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Gender representations in politics of belonging: An analysis of Swiss immigration regulation from the 19th century until today

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Abstract
The literature increasingly recognises the importance of gender in defining the boundaries between national societies and migrants. But little is still known about the history and changes of mechanisms that shape the role of gender as category of difference. Based on a critical case study of Switzerland, this article examines how gender is implicated in the politics of migrant admission and incorporation and underlying notions of 'the other'. Drawing on theories of boundary work, we show that gendered representations of migrants are mobilised by different actors to advance their claims and calls for certain forms of immigration control and migrant integration. Since the late 19th century, gendered representations of Swiss nationals and migrant others shift from classical gender ideas to culturalised post-colonial interpretations of gender roles and, most recently, to normative ideas of gender equality. As part of these changes, migrant women moved from the periphery to the core of public and political attention. Concomitantly, categories of difference shift from the intersection of gender and social class to an intersection of gender, culture and ethnicity. Local particularities of Switzerland – the idea of 'overforeignisation' and the system of direct democracy – play a significant role in shaping categories. But Switzerland's embeddedness in transnational fields emerges as equally important. The article expands on recent research and illuminates how changing dynamics of categorisation and othering facilitate the construction of nations and national identities in a transnationalised world.

Keywords
Gender, boundaries, immigration policies, belonging, identity, social representation, ethnicisation, Switzerland, immigration

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Introduction

Since the beginning of the 20th century, states and non-governmental actors have been scrambling to govern the presence of 'strangers' on their territory (Torpey, 2000). National migration regimes developed which are inextricably connected to the formation of the modern nation-state and its (imagined) community of citizens (Anderson, 1983). Nation-state building involves boundary work, as a result of which, migrants have become paradigmatic 'others' (Anderson, 2013). The criteria deployed to categorise, govern and judge migrants as welcome or unwelcome, however, vary over time.

Previous research has shown that gender plays an important role in the making of migrant others. Gender relations and sexuality are crucial for defining the boundaries between national societies and those seeking to join these societies (Schrover and Schinkel, 2013; van den Berg and Schinkel, 2009). Gender, as Scott (1999: 32) notes, 'becomes a way of denoting ''cultural constructions'' – the entirely social creation of ideas about appropriate roles for women and men'. Gender is fundamentally inscribed in ideologies, identities and institutionalised in laws and regulations (Connell, 1990), some of which revolve around immigration and the presence of foreigners in national societies.

The othering of migrants by means of gendered cultural difference has developed new dimensions in the wake of 9/11 and growing Islamophobia. The perception of veiled Muslim women as victims of their authoritarian, patriarchal culture and emphases on the need to save these women are at the heart of discourses in Europe and beyond (Abu-Lughod, 2002; Bilge, 2010; Meer et al., 2010; Razack, 2004). Normative ideas of gender equality as an essentially western quality, juxtaposed with oriental chauvinism, have emerged as yardsticks of cultural difference. This is reflected in public discourse and implemented through immigration control and integration requirements across Europe (Foerster, 2015; Kofman et al., 2015; Rostock and Berghahn, 2008).

Current research remains unclear about how gender has shaped migration policies before becoming a signpost of cultural difference and before normative framings of gender equality became widespread during the past decade. Most contributions are based on the analysis of distinct incidents and historical moments, often focusing on the culturalisation of Muslim women and men (Korteweg and Yurdakul, 2009; Roggeband and Lettinga, 2014). Little effort has been made to trace historical trajectories that have led to shifting boundaries, and to illuminate changing roles of gender as a boundary marker (exceptions are Schrover and Moloney, 2013; Roggeband and Verloo, 2007). This article tackles the lack of attention paid to temporal dynamics. Based on the case of Switzerland, we examine gendered boundary work in migration politics from a *historical* rather than a situational perspective. More specifically, we ask: When and under what conditions did the gendered representation of migrants change and how has gender been used as a category of difference that distinguishes immigrant others from an imagined community of Swiss nationals?

We consider migration policies and legislation as fundamental to a 'politics of belonging', a notion which stands for 'the maintenance and reproduction of the boundaries of the community of belonging by the hegemonic political powers' (Yuval-Davis, 2006: 205). Categorisations of 'who belongs [more]' to the national community influence national policies of migrant admission and incorporation (Block, 2014). To analyse the workings and implications of admission and integration policies and to illuminate how public discourse affects these policies, we draw on theories of boundary work (Lamont and Molnár, 2002; Pachucki et al., 2007). A focus on *ethnic* boundary work has been particularly salient in research on migration and migrant incorporation (Alba, 2005; Bail, 2008; Barth, 1969; Bauböck, 1998; Wimmer, 2013). We highlight the importance of adopting an intersectional perspective (Korteweg and Triadafilopoulos, 2013) with a particular emphasis on gender when studying the drawing and re-drawing of boundaries between 'national citizens' and 'immigrant others'.

This article adds a timely case study to international debates. First, our historical perspective enables us to show that the implications of gender as a signpost of difference have radically changed over time. Second, we enhance the visibility of Switzerland in international debates. There is a tendency for Switzerland to either remain absent from international comparative studies or to be treated as an exception. Given its multi-ethnic society, which integrates local, cantonal, and linguistic identities, Switzerland is widely assumed to deviate from general theories on nationalism and nation-state formation (Helbling and Stojanovic, 2011; Wimmer, 2011). Rather than constituting an exception, we claim that Swiss politics of belonging have been shaped by mechanisms that are at work in states across Europe. Although embedded in, and influenced by, wider transnational fields, there are various aspects that make Switzerland exceptional, especially with regard to the g*endered* politics of inclusion and exclusion. First, Swiss women acquired universal suffrage only in 1972, which reflects the conservative tradition of gender relations in Switzerland. A second particularity is the country's direct democracy and federal political arrangement.[1] Third, the idea of *Überfremdung* (over-foreignisation) constitutes a crucial element of Swiss immigration politics. Each of these specificities affects the construction of boundaries and the role of gender as a boundary marker.

In the remainder of this article, we first outline our research methods. We then present four historical turning points, each of which led to a redrawing of the gendered boundaries between 'genuine Swiss' and 'foreign others'. Each of these turning points is linked with specific representations of gender, which are institutionalised in the laws and policies governing migrant admission and integration. To demonstrate, how the social construction of migrant others evolves over time, we also examine changing gender relations in wider Swiss society. We conclude that a historical perspective is a useful first step to disentangling how particular local contexts of belonging are embedded in wider transnational fields in which gendered boundaries are produced and reproduced.

Methodology and scope

Building on the principles of critical discourse analysis (CDA), this article engages with the theory of social representations (Moscovici, 2000) drawing on Wodak's (2001b) historical discourse approach in particular. To implement the emphasis, CDA places on triangulation we draw on a range of empirical data and literature, including legal documents, interviews and secondary literature.

Starting with a review of secondary literature on the history of Swiss immigration and integration politics from the late 19th century until today, we identified important legislative changes and key legal documents for primary analysis. In line with Smart (1984), we find that law reflects the biases of popular culture and public discourse. This first analytical step is therefore well suited to identify anchors, where representations of others crystallise. The key materials are the Swiss Aliens Act and its concomitant guidelines for implementation, supplemented by selected transcripts of parliamentary debates and reports commissioned by the Federal Government. Several questions helped us focus our reading of these materials. First, how are migrants presented in the texts under consideration? Second, what gendered characteristics and features are attributed to them? Third, on what grounds is otherness or sameness of migrants and genuine Swiss citizens being established? (see Wodak, 2001a: 72–73).

Additionally, we included complementary literature that focuses more closely on changing characteristics ascribed to migrant others. Our reading of this literature was based on the same guiding questions as the analysis of legal documents. In addition, we examined how occurring changes were explained in the light of changing immigration legislation and broader domestic and international developments.

Finally, four expert interviews with Swiss scholars and non-academic experts enabled us to clarify particular questions, which emerged from the analysis of legislative texts and secondary literature. Each of our interviews comprised four thematic blocs. First, we asked informants as to which important turning points they identify with in regard to national origin and socio-economic backgrounds of migrants as well as immigration legislation and politics. Second, we addressed the Swiss notion of *Überfremdung*. We asked how and why public perceptions of strangers had changed since the early 20th century and to what extent changing images of 'the stranger' had gendered connotations. Here also, the interplay between public debates and changing immigration legislation and policies was of interest. A third topic was the increasing emphasis on integration. We asked informants to elaborate on its gendered implications and tacit ideas of a Swiss nation and culture. Fourth, we inquired how the idea of a Swiss nation had developed and changed over the last two centuries.

We systematically coded the reviewed literature and our interview transcripts in Atlas.ti. The coding scheme was built on the questions guiding our reading and interviews as well as specific historical periods and events. The triangulation of explanations derived from the literature with the focused accounts obtained from

expert interviews allowed us to substantiate four historical turning points, which we present in the following sections.

Exploring turning points in Swiss immigration politics from a gender perspective

Our findings show that gender constitutes an important aspect of immigration governance in the Swiss context. Each of the historical phases presented is a poignant example for different gendered dimensions of immigration governance in which both state and non-state actors are involved.

'Classicial' gender representations in early-stage immigration legislation

The late 19th century marks the beginning of large-scale immigration to Switzerland, which gradually shifts from an emigration to an immigration country (Wicker, 2003). During the 1880s, a period characterised by economic liberalism, prosperity increases and the economy grows. Large-scale infrastructure projects are initiated at the national level, which attract migrant workers from Italy, Germany and Austria (Piguet, 2013).

The period between the late 1880s and 1931 can be seen as a turning point because immigration control shifts from the local (cantonal and municipal) to the national level cumulating in the first National Aliens Act in 1931. This shift is linked to another important transformation: Founded in 1848, the modern Swiss state rests on a republican political concept (Jost, 1998). However, we observe, in the late 19th century, a transformation towards an idea of the nation that revolves more around ethnicity. This implies a redrawing of the boundaries between those who 'genuinely belong' to the Swiss nation and those who do not (Hoffmann-Nowotny, 1992; Piñeiro et al., 2015).

It is important to note that concepts of the nation and ideas of belonging were not only discussed in the context of immigration. In a search for the gendered basis of Swiss national identity, Mottier (2000) scrutinises the eugenics discourse which unfolded from the late 19th century until the end of the Second World War. It draws racialised boundaries between 'pure Swiss' and foreign races that contaminate this purity (see also Mottier, 2006). However, in our historical analysis of Swiss migration politics, we could not detect any direct connections with the eugenics discourse and concomitant calls for state interventions. At that time, discourses about immigration are linked mainly to the political boundary work of the Swiss state. It occurs in relation and in opposition to neighbouring nation-states like France and Germany and does not entail explicit links to transnational ideas of eugenics and race.

In this early period, the most important distinctions between native Swiss and foreign others are based on social class. Foreign-born in Switzerland are framed as temporary workforce (Niederberger, 2004) whose right of residence is coupled with employment. The integration of this temporary foreign labour force is debated mainly as a problem of social welfare. Municipalities and local communities are

eager to ensure that their resident population is productive and able to contribute to the common good (Expert 1, personal interview, 2015).[2] To prevent foreign residents from accessing public services, such as health care (Arlettaz and Arlettaz, 2004), assimilation in terms of compulsory naturalisation is seen as a logical solution to potential non-compliance (Schnapper, 1989).

The eve of the First World War marks an end to the era of liberalism. Nationalism is on the rise across Europe, including Switzerland. It forges protectionist attitudes among the political leadership and the population at large, which brighten the boundaries between nationals and foreigners. The idea of *Überfremdung* is rooted in this period (Kury, 2003).[3] It is based on a static understanding of who does, or does not, belong to the community of Swiss nationals. The introduction of the so-called 'Aliens Police' (*Fremdenpolizei*) in 1917 and increasing restrictions on settlement and employment opportunities for foreign workers form part of this development (Niederberger, 2004).

Our analysis shows that 'classical' gender representations prevail at that time, implying that men are seen as economic actors and women as natural guardians of the domestic and reproductive spheres (Ortner, 1974; Rosaldo, 1974). This classical dichotomisation of gender roles is deeply rooted in Swiss society, reflected for instance by the absence of political rights for women and low rates of female labour market participation (Eidgenössisches Statistisches Bureau, 1926). While gendered divisions of labour are not unique to Switzerland, the exclusion of women from political participation is firmly engrained in a particular Swiss understanding of democracy (Studer, 2014). It couples military defence of the country to political decision-making, thus turning the country's destiny into a subject of male responsibility.

Such representations of Swiss gender roles heavily influence debates on immigration: First, classic gender roles prompt a male bias in the sense that female immigrants remain largely invisible – even though they form a significant part of Switzerland's foreign labour force at that time (Arlettaz and Arlettaz, 2004). Second, the predominance of Swiss men as political actors and full citizens shaped political concerns related to immigration and the presence of foreigners in Switzerland. Assumptions of prevailing natural differences between men and women are inherent to the first national Aliens Act (*Bundesgesetz über Aufenthalt und Niederlassung der Ausländer* (ANAG)), which is drafted from 1924 onwards and comes into force on 26 March 1931.

A closer examination of the ANAG reveals some insights to the substance of this intersection of class-based and gendered boundaries that separate Swiss nationals from migrant others. Individual articles of the ANAG largely revolve around the prevention of illicit residence and income generation. Implicitly, this is to ensure that foreigners are of greatest possible benefit to the Swiss economy without being a burden to the country's social security system (Ruth, 1934). It is in this context that contours of the dichotomous universal representation of men as economic and women as reproductive actors become visible.

Article 10 of the ANAG specifies potential reasons for the expulsion of foreigners. It exemplifies the perception of the foreign man as head of family, which is

tied to the assumption that he is in charge of dependent family members who do not pursue paid employment themselves. Concomitantly, section (c) states that foreigners can be expelled from the country 'if he or one of his dependants is a burden to public or private beneficence or if there is certainty that he will become a long-term burden in the near future'. This image of the male, breadwinning head of family is further substantiated in Article 11.2, where spouses and children of foreign workers are explicitly defined as dependants, who do not have any individual entitlements as far as social welfare, education, etc. are concerned. If a person's residence permit expires or he is subject to expulsion for other reasons, there are no grounds on which dependants (spouse, children or other next of kin) could claim residence rights independent from the respective head of family. As dependants, however, spouses and children of foreign workers have the right to be included into the family father's residence permit. Such elements of legislation suggest that foreigners have no rights to remain in Switzerland without a proven basis for economic subsistence, for which the male head of family is responsible.

The act also refers to other migrant groups, including refugees (Article 21) and persons coming to Switzerland for education or medical treatment. Student status, however, is limited to singles who are formally enrolled at a Swiss institution. Students cannot extend their residence status beyond their academic degree programme and the requirement to be unmarried systematically excludes certain immigrant groups – such as spouses of guest workers – from accessing higher education. It is noteworthy that women constitute the vast majority of foreigners coming to study in Switzerland (Expert 3, personal interview, 2015). Yet their presence is not subject to distinct public or political debates and concerns. Given their affluent family backgrounds and temporary residence status, these female students do not correspond to prevailing gender representations or constitute a burden to Switzerland's welfare system, they escape public attention. In a similar vein, qualified migration is neither subject to political debates nor does it appear in the ANAG. This reiterates the importance of gender and class as intersecting boundary markers in early-stage immigration policies.

We need to emphasise that gender differences are not (yet) labelled as important with regard to the distinction between native Swiss and foreign others. Gender works as a universal boundary marker, which distinguishes between active and passive members of society. The gendered representations of migrants which appear in the original ANAG reinforce taken-for-granted gender inequalities that are the state of the art in Switzerland at the time. Establishing hegemonic differences between men and women as social actors forges clear boundaries, which shape and constrain the social roles of Swiss natives and foreign others alike (see Gerson and Peiss, 1985).

The gendered dynamics of post-war labour migration

We identify a second turning point in the aftermath of the Second World War. Following a period of economic decline between the World Wars, the Swiss

economy experiences unprecedented growth and a rise in prosperity from the late 1940s, which triggers a renewed demand for migrant workers. This development parallels trends in other European countries, most notably Germany (Cyrus and Vogel, 2007). For the first time, the Swiss government signs bilateral guest worker agreements with neighbouring countries, most notably Italy in 1948. Temporariness and a rotation principle are key to post-war labour recruitment. Seasonal workers – so-called *saisonniers* – form about half of the foreign workforce. They are allowed to work in Switzerland for a maximum of nine months. The other half holds annual work permits that are subject to renewal. This way the Swiss government strives to ensure that domestic employers are able to adjust their recruitment practices to business cycles and the country's economic performance.

The gender analysis of this episode carves out three mechanisms and effects of immigration control that are more fine-grained than the regulations stipulated in the ANAG. First, because of the rotation principle, the era of post-war labour recruitment is a period of 'explicit non-integration' (Niederberger 2004, p.41) with gender being a tacit yet decisive element. Strictly gendered recruitment practices of mostly young, unmarried men and women and separate (group) accommodation for male and female workers (Niederberger 2004, pp. 43–46) are illustrative for the gendered mechanisms of such politics. These measures forge clear boundaries between migrants and the native Swiss labor force, which derive from immigration legislation in conjunction with the setup of work places and arrangements for accommodation. The otherness of migrants is reinforced by their legal entitlements and their limited social and spatial access to the wider Swiss society.

Second, early guest worker movements are composed of men and women alike. They perpetuate the trend of pre-war labour movements (Arlettaz and Arlettaz, 2004). Overall, men form the majority but numbers of female guest workers are significant (Baumann, 2015; Expert 2, personal interview, 2015), as there is high demand for domestic service personnel and workers in the textile and food industries (Piguet, 2013). Although the numbers of migrant women working in Switzerland are consistently high throughout various stages of guest worker recruitment, it is striking that between 1949 and 1959, immigration of women exceeds those of men by 20% (Piguet, 2005: 86). Yet neither researchers nor the general public pay much attention to migrant women as economic actors. Biased perceptions of men as economic actors prevail.

Also the labour market itself is strictly gender-segregated. In her work on migrant women in Switzerland, Ley (1979) shows that around 70% of female guest workers from Italy pursue occupations that traditionally have a female connotation. These include the textile and clothing industry, the care sector, the hospitality industry and domestic services. Ley argues that employment in such sectors was badly paid, particularly prone to recession and often hazardous with regard to worker's health. Although indispensable to the wider economy, such fields of employment are not promoted as indicators of economic development, as it is the case for sectors such as construction, in which male guest workers dominate. Such differences in the symbolic value of male and female labour – in

conjunction with classical representations of gender roles – are an important reason for the latter remaining largely invisible.

Third, the invisibility of migrant women comes to an abrupt end once claims for family reunification and political debates on this subject gain momentum in the early 1960s. Until then, family reunification is met with deep-seated skepticism. The presence of strangers is perceived as irreversible once families 'put down their roots' (Niederberger, 2004: 48) in Switzerland. Such concerns are coupled with the persistent fear that guest worker families pose a burden on the Swiss state and society should the country's economic performance slow down. Additionally, family reunification boosts the numerical presence of foreigners in Switzerland (Piguet, 2013). But also those in favour of family reunification put forward gendered arguments to support their claim. A circular note, disseminated by the Federal Aliens Police to its cantonal outlets, for example, raises the problem of keeping guest workers' children apart from their fathers' paternal authority (Niederberger, 2004: 48). Children growing up in permanently separated families '…can suffer all life long from having been deprived of paternal authority when they would have needed it most. This is why one should avoid making decisions that will weigh heavily on the foreign worker and his family' (Circular letter of the Swiss Aliens Police, cited in Cerutti, 1994: 63). This is another indicator for the perception of guest workers as male actors whose needs are assessed in gendered terms with legislative amendments being proposed and implemented accordingly.

Drawing on human rights considerations, both the Italian government and the Organisation for European Economic Co-operation press the Swiss government to provide better conditions for guest workers. An amended guest worker agreement between Switzerland and Italy is signed in 1964. Articles 12 and 13 of the agreement specify the conditions for family reunification. Guest workers whose employment situation is considered sufficiently secure and who are able to provide 'adequate housing' can bring their spouse and children under the age of 18 to Switzerland (Bundesrat, 1965).

Family migration policies are central to the maintenance and reproduction of the boundaries delineating the community of belonging. Hence, policies governing family migration are linked to broader processes of national boundary work (Bonjour and de Hart, 2013). At the same time, policies and discourses relating to family migration are inherently gendered. The woman as the guardian of the domestic sphere now threatens to become burdensome to the Swiss society and welfare system. Hence, depending on the issues and interests at stake, classical representations of gender roles may promote the invisibility of female migrants or serve to substantiate the economic problems she potentially poses to the Swiss society.

The gendered role division of Swiss society is projected onto migrant families. However, such projections ignore the fact that female labour market participation is significantly higher among immigrants than it is within wider Swiss society. According to the 1960 census, the active part of the native Swiss population consists of 63% male and 24% female workers. Conversely, migrant employment rates

are at 82% for men and 59% for women. It is necessary to add that the foreign population largely comprises people of working age. Likewise the percentage of female enrolment in tertiary education is higher among migrants than it is among native Swiss (Eidgenössisches Statistisches Amt, 1964). Concerns about the negative economic effects of family reunification also suggest the application of double standards. Low rates of labour market participation among native Swiss women are accepted as normal, but framed as problematic when observed among immigrants.

The culturalisation of Überfremdung during the late 1960s and 1970s

We identify a third turning point in the 1960s when fears of *Überfremdung* move to the heart of unfolding debates. For the first time, cultural attributes are politically mobilised to substantiate perceived differences between native Swiss and foreign others. Article 16 of the original ANAG provides an anchor for the culturalisation of immigration and a redrawing of boundaries. The article refers to *Überfremdung* as an aspect that public authorities should consider when granting or denying entry and residence permissions to foreigners.

While the idea of *Überfremdung* itself goes back to the late 19th century, it is now re-appropriated by newly emerging populists, most notably the 'National Action Party', whose main emphasis is on the cultural dimensions of *Überfremdung*. In the 1960s, the focus of debates on immigration shifts from concerns relating to the Swiss economy and trade cycles to cultural aspects and issues of national identity. At the core is the fear that too much or certain forms of immigration would compromise Switzerland's cultural identity, and integrity as a nation (Skenderovic, 2008: 35). Wicker (2003) refers to this phase as 'culturalisation of the guest worker problem'. Gender relations are an important signifier of cultural difference in these debates.

Immigration and immigration control rank high on the agenda of right-wing populist actors. They use direct democracy and popular initiatives as political instruments. For the first time, initiatives mobilise culturalised images of gender relations and gendered attributes of migrants to highlight essential characteristics of entire groups: Swiss nationals vs. foreign others. The newly culturalised notion of gender differences amends the classical idea of migrant women as reproductive agents and companions of a male breadwinner, which continues to shape gender relations in wider Swiss society (Baumann, 2015; Ley, 1979; Expert 3, personal interview, 2015).

In 1967, the Federal Council publishes a report on a popular petition for a referendum against *Überfremdung*. The report assesses the demographic and economic effects, which the growing presence of foreigners is assumed to have on the Swiss society (Bundesrat, 1967). It not only flags the economic impacts but also draws attention to cultural consequences of migration and the presence of foreigners Switzerland. For the first time, highly skilled educated foreigners working in leading positions are also thought to have undesirable effects on the nation's

intellectual heritage as a result of their influential positions. The report identifies another root cause of *Überfremdung* deriving from the immigration of people from countries whose mores and customs 'have little in common with what is considered typical for Switzerland' (Bundesrat, 1967: 90). It is assumed that these culturally different groups face significant challenges as far as their assimilation into the Swiss society is concerned. This shift in public and political discourse reflects nostalgic inclinations and an essentialised idea of nations as homogeneous entities in which gender relations are fundamentally engrained.

The so-called Schwarzenbach Initiative, launched in 1968, marks a culmination of populist mobilisation of xenophobia. As head of the radically right wing National Action Party, James Schwarzenbach stages his political campaign around the cultural incompatibility of Italian immigrants and native Swiss. He initiates a referendum on restricting the number of foreigners to 10% in each canton, which is narrowly defeated in June 1970.[4] Populist moves against *Überfremdung* – such as Schwarzenbach's initiative – rigorously draw on racialised, gendered images to substantiate cultural difference and the problematic nature of foreigners. Italians are represented as 'brown sons of the south' (Maiolino, 2010) and notorious womanisers who pose a threat to Swiss women and girls (Maiolino, 2010, 2012). Conversely, foreign women are perceived as a driving force behind the rapid growth of Switzerland's immigrant population. They are framed as prone to having more children than native Swiss women, which is interpreted as a result of their carelessness (Skenderovic, 2008: 42). Such representations allude to implicit assumptions of Swiss purity, which is threatened by foreign otherness (Michel and Honegger, 2010).

Such antagonistic representations are not specific to Switzerland. Previous literature has shown how perceptions of cultural difference are linked with perceptions of gender relations and that these ideas are mobilised to legitimate hierarchical boundaries between national or ethnic groups, be it globally or in the context of multicultural politics (Moller Okin, 1999). The policing of women's roles and behaviour is one of the main means of asserting moral superiority, as women become the signifier for the whole group (Anthias et al., 1992; Espiritu, 2001). The underlying logic draws on classical gender representations by defining women as caregivers and educators of children who are responsible for the maintenance of a group's cultural endowments and identity.

In conjunction with images of dark-skinned, sexually aggressive Italian men such representations correspond to post-colonial gender images (Nader, 1989; Purtschert, 2015). Classical gender representation applies to native Swiss and foreigners alike and places them on an equal footing as far as gendered ascriptions are concerned. Conversely, the emerging cultural bias implies a qualitative change of the differences established between 'us' and 'them'. As a marker of cultural difference gender contributes to a hierarchical and moral juxtaposition of qualities and characteristics perceived as genuinely Swiss with features considered as culturally different and inferior (see also Dietze, 2009; Roggeband and Lettinga, 2014).

Regardless of the fact that Switzerland never acted as a colonial power, historical analyses show that important Swiss actors were transnationally embedded in

networks of colonial activities and imaginaries. The emergence and reproduction of orientalist representations of other cultures is part and parcel of such entanglements. In the light of their historical embeddedness, post-colonial representations of cultural difference can be seen as a consequence of colonialism without colonies (Purtschert et al., 2013). While the terminology of the discourse revolving around *Überfremdung* is a Swiss particularity, it is substantiated with transnational images of migrants as post-colonial gendered subjects (Lavanchy, 2015; Montoya and Agustín, 2013).

Ethnicising gender (in)equalities: Migrant admission and integration from the 1990s until today

In the 1990s, the Federal Council launches a full revision of the ANAG and, in 2005, a new act is ratified. In this context, three – partly overlapping – developments unfold, which prompt changes in the way gender amplifies the construction of migrant others.

First, Switzerland and the European Union sign a freedom of movement agreement, which liberalises mobility, while reinforcing the culturalisation of admission regulations for third-country nationals. Second, an increasing emphasis on integration has strong repercussions on admission and naturalisation policies and prompts enhanced attention to the role of migrant families. Third, since 2000, the right-wing Swiss Peoples' Party (SVP) garners unprecedented support. To a large extent, political campaigning revolves around issues relating to immigration and the presence of foreigners. In this context, we witness a particular Swiss adaptation of the post 9/11 stigmatisation of Muslims, which places gender inequality and oppressed Muslim women at centre stage (Baghdadi, 2010).

In 1989, the Federal Council establishes a working group to revise principles of migrant admission and discuss what became known as the 'three-circles-model'. Persons from the first (European Union (EU) and European Free Trade Area (EFTA)) and the second (USA and Canada) circles are seen as culturally similar and thus assimilable. Conversely, those grouped in the third circle ('third-country-nationals') are seen as culturally distant and incompatible with Switzerland's economic needs and cultural values. The three-circles model features centrally in a report on 'the concepts and priorities of Swiss aliens policies', which the Federal Council presents in 1991 (Bundesamt für Wirtschaft und Arbeit, 1991). The underlying aim is to protect economic interests and cultural integrity at the same time. This development is noteworthy as culturalised ideas of *Überfremdung* are no longer restricted to populist initiatives but now taken up in official political debates at a parliamentary level leading to a reinforced ethnicisation and implicit racialisation of admission and integration policy.

In 2002, the bilateral agreement on the 'Free Movement of Persons' between Switzerland, the EU and the EFTA is ratified. It turns the hypothetical three-circles model into a de-facto two-circles model. Enhancing free movement within the EU implies a significant restriction of non-European migration. Considered as

economically useful, EU-migration is labelled 'mobility' (Faist, 2013). Conversely, legislation and concrete political interventions relating to migrant admission and integration are limited to non-EU migrants. The juxtaposition of economic requirements and simplistic ideas of cultural similarity (Hoffmann-Nowotny, 1992) conflates cultural with geographical proximity and distance (Castles, 1993). It also reiterates post-colonial distinctions between various degrees of difference between 'genuine' Swiss and foreign others of western or non-western origin. In principle, immigration of non-EU migrants is only possible for highly skilled individuals, given that no Swiss or EU national is available for the position in question. For third-country nationals, family reunification is the remaining gateway of entry, which is however, subject to narrowly defined conditions (Bundesversammlung der Schweizerischen Eidgenossenschaft, 2005).[5]

A second important element is the shift from a 'policy of explicit non-integration' towards an integration policy, which is rooted in the early 1990s. A revised Aliens Act which is ratified in 2005 and comes into force in 2006 no longer contains direct references to *Überfremdung*. Instead integration features centrally. According to Article 3, 'sustainable' integration now constitutes a prerequisite for a person's admission to Switzerland. Articles 34 and 54.2 rule that the access to a permit of permanent settlement is linked to successful integration. The state's role extends from controlling the borders of the nation-state to controlling the borders of society. Similar tendencies can be observed across Europe, albeit to different extents (Schrover and Schinkel, 2013; Stolcke, 1995).

Gender plays an important role as far as official and conventionalised indicators of integration are concerned. An analysis of measures aimed at promoting integration makes this explicit. These measures tend to be oriented towards specific target groups. Particular pressure is inserted on Muslims. This, as Gianni (2013) holds, is justified in defence of gender equality as a centrepiece of basic democratic norms. The role of women in private and professional life, for instance, serves as an indicator for the extent to which persons are well, or not so well, integrated into Swiss society (Bundesversammlung der Schweizerischen Eidgenossenschaft, 2005). Article 53 specifies:

> The federation, cantons and municipalities [. . .] create favourable conditions for equal opportunities and the participation of the foreign population in public life. A special emphasis is placed on the acquisition of language skills, professional advancement, health care and the facilitation of living together and mutual understanding between the Swiss and the foreign population. Particular attention is paid to the needs and integration of women, children and adolescents.

Similarly, the 2007 decree for the integration of foreigners (Bundesrat, 2007), which accompanies the revised Aliens Act, emphasises that integration measures should specifically consider the needs of women, children and adolescents (Article 2). In a similar vein, measures aimed at preventing crime tend to be oriented towards young men of migrant origin (Kofler and Fankhauser, 2009).

In addition, Article 5 of the revised Aliens Act states that residence permits for certain groups of third-country nationals may be subject to so-called integration contracts between cantonal and municipal authorities and migrant candidates. Forging awareness of the basic norms and principles that ensure orderly coexistence in Swiss society is a central objective of these agreements. To obtain or renew their residence permit, migrants can be forced to attend 'integration-classes'. These are designed to enhance migrants' familiarity 'with Switzerland and its particularities and conventions and to create awareness of [Swiss] norms, rights and duties of citizens, the [principle of] equality between men and women, the health care system, etc.' (SEM, 2008). Remarkably, persons who enter Switzerland as highly skilled professionals remain exempt from such measures, regardless of their national origin. Such norms and principles suggests that modes of living together can be more or less compatible with what is considered 'genuinely Swiss' and respecting Swiss gender equality. Norms and principles provide only a partial account of reality.

Conversely, statistical evidence on employment, labour market participation and equal opportunities suggests that clear traces of classical gender dichotomies continue to prevail in the wider Swiss society (Bühler and Heye, 2005). Women are overrepresented in disadvantaged sections of the labour market and underrepresented in high-ranking corporate or academic positions as well as in political decision-making. In addition, motherhood is found to continuously curb professional advancement. Contrary to the subtext of integration debates, however, motherhood influences labour market participation of native Swiss women more strongly than is the case for migrant women. At a level of public discourse, however, gender equality becomes a characteristic feature of an imagined community of Swiss citizens.

As part of concerns about integration, family migration emerges as a discursive field where culturally determined ideas of gender equality become salient. First, one target group of integration contracts are spouses coming to Switzerland through family reunification (SEM, 2008). Second, newly emerging debates about arranged or forced marriages as well as so-called 'marriages of convenience' promote an increasing politicisation of migrant families. Similar trends can be observed in other European countries (Strasser et al., 2009). The public and political narrative constructs gender subordination as integral to particular migrant groups and their 'culture'. Unequal gender relations among migrant groups are identified as incompatible with the values of Switzerland's liberal democracy (Dahinden et al., 2014). Following these debates, new articles combating forced marriages are added to the Swiss Civil Code (EJPD, 2016) and to the Penal Law (Bundesrat, 1937) since 2005.

While the Federal Government promotes integration alongside restricted access for third-country nationals, populist actors employ gendered images to target the allegedly problematic presence of foreigners in Switzerland (Skenderovic and D'Amato, 2008). The Federal Government draws on gendered representations of migrants to substantiate the need for better immigrant integration. At the same time, right-wing parties, such as the SVP, mobilise gendered representations to

support their demands for further restrictions to immigration and the presence of 'undesirable strangers' in Switzerland. The most exemplary events which illustrate these tendencies are the popular vote on a nationwide ban of minarets in 2009 and the popular vote on the deportation of criminal foreigners in 2010. The image of a veiled Muslim woman is used to support the ban on minarets, whereas those in favour of deporting criminal foreigners draw on the image of the male villain from abroad. Such images strongly resemble gendered images of cultural others, which have been studied and identified as boundary markers in other contexts (Bilge, 2010; Razack, 2004).

Migrant groups, particularly those coming from Muslim-majority countries, are framed as victims of their culture or religion and hence are paradigmatic for gender inequality (Gianni and Clavien, 2012; see Rostock and Berghahn, 2008, for an analysis of similar developments in Germany). Such symbolic constructions of others not only feed assumptions of Islam and the West being incompatible but also affect integration debates and policies. It is through such avenues that the transnationally diffused image of 'the oppressed Muslim woman' (Abu-Lughod, 2002; Meer et al., 2010; Roggeband and Verloo, 2007) enters Swiss discourses. Given continuous salience of '*Überfremdung*', this image falls on fertile ground. Seen as two sides of the same coin, culture and religion are deemed incompatible with Swiss spirit and culture (Dahinden et al., 2014). A key attribute of this new gendered boundary in admission and integration politics is the ethnicisation and racialisation of female subordination and male chauvinism (Durand and Krefa, 2008; Dustin and Phillips, 2008; Neubauer and Dahinden, 2012). Ethnicised integration policies further increase the visibility of migrant women by emphasising their perceived backwardness (Roggeband and Verloo, 2007).[6] At the same time, disadvantaged positions of native Swiss women remain systematically eclipsed from public debates and policy making.

Discussion and conclusions

Gender has played an important role in shaping the social representations of migrants since the early days of Swiss immigration history. Based on the analysis of four historical turning points, we have shown how different phases of immigration are met with concerns of specific actors. We find that 'the foreigner' at the heart of concerns and political mobilisation is inherently gendered (Scott, 1999). However, perceptions and representations of gender change over time. They shift from classical representations of gender to a culturalised, post-colonial interpretation of gender roles and towards the normative framing of gender equality. The latter provides fertile ground for the ethnicisation of female subordination and male chauvinism, which has shaped public and political debates and policy making since the turn of the millennium. As part of these developments, migrant women move from the periphery to the core of public attention. Conversely, perceptions of Swiss women shift from classical gender representation to being equal and emancipated. Paradoxically, statistical figures on, for example, educational

enrolment and labour market participation, suggest that gender relations and equal opportunities in wider Swiss society are more complex. Notwithstanding such ambiguities, gender equality has become a key feature of Switzerland as an imagined community to which immigrant others are juxtaposed.

Gender is a salient element of a 'Swiss politics of belonging' throughout the periods studied. It consistently coincides with other categories of difference, most notably class, culture, ethnicity and religion. During the period which we refer to as the first turning point, belonging is largely a question of reciprocity, socio-economic endowments and welfare. Compulsory inclusion of foreigners into Swiss society is seen as a way to prevent potential free riding. The first ANAG reiterates the importance of employment and economic usefulness as criteria of (temporary) belonging. The gendered organisation of labour migration, which marks the second turning point, perpetuates the classical, dichotomous gender division of Swiss society. At the same time, ideas of belonging shift from compulsory inclusion to explicit not-belonging and temporary residence entitlements. In addition, emerging claims for family reunification add new connotations to questions of belonging. Implicit concerns pertaining to the family as a realm where certain values and conduct are reproduced illustrate the growing importance of cultural differences, of which gender relations are an expression. This emerging trend continues and solidifies during the third identified turning point. New articulations of *Überfremdung* turn belonging into a question of perceived cultural similarity or distance. The re-emergence of *Überfremdung* is firmly tied the idea of nations as homogenous entities and natural containers of belonging. The culturalisation and ethnicisation of belonging reaches another magnitude throughout the fourth turning point. But it varies according to national origin, culture and class. For instance, highly skilled, third-country nationals do not face the same immigration restrictions as those who are assumed to have low endowments of financial and cultural capital. Conversely, measures aimed at promoting integration mainly target the latter group. Politics of belonging thus vary over time, according to changing parameters and political ends.

The gendered order of the Swiss majority society plays an important role throughout the periods analysed. During the first two turning points, the emphasis is on integrating foreigners into the Swiss gender order. Conversely, during turning points three and four, gendered ascriptions serve to draw distinctions between Swiss nationals and foreign others. Our findings underline the usefulness of an intersectional analytical perspective, which allows us to unpack against the backdrop of which developments in Switzerland and beyond certain categories of difference and belonging are mobilised (see Korteweg and Triadafilopoulos, 2013; Yuval-Davis et al., 2005).

Switzerland is an illustrative case study as far as shifting boundaries between migrants and non-migrants and the changing gendered underpinnings of these boundaries are concerned. But rather than being a unique outlier, Switzerland is deeply embedded in transnational dynamics which mark different phases of migrant admission and integration. The identified turning points in gendered

representations of migrants are contingent on changing immigrant populations and the changing interests and concerns of domestic actors. Equally important forces are broader political developments in neighbouring countries and beyond and the changing gender representations diffused by travelling transnational discourses. Classical gender representations, post-colonial imaginaries and the normative of equality are strong ideas, which are not particular to the Swiss context, but which we find all over Europe (see Donato and Gabaccia, 2015; Schrover and Moloney, 2013).

However, the way these transnational imaginaries are adapted locally is related to the particularities of Switzerland. We have shown that Swiss immigration policies evolve amidst a continuous tension between economically driven openness and liberalism and social closure, deriving from recurrent debates on and measures against *Überfremdung* (Piguet, 2013). Compared with other European countries concerns relating to *Überfremdung* stick out as a Swiss particularity, which is deeply rooted in contemporary Swiss society. Explicit meanings of *Überfremdung*, however, are changeable and readily adapted to the travelling discourses that inform perceptions of migrants and that are ultimately reflected in immigration policies.

Besides recurrent debates on *Überfremdung*, direct democracy constitutes another Swiss particularity, which is important in this context. It provides political opportunity structures (Tilly, 2001), which bolster the power of right-wing actors enabling them to push forward their political agendas. Often initiatives launched by the far right affect decision-making at a federal level, as the interplay between the latest round of debates on *Überfremdung* in Switzerland and recent changes to migrant admission policies illustrate.

Our study is a timely contribution to current research examining the relationship between western societies and their respective migrant others. Illuminating the mechanisms behind the changing dynamics of categorisation and othering brings us closer to understanding the issues at the heart of constructions of a Swiss nation and a Swiss national identity. Since the onset of immigration to Switzerland, migrants have involuntarily played an important role in defining what does, or does not, count as 'genuinely Swiss'. Wicker (2003), for instance, argues that immigration to Switzerland has come to fundamentally reflect the idea of a Swiss nation, which the foreigner is entering. Such relational mechanisms of nation-building, however, are not unique to Switzerland. Future research should therefore expand on how travelling discourses affect the role of migration and gender play in shaping politics of belonging.

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Notes

1. This system allows Swiss citizens to propose constitutional amendments at a federal level or to request a referendum to be held on any existing law. In addition, Swiss citizens regularly vote on different issues at the cantonal and municipal level (see Kriesi and Trechsel, 2010).
2. Such concerns not only pertain to migrants but also to native Swiss who represent lower income groups and are therefore considered as a burden to their communities of residence.
3. Originally coined by Carl Schmidt, who served the City of Zürich as municipal officer for the poor, the notion *Überfremdung* is used to flag the social costs that growing numbers of foreigners are feared to imply for the Swiss society. The very notion of *fremd* (foreign/alien) indicates that persons from abroad are different and not part of Swiss society.
4. Mahnig and Piguet (2003) hold that, despite its failure, the Schwarzenbach Initiative marks a turning point in Swiss immigration politics. It is followed by political moves to curtail immigration and presence of immigrants in Switzerland. Its setting an end to the 'laissez-faire politics' of the 1950s and 1960s and contributes to the introduction of different consecutive systems of annual quota for foreign workers (Piguet, 2013).
5. Asylum is another possible entry route, one which we do not consider within the scope of this article.
6. We derive the distinction between culturalisation and ethnicisation from the way differences between native Swiss and foreign others are specified. With the term culturalisation, we capture references to different 'life styles' of different groups (i.e. regarding gender relations) as described in the literature (Maiolino, 2012). Conversely, differences which are framed mainly in terms of national origin or ethnicity, we refer to as ethnicisation. Both ways of constructing difference have essentialist underpinnings. Ethnicity is thought of as naturally linked with culture. Such constructs have been subject to poignant criticism (Baumann, 1996; Dahinden, 2014).

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