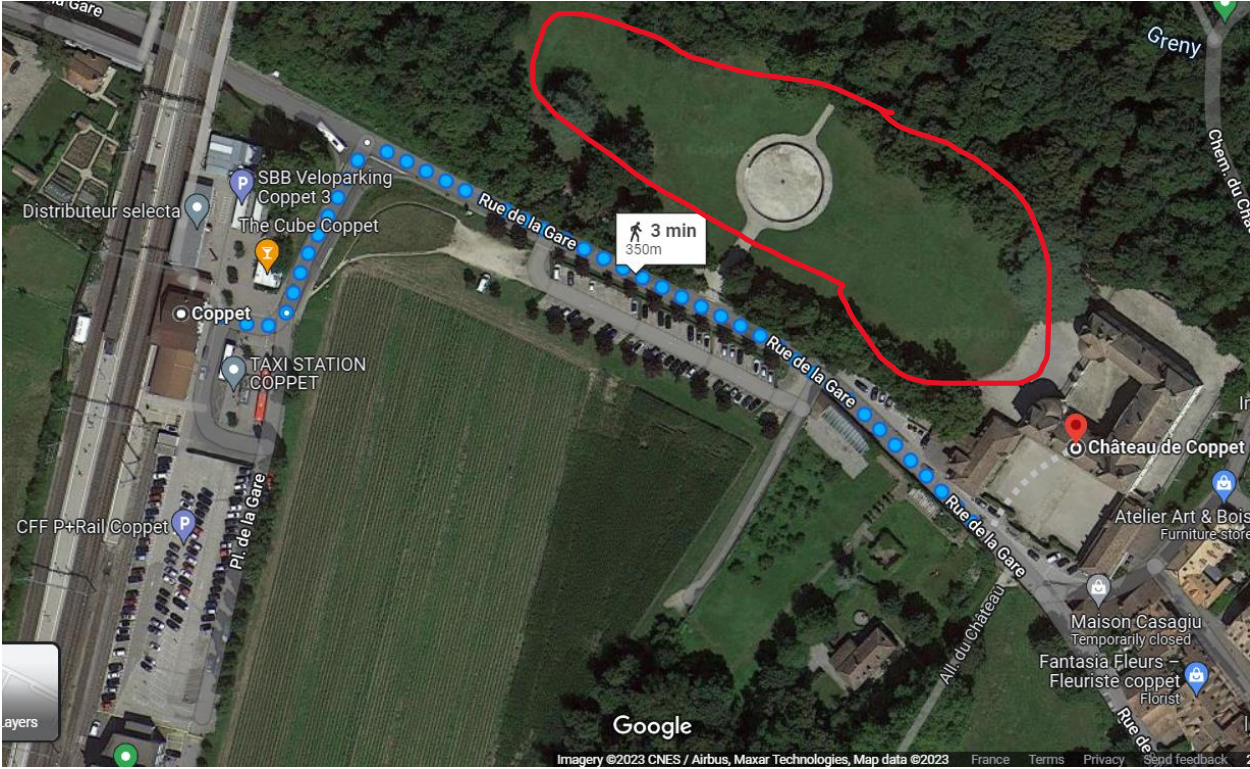
Photo credit: Wikipedia, "Gare d'Annemasse"

Place des Grottes, Geneva:



Photo credit: Olivier Chamard Photography /Didier Jordan / Ville de Genève

Parc du Chateau de Coppet:



Programme d'intégration cantonal 2022-2023

Thématique de votre projet

Type de demande

Nouvelle demande

Thématique de votre projet

Vivre ensemble

Coordonnées

Organisme responsable

Type d'organisme

Association

Nom de l'organisme responsable

Le Sismographe

Bref descriptif des objectifs et activités de l'organisme responsable

S'inspirant de l'usage de l'instrument de mesure du même nom, LE

SISMOGRAPHE capture les vibrations culturelles du territoire. Un instantané qui prend la mesure et suit des projets et initiatives d'organisations et d'habitants, une mise en exergue de l'énergie créative du Grand Genève.

Votre projet

Données générales

Nom du projet

Le Tour du Léman

Description courte du projet

Le Léman Express sera le point focal de cet événement : mode de transport inédit qui traverse et relie le territoire entre Annemasse et Coppet, ce train sera

transformé en scène culturel et musical, tout en transportant les participants à l'autre bout du Grand Genève pour y partager un repas canadien et pour faire des rencontres avec d'autres habitants du même territoire. Des associations culturelles, des groupes de musique et de danse, et des habitants ordinaires auront l'opportunité de "adopter" un des wagons du Léman Express pour un de ses trajets le jour du Tour. Chaque wagon adopté sera chargé d'animer un spectacle, un jeu, ou une autre activité participative pour partager quelque chose d'important culturellement ou personnellement du groupe animateur. En plus, des grands repas canadiens seront organisés à Annemasse, Genève, et Coppet. Les habitants autour de chaque emplacement seront encouragés d'aller via le Léman Express pour participer à un repas dans un des autres endroits afin de découvrir le territoire et sa population.

Date de début du projet

15.06.2024

Date de fin du projet

15.06.2024

Organisations partenaires impliquées dans le projet

SBB-CFF SNCF Maison Kultura Camarada Association Découvrir La Roseraie

Université Ouvrière de Genève FBI Prod Office cantonal de la culture et du sport,

Canton de Genève Canton de Vaud Département de la Haute-Savoie Conseil du

Léman

Données financières

Subvention BIE demandée en CHF

25 000,00

Coût du projet en CHF

65 200,00

Avez-vous effectué d'autres demandes de financement ?

Non

Justifications

Informations liées au projet

Le projet implique-t-il des enfants ou des jeunes mineurs (0 à 18 ans) ?

Oui

Confirmation de possession d'extrait de casier judiciaire

Situation initiale et plus-value du projet

Actuellement, le concept du Grand Genève n'est pas connu par une grande partie de la population qui y habitent, et il manque des sentiments d'appartenance au territoire. Il reste encore des préjugés et des discriminations entre les populations qui partagent ce territoire : entre les français et les suisses, et du part des français ou des suisses envers les populations étrangères. Les populations étrangers ont aussi de la difficulté à rencontrer des membres de la population locale, ce qui est nécessaire pour leur intégration. Ce projet vise à réduire ces préjugés et à faciliter l'intégration des étrangers en encourageant des rencontres et du partage entre ces membres de la population du Grand Genève.

Populations cibles du projet

Une population cible représentatif de tous les nationalités au canton de Genève : 41% étrangers, 59% Suisses et binationaux, visant la meilleure intégration des étrangers à la grande communauté Genevoise

Collaborations avec d'autres associations ou organisations

L'événement ne sera possible qu'avec la participation active des groupes et associations qui vont s'inscrire pour animer un wagon du train, ainsi que les autres partenaires déjà mentionnés : SBB-CFF SNCF Maison Kultura Camarada Association Découvrir La Roseraie Université Ouvrière de Genève FBI Prod Office cantonal de la culture et du sport, Canton de Genève Canton de Vaud Département de la Haute-Savoie Conseil du Léman

Canaux de promotion prévus

Newsletters, sites web, et réseaux sociaux de chaque partenaire, écrans dans les TPG/TAC (transport annemassiens collectifs), affiches dans le Léman Express

Objectifs mesurables du projet

Sensibiliser la population du Canton de Genève, du Canton de Vaud, et du Département de la Haute-Savoie au sujet du Grand Genève pour atteindre un territoire inclusif et ouvert aux différences; célébrer la diversité et faire découvrir à la population la richesse de culture qui se trouve dans ce territoire tout en ouvrant des opportunités de rencontre et d'échange entre tou.te.s.x les habitants du territoire.

Détail des activités qui seront mises en oeuvre pour atteindre les objectifs

Les habitants du territoire seront encouragés à prendre le Léman Express gratuitement pour découvrir un autre bout du territoire du Grand Genève et pour participer à un repas canadien qui y aura lieu (à Annemasse, Genève, et Coppet). Durant leur trajet, les passagers du train feront un tour culturel du Grand Genève en participant aux activités proposées par les groupes et associations diverses qui appartiennent au territoire du Grand Genève. Ces activités ont aussi pour but de bousculer quelque chose d'ordinaire - un trajet en train - pour le reconstruire en moments de partage et de vivre-ensemble. En arrivant à la destination finale - soit Coppet, Genève, ou Annemasse - les passagers ainsi que les habitants et d'autres participants déjà présents à la destination participeront ensemble à un grand repas canadien, partageant des moments conviviaux tout en découvrant les offres culinaires de chacun.

Critères prévus pour l'évaluation du projet

Nous évaluerons le projet selon le nombre et la diversité des participants : nombre et lieu de résidence des animateurs.trices des activités dans le train, le nombre d'utilisateurs du train comparé au nombre typique, et le nombre de participants aux repas canadiens.

Calendrier des activités prévues pour l'ensemble du projet

Les activités du projet sont-elles à date fixes ?

Oui

Activités à date fixe

Activité	Date de début	Date de fin	Commentaire	Actions
Phase préparatoire	01.02.2022	01.06.2024		
Mise en place	01.06.2024	14.06.2024		
Événement	15.06.2024	15.06.2024		

Annex E: Representation of the Geneva State Council in cross-border bodies

Auprès du Comité régional franco-genevois et ses commissions thématiques

DAL BUSCO Serge	Co-président	Comité régional franco-genevois – Instance politique de coopération (CRFG-IPC)
	Co-président	Groupe de suivi sur la compensation financière genevoise
	Chef de la délégation genevoise	Commission mixte consultative franco-suisse pour les problèmes de voisinage entre la République et canton de Genève et les départements de l'Ain et la Haute-Savoie
FISCHER Fabienne	Co-présidente	Comité régional franco-genevois (CRFG) – Commission "Economie, emploi et formation professionnelle"
POGGIA Mauro	Membre	Comité régional franco-genevois – Instance politique de coopération (CRFG-IPC)
	Membre de la délégation genevoise	Commission mixte consultative franco-suisse pour les problèmes de voisinage entre la République et canton de Genève et les départements de l'Ain et la Haute-Savoie
	Co-président	Comité régional franco-genevois (CRFG) – Commission "Santé" Comité régional franco-genevois (CRFG) – Commission "Sécurité et réglementation générale"
HODGERS Antonio	Membre	Comité régional franco-genevois – Instance politique de coopération (CRFG-IPC)
	Membre de la délégation genevoise	Commission mixte consultative franco-suisse pour les problèmes de voisinage entre la République et canton de Genève et les départements de l'Ain et la Haute-Savoie

Auprès du Groupement local de coopération transfrontalière (GLCT) Grand Genève

HODGERS Antonio	Président	GLCT Grand Genève – Assemblée et Bureau
DAL BUSCO Serge	Membre	GLCT Grand Genève – Assemblée
APOTHELOZ Thierry	Membre	GLCT Grand Genève – Assemblée

Auprès du Conseil du Léman

DAL BUSCO Serge	Chef de la délégation genevoise	Conseil du Léman – Assemblée plénière et Comité
HODGERS Antonio	Membre	Conseil du Léman – Assemblée plénière et Comité
	Vice-président	Conseil du Léman – Commission "Environnement lémanique"

Auprès du programme européen Interreg France-Suisse

DAL BUSCO Serge	Membre	Comité de suivi
	Membre	Coordination régionale Interreg France-Suisse – Comité stratégique

Auprès de la Métropole lémanique

DAL BUSCO Serge	Représentant du Conseil d'Etat	Pilotage de la Métropole lémanique
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Annex F: Timeline

